

TALKS ON PRAYER

By the Editor

"And He said unto them. When ye pray"
Luke 1:2.

The disciples went to the right source when they went to Jesus to be taught how to pray. See verse 1. For He is and always will be the highest authority on all questions pertaining to our spiritual life. Whatever may be said of men as being authorities in other lines of education, when they try to enter the realm of the spiritual they will have to recognize Jesus (the Great Teacher) as the sole authority and origin of truth. "In Him was life and the life was the light of men". John 1:4. In the first words that Jesus uttered here in His teaching on prayer, we find couched about all the elements essential to successful praying. Notice He said, "When ye pray say, Our Father which art in Heaven". Notice it is not so much what we say but what we are that determines the value of our prayer. It would be utter folly for us to say Our Father unless we have been "Born Again", and have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry "Abba Father". Rom. 8:15. For we are by nature the children of wrath (not of God). Eph. 2:3. This prayer is exclusively for the child of God.

A man may preach or sing or do social welfare work without being born again but when he prays after the manner that Jesus taught here, he must be born from above. Jesus also taught the sinner how to pray in the parable in Luke 18:13, where the publican stood afar off, smote on his breast and did not lift up his eyes to heaven but cried "God be merciful to me a sinner", and went down to his house justified. After that he might be in position to draw near to God and pray Our Father. God was seldom addressed as "Our Father" under the old dispensation, I think Isaiah did use that term twice. He is spoken of as The Almighty God, The Creator, The Most High, The High and Holy One, Jehovah, etc. But as Samuel Chadwick says, (in his book, "The Path of Prayer"), Jesus turned all these revelations of God into terms of filial value. In these words "Our Father" is suggested the thought of intimacy. The child ought to be intimate enough with his father to feel free to ask him for what he wants, and the father ought to be well enough acquainted with his child to know what he needs. Hence the words of Jesus, "Your Heavenly Father knoweth what things you have need of before you ask Him". Again the words suggest mutual love between father and child. The child loves the father and does not want to displease him, but delights in being often and long in his company even when he is not asking anything in particular from him, he would be an abnormal and ungrateful child if he only came to his father when in need of something as some of us do to God who profess to be His children. Can you not see here beloved why we do not get answers to our prayers oftener? God knows our hearts and knows that our love for Him is not very strong. It is the child that clings to its father and is always found in his company, that gets the favors from dad. The Psalmist said, "Delight thyself also in the Lord and He will give thee the desires of thine heart". Psa. 37:4. Thank God for that saying. Then again the child not only loves the father but the father loves the child and will always do him the good that he sees he needs. And if the child asks for some things at times (as we no doubt all do) which the father sees is not for his best good, the Loving Father will withhold and answer

No instead of Yes, like he answered Paul when he asked thrice to have the thorn removed from his flesh. But God gave him grace to bear with it, which was better and Paul gloried in his infirmity that the power of Christ might rest upon him. There is one thing certain, beloved if we are fulfilling the conditions of sonship and we ask of God and He does not give us what we ask and when we ask for it, it is because Our Father has something better in store for us and if we submit lovingly and trustingly to his love and wisdom we will see later that His way was best, and if the Holy Spirit inspires our petition the answer will surely come sometime. As expressed in the words of this beautiful hymn:

"Unanswered yet! The prayers your lips have pleaded

In agony of heart these many years?

Does faith begin to fail? Is hope departing?

And think you all in vain those falling tears?

Say not, the Father hath not heard your prayer,

You shall have your desire—sometime—somewhere.

"Unanswered yet! Though when you first presented

This one petition at the Father's Throne,

It seemed you could not wait the time of asking.

So urgent was the heart to make it known; Though years have passed since then, do not despair,

The Lord will answer you—sometime—somewhere.

"Unanswered yet! Nay, do not say ungranted, Perhaps your work is not wholly done.

The work began when first your prayer was uttered,

And God will finish what He has begun,

If you will keep the incense burning there,

His glory you shall see—sometime—somewhere.

"Unanswered yet! Faith cannot be unanswered;

Her feet are firmly planted on the Rock;

Amid the wildest storms she stands undaunted

Nor quails before the loudest thunder shock.

She knows Omnipotence has heard her prayer,

And cries: 'It shall be done—sometime—somewhere.'

—E. B. Browning.

REPENTANCE

The man who misses repentance will miss everything. If your repentance is shallow, your religious life will be shallow. If your coming to Christ does not mean everything, you will not get everything. If your surrender is not complete, you cannot receive. If your hands are full, you cannot take hold.—Gipsy Smith, in Wesleyan Methodist.

OUR EXAMPLE

For ever on Christ's burdened heart

A weight of sorrow hung,

Yet no ungentle, murmuring word

Escaped His silent tongue.

His foes might hate, despise, revile,

His friends unfaithful prove:

Unwearied in forgiveness still,

His heart could only love.

O give us hearts to love like Thee,

Like Thee, O Lord, to grieve

Far more for others' sins than all

The wrongs that we receive.

—Anon.

"BE OF GOOD CHEER!"

(From The Christian Witness)

Why should I be lonely?

I find amongst the crowd
Of wistful, eager faces

Of those who smile out loud,

There's oft a kindred spirit;

(We are akin, you know!)

And other hearts are lonely;

Just ask, you'll find it's so.

Why should I be lonely?

Loved ones die, 'tis true;

Friends I knew from childhood

Daily grow more few.

But in that Blessed Country

They wait expectant, sure;

I've promised I will meet them;

This helps me to endure.

Why should I be lonely

When the blessed Son of God

Proclaims that He is "with me"

The strenuous way I plod?

He daily walks beside me,

And whispers in my ear

Dear words of blest assurance—

O friends it is not lonely

With the blessed Jesus near!

—Ella Clark Craig.

ONE MINUTE SERMON

By Rev. A. J. McKinney

Fruit picked too early in the season is likely to spoil. Much of revival fruit may decay for similar reason or cause. Conviction must do its thorough work. Repentance must become ripe before its point for ending comes. In haste to arrive, both seeker and worker may absorb a good prospect for thorough and permanent approach. Conviction takes time, so also repentance.

The "fruit of the Spirit" must ripen in the successive seasons preparatory to salvation to insure permanency. In many hearts the processes are more rapid; but so in nature some fruits mature earlier. Surgery of the eyes for removal of "cataract" must be postponed until the crystalline lens is "ripe" for removal or the operation will abort. In hatching of eggs it is destruction to attempt a premature delivery. Nature is best judge as to speed. There are some laws of the spiritual kingdom in seeking the kingdom, and we damage, often, by too much haste, or by tardiness. McPherson, Kansas. —The Free Methodist.

Preachers usually assume that the people know much more about the Bible, church history, etc., than they really do. But how can they be expected to know, having never been taught? The ordinary layman is busy with school-keeping, house-keeping, store-keeping, or farming, and though it ought not to be so, yet he takes but little time if any to inform himself upon the general matters of religion.

Whatever other means are used it will be of great practical benefit if a preacher in every sermon will attempt to bring to the people at least one piece of information. This may seem a rather small ambition. But let it be remembered that some preachers are entirely oratory in style—always exhorting the people, but never telling them anything but what they have always known.

Also the preacher in preparing to give the information will have his own intellectual life quickened.—The Free Methodist.