

ANSWERING OUR OWN PRAYERS.

BY REV. DAVID JAMES BURRELL, D. D.

It is a mistake to dismiss our petitions with an "Amen," or leave them behind us when we close the closet-door, Let us carry them out to our offices, to our workshops, to our round of household duties. Let us bind them like a sary upon our necks to be our constant meditation. Let us labor all day long for their fulfilment. Earnestness and faith while at the mercy-seat are not enough, they must be supplemented by an honest effort to realize our supplications, with the help of God.

Kneel down to offer your petitions with importunate confidence; and then rise up to strive for their fulfilment. Pray for the blessing as zealously and trustfully as though it must come direct from God; and then work for the blessing as though it all depended upon yourself. This is both philosophy and common sense. Prayer and work go arm in arm. The match was made in heaven. What God hath joined together let not man put asunder.

It is well to look heavenward with a feeling of dependence; but they are fools who fold their hands and open their mouths, like the Jews at Taberah, and expect the clouds to drop manna free and plenteous as hoar-frost.

It is well to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread;" but this does not exempt us from the obligation of that old decree, "Thou shalt eat thy bread by the sweat of thy brow."

It is well to wait on the Lord for his tender mercies; but blessed is that servant who shall be found waiting, not in his bed, but in the vineyard with sleeves rolled up and perspiration on his face.

God helps those who help themselves. And if we consider the matter we shall be surprised to see how often we are able to answer our own prayers. Indeed, for the most part, here is the way God grants our petitions. Instead of giving us the blessing, he gives the wherewithal to gain it for ourselves. You ask for food. He does not fill your basket with baked loaves, but he gives you strength to labor for a livelihood.

Or you ask for wealth; he does not fill your purse with glittering coins, but puts a mattock in your hand and points to the gold mine, saying, "Go dig!"

On a winter's night a benevolent man sits by his fireside. The winds are whistling and the storm is fierce without. In a lull of the tempest he hears a wail of distress. He bends his head to listen more intently; and the cry is repeated. Then he settles back into his comfortable chair, shuts his eyes, clasps his hands and murmurs fervently, "God help the hungry, homeless poor." If the winds would cease their whistling this man in his easy chair might hear a still small voice, "I hate thine easy compassion. I abhor thine indolent prayer!" Let him open his door, venture forth into the stormy night, lend a hand to the poor creature who chouches under his eaves wringing her thin blue fingers, and then God will have helped the hungry and the homeless poor; his prayer will have been answered and, by the grace of God, he will have answered it himself.

It does not abate one jot or tittle of our voice of supplication," but stimulate ourselves to more earnest effort for the acquisition of our own desires. Keep on praying for the miserable; but be sure you leave no stone unturned to relieve their misery. Keep on praying for the sick, but go to their bedsides, relieve their needs and shrive their troubled souls. Go on praying for

the conversion of your children, but use the voice which God has given you to warn them of the wrath to come and the hand which he has given you to lead them to Christ. Go on praying for the success of your pastor, but see to it, meanwhile, that his efforts are supported and supplemented by your cordial help and sympathy, and there will be no doubt of his success. So, in every case, if we shall follow the prayer of faith with corresponding effort, God will satisfy us with his favor.

TO-MORROW.

God's call is not a call for to-morrow. "To-day, if we will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, when your fathers tempted me." God's grace always comes with dispatch; and if thou are drawn by God, thou wilt run after God, and not be talking about delays.

To-morrow!—it is not written in the almanac of time.

To-morrow!—it is in Satan's calendar, and nowhere else.

To-morrow!—it is a rock whitened by the bones of mariners who have been wrecked upon it; it is the wrecker's light gleaming on the shore, luring poor ships to destruction.

To-morrow!—it is the idiot's cup, which he fableth to lie at the foot of the rainbow, but which none hath ever found.

To-morrow!—it is the floating island of Lochlmond, which none hath ever seen.

To-morrow!—it is a dream. To-morrow!—it is a delusion.

To-morrow, aye, to-morrow you may lift up your eyes in hell, being in torments.

Yonder clock says, "To-day," thy pulse whispereth, "To-day." I hear my heart speak as it beats, and it says, "To-day," everything cries, "To-day," and the Holy Ghost is in union with these things, and says, "To-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Sinner, are you inclined now to seek the Saviour? Are you breathing a prayer now? Are you saying, "Now or never—I must be saved now?" Charles H. Spurgeon.

WHEN GOD ANSWERS PRAYER.

A few years ago they were putting up telegraph wires in the Shetland Islands, and the simple islanders who had never seen a piece of coal or a locomotive came in by hundreds to look at these remarkable wires. Amongst the crowd that stood there was a keen man of business and a half-witted Christian lad.

The merchant turned to the boy with the weak intellect and said, "What a wonderful thing. When these wires are completed, you will be able to send a message through to Aberdeen many miles away, and get an answer back in twenty minutes." The half-witted Christian lad on hearing that, exclaimed, "I do not see anything wonderful in that at all." And on being asked by the merchant whether he knew anything more wonderful, he remarked, "I should think I do." He then said to the merchant, "Did you ever hear of people getting an answer before they sent their message?" And on the merchant asking what he meant, he replied, "I only mean what Isaiah says, 'It shall come to pass that before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear.'"

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THE FUTURE LIFE.
 I stood before Phoebe Cary's chair the day before she died, and we conversed concerning her early life. She said she wished to go back to her old homestead before she died, and see her lover's grave. She added: "Before he went from this world I had no interest in the other world. I never questioned whether there was an eternity or not. The thought never seemed to have any power over me. Men talked about it and preached about it, and I read about it, but it never struck my heart and never touched my life. I had no desire to know of eternal things. But when my loved one went so suddenly, falling dead in the street, I asked over and over, 'Is there another world? Will I meet him? Will I live with him forever?' And then I so decided to know." That desire led her to that beautiful poetry which is in the hymn books of all the world to-day:
 One sweetly solemn thought
 Comes to me o'er and o'er;
 I am nearer home to-day
 That I ever have been before.

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