

Sisters All!

Dear Martha,

Your last letter answered an unspoken question that has been in my mind for quite a while. I had wondered if you were able to make any progress in your efforts toward a more meaningful devotional life, but it's not exactly a question one comes right out and asks. However, the tone of your letters has seemed more relaxed and optimistic lately, reflecting, I am sure, the poise of spirit that comes from a vital relationship with God.

Many of your comments were much in accord with my own observations, especially your analysis of the three levels of prayer. It recalled to my mind so clearly the development of my own prayer life.

Your first level you very appropriately called "pick-up praying"—the kind that is done anywhere and at any time. Often it has no introduction and no ending; it can be urgent or simply meditative. I pray that way when I am under stress or in a hurry, or sometimes I just "talk to God" when I am working around the house.

Probably the most usual kind of prayer is what you called "planned praying," a more formal effort to contact God out of a sense of present or future need. It is a time for refreshing, for casting one's burden on the Lord, for consciously seeking guidance and help. This type of praying necessarily comes often, and each one of us knows how frequent it must be for us.

What impressed — I might even say, excited — me most about your reflections was the third level of prayer, which you called "praying in depth." Where other forms of prayer are characterized by our much speaking, you pointed out that in this we must be still while we wait and listen.

I have noticed also that there is no rush, no urgency to this kind of praying. There may be a careful deliberate phrasing of ideas as they come, letting each one carry you to the next one, and thinking that one through with soul-searching care. Sometimes there is an inner questioning and answering, quietly and distinctly guided by the Spirit.

Often there is logical progression from one idea to its natural conclusion: a tangled situation unravels to beautiful and ordered simplicity; a glimmer of light in the darkness expands and glows until the path ahead is clear and unmistakable. Sometimes there is a flood of ideas, mingled with clarified understanding, thanksgiving, joyful self-sacrifice, love, and worship. At that stage, the prayer is already answered, and the outcome is immaterial.

Of course, a tangible answer brings its own blessing. It is the visible completion of the circuit between my mind and God. Thus, to me, the answered prayer is one proof that I have touched God, and that it was no illusion. There was a time when I used to pray earnestly in order to contact God and see my prayer answered. Now the greatest joy I find in answered prayer is its illuminating revelation of God. The God of the Universe has moved on my behalf! What does it matter what response He gives, so long as I may hear His voice? We cannot always attain to that highest level of prayer, but, as you have discovered, after you have been there once, an irresistible zest for spiritual heights impels you to return.

I want to scale the utmost height,

And catch a gleam of glory bright;

But still I'll pray till heav'n I've found,

"Lord, lead me on to higher ground."

Your loving sister, Mary.

AFRICAN DIARY

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Hosanna." I do not know as the Catholic Church has any claim on the particular words, but now and then I did note some faint reflections of the Church liturgy. At least they were not singing a Basuto battlesong, and I meditated upon the influence of missions.

As we entered the center of the village from which the children had come, a Basuto man dashed up on his horse and asked us what we wanted. We tried to explain that we wished to see the rock paintings which were in the vicinity of his village. He indicated the direction, and then about a dozen of the children eagerly led us across the open veld and down into a valley where an ancient river had carved away the side of a cliff, leaving a great overhanging shelter. Here was another typical Bushman site, obviously quite ideal from his point of view, as protection from the rain, a place to build his fires, and where his enemies could not attack him from behind. What was most important, the great flat wall at the back of his shelter provided him a natural surface for his ever-present art. Here were many of the domestic, hunting, and ritual scenes that I had learned to recognize in the paintings in and near Modderpoort. The Bushmen, apparently, were a happy, peaceful people, quite contented to live by themselves and to mind their own business. Other encroaching tribes gradually forced them into new territory where they were not able to adapt themselves, and gradually this simple, art-loving people became almost extinct. Probably there are a few left in the region of the great Kalahari Desert.

Coming home that evening we stopped to make tea right out in the open on a high plateau between the mountains. For a few minutes I wandered away by myself, and far off in the distance I could see the fires from many villages. From across a valley came the haunting, pulse-quickening rhythm of excited singing. Before I got back to the car a threatening storm broke with sudden fury, with thunder and lightning accompaniment. It seemed very lonely out there in the African night.

MY TESTIMONY

by Mrs. Edwin Jennings*

I was brought up in a Christian home and always attended Church and Sunday School. We were taught to reverence God, his Word, the Church, and to know what was right and wrong. In my teens I realized that knowing about God and Jesus Christ was not enough, so without any teaching, other than the leading of the Holy Spirit, I confessed my need and accepted Christ as my Savior.

When my children were old enough to go to Church and Sunday School I attended the Reformed Baptist Church at Lower Brighton, N. B., which was two miles from our home, and most of the time we walked. It was there that I was led into a deeper knowledge of salvation and God's will for my life. It has always been my desire to do his will as he gave me more light. He showed me my need to present my body a living sacrifice to Him, a reasonable service. I have always been interested in Missions, and want to do all I can to help others to find the Wonderful Savior.

I have had many things in my life that seemed to be sore trials, but they taught me my need of help from God, and His grace has always been sufficient. I praise Him for the way he led me closer to Him. I want to thank God for the strength He has given me this winter, through the different days since the accident that took Mary, my daughter-in-law, from us, and left Robert, my

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