

The King's Highway.

And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness: The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. *Isaiah 35:8*

VOL. XVIII. (New Series.)

WOODSTOCK, N. B., APRIL 30, 1907.

(Semi-Monthly.) NO. 8

PRAYER IN SECRET.

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The Christian cannot live without prayer, not as a gush of feeling or an indulgence of sentiment, but as an earnest habit of the soul. Without constant, steady communion with God, the soul is drawn down by its fleshy instrument, the body immersed in sense, and swayed by the secularities of this life and by the external world. Inward, toward God, he must continually go for spiritual force; then outward, toward man and life, to exercise it profitably. In order to have a real energy of spiritual life, he must have actual intercourse with God Himself. To think about him, to meditate upon his word and works and ways, is one thing; to commune with Him, another. To live without prayer is to live without communion with God. The Divine Presence surrounds us everywhere and at all times, His power upholds, His love blesses every moment. But it is possible to become unconscious of this by forgetting and neglecting Him in heart and action. We have the solemn freedom of escaping, if we choose, the precious influences of the parental presence. But the true-hearted child of God dreads this; he must pray when it is necessary, be it seldom or often, till the need is supplied; and then he prays spontaneously the prayer of thanksgiving, gratitude and love; and enjoying assured fellowship with God, he prays for others, for the kingdom of God, and for all sorts and conditions of men." Privilege rather than duty is the impelling motive. The Lord Jesus Christ never argues out the duty of prayer, or gives reasons why men should pray, but everywhere assumes that it is recognized as a duty, and discourses of it in such manner and tone as to exhibit it as a boon and privilege.

The parable that teaches, "men ought always to pray," lays the obligation, not upon the rightness of praying, but upon the spirit of unfainting importunity, to be cherished by the pleader. So everywhere the Lord Jesus Christ teaches that prayer is to be the most devoutly joyful act of our lives, the freest and happiest privilege allotted to us here below. And all this accords with the loyal and heart of the child of God. Love elevates prayer, and prayer in turn feeds love. To "pray without ceasing" is not a problem to perplex, but the very instinct, breath, pulsation of the soul. A throb of gratitude, a sudden aspiration of love, or of the soul falling down in humility and adoration before God will not suffice; communion will be sought. A place and time of prayer, and a certain degree of system will be found necessary. True spiritual prayer need not be desultory or lack intelligent plan. Lest it escape in transient ejaculation only, some arrangement is requisite, as in other things. That it may not be a seemly form merely, it is essential to fix a secret solitary place, called specifically by Jesus "thy closet." The first instruction He gives in the New Testament concerning prayer is in substance this, "Pray in secret." It is wise and well to obey the injunction as a test of our sincerity and simplicity, in order to exclude all outward distracting influences, and to escape all thought of the opinion of others. If a man finds secret prayer less agreeable than to conduct devotion at a prayer meeting, or to join audibly in

responses in the sanctuary, he had better settle with himself whether he loves the reputation of being religious better than the reality of religion. He who can pray most happily alone may, at least, be sure that he is not influenced by what others think of him or of his prayers. If the proportion of prayer be considered, may it not be said that the least amount of it (though the claims of the Sabbath and the sanctuary are irresistibly Divine, and must be unstintingly met) should be in mixed congregation; a larger amount in social prayer among those who all "agree together" in sympathy as to the object and spirit; and that the largest portion of a Christian's prayer should be alone with his God? Public prayer must be expressed in general terms, which are necessarily brief. Social prayer can enter into a greater minuteness of statement. In private prayer every part of individual life and thought can be brought before God without the least reserve, and told again and again, perhaps with trembling, but trustful stammerings. In thankfulness, contrition, supplication, intercession, the largest portion of a Christian's distinctive approaches to God will be private. He will hold colloquy with the heavenly Father. Secret prayer is the fountain of all other prayer. Where there is no chosen habit of secluded communion with God, there will lack earnestness in public prayer. It is the sign and food

life is love to God, and where it exists it must express itself. If the heart loves God, it will delight to commune with Him; it will habitually turn to Him, as the heliotrope to the sun; it will lean on Him in confidence and dependence. Its food—for such communion opens the soul to receive new life flowing into it from God, and prayer is the door through which the bread and wine of the soul are brought in. Sometimes the soul shrinks away to be alone in the "secret place of the Most High." "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O God!" There are deep places in life, there are deep moments of thought, there are deep complexities of domestic history, there are deep soundings of the heart. Who can fathom these but God, and where dare you seek Him but where you only covet to find Him, there in "thy closet?" The place is already consecrated, for anticipating your coming, even as He understands your utmost care and needs, He is there awaiting you, "But thou, when thou prayest enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." (Matt vi:6.)

—The Consecrated Life.

THE USE OF MEANS.

A genuine pentecostal revival is needed in every locality. The masses are living only for this world. The men of the world think highly of themselves, love position and honor and covet earthly things. "What shall I eat? what shall I drink? and wherewithal shall I be clothed?" are questions of the first importance with the worldly-minded. Something must be done to arouse the slumbering consciences of mankind. Genuine revivals of God's work are not mere happenings, but are the result of well-directed effort. It is quite as reasonable and philosophical to use means to

promote the work of God as it is to plow and sow to secure harvest. In the use of appropriate means, no work can be undertaken with greater certainty of success than that of soul-saving.

1. The prayer of faith is an essential factor in revival work. At Pentecost they plead the divine promise. God had promised that He would pour out His spirit upon all flesh, and although its fulfillment was withheld for a time, the prayer of faith at last prevailed and "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost," which was the forerunner of a grand and glorious revival of the work of God. Genuine revivals are born of God, but they cannot be brought about without importunate prayer inspired by the Holy Ghost. The Lord will be sought unto to do mighty things for His people. The waste places need to be built up. The teeming masses are rushing headlong to ultimate ruin, and nothing but divine interposition can check the tide. Every one who has faith in God should cry mightily unto Him that the forces of iniquity may be repulsed and immortal souls rescued from eternal despair. The prayer of faith ascending from the heart yearning for lost souls must prevail.

2. Gospel preaching. God is pleased "by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." At Pentecost they "spake as the Spirit gave them utterance." The truth was said in the right spirit. The world by mere human wisdom cannot know God. Jesus Christ must be lifted up as the only Saviour of the world. It is the simple story of the cross, accompanied by the Holy Spirit, that overcomes men's prejudices breaks through their unbelief, conquers their stubborn wills and wins them to Christ. God works along the line of gospel truth, and if men are saved it must be through the truth of God. The Saviour prayed for His disciples "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth." Salvation never comes contrary to Bible teaching. The word must be preached in its simplicity if the best results are hoped for. Scientific reasoning or human philosophizing cannot arouse the slumbering conscience or melt the hardened heart. The story of the cross, related in its original simplicity and power is God's ordained subduing the human heart. The gospel "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

3. The outpoured Spirit is essential to a genuine revival. Had not the Holy Spirit come the results of Pentecost could not have been realized. The power of the church to pray and preach and labor so as to awaken souls and draw them to Christ lies in the possession of the Holy Spirit. This is the pressing need of the twentieth century church. Would that His inspiring presence might be felt throughout her entire borders. All the available resources of the church will be ineffectual in the work of soul-saving unless fired by the Holy Spirit. The ministry, leaders, laity, all need the holy anointing to make them efficient in their high calling. The old and the young should wait before the Lord until they receive the baptism from on high. Then, and not until then, can the church look with any degree of assurance for a general revival of "pure and undefiled religion." B. R. J. in Free Methodist.

THE JOY OF BEING MADE HOLY.

We readily concede that the human heart was formed by its divine creator to be happy; we do not concede that to be happy is the highest end for which man was created but we do affirm that attaining unto that highest end, being holy is the most certain way to be made happy. There is much of crucifixion, separation, and self-denial in being made holy and in continuing holy, but there is also a joy in being made holy, a joy that comes from being right, from having the victory within and without, a joy that springs from the closer and clearer relations to Jesus and truth all and the things divine, joy that springs forth from a better and stronger faith and a larger understanding of the will of God, a joy that comes from having the devil and world outside rather than on the inside of the heart, and from having the flesh or self where it ought to be in most humble subjection to all the will of God. In addition to all this the life of holiness is a simple life, simple and plain in all of its manifestations, desires, purposes and aims, hence is not much perplexed with what other persons may think or say or do. This life has nothing to do with the mad race of the fashionable and is not wild after money nor seeking pleasure or honor with a mad ambition; There is room and time and welcome for the simple joy that comes from living right. There is also the joy which springs from the deeper fellowship with God and saints, fellowship known in its depth and height and breadth and mystery only to the wholly sanctified. There is joy in the sense the wholly sanctified have of being settled forever, the old inward restlessness is gone, the peace of God fills the life, henceforth in some respects there are to be no interruptions, for whatever comes is in the will of God, changes will not have to be made, death may come "but it cuts off nothing essential to life, all sorts and kinds of change may enter our lives, but the steady onflow of the deeper currents never change, everything is taken as from God and all the deepest emotions of the spirit center in God henceforth forever. The great changes necessary in obtaining life and more abundant life have been passed and henceforth the soul has nothing to do but to live in God where the life is hid with Christ.—Wesleyan Methodist.

COUNTING NOSES.

There are many persons whose remedy for existing evils is votes. If they can get a majority to vote this way or that, then something can be accomplished; and so they estimate the future of the church and the nation and the world on the basis of census. Such an estimate is erroneous. It avails but little for the cause of righteousness to "count noses," if the majority of the noses are red ones! and besides a numerical estimate is sure to be an erroneous one. When some one was asked what he thought of Xerxes' army of five million men, he said, "There are many mouths, but few hands—many men but few soldiers."

God's work has ever been done by minorities; one man, strong in God, can chase a thousand of those men who simply count. One Elijah on the summit of Carmel is a match for all the prophets of Baal, and all the

apostates that feed at Jezebel's table. One man reasoning of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, and thundering the wrath of God which is revealed against all unrighteousness, counts for more than a score of learned Nicodemuses who have never been born again, or a whole Sanhedrin of Rabbis and scribes, who are pecking at phrases and disputing about forms and striving to take him in his talk. Gideon did not win his battle with thirty thousand warriors, two-thirds of whom were in a hurry to get home. His force was too large; his army must be thinned out and whittled down till the three hundred could take the pitchers and the lamps, and cry, "The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon," and conquer with that battle cry.

Man of God, do not fear being a minority; do not fear to stand alone; fear nobody but God; fear nothing but sin, and let the world count and recount its multitudes. Let the men who draw all their inspiration from the census, reckon their forces and imagine prosperity or adversity, danger or safety, according to the figures they find there; but let men of God know that one man with the Lord is stronger than all the hosts of Satan, and that if God be for us all hell may rage against us in vain. Stand for the right, stand for the true, stand for the Lord, and having done all, stand! Those heroic souls who, through faith, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, violence of fire—were every man of them on the unpopular side; not one of them had a majority with him. The majority bowed the knee to Baal; the majority knelt before the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar set up; the majority prayed to king Darius, while Daniel's windows were open toward Jerusalem. The majority builded no arks, but perished in the flood; the majority went down in the fiery storm that burst upon the cities of the plain.

Let the servants of the Lord strengthen themselves in Him; let them be of good cheer; let them fear not the foe, and when the hosts of hell assail them, let them, instead of worrying their souls over census reports, cry to the living God for help in time of need; for deliverance in the hour of danger, for blessing which the Lord alone can give.

Man of God, hold fast the faith! Let others number Israel, but let it be yours to trust in Him whose hosts no man can number, who counts the stars, who rules the world, who marshals the angels, who delivers his people, who will never leave nor forsake his saints. One man following—the Lord of heaven may overturn the devices of a thousand crafty hypocrites. One man with a voice that cannot be silenced, with a pen that cannot be bought, with a spirit that knows no fear, can stand like a rock in the midst of the ocean's billows, and abide when winds and waves are hushed to rest, and be found at last crowned with light among those who are "more than conquerors through Him that loved us."—H. L. Hastings.

CIGARETTES AND TOBACCO.

How any christian dealer can conscientiously sell cigarettes and tobacco when he knows it is going to injure the users, is more than we can understand. How ministers of the gospel can use tobacco and yet preach purity to others is another problem we cannot solve.

To tax a thing is to tolerate it and vice in its nature is not a thing to be tolerated.—John Jay.