

1 With Christ In the School of Prayer

2
3 Thoughts on Our Training

4
5 for the

6
7 Ministry of Intercession

8
9 by

10
11 Andrew Murray

12
13 Lord, teach us to pray.

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22 PREFACE.

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26 Of all the promises connected with the command, ABIDE IN ME,' there is none higher, and none
27 that sooner brings the confession, Not that I have already attained, or am already made perfect,'
28 than this: If ye abide in me, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' Power with God
29 is the highest attainment of the life of full abiding.

30
31 And of all the traits of a life LIKE CHRIST there is none higher and more glorious than conformity
32 to Him in the work that now engages Him without ceasing in the Father's presence—His all-
33 prevailing intercession. The more we abide in Him, and grow unto His likeness, will His priestly
34 life work in us mightily, and our life become what His is, a life that ever pleads and prevails for
35 men.

36
37 Thou hast made us kings and priests unto God.' Both in the king and the priest the chief thing is
38 power, influence, blessing. In the king it is the power coming downward; in the priest, the power
39 rising upward, prevailing with God. In our blessed Priest-King, Jesus Christ, the kingly power is
40 founded on the priestly He is able to save to the uttermost, because He ever liveth to make
41 intercession.' In us, His priests and kings, it is no otherwise: it is in intercession that the Church is
42 to find and wield its highest power, that each member of the Church is to prove his descent from
43 Israel, who as a prince had power with God and with men, and prevailed.

44
45 It is under a deep impression that the place and power of prayer in the Christian life is too little
46 understood, that this book has been written. I feel sure that as long as we look on prayer chiefly as
47 the means of maintaining our own Christian life, we shall not know fully what it is meant to be. But
48 when we learn to regard it as the highest part of the work entrusted to us, the root and strength of all
49 other work, we shall see that there is nothing that we so need to study and practise as the art of

50 praying aright. If I have at all succeeded in pointing out the progressive teaching of our Lord in
51 regard to prayer, and the distinct reference the wonderful promises of the last night (John xiv. 16)
52 have to the works we are to do in His Name, to the greater works, and to the bearing much fruit, we
53 shall all admit that it is only when the Church gives herself up to this holy work of intercession that
54 we can expect the power of Christ to manifest itself in her behalf. It is my prayer that God may use
55 this little book to make clearer to some of His children the wonderful place of power and influence
56 which He is waiting for them to occupy, and for which a weary world is waiting too.

57
58 In connection with this there is another truth that has come to me with wonderful clearness as I
59 studied the teaching of Jesus on prayer. It is this: that the Father waits to hear every prayer of faith,
60 to give us whatsoever we will, and whatsoever we ask in Jesus' name. We have become so
61 accustomed to limit the wonderful love and the large promises of our God, that we cannot read the
62 simplest and clearest statements of our Lord without the qualifying clauses by which we guard and
63 expound them. If there is one thing I think the Church needs to learn, it is that God means prayer to
64 have an answer, and that it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive what God will do for
65 His child who gives himself to believe that his prayer will be heard. God hears prayer; this is a truth
66 universally admitted, but of which very few understand the meaning, or experience the power. If
67 what I have written stir my reader to go to the Master's words, and take His wondrous promises
68 simply and literally as they stand, my object has been attained.

69
70 And then just one thing more. Thousands have in these last years found an unspeakable blessing in
71 learning how completely Christ is our life, and how He undertakes to be and to do all in us that we
72 need. I know not if we have yet learned to apply this truth to our prayer-life. Many complain that
73 they have not the power to pray in faith, to pray the effectual prayer that availeth much. The
74 message I would fain bring them is that the blessed Jesus is waiting, is longing, to teach them this.
75 Christ is our life: in heaven He ever liveth to pray; His life in us is an ever-praying life, if we will
76 but trust Him for it. Christ teaches us to pray not only by example, by instruction, by command, by
77 promises, but by showing us HIMSELF, the ever-living Intercessor, as our Life. It is when we
78 believe this, and go and abide in Him for our prayer-life too, that our fears of not being able to pray
79 aright will vanish, and we shall joyfully and triumphantly trust our Lord to teach us to pray, to be
80 Himself the life and the power of our prayer.

81
82 May God open our eyes to see what the holy ministry of intercession is to which, as His royal
83 priesthood, we have been set apart. May He give us a large and strong heart to believe what mighty
84 influence our prayers can exert. And may all fear as to our being able to fulfil our vocation vanish as
85 we see Jesus, living ever to pray, living in us to pray, and standing surety for our prayer-life.

86
87 ANDREW MURRAY

88
89 WELLINGTON, 28th October 1895

90
91
92
93
94 FIRST LESSON.

95
96 Lord, teach us to pray;'

97
98 Or, The Only Teacher .

100 And it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, that when He ceased, one of His disciples
101 said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray.'—Luke xi. 1.

102
103 THE disciples had been with Christ, and seen Him pray. They had learnt to understand something
104 of the connection between His wondrous life in public, and His secret life of prayer. They had learnt
105 to believe in Him as a Master in the art of prayer—none could pray like Him. And so they came to
106 Him with the request, Lord, teach us to pray.' And in after years they would have told us that there
107 were few things more wonderful or blessed that He taught them than His lessons on prayer.

108
109 And now still it comes to pass, as He is praying in a certain place, that disciples who see Him thus
110 engaged feel the need of repeating the same request, Lord, teach us to pray.' As we grow in the
111 Christian life, the thought and the faith of the Beloved Master in His never-failing intercession
112 becomes ever more precious, and the hope of being Like Christ in His intercession gains an
113 attractiveness before unknown. And as we see Him pray, and remember that there is none who can
114 pray like Him, and none who can teach like Him, we feel the petition of the disciples, Lord, teach us
115 to pray,' is just what we need. And as we think how all He is and has, how He Himself is our very
116 own, how He is Himself our life, we feel assured that we have but to ask, and He will be delighted
117 to take us up into closer fellowship with Himself, and teach us to pray even as He prays.

118
119 Come, my brothers! Shall we not go to the Blessed Master and ask Him to enrol our names too
120 anew in that school which He always keeps open for those who long to continue their studies in the
121 Divine art of prayer and intercession? Yes, let us this very day say to the Master, as they did of old,
122 Lord, teach us to pray.' As we meditate, we shall find each word of the petition we bring to be full
123 of meaning.

124
125 Lord, teach us to pray.' Yes, to pray. This is what we need to be taught. Though in its beginnings
126 prayer is so simple that the feeblest child can pray, yet it is at the same time the highest and holiest
127 work to which man can rise. It is fellowship with the Unseen and Most Holy One. The powers of
128 the eternal world have been placed at its disposal. It is the very essence of true religion, the channel
129 of all blessings, the secret of power and life. Not only for ourselves, but for others, for the Church,
130 for the world, it is to prayer that God has given the right to take hold of Him and His strength. It is
131 on prayer that the promises wait for their fulfilment, the kingdom for its coming, the glory of God
132 for its full revelation. And for this blessed work, how slothful and unfit we are. It is only the Spirit
133 of God can enable us to do it aright. How speedily we are deceived into a resting in the form, while
134 the power is wanting. Our early training, the teaching of the Church, the influence of habit, the
135 stirring of the emotions—how easily these lead to prayer which has no spiritual power, and avails
136 but little. True prayer, that takes hold of God's strength, that availeth much, to which the gates of
137 heaven are really opened wide—who would not cry, Oh for some one to teach me thus to pray?

138
139 Jesus has opened a school, in which He trains His redeemed ones, who specially desire it, to have
140 power in prayer. Shall we not enter it with the petition, Lord! it is just this we need to be taught! O
141 teach us to pray.

142
143 Lord, teach us to pray.' Yes, us, Lord. We have read in Thy Word with what power Thy believing
144 people of old used to pray, and what mighty wonders were done in answer to their prayers. And if
145 this took place under the Old Covenant, in the time of preparation, how much more wilt Thou not
146 now, in these days of fulfilment, give Thy people this sure sign of Thy presence in their midst. We
147 have heard the promises given to Thine apostles of the power of prayer in Thy name, and have seen

148 how gloriously they experienced their truth: we know for certain, they can become true to us too.
149 We hear continually even in these days what glorious tokens of Thy power Thou dost still give to
150 those who trust Thee fully. Lord! these all are men of like passions with ourselves; teach us to pray
151 so too. The promises are for us, the powers and gifts of the heavenly world are for us. O teach us to
152 pray so that we may receive abundantly. To us too Thou hast entrusted Thy work, on our prayer too
153 the coming of Thy kingdom depends, in our prayer too Thou canst glorify Thy name; Lord teach us
154 to pray.' Yes, us, Lord; we offer ourselves as learners; we would indeed be taught of Thee. Lord,
155 teach us to pray.'

156
157 Lord, teach us to pray.' Yes, we feel the need now of being taught to pray. At first there is no work
158 appears so simple; later on, none that is more difficult; and the confession is forced from us: We
159 know not how to pray as we ought. It is true we have God's Word, with its clear and sure promises;
160 but sin has so darkened our mind, that we know not always how to apply the word. In spiritual
161 things we do not always seek the most needful things, or fail in praying according to the law of the
162 sanctuary. In temporal things we are still less able to avail ourselves of the wonderful liberty our
163 Father has given us to ask what we need. And even when we know what to ask, how much there is
164 still needed to make prayer acceptable. It must be to the glory of God, in full surrender to His will,
165 in full assurance of faith, in the name of Jesus, and with a perseverance that, if need be, refuses to
166 be denied. All this must be learned. It can only be learned in the school of much prayer, for practice
167 makes perfect. Amid the painful consciousness of ignorance and unworthiness, in the struggle
168 between believing and doubting, the heavenly art of effectual prayer is learnt. Because, even when
169 we do not remember it, there is One, the Beginner and Finisher of faith and prayer, who watches
170 over our praying, and sees to it that in all who trust Him for it their education in the school of prayer
171 shall be carried on to perfection. Let but the deep undertone of all our prayer be the teachableness
172 that comes from a sense of ignorance, and from faith in Him as a perfect teacher, and we may be
173 sure we shall be taught, we shall learn to pray in power. Yes, we may depend upon it, He teaches to
174 pray.

175
176 Lord, teach us to pray.' None can teach like Jesus, none but Jesus; therefore we call on Him, LORD,
177 teach us to pray.' A pupil needs a teacher, who knows his work, who has the gift of teaching, who
178 in patience and love will descend to the pupil's needs. Blessed be God! Jesus is all this and much
179 more. He knows what prayer is. It is Jesus, praying Himself, who teaches to pray. He knows what
180 prayer is. He learned it amid the trials and tears of His earthly life. In heaven it is still His beloved
181 work: His life there is prayer. Nothing delights Him more than to find those whom He can take with
182 Him into the Father's presence, whom He can clothe with power to pray down God's blessing on
183 those around them, whom He can train to be His fellow-workers in the intercession by which the
184 kingdom is to be revealed on earth. He knows how to teach. Now by the urgency of felt need, then
185 by the confidence with which joy inspires. Here by the teaching of the Word, there by the testimony
186 of another believer who knows what it is to have prayer heard. By His Holy Spirit, He has access to
187 our heart, and teaches us to pray by showing us the sin that hinders the prayer, or giving us the
188 assurance that we please God. He teaches, by giving not only thoughts of what to ask or how to ask,
189 but by breathing within us the very spirit of prayer, by living within us as the Great Intercessor. We
190 may indeed and most joyfully say, Who teacheth like Him?' Jesus never taught His disciples how to
191 preach, only how to pray. He did not speak much of what was needed to preach well, but much of
192 praying well. To know how to speak to God is more than knowing how to speak to man. Not power
193 with men, but power with God is the first thing. Jesus loves to teach us how to pray.

194
195 What think you, my beloved fellow-disciples! would it not be just what we need, to ask the Master
196 for a month to give us a course of special lessons on the art of prayer? As we meditate on the words

197 He spake on earth, let us yield ourselves to His teaching in the fullest confidence that, with such a
198 teacher, we shall make progress. Let us take time not only to meditate, but to pray, to tarry at the
199 foot of the throne, and be trained to the work of intercession. Let us do so in the assurance that
200 amidst our stammerings and fears He is carrying on His work most beautifully. He will breathe His
201 own life, which is all prayer, into us. As He makes us partakers of His righteousness and His life,
202 He will of His intercession too. As the members of His body, as a holy priesthood, we shall take
203 part in His priestly work of pleading and prevailing with God for men. Yes, let us most joyfully say,
204 ignorant and feeble though we be, Lord, teach us to pray.’

205

206 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

207

208

209

210 Blessed Lord! who ever livest to pray, Thou canst teach me too to pray, me too to live ever to pray.
211 In this Thou lovest to make me share Thy glory in heaven, that I should pray without ceasing, and
212 ever stand as a priest in the presence of my God.

213

214 Lord Jesus! I ask Thee this day to enrol my name among those who confess that they know not how
215 to pray as they ought, and specially ask Thee for a course of teaching in prayer. Lord! teach me to
216 tarry with Thee in the school, and give Thee time to train me. May a deep sense of my ignorance, of
217 the wonderful privilege and power of prayer, of the need of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of prayer,
218 lead me to cast away my thoughts of what I think I know, and make me kneel before Thee in true
219 teachableness and poverty of spirit.

220

221 And fill me, Lord, with the confidence that with such a teacher as Thou art I shall learn to pray. In
222 the assurance that I have as my teacher, Jesus who is ever praying to the Father, and by His prayer
223 rules the destinies of His Church and the world, I will not be afraid. As much as I need to know of
224 the mysteries of the prayer-world, Thou wilt unfold for me. And when I may not know, Thou wilt
225 teach me to be strong in faith, giving glory to God.

226

227 Blessed Lord! Thou wilt not put to shame Thy scholar who trusts Thee, nor, by Thy grace, would he
228 Thee either. Amen.

229

230

231

232 SECOND LESSON.

233

234 In spirit and truth.’

235

236 Or, The True Worshippers.

237

238 The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth:
239 for such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him
240 must worship Him in spirit and truth.’—John iv. 23, 24.

241

242 THESE words of Jesus to the woman of Samaria are His first recorded teaching on the subject of
243 prayer. They give us some wonderful first glimpses into the world of prayer. The Father seeks
244 worshippers: our worship satisfies His loving heart and is a joy to Him. He seeks true worshippers,
245 but finds many not such as He would have them. True worship is that which is in spirit and truth.

246 The Son has come to open the way for this worship in spirit and in truth, and teach it us. And so one
247 of our first lessons in the school of prayer must be to understand what it is to pray in spirit and in
248 truth, and to know how we can attain to it.

249
250 To the woman of Samaria our Lord spoke of a threefold worship. There is first, the ignorant worship
251 of the Samaritans: 'Ye worship that which ye know not.' The second, the intelligent worship of the
252 Jew, having the true knowledge of God: 'We worship that which we know; for salvation is of the
253 Jews.' And then the new, the spiritual worship which He Himself has come to introduce: 'The hour
254 is coming, and is now, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth.' From
255 the connection it is evident that the words 'in spirit and truth' do not mean, as is often thought,
256 earnestly, from the heart, in sincerity. The Samaritans had the five books of Moses and some
257 knowledge of God; there was doubtless more than one among them who honestly and earnestly
258 sought God in prayer. The Jews had the true full revelation of God in His word, as thus far given;
259 there were among them godly men, who called upon God with their whole heart. And yet not in
260 spirit and truth,' in the full meaning of the words. Jesus says, 'The hour is coming, and now is;' it is
261 only in and through Him that the worship of God will be in spirit and truth.

262
263 Among Christians one still finds the three classes of worshippers. Some who in their ignorance
264 hardly know what they ask: they pray earnestly, and yet receive but little. Others there are, who
265 have more correct knowledge, who try to pray with all their mind and heart, and often pray most
266 earnestly, and yet do not attain to the full blessedness of worship in spirit and truth. It is into this
267 third class we must ask our Lord Jesus to take us; we must be taught of Him how to worship in
268 spirit and truth. This alone is spiritual worship; this makes us worshippers such as the Father seeks.
269 In prayer everything will depend on our understanding well and practising the worship in spirit and
270 truth.

271
272 God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and truth.' The first thought
273 suggested here by the Master is that there must be harmony between God and His worshippers; such
274 as God is, must His worship be. This is according to a principle which prevails throughout the
275 universe: we look for correspondence between an object and the organ to which it reveals or yields
276 itself. The eye has an inner fitness for the light, the ear for sound. The man who would truly worship
277 God, would find and know and possess and enjoy God, must be in harmony with Him, must have
278 the capacity for receiving Him. Because God is Spirit, we must worship in spirit. As God is, so His
279 worshipper.

280
281 And what does this mean? The woman had asked our Lord whether Samaria or Jerusalem was the
282 true place of worship. He answers that henceforth worship is no longer to be limited to a certain
283 place: 'Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall
284 ye worship the Father.' As God is Spirit, not bound by space or time, but in His infinite perfection
285 always and everywhere the same, so His worship would henceforth no longer be confined by place
286 or form, but spiritual as God Himself is spiritual. A lesson of deep importance. How much our
287 Christianity suffers from this, that it is confined to certain times and places. A man, who seeks to
288 pray earnestly in the church or in the closet, spends the greater part of the week or the day in a spirit
289 entirely at variance with that in which he prayed. His worship was the work of a fixed place or hour,
290 not of his whole being. God is a Spirit: He is the Everlasting and Unchangeable One; what He is, He
291 is always and in truth. Our worship must even so be in spirit and truth: His worship must be the
292 spirit of our life; our life must be worship in spirit as God is Spirit.

293

294 God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth.’ The second
295 thought that comes to us is that the worship in the spirit must come from God Himself. God is
296 Spirit: He alone has Spirit to give. It was for this He sent His Son, to fit us for such spiritual
297 worship, by giving us the Holy Spirit. It is of His own work that Jesus speaks when He says twice,
298 The hour cometh,’ and then adds, and is now.’ He came to baptize with the Holy Spirit; the Spirit
299 could not stream forth till He was glorified (John i. 33, vii. 37, 38, xvi. 7). It was when He had made
300 an end of sin, and entering into the Holiest of all with His blood, had there on our behalf received
301 the Holy Spirit (Acts ii. 33), that He could send Him down to us as the Spirit of the Father. It was
302 when Christ had redeemed us, and we in Him had received the position of children, that the Father
303 sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts to cry, Abba, Father.’ The worship in spirit is the
304 worship of the Father in the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Sonship.

306 This is the reason why Jesus here uses the name of Father. We never find one of the Old Testament
307 saints personally appropriate the name of child or call God his Father. The worship of the Father is
308 only possible to those to whom the Spirit of the Son has been given. The worship in spirit is only
309 possible to those to whom the Son has revealed the Father, and who have received the spirit of
310 Sonship. It is only Christ who opens the way and teaches the worship in spirit.

312 And in truth. That does not only mean, in sincerity. Nor does it only signify, in accordance with the
313 truth of God’s Word. The expression is one of deep and Divine meaning. Jesus is the only-begotten
314 of the Father, full of grace and truth.’ The law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus
315 Christ.’ Jesus says, I am the truth and the life.’ In the Old Testament all was shadow and promise;
316 Jesus brought and gives the reality, the substance, of things hoped for. In Him the blessings and
317 powers of the eternal life are our actual possession and experience. Jesus is full of grace and truth;
318 the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth; through Him the grace that is in Jesus is ours in deed and truth,
319 a positive communication out of the Divine life. And so worship in spirit is worship in truth; actual
320 living fellowship with God, a real correspondence and harmony between the Father, who is a Spirit,
321 and the child praying in the spirit.

323 What Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, she could not at once understand. Pentecost was needed
324 to reveal its full meaning. We are hardly prepared at our first entrance into the school of prayer to
325 grasp such teaching. We shall understand it better later on. Let us only begin and take the lesson as
326 He gives it. We are carnal and cannot bring God the worship He seeks. But Jesus came to give the
327 Spirit: He has given Him to us. Let the disposition in which we set ourselves to pray be what
328 Christ’s words have taught us. Let there be the deep confession of our inability to bring God the
329 worship that is pleasing to Him; the childlike teachableness that waits on Him to instruct us; the
330 simple faith that yields itself to the breathing of the Spirit. Above all, let us hold fast the blessed
331 truth—we shall find that the Lord has more to say to us about it—that the knowledge of the
332 Fatherhood of God, the revelation of His infinite Fatherliness in our hearts, the faith in the infinite
333 love that gives us His Son and His Spirit to make us children, is indeed the secret of prayer in spirit
334 and truth. This is the new and living way Christ opened up for us. To have Christ the Son, and the
335 Spirit of the Son, dwelling within us, and revealing the Father, this makes us true, spiritual
336 worshippers.

338 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

339
340
341

342 Blessed Lord! I adore the love with which Thou didst teach a woman, who had refused Thee a cup
343 of water, what the worship of God must be. I rejoice in the assurance that Thou wilt no less now
344 instruct Thy disciple, who comes to Thee with a heart that longs to pray in spirit and in truth. O my
345 Holy Master! do teach me this blessed secret.

346
347 Teach me that the worship in spirit and truth is not of man, but only comes from Thee; that it is not
348 only a thing of times and seasons, but the outflowing of a life in Thee. Teach me to draw near to
349 God in prayer under the deep impression of my ignorance and my having nothing in myself to offer
350 Him, and at the same time of the provision Thou, my Saviour, makest for the Spirit's breathing in
351 my childlike stammerings. I do bless Thee that in Thee I am a child, and have a child's liberty of
352 access; that in Thee I have the spirit of Sonship and of worship in truth. Teach me, above all,
353 Blessed Son of the Father, how it is the revelation of the Father that gives confidence in prayer; and
354 let the infinite Fatherliness of God's Heart be my joy and strength for a life of prayer and of
355 worship. Amen.

356

357

358

359 THIRD LESSON.

360

361 Pray to thy Father, which is in secret;'

362

363 Or, Alone with God.

364

365 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy
366 Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee'—Matt. vi. 6.

367

368 AFTER Jesus had called His first disciples, He gave them their first public teaching in the Sermon
369 on the Mount. He there expounded to them the kingdom of God, its laws and its life. In that
370 kingdom God is not only King, but Father, He not only gives all, but is Himself all. In the
371 knowledge and fellowship of Him alone is its blessedness. Hence it came as a matter of course that
372 the revelation of prayer and the prayer-life was a part of His teaching concerning the New Kingdom
373 He came to set up. Moses gave neither command nor regulation with regard to prayer: even the
374 prophets say little directly of the duty of prayer; it is Christ who teaches to pray.

375

376 And the first thing the Lord teaches His disciples is that they must have a secret place for prayer;
377 every one must have some solitary spot where he can be alone with his God. Every teacher must
378 have a schoolroom. We have learnt to know and accept Jesus as our only teacher in the school of
379 prayer. He has already taught us at Samaria that worship is no longer confined to times and places;
380 that worship, spiritual true worship, is a thing of the spirit and the life; the whole man must in his
381 whole life be worship in spirit and truth. And yet He wants each one to choose for himself the fixed
382 spot where He can daily meet him. That inner chamber, that solitary place, is Jesus' schoolroom.
383 That spot may be anywhere; that spot may change from day to day if we have to change our abode;
384 but that secret place there must be, with the quiet time in which the pupil places himself in the
385 Master's presence, to be by Him prepared to worship the Father. There alone, but there most surely,
386 Jesus comes to us to teach us to pray.

387

388 A teacher is always anxious that his schoolroom should be bright and attractive, filled with the light
389 and air of heaven, a place where pupils long to come, and love to stay. In His first words on prayer
390 in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus seeks to set the inner chamber before us in its most attractive

391 light. If we listen carefully, we soon notice what the chief thing is He has to tell us of our tarrying
392 there. Three times He uses the name of Father: Pray to thy Father; Thy Father shall recompense
393 thee; Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of. The first thing in closet-prayer is: I must
394 meet my Father. The light that shines in the closet must be: the light of the Father's countenance.
395 The fresh air from heaven with which Jesus would have it filled, the atmosphere in which I am to
396 breathe and pray, is: God's Father-love, God's infinite Fatherliness. Thus each thought or petition
397 we breathe out will be simple, hearty, childlike trust in the Father. This is how the Master teaches us
398 to pray: He brings us into the Father's living presence. What we pray there must avail. Let us listen
399 carefully to hear what the Lord has to say to us.

400
401 First, Pray to thy Father which is in secret. God is a God who hides Himself to the carnal eye. As
402 long as in our worship of God we are chiefly occupied with our own thoughts and exercises, we
403 shall not meet Him who is a Spirit, the unseen One. But to the man who withdraws himself from all
404 that is of the world and man, and prepares to wait upon God alone, the Father will reveal Himself.
405 As he forsakes and gives up and shuts out the world, and the life of the world, and surrenders
406 himself to be led of Christ into the secret of God's presence, the light of the Father's love will rise
407 upon him. The secrecy of the inner chamber and the closed door, the entire separation from all
408 around us, is an image of, and so a help to that inner spiritual sanctuary, the secret of God's
409 tabernacle, within the veil, where our spirit truly comes into contact with the Invisible One. And so
410 we are taught, at the very outset of our search after the secret of effectual prayer, to remember that it
411 is in the inner chamber, where we are alone with the Father, that we shall learn to pray aright. The
412 Father is in secret: in these words Jesus teaches us where He is waiting us, where He is always to be
413 found. Christians often complain that private prayer is not what it should be. They feel weak and
414 sinful, the heart is cold and dark; it is as if they have so little to pray, and in that little no faith or joy.
415 They are discouraged and kept from prayer by the thought that they cannot come to the Father as
416 they ought or as they wish. Child of God! listen to your Teacher. He tells you that when you go to
417 private prayer your first thought must be: The Father is in secret, the Father waits me there. Just
418 because your heart is cold and prayerless, get you into the presence of the loving Father. As a father
419 pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth you. Do not be thinking of how little you have to bring God,
420 but of how much He wants to give you. Just place yourself before, and look up into, His face; think
421 of His love, His wonderful, tender, pitying love. Just tell Him how sinful and cold and dark all is: it
422 is the Father's loving heart will give light and warmth to yours. O do what Jesus says: Just shut the
423 door, and pray to thy Father which is in secret. Is it not wonderful? to be able to go alone with God,
424 the infinite God. And then to look up and say: My Father!

425
426 And thy Father, which seeth in secret, will recompense thee. Here Jesus assures us that secret
427 prayer cannot be fruitless: its blessing will show itself in our life. We have but in secret, alone with
428 God, to entrust our life before men to Him; He will reward us openly; He will see to it that the
429 answer to prayer be made manifest in His blessing upon us. Our Lord would thus teach us that as
430 infinite Fatherliness and Faithfulness is that with which God meets us in secret, so on our part there
431 should be the childlike simplicity of faith, the confidence that our prayer does bring down a
432 blessing. He that cometh to God must believe that He is a rewarder of them that seek Him. Not on
433 the strong or the fervent feeling with which I pray does the blessing of the closet depend, but upon
434 the love and the power of the Father to whom I there entrust my needs. And therefore the Master
435 has but one desire: Remember your Father is, and sees and hears in secret; go there and stay there,
436 and go again from there in the confidence: He will recompense. Trust Him for it; depend upon Him:
437 prayer to the Father cannot be vain; He will reward you openly.

438

439 Still further to confirm this faith in the Father-love of God, Christ speaks a third word: Your Father
440 knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him.' At first sight it might appear as if this
441 thought made prayer less needful: God knows far better than we what we need. But as we get a
442 deeper insight into what prayer really is, this truth will help much to strengthen our faith. It will
443 teach us that we do not need, as the heathen, with the multitude and urgency of our words, to
444 compel an unwilling God to listen to us. It will lead to a holy thoughtfulness and silence in prayer as
445 it suggests the question: Does my Father really know that I need this? It will, when once we have
446 been led by the Spirit to the certainty that our request is indeed something that, according to the
447 Word, we do need for God's glory, give us wonderful confidence to say, My Father knows I need it
448 and must have it. And if there be any delay in the answer, it will teach us in quiet perseverance to
449 hold on: FATHER! THOU KNOWEST I need it. O the blessed liberty and simplicity of a child that
450 Christ our Teacher would fain cultivate in us, as we draw near to God: let us look up to the Father
451 until His Spirit works it in us. Let us sometimes in our prayers, when we are in danger of being so
452 occupied with our fervent, urgent petitions, as to forget that the Father knows and hears, let us hold
453 still and just quietly say: My Father sees, my Father hears, my Father knows; it will help our faith to
454 take the answer, and to say: We know that we have the petitions we have asked of Him.

455
456 And now, all ye who have anew entered the school of Christ to be taught to pray, take these lessons,
457 practise them, and trust Him to perfect you in them. Dwell much in the inner chamber, with the door
458 shut—shut in from men, shut up with God; it is there the Father waits you, it is there Jesus will
459 teach you to pray. To be alone in secret with THE FATHER: this be your highest joy. To be assured
460 that THE FATHER will openly reward the secret prayer, so that it cannot remain unblessed: this be
461 your strength day by day. And to know that THE FATHER knows that you need what you ask; this
462 be your liberty to bring every need, in the assurance that your God will supply it according to His
463 riches in Glory in Christ Jesus.

464
465 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

466
467
468
469 Blessed Saviour! with my whole heart I do bless Thee for the appointment of the inner chamber, as
470 the school where Thou meetest each of Thy pupils alone, and revealest to him the Father. O my
471 Lord! strengthen my faith so in the Father's tender love and kindness, that as often as I feel sinful or
472 troubled, the first instinctive thought may be to go where I know the Father waits me, and where
473 prayer never can go unblessed. Let the thought that He knows my need before I ask, bring me, in
474 great restfulness of faith, to trust that He will give what His child requires. O let the place of secret
475 prayer become to me the most beloved spot of earth.

476
477 And, Lord! hear me as I pray that Thou wouldest everywhere bless the closets of Thy believing
478 people. Let Thy wonderful revelation of a Father's tenderness free all young Christians from every
479 thought of secret prayer as a duty or a burden, and lead them to regard it as the highest privilege of
480 their life, a joy and a blessing. Bring back all who are discouraged, because they cannot find ought
481 to bring Thee in prayer. O give them to understand that they have only to come with their emptiness
482 to Him who has all to give, and delights to do it. Not, what they have to bring the Father, but what
483 the Father waits to give them, be their one thought.

484
485 And bless especially the inner chamber of all Thy servants who are working for Thee, as the place
486 where God's truth and God's grace is revealed to them, where they are daily anointed with fresh oil,

487 where their strength is renewed, and the blessings are received in faith, with which they are to bless
488 their fellow-men. Lord, draw us all in the closet nearer to Thyself and the Father. Amen.

489

490

491

492 FOURTH LESSON

493

494 After this manner pray;’

495

496 Or, The Model Prayer.

497

498 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven.’—Matt. vi. 9.

499

500 EVERY teacher knows the power of example. He not only tells the child what to do and how to do
501 it, but shows him how it really can be done. In condescension to our weakness, our heavenly
502 Teacher has given us the very words we are to take with us as we draw near to our Father. We have
503 in them a form of prayer in which there breathe the freshness and fulness of the Eternal Life. So
504 simple that the child can lisp it, so divinely rich that it comprehends all that God can give. A form
505 of prayer that becomes the model and inspiration for all other prayer, and yet always draws us back
506 to itself as the deepest utterance of our souls before our God.

507

508 Our Father which art in heaven!’ To appreciate this word of adoration aright, I must remember that
509 none of the saints had in Scripture ever ventured to address God as their Father. The invocation
510 places us at once in the centre of the wonderful revelation the Son came to make of His Father as
511 our Father too. It comprehends the mystery of redemption—Christ delivering us from the curse that
512 we might become the children of God. The mystery of regeneration—the Spirit in the new birth
513 giving us the new life. And the mystery of faith—ere yet the redemption is accomplished or
514 understood, the word is given on the lips of the disciples to prepare them for the blessed experience
515 still to come. The words are the key to the whole prayer, to all prayer. It takes time, it takes life to
516 study them; it will take eternity to understand them fully. The knowledge of God’s Father-love is
517 the first and simplest, but also the last and highest lesson in the school of prayer. It is in the personal
518 relation to the living God, and the personal conscious fellowship of love with Himself, that prayer
519 begins. It is in the knowledge of God’s Fatherliness, revealed by the Holy Spirit, that the power of
520 prayer will be found to root and grow. In the infinite tenderness and pity and patience of the infinite
521 Father, in His loving readiness to hear and to help, the life of prayer has its joy. O let us take time,
522 until the Spirit has made these words to us spirit and truth, filling heart and life: Our Father which
523 art in heaven.’ Then we are indeed within the veil, in the secret place of power where prayer always
524 prevails.

525

526 Hallowed be Thy name.’ There is something here that strikes us at once. While we ordinarily first
527 bring our own needs to God in prayer, and then think of what belongs to God and His interests, the
528 Master reverses the order. First, Thy name, Thy kingdom, Thy will; then, give us, forgive us, lead
529 us, deliver us. The lesson is of more importance than we think. In true worship the Father must be
530 first, must be all. The sooner I learn to forget myself in the desire that HE may be glorified, the
531 richer will the blessing be that prayer will bring to myself. No one ever loses by what he sacrifices
532 for the Father.

533

534 This must influence all our prayer. There are two sorts of prayer: personal and intercessory. The
535 latter ordinarily occupies the lesser part of our time and energy. This may not be. Christ has opened

536 the school of prayer specially to train intercessors for the great work of bringing down, by their faith
537 and prayer, the blessings of His work and love on the world around. There can be no deep growth in
538 prayer unless this be made our aim. The little child may ask of the father only what it needs for
539 itself; and yet it soon learns to say, Give some for sister too. But the grown-up son, who only lives
540 for the father's interest and takes charge of the father's business, asks more largely, and gets all that
541 is asked. And Jesus would train us to the blessed life of consecration and service, in which our
542 interests are all subordinate to the Name, and the Kingdom, and the Will of the Father. O let us live
543 for this, and let, on each act of adoration, Our Father! there follow in the same breath Thy Name,
544 Thy Kingdom, Thy Will;—for this we look up and long.

545
546 Hallowed be Thy name.' What name? This new name of Father. The word Holy is the central word
547 of the Old Testament; the name Father of the New. In this name of Love all the holiness and glory
548 of God are now to be revealed. And how is the name to be hallowed? By God Himself: I will hallow
549 My great name which ye have profaned.' Our prayer must be that in ourselves, in all God's
550 children, in presence of the world, God Himself would reveal the holiness, the Divine power, the
551 hidden glory of the name of Father. The Spirit of the Father is the Holy Spirit: it is only when we
552 yield ourselves to be led of Him, that the name will be hallowed in our prayers and our lives. Let us
553 learn the prayer: Our Father, hallowed be Thy name.'

554
555 Thy kingdom come.' The Father is a King and has a kingdom. The son and heir of a king has no
556 higher ambition than the glory of his father's kingdom. In time of war or danger this becomes his
557 passion; he can think of nothing else. The children of the Father are here in the enemy's territory,
558 where the kingdom, which is in heaven, is not yet fully manifested. What more natural than that,
559 when they learn to hallow the Father-name, they should long and cry with deep enthusiasm: Thy
560 kingdom come.' The coming of the kingdom is the one great event on which the revelation of the
561 Father's glory, the blessedness of His children, the salvation of the world depends. On our prayers
562 too the coming of the kingdom waits. Shall we not join in the deep longing cry of the redeemed:
563 Thy kingdom come'? Let us learn it in the school of Jesus.

564
565 Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.' This petition is too frequently applied alone to the
566 suffering of the will of God. In heaven God's will is done, and the Master teaches the child to ask
567 that the will may be done on earth just as in heaven: in the spirit of adoring submission and ready
568 obedience. Because the will of God is the glory of heaven, the doing of it is the blessedness of
569 heaven. As the will is done, the kingdom of heaven comes into the heart. And wherever faith has
570 accepted the Father's love, obedience accepts the Father's will. The surrender to, and the prayer for
571 a life of heaven-like obedience, is the spirit of childlike prayer.

572
573 Give us this day our daily bread.' When first the child has yielded himself to the Father in the care
574 for His Name, His Kingdom, and His Will, he has full liberty to ask for his daily bread. A master
575 cares for the food of his servant, a general of his soldiers, a father of his child. And will not the
576 Father in heaven care for the child who has in prayer given himself up to His interests? We may
577 indeed in full confidence say: Father, I live for Thy honour and Thy work; I know Thou carest for
578 me. Consecration to God and His will gives wonderful liberty in prayer for temporal things: the
579 whole earthly life is given to the Father's loving care.

580
581 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.' As bread is the first need of the
582 body, so forgiveness for the soul. And the provision for the one is as sure as for the other. We are
583 children but sinners too; our right of access to the Father's presence we owe to the precious blood
584 and the forgiveness it has won for us. Let us beware of the prayer for forgiveness becoming a

585 formality: only what is really confessed is really forgiven. Let us in faith accept the forgiveness as
586 promised: as a spiritual reality, an actual transaction between God and us, it is the entrance into all
587 the Father's love and all the privileges of children. Such forgiveness, as a living experience, is
588 impossible without a forgiving spirit to others: as forgiven expresses the heavenward, so forgiving
589 the earthward, relation of God's child. In each prayer to the Father I must be able to say that I know
590 of no one whom I do not heartily love.

591
592 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.' Our daily bread, the pardon of
593 our sins, and then our being kept from all sin and the power of the evil one, in these three petitions
594 all our personal need is comprehended. The prayer for bread and pardon must be accompanied by
595 the surrender to live in all things in holy obedience to the Father's will, and the believing prayer in
596 everything to be kept by the power of the indwelling Spirit from the power of the evil one.

597
598 Children of God! it is thus Jesus would have us to pray to the Father in heaven. O let His Name, and
599 Kingdom, and Will, have the first place in our love; His providing, and pardoning, and keeping love
600 will be our sure portion. So the prayer will lead us up to the true child-life: the Father all to the
601 child, the Father all for the child. We shall understand how Father and child, the Thine and the Our,
602 are all one, and how the heart that begins its prayer with the God-devoted THINE, will have the
603 power in faith to speak out the OUR too. Such prayer will, indeed, be the fellowship and
604 interchange of love, always bringing us back in trust and worship to Him who is not only the
605 Beginning but the End: FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE
606 GLORY, FOR EVER, AMEN.' Son of the Father, teach us to pray, OUR FATHER.'

607
608 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

609
610
611
612 O Thou who art the only-begotten Son, teach us, we beseech Thee, to pray, OUR FATHER.' We
613 thank Thee, Lord, for these Living Blessed Words which Thou has given us. We thank Thee for the
614 millions who in them have learnt to know and worship the Father, and for what they have been to
615 us. Lord! it is as if we needed days and weeks in Thy school with each separate petition; so deep
616 and full are they. But we look to Thee to lead us deeper into their meaning: do it, we pray Thee, for
617 Thy Name's sake; Thy name is Son of the Father.

618
619 Lord! Thou didst once say: No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son
620 willeth to reveal Him.' And again: I made known unto them Thy name, and will make it known,
621 that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them.' Lord Jesus! reveal to us the Father.
622 Let His name, His infinite Father-love, the love with which He loved Thee, according to Thy prayer,
623 BE IN US. Then shall we say aright, OUR FATHER!' Then shall we apprehend Thy teaching, and
624 the first spontaneous breathing of our heart will be: Our Father, Thy Name, Thy Kingdom, Thy
625 Will.' And we shall bring our needs and our sins and our temptations to Him in the confidence that
626 the love of such a Father care for all.

627
628 Blessed Lord! we are Thy scholars, we trust Thee; do teach us to pray, OUR FATHER.' Amen.

629
630
631
632
633 FIFTH LESSON.

634
635 Ask, and it shall be given you;
636
637 Or, The Certainty of the Answer to Prayer.
638
639 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for
640 every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be
641 opened,'—Matt. vii. 7, 8.
642
643 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss.'—Jas. iv. 3.
644
645 OUR Lord returns here in the Sermon on the Mount a second time to speak of prayer. The first time
646 He had spoken of the Father who is to be found in secret, and rewards openly, and had given us the
647 pattern prayer (Matt. vi. 5-15). Here He wants to teach us what in all Scripture is considered the
648 chief thing in prayer: the assurance that prayer will be heard and answered. Observe how He uses
649 words which mean almost the same thing, and each time repeats the promise so distinctly: Ye shall
650 receive, ye shall find, it shall be opened unto you;' and then gives as ground for such assurance the
651 law of the kingdom: He that asketh, receiveth; he that seeketh, findeth; to him that knocketh, it shall
652 be opened.' We cannot but feel how in this sixfold repetition He wants to impress deep on our
653 minds this one truth, that we may and must most confidently expect an answer to our prayer. Next
654 to the revelation of the Father's love, there is, in the whole course of the school of prayer, not a
655 more important lesson than this: Every one that asketh, receiveth.
656
657 In the three words the Lord uses, ask, seek, knock, a difference in meaning has been sought. If such
658 was indeed His purpose, then the first, ASK, refers to the gifts we pray for. But I may ask and
659 receive the gift without the Giver. SEEK is the word Scripture uses of God Himself; Christ assures
660 me that I can find Himself. But it is not enough to find God in time of need, without coming to
661 abiding fellowship: KNOCK speaks of admission to dwell with Him and in Him. Asking and
662 receiving the gift would thus lead to seeking and finding the Giver, and this again to the knocking
663 and opening of the door of the Father's home and love. One thing is sure: the Lord does want us to
664 count most certainly on it that asking, seeking, knocking, cannot be in vain: receiving an answer,
665 finding God, the opened heart and home of God, are the certain fruit of prayer.
666
667 That the Lord should have thought it needful in so many forms to repeat the truth, is a lesson of
668 deep import. It proves that He knows our heart, how doubt and distrust toward God are natural to
669 us, and how easily we are inclined to rest in prayer as a religious work without an answer. He
670 knows too how, even when we believe that God is the Hearer of prayer, believing prayer that lays
671 hold of the promise, is something spiritual, too high and difficult for the half-hearted disciple. He
672 therefore at the very outset of His instruction to those who would learn to pray, seeks to lodge this
673 truth deep into their hearts: prayer does avail much; ask and ye shall receive; every one that asketh,
674 receiveth. This is the fixed eternal law of the kingdom: if you ask and receive not, it must be
675 because there is something amiss or wanting in the prayer. Hold on; let the Word and the Spirit
676 teach you to pray aright, but do not let go the confidence He seeks to waken: Every one that asketh,
677 receiveth.
678
679 Ask, and it shall be given you.' Christ has no mightier stimulus to persevering prayer in His school
680 than this. As a child has to prove a sum to be correct, so the proof that we have prayed aright is, the
681 answer. If we ask and receive not, it is because we have not learned to pray aright. Let every learner
682 in the school of Christ therefore take the Master's word in all simplicity: Every one that asketh,

683 receiveth. He had good reasons for speaking so unconditionally. Let us beware of weakening the
684 Word with our human wisdom. When He tells us heavenly things, let us believe Him: His Word
685 will explain itself to him who believes it fully. If questions and difficulties arise, let us not seek to
686 have them settled before we accept the Word. No; let us entrust them all to Him: it is His to solve
687 them: our work is first and fully to accept and hold fast His promise. Let in our inner chamber, in
688 the inner chamber of our heart too, the Word be inscribed in letters of light: Every one that asketh,
689 receiveth.

690
691 According to this teaching of the Master, prayer consists of two parts, has two sides, a human and a
692 Divine. The human is the asking, the Divine is the giving. Or, to look at both from the human side,
693 there is the asking and the receiving—the two halves that make up a whole. It is as if He would tell
694 us that we are not to rest without an answer, because it is the will of God, the rule in the Father's
695 family: every childlike believing petition is granted. If no answer comes, we are not to sit down in
696 the sloth that calls itself resignation, and suppose that it is not God's will to give an answer. No;
697 there must be something in the prayer that is not as God would have it, childlike and believing; we
698 must seek for grace to pray so that the answer may come. It is far easier to the flesh to submit
699 without the answer than to yield itself to be searched and purified by the Spirit, until it has learnt to
700 pray the prayer of faith.

701
702 It is one of the terrible marks of the diseased state of Christian life in these days, that there are so
703 many who rest content without the distinct experience of answer to prayer. They pray daily, they
704 ask many things, and trust that some of them will be heard, but know little of direct definite answer
705 to prayer as the rule of daily life. And it is this the Father wills: He seeks daily intercourse with His
706 children in listening to and granting their petitions. he wills that I should come to Him day by day
707 with distinct requests; He wills day by day to do for me what I ask. It was in His answer to prayer
708 that the saints of old learned to know God as the Living One, and were stirred to praise and love
709 (Ps. xxxiv., lxvi. 19, cxvi. 1). Our Teacher waits to imprint this upon our minds: prayer and its
710 answer, the child asking and the father giving, belong to each other.

711
712 There may be cases in which the answer is a refusal, because the request is not according to God's
713 Word, as when Moses asked to enter Canaan. But still, there was an answer: God did not leave His
714 servant in uncertainty as to His will. The gods of the heathen are dumb and cannot speak. Our
715 Father lets His child know when He cannot give him what he asks, and he withdraws his petition,
716 even as the Son did in Gethsemane. Both Moses the servant and Christ the Son knew that what they
717 asked was not according to what the Lord had spoken: their prayer was the humble supplication
718 whether it was not possible for the decision to be changed. God will teach those who are teachable
719 and give Him time, by His Word and Spirit, whether their request be according to His will or not.
720 Let us withdraw the request, if it be not according to God's mind, or persevere till the answer come.
721 Prayer is appointed to obtain the answer. It is in prayer and its answer that the interchange of love
722 between the Father and His child takes place.

723
724 How deep the estrangement of our heart from God must be, that we find it so difficult to grasp such
725 promises. Even while we accept the words and believe their truth, the faith of the heart, that fully
726 has them and rejoices in them, comes so slowly. It is because our spiritual life is still so weak, and
727 the capacity for taking God's thoughts is so feeble. But let us look to Jesus to teach us as none but
728 He can teach. If we take His words in simplicity, and trust Him by His Spirit to make them within
729 us life and power, they will so enter into our inner being, that the spiritual Divine reality of the truth
730 they contain will indeed take possession of us, and we shall not rest content until every petition we
731 offer is borne heavenward on Jesus' own words: Ask, and it shall be given you.'

732
733 Beloved fellow-disciples in the school of Jesus! let us set ourselves to learn this lesson well. Let us
734 take these words just as they were spoken. Let us not suffer human reason to weaken their force. Let
735 us take them as Jesus gives them, and believe them. He will teach us in due time how to understand
736 them fully: let us begin by implicitly believing them. Let us take time, as often as we pray, to listen
737 to His voice: Every one that asketh, receiveth. Let us not make the feeble experiences of our
738 unbelief the measure of what our faith may expect. Let us seek, not only just in our seasons of
739 prayer, but at all times, to hold fast the joyful assurance: man's prayer on earth and God's answer in
740 heaven are meant for each other. Let us trust Jesus to teach us so to pray that the answer can come.
741 He will do it, if we hold fast the word He gives today: Ask, and ye shall receive.'

742
743 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

744
745
746
747 O Lord Jesus! teach me to understand and believe what Thou hast now promised me. It is not hid
748 from Thee, O my Lord, with what reasonings my heart seeks to satisfy itself, when no answer
749 comes. There is the thought that my prayer is not in harmony with the Father's secret counsel; that
750 there is perhaps something better Thou wouldest give me; or that prayer as fellowship with God is
751 blessing enough without an answer. And yet, my blessed Lord, I find in Thy teaching on prayer that
752 Thou didst not speak of these things, but didst say so plainly, that prayer may and must expect an
753 answer. Thou dost assure us that this is the fellowship of a child with the Father: the child asks and
754 the Father gives.

755
756 Blessed Lord! Thy words are faithful and true. It must be, because I pray amiss, that my experience
757 of answered prayer is not clearer. It must be, because I live too little in the Spirit, that my prayer is
758 too little in the Spirit, and that the power for the prayer of faith is wanting.

759
760 Lord! teach me to pray. Lord Jesus! I trust Thee for it; teach me to pray in faith. Lord! teach me this
761 lesson of today: Every one that asketh receiveth. Amen.

762
763
764
765

766 SIXTH LESSON.

767
768 How much more?'

769
770 Or, The Infinite Fatherliness of God.

771
772 Or what man is there of you, who, if his son ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone; or if he shall
773 ask for a fish, will give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your
774 children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask
775 Him?'—Matt. vii. 9-11

776
777 IN these words our Lord proceeds further to confirm what He had said of the certainty of an answer
778 to prayer. To remove all doubt, and show us on what sure ground His promise rests, He appeals to
779 what every one has seen and experienced here on earth. We are all children, and know what we
780 expected of our fathers. We are fathers, or continually see them; and everywhere we look upon it as

781 the most natural thing there can be, for a father to hear his child. And the Lord asks us to look up
782 from earthly parents, of whom the best are but evil, and to calculate HOW MUCH MORE the
783 heavenly Father will give good gifts to them that ask Him. Jesus would lead us up to see, that as
784 much greater as God is than sinful man, so much greater our assurance ought to be that He will
785 more surely than any earthly father grant our childlike petitions. As much greater as God is than
786 man, so much surer is it that prayer will be heard with the Father in heaven than with a father on
787 earth.

788
789 As simple and intelligible as this parable is, so deep and spiritual is the teaching it contains. The
790 Lord would remind us that the prayer of a child owes its influence entirely to the relation in which
791 he stands to the parent. The prayer can exert that influence only when the child is really living in
792 that relationship, in the home, in the love, in the service of the Father. The power of the promise,
793 Ask, and it shall be given you,' lies in the loving relationship between us as children and the Father
794 in heaven; when we live and walk in that relationship, the prayer of faith and its answer will be the
795 natural result. And so the lesson we have today in the school of prayer is this: Live as a child of
796 God, then you will be able to pray as a child, and as a child you will most assuredly be heard.

797
798 And what is the true child-life? The answer can be found in any home. The child that by preference
799 forsakes the father's house, that finds no pleasure in the presence and love and obedience of the
800 father, and still thinks to ask and obtain what he will, will surely be disappointed. On the contrary,
801 he to whom the intercourse and will and honour and love of the father are the joy of his life, will
802 find that it is the father's joy to grant his requests. Scripture says, As many as are led by the Spirit of
803 God, they are the children of God:' the childlike privilege of asking all is inseparable from the
804 childlike life under the leading of the Spirit. He that gives himself to be led by the Spirit in his life,
805 will be led by Him in his prayers too. And he will find that Fatherlike giving is the Divine response
806 to childlike living.

807
808 To see what this childlike living is, in which childlike asking and believing have their ground, we
809 have only to notice what our Lord teaches in the Sermon on the Mount of the Father and His
810 children. In it the prayer-promises are imbedded in the life-precepts; the two are inseparable. They
811 form one whole; and He alone can count on the fulfilment of the promise, who accepts too all that
812 the Lord has connected with it. It is as if in speaking the word, Ask, and ye shall receive,' He says: I
813 give these promises to those whom in the beatitudes I have pictured in their childlike poverty and
814 purity, and of whom I have said, They shall be called the children of God' (Matt. v. 3-9): to
815 children, who let your light shine before men, so that they may glorify your Father in heaven;' to
816 those who walk in love, that ye may be children of your Father which is in heaven,' and who seek to
817 be perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect' (v. 45): to those whose fasting and praying and
818 almsgiving (vi. 1-18) is not before men, but before your Father which seeth in secret;' who forgive
819 even as your Father forgiveth you' (vi. 15); who trust the heavenly Father in all earthly need,
820 seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (vi. 26-32); who not only say, Lord, Lord,
821 but do the will of my Father which is in heaven (vii. 21). Such are the children of the Father, and
822 such is the life in the Father's love and service; in such a child-life answered prayers are certain and
823 abundant.

824
825 But will not such teaching discourage the feeble one? If we are first to answer to this portrait of a
826 child, must not many give up all hope of answers to prayer? The difficulty is removed if we think
827 again of the blessed name of father and child. A child is weak; there is a great difference among
828 children in age and gift. The Lord does not demand of us a perfect fulfilment of the law; no, but
829 only the childlike and whole-hearted surrender to live as a child with Him in obedience and truth.

830 Nothing more. But also, nothing less. The Father must have the whole heart. When this is given,
831 and He sees the child with honest purpose and steady will seeking in everything to be and live as a
832 child, then our prayer will count with Him as the prayer of a child. Let any one simply and honestly
833 begin to study the Sermon on the Mount and take it as his guide in life, and he will find,
834 notwithstanding weakness and failure, an ever-growing liberty to claim the fulfilment of its
835 promises in regard to prayer. In the names of father and child he has the pledge that his petitions
836 will be granted.

837
838 This is the one chief thought on which Jesus dwells here, and which He would have all His scholars
839 take in. He would have us see that the secret of effectual prayer is: to have the heart filled with the
840 Father-love of God. It is not enough for us to know that God is a Father: He would have us take
841 time to come under the full impression of what that name implies. We must take the best earthly
842 father we know; we must think of the tenderness and love with which he regards the request of his
843 child, the love and joy with which he grants every reasonable desire; we must then, as we think in
844 adoring worship of the infinite Love and Fatherliness of God, consider with how much more
845 tenderness and joy He sees us come to Him, and gives us what we ask aright. And then, when we
846 see how much this Divine arithmetic is beyond our comprehension, and feel how impossible it is for
847 us to apprehend God's readiness to hear us, then He would have us come and open our heart for the
848 Holy Spirit to shed abroad God's Father-love there. Let us do this not only when we want to pray,
849 but let us yield heart and life to dwell in that love. The child who only wants to know the love of the
850 father when he has something to ask, will be disappointed. But he who lets God be Father always
851 and in everything, who would fain live his whole life in the Father's presence and love, who allows
852 God in all the greatness of His love to be a Father to him, oh! he will experience most gloriously
853 that a life in God's infinite Fatherliness and continual answers to prayer are inseparable.

854
855 Beloved fellow-disciple! we begin to see what the reason is that we know so little of daily answers
856 to prayer, and what the chief lesson is which the Lord has for us in His school. It is all in the name
857 of Father. We thought of new and deeper insight into some of the mysteries of the prayer-world as
858 what we should get in Christ's school; He tells us the first is the highest lesson; we must learn to say
859 well, Abba, Father!' Our Father which art in heaven.' He that can say this, has the key to all prayer.
860 In all the compassion with which a father listens to his weak or sickly child, in all the joy with
861 which he hears his stammering child, in all the gentle patience with which he bears with a
862 thoughtless child, we must, as in so many mirrors, study the heart of our Father, until every prayer
863 be borne upward on the faith of this Divine word: How much more shall your heavenly Father give
864 good gifts to them that ask Him.'

865
866 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

867
868
869
870 Blessed Lord! Thou knowest that this, though it be one of the first and simplest and most glorious
871 lessons in Thy school, is to our hearts one of the hardest to learn: we know so little of the love of the
872 Father. Lord! teach us so to live with the Father that His love may be to us nearer, clearer, dearer,
873 than the love of any earthly father. And let the assurance of His hearing our prayer be as much
874 greater than the confidence in an earthly parent, as the heavens are higher than earth, as God is
875 infinitely greater than man. Lord! show us that it is only our unchildlike distance from the Father
876 that hinders the answer to prayer, and lead us on to the true life of God's children. Lord Jesus! it is
877 fatherlike love that wakens childlike trust. O reveal to us the Father, and His tender, pitying love,
878 that we may become childlike, and experience how in the child-life lies the power of prayer.

879
880 Blessed Son of God! the Father loveth Thee and hath given Thee all things. And Thou lovest the
881 Father, and hast done all things He commanded Thee, and therefore hast the power to ask all things.
882 Lord! give us Thine own Spirit, the Spirit of the Son. Make us childlike, as Thou wert on earth. And
883 let every prayer be breathed in the faith that as the heaven is higher than the earth, so God's Father-
884 love, and His readiness to give us what we ask, surpasses all we can think or conceive. Amen.

885
886 NOTE.^{^1}

887
888 Your Father which is in heaven.' Alas! we speak of it only as the utterance of a reverential homage.
889 We think of it as a figure borrowed from an earthly life, and only in some faint and shallow
890 meaning to be used of God. We are afraid to take God as our own tender and pitiful father. He is a
891 schoolmaster, or almost farther off than that, and knowing less about us—an inspector, who knows
892 nothing of us except through our lessons. His eyes are not on the scholar, but on the book, and all
893 alike must come up to the standard.

894
895 Now open the ears of the heart, timid child of God; let it go sinking right down into the inner most
896 depths of the soul. Here is the starting-point of holiness, in the love and patience and pity of our
897 heavenly Father. We have not to learn to be holy as a hard lesson at school, that we may make God
898 think well of us; we are to learn it at home with the Father to help us. God loves you not because
899 you are clever not because you are good, but because He is your Father. The Cross of Christ does
900 not make God love us; it is the outcome and measure of His love to us. He loves all His children,
901 the clumsiest, the dullest, the worst of His children. His love lies at the back of everything, and we
902 must get upon that as the solid foundation of our religious life, not growing up into that, but
903 growing up out of it. We must begin there or our beginning will come to nothing. Do take hold of
904 this mightily. We must go out of ourselves for any hope, or any strength, or any confidence. And
905 what hope, what strength, what confidence may be ours now that we begin here, your Father which
906 is in heaven!

907
908 We need to get in at the tenderness and helpfulness which lie in these words, and to rest upon it—
909 your Father. Speak them over to yourself until something of the wonderful truth is felt by us. It
910 means that I am bound to God by the closest and tenderest relationship; that I have a right to His
911 love and His power and His blessing, such as nothing else could give me. O the boldness with
912 which we can draw near! O the great things we have a right to ask for! Your Father. It means that
913 all His infinite love and patience and wisdom bend over me to help me. In this relationship lies not
914 only the possibility of holiness; there is infinitely more than that.

915
916 Here we are to begin, in the patient love of our Father. Think how He knows us apart and by
917 ourselves, in all our peculiarities, and in all our weaknesses and difficulties. The master judges by
918 the result, but our Father judges by the effort. Failure does not always mean fault. He knows how
919 much things cost, and weighs them where others only measure. YOUR FATHER. Think how great
920 store His love sets by the poor beginnings of the little ones, clumsy and unmeaning as they may be
921 to others. All this lies in this blessed relationship and infinitely more. Do not fear to take it all as
922 your own.

923
924 ^{^1}From Thoughts on Holiness, by Mark Guy Pearse. What is so beautifully said of the knowledge
925 of God's Fatherliness as the starting-point of holiness is no less true of prayer.

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SEVENTH LESSON.

How much more the Holy Spirit;

Or, The All-Comprehensive Gift.

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?'—Luke xi. 13.

IN the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord had already given utterance to His wonderful HOW MUCH MORE? Here in Luke, where He repeats the question, there is a difference. Instead of speaking, as then of giving good gifts, He says, How much more shall the heavenly Father give THE HOLY SPIRIT?' He thus teaches us that the chief and the best of these gifts is the Holy Spirit, or rather, that in this gift all others are comprised The Holy Spirit is the first of the Father's gifts, and the one He delights most to bestow. The Holy Spirit is therefore the gift we ought first and chiefly to seek.

The unspeakable worth of this gift we can easily understand. Jesus spoke of the Spirit as the promise of the Father;' the one promise in which God's Fatherhood revealed itself. The best gift a good and wise father can bestow on a child on earth is his own spirit. This is the great object of a father in education—to reproduce in his child his own disposition and character. If the child is to know and understand his father; if, as he grows up, he is to enter into all his will and plans; if he is to have his highest joy in the father, and the father in him,—he must be of one mind and spirit with him. And so it is impossible to conceive of God bestowing any higher gift on His child than this, His own Spirit. God is what He is through His Spirit; the Spirit is the very life of God. Just think what it means—God giving His own Spirit to His child on earth.

Or was not this the glory of Jesus as a Son upon earth, that the Spirit of the Father was in Him? At His baptism in Jordan the two things were united,—the voice, proclaiming Him the Beloved Son, and the Spirit, descending upon Him. And so the apostle says of us, Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' A king seeks in the whole education of his son to call forth in him a kingly spirit. Our Father in heaven desires to educate us as His children for the holy, heavenly life in which He dwells, and for this gives us, from the depths of His heart, His own Spirit. It was this which was the whole aim of Jesus when, after having made atonement with His own blood, He entered for us into God's presence, that He might obtain for us, and send down to dwell in us, the Holy Spirit. As the Spirit of the Father, and of the Son, the whole life and love of the Father and the Son are in Him; and, coming down into us, He lifts us up into their fellowship. As Spirit of the Father, He sheds abroad the Father's love, with which He loved the Son, in our hearts, and teaches us to live in it. As Spirit of the Son, He breathes in us the childlike liberty, and devotion, and obedience in which the Son lived upon earth. The Father can bestow no higher or more wonderful gift than this: His own Holy Spirit, the Spirit of sonship.

This truth naturally suggests the thought that this first and chief gift of God must be the first and chief object of all prayer. For every need of the spiritual life this is the one thing needful, the Holy Spirit. All the fulness is in Jesus; the fulness of grace and truth, out of which we receive grace for grace. The Holy Spirit is the appointed conveyancer, whose special work it is to make Jesus and all there is in Him for us ours in personal appropriation, in blessed experience. He is the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus; as wonderful as the life is, so wonderful is the provision by which such an agent is provided to communicate it to us. If we but yield ourselves entirely to the disposal of the Spirit, and

977 let Him have His way with us, He will manifest the life of Christ within us. He will do this with a
978 Divine power, maintaining the life of Christ in us in uninterrupted continuity. Surely, if there is one
979 prayer that should draw us to the Father's throne and keep us there, it is this: for the Holy Spirit,
980 whom we as children have received, to stream into us and out from us in greater fulness.

981
982 In the variety of the gifts which the Spirit has to dispense, He meets the believer's every need. Just
983 think of the names He bears. The Spirit of grace, to reveal and impart all of grace there is in Jesus.
984 The Spirit of faith, teaching us to begin and go on and increase in ever believing. The Spirit of
985 adoption and assurance, who witnesses that we are God's children, and inspires the confiding and
986 confident Abba, Father! The Spirit of truth, to lead into all truth, to make each word of God ours in
987 deed and in truth. The Spirit of prayer, through whom we speak with the Father; prayer that must be
988 heard. The Spirit of judgment and burning, to search the heart, and convince of sin. The Spirit of
989 holiness, manifesting and communicating the Father's holy presence within us. The Spirit of power,
990 through whom we are strong to testify boldly and work effectually in the Father's service. The
991 Spirit of glory, the pledge of our inheritance, the preparation and the foretaste of the glory to come.
992 Surely the child of God needs but one thing to be able really to live as a child: it is, to be filled with
993 this Spirit.

994
995 And now, the lesson Jesus teaches us today in His school is this: That the Father is just longing to
996 give Him to us if we will but ask in the childlike dependence on what He says: 'If ye know to give
997 good gifts unto your children, HOW MUCH MORE shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit
998 to them that ask Him.' In the words of God's promise, 'I will pour out my Spirit abundantly;' and of
999 His command, 'Be ye filled with the Spirit' we have the measure of what God is ready to give, and
1000 what we may obtain. As God's children, we have already received the Spirit. But we still need to
1001 ask and pray for His special gifts and operations as we require them. And not only this, but for
1002 Himself to take complete and entire possession; for His unceasing momentary guidance. Just as the
1003 branch, already filled with the sap of the vine, is ever crying for the continued and increasing flow
1004 of that sap, that it may bring its fruit to perfection, so the believer, rejoicing in the possession of the
1005 Spirit, ever thirsts and cries for more. And what the great Teacher would have us learn is, that
1006 nothing less than God's promise and God's command may be the measure of our expectation and
1007 our prayer; we must be filled abundantly. He would have us ask this in the assurance that the
1008 wonderful HOW MUCH MORE of God's Father-love is the pledge that, when we ask, we do most
1009 certainly receive.

1010
1011 Let us now believe this. As we pray to be filled with the Spirit, let us not seek for the answer in our
1012 feelings. All spiritual blessings must be received, that is, accepted or taken in faith.^1 Let me
1013 believe, the Father gives the Holy Spirit to His praying child. Even now, while I pray, I must say in
1014 faith: I have what I ask, the fulness of the Spirit is mine. Let us continue stedfast in this faith. On the
1015 strength of God's Word we know that we have what we ask. Let us, with thanksgiving that we have
1016 been heard, with thanksgiving for what we have received and taken and now hold as ours, continue
1017 stedfast in believing prayer that the blessing, which has already been given us, and which we hold in
1018 faith, may break through and fill our whole being. It is in such believing thanksgiving and prayer,
1019 that our soul opens up for the Spirit to take entire and undisturbed possession. It is such prayer that
1020 not only asks and hopes, but takes and holds, that inherits the full blessing. In all our prayer let us
1021 remember the lesson the Saviour would teach us this day, that, if there is one thing on earth we can
1022 be sure of, it is this, that the Father desires to have us filled with His Spirit, that He delights to give
1023 us His Spirit.

1024

1025 And when once we have learned thus to believe for ourselves, and each day to take out of the
1026 treasure we hold in heaven, what liberty and power to pray for the outpouring of the Spirit on the
1027 Church of God, on all flesh, on individuals, or on special efforts! He that has once learned to know
1028 the Father in prayer for himself, learns to pray most confidently for others too. The Father gives the
1029 Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, not least, but most, when they ask for others.

1030
1031 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

1032
1033
1034
1035 Father in heaven! Thou didst send Thy Son to reveal Thyself to us, Thy Father-love, and all that that
1036 love has for us. And He has taught us, that the gift above all gifts which Thou wouldst bestow in
1037 answer to prayer is, the Holy Spirit.

1038
1039 O my Father! I come to Thee with this prayer; there is nothing I would—may I not say, I do—desire
1040 so much as to be filled with the Spirit, the Holy Spirit. The blessings He brings are so unspeakable,
1041 and just what I need. He sheds abroad Thy love in the heart, and fills it with Thy self. I long for this.
1042 He breathes the mind and life of Christ in me, so that I live as He did, in and for the Father’s love. I
1043 long for this. He endues with power from on high for all my walk and work. I long for this. O
1044 Father! I beseech Thee, give me this day the fulness of Thy Spirit.

1045
1046 Father! I ask this, resting on the words of my Lord: HOW MUCH MORE THE HOLY SPIRIT.’ I
1047 do believe that Thou hearest my prayer; I receive now what I ask; Father! I claim and I take it: the
1048 fulness of Thy Spirit is mine. I receive the gift this day again as a faith gift; in faith I reckon my
1049 Father works through the Spirit all He has promised. The Father delights to breathe His Spirit into
1050 His waiting child as He carries in fellowship with Himself. Amen.

1051
1052 ^1The Greek word for receiving and taking is the same. When Jesus said, Everyone that asketh
1053 receiveth,’ He used the same verb as at the Supper, Take, eat,’ or on the resurrection morning,
1054 Receive,’ accept, take, the Holy Spirit.’ Receiving not only implies God’s bestowment, but our
1055 acceptance.

1056
1057
1058
1059
1060 EIGHTH LESSON.

1061
1062 Because of his importunity;’

1063
1064 Or, The Boldness of God’s Friends.

1065
1066 And He said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and say
1067 to him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine is come to me from a journey, and I have
1068 nothing to set before him’ and he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now
1069 shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, though he will
1070 not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give
1071 him as many as he needeth.’—Luke xi. 5-8.

1072

1073 THE first teaching to His disciples was given by our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount. It was near a
1074 year later that the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray. In answer He gave them a second
1075 time the Lord's Prayer, so teaching them what to pray. He then speaks of how they ought to pray,
1076 and repeats what he formerly said of God's Fatherliness and the certainty of an answer. But in
1077 between He adds the beautiful parable of the friend at midnight, to teach them the two fold lesson,
1078 that God does not only want us to pray for ourselves, but for the perishing around us, and that in
1079 such intercession great boldness of entreaty is often needful, and always lawful, yea, pleasing to
1080 God.

1081
1082 The parable is a perfect storehouse of instruction in regard to true intercession. There is, first, the
1083 love which seeks to help the needy around us: my friend is come to me.' Then the need which urges
1084 to the cry I have nothing to set before him.' Then follows the confidence that help is to be had:
1085 which of you shall have a friend, and say, Friend, lend me three loaves.' Then comes the
1086 unexpected refusal: I cannot rise and give thee.' Then again the perseverance that takes no refusal:
1087 because of his importunity.' And lastly, the reward of such prayer: he will give him as many as he
1088 needeth.' A wonderful setting forth of the way of prayer and faith in which the blessing of God has
1089 so often been sought and found.

1090
1091 Let us confine ourselves to the chief thought: prayer as an appeal to the friendship of God; and we
1092 shall find that two lessons are specially suggested. The one, that if we are God's friends, and come
1093 as such to Him, we must prove ourselves the friends of the needy; God's friendship to us and ours
1094 to others go hand in hand. The other, that when we come thus we may use the utmost liberty in
1095 claiming an answer.

1096
1097 There is a twofold use of prayer: the one, to obtain strength and blessing for our own life; the other,
1098 the higher, the true glory of prayer, for which Christ has taken us into His fellowship and teaching,
1099 is intercession, where prayer is the royal power a child of God exercises in heaven on behalf of
1100 others and even of the kingdom. We see it in Scripture, how it was in intercession for others that
1101 Abraham and Moses, Samuel and Elijah, with all the holy men of old, proved that they had power
1102 with God and prevailed. It is when we give ourselves to be a blessing that we can specially count on
1103 the blessing of God. It is when we draw near to God as the friend of the poor and the perishing that
1104 we may count on His friendliness; the righteous man who is the friend of the poor is very specially
1105 the friend of God. This gives wonderful liberty in prayer. Lord! I have a needy friend whom I must
1106 help. As a friend I have undertaken to help him. In Thee I have a Friend, whose kindness and riches
1107 I know to be infinite: I am sure Thou wilt give me what I ask. If I, being evil, am ready to do for my
1108 friend what I can, how much more wilt Thou, O my heavenly Friend, now do for Thy friend what
1109 he asks?

1110
1111 The question might suggest itself, whether the Fatherhood of God does not give such confidence in
1112 prayer, that the thought of His Friendship can hardly teach us anything more: a father is more than a
1113 friend. And yet, if we consider it, this pleading the friendship of God opens new wonders to us. That
1114 a child obtains what he asks of his father looks so perfectly natural, we almost count it the father's
1115 duty to give. But with a friend it is as if the kindness is more free, dependent, not on nature, but on
1116 sympathy and character. And then the relation of a child is more that of perfect dependence; two
1117 friends are more nearly on a level. And so our Lord, in seeking to unfold to us the spiritual mystery
1118 of prayer, would fain have us approach God in this relation too, as those whom He has
1119 acknowledged as His friends, whose mind and life are in sympathy with His.

1120

1121 But then we must be living as His friends. I am still a child even when a wanderer; but friendship
1122 depends upon the conduct. Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.' Thou seest that
1123 faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect; and the scripture was fulfilled
1124 which saith, And Abraham believed God, and he was called the friend of God.' It is the Spirit, the
1125 same Spirit,' that leads us that also bears witness to our acceptance with God; likewise, also,' the
1126 same Spirit helpeth us in prayer. It is a life as the friend of God that gives the wonderful liberty to
1127 say: I have a friend to whom I can go even at midnight. And how much more when I go in the very
1128 spirit of that friendliness, manifesting myself the very kindness I look for in God, seeking to help
1129 my friend as I want God to help me. When I come to God in prayer, He always looks to what the
1130 aim is of my petition. If it be merely for my own comfort or joy I seek His grace, I do not receive.
1131 But if I can say that it is that He may be glorified in my dispensing His blessings to others, I shall
1132 not ask in vain. Or if I ask for others, but want to wait until God has made me so rich, that it is no
1133 sacrifice or act of faith to aid them, I shall not obtain. But if I can say that I have already undertaken
1134 for my needy friend, that in my poverty I have already begun the work of love, because I know I
1135 had a friend Who would help me, my prayer will be heard. Oh, we know not how much the plea
1136 avails: the friendship of earth looking in its need to the friendship of heaven: He will give him as
1137 much as he needeth.'

1138
1139 But not always at once. The one thing by which man can honour and enjoy his God is faith.
1140 Intercession is part of faith's training-school. There our friendship with men and with God is tested.
1141 There it is seen whether my friendship with the needy is so real, that I will take time and sacrifice
1142 my rest, will go even at midnight and not cease until I have obtained for them what I need. There it
1143 is seen whether my friendship with God is so clear, that I can depend on Him not to turn me away
1144 and therefore pray on until He gives.

1145
1146 O what a deep heavenly mystery this is of persevering prayer. The God who has promised, who
1147 longs, whose fixed purpose it is to give the blessing, holds it back. It is to Him a matter of such deep
1148 importance that His friends on earth should know and fully trust their rich Friend in heaven, that He
1149 trains them, in the school of answer delayed, to find out how their perseverance really does prevail,
1150 and what the mighty power is they can wield in heaven, if they do but set themselves to it. There is
1151 a faith that sees the promise, and embraces it, and yet does not receive it (Heb. xi. 13, 39). It is when
1152 the answer to prayer does not come, and the promise we are most firmly trusting appears to be of
1153 none effect, that the trial of faith, more precious than of gold, takes place. It is in this trial that the
1154 faith that has embraced the promise is purified and strengthened and prepared in personal, holy
1155 fellowship with the living God, to see the glory of God. It takes and holds the promise until it has
1156 received the fulfilment of what it had claimed in a living truth in the unseen but living God.

1157
1158 Let each child of God who is seeking to work the work of love in his Father's service take courage.
1159 The parent with his child, the teacher with his class, the visitor with his district, the Bible reader
1160 with his circle, the preacher with his hearers, each one who, in his little circle, has accepted and is
1161 bearing the burden of hungry, perishing souls,—let them all take courage. Nothing is at first so
1162 strange to us as that God should really require persevering prayer, that there should be a real
1163 spiritual needs-be for importunity. To teach it us, the Master uses this almost strange parable. If the
1164 unfriendliness of a selfish earthly friend can be conquered by importunity, how much more will it
1165 avail with the heavenly Friend, who does so love to give, but is held back by our spiritual unfitness,
1166 our incapacity to possess what He has to give. O let us thank Him that in delaying His answer He is
1167 educating us up to our true position and the exercise of all our power with Him, training us to live
1168 with Him in the fellowship of undoubting faith and trust, to be indeed the friends of God. And let us

1169 hold fast the threefold cord that cannot be broken: the hungry friend needing the help, and the
1170 praying friend seeking the help, and the Mighty Friend, loving to give as much as he needeth.

1171

1172 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

1173

1174

1175

1176 O my Blessed Lord and Teacher! I must come to Thee in prayer. Thy teaching is so glorious, and
1177 yet too high for me to grasp. I must confess that my heart is too little to take in these thoughts of the
1178 wonderful boldness I may use with Thy Father as my Friend. Lord Jesus! I trust Thee to give me
1179 Thy Spirit with Thy Word, and to make the Word quick and powerful in my heart. I desire to keep
1180 Thy Word of this day: Because of his importunity he will give him as many as he needeth.’

1181

1182 Lord! teach me more to know the power of persevering prayer. I know that in it the Father suits
1183 Himself to our need of time for the inner life to attain its growth and ripeness, so that His grace may
1184 indeed be assimilated and made our very own. I know that He would fain thus train us to the
1185 exercise of that strong faith that does not let Him go even in the face of seeming disappointment. I
1186 know He wants to lift us to that wonderful liberty, in which we understand how really He has made
1187 the dispensing of His gift dependent on our prayer. Lord! I know this: O teach me to see it in spirit
1188 and truth.

1189

1190 And may it now be the joy of my life to become the almoner of my Rich Friend in heaven, to care
1191 for all the hungry and perishing, even at midnight, because I know MY FRIEND, who always gives
1192 to him who perseveres, because of his importunity, as many as he needeth. Amen.

1193

1194

1195

1196 NINTH LESSON.

1197

1198 Pray the Lord of the harvest;’

1199

1200 Or, Prayer provides Labourers.

1201

1202 Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye
1203 therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest.’—Matt. ix. 37-
1204 38.

1205

1206 THE Lord frequently taught His disciples that they must pray, and how; but seldom what to pray.
1207 This he left to their sense of need, and the leading of the Spirit. But here we have one thing He
1208 expressly enjoins them to remember: in view of the plenteous harvest, and the need of reapers, they
1209 must cry to the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers. Just as in the parable of the friend at
1210 midnight, He would have them understand that prayer is not to be selfish; so here it is the power
1211 through which blessing can come to others. The Father is Lord of the harvest; when we pray for the
1212 Holy Spirit, we must pray for Him to prepare and send forth labourers for the work.

1213

1214 Strange, is it not, that He should ask His disciples to pray for this? And could He not pray Himself?
1215 And would not one prayer of His avail more than a thousand of theirs? And God, the Lord of the
1216 harvest, did He not see the need? And would not He, in His own good time, send forth labourers
1217 without their prayer? Such questions lead us up to the deepest mysteries of prayer, and its power in

1218 the Kingdom of God. The answer to such questions will convince us that prayer is indeed a power,
1219 on which the ingathering of the harvest and the coming of the Kingdom do in very truth depend.

1220
1221 Prayer is no form or show. The Lord Jesus was Himself the truth; everything He spake was the
1222 deepest truth. It was when (see ver. 36) He saw the multitude, and was moved with compassion on
1223 them, because they were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd,' that He called on the
1224 disciples to pray for labourers to be sent among them. He did so because He really believed that
1225 their prayer was needed, and would help. The veil which so hides the invisible world from us was
1226 wonderfully transparent to the holy human soul of Jesus. He had looked long and deep and far into
1227 the hidden connection of cause and effect in the spirit world. He had marked in God's Word how,
1228 when God called men like Abraham and Moses, Joshua and Samuel and Daniel, and given them
1229 authority over men in His name, He had at the same time given them authority and right to call in
1230 the powers of heaven to their aid as they needed them. He knew that as to these men of old, and to
1231 Himself for a time, here upon earth, the work of God had been entrusted, so it was now about to
1232 pass over into the hands of His disciples. He knew that when this work should be given in charge to
1233 them, it would not be a mere matter of form or show, but that on them, and their being faithful or
1234 unfaithful, the success of the work would actually depend. As a single individual, within the
1235 limitations of a human body and a human life, Jesus feels how little a short visit can accomplish
1236 among these wandering sheep He sees around Him, and He longs for help to have them properly
1237 cared for. And so He tells His disciples now to begin and pray, and, when they have taken over the
1238 work from Him on earth, to make this one of the chief petitions in their prayer: That the Lord of the
1239 harvest Himself would send forth labourers into His harvest. The God who entrusted them with the
1240 work, and made it to so large extent dependent on them, gives them authority to apply to Him for
1241 labourers to help, and makes the supply dependent on their prayer.

1242
1243 How little Christians really feel and mourn the need of labourers in the fields of the world so white
1244 to the harvest. And how little they believe that our labour-supply depends on prayer, that prayer will
1245 really provide as many as he needeth.' Not that the dearth of labour is not known or discussed. Not
1246 that efforts are not sometimes put forth to supply the want. But how little the burden of the sheep
1247 wandering without a Shepherd is really borne in the faith that the Lord of the harvest will, in answer
1248 to prayer, send forth the labourers, and in the solemn conviction that without this prayer fields ready
1249 for reaping will be left to perish. And yet it is so. So wonderful is the surrender of His work into the
1250 hands of His Church, so dependent has the Lord made Himself on them as His body, through whom
1251 alone His work can be done, so real is the power which the Lord gives His people to exercise in
1252 heaven and earth, that the number of the labourers and the measure of the harvest does actually
1253 depend upon their prayer.

1254
1255 Solemn thought! O why is it that we do not obey the injunction of the Master more heartily, and cry
1256 more earnestly for labourers? There are two reasons for this. The one is: We miss the compassion of
1257 Jesus, which gave rise to this request for prayer. When believers learn that to love their neighbours
1258 as themselves, that to live entirely for God's glory in their fellow-men, is the Father's first
1259 commandment to His redeemed ones, they will accept of the perishing ones as the charge entrusted
1260 to them by their Lord. And, accepting them not only as a field of labour, but as the objects of loving
1261 care and interest, it will not be long before compassion towards the hopelessly perishing will touch
1262 their heart, and the cry ascend with an earnestness till then unknown: Lord! send labourers. The
1263 other reason for the neglect of the command, the want of faith, will then make itself felt, but will be
1264 overcome as our pity pleads for help. We believe too little in the power of prayer to bring about
1265 definite results. We do not live close enough to God, and are not enough entirely given up to His
1266 service and Kingdom, to be capable of the confidence that He will give it in answer to our prayer. O

1267 let us pray for a life so one with Christ, that His compassion may stream into us, and His Spirit be
1268 able to assure us that our prayer avails.

1269
1270 Such prayer will ask and obtain a twofold blessing. There will first be the desire for the increase of
1271 men entirely given up to the service of God. It is a terrible blot upon the Church of Christ that there
1272 are times when actually men cannot be found for the service of the Master as ministers,
1273 missionaries, or teachers of God's Word. As God's children make this a matter of supplication for
1274 their own circle or Church, it will be given. The Lord Jesus is now Lord of the harvest. He has been
1275 exalted to bestow gifts—the gifts of the Spirit. His chief gifts are men filled with the Spirit. But the
1276 supply and distribution of the gifts depend on the co-operation of Head and members. It is just
1277 prayer will lead to such co-operation; the believing suppliants will be stirred to find the men and the
1278 means for the work.

1279
1280 The other blessing to be asked will not be less. Every believer is a labourer; not one of God's
1281 children who has not been redeemed for service, and has not his work waiting. It must be our prayer
1282 that the Lord would so fill all His people with the spirit of devotion, that not one may be found
1283 standing idle in the vineyard. Wherever there is a complaint of the want of helpers, or of fit helpers
1284 in God's work, prayer has the promise of a supply. There is no Sunday school or district visiting, no
1285 Bible reading or rescue work, where God is not ready and able to provide. It may take time and
1286 importunity, but the command of Christ to ask the Lord of the harvest is the pledge that the prayer
1287 will be heard: I say unto you, he will arise and give him as many as he needeth.'

1288
1289 Solemn, blessed thought! this power has been given us in prayer to provide in the need of the world,
1290 to secure the servants for God's work. The Lord of the harvest will hear. Christ, who called us so
1291 specially to pray thus, will support our prayers offered in His name and interest. Let us set apart
1292 time and give ourselves to this part of our intercessory work. It will lead us into the fellowship of
1293 that compassionate heart of His that led Him to call for our prayers. It will elevate us to the insight
1294 of our regal position, as those whose will counts for something with the great God in the
1295 advancement of His Kingdom. It will make us feel how really we are God's fellow-workers on
1296 earth, to whom a share in His work has in downright earnest been entrusted. It will make us
1297 partakers in the soul travail, but also in the soul satisfaction of Jesus, as we know how, in answer to
1298 our prayer, blessing has been given that otherwise would not have come.

1299
1300 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

1301
1302
1303
1304 Blessed Lord! Thou hast this day again given us another of Thy wondrous lessons to learn. We
1305 humbly ask Thee, O give us to see aright the spiritual realities of which Thou hast been speaking.
1306 There is the harvest which is so large, and perishing, as it waits for sleepy disciples to give the
1307 signal for labourers to come. Lord, teach us to look out upon it with a heart moved with compassion
1308 and pity. There are the labourers, so few. Lord, show us how terrible the sin of the want of prayer
1309 and faith, of which this is the token. And there is the Lord of the harvest, so able and ready to send
1310 them forth. Lord, show us how He does indeed wait for the prayer to which He has bound His
1311 answer. And there are the disciples, to whom the commission to pray has been given: Lord, show us
1312 how Thou canst pour down Thy Spirit and breathe upon them, so that Thy compassion and the faith
1313 in Thy promise shall rouse them to unceasing, prevailing prayer.

1314

1315 O our Lord! we cannot understand how Thou canst entrust such work and give such power to men
1316 so slothful and unfaithful. We thank Thee for all whom Thou art teaching to cry day and night for
1317 labourers to be sent forth. Lord, breathe Thine own Spirit on all Thy children, that they may learn to
1318 live for this one thing alone—the Kingdom and glory of their Lord—and become fully awake to the
1319 faith of what their prayer can accomplish. And let all our hearts in this, as in every petition, be filled
1320 with the assurance that prayer, offered in loving faith in the living God, will bring certain and
1321 abundant answer. Amen.

1322

1323

1324

1325 TENTH LESSON.

1326

1327 What wilt thou?’

1328

1329 Or, Prayer must be Definite.

1330

1331 And Jesus answered him, and said, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?’—Mark x. 51; Luke
1332 xviii. 41.

1333

1334 THE blind man had been crying out aloud, and that a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on
1335 me.’ The cry had reached the ear of the Lord; He knew what he wanted, and was ready to grant it
1336 him. But ere He does it, He asks him: What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?’ He wants to hear
1337 from his own lips, not only the general petition for mercy, but the distinct expression of what his
1338 desire was. Until he speaks it out, he is not healed.

1339

1340 There is now still many a suppliant to whom the Lord puts the same question, and who cannot, until
1341 it has been answered, get the aid he ask. Our prayers must not be a vague appeal to His mercy, an
1342 indefinite cry for blessing, but the distinct expression of definite need. Not that His loving heart
1343 does not understand our cry, or is not ready to hear. But He desires it for our own sakes. Such
1344 definite prayer teaches us to know our own needs better. It demands time, and thought, and self-
1345 scrutiny to find out what really is our greatest need. It searches us and puts us to the test as to
1346 whether our desires are honest and real, such as we are ready to persevere in. It leads us to judge
1347 whether our desires are according to God’s Word, and whether we really believe that we shall
1348 receive the things we ask. It helps us to wait for the special answer, and to mark it when it comes.

1349

1350 And yet how much of our prayer is vague and pointless. Some cry for mercy, but take not the
1351 trouble to know what mercy must do for them. Others ask, perhaps, to be delivered from sin, but do
1352 not begin by bringing any sin by name from which the deliverance may be claimed. Still others pray
1353 for God’s blessing on those around them, for the outpouring of God’s Spirit on their land or the
1354 world, and yet have no special field where they wait and expect to see the answer. To all the Lord
1355 says: And what is it now you really want and expect Me to do? Every Christian has but limited
1356 powers, and as he must have his own special field of labour in which he works, so with his prayers
1357 too. Each believer has his own circle, his family, his friends, his neighbours. If he were to take one
1358 or more of these by name, he would find that this really brings him into the training-school of faith,
1359 and leads to personal and pointed dealing with his God. It is when in such distinct matters we have
1360 in faith claimed and received answers, that our more general prayers will be believing and effectual.

1361

1362 We all know with what surprise the whole civilised world heard of the way in which trained troops
1363 were repulsed by the Transvaal Boers at Majuba. And to what did they owe their success? In the

1364 armies of Europe the soldier fires upon the enemy standing in large masses, and never thinks of
1365 seeking an aim for every bullet. In hunting game the Boer had learnt a different lesson: his practised
1366 eye knew to send every bullet on its special message, to seek and find its man. Such aiming must
1367 gain the day in the spiritual world too. As long as in prayer we just pour out our hearts in a
1368 multitude of petitions, without taking time to see whether every petition is sent with the purpose and
1369 expectation of getting an answer, not many will reach the mark. But if, as in silence of soul we bow
1370 before the Lord, we were to ask such questions as these: What is now really my desire? do I desire it
1371 in faith, expecting to receive? am I now ready to place and leave it in the Father's bosom? is it a
1372 settled thing between God and me that I am to have the answer? we should learn so to pray that God
1373 would see and we would know what we really expect.

1374
1375 It is for this, among other reasons, that the Lord warns us against the vain repetitions of the
1376 Gentiles, who think to be heard for their much praying. We often hear prayers of great earnestness
1377 and fervour, in which a multitude of petitions are poured forth, but to which the Saviour would
1378 undoubtedly answer 'What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?' If I am in a strange land, in the
1379 interests of the business which my father owns, I would certainly write two different sorts of letters.
1380 There will be family letters giving expression to all the intercourse to which affection prompts; and
1381 there will be business letters, containing orders for what I need. And there may be letters in which
1382 both are found. The answers will correspond to the letters. To each sentence of the letters containing
1383 the family news I do not expect a special answer. But for each order I send I am confident of an
1384 answer whether the desired article has been forwarded. In our dealings with God the business
1385 element must not be wanting. With our expression of need and sin, of love and faith and
1386 consecration, there must be the pointed statement of what we ask and expect to receive; it is in the
1387 answer that the Father loves to give us the token of His approval and acceptance.

1388
1389 But the word of the Master teaches us more. He does not say, 'What dost thou wish?' but, 'What does
1390 thou will?' One often wishes for a thing without willing it. I wish to have a certain article, but I find
1391 the price too high; I resolve not to take it; I wish, but do not will to have it. The sluggard wishes to
1392 be rich, but does not will it. Many a one wishes to be saved, but perishes because he does not will it.
1393 The will rules the whole heart and life; if I really will to have anything that is within my reach, I do
1394 not rest till I have it. And so, when Jesus says to us, 'What wilt thou?' He asks whether it is indeed
1395 our purpose to have what we ask at any price, however great the sacrifice. Dost thou indeed so will
1396 to have it that, though He delay it long, thou dost not hold thy peace till He hear thee? Alas! how
1397 many prayers are wishes, sent up for a short time and then forgotten, or sent up year after year as
1398 matter of duty, while we rest content with the prayer without the answer.

1399
1400 But, it may be asked, is it not best to make our wishes known to God, and then to leave it to Him to
1401 decide what is best, without seeking to assert our will? By no means. This is the very essence of the
1402 prayer of faith, to which Jesus sought to train His disciples, that it does not only make known its
1403 desire and then leave the decision to God. That would be the prayer of submission, for cases in
1404 which we cannot know God's will. But the prayer of faith, finding God's will in some promise of
1405 the Word, pleads for that till it come. In Matthew (ix. 28) we read Jesus said to the blind man:
1406 'Believe ye that I can do this?' Here, in Mark, He says: 'What wilt thou that I should do?' In both
1407 cases He said that faith had saved them. And so He said to the Syrophenician woman, too: 'Great is
1408 thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.' Faith is nothing but the purpose of the will resting on
1409 God's word, and saying: 'I must have it. To believe truly is to will firmly.'

1410
1411 But is not such a will at variance with our dependence on God and our submission to Him? By no
1412 means; it is much rather the true submission that honours God. It is only when the child has yielded

1413 his own will in entire surrender to the Father, that he receives from the Father liberty and power to
1414 will what he would have. But, when once the believer has accepted the will of God, as revealed
1415 through the Word and Spirit, as his will, too, then it is the will of God that His child should use this
1416 renewed will in His service. The will is the highest power in the soul; grace wants above everything
1417 to sanctify and restore this will, one of the chief traits of God's image, to full and free exercise. As a
1418 son, who only lives for his father's interests, who seeks not his own but his father's will is trusted
1419 by the father with his business, so God speaks to His child in all truth, 'What wilt thou?' It is often
1420 spiritual sloth that, under the appearance of humility, professes to have no will, because it fears the
1421 trouble of searching out the will of God, or, when found, the struggle of claiming it in faith. True
1422 humility is ever in company with strong faith, which only seeks to know what is according to the
1423 will of God, and then boldly claims the fulfilment of the promise: 'Ye shall ask what ye will, and it
1424 shall be done unto you.'

1425
1426 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

1427
1428
1429
1430 Lord Jesus! teach me to pray with all my heart and strength, that there may be no doubt with Thee
1431 or with me as to what I have asked. May I so know what I desire that, even as my petitions are
1432 recorded in heaven, I can record them on earth too, and note each answer as it comes. And may my
1433 faith in what Thy Word has promised be so clear that the Spirit may indeed work in me the liberty
1434 to will that it shall come. Lord! renew, strengthen, sanctify wholly my will for the work of effectual
1435 prayer.

1436
1437 Blessed Saviour! I do beseech Thee to reveal to me the wonderful condescension Thou showest us,
1438 thus asking us to say what we will that Thou shouldest do, and promising to do whatever we will.
1439 Son of God! I cannot understand it; I can only believe that Thou hast indeed redeemed us wholly for
1440 Thyself, and dost seek to make the will, as our noblest part, Thy most efficient servant. Lord! I do
1441 most unreservedly yield my will to Thee, as the power through which Thy Spirit is to rule my whole
1442 being. Let Him take possession of it, lead it into the truth of Thy promises, and make it so strong in
1443 prayer that I may ever hear Thy voice saying: 'Great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.'
1444 Amen.

1445
1446
1447
1448
1449 ELEVENTH LESSON.

1450
1451 Believe that ye have received;'

1452
1453 Or, The Faith that Takes.

1454
1455 Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received
1456 them, and ye shall have them.'—Mark xi. 24

1457
1458 WHAT a promise! so large, so Divine, that our little hearts cannot take it in, and in every possible
1459 way seek to limit it to what we think safe or probable; instead of allowing it, in its quickening
1460 power and energy, just as He gave it, to enter in, and to enlarge our hearts to the measure of what
1461 His love and power are really ready to do for us. Faith is very far from being a mere conviction of

1462 the truth of God's word, or a conclusion drawn from certain premises. It is the ear which has heard
1463 God say what He will do, the eye which has seen Him doing it, and, therefore, where there is true
1464 faith, it is impossible but the answer must come. If we only see to it that we do the one thing that He
1465 asks of us as we pray: BELIEVE that ye have received; He will see to it that He does the thing He
1466 has promised: 'Ye shall have them.' The key-note of Solomon's prayer (2 Chron. vi. 4), 'Blessed be
1467 the Lord God of Israel, who hath with His hands fulfilled that which He spake with His mouth to
1468 my father David,' is the key-note of all true prayer: the joyful adoration of a God whose hand
1469 always secures the fulfilment of what His mouth hath spoken. Let us in this spirit listen to the
1470 promise Jesus gives; each part of it has its Divine message.

1471
1472 All things whatsoever.' At this first word our human wisdom at once begins to doubt and ask: This
1473 surely cannot be literally true? But if it be not, why did the Master speak it, using the very strongest
1474 expression He could find: All things whatsoever.' And it is not as if this were the only time He
1475 spoke thus; is it not He who also said, 'If thou canst believe, ALL THINGS are possible to him that
1476 believeth;' 'If ye have faith, NOTHING shall be impossible to you.' Faith is so wholly the work of
1477 God's Spirit through His word in the prepared heart of the believing disciple, that it is impossible
1478 that the fulfilment should not come; faith is the pledge and forerunner of the coming answer. Yes,
1479 ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye receive.' The tendency of
1480 human reason is to interpose here, and with certain qualifying clauses, if expedient, 'if according to
1481 God's will,' to break the force of a statement which appears dangerous. O let us beware of dealing
1482 thus with the Master's words. His promise is most literally true. He wants His oft repeated ALL
1483 THINGS' to enter into our hearts, and reveal to us how mighty the power of faith is, how truly the
1484 Head calls the members to share with Him in His power, how wholly our Father places His power at
1485 the disposal of the child that wholly trusts Him. In this all things' faith is to have its food and
1486 strength: as we weaken it we weaken faith. The WHATSOEVER is unconditional: the only
1487 condition is what is implied in the believing. Ere we can believe we must find out and know what
1488 God's will is' believing is the exercise of a soul surrendered and given up to the influence of the
1489 Word and the Spirit; but when once we do believe nothing shall be impossible. God forbid that we
1490 should try and bring down His ALL THINGS to the level of what we think possible. Let us now
1491 simply take Christ's WHATSOEVER' as the measure and the hope of our faith: it is a seed-word
1492 which, if taken just as He gives it, and kept in the heart, will unfold itself and strike root, fill our life
1493 with its fulness, and bring forth fruit abundantly.

1494
1495 All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for.' It is in prayer that these all things' are to be brought to
1496 God, to be asked and received of Him. The faith that receives them is the fruit of the prayer. In one
1497 aspect there must be faith before there can be prayer; in another the faith is the outcome and the
1498 growth of prayer. It is in the personal presence of the Saviour, in intercourse with Him, that faith
1499 rises to grasp what at first appeared too high. It is in prayer that we hold up our desire to the light of
1500 God's Holy Will, that our motives are tested, and proof given whether we ask indeed in the name of
1501 Jesus, and only for the glory of God. It is in prayer that we wait for the leading of the Spirit to show
1502 us whether we are asking the right thing and in the right spirit. It is in prayer that we become
1503 conscious of our want of faith, that we are led on to say to the Father that we do believe, and that we
1504 prove the reality of our faith by the confidence with which we persevere. It is in prayer that Jesus
1505 teaches and inspires faith. He that waits to pray, or loses heart in prayer, because he does not yet
1506 feel the faith needed to get the answer, will never learn to believe. He who begins to pray and ask
1507 will find the Spirit of faith is given nowhere so surely as at the foot of the Throne.

1508
1509 Believe that ye have received.' It is clear that what we are to believe is, that we receive the very
1510 things we ask. The Saviour does not hint that because the Father knows what is best He may give us

1511 something else. The very mountain faith bids depart is cast into the sea. There is a prayer in which,
1512 in everything, we make known our requests with prayer and supplication, and the reward is the
1513 sweet peace of God keeping heart and mind. This is the prayer of trust. It has reference to things of
1514 which we cannot find out if God is going to give them. As children we make known our desires in
1515 the countless things of daily life, and leave it to the Father to give or not as He thinks best. But the
1516 prayer of faith of which Jesus speaks is something different, something higher. When, whether in
1517 the greater interests of the Master's work, or in the lesser concerns of our daily life, the soul is led to
1518 see how there is nothing that so honours the Father as the faith that is assured that He will do what
1519 He has said in giving us whatsoever we ask for, and takes its stand on the promise as brought home
1520 by the Spirit, it may know most certainly that it does receive exactly what it asks. Just see how
1521 clearly the Lord sets this before us in verse 23: Whosoever shall not doubt in his heart, but shall
1522 believe that what he saith cometh to pass, he shall have it.' This is the blessing of the prayer of faith
1523 of which Jesus speaks.

1524
1525 Believe that ye have received.' This is the word of central importance, of which the meaning is too
1526 often misunderstood. Believe that you have received! now, while praying, the thing you ask for. It
1527 may only be later that you shall have it in personal experience, that you shall see what you believe;
1528 but now, without seeing, you are to believe that it has been given you of the Father in heaven. The
1529 receiving or accepting of an answer to prayer is just like the receiving or accepting of Jesus or of
1530 pardon, a spiritual thing, an act of faith apart from all feeling. When I come as a supplicant for
1531 pardon, I believe that Jesus in heaven is for me, and so I receive or take Him. When I come as a
1532 supplicant for any special gift, which is according to God's word, I believe that what I ask is given
1533 me: I believe that I have it, I hold it in faith; I thank God that it is mine. If we know that He heareth
1534 us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of Him.'

1535
1536 And ye shall have them.' That is, the gift which we first hold in faith as bestowed upon us in heaven
1537 will also become ours in personal experience. But will it be needful to pray longer if once we know
1538 we have been heard and have received what we asked? There are cases in which such prayer will
1539 not be needful, in which the blessing is ready to break through at once, if we but hold fast our
1540 confidence, and prove our faith by praising for what we have received, in the face of our not yet
1541 having it in experience. There are other cases in which the faith that has received needs to be still
1542 further tried and strengthened in persevering prayer. God only knows when everything in and
1543 around us is fully ripe for the manifestation of the blessing that has been given to faith. Elijah knew
1544 for certain that rain would come; God had promised it; and yet he had to pray the seven times. And
1545 that prayer was no show or play; an intense spiritual reality in the heart of him who lay pleading
1546 there, and in the heaven above where it had its effectual work to do. It is through faith and patience
1547 we inherit the promises.' Faith says most confidently, I have received it. Patience perseveres in
1548 prayer until the gift bestowed in heaven is seen on earth. Believe that ye have received, and ye shall
1549 have.' Between the have received in heaven, and the shall have of earth, believe: believing praise
1550 and prayer is the link.

1551
1552 And now, remember one thing more: It is Jesus who said this. As we see heaven thus opened to us,
1553 and the Father on the Throne offering to give us whatsoever we ask in faith, our hearts feel full of
1554 shame that we have so little availed ourselves of our privilege, and full of fear lest our feeble faith
1555 still fail to grasp what is so clearly placed within our reach. There is one thing must make us strong
1556 and full of hope: it is Jesus who has brought us this message from the Father. He Himself, when He
1557 was on earth, lived the life of faith and prayer. It was when the disciples expressed their surprise at
1558 what He had done to the fig-tree, that He told them that the very same life He led could be theirs;
1559 that they could not only command the fig-tree, but the very mountain, and it must obey. And He is

1560 our life: all He was on earth He is in us now; all He teaches He really gives. He is Himself the
1561 Author and the Perfecter of our faith: He gives the spirit of faith; let us not be afraid that such faith
1562 is not meant for us. It is meant for every child of the Father; it is within reach of each one who will
1563 but be childlike, yielding himself to the Father's Will and Love, trusting the Father's Word and
1564 Power. Dear fellow-Christian! let the thought that this word comes through Jesus, the Son, our
1565 Brother, give us courage, and let our answer be: Yea, Blessed Lord, we do believe Thy Word, we do
1566 believe that we receive.

1567
1568 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

1569
1570
1571
1572 Blessed Lord! Thou didst come from the Father to show us all His love, and all the treasures of
1573 blessing that love is waiting to bestow. Lord! Thou hast this day again flung the gates so wide open,
1574 and given us such promises as to our liberty in prayer, that we must blush that our poor hearts have
1575 so little taken it in. It has been too large for us to believe.

1576
1577 Lord! we now look up to Thee to teach us to take and keep and use this precious word of Thine: All
1578 things whatsoever ye ask, believe that ye have received.' Blessed Jesus! it is Thy self in whom our
1579 faith must be rooted if it is to grow strong. Thy work has freed us wholly from the power of sin, and
1580 opened the way to the Father; Thy Love is ever longing to bring us into the full fellowship of Thy
1581 glory and power; Thy Spirit is ever drawing us upward into a life of perfect faith and confidence;
1582 we are assured that in Thy teaching we shall learn to pray the prayer of faith. Thou wilt train us to
1583 pray so that we believe that we receive, to believe that we really have what we ask. Lord! teach me
1584 so to know and trust and love Thee, so to live and abide in Thee, that all my prayers rise up and
1585 come before God in Thee, and that my soul may have in Thee the assurance that I am heard. Amen.

1586
1587
1588
1589 TWELFTH LESSON.

1590
1591 Have faith in God;'

1592
1593 Or, The Secret of Believing Prayer.

1594
1595 Jesus, answering, said unto them, Have faith in God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not
1596 doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what He saith cometh to pass; he shall have it. Therefore I
1597 say unto you, All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye
1598 shall have them.'—Mark xi. 22-24.

1599
1600 THE promise of answer to prayer which formed our yesterday's lesson is one of the most wonderful
1601 in all Scripture. In how many hearts it has raised the question: How ever can I attain the faith that
1602 knows that it receives all it asks?

1603
1604 It is this question our Lord would answer today. Ere He gave that wonderful promise to His
1605 disciples, He spoke another word, in which He points out where the faith in the answer to prayer
1606 takes its rise, and ever finds its strength. HAVE FAITH IN GOD: this word precedes the other,
1607 Have faith in the promise of an answer to prayer. The power to believe a promise depends entirely,
1608 but only, on faith in the promiser. Trust in the person begets trust in his word. It is only where we

1609 live and associate with God in personal, loving intercourse, where GOD HIMSELF is all to us,
1610 where our whole being is continually opened up and exposed to the mighty influences that are at
1611 work where His Holy Presence is revealed, that the capacity will be developed for believing that He
1612 gives whatsoever we ask.

1613
1614 This connection between faith in God and faith in His promise will become clear to us if we think
1615 what faith really is. It is often compared to the hand or the mouth, by which we take and appropriate
1616 what is offered to us. But it is of importance that we should understand that faith is also the ear by
1617 which I hear what is promised, the eye by which I see what is offered me. On this the power to take
1618 depends. I must hear the person who gives me the promise: the very tone of his voice gives me
1619 courage to believe. I must see him: in the light of his eye and countenance all fear as to my right to
1620 take passes away. The value of the promise depends on the promiser: it is on my knowledge of what
1621 the promiser is that faith in the promise depends.

1622
1623 It is for this reason that Jesus, ere He gives that wonderful prayer-promise, first says, HAVE FAITH
1624 IN GOD.' That is, let thine eye be open to the Living God, and gaze on Him, seeing Him who is
1625 Invisible. It is through the eye that I yield myself to the influence of what is before me; I just allow
1626 it to enter, to exert its influence, to leave its impression upon my mind. So believing God is just
1627 looking to God and what He is, allowing Him to reveal His presence, giving Him time and yielding
1628 the whole being to take in the full impression of what He is as God, the soul opened up to receive
1629 and rejoice in the overshadowing of His love. Yes, faith is the eye to which God shows what He is
1630 and does: through faith the light of His presence and the workings of His mighty power stream into
1631 the soul. As that which I see lives in me, so by faith God lives in me too.

1632
1633 And even so faith is also the ear through which the voice of God is always heard and intercourse
1634 with Him kept up. It is through the Holy Spirit the Father speaks to us; the Son is the Word, the
1635 substance of what God says; the Spirit is the living voice. This the child of God needs to lead and
1636 guide him; the secret voice from heaven must teach him, as it taught Jesus, what to say and what to
1637 do. An ear opened towards God, that is, a believing heart waiting on Him, to hear what He says,
1638 will hear Him speak. The words of God will not only be the words of a Book, but, proceeding from
1639 the mouth of God, they will be spirit and truth, life and power. They will bring in deed and living
1640 experience what are otherwise only thoughts. Through this opened ear the soul tarries under the
1641 influence of the life and power of God Himself. As the words I hear enter the mind and dwell and
1642 work there, so through faith God enters the heart, and dwells and works there.

1643
1644 When faith now is in full exercise as eye and ear, as the faculty of the soul by which we see and
1645 hear God, then it will be able to exercise its full power as hand and mouth, by which we appropriate
1646 God and His blessing. The power of reception will depend entirely on the power of spiritual
1647 perception. For this reason Jesus said, ere He gave the promise that God would answer believing
1648 prayer: HAVE FAITH IN GOD.' Faith is simply surrender: I yield myself to the impression the
1649 tidings I hear make on me. By faith I yield myself to the living God. His glory and love fill my
1650 heart, and have the mastery over my life. Faith is fellowship; I give myself up to the influence of the
1651 friend who makes me a promise, and become linked to him by it. And it is when we enter into this
1652 living fellowship with God Himself, in a faith that always sees and hears Him, that it becomes easy
1653 and natural to believe His promise as to prayer. Faith in the promise is the fruit of faith in the
1654 promiser: the prayer of faith is rooted in the life of faith. And in this way the faith that prays
1655 effectually is indeed a gift of God. Not as something that He bestows or infuses at once, but in a far
1656 deeper and truer sense, as the blessed disposition or habit of soul which is wrought and grows up in
1657 us in a life of intercourse with Him. Surely for one who knows his Father well, and lives in constant

1658 close intercourse with Him, it is a simple thing to believe the promise that He will do the will of His
1659 child who lives in union with Himself.

1660
1661 It is because very many of God's children do not understand this connection between the life of
1662 faith and the prayer of faith that their experience of the power of prayer is so limited. When they
1663 desire earnestly to obtain an answer from God, they fix their whole heart upon the promise, and try
1664 their utmost to grasp that promise in faith. When they do not succeed, they are ready to give up
1665 hope; the promise is true, but it is beyond their power to take hold of it in faith. Listen to the lesson
1666 Jesus teaches us this day: HAVE FAITH IN GOD, the Living God: let faith look to God more than
1667 the thing promised: it is His love, His power, His living presence will waken and work the faith. A
1668 physician would say to one asking for some means to get more strength in his arms and hands to
1669 seize and hold, that his whole constitution must be built up and strengthened. So the cure of a feeble
1670 faith is alone to be found in the invigoration of our whole spiritual life by intercourse with God.
1671 Learn to believe in God, to take hold of God, to let God take possession of thy life, and it will be
1672 easy to take hold of the promise. He that knows and trusts God finds it easy to trust the promise too.

1673
1674 Just note how distinctly this comes out in the saints of old. Every special exhibition of the power of
1675 faith was the fruit of a special revelation of God. See it in Abraham: And the word of the Lord came
1676 unto Abram, saying, Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield. And He brought him forth abroad, and said .
1677 . . . AND HE BELIEVED THE LORD.' And later again: The Lord appeared unto him, and said unto
1678 him, I am God Almighty. And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, As for me,
1679 behold my covenant is with thee.' It was the revelation of God Himself that gave the promise its
1680 living power to enter the heart and work the faith. Because they knew God, these men of faith could
1681 not do anything but trust His promise. God's promise will be to us what God Himself is. It is the
1682 man who walks before the Lord, and falls upon his face to listen while the living God speaks to him,
1683 who will really receive the promise. Though we have God's promises in the Bible, with full liberty
1684 to take them, the spiritual power is wanting, except as God Himself speaks them to us. And He
1685 speaks to those who walk and live with Him. Therefore, HAVE FAITH IN GOD: let faith be all eye
1686 and ear, the surrender to let God make His full impression, and reveal Himself fully in the soul.
1687 Count it one of the chief blessings of prayer to exercise faith in God, as the Living Mighty God who
1688 waits to fulfil in us all the good pleasure of His will, and the work of faith with power. See in Him
1689 the God of Love, whose delight it is to bless and impart Himself. In such worship of faith in God
1690 the power will speedily come to believe the promise too: ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER YE ASK,
1691 BELIEVE THAT YE RECEIVE.' Yes, see that thou dost in faith make God thine own; the promise
1692 will be thine too.

1693
1694 Precious lessons that Jesus has to teach us this day. We seek God's gifts: God wants to give us
1695 HIMSELF first. We think of prayer as the power to draw down good gifts from heaven; Jesus as the
1696 means to draw ourselves up to God. We want to stand at the door and cry; Jesus would have us first
1697 enter in and realize that we are friends and children. Let us accept the teaching. Let every
1698 experience of the littleness of our faith in prayer urge us first to have and exercise more faith in the
1699 living God, and in such faith to yield ourselves to Him. A heart full of God has power for the prayer
1700 of faith. Faith in God begets faith in the promise, in the promise too of an answer to prayer.

1701
1702 Therefore, child of God, take time, take time, to bow before Him, to wait on Him to reveal Himself.
1703 Take time, and let thy soul in holy awe and worship exercise and express its faith in the Infinite
1704 One, and as He imparts Himself and takes possession of thee, the prayer of faith will crown thy
1705 faith in God.

1706

1707 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

1708

1709

1710

1711 O my God! I do believe in Thee. I believe in Thee as the Father, Infinite in Thy Love and Power.
1712 And as the Son, my Redeemer and my Life. And as the Holy Spirit, Comforter and Guide and
1713 Strength. Three-One God, I have faith in Thee. I know and am sure that all that Thou art Thou art to
1714 me, that all Thou hast promised Thou wilt perform.

1715

1716 Lord Jesus! increase this faith. Teach me to take time, and wait and worship in the Holy Presence
1717 until my faith takes in all there is in my God for me. Let it see Him as the Fountain of all Life,
1718 working with Almighty Strength to accomplish His will on the world and in me. Let it see Him in
1719 His love longing to meet and fulfil my desires. Let it so take possession of my heart and life that
1720 through faith God alone may dwell there. Lord Jesus, help me! with my whole heart would I believe
1721 in God. Let faith in God each moment fill me.

1722

1723 O my Blessed Saviour! how can Thy Church glorify Thee, how can it fulfil that work of
1724 intercession through which Thy kingdom must come, unless our whole life be FAITH IN GOD.
1725 Blessed Lord! speak Thy Word, HAVE FAITH IN GOD,’ unto the depths of our souls.

1726

1727

1728

1729 THIRTEENTH LESSON.

1730

1731 Prayer and fasting;’

1732

1733 Or, The Cure of Unbelief.

1734

1735 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said
1736 unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard
1737 seed, nothing shall be impossible to you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and
1738 fasting’—Matt. xvii. 19-21.

1739

1740 WHEN the disciples saw Jesus cast the evil spirit out of the epileptic whom they could not cure,’
1741 they asked the Master for the cause of their failure. He had given them power and authority over all
1742 devils, and to cure all diseases.’ They had often exercised that power, and joyfully told how the
1743 devils were subject to them. And yet now, while He was on the Mount, they had utterly failed. That
1744 there had been nothing in the will of God or in the nature of the case to render deliverance
1745 impossible, had been proved: at Christ’s bidding the evil spirit had gone out. From their expression,
1746 Why could we not?’ it is evident that they had wished and sought to do so; they had probably used
1747 the Master’s name, and called upon the evil spirit to go out. Their efforts had been vain, and in
1748 presence of the multitude, they had been put to shame. Why could we not?’

1749

1750 Christ’s answer was direct and plain: Because of your unbelief.’ The cause of His success and their
1751 failure, was not owing to His having a special power to which they had no access. No; the reason
1752 was not far to seek. He had so often taught them that there is one power, that of faith, to which, in
1753 the kingdom of darkness, as in the kingdom of God, everything must bow; in the spiritual world
1754 failure has but one cause, the want of faith. Faith is the one condition on which all Divine power can
1755 enter into man and work through him. It is the susceptibility of the unseen: man’s will yielded up to,

1756 and moulded by, the will of God. The power they had received to cast out devils, they did not hold
1757 in themselves as a permanent gift or possession; the power was in Christ, to be received, and held,
1758 and used by faith alone, living faith in Himself. Had they been full of faith in Him as Lord and
1759 Conqueror in the spirit-world, had they been full of faith in Him as having given them authority to
1760 cast out in His name, this faith would have given them the victory. Because of your unbelief' was,
1761 for all time, the Master's explanation and reproof of impotence and failure in His Church.

1762
1763 But such want of faith must have a cause too. Well might the disciples have asked: And why could
1764 we not believe? Our faith has cast out devils before this: why have we now failed in believing? The
1765 Master proceeds to tell them ere they ask: This kind goeth not out but by fasting and prayer.' As
1766 faith is the simplest, so it is the highest exercise of the spiritual life, where our spirit yields itself in
1767 perfect receptivity to God's Spirit and so is strengthened to its highest activity. This faith depends
1768 entirely upon the state of the spiritual life; only when this is strong and in full health, when the
1769 Spirit of God has full sway in our life, is there the power of faith to do its mighty deeds. And
1770 therefore Jesus adds: Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by fasting and prayer.' The faith that can
1771 overcome such stubborn resistance as you have just seen in this evil spirit, Jesus tells them, is not
1772 possible except to men living in very close fellowship with God, and in very special separation from
1773 the world—in prayer and fasting. And so He teaches us two lessons in regard to prayer of deep
1774 importance. The one, that faith needs a life of prayer in which to grow and keep strong. The other,
1775 that prayer needs fasting for its full and perfect development.

1776
1777 Faith needs a life of prayer for its full growth. In all the different parts of the spiritual life, there is
1778 such close union, such unceasing action and re-action, that each may be both cause and effect. Thus
1779 it is with faith. There can be no true prayer without faith; some measure of faith must precede
1780 prayer. And yet prayer is also the way to more faith; there can be no higher degrees of faith except
1781 through much prayer. This is the lesson Jesus teaches here. There is nothing needs so much to grow
1782 as our faith. Your faith groweth exceedingly,' is said of one Church. When Jesus spoke the words,
1783 According to your faith be it unto you,' He announced the law of the kingdom, which tells us that
1784 all have not equal degrees of faith, that the same person has not always the same degree, and that
1785 the measure of faith must always determine the measure of power and of blessing. If we want to
1786 know where and how our faith is to grow, the Master points us to the throne of God. It is in prayer,
1787 in the exercise of the faith I have, in fellowship with the living God, that faith can increase. Faith
1788 can only live by feeding on what is Divine, on God Himself.

1789
1790 It is in the adoring worship of God, the waiting on Him and for Him, the deep silence of soul that
1791 yields itself for God to reveal Himself, that the capacity for knowing and trusting God will be
1792 developed. It is as we take His word from the Blessed Book, and bring it to Himself, asking him to
1793 speak it to us with His living loving voice, that the power will come fully to believe and receive the
1794 word as God's own word to us. It is in prayer, in living contact with God in living faith, that faith,
1795 the power to trust God, and in that trust, to accept everything He says, to accept every possibility He
1796 has offered to our faith will become strong in us. Many Christians cannot understand what is meant
1797 by the much prayer they sometimes hear spoken of: they can form no conception, nor do they feel
1798 the need, of spending hours with God. But what the Master says, the experience of His people has
1799 confirmed: men of strong faith are men of much prayer.

1800
1801 This just brings us back again to the lesson we learned when Jesus, before telling us to believe that
1802 we receive what we ask, first said, Have faith in God.' It is God, the living God, into whom our faith
1803 must strike its roots deep and broad; then it will be strong to remove mountains and cast out devils.
1804 If ye have faith, nothing shall be impossible to you.' Oh! if we do but give ourselves up to the work

1805 God has for us in the world, coming into contact with the mountains and the devils there are to be
1806 cast away and cast out, we should soon comprehend the need there is of much faith, and of much
1807 prayer, as the soil in which alone faith can be cultivated. Christ Jesus is our life, the life of our faith
1808 too. It is His life in us that makes us strong, and makes us simple to believe. It is in the dying to self
1809 which much prayer implies, in closer union to Jesus, that the spirit of faith will come in power.
1810 Faith needs prayer for its full growth.

1811
1812 And prayer needs fasting for its full growth: this is the second lesson. Prayer is the one hand with
1813 which we grasp the invisible; fasting, the other, with which we let loose and cast away the visible.
1814 In nothing is man more closely connected with the world of sense than in his need of food, and his
1815 enjoyment of it. It was the fruit, good for food, with which man was tempted and fell in Paradise. It
1816 was with bread to be made of stones that Jesus, when an hungered, was tempted in the wilderness,
1817 and in fasting that He triumphed. The body has been redeemed to be a temple of the Holy Spirit; it
1818 is in body as well as spirit, it is very specially, Scripture says, in eating and drinking, we are to
1819 glorify God. It is to be feared that there are many Christians to whom this eating to the glory of God
1820 has not yet become a spiritual reality. And the first thought suggested by Jesus' words in regard to
1821 fasting and prayer, is, that it is only in a life of moderation and temperance and self-denial that there
1822 will be the heart or the strength to pray much.

1823
1824 But then there is also its more literal meaning. Sorrow and anxiety cannot eat: joy celebrates its
1825 feasts with eating and drinking. There may come times of intense desire, when it is strongly felt
1826 how the body, with its appetites, lawful though they be, still hinder the spirit in its battle with the
1827 powers of darkness, and the need is felt of keeping it under. We are creatures of the senses: our
1828 mind is helped by what comes to us embodied in concrete form; fasting helps to express, to deepen,
1829 and to confirm the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything, to sacrifice ourselves, to attain
1830 what we seek for the kingdom of God. And He who accepted the fasting and sacrifice of the Son,
1831 knows to value and accept and reward with spiritual power the soul that is thus ready to give up all
1832 for Christ and His kingdom.

1833
1834 And then follows a still wider application. Prayer is the reaching out after God and the unseen;
1835 fasting, the letting go of all that is of the seen and temporal. While ordinary Christians imagine that
1836 all that is not positively forbidden and sinful is lawful to them, and seek to retain as much as
1837 possible of this world, with its property, its literature, its enjoyments, the truly consecrated soul is as
1838 the soldier who carries only what he needs for the warfare. Laying aside every weight, as well as the
1839 easily besetting sin, afraid of entangling himself with the affairs of this life, he seeks to lead a
1840 Nazarite life, as one specially set apart for the Lord and His service. Without such voluntary
1841 separation, even from what is lawful, no one will attain power in prayer: this kind goeth not out but
1842 by fasting and prayer.

1843
1844 Disciples of Jesus! who have asked the Master to teach you to pray, come now and accept His
1845 lessons. He tells you that prayer is the path to faith, strong faith, that can cast out devils. He tells
1846 you: 'If ye have faith, nothing shall be impossible to you;' let this glorious promise encourage you to
1847 pray much. Is the prize not worth the price? Shall we not give up all to follow Jesus in the path He
1848 opens to us here; shall we not, if need be, fast? Shall we not do anything that neither the body nor
1849 the world around hinder us in our great life-work,—having intercourse with our God in prayer, that
1850 we may become men of faith, whom He can use in His work of saving the world.

1851
1852 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

1853

1854
1855
1856 O Lord Jesus! how continually Thou hast to reprove us for our unbelief! How strange it must appear
1857 to Thee, this terrible incapacity of trusting our Father and His promises. Lord! let Thy reproof, with
1858 its searching, Because of your unbelief,' sink into the very depths of our hearts, and reveal to us
1859 how much of the sin and suffering around us is our blame. And then teach us, Blessed Lord, that
1860 there is a place where faith can be learned and gained,—even in the prayer and fasting that brings
1861 into living and abiding fellowship with Thyself and the Father.

1862
1863 O Saviour! Thou Thyself art the Author and the Perfecter of our faith; teach us what it is to let Thee
1864 live in us by Thy Holy Spirit. Lord! our efforts and prayers for grace to believe have been so
1865 unavailing. We know why it was: we sought for strength in ourselves to be given from Thee. Holy
1866 Jesus! do at length teach us the mystery of Thy life in us, and how Thou, by Thy Spirit, dost
1867 undertake to live in us the life of faith, to see to it that our faith shall not fail. O let us see that our
1868 faith will just be a part of that wonderful prayer-life which Thou givest in them who expect their
1869 training for the ministry of intercession, not in word and thought only, but in the Holy Unction Thou
1870 givest, the inflowing of the Spirit of Thine own life. And teach us how, in fasting and prayer, we
1871 may grow up to the faith to which nothing shall be impossible. Amen.

1872
1873 NOTE

1874
1875 At the time when Blumhardt was passing through his terrible conflict with the evil spirits in those
1876 who were possessed, and seeking to cast them out by prayer, he often wondered what it was that
1877 hindered the answer. One day a friend, to whom he had spoken of his trouble, directed his attention
1878 to our Lord's words about fasting. Blumhardt resolved to give himself to fasting, sometimes for
1879 more than thirty hours. From reflection and experience he gained the conviction that it is of more
1880 importance than is generally thought. He says, Inasmuch as the fasting is before God, a practical
1881 proof that the thing we ask is to us a matter of true and pressing interest, and inasmuch as in a high
1882 degree it strengthens the intensity and power of the prayer, and becomes the unceasing practical
1883 expression of a prayer without words, I could believe that it would not be without efficacy,
1884 especially as the Master's words had reference to a case like the present. I tried it, without telling
1885 any one, and in truth the later conflict was extraordinarily lightened by it. I could speak with much
1886 greater restfulness and decision. I did not require to be so long present with the sick one; and I felt
1887 that I could influence without being present.'

1888
1889
1890
1891 FOURTEENTH LESSON.

1892
1893 When ye stand praying, forgive;'

1894
1895 Or, Prayer and Love.

1896
1897 And whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one; that your Father also
1898 which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.'—Mark xi. 25.

1899
1900 THESE words follow immediately on the great prayer-promise, All things whatsoever ye pray,
1901 believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them.' We have already seen how the words
1902 that preceded that promise, Have faith in God,' taught us that in prayer all depends upon our

1903 relation to God being clear; these words that follow on it remind us that our relation with fellow-
1904 men must be clear too. Love to God and love to our neighbour are inseparable: the prayer from a
1905 heart, that is either not right with God on the one side, or with men on the other, cannot prevail.
1906 Faith and love are essential to each other.

1907
1908 We find that this is a thought to which our Lord frequently gave expression. In the Sermon on the
1909 Mount (Matt. v. 23, 24), when speaking of the sixth commandment, He taught His disciples how
1910 impossible acceptable worship to the Father was if everything were not right with the brother: If
1911 thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee,
1912 leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come
1913 and offer thy gift.' And so later, when speaking of prayer to God, after having taught us to pray,
1914 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors,' He added at the close of the prayer: If
1915 you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.' At the close
1916 of the parable of the unmerciful servant He applies His teaching in the words: So shall also my
1917 Heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.' And so here,
1918 beside the dried-up fig-tree, where He speaks of the wonderful power of faith and the prayer of
1919 faith, He all at once, apparently without connection, introduces the thought, Whosoever ye stand
1920 praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one; that your Father also which is in heaven may
1921 forgive you your trespasses.' It is as if the Lord had learned during His life at Nazareth and
1922 afterwards that disobedience to the law of love to men was the great sin even of praying people, and
1923 the great cause of the feebleness of their prayer. And it is as if He wanted to lead us into His own
1924 blessed experience that nothing gives such liberty of access and such power in believing as the
1925 consciousness that we have given ourselves in love and compassion, for those whom God loves.

1926
1927 The first lesson taught here is that of a forgiving disposition. We pray, Forgive, even as we have
1928 forgiven.' Scripture says, Forgive one another, even as God also in Christ forgave you.' God's full
1929 and free forgiveness is to be the rule of ours with men. Otherwise our reluctant, half-hearted
1930 forgiveness, which is not forgiveness at all, will be God's rule with us. Every prayer rests upon our
1931 faith in God's pardoning grace. If God dealt with us after our sins, not one prayer could be heard.
1932 Pardon opens the door to all God's love and blessing: because God has pardoned all our sin, our
1933 prayer can prevail to obtain all we need. The deep sure ground of answer to prayer is God's
1934 forgiving love. When it has taken possession of the heart, we pray in faith. But also, when it has
1935 taken possession of the heart, we live in love. God's forgiving disposition, revealed in His love to
1936 us, becomes a disposition in us; as the power of His forgiving love shed abroad and dwelling within
1937 us, we forgive even as He forgives. If there be great and grievous injury or injustice done us, we
1938 seek first of all to possess a Godlike disposition; to be kept from a sense of wounded honour, from a
1939 desire to maintain our rights, or from rewarding the offender as he has deserved. In the little
1940 annoyances of daily life, we are watchful not to excuse the hasty temper, the sharp word, the quick
1941 judgment, with the thought that we mean no harm, that we do not keep the anger long, or that it
1942 would be too much to expect from feeble human nature, that we should really forgive the way God
1943 and Christ do. No, we take the command literally, Even as Christ forgave, so also do ye.' The blood
1944 that cleanses the conscience from dead works, cleanses from selfishness too; the love it reveals is
1945 pardoning love, that takes possession of us and flows through us to others. Our forgiving love to
1946 men is the evidence of the reality of God's forgiving love in us, and so the condition of the prayer of
1947 faith.

1948
1949 There is a second, more general lesson: our daily life in the world is made the test of our intercourse
1950 with God in prayer. How often the Christian, when he comes to pray, does his utmost to cultivate
1951 certain frames of mind which he thinks will be pleasing. He does not understand, or forgets, that life

1952 does not consist of so many loose pieces, of which now the one, then the other, can be taken up.
1953 Life is a whole, and the pious frame of the hour of prayer is judged of by God from the ordinary
1954 frame of the daily life of which the hour of prayer is but a small part. Not the feeling I call up, but
1955 the tone of my life during the day, is God's criterion of what I really am and desire. My drawing
1956 nigh to God is of one piece with my intercourse with men and earth: failure here will cause failure
1957 there. And that not only when there is the distinct consciousness of anything wrong between my
1958 neighbour and myself; but the ordinary current of my thinking and judging, the unloving thoughts
1959 and words I allow to pass unnoticed, can hinder my prayer. The effectual prayer of faith comes out
1960 from a life given up to the will and the love of God. Not according to what I try to be when praying,
1961 but what I am when not praying, is my prayer dealt with by God.

1962
1963 We may gather these thoughts into a third lesson: In our life with men the one thing on which
1964 everything depends is love. The spirit of forgiveness is the spirit of love. Because God is love, He
1965 forgives: it is only when we are dwelling in love that we can forgive as God forgives. In love to the
1966 brethren we have the evidence of love to the Father, the ground of confidence before God, and the
1967 assurance that our prayer will be heard, (1 John iv. 20, iii. 18-21, 23.). Let us love in deed and truth;
1968 hereby shall we assure our heart before Him. If our heart condemn us not, we have boldness toward
1969 God, and whatever we ask, we receive of Him.' Neither faith nor work will profit if we have not
1970 love; it is love that unites with God, it is love that proves the reality of faith. As essential as in the
1971 word that precedes the great prayer-promise in Mark xi. 24, 'Have faith in God,' is this one that
1972 follows it, 'Have love to men.' The right relations to the living God above me, and the living men
1973 around me, are the conditions of effectual prayer.

1974
1975 This love is of special consequence when we labour for such and pray for them. We sometimes give
1976 ourselves to work for Christ, from zeal for His cause, as we call it, or for our own spiritual health,
1977 without giving ourselves in personal self-sacrificing love for those whose souls we seek. No wonder
1978 that our faith is feeble and does not conquer. To look on each wretched one, however unloveable he
1979 be, in the light of the tender love of Jesus the Shepherd seeking the lost; to see Jesus Christ in him,
1980 and to take him up, for Jesus' sake, in a heart that really loves, —this, this is the secret of believing
1981 prayer and successful effort. Jesus, in speaking of forgiveness, speaks of love as its root. Just as in
1982 the Sermon on the Mount He connected His teaching and promises about prayer with the call to be
1983 merciful, as the Father in heaven is merciful (Matt. v. 7, 9, 22, 38-48), so we see it here: a loving
1984 life is the condition of believing prayer.

1985
1986 It has been said: There is nothing so heart-searching as believing prayer, or even the honest effort to
1987 pray in faith. O let us not turn the edge of that self-examination by the thought that God does not
1988 hear our prayer for reasons known to Himself alone. By no means. Ye ask and receive not, because
1989 ye ask amiss.' Let that word of God search us. Let us ask whether our prayer be indeed the
1990 expression of a life wholly given over to the will of God and the love of man. Love is the only soil
1991 in which faith can strike its roots and thrive. As it throws its arms up, and opens its heart
1992 heavenward, the Father always looks to see if it has them opened towards the evil and the unworthy
1993 too. In that love, not indeed the love of perfect attainment, but the love of fixed purpose and sincere
1994 obedience, faith can alone obtain the blessing. It is he who gives himself to let the love of God
1995 dwell in him, and in the practice of daily life to love as God loves, who will have the power to
1996 believe in the Love that hears his every prayer. It is the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne: it is
1997 suffering and forbearing love that prevails with God in prayer. The merciful shall obtain mercy; the
1998 meek shall inherit the earth.

1999
2000 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

2001
2002
2003
2004 Blessed Father! Thou art Love, and only he that abideth in love abideth in Thee and in fellowship
2005 with Thee. The Blessed Son hath this day again taught me how deeply true this is of my fellowship
2006 with Thee in prayer. O my God! let Thy love, shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Spirit, be in me a
2007 fountain of love to all around me, that out of a life in love may spring the power of believing prayer.
2008 O my Father! grant by the Holy Spirit that this may be my experience, that a life in love to all
2009 around me is the gate to a life in the love of my God. And give me especially to find in the joy with
2010 which I forgive day by day whoever might offend me, the proof that Thy forgiveness to me is a
2011 power and a life.

2012
2013 Lord Jesus! my Blessed Teacher! teach Thou me to forgive and to love. Let the power of Thy blood
2014 make the pardon of my sins such a reality, that forgiveness, as shown by Thee to me, and by me to
2015 others, may be the very joy of heaven. Show me whatever in my intercourse with fellowmen might
2016 hinder my fellowship with God, so that my daily life in my own home and in society may be the
2017 school in which strength and confidence are gathered for the prayer of faith. Amen.

2018
2019
2020
2021 FIFTEENTH LESSON.

2022
2023 If two agree;'

2024
2025 Or, The Power of United Prayer

2026
2027 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall
2028 ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered
2029 together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them.—Matt. xviii. 19, 20.

2030
2031 ONE of the first lessons of our Lord in His school of prayer was: Not to be seen of men. Enter thy
2032 inner chamber; be alone with the Father. When He has thus taught us that the meaning of prayer is
2033 personal individual contact with God, He comes with a second lesson: You have need not only of
2034 secret solitary, but also of public united prayer. And He gives us a very special promise for the
2035 united prayer of two or three who agree in what they ask. As a tree has its root hidden in the ground
2036 and its stem growing up into the sunlight, so prayer needs equally for its full development the
2037 hidden secrecy in which the soul meets God alone, and the public fellowship with those who find in
2038 the name of Jesus their common meeting-place.

2039
2040 The reason why this must be so is plain. The bond that unites a man to his fellow-men is no less real
2041 and close than that which unites him to God: he is one with them. Grace renews not alone our
2042 relation to God but to man too. We not only learn to say My Father,' but Our Father.' Nothing
2043 would be more unnatural than that the children of a family should always meet their father
2044 separately, but never in the united expression of their desires or their love. Believers are not only
2045 members of one family, but even of one body. Just as each member of the body depends on the
2046 other, and the full action of the spirit dwelling in the body depends on the union and co-operation of
2047 all, so Christians cannot reach the full blessing God is ready to bestow through His Spirit, but as
2048 they seek and receive it in fellowship with each other. It is in the union and fellowship of believers

2049 that the Spirit can manifest His full power. It was to the hundred and twenty continuing in one place
2050 together, and praying with one accord, that the Spirit came from the throne of the glorified Lord.

2051
2052 The marks of true united prayer are given us in these words of our Lord. The first is agreement as to
2053 the thing asked. There must not only be generally the consent to agree with anything another may
2054 ask: there must be some special thing, matter of distinct united desire; the agreement must be, as all
2055 prayer, in spirit and in truth. In such agreement it will become very clear to us what exactly we are
2056 asking, whether we may confidently ask according to God's will, and whether we are ready to
2057 believe that we have received what we ask.

2058
2059 The second mark is the gathering in, or into, the Name of Jesus. We shall afterwards have much
2060 more to learn of the need and the power of the Name of Jesus in prayer; here our Lord teaches us
2061 that the Name must be the centre of union to which believers gather, the bond of union that makes
2062 them one, just as a home contains and unites all who are in it. The Name of the Lord is a strong
2063 tower; the righteous runneth into it and escape.' That Name is such a reality to those who
2064 understand and believe it, that to meet within it is to have Himself present. The love and unity of
2065 His disciples have to Jesus infinite attraction: Where two or three are gathered in my Name, there
2066 am I in the midst of them.' It is the living presence of Jesus, in the fellowship of His loving praying
2067 disciples, that gives united prayer its power.

2068
2069 The third mark is, the sure answer: It shall be done for them of my Father.' A prayer-meeting for
2070 maintaining religious fellowship, or seeking our own edification, may have its use; this was not the
2071 Saviour's view in its appointment. He meant it as a means of securing special answer to prayer. A
2072 prayer meeting without recognised answer to prayer ought to be an anomaly. When any of us have
2073 distinct desires in regard to which we feel too weak to exercise the needful faith, we ought to seek
2074 strength in the help of other. In the unity of faith and of love and of the Spirit, the power of the
2075 Name and the Presence of Jesus acts more freely and the answer comes more surely. The mark that
2076 there has been true united prayer is the fruit, the answer, the receiving of the thing we have asked: I
2077 say unto you, It shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.'

2078
2079 What an unspeakable privilege this of united prayer is, and what a power it might be. If the
2080 believing husband and wife knew that they were joined together in the Name of Jesus to experience
2081 His presence and power in united prayer (1 Peter); if friends believed what mighty help two or three
2082 praying in concert could give each other; if in every prayer meeting the coming together in the
2083 Name, the faith in the Presence, and the expectation of the answer, stood in the foreground; if in
2084 every Church united effectual prayer were regarded as one of the chief purposes for which they are
2085 banded together, the highest exercise of their power as a Church; if in the Church universal the
2086 coming of the kingdom, the coming of the King Himself, first in the mighty outpouring of His Holy
2087 Spirit, then in His own glorious person, were really matter of unceasing united crying to God;—O
2088 who can say what blessing might come to, and through, those who thus agreed to prove God in the
2089 fulfilment of His promise.

2090
2091 In the Apostle Paul we see very distinctly what a reality his faith in the power of united prayer was.
2092 To the Romans he writes (xv. 30): I beseech you, brethren, by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive
2093 together with me in your prayer to God for me.' He expects in answer to be delivered from his
2094 enemies, and to be prospered in his work. To the Corinthians (2 Cor. i. 11), God will still deliver us,
2095 ye also helping together on our behalf by your supplications;' their prayer is to have a real share in
2096 his deliverance. To the Ephesians he writes: With all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons
2097 in the Spirit for all the saints and on my behalf, that utterance may be given unto me.' His power

2098 and success in his ministry he makes to depend on their prayers. With the Philippians (i. 19) he
2099 expects that his trials will turn to his salvation and the progress of the gospel through your
2100 supplications and the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ.; To the Colossians (iv. 3) he adds to the
2101 injunction to continue steadfast in prayer: Withal praying for us too, that God may open unto us a
2102 door for the word.' And to the Thessalonians (2 Thess. iii. 1) he writes: Finally, brethren, pray for
2103 us, that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified, and that we may be delivered from
2104 unreasonable men.' It is everywhere evident that Paul felt himself the member of a body, on the
2105 sympathy and co-operation of which he was dependent, and that he counted on the prayers of these
2106 Churches to gain for him, what otherwise might not be given. The prayers of the Church were to
2107 him as real a factor in the work of the kingdom, as the power of God.

2108
2109 Who can say what power a Church could develop and exercise, if it gave itself to the work of prayer
2110 day and night for the coming of the kingdom, for God's power on His servants and His word, for
2111 the glorifying of God in the salvation of souls? Most Churches think their members are gathered
2112 into one simply to take care of and build up each other. They know not that God rules the world by
2113 the prayers of His saints; that prayer is the power by which Satan is conquered; that by prayer the
2114 Church on earth has disposal of the powers of the heavenly world. They do not remember that Jesus
2115 has, by His promise, consecrated every assembly in His Name to be a gate of heaven, where His
2116 Presence is to be felt, and His Power experienced in the Father fulfilling their desires.

2117
2118 We cannot sufficiently thank God for the blessed week of united prayer, with which Christendom in
2119 our days opens every year. As proof of our unity and our faith in the power of united prayer, as a
2120 training-school for the enlargement of our hearts to take in all the needs of the Church universal, as
2121 a help to united persevering prayer, it is of unspeakable value. But very specially as a stimulus to
2122 continued union in prayer in the smaller circles, its blessing has been great. And it will become even
2123 greater, as God's people recognise what it is, all to meet as one in the Name of Jesus to have His
2124 presence in the midst of a body all united in the Holy Spirit, and boldly to claim the promise that it
2125 shall be done of the Father what they agree to ask.

2126
2127 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY'

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2130
2131 Blessed Lord! who didst in Thy high-priestly prayer ask so earnestly for the unity of Thy people,
2132 teach us how Thou dost invite and urge us to this unity by Thy precious promise given to united
2133 prayer. It is when we are one in love and desire that our faith has Thy presence and the Father's
2134 answer.

2135
2136 O Father! we pray for Thy people, and for every smaller circle of those who meet together, that they
2137 may be one. Remove, we pray, all selfishness and self-interest, all narrowness of heart and
2138 estrangement, by which that unity is hindered. Cast out the spirit of the world and the flesh, through
2139 which Thy promise loses all its power. O let the thought of Thy presence and the Father's favour
2140 draw us all nearer to each other.

2141
2142 Grant especially Blessed Lord, that Thy Church may believe that it is by the power of united prayer
2143 that she can bind and loose in heaven; that Satan can be cast out; that souls can be saved; that
2144 mountains can be removed; that the kingdom can be hastened. And grant, good Lord! that in the
2145 circle with which I pray, the prayer of the Church may indeed be the power through which Thy
2146 Name and Word are glorified. Amen.

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SIXTEENTH LESSON.

Speedily, though bearing long;’

Or, The Power of Persevering Prayer.

And He spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint. . . .
And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge saith. And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry to Him day and night, and He is long-suffering over them? I say unto you, that He will avenge them speedily.’—Luke xviii. 108.

OF all the mysteries of the prayer world, the need of persevering prayer is one of the greatest. That the Lord, who is so loving and longing to bless, should have to be supplicated time after time, sometimes year after year, before the answer comes, we cannot easily understand. It is also one of the greatest practical difficulties in the exercise of believing prayer. When, after persevering supplication, our prayer remains unanswered, it is often easiest for our slothful flesh, and it has all the appearance of pious submission, to think that we must now cease praying, because God may have His secret reason for withholding His answer to our request.

It is by faith alone that the difficulty is overcome. When once faith has taken its stand upon God’s word, and the Name of Jesus, and has yielded itself to the leading of the Spirit to seek God’s will and honour alone in its prayer, it need not be discouraged by delay. It knows from Scripture that the power of believing prayer is simply irresistible; real faith can never be disappointed. It knows how, just as water, to exercise the irresistible power it can have, must be gathered up and accumulated, until the stream can come down in full force, there must often be a heaping up of prayer, until God sees that the measure is full, and the answer comes. It knows how, just as the ploughman has to take his ten thousand steps, and sow his ten thousand seeds, each one a part of the preparation for the final harvest, so there is a need-be for oft-repeated persevering prayer, all working out some desired blessing. It knows for certain that not a single believing prayer can fail of its effect in heaven, but has its influence, and is treasured up to work out an answer in due time to him who persevereth to the end. It knows that it has to do not with human thoughts or possibilities, but with the word of the living God. And so even as Abraham through so many years in hope believed against hope,’ and then through faith and patience inherited the promise,’ it counts that the long-suffering of the Lord is salvation, waiting and hastening unto the coming of its Lord to fulfil His promise.

To enable us, when the answer to our prayer does not come at once, to combine quiet patience and joyful confidence in our persevering prayer, we must specially try to understand the two words in which our Lord sets forth the character and conduct, not of the unjust judge, but of our God and Father towards those whom He allows to cry day and night to Him: He is long-suffering over them; He will avenge them speedily.’

He will avenge them speedily, the Master says. The blessing is all prepared; He is not only willing but most anxious to give them what they ask; everlasting love burns with the longing desire to reveal itself fully to its beloved, and to satisfy their needs. God will not delay one moment longer than is absolutely necessary; He will do all in His power to hasten and speed the answer.

2196
2197 But why, if this be true and His power be infinite, does it often last so long with the answer to
2198 prayer? And why must God's own elect so often, in the midst of suffering and conflict, cry day and
2199 night? He is long-suffering over them.' Behold! the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the
2200 earth, being long-suffering over it, till it receive the early and the latter rain.' The husbandman does
2201 indeed long for his harvest, but knows that it must have its full time of sunshine and rain, and has
2202 long patience. A child so often wants to pick the half-ripe fruit; the husbandman knows to wait till
2203 the proper time. Man, in his spiritual nature too, is under the law of gradual growth that reigns in all
2204 created life. It is only in the path of development that he can reach his divine destiny. And it is the
2205 Father, in whose hands are the times and seasons, who alone knows the moment when the soul or
2206 the Church is ripened to that fulness of faith in which it can really take and keep the blessing. As a
2207 father who longs to have his only child home from school, and yet waits patiently till the time of
2208 training is completed, so it is with God and His children: He is the long-suffering One, and answers
2209 speedily.

2210
2211 The insight into this truth leads the believer to cultivate the corresponding dispositions: patience and
2212 faith, waiting and hasting, are the secret of his perseverance. By faith in the promise of God, we
2213 know that we have the petitions we have asked of Him. Faith takes and holds the answer in the
2214 promise, as an unseen spiritual possession, rejoices in it, and praises for it. But there is a difference
2215 between the faith that thus holds the word and knows that it has the answer, and the clearer, fuller,
2216 riper faith that obtains the promise as a present experience. It is in persevering, not unbelieving, but
2217 confident and praising prayer, that the soul grows up into that full union with its Lord in which it
2218 can enter upon the possession of the blessing in Him. There may be in these around us, there may be
2219 in that great system of being of which we are part, there may be in God's government, things that
2220 have to be put right through our prayer, ere the answer can fully come: the faith that has, according
2221 to the command, believed that it has received, can allow God to take His time: it knows it has
2222 prevailed and must prevail. In quiet, persistent, and determined perseverance it continues in prayer
2223 and thanksgiving until the blessing come. And so we see combined what at first sight appears so
2224 contradictory; the faith that rejoices in the answer of the unseen God as a present possession, with
2225 the patience that cries day and night until it be revealed. The speedily of God's long-suffering is met
2226 by the triumphant but patient faith of His waiting child.

2227
2228 Our great danger in this school of the answer delayed, is the temptation to think that, after all, it
2229 may not be God's will to give us what we ask. If our prayer be according to God's word, and under
2230 the leading of the Spirit, let us not give way to these fears. Let us learn to give God time. God needs
2231 time with us. If we only give Him time, that is, time in the daily fellowship with Himself, for Him
2232 to exercise the full influence of His presence on us, and time, day by day, in the course of our being
2233 kept waiting, for faith to prove its reality and to fill our whole being, He Himself will lead us from
2234 faith to vision; we shall see the glory of God. Let no delay shake our faith. Of faith it holds good:
2235 first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. Each believing prayer brings a step nearer
2236 the final victory. Each believing prayer helps to ripen the fruit and bring us nearer to it; it fills up the
2237 measure of prayer and faith known to God alone; it conquers the hindrances in the unseen world; it
2238 hastens the end. Child of God! give the Father time. He is long-suffering over you. He wants the
2239 blessing to be rich, and full, and sure; give Him time, while you cry day and night. Only remember
2240 the word: I say unto you, He will avenge them speedily.'

2241
2242 The blessing of such persevering prayer is unspeakable. There is nothing so heart-searching as the
2243 prayer of faith. It teaches you to discover and confess, and give up everything that hinders the
2244 coming of the blessing; everything there may be not in accordance with the Father's will. It leads to

2245 closer fellowship with Him who alone can teach to pray, to a more entire surrender to draw nigh
2246 under no covering but that of the blood, and the Spirit. It calls to a closer and more simple abiding
2247 in Christ alone. Christian! give God time. He will perfect that which concerneth you. Long-
2248 suffering—speedily,’ this is God’s watchword as you enter the gates of prayer: be it yours too.
2249

2250 Let it be thus whether you pray for yourself, or for others. All labour, bodily or mental, needs time
2251 and effort: we must give up ourselves to it. Nature discovers her secrets and yields her treasures
2252 only to diligent and thoughtful labour. However little we can understand it, in the spiritual
2253 husbandry it is the same: the seed we sow in the soil of heaven, the efforts we put forth, and the
2254 influence we seek to exert in the world above, need our whole being: we must give ourselves to
2255 prayer. But let us hold fast the great confidence, that in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.
2256

2257 And let us specially learn the lesson as we pray for the Church of Christ. She is indeed as the poor
2258 widow, in the absence of her Lord, apparently at the mercy of her adversary, helpless to obtain
2259 redress. Let us, when we pray for His Church or any portion of it, under the power of the world,
2260 asking Him to visit her with the mighty workings of His Spirit and to prepare her for His coming,
2261 let us pray in the assured faith: prayer does help, praying always and not fainting will bring the
2262 answer. Only give God time. And then keep crying day and night. Hear what the unrighteous judge
2263 saith. And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry to Him day and night, and He is long-
2264 suffering over them. I say unto you, He will avenge them speedily.’
2265

2266 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’
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2269

2270 O Lord my God! teach me now to know Thy way, and in faith to apprehend what Thy Beloved Son
2271 has taught: He will avenge them speedily.’ Let Thy tender love, and the delight Thou hast in hearing
2272 and blessing Thy children, lead me implicitly to accept Thy promise, that we receive what we
2273 believe, that we have the petitions we ask, and that the answer will in due time be seen. Lord! we
2274 understand the seasons in nature, and know to wait with patience for the fruit we long for—O fill us
2275 with the assurance that not one moment longer than is needed wilt Thou delay, and that faith will
2276 hasten the answer.
2277

2278 Blessed Master! Thou hast said that it is a sign of God’s elect that they cry day and night. O teach
2279 us to understand this. Thou knowest how speedily we grow faint and weary. It is as if the Divine
2280 Majesty is so much beyond the need or the reach of continued supplication, that it does not become
2281 us to be too importunate. O Lord! do teach me how real the labour of prayer is. I know how here on
2282 earth, when I have failed in an undertaking, I can often succeed by renewed and more continuing
2283 effort, by giving more time and thought: show me how, by giving myself more entirely to prayer, to
2284 live in prayer, I shall obtain what I ask. And above all, O my blessed Teacher! Author and perfecter
2285 of faith, let by Thy grace my whole life be one of faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave
2286 Himself for me—in whom my prayer gains acceptance, in whom I have the assurance of the
2287 answer, in whom the answer will be mine. Lord Jesus! in this faith I will pray always and not faint.
2288 Amen.
2289

2290 NOTE
2291

2292 The need of persevering importunate prayer appears to some to be at variance with the faith which
2293 knows that it has received what it asks (Mark xi. 24). One of the mysteries of the Divine life is the

2294 harmony between the gradual and the sudden, immediate full possession, and slow imperfect
2295 appropriation. And so here persevering prayer appears to be the school in which the soul is
2296 strengthened for the boldness of faith. And with the diversity of operations of the Spirit there may
2297 be some in whom faith takes more the form of persistent waiting; while to others, triumphant
2298 thanksgiving appears the only proper expressions of the assurance of having been heard.
2299

2300 In a remarkable way the need of persevering prayer, and the gradual rising into greater ease in
2301 obtaining answer, is illustrated in the life of Blumhardt. Complaints had been lodged against him of
2302 neglecting his work as a minister of the gospel, and devoting himself to the healing of the sick; and
2303 especially his unauthorized healing of the sick belonging to other congregations. In his defense he
2304 writes: I simply ventured to do what becomes one who has the charge of souls, and to pray
2305 according to the command of the Lord in James i. 6, 7. In no way did I trust to my own power, or
2306 imagine that I had any gift that others had not. But this is true, I set myself to the work as a minister
2307 of the gospel, who has a right to pray. But I speedily discovered that the gates of heaven were not
2308 fully opened to me. Often I was inclined to retire in despair. But the sight of the sick ones, who
2309 could find help nowhere, gave me no rest. I thought of the word of the Lord: "Ask, and it shall be
2310 given you" (Luke xi. 9, 10). And farther, I thought that if the Church and her ministers had, through
2311 unbelief, sloth, and disobedience lost what was needed for overcoming of the power of Satan, it was
2312 just for such times of leanness and famine that the Lord had spoken the parable of the friend at
2313 midnight and his three loaves. I felt that I was not worthy thus at midnight, in a time of great
2314 darkness, to appear before God as His friend and ask for a member of my congregation what he
2315 needed. And yet, to leave him uncared for, I could not either. And so I kept knocking, as the parable
2316 directs, or, as some have said, with great presumption and tempting God. Be this as it may, I could
2317 not leave my guest unprovided. At this time the parable of the widow became very precious to me. I
2318 saw that the Church was the widow, and I was a minister of the Church. I had the right to be her
2319 mouthpiece against the adversary; but for a long time the Lord would not. I asked nothing more
2320 than the three loaves; what I needed for my guest. At last the Lord listened to the importunate
2321 beggar, and helped me. Was it wrong of me to pray thus? The two parables must surely be
2322 applicable somewhere, and where was greater need to be conceived?
2323

2324 And what was the fruit of my prayer? The friend who was at first unwilling, did not say, Go now; I
2325 will myself give to your friend what he needs; I do not require you; but gave it to me as His friend,
2326 to give to my guest. And so I used the three loaves, and had to spare. But the supply was small, and
2327 new guests came; because they saw I had a heart to help them, and that I would take the trouble
2328 even at midnight to go to my friend. When I asked for them, too, I got the needful again, and there
2329 was again to spare. How could I help that the needy continually came to my house? Was I to harden
2330 myself, and say, Why do you come to me? there are large and better homes in the city, go there.
2331 Their answer was, Dear sir, we cannot go there. We have been there: they were very sorry to send
2332 us away so hungry, but they could not undertake to go and ask a friend for what we wanted. Do go,
2333 and get us bread for we suffer great pain. What could I do? They spoke the truth, and their suffering
2334 touched my heart. However much labour it cost me, I went each time again, and got the three
2335 loaves. Often I got what I asked much quicker than at first, and also much more abundantly. But all
2336 did not care for this bread, so some left my home hungry.'^1
2337

2338 In his first struggles with the evil spirits, it took him more than eighteen months of prayer and
2339 labour before the final victory was gained. Afterwards he had such ease of access to the throne, and
2340 stood in such close communication with the unseen world, that often, with letters came asking
2341 prayer for sick people, he could, after just looking upward for a single moment, obtain the answer as
2342 to whether they would be healed.

2343
2344 ^1From Johann Christophe Blumhardt, Ein Lebenabild von F. Etindel.

2345
2346
2347
2348 SEVENTEENTH LESSON.

2349 I know that Thou hearest me always;'

2351
2352 Or Prayer in Harmony with the Being of God.

2353
2354 Father, I thank Thee that Thou heardest me. And I knew that Thou hearest me always.'—John xi.
2355 41, 42.

2356
2357 Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of me, and I shall give Thee.'—Ps. ii. 7, 8.

2358
2359 IN the New Testament we find a distinction made between faith and knowledge. To one is given,
2360 through the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge, according to the same
2361 Spirit; to another faith, in the same Spirit.' In a child or a simple-minded Christian there may be
2362 much faith with little knowledge. Childlike simplicity accepts the truth without difficulty, and often
2363 cares little to give itself or others any reason for its faith but this: God has said. But it is the will of
2364 God that we should love and serve Him, not only with all the heart but also with all the mind; that
2365 we should grow up into an insight into the Divine wisdom and beauty of all His ways and words
2366 and works. It is only thus that the believer will be able fully to approach and rightly to adore the
2367 glory of God's grace; and only thus that our heart can intelligently apprehend the treasures of
2368 wisdom and knowledge there are in redemption, and be prepared to enter fully into the highest note
2369 of the song that rises before the throne: O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge
2370 of God!'

2371
2372 In our prayer life this truth has its full application. While prayer and faith are so simple that the
2373 new-born convert can pray with power, true Christian science finds in the doctrine of prayer some
2374 of its deepest problems. In how far is the power of prayer a reality? If so, how God can grant to
2375 prayer such mighty power? How can the action of prayer be harmonized with the will and the
2376 decrees of God? How can God's sovereignty and our will, God's liberty and ours, be reconciled?—
2377 these and other like questions are fit subjects for Christian meditation and inquiry. The more
2378 earnestly and reverently we approach such mysteries, the more shall we in adoring wonder fall
2379 down to praise Him who hath in prayer given such power to man.

2380
2381 One of the secret difficulties with regard to prayer,—one which, though not expressed, does often
2382 really hinder prayer,—is derived from the perfection of God, in His absolute independence of all
2383 that is outside of Himself. Is He not the Infinite Being, who owes what He is to Himself alone, who
2384 determines Himself, and whose wise and holy will has determined all that is to be? How can prayer
2385 influence Him, or He be moved by prayer to do what otherwise would not be done? Is not the
2386 promise of an answer to prayer simply a condescension to our weakness? Is what is said of the
2387 power—the much-availing power—of prayer anything more than an accommodation to our mode of
2388 thought, because the Deity never can be dependent on any action from without for its doings? And
2389 is not the blessing of prayer simply the influence it exercises upon ourselves?

2390

2391 In seeking an answer to such questions, we find the key in the very being of God, in the mystery of
2392 the Holy Trinity. If God was only one Person, shut up within Himself, there could be no thought of
2393 nearness to Him or influence on Him. But in God there are three Persons. In God we have Father
2394 and Son, who have in the Holy Spirit their living bond of unity and fellowship. When eternal Love
2395 begat the Son, and the Father gave the Son as the Second Person a place next Himself as His Equal
2396 and His Counsellor, there was a way opened for prayer and its influence in the very inmost life of
2397 Deity itself. Just as on earth, so in heaven the whole relation between Father and Son is that of
2398 giving and taking. And if that taking is to be as voluntary and self-determined as the giving, there
2399 must be on the part of the Son an asking and receiving. In the holy fellowship of the Divine Persons,
2400 this asking of the Son was one of the great operations of the Thrice Blessed Life of God. Hence we
2401 have it in Psalm ii.: This day I have begotten Thee: ask of me and I will give Thee.’ The Father gave
2402 the Son the place and the power to act upon Him. The asking of the Son was no mere show or
2403 shadow, but one of those life-movements in which the love of the Father and the Son met and
2404 completed each other. The Father had determined that He should not be alone in His counsels: there
2405 was a Son on whose asking and accepting their fulfilment should depend. And so there was in the
2406 very Being and Life of God an asking of which prayer on earth was to be the reflection and the
2407 outflow. It was not without including this that Jesus said, “I knew that Thou always hearest me.’
2408 Just as the Sonship of Jesus on earth may not be separated from His Sonship in heaven, even so
2409 with His prayer on earth, it is the continuation and the counterpart of His asking in heaven. The
2410 prayer of the man Christ Jesus is the link between the eternal asking of the only-begotten Son in the
2411 bosom of the Father and the prayer of men upon earth. Prayer has its rise and its deepest source in
2412 the very Being of God. In the bosom of Deity nothing is ever done without prayer—the asking of
2413 the Son and the giving of the Father.^1

2414
2415 This may help us somewhat to understand how the prayer of man, coming through the Son, can
2416 have effect upon God. The decrees of God are not decisions made by Him without reference to the
2417 Son, or His petition, or the petition to be sent up through Him. By no means. The Lord Jesus is the
2418 first-begotten, the Head and Heir of all things: all things were created through Him and unto Him,
2419 and all things consist in Him. In the counsels of the Father, the Son, as Representative of all
2420 creation, had always a voice; in the decrees of the eternal purpose there was always room left for the
2421 liberty of the Son as Mediator and Intercessor, and so for the petitions of all who draw nigh to the
2422 Father in the Son.

2423
2424 And if the thought come that this liberty and power of the Son to act upon the Father is at variance
2425 with the immutability of the Divine decrees, let us not forget that there is not with God as with man,
2426 a past by which He is irrevocably bound. God does not live in time with its past and future; the
2427 distinctions of time have no reference to Him who inhabits Eternity. And Eternity is an ever-present
2428 Now, in which the past is never past, and the future always present. To meet our human weakness,
2429 Scripture must speak of past decrees, and a coming future. In reality, the immutability of God’s
2430 counsel is ever still in perfect harmony with His liberty to do whatsoever He will. Not so were the
2431 prayers of the Son and His people taken up into the eternal decrees that their effect should only be
2432 an apparent one; but so, that the Father-heart holds itself open and free to listen to every prayer that
2433 rises through the Son, and that God does indeed allow Himself to be decided by prayer to do what
2434 He otherwise would not have done.

2435
2436 This perfect harmony and union of Divine Sovereignty and human liberty is to us an unfathomable
2437 mystery, because God as THE ETERNAL ONE transcends all our thoughts. But let it be our
2438 comfort and strength to be assured that in the eternal fellowship of the Father and the Son, the
2439 power of prayer has its origin and certainty, and that through our union with the Son, our prayer is

2440 taken up and can have its influence in the inner life of the Blessed Trinity. God's decrees are no iron
2441 framework against which man's liberty would vainly seek to struggle. No. God Himself is the
2442 Living Love, who in His Son as man has entered into the tenderest relation with all that is human,
2443 who through the Holy Spirit takes up all that is human into the Divine life of love, and keeps
2444 Himself free to give every human prayer its place in His government of the world.

2445
2446 It is in the daybreak light of such thoughts that the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity no longer is an
2447 abstract speculation, but the living manifestation of the way in which it were possible for man to be
2448 taken up into the fellowship of God, and his prayer to become a real factor in God's rule of this
2449 earth. And we can, as in the distance, catch glimpses of the light that from the eternal world shines
2450 out on words such as these: THROUGH HIM we have access BY ONE SPIRIT unto THE
2451 FATHER.'

2452
2453 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

2454
2455
2456
2457 Everlasting God! the Three-One and Thrice Holy! in deep reverence would I with veiled face
2458 worship before the holy mystery of Thy Divine Being. And if it please Thee, O most glorious God,
2459 to unveil aught of that mystery, I would bow with fear and trembling, lest I sin against Thee, as I
2460 meditate on Thy glory.

2461
2462 Father! I thank Thee that Thou bearest this name not only as the Father of Thy children here on
2463 earth, but as having from eternity subsisted as the Father with Thine only-begotten Son. I thank
2464 Thee that as Father Thou canst hear our prayer, because Thou hast from eternity given a place in
2465 Thy counsels to the asking of Thy Son. I thank Thee that we have seen in Him on earth, what the
2466 blessed intercourse was He had with Thee in heaven; and how from eternity in all Thy counsels and
2467 decrees there had been room left for His prayer and their answers. And I thank Thee above all that
2468 through His true human nature on Thy throne above, and through Thy Holy Spirit in our human
2469 nature here below, a way has been opened up by which every human cry of need can be taken up
2470 into and touch the Life and the Love of God, and receive in answer whatsoever it shall ask.

2471
2472 Blessed Jesus! in whom as the Son the path of prayer has been opened up, and who givest us
2473 assurance of the answer, we beseech Thee, teach Thy people to pray. O let this each day be the sign
2474 of our sonship, that, like Thee, we know that the Father heareth us always. Amen.

2475
2476 NOTE.

2477
2478 "God hears prayer." This simplest view of prayer is taken throughout Scripture. It dwells not on the
2479 reflex influence of prayer on our heart and life, although it abundantly shows the connection
2480 between prayer as an act, and prayer as a state. It rather fixes with great definiteness the objective or
2481 real purposes of prayer, to obtain blessing, gifts, deliverances from God. Ask and it shall be given,"
2482 Jesus says.

2483
2484 However true and valuable the reflection may be, that God, foreseeing and foreordaining all things,
2485 has also foreseen and foreordained our prayers as links in the chain of events, of cause and effect, as
2486 a real power, yet we feel convinced that this is not the light in which the mind can find peace in this
2487 great subject, nor do we think that here is the attractive power to draw us in prayer. We feel rather
2488 that such a reflection diverts the attention from the Object whence comes the impulse, life, and

2489 strength of prayer. The living God, cotemporary and not merely eternal, ^1 the living, merciful, holy
2490 One, God manifesting Himself to the soul, God saying, "Seek my face;" this is the magnet that
2491 draws us, this alone can open heart and lips. . .

2492
2493 In Jesus Christ the Son of God we have the full solution of the difficulty. He prayed on earth, and
2494 that not merely as man, but as the Son of God incarnate. His prayer on earth is only the
2495 manifestation of His prayer from all eternity, when in the Divine counsel He was set up as the
2496 Christ. . . . The Son was appointed to be heir of all things. From all eternity the Son of God was the
2497 Way, the Mediator. He was, to use our imperfect language, from eternity speaking unto the Father
2498 on behalf of the world.'—SAPHIR, *The Hidden Life*, chap. vi. See also *The Lord's Prayer*, p. 12.

2499
2500 ^1Should it not rather be cotemporary, because eternal, in the proper meaning of this latter word?

2501
2502
2503
2504

2505 EIGHTEENTH LESSON

2506
2507 Whose is this image?'

2508
2509 Or, Prayer in Harmony with the Destiny of Man.

2510
2511 He saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?—Matt. xxi. 20.

2512
2513 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.'—Gen. i. 26.

2514
2515 WHOSE is this image?' It was by this question that Jesus foiled His enemies, when they thought to
2516 take Him, and settled the matter of duty in regard to the tribute. The question and the principle it
2517 involves are of universal application. Nowhere more truly than in man himself. The image he bears
2518 decides his destiny. Bearing God's image, he belongs to God: prayer to God is what he was created
2519 for. Prayer is part of the wondrous likeness he bears to His Divine original; of the deep mystery of
2520 the fellowship of love in which the Three-One has His blessedness, prayer is the earthly image and
2521 likeness.

2522
2523 The more we meditate on what prayer is, and the wonderful power with God which it has, the more
2524 we feel constrained to ask who and what man is, that such a place in God's counsels should have
2525 been allotted to him. Sin has so degraded him, that from what he is now we can form no conception
2526 of what he was meant to be. We must turn back to God's own record of man's creation to discover
2527 there what God's purpose was, and what the capacities with which man was endowed for the
2528 fulfilment of that purpose.

2529
2530 Man's destiny appears clearly from God's language at creation. It was to fill, to subdue, to have
2531 dominion over the earth and all in it. All the three expressions show us that man was meant, as
2532 God's representative, to hold rule here on earth. As God's viceroy he was to fill God's place:
2533 himself subject to God, he was to keep all else in subjection to Him. It was the will of God that all
2534 that was to be done on earth should be done through him: the history of the earth was to be entirely
2535 in his hands.

2536

2537 In accordance with such a destiny was the position he was to occupy, and the power at his disposal.
2538 When an earthly sovereign sends a viceroy to a distant province, it is understood that he advises as
2539 to the policy to be adopted, and that that advice is acted on: that he is at liberty to apply for troops
2540 and the other means needed for carrying out the policy or maintaining the dignity of the empire. If
2541 his policy be not approved of, he is recalled to make way for some one who better understands his
2542 sovereign's desires' as long as he is trusted, his advice is carried out. As God's representative man
2543 was to have ruled; all was to have been done under his will and rule; on his advice and at his request
2544 heaven was to have bestowed its blessing on earth. His prayer was to have been the wonderful,
2545 though simple and most natural channel, in which the intercourse between the King in heaven and
2546 His faithful servant man, as lord of this world, was to have been maintained. The destinies of the
2547 world were given into the power of the wishes, the will, the prayer of man.
2548

2549 With sin all this underwent a terrible change—man's fall brought all creation under the curse. With
2550 redemption the beginning was seen of a glorious restoration. No sooner had God begun in Abraham
2551 to form for Himself a people from whom kings, yea the Great King, should come forth, than we see
2552 what power the prayer of God's faithful servant has to decide the destinies of those who come into
2553 contact with him. In Abraham we see how prayer is not only, or even chiefly, the means of
2554 obtaining blessing for ourselves, but is the exercise of his royal prerogative to influence the
2555 destinies of men, and the will of God which rules them. We do not once find Abraham praying for
2556 himself. His prayer for Sodom and Lot, for Abimelech, for Ishmael, prove what power a man, who
2557 is God's friend, has to make the history of those around him.
2558

2559 This had been man's destiny from the first. Scripture not only tells us this, but also teaches us how it
2560 was that God could entrust man with such a high calling. It was because He had created him in His
2561 own image and likeness. The external rule was not committed to him without the inner fitness: the
2562 bearing God's image in having dominion, in being lord of all, had its root in the inner likeness, in
2563 his nature. There was an inner agreement and harmony between God and man, and incipient
2564 Godlikeness, which gave man a real fitness for being the mediator between God and His world, for
2565 he was to be prophet, priest, and king, to interpret God's will, to represent nature's needs, to receive
2566 and dispense God's bounty. It was in bearing God's image that he could bear God's rule; he was
2567 indeed so like God, so capable of entering into God's purposes, and carrying out His plans, that God
2568 could trust him with the wonderful privilege of asking and obtaining what the world might need.
2569 And although sin has for a time frustrated God's plans, prayer still remains what it would have been
2570 if man had never fallen: the proof of man's Godlikeness, the vehicle of his intercourse with the
2571 Infinite Unseen One, the power that is allowed to hold the hand that holds the destinies of the
2572 universe. Prayer is not merely the cry of the suppliant for mercy; it is the highest forth-putting of his
2573 will by man, knowing himself to be of Divine origin, created for and capable of being, in king-like
2574 liberty, the executor of the counsels of the Eternal.
2575

2576 What sin destroyed, grace has restored. What the first Adam lost, the second has won back. In
2577 Christ man regains his original position, and the Church, abiding in Christ, inherits the promise:
2578 Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' Such a promise does by no means, in the first
2579 place, refer to the grace or blessing we need for ourselves. It has reference to our position as the
2580 fruit-bearing branches of the Heavenly Vine, who, like Him, only live for the work and glory of the
2581 Father. It is for those who abide in Him, who have forsaken self to take up their abode in Him with
2582 His life of obedience and self-sacrifice, who have lost their life and found it in Him, who are now
2583 entirely given up to the interests of the Father and His kingdom. These are they who understand
2584 how their new creation has brought them back to their original destiny, has restored God's image
2585 and likeness, and with it the power to have dominion. Such have indeed the power, each in their

2586 own circle, to obtain and dispense the powers of heaven here on earth. With holy boldness they may
2587 make known what they will: they live as priests in God's presence; as kings the powers of the world
2588 to come begin to be at their disposal. [1] They enter upon the fulfilment of the promise: Ask
2589 whatsoever ye will, it shall be done unto you.'

2590
2591 Church of the living God! thy calling is higher and holier than thou knowest. Through thy members,
2592 as kings, and priests unto God, would God rule the world; their prayers bestow and withhold the
2593 blessing of heaven. In His elect who are not just content to be themselves saved, but yield
2594 themselves wholly, that through them, even as through the Son, the Father may fulfil all His
2595 glorious counsel, in these His elect, who cry day and night unto Him, God would prove how
2596 wonderful man's original destiny was. As the image-bearer of God on earth, the earth was indeed
2597 given into his hand. When he fell, all fell with him: the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in
2598 pain together. But now he is redeemed; the restoration of the original dignity has begun. It is in very
2599 deed God's purpose that the fulfilment of His eternal purpose, and the coming of His kingdom,
2600 should depend on those of His people who, abiding in Christ, are ready to take up their position in
2601 Him their Head, the great Priest-King, and in their prayers are bold enough to say what they will
2602 that their God should do. As image-bearer and representative of God on earth, redeemed man has by
2603 his prayers to determine the history of this earth. Man was created, and has now again been
2604 redeemed, to pray, and by his prayer to have dominion.

2605
2606 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

2607
2608
2609
2610 Lord! what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? for
2611 Thou has made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.
2612 Thou madest him to have dominion over the work of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things under his
2613 feet. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!

2614
2615 Lord God! how low has sin made man to sink. And how terribly has it darkened his mind, that he
2616 does not even know his Divine destiny, to be Thy servant and representative. Alas! that even Thy
2617 people, when their eyes are opened, are so little ready to accept their calling and to seek to have
2618 power with God, that they may have power with men too to bless them.

2619
2620 Lord Jesus! it is in Thee the Father hath again crowned man with glory and honour, and opened the
2621 way for us to be what He would have us. O Lord, have mercy on Thy people, and visit Thine
2622 heritage! Work mightily in Thy Church, and teach Thy believing disciples to go forth in their royal
2623 priesthood, and in the power of prayer, to which Thou hast given such wonderful promises, to serve
2624 Thy kingdom, to have rule over the nations, and make the name of God glorious in the earth. Amen.

2625
2626 [1] God is seeking priests among the sons of men. A human priesthood is one of the essential parts
2627 of His eternal plan. To rule creation by man is His design; to carry on the worship of creation by
2628 man is no less part of His design. Priesthood is the appointed link between heaven and earth, the
2629 channel of intercourse between the sinner and God. Such a priesthood, in so far as expiation is
2630 concerned, is in the hands of the Son of God alone; in so far as it is to be the medium of
2631 communication between Creator and creature, is also in the hands of redeemed men—of the Church
2632 of God. God is seeking kings. Not out of the ranks of angels. Fallen man must furnish Him with the
2633 rulers of His universe. Human hands must wield the sceptre, human heads must wear the crown.—
2634 The Rent Veil, by Dr. H. Bonar.

2635
2636
2637
2638 NINETEENTH LESSON.
2639
2640 I go unto the Father!’
2641
2642 Or, Power for Praying and Working.
2643
2644 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and
2645 greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in
2646 my Name, that will I do.’—John xiv. 12, 13.
2647
2648 AS the Saviour opened His public ministry with His disciples by the Sermon on the Mount, so He
2649 closes it by the Parting Address preserved to us by John. In both He speaks more than once of
2650 prayer. But with a difference. In the Sermon on the Mount it is as to disciples who have only just
2651 entered His school, who scarcely know that God is their Father, and whose prayer chiefly has
2652 reference to their personal needs. In His closing address He speaks to disciples whose training time
2653 is now come to an end, and who are ready as His messengers to take His place and His work. In the
2654 former the chief lesson is: Be childlike, pray believingly, and trust the Father that He will give you
2655 all good gifts. Here He points to something higher: They are now His friends to whom He has made
2656 known all that He has heard of the Father; His messengers, who have entered into His plans, and
2657 into whose hands the care of His work and kingdom on earth is to be entrusted. They are now to go
2658 out and do His works, and in the power of His approaching exaltation, even greater works: prayer is
2659 now to be the channel through which that power is to be received for their work. With Christ’s
2660 ascension to the Father a new epoch commences for their working and praying both.
2661
2662 See how clearly this connection comes out in our text. As His body here on earth, as those who are
2663 one with Him in heaven, they are now to do greater works than He had done; their success and their
2664 victories are to be greater than His. He mentions two reasons for this. The one, because He was to
2665 go to the Father, to receive all power; the other, because they might now ask and expect all in His
2666 Name. Because I go to the Father, and—notice this and—and, whatsoever ye shall ask, I will do.’
2667 His going to the Father would thus bring the double blessing: they would ask and receive all in His
2668 Name, and as a consequence, would do the greater works. This first mention of prayer in our
2669 Saviour’s parting words thus teaches us two most important lessons. He that would do the works of
2670 Jesus must pray in His Name. He that would pray in His Name must work in His Name.
2671
2672 He who would work must pray: it is in prayer that the power for work is obtained. He that in faith
2673 would do the works that Jesus did, must pray in His Name. As long as Jesus was here on earth, He
2674 Himself did the greatest works: devils the disciples could not cast out, fled at His word. When He
2675 went to the Father, He was no longer here in the body to work directly. The disciples were now His
2676 body: all His work from the throne in heaven here on earth must and could be done through them.
2677 One might have thought that now He was leaving the scene Himself, and could only work through
2678 commissioners, the works might be fewer and weaker. He assures us of the contrary: Verily, verily,
2679 I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and he shall do greater
2680 works.’ His approaching death was to be such a real breaking down and making an end of the power
2681 of sin; with the resurrection the powers of the Eternal Life were so truly to take possession of the
2682 human body and to obtain supremacy over human life; with His ascension He was to receive the
2683 power to communicate the Holy Spirit so fully to His own; the union, the oneness between Himself

2684 on the throne and them on earth, was to be so intensely and divinely perfect, that He meant it as the
2685 literal truth: Greater works than these shall he do, because I go to the Father.’ And the issue proved
2686 how true it was. While Jesus, during three years of personal labour on earth, gathered little more
2687 than five hundred disciples, and the most of them so feeble that they were but little credit to His
2688 cause, it was given to men like Peter and Paul manifestly to do greater things than He had done.
2689 From the throne He could do through them what He Himself in His humiliation could not yet do.

2690
2691 But there is one condition: He that believeth on me, he shall do greater works, because I go to the
2692 Father; and whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do.’ His going to the Father would give
2693 Him a new power to hear prayer. For the doing of the greater works, two things were needed: His
2694 going to the Father to receive all power, our prayer in His Name to receive all power from Him
2695 again. As He asks the Father, He receives and bestows on us the power of the new dispensation for
2696 the greater works; as we believe, and ask in His Name, the power comes and takes possession of us
2697 to do the greater works.

2698
2699 Alas! how much working there is in the work of God, in which there is little or nothing to be seen of
2700 the power to do anything like Christ’s works, not to speak of greater works. There can be but one
2701 reason: the believing on Him, the believing prayer in His Name, this is so much wanting. O that
2702 every labourer and leader in church, or school, in the work of home philanthropy or foreign
2703 missions might learn the lesson: Prayer in the Name of Jesus is the way to share in the mighty
2704 power which Jesus has received of the Father for His people, and it is in this power alone that he
2705 that believeth can do the greater works. To every complaint as to weakness or unfitness, as to
2706 difficulties or want of success, Jesus gives this one answer: He that believeth on me shall do greater
2707 works, because I go to the Father, and whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do.’ We must
2708 understand that the first and chief thing for everyone who would do the work of Jesus, is to believe,
2709 and so to get linked to Him, the Almighty One, and then to pray the prayer of faith in His Name.
2710 Without this our work is but human and carnal; it may have some use in restraining sin, or preparing
2711 the way for blessing, but the real power is wanting. Effectual working needs first effectual prayer.

2712
2713 And now the second lesson: He who would pray must work. It is for power to work that prayer has
2714 such great promises: it is in working that the power for the effectual prayer of faith will be gained.
2715 In these parting words of our blessed Lord we find that He no less than six times (John xiv. 13, 14,
2716 xv. 7, 16, xvi. 23, 24) repeats those unlimited prayer-promises which have so often awakened our
2717 anxious questionings as to their real meaning: whatsoever,’ anything,’ what ye will,’ ask and ye
2718 shall receive.’ How many a believer has read these over with joy and hope, and in deep earnestness
2719 of soul has sought to plead them for his own need. And he has come out disappointed. The simple
2720 reason was this: he had rent away the promise from its surrounding. The Lord gave the wonderful
2721 promise of the free use of His Name with the Father in connection with the doing of His works. It is
2722 the disciple who gives himself wholly to live for Jesus’ work and kingdom, for His will and honour,
2723 to whom the power will come to appropriate the promise. He that would fain grasp the promise
2724 when he wants something very special for himself, will be disappointed, because he would make
2725 Jesus the servant of his own comfort. But to him who seeks to pray the effectual prayer of faith,
2726 because he needs it for the work of the Master, to him it will be given to learn it; because he has
2727 made himself the servant of his Lord’s interests. Prayer not only teaches and strengthens to work:
2728 work teaches and strengthens to pray.

2729
2730 This is in perfect harmony with what holds good both in the natural and the spiritual world.
2731 Whosoever hath, to him shall be given; or, He that is faithful in a little, is faithful also in much. Let
2732 us with the small measure of grace already received, give ourselves to the Master for His work:

2733 work will be to us a real school of prayer. It was when Moses had to take full charge of a rebellious
2734 people that he felt the need, but also the courage, to speak boldly to God and to ask great things of
2735 Him (Ex. xxxiii. 12, 15, 18). As you give yourself entirely to God for His work, you will feel that
2736 nothing less than these great promises are what you need, that nothing less is what you may most
2737 confidently expect.

2738
2739 Believer in Jesus! You are called, you are appointed, to do the works of Jesus, and even greater
2740 works, because He has gone to the Father to receive the power to do them in and through you.

2741
2742 Whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do. Give yourself, and live, to do the works of
2743 Christ and you will learn to pray so as to obtain wonderful answers to prayer. Give yourself, and
2744 live, to pray and you will learn to do the works He did, and greater works. With disciples full of
2745 faith in Himself, and bold in prayer to ask great things, Christ can conquer the world.

2746
2747 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

2748
2749
2750
2751 O my Lord! I have this day again heard words from Thee which pass my comprehension. And yet I
2752 cannot do aught but in simple childlike faith take and keep them as Thy gift to me too. Thou hast
2753 said that in virtue of Thy going to the Father, he that believeth on Thee will do the works which
2754 Thou hast done, and greater works. Lord! I worship Thee as the Glorified One, and look for the
2755 fulfilment of Thy promise. May my whole life just be one of continued believing in Thee. So purify
2756 and sanctify my heart, make it so tenderly susceptible of Thyself and Thy love, that believing on
2757 Thee may be the very life it breathes.

2758
2759 And Thou hast said that in virtue of Thy going to the Father, whatsoever we ask, Thou wilt do.
2760 From Thy throne of power Thou wouldest make Thy people share the power given Thee, and work
2761 through them as the members of Thy body, in response to their believing prayers in Thy Name.
2762 Power in prayer with Thee, and power in work with men, is what Thou has promised Thy people
2763 and me too.

2764
2765 Blessed Lord! Forgive us all that we have so little believed Thee and Thy promise, and so little
2766 proved Thy faithfulness in fulfilling it. O forgive us that we have so little honoured Thy all-
2767 prevailing Name in heaven or upon earth.

2768
2769 Lord! Teach me to pray so that I may prove that Thy Name is indeed all-prevailing with God and
2770 men and devils. Yea, teach me so to work and so to pray that Thou canst glorify Thyself in me as
2771 the Omnipotent One, and do Thy great work through me too. Amen.

2772
2773
2774
2775 TWENTIETH LESSON.

2776
2777 That the Father may be glorified;’

2778
2779 Or, The Chief End of Prayer.

2780

2781 I go unto the Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do, that the Father may be
2782 glorified in the Son.’—John xiv. 13.

2783
2784 THAT the Father may be glorified in the Son: it is to this end that Jesus on His throne in glory will
2785 do all we ask in His Name. Every answer to prayer He gives will have this as its object: when there
2786 is no prospect of this object being obtained, He will not answer. It follows as a matter of course that
2787 this must be with us, as with Jesus, the essential element in our petitions: the glory of the Father
2788 must be the aim and end, the very soul and life of our prayer.

2789
2790 It was so with Jesus when He was on earth. I seek not mine own honour: I seek the honour of Him
2791 that sent me;’ in such words we have the keynote of His life. In the first words of the high-priestly
2792 prayer He gives utterance to it: Father! Glorify Thy son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee. I have
2793 glorified Thee on earth; glorify me with Thyself.’ The ground on which He asks to be taken up into
2794 the glory He had with the Father, is the twofold one: He has glorified Him on earth; He will still
2795 glorify Him in heaven. What He asks is only to enable Him to glorify the Father more. It is as we
2796 enter into sympathy with Jesus on this point, and gratify Him by making the Father’s glory our chief
2797 object in prayer too, that our prayer cannot fail of an answer. There is nothing of which the Beloved
2798 Son has said more distinctly that it will glorify the Father than this, His doing what we ask; He will
2799 not, therefore, let any opportunity slip of securing this object. Let us make His aim ours: let the
2800 glory of the Father be the link between our asking and His doing: such prayer must prevail.^1

2801
2802 This word of Jesus comes indeed as a sharp two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul
2803 and spirit, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. Jesus in His prayers on earth, in
2804 His intercession in heaven, in His promise of an answer to our prayers from there, makes this His
2805 first object—the glory of His Father. Is it so with us too? Or are not, in large measure, self-interest
2806 and self-will the strongest motives urging us to pray? Or, if we cannot see that this is the case, have
2807 we not to acknowledge that the distinct, conscious longing for the glory of the Father is not what
2808 animates our prayers? And yet it must be so.

2809
2810 Not as if the believer does not at times desire it. But he has to mourn that he has so little attained.
2811 And he knows the reason of his failure too. It was, because the separation between the spirit of daily
2812 life and the spirit of the hour of prayer was too wide. We begin to see that the desire for the glory of
2813 the Father is not something that we can awake and present to our Lord when we prepare ourselves
2814 to pray. No! it is only when the whole life, in all its parts, is given up to God’s glory, that we can
2815 really pray to His glory too. Do all to the glory of God,’ and, Ask all to the glory of God,’—these
2816 twin commands are inseparable: obedience to the former is the secret of grace for the latter. A life to
2817 the glory of God is the condition of the prayers that Jesus can answer, that the Father may be
2818 glorified.’

2819
2820 This demand in connection with prevailing prayer—that it should be to the glory of God—is no
2821 more than right and natural. There is none glorious but the Lord: there is no glory but His, and what
2822 He layeth on His creatures. Creation exists to show forth His glory; all that is not for His glory is
2823 sin, and darkness, and death: it is only in the glorifying of God that the creatures can find glory.
2824 What the Son of Man did, to give Himself wholly, His whole life, to glorify the Father, is nothing
2825 but the simple duty of every redeemed one. And Christ’s reward will be his too. Because He gave
2826 Himself so entirely to the glory of the Father, the Father crowned Him with glory and honour,
2827 giving the kingdom into His hands, with the power to ask what He will, and, as Intercessor, to
2828 answer our prayers. And just as we become one with Christ in this, and as our prayer is part of a life

2829 utterly surrendered to God's glory, will the Saviour be able to glorify the Father to us by the
2830 fulfilment of the promise: Whatsoever ye shall ask, I will do it.'

2831
2832 To such a life, with God's glory our only aim, we cannot attain by any effort of our own. It is only
2833 in the man Christ Jesus that such a life is to be seen: in Him it is to be found for us. Yes blessed be
2834 God! His life is our life; He gave Himself for us; He Himself is now our life. The discovery, and the
2835 confession, and the denial, of self, as usurping the place of God, of self-seeking and self-trusting, is
2836 essential, and yet is what we cannot accomplish in our own strength. It is the incoming and
2837 indwelling, the Presence and the Rule in the heart, of our Lord Jesus who glorified the Father on
2838 earth, and is now glorified with Him, that thence He might glorify Him in us;—it is Jesus Himself
2839 coming in, who can cast out all self-glorifying, and give us instead His own God-glorifying life and
2840 Spirit. It is Jesus, who longs to glorify the Father in hearing our prayers, who will teach us to live
2841 and to pray to the glory of God.

2842
2843 And what motive, what power is there that can urge our slothful hearts to yield themselves to our
2844 Lord to work this in us? Surely nothing more is needed than a sight of how glorious, how alone
2845 worthy of glory the Father is. Let our faith learn in adoring worship to bow before Him, to ascribe
2846 to Him alone the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, to yield ourselves to dwell in His light as
2847 the ever-blessed, ever-loving One. Surely we shall be stirred to say, 'To Him alone be glory.' And
2848 we shall look to our Lord Jesus with new intensity of desire for a life that refuses to see or seek
2849 ought but the glory of God. When there is but little prayer that can be answered, the Father is not
2850 glorified. It is a duty, for the glory of God, to live and pray so that our prayer can be answered. For
2851 the sake of God's glory, let us learn to pray well.

2852
2853 What a humbling thought that so often there is earnest prayer for a child or a friend, for a work or a
2854 circle, in which the thought of our joy or our pleasure was far stronger than any yearnings for God's
2855 glory. No wonder that there are so many unanswered prayers: here we have the secret. God would
2856 not be glorified when that glory was not our object. He that would pray the prayer of faith, will have
2857 to give himself to live literally so that the Father in all things may be glorified in him. This must be
2858 his aim: without this there cannot be the prayer of faith. How can ye believe,' said Jesus, which
2859 receive glory of one another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not?' All seeking
2860 of our own glory with men makes faith impossible: it is the deep, intense self-sacrifice that gives up
2861 its own glory, and seeks the glory of God alone, that wakens in the soul that spiritual susceptibility
2862 of the Divine, which is faith. The surrender to God to seek His glory, and the expectation that He
2863 will show His glory in hearing us, are one at root: He that seeks God's glory will see it in the
2864 answer to his prayer, and he alone.

2865
2866 And how, we ask again, shall we attain to it? Let us begin with confession. How little has the glory
2867 of God been an all-absorbing passion; how little our lives and our prayers have been full of it. How
2868 little have we lived in the likeness of the Son, and in sympathy with Him—for God and His glory
2869 alone. Let us take time, until the Holy Spirit discover it to us, and we see how wanting we have
2870 been in this. True knowledge and confession of sin are the sure path to deliverance.

2871
2872 And then let us look to Jesus. In Him we can see by what death we can glorify God. In death He
2873 glorified Him; through death He was glorified with Him. It is by dying, being dead to self and living
2874 to God, that we can glorify Him. And this—this death to self, this life to the glory of God—is what
2875 Jesus gives and lives in each one who can trust Him for it. Let nothing less than these—the desire,
2876 the decision to live only for the glory of the Father, even as Christ did; the acceptance of Him with
2877 His life and strength working it in us; the joyful assurance that we can live to the glory of God,

2878 because Christ lives in us;—let this be the spirit of our daily life. Jesus stands surety for our living
2879 thus; the Holy Spirit is given, and waiting to make it our experience, if we will only trust and let
2880 Him; O let us not hold back through unbelief, but confidently take as our watchword—All to the
2881 glory of God! The Father accepts the will, the sacrifice is well-pleasing; the Holy Spirit will seal us
2882 within with the consciousness, we are living for God and His glory.

2883
2884 And then what quiet peace and power there will be in our prayers, as we know ourselves through
2885 His grace, in perfect harmony with Him who says to us, when He promises to do what we ask: That
2886 the Father may be glorified in the Son.’ With our whole being consciously yielded to the inspiration
2887 of the Word and Spirit, our desires will be no longer ours but His; their chief end the glory of God.
2888 With increasing liberty we shall be able in prayer to say: Father! Thou knowest, we ask it only for
2889 Thy glory. And the condition of prayer-answers, instead of being as a mountain we cannot climb,
2890 will only give us the greater confidence that we shall be heard, because we have seen that prayer has
2891 no higher beauty or blessedness than this, that it glorifies the Father. And the precious privilege of
2892 prayer will become doubly precious because it brings us into perfect unison with the Beloved Son in
2893 the wonderful partnership He proposes: You ask, and I do, that the Father may be glorified in the
2894 Son.’

2895
2896 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

2897
2898
2899
2900 Blessed Lord Jesus! I come again to Thee. Every lesson Thou givest me convinces me more deeply
2901 how little I know to pray aright. But every lesson also inspires me with hope that Thou art going to
2902 teach me, that Thou art teaching me not only to know what prayer should be, but actually to pray as
2903 I ought. O my Lord! I look with courage to Thee, the Great Intercessor, who didst pray and dost
2904 hear prayer, only that the Father may be glorified, to teach me too to live and to pray to the glory of
2905 God.

2906
2907 Saviour! To this end I yield myself to Thee again. I would be nothing. I have given self, as already
2908 crucified with Thee, to the death. Through the Spirit its workings are mortified and made dead; Thy
2909 life and Thy love of the Father are taking possession of me. A new longing begins to fill my soul,
2910 that every day, every hour, that in every prayer the glory of the Father may be everything to me. O
2911 my Lord! I am in Thy school to learn this: teach Thou it me.

2912
2913 And do Thou, the God of glory, the Father of glory, my God and my Father, accept the desire of a
2914 child who has seen that Thy glory is indeed alone worth living for. O Lord! Show me Thy glory. Let
2915 it overshadow me. Let it fill the temple of my heart. Let me dwell in it as revealed in Christ. And do
2916 Thou Thyself fulfil in me Thine own good pleasure, that Thy child should find his glory in seeking
2917 the glory of his Father. Amen.

2918
2919 ^1See in the note on George Muller, at the close of this volume, how he was led to make God’s
2920 glory his first object.

2921
2922
2923
2924 TWENTY-FIRST LESSON.

2925
2926 If ye abide in me;’

2927
2928 Or The All-Inclusive Condition.

2929
2930 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto
2931 you.'—John xv. 7.

2932
2933 IN all God's intercourse with us, the promise and its conditions are inseparable. If we fulfil the
2934 conditions, He fulfils the promise. What He is to be to us depends upon what we are willing to be to
2935 Him. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.' And so in prayer the unlimited promise,
2936 Ask whatsoever ye will, has its one simple and natural condition, if ye abide in me. It is Christ
2937 whom the Father always hears; God is in Christ, and can only be reached by being in Him; to be IN
2938 HIM is the way to have our prayer heard; fully and wholly ABIDING IN HIM, we have the right to
2939 ask whatsoever we will, and the promise that it shall be done unto us.

2940
2941 When we compare this promise with the experiences of most believers, we are startled by a terrible
2942 discrepancy. Who can number up the countless prayers that rise and bring no answer? The cause
2943 must be either that we do not fulfil the condition, or God does not fulfil the promise. Believers are
2944 not willing to admit either, and therefore have devised a way of escape from the dilemma. They put
2945 into the promise the qualifying clause our Saviour did not put there—if it be God's will; and so
2946 maintain both God's integrity and their own. O if they did but accept it and hold it fast as it stands,
2947 trusting to Christ to vindicate His truth, how God's Spirit would lead them to see the Divine
2948 propriety of such a promise to those who really abide in Christ in the sense in which He means it,
2949 and to confess that the failure in the fulfilling the condition is the one sufficient explanation of
2950 unanswered prayer. And how the Holy Spirit would then make our feebleness in prayer one of the
2951 mightiest motives to urge us on to discover the secret, and obtain the blessing, of full abiding in
2952 Christ.

2953
2954 If ye abide in me.' As a Christian grows in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, he is often
2955 surprised to find how the words of God grow too, in the new and deeper meaning with which they
2956 come to him. He can look back to the day when some word of God was opened up to him and he
2957 rejoiced in the blessing he had found in it. After a time some deeper experience gave it a new
2958 meaning, and it was as if he never had seen what it contained. And yet once again, as he advanced
2959 in the Christian life, the same word stood before him again as a great mystery, until anew the Holy
2960 Spirit led him still deeper into its Divine fulness. One of these ever-growing, never-exhausted
2961 words, opening up to us step by step the fulness of the Divine life, is the Master's precious Abide in
2962 me.' As the union of the branch with the vine is one of growth, never-ceasing growth and increase,
2963 so our abiding in Christ is a life process in which the Divine life takes ever fuller and more
2964 complete possession of us. The young and feeble believer may be really abiding in Christ up to the
2965 measure of his light; it is he who reaches onward to the full abiding in the sense in which the Master
2966 understood the words, who inherits all the promises connected with it.

2967
2968 In the growing life of abiding in Christ, the first stage is that of faith. As the believer sees that, with
2969 all his feebleness, the command is really meant for him, his great aim is simply to believe that, as he
2970 knows he is in Christ, so now, notwithstanding unfaithfulness and failure, abiding in Christ is his
2971 immediate duty, and a blessing within his reach. He is specially occupied with the love, and power,
2972 and faithfulness of the Saviour: he feels his one need to be believing.

2973
2974 It is not long before he sees something more is needed. Obedience and faith must go together. Not
2975 as if to the faith he has the obedience must be added, but faith must be made manifest in obedience.

2976 Faith is obedience at home and looking to the Master: obedience is faith going out to do His will.
2977 He sees how he has been more occupied with the privilege and the blessings of this abiding than
2978 with its duties and its fruit. There has been much of self and of self-will that has been unnoticed or
2979 tolerated: the peace which, as a young and feeble disciple, he could enjoy in believing goes from
2980 him; it is in practical obedience that the abiding must be maintained: If ye keep my commands, ye
2981 shall abide in my love.' As before his great aim was through the mind, and the truth it took hold of,
2982 to let the heart rest on Christ and His promises; so now, in this stage, he chief effort is to get his will
2983 united with the will of his Lord, and the heart and the life brought entirely under His rule.
2984

2985 And yet it is as if there is something wanting. The will and the heart are on Christ's side; he obeys
2986 and he loves his Lord. But still, why is it that the fleshly nature has yet so much power, that the
2987 spontaneous motions and emotions of the inmost being are not what they should be? The will does
2988 not approve or allow, but here is a region beyond control of the will. And why also, even when
2989 there is not so much of positive commission to condemn, why so much of omission, the deficiency
2990 of that beauty of holiness, that zeal of love, that conformity to Jesus and His death, in which the life
2991 of self is lost, and which is surely implied in the abiding, as the Master meant it? There must surely
2992 be something in our abiding in Christ and Christ in us, which he has not yet experienced.
2993

2994 It is so. Faith and obedience are but the pathway of blessing. Before giving us the parable of the
2995 vine and the branches, Jesus had very distinctly told what the full blessing is to which faith and
2996 obedience are to lead. Three times over He had said, If ye love me, keep my commandments,' and
2997 spoken of the threefold blessing with which He would crown such obedient love. The Holy Spirit
2998 would come from the Father; the Son would manifest Himself; the Father and the Son would come
2999 and make their abode. It is as our faith grows into obedience, and in obedience and love our whole
3000 being goes out and clings itself to Christ, that our inner life becomes opened up, and the capacity is
3001 formed within of receiving the life, the spirit, of the glorified Jesus, as a distinct and conscious
3002 union with Christ and with the Father. The word is fulfilled in us: In that day ye shall know that I
3003 am in my Father and ye in me, and I in you.' We understand how, just as Christ is in God, and God
3004 in Christ, one together not only in will and in love, but in identity of nature and life, because they
3005 exist in each other, so we are in Christ and Christ in us, in union not only of will and love, but of
3006 life and nature too.
3007

3008 It was after Jesus had spoken of our thus through the Holy Spirit knowing that He is in the Father,
3009 and even so we in Him and He in us, that He said, Abide in me, and I in you. Accept, consent to
3010 receive that Divine life of union with myself, in virtue of which, as you abide in me, I also abide in
3011 you, even as I abide in the Father. So that your life is mine and mine is yours.' This is the true
3012 abiding, the occupying of the position in which Christ can come and abide; so abiding in Him that
3013 the soul has come away from self to find that He has taken the place and become our life. It is the
3014 becoming as little children who have no care, and find their happiness in trusting and obeying the
3015 love that has done all for them.
3016

3017 To those who thus abide, the promise comes as their rightful heritage: Ask whatsoever ye will. It
3018 cannot be otherwise. Christ has got full possession of them. Christ dwells in their love, their will,
3019 their life. Not only has their will been given up; Christ has entered it, and dwells and breathes in it
3020 by His Spirit. He whom the Father always hears, prays in them; they pray in Him: what they ask
3021 shall be done unto them.
3022

3023 Beloved fellow-believer! let us confess that it is because we do not abide in Christ as He would
3024 have us, that the Church is so impotent in presence of the infidelity and worldliness and

3025 heathendom, in the midst of which the Lord is able to make her more than conqueror. Let us believe
3026 that He means what He promises, and accept the condemnation the confession implies.

3027
3028 But let us not be discouraged. The abiding of the branch in the Vine is a life of never-ceasing
3029 growth. The abiding, as the Master meant it, is within our reach, for He lives to give it us. Let us but
3030 be ready to count all things loss, and to say, Not as though I had already attained; I follow after, if
3031 that I may apprehend that for which I also am apprehended of Christ Jesus.' Let us not be so much
3032 occupied with the abiding, as with Him to whom the abiding links us, and His fulness. Let it be
3033 Him, the whole Christ, in His obedience and humiliation, in His exaltation and power, in whom our
3034 soul moves and acts; He Himself will fulfil His promise in us.

3035
3036 And then as we abide, and grow evermore into the full abiding, let us exercise our right, the will to
3037 enter into all God's will. Obeying what that will commands, let us claim what it promises. Let us
3038 yield to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, to show each of us, according to his growth and measure,
3039 what the will of God is which we may claim in prayer. And let us rest content with nothing less than
3040 the personal experience of what Jesus gave when He said, If ye abide in me, ask whatsoever ye will,
3041 it shall be done unto you.'

3042
3043 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY!

3044
3045
3046

3047 Beloved Lord! do teach me to take this promise anew in all its simplicity, and to be sure that the
3048 only measure of Thy holy giving is our holy willing. Lord! Let each word of this Thy promise be
3049 anew made quick and powerful in my soul.

3050
3051 Thou sayest: Abide in me! O my Master, my Life, my All, I do abide in Thee. Give Thou me to
3052 grow up into all Thy fulness. It is not the effort of faith, seeking to cling to Thee, nor even the rest
3053 of faith, trusting Thee to keep me; it is not the obedience of the will, nor the keeping the
3054 commandments; but it is Thyself living in me and in the Father, that alone can satisfy me. It is Thy
3055 self, my Lord, no longer before me and above me, but one with me, and abiding in me; it is this I
3056 need, it is this I seek. It is this I trust Thee for.

3057
3058 Thou sayest: Ask whatsoever ye will! Lord! I know that the life of full, deep abiding will so renew
3059 and sanctify and strengthen the will that I shall have the light and the liberty to ask great things.
3060 Lord! let my will, dead in Thy death, living in Thy life, be bold and large in its petitions.

3061
3062 Thou sayest: It shall be done. O Thou who art the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, give me in
3063 Thyself the joyous confidence that Thou wilt make this word yet more wonderfully true to me than
3064 ever, because it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared for them
3065 that love Him. Amen.

3066
3067 NOTE

3068
3069 On a thoughtful comparison of what we mostly find in books or sermons on prayer, and the teaching
3070 of the Master, we shall find one great difference: the importance assigned to the answer to prayer is
3071 by no means the same. In the former we find a great deal on the blessing of prayer as a spiritual
3072 exercise even if there be no answer, and on the reasons why we should be content without it. God's
3073 fellowship ought to be more to us than the gift we ask; God's wisdom only knows what is best; God

3074 may bestow something better than what He withholds. Though this teaching looks very high and
3075 spiritual, it is remarkable that we find nothing of it with our Lord. The more carefully we gather
3076 together all He spoke on prayer, the clearer it becomes that He wished us to think of prayer simply
3077 as the means to an end, and that the answer was to be the proof that we and our prayer are
3078 acceptable to the Father in heaven. It is not that Christ would have us count the gifts of higher value
3079 than the fellowship and favour of the Father. By no means. But the Father means the answer to be
3080 the token of His favour and of the reality of our fellowship with Him. To-day thy servant knoweth
3081 that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his
3082 servant.’

3083
3084 A life marked by daily answer to prayer is the proof of our spiritual maturity; that we have indeed
3085 attained to the true abiding in Christ; that our will is truly at one with God’s will; that our faith has
3086 grown strong to see and take what God has prepared for us; that the Name of Christ and His nature
3087 have taken full possession of us; and that we have been found fit to take a place among those whom
3088 God admits to His counsels, and according to whose prayer He rules the world. These are they in
3089 whom something of man’s original dignity hath been restored, in whom, as they abide in Christ, His
3090 power as the all-prevailing Intercessor can manifest itself, in whom the glory of His Name is shown
3091 forth. Prayer is very blessed; the answer is more blessed still, as the response from the Father that
3092 our prayer, our faith, our will are indeed as He would wish them to be.

3093
3094 I make these remarks with the one desire of leading my readers themselves to put together all that
3095 Christ has said on prayer, and to yield themselves to the full impression of the truth that when
3096 prayer is what it should be, or rather when we are what we should be, abiding in Christ, the answer
3097 must be expected. It will bring us out from those refuges where we have comforted ourselves with
3098 unanswered prayer. It will discover to us the place of power to which Christ has appointed His
3099 Church, and which it so little occupies. It will reveal the terrible feebleness of our spiritual life as
3100 the cause of our not knowing to pray boldly in Christ’s Name. It will urge us mightily to rise to a
3101 life in the full union with Christ, and in the fulness of the Spirit, as the secret of effectual prayer.
3102 And it will so lead us on to realize our destiny: At that day: Verily, verily, I say unto you, If ye shall
3103 ask anything of the Father, He will give it you in my Name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy
3104 may be fulfilled.’ Prayer that is really, spiritually, in union with Jesus, is always answered.

3105
3106
3107

3108 TWENTY-SECOND LESSON.

3109

3110 My words in you.’

3111

3112 Or, The Word and Prayer.

3113

3114 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto
3115 you.’—John xv. 7.

3116

3117 THE vital connection between the word and prayer is one of the simplest and earliest lessons of the
3118 Christian life. As that newly-converted heathen put it: I pray—I speak to my father; I read—my
3119 Father speaks to me. Before prayer, it is God’s word that prepares me for it by revealing what the
3120 Father has bid me ask. In prayer, it is God’s word strengthens me by giving my faith its warrant and
3121 its plea. And after prayer, it is God’s word that brings me the answer when I have prayed, for in it
3122 the Spirit gives me to hear the Father’s voice. Prayer is not monologue but dialogue; God’s voice in

3123 response to mine in its most essential part. Listening to God's voice is the secret of the assurance
3124 that He will listen to mine. Incline thine ear, and hear;' Give ear to me;' Hearken to my voice;' are
3125 words which God speaks to man as well as man to God. His hearkening will depend on ours; the
3126 entrance His words find with me, will be the measure of the power of my words with Him. What
3127 God's words are to me, is the test of what He Himself is to me, and so of the uprightness of my
3128 desire after Him in prayer.

3129
3130 It is this connection between His word and our prayer that Jesus points to when He says, If ye abide
3131 in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' The deep
3132 importance of this truth becomes clear if we notice the other expression of which this one has taken
3133 the place. More than once Jesus had said, "Abide in me and I in you.' His abiding in us was the
3134 complement and the crown of our abiding in Him. But here, instead of Ye in me and I in you,' He
3135 says, Ye in me and my words in you.' His words abiding are the equivalent of Himself abiding.

3136
3137 What a view is here opened up to us of the place the words of God in Christ are to have in our
3138 spiritual life, and especially in our prayer. In a man's words he reveals himself. In his promises he
3139 gives himself away, he binds himself to the one who receives his promise. In his commands he sets
3140 forth his will, seeks to make himself master of him whose obedience he claims, to guide and use
3141 him as if he were part of himself. It is through our words that spirit holds fellowship with spirit, that
3142 the spirit of one man passes over and transfers itself into another. It is through the words of a man,
3143 heard and accepted, and held fast and obeyed, that he can impart himself to another. But all this in a
3144 very relative and limited sense.

3145
3146 But when God, the infinite Being, in whom everything is life and power, spirit and truth, in the very
3147 deepest meaning of the words,—when God speaks forth Himself in His words, He does indeed give
3148 HIMSELF, His Love and His Life, His Will and His Power, to those who receive these words, in a
3149 reality passing comprehension. In every promise He puts Himself in our power to lay hold of and
3150 possess; in every command He puts Himself in our power for us to share with Him His Will, His
3151 Holiness, His Perfection. In God's Word God gives us HIMSELF; His Word is nothing less than the
3152 Eternal Son, Christ Jesus. And so all Christ's words are God's words, full of a Divine quickening
3153 life and power. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.'

3154
3155 Those who have made the deaf and dumb their study, tell us how much the power of speaking
3156 depends on that of hearing, and how the loss of hearing in children is followed by that of speaking
3157 too. This is true in a wider sense: as we hear, so we speak. This is true in the highest sense of our
3158 intercourse with God. To offer a prayer—to give utterance to certain wishes and to appeal to certain
3159 promises—is an easy thing, and can be learned of man by human wisdom. But to pray in the Spirit,
3160 to speak words that reach and touch God, that affect and influence the powers of the unseen
3161 world,—such praying, such speaking, depends entirely upon our hearing God's voice. Just as far as
3162 we listen to the voice and language that God speaks, and in the words of God receive His thoughts,
3163 His mind, His life, into our heart, we shall learn to speak in the voice and the language that God
3164 hears. It is the ear of the learner, wakened morning by morning, that prepares for the tongue of the
3165 learned, to speak to God as well as men, as should be (Isa. l. 4).

3166
3167 This hearing the voice of God is something more than the thoughtful study of the Word. There may
3168 be a study and knowledge of the Word, in which there is but little real fellowship with the living
3169 God. But there is also a reading of the Word, in the very presence of the Father, and under the
3170 leading of the Spirit, in which the Word comes to us in living power from God Himself; it is to us
3171 the very voice of the Father, a real personal fellowship with Himself. It is the living voice of God

3172 that enters the heart, that brings blessing and strength, and awakens the response of a living faith
3173 that reaches the heart of God again.

3174
3175 It is on this hearing the voice, that the power both to obey and believe depends. The chief thing is,
3176 not to know what God has said we must do, but that God Himself says it to us. It is not the law, and
3177 not the book, not the knowledge of what is right, that works obedience, but the personal influence of
3178 God and His living fellowship. And even so it is not the knowledge of what God has promised, but
3179 the presence of God Himself as the Promiser, that awakens faith and trust in prayer. It is only in the
3180 full presence of God that disobedience and unbelief become impossible.

3181
3182 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, it shall be done unto you.’
3183 We see what this means. In the words the Saviour gives Himself. We must have the words in us,
3184 taken up into our will and life, reproduced in our disposition and conduct. We must have them
3185 abiding in us: our whole life one continued exposition of the words that are within, and filling us;
3186 the words revealing Christ within, and our life revealing Him without. It is as the words of Christ
3187 enter our very heart, become our life and influence it, that our words will enter His heart and
3188 influence Him. My prayer will depend on my life; what God’s words are to me and in me, my
3189 words will be to God and in God. If I do what God says, God will do what I say.

3190
3191 How well the Old Testament saints understood this connection between God’s words and ours, and
3192 how really prayer with them was the loving response to what they had heard God speak! If the word
3193 were a promise, they counted on God to do as He had spoken. Do as Thou hast said;’ For Thou,
3194 Lord, hast spoken it;’ According to Thy promise;’ According to Thy word;’ in such expressions
3195 they showed that what God spake in promise was the root and the life of what they spake in prayer.
3196 If the word was a command, they simply did as the Lord had spoken: So Abram departed as the
3197 Lord had spoken.’ Their life was fellowship with God, the interchange of word and thought. What
3198 God spoke they heard and did; what they spoke God heard and did. In each word He speaks to us,
3199 the whole Christ gives Himself to fulfil it for us. For each word He asks no less that we give the
3200 whole man to keep that word, and to receive its fulfilment.

3201
3202 If my words abide in you;’ the condition is simple and clear. In His words His will is revealed. As
3203 the words abide in me, His will rules me; my will becomes the empty vessel which His will fills, the
3204 willing instrument which His will wields; He fills my inner being. In the exercise of obedience and
3205 faith my will becomes ever stronger, and is brought into deeper inner harmony with Him. He can
3206 fully trust it to will nothing but what He wills; He is not afraid to give the promise, If my words
3207 abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, it shall be done unto you.’ To all who believe it, and act upon
3208 it, He will make it literally true.

3209
3210 Disciples of Christ! is it not becoming more and more clear to us that while we have been excusing
3211 our unanswered prayers, our impotence in prayer, with a fancied submission to God’s wisdom and
3212 will, the real reason has been that our own feeble life has been the cause of our feeble prayers.
3213 Nothing can make strong men but the word coming to us from God’s mouth: by that we must live.
3214 It is the word of Christ, loved, lived in, abiding in us, becoming through obedience and action part
3215 of our being, that makes us one with Christ, that fits us spiritually for touching, for taking hold of
3216 God. All that is of the world passeth away; he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. O let us
3217 yield heart and life to the words of Christ, the words in which He ever gives HIMSELF, the
3218 personal living Saviour, and His promise will be our rich experience: If ye abide in me, and my
3219 words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.’

3220

3221
3222 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY!

3223
3224
3225
3226 Blessed Lord! Thy lesson this day has again discovered to me my folly. I see how it is that my
3227 prayer has not been more believing and prevailing. I was more occupied with my speaking to Thee
3228 than Thy speaking to me. I did not understand that the secret of faith is this: there can be only so
3229 much faith as there is of the Living Word dwelling in the soul.

3230
3231 And Thy word had taught me so clearly: Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak; let not thine
3232 heart be hasty to utter anything before God. Lord, teach me that it is only with Thy word taken up
3233 into my life that my words can be taken into Thy heart; that Thy word, if it be a living power within
3234 me, will be a living power with Thee; what Thy mouth hath spoken Thy hand will perform.

3235
3236 Lord! deliver me from the uncircumcised ear. Give me the opened ear of the learner, wakened
3237 morning by morning to hear the Father's voice. Even as Thou didst only speak what Thou didst
3238 hear, may my speaking be the echo of Thy speaking to me. When Moses went into the tabernacle to
3239 speak with Him, he heard the voice of One speaking unto him from off the mercy-seat.' Lord, may
3240 it be so with me too. Let a life and character bearing the one mark, that Thy words abide and are
3241 seen in it, be the preparation for the full blessing: Ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto
3242 you.' Amen.

3243
3244
3245
3246
3247 TWENTY-THIRD LESSON

3248
3249 Bear fruit, that the Father may give what ye ask;'

3250
3251 Or, Obedience the Path to Power in Prayer.

3252
3253 Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that
3254 your fruit should abide: that whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He may give it you.'—
3255 John xv. 16.

3256
3257 The fervent effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much.'—James. v. 16.

3258
3259 THE promise of the Father's giving whatsoever we ask is here once again renewed, in such a
3260 connection as to show us to whom it is that such wonderful influence in the council chamber of the
3261 Most High is to be granted. I chose you,' the Master says, and appointed you that ye should go and
3262 bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide;' and then He adds, to the end that whatsoever ye,' the
3263 fruit-bearing ones, shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you.' This is nothing but the
3264 fuller expression of what He had spoken in the words, If ye abide in me.' He had spoken of the
3265 object of this abiding as the bearing fruit,' more fruit,' much fruit;' in this was God to be glorified,
3266 and the mark of discipleship seen. No wonder that He now adds, that where the reality of the
3267 abiding is seen in fruit abounding and abiding, this would be the qualification for praying so as to
3268 obtain what we ask. Entire consecration to the fulfilment of our calling is the condition of effectual
3269 prayer, is the key to the unlimited blessings of Christ's wonderful prayer-promises.

3270
3271 There are Christians who fear that such a statement is at variance with the doctrine of free grace.
3272 But surely not of free grace rightly understood, nor with so many express statements of God's
3273 blessed word. Take the words of St. John (1 John iii. 22): Let us love in deed and truth; hereby shall
3274 we assure our heart before Him. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His
3275 commandments, and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.' Or take the oft-quoted words of
3276 James: The fervent effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much;' that is, of a man of whom,
3277 according to the definition of the Holy Spirit, it can be said, He that doeth righteousness, is
3278 righteous even as He is righteous.' Mark the spirit of so many of the Psalms, with their confident
3279 appeal to the integrity and righteousness of the supplicant. In Ps. xviii, David says: The Lord
3280 rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath He
3281 recompensed me. . . . I was upright before Him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity: therefore
3282 hath the Lord recompensed me according to my righteousness.' (Ps. xviii. 20-26. See also Ps. vii. 3-
3283 5, xv. 1, 2, xviii. 3, 6, xxvi. 1-6, cxix. 121, 153.) If we carefully consider such utterances in the light
3284 of the New Testament, we shall find them in perfect harmony with the explicit teaching of the
3285 Saviour's parting words: If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love;' Ye are my
3286 friends if ye do what I command you.' The word is indeed meant literally: I appointed you that ye
3287 should go and bear fruit, that,' then, whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give
3288 it you.'

3289
3290 Let us seek to enter into the spirit of what the Saviour here teaches us. There is a danger in our
3291 evangelical religion of looking too much at what it offers from one side, as a certain experience to
3292 be obtained in prayer and faith. There is another side which God's word puts very strongly, that of
3293 obedience as the only path to blessing. What we need is to realize that in our relationship to the
3294 Infinite Being whom we call God who has created and redeemed us, the first sentiment that ought to
3295 animate us is that of subjection: the surrender to His supremacy, His glory, His will, His pleasure,
3296 ought to be the first and uppermost thought of our life. The question is not, how we are to obtain
3297 and enjoy His favour, for in this the main thing may still be self. But what this Being in the very
3298 nature of things rightfully claims, and is infinitely and unspeakably worthy of, is that His glory and
3299 pleasure should be my one object. Surrender to His perfect and blessed will, a life of service and
3300 obedience, is the beauty and the charm of heaven. Service and obedience, these were the thoughts
3301 that were uppermost in the mind of the Son, when He dwelt upon earth. Service and obedience,
3302 these must become with us the chief objects of desire and aim, more so than rest or light, or joy or
3303 strength: in them we shall find the path to all the higher blessedness that awaits us.

3304
3305 Just note what a prominent place the Master gives it, not only in the 15th chapter, in connection
3306 with the abiding, but in the 14th, where He speaks of the indwelling of the Three-One God. In
3307 verse 15 we have it: If ye love me, keep my commandments, and the Spirit will be given you of the
3308 Father. Then verse 21: He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;' and he shall have the special love of my Father resting on him and the special manifestation of
3309 myself. And then again, verse 23, one of the highest of all the exceeding great and precious
3310 promises: If a man love me he will keep my words, and the Father and I will come and take up our
3311 abode with him.' Could words put it more clearly that obedience is the way to the indwelling of the
3312 Spirit, to His revealing the Son within us, and to His again preparing us to be the abode, the home of
3313 the Father? The indwelling of the Three-One God is the heritage of them that obey. Obedience and
3314 faith are but two aspects of one act,—surrender to God and His will. As faith strengthens for
3315 obedience, it is in turn strengthened by it: faith is made perfect by works. It is to be feared that often
3316 our efforts to believe have been unavailing because we have not taken up the only position in which
3317 a large faith is legitimate or possible,—that of entire surrender to the honour and the will of God. It
3318

3319 is the man who is entirely consecrated to God and His will who will find the power come to claim
3320 everything that His God has promised to be for him.

3321
3322 The application of this in the school of prayer is very simple, but very solemn. I chose you,' the
3323 Master says, and appointed you that ye should go and bear fruit,' much fruit (verses 5, 8), and that
3324 your fruit should abide,' that your life might be one of abiding fruit and abiding fruitfulness, that'
3325 thus, as fruitful branches abiding in me, whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may
3326 give it you.' O how often we have sought to be able to pray the effectual prayer for much grace to
3327 bear fruit, and have wondered that the answer came not. It was because we were reversing the
3328 Master's order. We wanted to have the comfort and the joy and the strength first, that we might do
3329 the work easily and without any feeling of difficulty or self-sacrifice. And He wanted us in faith,
3330 without asking whether we felt weak or strong, whether the work was hard or easy, in the obedience
3331 of faith to do what He said: the path of fruit-bearing would have led us to the place and the power of
3332 prevailing prayer. Obedience is the only path that leads to the glory of God. Not obedience instead
3333 of faith, nor obedience to supply the shortcomings of faith; no, but faith's obedience gives access to
3334 all the blessings our God has for us. The baptism of the Spirit (xiv. 16), the manifestation of the Son
3335 (xiv. 21), the indwelling of the Father (xiv. 23), the abiding in Christ's love (xv. 10), the privilege of
3336 His holy friendship (xv. 14), and the power of all-prevailing prayer (xv. 16),—all wait for the
3337 obedient.

3338
3339 Let us take home the lessons. Now we know the great reason why we have not had power in faith to
3340 pray prevailingly. Our life was not as it should have been: simple downright obedience, abiding
3341 fruitfulness, was not its chief mark. And with our whole heart we approve of the Divine
3342 appointment: men to whom God is to give such influence in the rule of the world, as at their request
3343 to do what otherwise would not have taken place, men whose will is to guide the path in which
3344 God's will is to work, must be men who have themselves learned obedience, whose loyalty and
3345 submission to authority must be above all suspicion. Our whole soul approves the law: obedience
3346 and fruit-bearing, the path to prevailing prayer. And with shame we acknowledge how little our
3347 lives have yet borne this stamp.

3348
3349 Let us yield ourselves to take up the appointment the Saviour gives us. Let us study His relation to
3350 us as Master. Let us seek no more with each new day to think in the first place of comfort, or joy, or
3351 blessing. Let the first thought be: I belong to the Master. Every moment and every movement I must
3352 act as His property, as a part of Himself, as one who only seeks to know and do His will. A servant,
3353 a slave of Jesus Christ,—let this be the spirit that animates me. If He says, No longer do I call you
3354 servants, but I have called you friends,' let us accept the place of friends: Ye are my friends if ye do
3355 the things which I command you.'

3356
3357 The one thing He commands us as His branches is to bear fruit. Let us live to bless others, to testify
3358 of the life and the love there is in Jesus. Let us in faith and obedience give our whole life to that
3359 which Jesus chose us for and appointed us to—fruit-bearing. As we think of His electing us to this,
3360 and take up our appointment as coming from Him who always gives all He demands, we shall grow
3361 strong in the confidence that a life of fruit-bearing, abounding and abiding, is within our reach. And
3362 we shall understand why this fruit-bearing alone can be the path to the place of all prevailing prayer.
3363 It is the man who, in obedience to the Christ of God, is proving that he is doing what his Lord wills,
3364 for whom the Father will do whatsoever he will: Whatsoever we ask we receive, because we keep
3365 His commandments, and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.'

3366
3367 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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Blessed Master! teach me to apprehend fully what I only partly realize, that it is only through the will of God, accepted and acted out in obedience to His commands, that we obtain the power to grasp His will in His promises and fully to appropriate them in our prayers. And teach me that it is in the path of fruit-bearing that the deeper growth of the branch into the Vine can be perfected, and we attain to the perfect oneness with Thyself in which we ask whatsoever we will.

O Lord! Reveal to us, we pray Thee, how with all the hosts of heaven, and with Thyself the Son on earth, and with all the men of faith who have glorified Thee on earth, obedience to God is our highest privilege, because it gives access to oneness with Himself in that which is His highest glory—His all perfect will. And reveal to us, we pray Thee, how in keeping Thy commandments and bearing fruit according to Thy will, our spiritual nature will grow up to the full stature of the perfect man, with power to ask and to receive whatsoever we will.

O Lord Jesus! Reveal Thyself to us, and the reality of Thy purpose and Thy power to make these Thy wonderful promises the daily experience of all who utterly yield themselves to Thee and Thy words. Amen.

TWENTY-FOURTH LESSON.

In my Name;'

Or, The All-prevailing Plea.

Whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do. If ye shall ask me anything in my Name, that will I do. That whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, He may give it you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If ye shall ask anything of the Father, He will give it you in my Name. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my Name: ask, and ye shall receive. In that day ye shall ask in my Name.'—John xiv. 13, 14, xv. 16, xvi. 23, 24, 26.

HITHERTO the disciples had not asked in the Name of Christ, nor had He Himself ever used the expression. The nearest approach is, met together in my Name.' Here in His parting words, He repeats the word unceasingly in connection with those promises of unlimited meaning, 'Whatsoever,' 'Anything,' 'What ye will,' to teach them and us that His Name is our only, but also our all-sufficient plea. The power of prayer and the answer depend on the right use of the Name.

What is a person's name? That word or expression in which the person is called up or represented to us. When I mention or hear a name, it calls up before me the whole man, what I know of him, and also the impression he has made on me. The name of a king includes his honour, his power, his kingdom. His name is the symbol of his power. And so each name of God embodies and represents some part of the glory of the Unseen One. And the Name of Christ is the expression of all He has done and all He is and lives to do as our Mediator.

And what is it to do a thing in the name of another? It is to come with the power and authority of that other, as his representative and substitute. We know how such a use of another's name always

3417 supposes a community of interest. No one would give another the free use of his name without first
3418 being assured that his honour and interest were as safe with that other as with himself.

3419
3420 And what is it when Jesus gives us power over His Name, the free use of it, with the assurance that
3421 whatever we ask in it will be given to us? The ordinary comparison of one person giving another, on
3422 some special occasion, the liberty to ask something in his name, comes altogether short here,—
3423 Jesus solemnly gives to all His disciples a general and unlimited power of the free use of His Name
3424 at all times for all they desire. He could not do this if He did not know that He could trust us with
3425 His interests, that His honour would be safe in our hands. The free use of the name of another is
3426 always the token of great confidence, of close union. He who gives his name to another stands
3427 aside, to let that other act for him; he who takes the name of another, gives up his own as of no
3428 value. When I go in the name of another, I deny myself, I take not only his name, but himself and
3429 what he is, instead of myself and what I am.

3430
3431 Such a use of the name of a person may be in virtue of a legal union. A merchant leaving his home
3432 and business, gives his chief clerk a general power, by which he can draw thousands of pounds in
3433 the merchant's name. The clerk does this, not for himself, but only in the interests of the business. It
3434 is because the merchant knows and trusts him as wholly devoted to his interests and business, that
3435 he dares put his name and property at his command. When the Lord Jesus went to heaven, He left
3436 His work, the management of His kingdom on earth, in the hands of His servants. He could not do
3437 otherwise than also give them His Name to draw all the supplies they needed for the due conduct of
3438 His business. And they have the spiritual power to avail themselves of the Name of Jesus just to the
3439 extent to which they yield themselves to live only for the interests and the work of the Master. The
3440 use of the Name always supposes the surrender of our interests to Him whom we represent.

3441
3442 Or such a use of the name may be in virtue of a life union. In the case of the merchant and his clerk,
3443 the union is temporary. But we know how oneness of life on earth gives oneness of name: a child
3444 has the father's name because he has his life. And often the child of a good father has been
3445 honoured or helped by others for the sake of the name he bore. But this would not last long if it
3446 were found that it was only a name, and that the father's character was wanting. The name and the
3447 character or spirit must be in harmony. When such is the case, the child will have a double claim on
3448 the father's friends: the character secures and increases the love and esteem rendered first for the
3449 name's sake. So it is with Jesus and the believer: we are one, we have one life, one Spirit with Him;
3450 for this reason we may come in His Name. Our power in using that Name, whether with God, or
3451 men, or devils depends on the measure of our spiritual life-union. The use of the name rests on the
3452 unity of life; the Name and the Spirit of Jesus are one. [2]

3453
3454 Or the union that empowers to the use of the Name may be the union of love. When a bride whose
3455 life has been one of poverty, becomes united to the bridegroom, she gives up her own name, to be
3456 called by his, and has now the full right to use it. She purchases in his name, and that name is not
3457 refused. And this is done because the bridegroom has chosen her for himself, counting on her to
3458 care for his interests: they are now one. And so the Heavenly Bridegroom could do nothing less;
3459 having loved us and made us one with Himself, what could He do but give those who bear His
3460 Name the right to present it before the Father, or to come with it to Himself for all they need. And
3461 there is no one who gives himself really to live in the Name of Jesus, who does not receive in ever-
3462 increasing measure the spiritual capacity to ask and receive in that Name what he will. The bearing
3463 of the name of another supposes my having given up my own, and with it my own independent life;
3464 but then, as surely, my possession of all there is in the name I have taken instead of my own.

3465

3466 Such illustrations show us how defective the common view is of a messenger sent to ask in the
3467 name of another, or a guilty one appealing to the name of a surety. No Jesus Himself is with the
3468 Father; it is not an absent one in whose name we come. Even when we pray to Jesus Himself, it
3469 must be in His Name. The name represents the person; to ask in the Name is to ask in full union of
3470 interest and life and love with Himself, as one who lives in and for Him. Let the Name of Jesus only
3471 have undivided supremacy in my heart and life, my faith will grow to the assurance that what I ask
3472 in that Name cannot be refused. The name and the power of asking go together: when the Name of
3473 Jesus has become the power that rules my life, its power in prayer with God will be seen too.

3474
3475 We see thus that everything depends on our own relation to the Name: the power it has on my life is
3476 the power it will have in my prayers. There is more than one expression in Scripture which can
3477 make this clear to us. When it says, Do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus,' we see how this is the
3478 counterpart of the other, Ask all.' To do all and to ask all in His Name, these go together. When we
3479 read, We shall walk in the Name of our God,' we see how the power of the Name must rule in the
3480 whole life; only then will it have power in prayer. It is not to the lips but to the life God looks to see
3481 what the Name is to us. When Scripture speaks of men who have given their lives for the Name of
3482 the Lord Jesus,' or of one ready to die for the Name of the Lord Jesus,' we see what our relation to
3483 the Name must be: when it is everything to me, it will obtain everything for me. If I let it have all I
3484 have, it will let me have all it has.

3485
3486 WHATSOEVER ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do.' Jesus means the promise literally.
3487 Christians have sought to limit it: it looked too free; it was hardly safe to trust man so
3488 unconditionally. We did not understand that the word in my Name' is its own safeguard. It is a
3489 spiritual power which no one can use further than he obtains the capacity for, by his living and
3490 acting in that Name. As we bear that Name before men, we have power to use it before God. O let
3491 us plead for God's Holy Spirit to show us what the Name means, and what the right use of it is. It is
3492 through the Spirit that the Name, which is above every name in heaven, will take the place of
3493 supremacy in our heart and life too.

3494
3495 Disciples of Jesus! Let the lessons of this day enter deep into your hearts. The Master says: Only
3496 pray in my Name; whatsoever ye ask will be given. Heaven is set open to you; the treasures and
3497 powers of the world of spirit are placed at your disposal on behalf of men around you. O come, and
3498 let us learn to pray in the Name of Jesus. As to the disciples, He says to us, Hitherto ye have not
3499 asked in my Name: ask, and ye shall receive.' Let each disciple of Jesus seek to avail himself of the
3500 rights of his royal priesthood, and use the power placed at his disposal for his circle and his work.
3501 Let Christians awake and hear the message: your prayer can obtain what otherwise will be withheld,
3502 can accomplish what otherwise remains undone. O awake, and use the name of Jesus to open the
3503 treasures of heaven for this perishing world. Learn as the servants of the King to use His Name:
3504 WHATSOEVER ye shall ask in my Name, THAT WILL I DO.'

3505
3506 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

3507
3508
3509
3510 Blessed Lord! It is as if each lesson Thou givest me has such fulness and depths of meaning, that if I
3511 can only learn that one, I shall know how to pray aright. This day I feel again as if I needed but one
3512 prayer every day: Lord! Teach me what it is to pray in Thy Name. Teach me so to live and act, to
3513 walk and speak, so to do all in the Name of Jesus, that my prayer cannot be anything else but in that
3514 blessed Name too.

3515
3516 And teach me, Lord! to hold fast the precious promise that WHATSOEVER we ask in Thy Name,
3517 Thou wilt do, the Father will give. Though I do not yet fully understand, and still less have fully
3518 attained, the wondrous union Thou meanest when Thou sayest, IN MY NAME, I would yet hold
3519 fast the promise until it fills my heart with the undoubting assurance: Anything in the Name of
3520 Jesus.
3521
3522 O my Lord! let Thy Holy Spirit teach me this. Thou didst say of Him, The Comforter, whom the
3523 Father shall send IN MY NAME.' He knows what it is to be sent from heaven in Thy Name, to
3524 reveal and to honour the power of that Name in Thy servants, to use that Name alone, and so to
3525 glorify Thee. Lord Jesus! let Thy Spirit dwell in me, and fill me. I would, I do yield my whole being
3526 to His rule and leading. Thy Name and Thy Spirit are one; through Him Thy Name will be the
3527 strength of my life and my prayer. Then I shall be able for Thy Name's sake to forsake all, in Thy
3528 Name to speak to men and to God, and to prove that this is indeed the Name above every name.
3529
3530 Lord Jesus! O teach me by Thy Holy Spirit to pray in Thy Name. Amen.
3531
3532 NOTE.
3533
3534 What is meant by praying in Christ's name? It cannot mean simply appearing before God with faith
3535 in the mediation of the Saviour. When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, He supplied
3536 them with petitions. And afterwards Jesus said to them, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my
3537 Name." Until the Spirit came, the seven petitions of the Lord's prayer lay as it were dormant within
3538 them. When by the Holy Ghost Christ descended into their hearts, they desired the very blessings
3539 which Christ as our High Priest obtains for us by His prayer from the Father. And such petitions are
3540 always answered. The Father is always willing to give what Christ asks. The Spirit of Christ always
3541 teaches and influences us to offer the petitions which Christ ratifies and presents to the Father. To
3542 pray in Christ's name is therefore to be identified with Christ as to our righteousness, and to be
3543 identified with Christ in our desires by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. To pray in the Spirit, to
3544 pray according to the will of the Father, to pray in Christ's name, are identical expressions. The
3545 Father Himself loveth us, and is willing to hear us: two intercessors, Christ the Advocate above, and
3546 the Holy Ghost, the Advocate within, are the gifts of His love.
3547
3548 This view may appear at first less consoling than a more prevalent one, which refers prayer in
3549 Christ's name chiefly to our trust in Christ's merit. The defect of this opinion is, that it does not
3550 combine the intercession of the Saviour with the will of the Father, and the indwelling Spirit's aid in
3551 prayer. Nor does it fully realize the mediation of Christ; for the mediation consists not merely in
3552 that for Christ's sake the Holy Father is able to regard me and my prayer; but also, in that Christ
3553 Himself presents my petitions as His petitions, desired by Him for me, even as all blessings are
3554 purchased for me by His precious blood.
3555
3556 In all prayer, the one essential condition is that we are able to offer it in the name of Jesus, as
3557 according to His desire for us, according to the Father's will, according to the Spirit's teaching. And
3558 thus praying in Christ's name is impossible without self-examination, without reflection, without
3559 self-denial; in short, without the aid of the Spirit.'—Saphiv [Adolph Saphir], *The Lord's Prayer*, pp.
3560 411, 142.
3561
3562

3563 [2] ^Whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name,' that is, in my nature; for things with God are called
3564 according to their nature. We ask in Christ's Name, not when at the end of some request we say,
3565 This I ask in the Name of Jesus Christ,' but when we pray according to His nature, which is love,
3566 which seeketh not its own but only the will of God and the good of all creatures. Such asking is the
3567 cry of His own Spirit in our hearts.—Jukes. The New Man.

3568
3569
3570
3571

3572 TWENTY-FIFTH LESSON.

3573
3574 At that day;'

3575
3576 Or, The Holy Spirit and Prayer.

3577
3578 In that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the
3579 Father in my Name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my Name: ask, and ye
3580 shall receive, that your joy may be full. At that day ye shall ask in my Name: and I say not, that I
3581 will pray the Father for you, for the Father Himself loveth you.'—John xvi. 23-26.

3582
3583 Praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God.'—JUDE 20, 21.

3584
3585 THE words of John (I John ii. 12-14) to little children, to young men, and to fathers suggest the
3586 thought that there often are in the Christian life three great stages of experience. The first, that of the
3587 new-born child, with the assurance and the joy of forgiveness. The second, the transition stage of
3588 struggle and growth in knowledge and strength: young men growing strong, God's word doing its
3589 work in them and giving them victory over the Evil One. And then the final stage of maturity and
3590 ripeness: the Fathers, who have entered deeply into the knowledge and fellowship of the Eternal
3591 One.

3592
3593 In Christ's teaching on prayer there appear to be three stages in the prayer-life, somewhat
3594 analogous. In the Sermon on the Mount we have the initial stage: His teaching is all comprised in
3595 one word, Father. Pray to your Father, your Father sees, hears, knows, and will reward: how much
3596 more than any earthly father! Only be childlike and trustful. Then comes later on something like the
3597 transition stage of conflict and conquest, in words like these: This sort goeth not out but by fasting
3598 and prayer; Shall not God avenge His own elect who cry day and night unto Him?' And then we
3599 have in the parting words, a higher stage. The children have become men: they are now the Master's
3600 friends, from whom He has no secrets, to whom He says, All things that I heard from my Father I
3601 made known unto you; and to whom, in the oft-repeated whatsoever ye will,' He hands over the
3602 keys of the kingdom. Now the time has come for the power of prayer in His Name to be proved.

3603
3604 The contrast between this final stage and the previous preparatory ones our Saviour marks most
3605 distinctly in the words we are to meditate on: Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my Name; At that
3606 day ye shall ask in my Name. We know what at that day' means. It is the day of the outpouring of
3607 the Holy Spirit. The great work Christ was to do on the cross, the mighty power and the complete
3608 victory to be manifested in His resurrection and ascension, were to issue in the coming down from
3609 heaven, as never before, of the glory of God to dwell in men. The Spirit of the glorified Jesus was to
3610 come and be the life of His disciples. And one of the marks of that wonderful spirit-dispensation

3611 was to be a power in prayer hitherto unknown—prayer in the Name of Jesus, asking and obtaining
3612 whatsoever they would, is to be the manifestation of the reality of the Spirit’s indwelling.

3613
3614 To understand how the coming of the Holy Spirit was indeed to commence a new epoch in the
3615 prayer-world, we must remember who He is, what His work, and what the significance of His not
3616 being given until Jesus was glorified. It is in the Spirit that God exists, for He is Spirit. It is in the
3617 Spirit that the Son was begotten of the Father: it is in the fellowship of the Spirit that the Father and
3618 the Son are one. The eternal never-ceasing giving to the Son which is the Father’s prerogative and
3619 the eternal asking and receiving which is the Son’s right and blessedness—it is through the Spirit
3620 that this communion of life and love is maintained. It has been so from all eternity. It is so specially
3621 now, when the Son as Mediator ever liveth to pray. The great work which Jesus began on earth of
3622 reconciling in His own body God and man, He carries on in heaven. To accomplish this He took up
3623 into His own person the conflict between God’s righteousness and our sin. On the cross He once for
3624 all ended the struggle in His own body. And then He ascended to heaven, that thence He might in
3625 each member of His body carry out the deliverance and manifest the victory He had obtained. It is
3626 to do this that He ever liveth to pray; in His unceasing intercession He places Himself in living
3627 fellowship with the unceasing prayer of His redeemed ones. Or rather, it is His unceasing
3628 intercession which shows itself in their prayers, and gives them a power they never had before.

3629
3630 And He does this through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the glorified Jesus, was not
3631 (John vii. 39), could not be, until He had been glorified. This gift of the Father was something
3632 distinctively new, entirely different from what Old Testament saints had known. The work that the
3633 blood effected in heaven when Christ entered within the veil, was something so true and new, the
3634 redemption of our human nature into fellowship with His resurrection-power and His exaltation-
3635 glory was so intensely real, the taking up of our humanity in Christ into the life of the Three-One
3636 God was an event of such inconceivable significance, that the Holy Spirit, who had to come from
3637 Christ’s exalted humanity to testify in our hearts of what Christ had accomplished, was indeed no
3638 longer only what He had been in the Old Testament. It was literally true the Holy Spirit was not yet,
3639 for Christ was not yet glorified.’ He came now first as the Spirit of the glorified Jesus. Even as the
3640 Son, who was from eternity God, had entered upon a new existence as man, and returned to heaven
3641 with what He had not before, so the Blessed Spirit, whom the Son, on His ascension, received from
3642 the Father (Acts ii. 33) into His glorified humanity, came to us with a new life, which He had not
3643 previously to communicate. Under the Old Testament He was invoked as the Spirit of God: at
3644 Pentecost He descended as the Spirit of the glorified Jesus, bringing down and communicating to us
3645 the full fruit and power of the accomplished redemption.

3646
3647 It is in the intercession of Christ that the continued efficacy and application of His redemption is
3648 maintained. And it is through the Holy Spirit descending from Christ to us that we are drawn up into
3649 the great stream of His ever-ascending prayers. The Spirit prays for us without words: in the depths
3650 of a heart where even thoughts are at times formless, the Spirit takes us up into the wonderful flow
3651 of the life of the Three-One God. Through the Spirit, Christ’s prayers become ours, and ours are
3652 made His: we ask what we will, and it is given to us. We then understand from experience, Hitherto
3653 ye have not asked in my Name. At that day ye shall ask in my Name.’

3654
3655 Brother! what we need to pray in the Name of Christ, to ask that we may receive that our joy may
3656 be full, is the baptism of this Holy Ghost. This is more than the Spirit of God under the Old
3657 Testament. This is more than the Spirit of conversion and regeneration the disciples had before
3658 Pentecost. This is more than the Spirit with a measure of His influence and working. This is the
3659 Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the glorified Jesus in His exaltation-power, coming on us as the Spirit of

3660 the indwelling Jesus, revealing the Son and the Father within. (John xiv. 16-23.) It is when this
3661 Spirit is the Spirit not of our hours of prayer, but of our whole life and walk, when this Spirit
3662 glorifies Jesus in us by revealing the completeness of His work, and making us wholly one with
3663 Him and like Him, that we can pray in His Name, because we are in very deed one with Him. Then
3664 it is that we have that immediateness of access to the Father of which Jesus says, I say not that I will
3665 pray the Father for you.' Oh! we need to understand and believe that to be filled with this, the Spirit
3666 of the glorified One, is the one need of God's believing people. Then shall we realize what it is,
3667 with all prayer and supplication to be praying at all seasons in the Spirit,' and what it is, praying in
3668 the Holy Ghost, to keep ourselves in the love of God.' At that day ye shall ask in my Name.'

3669
3670 And so once again the lesson comes: What our prayer avails, depends upon what we are and what
3671 our life is. It is living in the Name of Christ that is the secret of praying in the Name of Christ;
3672 living in the Spirit that fits for praying in the Spirit. It is abiding in Christ that gives the right and
3673 power to ask what we will: the extent of the abiding is the exact measure of the power in prayer. It
3674 is the Spirit dwelling within us that prays, not in words and thoughts always, but in a breathing and
3675 a being deeper than utterance. Just so much as there is of Christ's Spirit in us, is there real prayer.
3676 Our lives, our lives, O let our lives be full of Christ, and full of His Spirit, and the wonderfully
3677 unlimited promises to our prayer will no longer appear strange. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in
3678 my Name. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. At that day ye shall ask in my Name.
3679 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the father in my Name, He will give it you.'

3680
3681 LORD , TEACH US TO PRAY.'

3682
3683
3684
3685 O my God! in holy awe I bow before Thee, the Three in One. Again I have seen how the mystery of
3686 prayer is the mystery of the Holy Trinity. I adore the Father who ever hears, and the Son who ever
3687 lives to pray, and the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, to lift us up into the
3688 fellowship of that ever-blessed, never-ceasing asking and receiving. I bow, my God, in adoring
3689 worship, before the infinite condescension that thus, through the Holy Spirit, takes us and our
3690 prayers into the Divine Life, and its fellowship of love.

3691
3692 O my Blessed Lord Jesus! Teach me to understand Thy lesson, that it is the indwelling Spirit,
3693 streaming from Thee, uniting to Thee, who is the Spirit of prayer. Teach me what it is as an empty,
3694 wholly consecrated vessel, to yield myself to His being my life. Teach me to honour and trust Him,
3695 as a living Person, to lead my life and my prayer. Teach me specially in prayer to wait in holy
3696 silence, and give Him place to breathe within me His unutterable intercession. And teach me that
3697 through Him it is possible to pray without ceasing, and to pray without failing, because He makes
3698 me partaker of the never-ceasing and never-failing intercession in which Thou, the Son, dost appear
3699 before the Father. Yea, Lord, fulfil in me Thy promise, At that day ye shall ask in my Name. Verily,
3700 verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, that will He give.' Amen.

3701
3702
3703
3704 NOTE.

3705
3706 Prayer has often been compared to breathing: we have only to carry out the comparison fully to see
3707 how wonderful the place is which the Holy Spirit occupies. With every breath we expel the impure
3708 air which would soon cause our death, and inhale again the fresh air to which we owe our life. So

3709 we give out from us, in confession the sins, in prayer the needs and the desires of our heart. And in
3710 drawing in our breath again, we inhale the fresh air of the promises, and the love, and the life of
3711 God in Christ. We do this through the Holy Spirit, who is the breath of our life.

3712
3713 And this He is because He is the breath of God. The Father breathes Him into us, to unite Himself
3714 with our life. And then just as on every expiration there follows again the inhaling or drawing in of
3715 the breath, so God draws in again His breath, and the Spirit returns to Him laden with the desires
3716 and needs of our hearts. And thus the Holy Spirit is the breath of the life of God, and the breath of
3717 the new life in us. As God breathes Him out, we receive Him in answer to prayer; as we breathe
3718 Him back again, He rises to God laden with our supplications. As the Spirit of God, in whom the
3719 Father and the Son are one, and the intercession of the Son reaches the Father, He is to us the Spirit
3720 of prayer. True prayer is the living experience of the truth of the Holy Trinity. The Spirit's
3721 breathing, the Son's intercession, the Father's will, these three become one in us.

3722

3723

3724

3725 TWENTY-SIXTH LESSON.

3726

3727 I have prayed for thee;'

3728

3729 Or, Christ the Intercessor.

3730

3731 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.'—Luke xxii. 32.

3732

3733 I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you.'—John xvi. 26.

3734

3735 He ever liveth to make intercession.'—Heb. vii. 25.

3736

3737 ALL growth in the spiritual life is connected with the clearer insight into what Jesus is to us. The
3738 more I realize that Christ must be all to me and in me, that all in Christ is indeed for me, the more I
3739 learn to live the real life of faith, which, dying to self, lives wholly in Christ. The Christian life is no
3740 longer the vain struggle to live right, but the resting in Christ and finding strength in Him as our life,
3741 to fight the fight and gain the victory of faith. This is specially true of the life of prayer. As it too
3742 comes under the law of faith alone, and is seen in the light of the fulness and completeness there is
3743 in Jesus, the believer understands that it need no longer be a matter of strain or anxious care, but an
3744 experience of what Christ will do for him and in him—a participation in that life of Christ which, as
3745 on earth, so in heaven, ever ascends to the Father as prayer. And he begins to pray, not only trusting
3746 in the merits of Jesus, or in the intercession by which our unworthy prayers are made acceptable,
3747 but in that near and close union in virtue of which He prays in us and we in Him. [3] ^ The whole of
3748 salvation is Christ Himself: He has given HIMSELF to us; He Himself lives in us. Because He
3749 prays, we pray too. As the disciples, when they saw Jesus pray, asked Him to make them partakers
3750 of what He knew of prayer, so we, now we see Him as intercessor on the throne, know that He
3751 makes us participate with Himself in the life of prayer.

3752

3753 How clearly this comes out in the last night of His life. In His high-priestly prayer (John xvii.), He
3754 shows us how and what He has to pray to the Father, and will pray when once ascended to heaven.
3755 And yet He had in His parting address so repeatedly also connected His going to the Father with
3756 their new life of prayer. The two would be ultimately connected: His entrance on the work of His
3757 eternal intercession would be the commencement and the power of their new prayer-life in His

3758 Name. It is the sight of Jesus in His intercession that gives us power to pray in His Name: all right
3759 and power of prayer is Christ's; He makes us share in His intercession.

3760
3761 To understand this, think first of His intercession: He ever liveth to make intercession. The work of
3762 Christ on earth as Priest was but a beginning. It was as Aaron He shed His blood; it is as
3763 Melchizedek that He now lives within the veil to continue His work, after the power of the eternal
3764 life. As Melchizedek is more glorious than Aaron, so it is in the work of intercession that the
3765 atonement has its true power and glory. It is Christ that died: yea more, who is even at the right
3766 hand of God, who maketh intercession for us.' That intercession is an intense reality, a work that is
3767 absolutely necessary, and without which the continued application of redemption cannot take place.
3768 In the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus the wondrous reconciliation took place, by which man
3769 became partaker of the Divine life and blessedness. But the real personal appropriation of this
3770 reconciliation in each of His members here below cannot take place without the unceasing exercise
3771 of His Divine power by the head in heaven. In all conversion and sanctification, in every victory
3772 over sin and the world, there is a real forth-putting of the power of Him who is mighty to save. And
3773 this exercise of His power only takes place through His prayer: He asks of the Father, and receives
3774 from the Father. He is able to save to the uttermost, because He ever liveth to make intercession.'
3775 There is not a need of His people but He receives in intercession what the Godhead has to give: His
3776 mediation on the throne is as real and indispensable as on the cross. Nothing takes place without His
3777 intercession: it engages all His time and powers, is His unceasing occupation at the right hand of the
3778 Father.

3779
3780 And we participate not only in the benefits of this His work, but in the work itself. This because we
3781 are His body. Body and members are one: The head cannot say to the feet, I have no need of thee.'
3782 We share with Jesus in all He is and has: The glory which Thou gavest me, I have given them.' We
3783 are partakers of His life, His righteousness, His work: we share with Him in His intercession too; it
3784 is not a work He does without us.

3785
3786 We do this because we are partakers of His life: Christ is our life;' No longer I, but Christ liveth in
3787 me.' The life in Him and in us is identical, one and the same. His life in us is an ever-praying life.
3788 When it descends and takes possession of us, it does not lose its character; in us too it is the every-
3789 praying life—a life that without ceasing asks and receives from God. And this not as if there were
3790 two separate currents of prayer rising upwards, one from Him, and one from His people. No, but the
3791 substantial life-union is also prayer-union: what He prays passes through us, what we pray passes
3792 through Him. He is the angel with the golden censer: UNTO HIM there was given much incense,'
3793 the secret of acceptable prayer, that He should add it unto the prayers of all the saints upon the
3794 golden altar.' We live, we abide in Him, the Interceding One.

3795
3796 The Only-begotten is the only one who has the right to pray: to Him alone it was said, Ask, and it
3797 shall be given Thee.' As in all other things the fulness dwells in Him, so the true prayer-fulness too;
3798 He alone has the power of prayer. And just as the growth of the spiritual life consists in the clearer
3799 insight that all the treasures are in Him, and that we too are in Him, to receive each moment what
3800 we possess in Him, grace for grace, so with the prayer-life too. Our faith in the intercession of Jesus
3801 must not only be that He prays in our stead, when we do not or cannot pray, but that, as the Author
3802 of our life and our faith, He draws us on to pray in unison with Himself. Our prayer must be a work
3803 of faith in this sense too, that as we know that Jesus communicates His whole life in us, He also out
3804 of that prayerfulness which is His alone breathes into us our praying.

3805

3806 To many a believer it was a new epoch in his spiritual life when it was revealed to him how truly
3807 and entirely Christ was his life, standing good as surety for his remaining faithful and obedient. It
3808 was then first that he really began to live a faith-life. No less blessed will be the discovery that
3809 Christ is surety for our prayer-life too, the centre and embodiment of all prayer, to be communicated
3810 by Him through the Holy Spirit to His people. He ever liveth to make intercession' as the Head of
3811 the body, as the Leader in that new and living way which He hath opened up, as the Author and the
3812 Perfecter of our faith. He provides in everything for the life of His redeemed ones by giving His
3813 own life in them: He cares for their life of prayer, by taking them up into His heavenly prayer-life,
3814 by giving and maintaining His prayer-life within them. I have prayed for thee,' not to render thy
3815 faith needless, but that thy faith fail not:' our faith and prayer of faith is rooted in His. It is, if ye
3816 abide in me,' the ever-living Intercessor, and pray with me and in me: ask whatsoever ye will, and it
3817 shall be done unto you.'

3818
3819 The thought of our fellowship in the intercession of Jesus reminds us of what He has taught us more
3820 than once before, how all these wonderful prayer-promises have as their aim and their justification,
3821 the glory of God in the manifestation of His kingdom and the salvation of sinners. As long as we
3822 only or chiefly pray for ourselves, the promises of the last night must remain a sealed book to us. It
3823 is to the fruit-bearing branches of the Vine; it is to disciples sent into the world as the Father sent
3824 Him, to live for perishing men; it is to His faithful servants and intimate friends who take up the
3825 work He leaves behind, who have like their Lord become as the seed-corn, losing its life to multiply
3826 it manifold;—it is to such that the promises are given. Let us each find out what the work is, and
3827 who the souls are entrusted to our special prayers; let us make our intercession for them our life of
3828 fellowship with God, and we shall not only find the promises of power in prayer made true to us,
3829 but we shall then first begin to realize how our abiding in Christ and His abiding in us makes us
3830 share in His own joy of blessing and saving men.

3831
3832 O most wonderful intercession of our Blessed Lord Jesus, to which we not only owe everything, but
3833 in which we are taken up as active partners and fellow-workers! Now we understand what it is to
3834 pray in the Name of Jesus, and why it has such power. In His Name, in His Spirit, in Himself, in
3835 perfect union with Him. O wondrous, ever active, and most efficacious intercession of the man
3836 Christ Jesus! When shall we be wholly taken up into it and always pray in it?

3837
3838 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

3839
3840
3841
3842 Blessed Lord! In lowly adoration I would again bow before Thee. Thy whole redemption work has
3843 now passed into prayer; all that now occupies Thee in maintaining and dispensing what Thou didst
3844 purchase with Thy blood is only prayer. Thou ever livest to pray. And because we are and abide in
3845 Thee, the direct access to the Father is always open, our life can be one of unceasing prayer, and the
3846 answer to our prayer is sure.

3847
3848 Blessed Lord! Thou hast invited Thy people to be Thy fellow-workers in a life of prayer. Thou hast
3849 united Thyself with Thy people and makest them as Thy body share with Thee in that ministry of
3850 intercession through which alone the world can be filled with the fruit of Thy redemption and the
3851 glory of the Father. With more liberty than ever I come to Thee, my Lord, and beseech Thee: Teach
3852 me to pray. Thy life is prayer, Thy life is mine. Lord! teach me to pray, in Thee, like Thee.

3853

3854 And, O my Lord! Give me specially to know, as Thou didst promise Thy disciples, that Thou art in
3855 the Father, and I in Thee, and Thou in me. Let the uniting power of the Holy Spirit make my whole
3856 life an abiding in Thee and Thy intercession, so that my prayer may be its echo, and the Father hear
3857 me in Thee and Thee in me. Lord Jesus! let Thy mind in everything be in me, and my life in
3858 everything by in Thee. So shall I be prepared to be the channel through which Thy intercession
3859 pours its blessing on the world. Amen.

3860

3861 NOTE.

3862

3863 The new epoch of prayer in the Name of Jesus is pointed out by Christ as the time of the outpouring
3864 of the Spirit, in which the disciples enter upon a more enlightened apprehension of the economy of
3865 redemption, and become as clearly conscious of their oneness with Jesus as of His oneness with the
3866 Father. Their prayer in the Name of Jesus is now directly to the Father Himself. "I say not that I will
3867 pray for you, for the Father Himself loveth you," Jesus says; while He had previously spoken of the
3868 time before the Spirit's coming: "I will pray the Father, and He will give you the Comforter." This
3869 prayer thus has as its central thought the insight into our being united to God in Christ as on both
3870 sides the living bond of union between God and us (John xvii. 23: "I in them and Thou in me"), so
3871 that in Jesus we behold the Father as united to us, and ourselves as united to the Father. Jesus Christ
3872 must have been revealed to us, not only through the truth in the mind, but in our inmost personal
3873 consciousness as the living personal reconciliation, as He in whom God's Fatherhood and Father-
3874 love have been perfectly united with human nature and it with God. Not that with the immediate
3875 prayer to the Father, the mediatorship of Christ is set aside; but it is no longer looked at as
3876 something external, existing outside of us, but as a real living spiritual existence within us, so that
3877 the Christ for us, the Mediator, has really become Christ in us.

3878

3879 When the consciousness of this oneness between God in Christ and us in Christ still is wanting, or
3880 has been darkened by the sense of guilt, then the prayer of faith looks to our Lord as the Advocate,
3881 who pays the Father for us. (Compare John xvi. 26 with John xiv. 16, 17; ix. 20; Luke xxi. 32; I
3882 John ii. 1.) To take Christ thus in prayer as Advocate, is according to John xvi. 26 not perfectly the
3883 same as the prayer in His Name. Christ's advocacy is meant to lead us on to that inner self-standing
3884 life-union with Him, and with the Father in Him, in virtue of which Christ is He in whom God
3885 enters into immediate relation and unites Himself with us, and in whom we in all circumstances
3886 enter into immediate relation with God. Even so the prayer in the Name of Jesus does not consist in
3887 our prayer at His command: the disciples had prayed thus ever since the Lord had given them His
3888 "Our Father," and yet He says, "Hitherto ye have not prayed in my Name." Only when the
3889 mediation of Christ has become, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, life and power within us,
3890 and so His mind, as it found expression in His word and work, has taken possession of and filled our
3891 personal consciousness and will, so that in faith and love we have Jesus in us as the Reconciler who
3892 has actually made us one with God: only then His Name, which included His nature and His work,
3893 is become truth and power in us (not only for us), and we have in the Name of Jesus the free, direct
3894 access to the Father which is sure of being heard. Prayer in the Name of Jesus is the liberty of a son
3895 with the Father, just as Jesus had this as the First-begotten. We pray in the place of Jesus, not as if
3896 we could put ourselves in His place, but in as far as we are in Him and He in us. We go direct to the
3897 Father, but only as the Father is in Christ, not as if He were separate from Christ. Wherever thus the
3898 inner man does not live in Christ and has Him not present as the Living One, where His word is not
3899 ruling in the heart in its Spirit-power, where His truth and life have not become the life of our soul,
3900 it is vain to think that a formula like "for the sake of Thy dear Son" will avail.'—Christliche Ethik,
3901 von Dr. I. T. Beck, Tübingen, iii. 39.

3902

3903
3904 [3] See on the difference between having Christ as an Advocate or Intercessor who stands outside of
3905 us, and the having Him within us, we abiding in Him and He in us through the Holy Spirit
3906 perfecting our union with Him, so that we ourselves can come directly to the Father in His Name,—
3907 the note above from Beck of Tubingen.

3908
3909
3910

3911 TWENTY-SEVENTH LESSON.

3912
3913 Father, I will;’

3914
3915 Or, Christ the High Priest

3916
3917 Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me may be with me where I am.’—John xvii. 24.

3918
3919 IN His parting address, Jesus gives His disciples the full revelation of what the New Life was to be,
3920 when once the kingdom of God had come in power. In the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, in union
3921 with Him the heavenly Vine, in their going forth to witness and to suffer for Him, they were to find
3922 their calling and their blessedness. In between His setting forth of their future new life, the Lord had
3923 repeatedly given the most unlimited promises as to the power their prayers might have. And now in
3924 closing, He Himself proceeds to pray. To let His disciples have the joy of knowing what His
3925 intercession for them in heaven as their High Priest will be, He gives this precious legacy of His
3926 prayer to the Father. He does this at the same time because they as priests are to share in His work
3927 of intercession, that they and we might know how to perform this holy work. In the teaching of our
3928 Lord on this last night, we have learned to understand that these astonishing prayer-promises have
3929 not been given in our own behalf, but in the interest of the Lord and His kingdom: it is from the
3930 Lord Himself alone that we can learn what the prayer in His Name is to be and to obtain. We have
3931 understood that to pray in His Name is to pray in perfect unity with Himself: the high-priestly
3932 prayer will teach all that the prayer in the Name of Jesus may ask and expect.

3933
3934 This prayer is ordinarily divided into three parts. Our Lord first prays for Himself (v. 1-5), then for
3935 His disciples (6-19), and last for all the believing people through all ages (20-26). The follower of
3936 Jesus, who gives himself to the work of intercession, and would fain try how much of blessing he
3937 can pray down upon his circle in the Name of Jesus, will in all humility let himself be led of the
3938 Spirit to study this wonderful prayer as one of the most important lessons of the school of prayer.

3939
3940 First of all, Jesus prays for Himself, for His being glorified, that so He may glorify the Father.
3941 Father! Glorify Thy Son. And now, Father, glorify me.’ And He brings forward the grounds on
3942 which He thus prays. A holy covenant had been concluded between the Father and the Son in
3943 heaven. The Father had promised Him power over all flesh as the reward of His work: He had done
3944 the work, He had glorified the Father, and His one purpose is now still further to glorify Him. With
3945 the utmost boldness He asks that the Father may glorify Him, that He may now be and do for His
3946 people all He has undertaken.

3947
3948 Disciple of Jesus! here you have the first lesson in your work of priestly intercession, to be learned
3949 from the example of your great High Priest. To pray in the Name of Jesus is to pray in unity, in
3950 sympathy with Him. As the Son began His prayer by making clear His relation to the Father,
3951 pleading His work and obedience and His desire to see the Father glorified, do so too. Draw near

3952 and appear before the Father in Christ. Plead His finished work. Say that you are one with it, that
3953 you trust on it, live in it. Say that you too have given yourself to finish the work the Father has given
3954 you to do, and to live alone for His glory. And ask then confidently that the Son may be glorified in
3955 you. This is praying in the Name, in the very words, in the Spirit of Jesus, in union with Jesus
3956 Himself. Such prayer has power. If with Jesus you glorify the Father, the Father will glorify Jesus
3957 by doing what you ask in His Name. It is only when your own personal relation on this point, like
3958 Christ's, is clear with God, when you are glorifying Him, and seeking all for His glory, that like
3959 Christ, you will have power to intercede for those around you.

3960
3961 Our Lord next prays for the circle of His disciples. He speaks of them as those whom the Father has
3962 given Him. Their chief mark is that they have received Christ's word. He says of them that He now
3963 sends them into the world in His place, just as the Father had sent Himself. And He asks two things
3964 for them: that the Father keep them from the evil one, and sanctify them through His Word, because
3965 He sanctifies Himself for them.

3966
3967 Just like the Lord, each believing intercessor has his own immediate circle for whom he first prays.
3968 Parents have their children, teachers their pupils, pastors their flocks, all workers their special
3969 charge, all believers those whose care lies upon their hearts. It is of great consequence that
3970 intercession should be personal, pointed, and definite. And then our first prayer must always be that
3971 they may receive the word. But this prayer will not avail unless with our Lord we say, I have given
3972 them Thy word: 'it is this gives us liberty and power in intercession for souls. Not only pray for
3973 them, but speak to them. And when they have received the word, let us pray much for their being
3974 kept from the evil one, for their being sanctified through that word. Instead of being hopeless or
3975 judging or giving up those who fall, let us pray for our circle, Father! Keep them in Thy Name;'
3976 Sanctify them through Thy truth.' Prayer in the Name of Jesus availeth much: What ye will shall be
3977 done unto you.'

3978
3979 And then follows our Lord's prayer for a still wider circle. I pray not only for these, but for them
3980 who through their word shall believe.' His priestly heart enlarges itself to embrace all places and all
3981 time, and He prays that all who belong to Him may everywhere be one, as God's proof to the world
3982 of the divinity of His mission, and then that they may ever be with Him in His glory. Until then that
3983 the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.'

3984
3985 The disciple of Jesus, who has first in his own circle proved the power of prayer, cannot confine
3986 himself within its limits: he prays for the Church universal and its different branches. He prays
3987 specially for the unity of the Spirit and of love. He prays for its being one in Christ, as a witness to
3988 the world that Christ, who hath wrought such a wonder as to make love triumph over selfishness
3989 and separation, is indeed the Son of God sent from heaven. Every believer ought to pray much that
3990 the unity of the Church, not in external organizations, but in spirit and in truth, may be made
3991 manifest.

3992
3993 So much for the matter of the prayer. Now for its mode. Jesus says, FATHER! I WILL.' On the
3994 ground of His right as Son, and the Father's promise to Him, and His finished work, He might do
3995 so. The Father had said to Him, Ask of me, and I will give Thee.' He simply availed Himself of the
3996 Father's promise. Jesus has given us a like promise: Whatsoever ye will shall be done unto you.' He
3997 asks me in His Name to say what I will. Abiding in Him, in a living union with Him in which man
3998 is nothing and Christ all, the believer has the liberty to take up that word of His High Priest and, in
3999 answer to the question What wilt thou?' to say, FATHER! I WILL all that Thou hast promised.'
4000 This is nothing but true faith; this is honouring God: to be assured that such confidence in saying

4001 what I will is indeed acceptable to Him. At first sight, our heart shrinks from the expression; we feel
4002 neither the liberty nor the power to speak thus. It is a word for which alone in the most entire
4003 abnegation of our will grace will be given, but for which grace will most assuredly be given to each
4004 one who loses his will in his Lord's. He that loseth his will shall find it; he that gives up his will
4005 entirely shall find it again renewed and strengthened with a Divine Strength. FATHER! I WILL:’
4006 this is the keynote of the everlasting, ever-active, all-prevailing intercession of our Lord in heaven.
4007 It is only in union with Him that our prayer avails; in union with Him it avails much. If we but abide
4008 in Him, living, and walking, and doing all things in His Name; if we but come and bring each
4009 separate petition, tested and touched by His Word and Spirit, and cast it into the mighty stream of
4010 intercession that goes up from Him, to be borne upward and presented before the Father;—we shall
4011 have the full confidence that we receive the petitions we ask: the Father! I will’ will be breathed into
4012 us by the Spirit Himself. We shall lose ourselves in Him, and become nothing, to find that in our
4013 impotence we have power and prevail.

4014
4015 Disciples of Jesus! Called to be like your Lord in His priestly intercession, when, O when! Shall we
4016 awaken to the glory, passing all conception, of this our destiny to plead and prevail with God for
4017 perishing men? O when shall we shake off the sloth that clothes itself with the pretence of humility,
4018 and yield ourselves wholly to God's Spirit, that He may fill our wills with light and with power, to
4019 know, and to take, and to possess all that our God is waiting to give to a will that lays hold on Him.

4020
4021 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

4022
4023
4024
4025 O my Blessed High Priest! who am I that Thou shouldest thus invite me to share with Thee in Thy
4026 power of prevailing intercession! And why, O my Lord! am I so slow of heart to understand and
4027 believe and exercise this wonderful privilege to which Thou hast redeemed Thy people. O Lord!
4028 give Thy grace that this may increasingly be my unceasing life-work—in praying without ceasing to
4029 draw down the blessing of heaven on all my surroundings on earth.

4030
4031 Blessed Lord! I come now to accept this my calling. For this I would forsake all and follow Thee.
4032 Into Thy hands I would believingly yield my whole being: form, train, inspire me to be one of Thy
4033 prayer-legion, wrestlers who watch and strive in prayer, Israel's, God's princes, who have power and
4034 prevail. Take possession of my heart, and fill it with the one desire for the glory of God in the
4035 ingathering, and sanctification, and union of those whom the Father hath given Thee. Take my mind
4036 and let this be my study and my wisdom, to know when prayer can bring a blessing. Take me
4037 wholly and fit me as a priest ever to stand before God and to bless in His Name.

4038
4039 Blessed Lord! Be it here, as through all the spiritual life: Thou all, I nothing. And be it here my
4040 experience too that he that has and seeks nothing for himself, receives all, even to the wonderful
4041 grace of sharing with Thee in Thine everlasting ministry of intercession. Amen.

4042
4043
4044
4045 TWENTY-EIGHTH LESSON.

4046
4047 Father! Not what I will;’
4048
4049 Or, Christ the Sacrifice.

4050
4051 And He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee; remove this cup from me: howbeit not
4052 what I will, but what Thou wilt.'—Mark xiv. 36.

4053
4054 WHAT a contrast within the space of a few hours! What a transition from the quiet elevation of
4055 that, He lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, FATHER I WILL,' to that falling on the ground and
4056 crying in agony. My Father! Not what I will.' In the one we see the High Priest within the veil in
4057 His all-prevailing intercession; in the other, the sacrifice on the altar opening the way through the
4058 rent veil. The high-priestly Father! I will,' in order of time precedes the sacrificial Father! Not what
4059 I will;' but this was only by anticipation, to show what the intercession would be when once the
4060 sacrifice was brought. In reality it was that prayer at the altar, Father! Not what I will,' in which the
4061 prayer before the throne, Father! I will,' had its origin and its power. It is from the entire surrender
4062 of His will in Gethsemane that the High Priest on the throne has the power to ask what He will, has
4063 the right to make His people share in that power too, and ask what they will.

4064
4065 For all who would learn to pray in the school of Jesus, this Gethsemane lesson is one of the most
4066 sacred and precious. To a superficial scholar it may appear to take away the courage to pray in faith.
4067 If even the earnest supplication of the Son was not heard, if even the Beloved had to say, NOT
4068 WHAT I WILL!' how much more do we need to speak so. And thus it appears impossible that the
4069 promises which the Lord had given only a few hours previously, WHATSOEVER YE SHALL
4070 ASK,' WHATSOEVER YE WILL,' could have been meant literally. A deeper insight into the
4071 meaning of Gethsemane would teach us that we have just here the sure ground and the open way to
4072 the assurance of an answer to our prayer. Let us draw nigh in reverent and adoring wonder, to gaze
4073 on this great sight—God's Son thus offering up prayer and supplications with strong crying and
4074 tears, and not obtaining what He asks. He Himself is our Teacher, and will open up to us the
4075 mystery of His holy sacrifice, as revealed in this wondrous prayer.

4076
4077 To understand the prayer, let us note the infinite difference between what our Lord prayed a little
4078 ago as a Royal High Priest, and what He here supplicates in His weakness. There it was for the
4079 glorifying of the Father He prayed, and the glorifying of Himself and His people as the fulfilment of
4080 distinct promises that had been given Him. He asked what He knew to be according to the word and
4081 the will of the Father; He might boldly say, FATHER! I WILL.' Here He prays for something in
4082 regard to which the Father's will is not yet clear to Him. As far as He knows, it is the Father's will
4083 that He should drink the cup. He had told His disciples of the cup He must drink: a little later He
4084 would again say, The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?' It was for this He
4085 had come to this earth. But when, in the unutterable agony of soul that burst upon him as the power
4086 of darkness came upon Him, and He began to taste the first drops of death as the wrath of God
4087 against sin, His human nature, as it shuddered in presence of the awful reality of being made a
4088 curse, gave utterance in this cry of anguish, to its desire that, if God's purpose could be
4089 accomplished without it, He might be spared the awful cup: Let this cup pass from me.' That desire
4090 was the evidence of the intense reality of His humanity. The Not as I will' kept that desire from
4091 being sinful: as He pleadingly cries, All things are possible with Thee,' and returns again to still
4092 more earnest prayer that the cup may be removed, it is His thrice-repeated NOT WHAT I WILL'
4093 that constitutes the very essence and worth of His sacrifice. He had asked for something of which
4094 He could not say: I know it is Thy will. He had pleaded God's power and love, and had then
4095 withdrawn it in His final, THY WILL BE DONE.' The prayer that the cup should pass away could
4096 not be answered; the prayer of submission that God's will be done was heard, and gloriously
4097 answered in His victory first over the fear, and then over the power of death.

4098

4099 It is in this denial of His will, this complete surrender of His will to the will of the Father, that
4100 Christ's obedience reached its highest perfection. It is from the sacrifice of the will in Gethsemane
4101 that the sacrifice of the life on Calvary derives its value. It is here, as Scripture saith, that He learned
4102 obedience, and became the author of everlasting salvation to all that obey Him. It was because He
4103 there, in that prayer, became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, that God hath highly
4104 exalted Him, and given Him the power to ask what He will. It was in that Father! Not what I will,'
4105 that He obtained the power for that other FATHER! I will.' It was by Christ's submittal in
4106 Gethsemane to have not His will done, that He secured for His people the right to say to them, Ask
4107 whatsoever ye will.'

4108
4109 Let me look at them again, the deep mysteries that Gethsemane offers to my view. There is the first:
4110 the Father offers His Well-beloved the cup, the cup of wrath. The second: the Son, always so
4111 obedient, shrinks back, and implores that He may not have to drink it. The third: the Father does not
4112 grant the Son His request, but still gives the cup. And then the last: the Son yields His will, is
4113 content that His will be not done, and goes out to Calvary to drink the cup. O Gethsemane! in thee I
4114 see how my Lord could give me such unlimited assurance of an answer to my prayers. As my surety
4115 He won it for me, by His consent to have His petition unanswered.

4116
4117 This is in harmony with the whole scheme of redemption. Our Lord always wins for us the opposite
4118 of what He suffered. He was bound that we might go free. He was made sin that we might become
4119 the righteousness of God. He died that we might live. He bore God's curse that God's blessing
4120 might be ours. He endured the not answering of His prayer, that our prayers might find an answer.
4121 Yea, He spake, Not as I will,' that He might say to us, If ye abide in me, ask what ye will; it shall be
4122 done unto you.'

4123
4124 Yes, If ye abide in me;' here in Gethsemane the word acquires new force and depth. Christ is our
4125 Head, who as surety stands in our place, and bears what we must for ever have borne. We had
4126 deserved that God should turn a deaf ear to us, and never listen to our cry. Christ comes, and suffers
4127 this too for us: He suffers what we had merited; for our sins He suffers beneath the burden of that
4128 unanswered prayer. But now His suffering this avails for me: what He has borne is taken away for
4129 me; His merit has won for me the answer to every prayer, if I abide in Him.

4130
4131 Yes, in Him, as He bows there in Gethsemane, I must abide. As my Head, He not only once
4132 suffered for me, but ever lives in me, breathing and working His own disposition in me too. The
4133 Eternal Spirit, through which He offered Himself unto God, is the Spirit that dwells in me too, and
4134 makes me partaker of the very same obedience, and the sacrifice of the will unto God. That Spirit
4135 teaches me to yield my will entirely to the will of the Father, to give it up even unto the death, in
4136 Christ to be dead to it. Whatever is my own mind and thought and will, even though it be not
4137 directly sinful, He teaches me to fear and flee. He opens my ear to wait in great gentleness and
4138 teachableness of soul for what the Father has day by day to speak and to teach. He discovers to me
4139 how union with God's will in the love of it is union with God Himself; how entire surrender to
4140 God's will is the Father's claim, the Son's example, and the true blessedness of the soul. He leads
4141 my will into the fellowship of Christ's death and resurrection, my will dies in Him, in Him to be
4142 made alive again. He breathes into it, as a renewed and quickened will, a holy insight into God's
4143 perfect will, a holy joy in yielding itself to be an instrument of that will, a holy liberty and power to
4144 lay hold of God's will to answer prayer. With my whole will I learn to live for the interests of God
4145 and His kingdom, to exercise the power of that will—crucified but risen again—in nature and in
4146 prayer, on earth and in heaven, with men and with God. The more deeply I enter into the FATHER!
4147 NOT WHAT I WILL' of Gethsemane, and into Him who spake it, to abide in Him, the fuller is my

4148 spiritual access into the power of His FATHER! I WILL. And the soul experiences that it is the
4149 will, which has become nothing that God's will may be all, which now becomes inspired with a
4150 Divine strength to really will what God wills, and to claim what has been promised it in the name of
4151 Christ.

4152
4153 O let us listen to Christ in Gethsemane, as He calls, If ye abide in me, ask whatsoever ye will, and it
4154 shall be done unto you.' Being of one mind and spirit with Him in His giving up everything to
4155 God's will, living like Him in obedience and surrender to the Father; this is abiding in Him; this is
4156 the secret of power in prayer.

4157
4158 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

4159
4160
4161
4162 Blessed Lord Jesus! Gethsemane was Thy school, where Thou didst learn to pray and to obey. It is
4163 still Thy school, where Thou ledest all Thy disciples who would fain learn to obey and to pray
4164 even as Thou. Lord! teach me there to pray, in the faith that Thou has atoned for and conquered our
4165 self-will, and canst indeed give us grace to pray like Thee.

4166
4167 O Lamb of God! I would follow Thee to Gethsemane, there to become one with Thee, and to abide
4168 in Thee as Thou dost unto the very death yield Thy will unto the Father. With Thee, through Thee,
4169 in Thee, I do yield my will in absolute and entire surrender to the will of the Father. Conscious of
4170 my own weakness, and the secret power with which self-will would assert itself and again take its
4171 place on the throne, I claim in faith the power of Thy victory. Thou didst triumph over it and deliver
4172 me from it. In Thy death I would daily live; in Thy life I would daily die. Abiding in Thee, let my
4173 will, through the power of Thine eternal Spirit, only be the tuned instrument which yields to every
4174 touch of the will of my God. With my whole soul do I say with Thee and in Thee, Father! Not as I
4175 will, but as Thou wilt.'

4176
4177 And then, Blessed Lord! Open my heart and that of all Thy people, to take in fully the glory of the
4178 truth, that a will given up to God is a will accepted of God to be used in his service, to desire, and
4179 purpose, and determine, and will what is according to God's will. A will which, in the power of the
4180 Holy Spirit the indwelling God, is to exercise its royal prerogative in prayer, to loose and to bind in
4181 heaven and upon earth, to ask whatsoever it will, and to say it shall be done.

4182
4183 O Lord Jesus! teach me to pray. Amen.

4184
4185
4186
4187

4188 TWENTY-NINTH LESSON.

4189
4190 According to His will;

4191
4192 Or, Our Boldness in Prayer.

4193
4194 And this is the boldness which we have toward Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will,
4195 He heareth us. And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the
4196 petitions which we have asked of Him.'—I John v. 14, 15.

4197
4198 ONE of the greatest hindrances to believing prayer is with many undoubtedly this: they know not if
4199 what they ask is according to the will of God. As long as they are in doubt on this point, they cannot
4200 have the boldness to ask in the assurance that they certainly shall receive. And they soon begin to
4201 think that, if once they have made known their requests, and receive no answer, it is best to leave it
4202 to God to do according to His good pleasure. The words of John, 'If we ask anything according to
4203 His will, He heareth us,' as they understand them, make certainty as to answer to prayer impossible,
4204 because they cannot be sure of what really may be the will of God. They think of God's will as His
4205 hidden counsel—how should man be able to fathom what really may be the purpose of the all-wise
4206 God.

4207
4208 This is the very opposite of what John aimed at in writing thus. He wished to rouse us to boldness,
4209 to confidence, to full assurance of faith in prayer. He says, 'This is the boldness which we have
4210 toward Him,' that we can say: 'Father! Thou knowest and I know that I ask according to Thy will: I
4211 know Thou hearest me. This is the boldness, that if we ask anything according to His will, He
4212 heareth us.' On this account He adds at once: 'If we know that He heareth us whatsoever we ask, we
4213 know,' through this faith, that we have,' that we now while we pray receive the petition,' the special
4214 things, we have asked of Him.' John supposes that when we pray, we first find out if our prayers are
4215 according to the will of God. They may be according to God's will, and yet not come at once, or
4216 without the persevering prayer of faith. It is to give us courage thus to persevere and to be strong in
4217 faith, that He tells us: 'This gives us boldness or confidence in prayer, if we ask anything according
4218 to His will, He heareth us. It is evident that if it be a matter of uncertainty to us whether our
4219 petitions be according to His will, we cannot have the comfort of what he says, 'We know that we
4220 have the petitions which we have asked of Him.'

4221
4222 But just this is the difficulty. More than one believer says: 'I do not know if what I desire be
4223 according to the will of God. God's will is the purpose of His infinite wisdom: it is impossible for
4224 me to know whether He may not count something else better for me than what I desire, or may not
4225 have some reasons for withholding what I ask.' Every one feels how with such thoughts the prayer
4226 of faith, of which Jesus said, 'Whosoever shall believe that these things which he saith shall come to
4227 pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith,' becomes an impossibility. There may be the prayer of
4228 submission, and of trust in God's wisdom; there cannot be the prayer of faith. The great mistake
4229 here is that God's children do not really believe that it is possible to know God's will. Or if they
4230 believe this, they do not take the time and trouble to find it out. What we need is to see clearly in
4231 what way it is that the Father leads His waiting, teachable child to know that his petition is
4232 according to His will.¹ It is through God's holy word, taken up and kept in the heart, the life, the
4233 will; and through God's Holy Spirit, accepted in His indwelling and leading, that we shall learn to
4234 know that our petitions are according to His will.

4235
4236 Through the word. There is a secret will of God, with which we often fear that our prayers may be
4237 at variance. It is not with this will of God, but His will as revealed in His word, that we have to do
4238 in prayer. Our notions of what the secret will may have decreed, and of how it might render the
4239 answers to our prayers impossible, are mostly very erroneous. Childlike faith as to what He is
4240 willing to do for His children, simply keeps to the Father's assurance, that it is His will to hear
4241 prayer and to do what faith in His word desires and accepts. In the word the Father has revealed in
4242 general promises the great principles of His will with His people. The child has to take the promise
4243 and apply it to the special circumstances in His life to which it has reference. Whatever he asks
4244 within the limits of that revealed will, he can know to be according to the will of God, and he may
4245 confidently expect. In His word, God has given us the revelation of His will and plans with us, with

4246 His people, and with the world, with the most precious promises of the grace and power with which
4247 through His people He will carry out His plans and do His work. As faith becomes strong and bold
4248 enough to claim the fulfilment of the general promise in the special case, we may have the
4249 assurance that our prayers are heard: they are according to God's will. Take the words of John in the
4250 verse following our text as an illustration: 'If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he
4251 shall ask and God will give him life.' Such is the general promise; and the believer who pleads on
4252 the ground of this promise, prays according to the will of God, and John would give him boldness to
4253 know that he has the petition which he asks.

4254
4255 But this apprehension of God's will is something spiritual, and must be spiritually discerned. It is
4256 not as a matter of logic that we can argue it out: God has said it; I must have it. Nor has every
4257 Christian the same gift or calling. While the general will revealed in the promise is the same for all,
4258 there is for each one a special different will according to God's purpose. And herein is the wisdom
4259 of the saints, to know this special will of God for each of us, according to the measure of grace
4260 given us, and so to ask in prayer just what God has prepared and made possible for each. It is to
4261 communicate this wisdom that the Holy Ghost dwells in us. The personal application of the general
4262 promises of the word to our special personal needs—it is for this that the leading of the Holy Spirit
4263 is given us.

4264
4265 It is this union of the teaching of the word and Spirit that many do not understand, and so there is a
4266 twofold difficulty in knowing what God's will may be. Some seek the will of God in an inner
4267 feeling or conviction, and would have the Spirit lead them without the word. Others seek it in the
4268 word, without the living leading of the Holy Spirit. The two must be united: only in the word, only
4269 in the Spirit, but in these most surely, can we know the will of God, and learn to pray according to
4270 it. In the heart the word and the Spirit must meet: it is only by indwelling that we can experience
4271 their teaching. The word must dwell, must abide in us: heart and life must day by day be under its
4272 influence. Not from without, but from within, comes the quickening of the word by the Spirit. It is
4273 only he who yields himself entirely in his whole life to the supremacy of the word and the will of
4274 God, who can expect in special cases to discern what that word and will permit him boldly to ask.
4275 And even as with the word, just so with the Spirit: if I would have the leading of the Spirit in prayer
4276 to assure me what God's will is, my whole life must be yielded to that leading; so only can mind
4277 and heart become spiritual and capable of knowing God's holy will. It is he who, through word and
4278 Spirit, lives in the will of God by doing it, who will know to pray according to that will in the
4279 confidence that He hears us.

4280
4281 Would that Christians might see what incalculable harm they do themselves by the thought that
4282 because possibly their prayer is not according to God's will, they must be content without an
4283 answer. God's word tells us that the great reason of unanswered prayer is that we do not pray aright:
4284 'Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss.' In not granting an answer, the Father tells us that
4285 there is something wrong in our praying. He wants to teach us to find it out and confess it, and so to
4286 educate us to true believing and prevailing prayer. He can only attain His object when He brings us
4287 to see that we are to blame for the withholding of the answer; our aim, or our faith, or our life is not
4288 what it should be. But this purpose of God is frustrated as long as we are content to say: It is
4289 perhaps because my prayer is not according to His will that He does not hear me. O let us no longer
4290 throw the blame of our unanswered prayers on the secret will of God, but on our praying amiss. Let
4291 that word, 'Ye receive not because ye ask amiss,' be as the lantern of the Lord, searching heart and
4292 life to prove that we are indeed such as those to whom Christ gave His promises of certain answers.
4293 Let us believe that we can know if our prayer be according to God's will. Let us yield our heart to
4294 have the word of the Father dwell richly there, to have Christ's word abiding in us. Let us live day

4295 by day with the anointing which teacheth us all things. Let us yield ourselves unreservedly to the
4296 Holy Spirit as He teaches us to abide in Christ, to dwell in the Father's presence, and we shall soon
4297 understand how the Father's love longs that the child should know His will, and should, in the
4298 confidence that that will includes all that His power and love have promised to do, know too that He
4299 hears the petitions which we ask of Him. This is the boldness which we have, that if we ask
4300 anything according to His will, He heareth us.'

4301
4302 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

4303
4304 ———0———

4305
4306 Blessed Master! With my whole heart I thank Thee for this blessed lesson, that the path to a life full
4307 of answers to prayer is through the will of God. Lord! Teach me to know this blessed will by living
4308 it, loving it, and always doing it. So shall I learn to offer prayers according to that will, and to find
4309 in their harmony with God's blessed will, my boldness in prayer and my confidence in accepting the
4310 answer.

4311
4312 Father! it is Thy will that Thy child should enjoy Thy presence and blessing. It is Thy will that
4313 everything in the life of Thy child should be in accordance with Thy will, and that the Holy Spirit
4314 should work this in Him. It is Thy will that Thy child should live in the daily experience of distinct
4315 answers to prayer, so as to enjoy living and direct fellowship with Thyself. It is Thy will that Thy
4316 Name should be glorified in and through Thy children, and that it will be in those who trust Thee. O
4317 my Father! let this Thy will be my confidence in all I ask.

4318
4319 Blessed Saviour! Teach me to believe in the glory of this will. That will is the eternal love, which
4320 with Divine power works out its purpose in each human will that yields itself to it. Lord! Teach me
4321 this. Thou canst make me see how every promise and every command of the word is indeed the will
4322 of God, and that its fulfilment is secured to me by God Himself. Let thus the will of God become to
4323 me the sure rock on which my prayer and my assurance of an answer ever rest. Amen.

4324
4325 NOTE.

4326
4327 There is often great confusion as to the will of God. People think that what God wills must
4328 inevitably take place. This is by no means the case. God wills a great deal of blessing to His people,
4329 which never comes to them. He wills it most earnestly, but they do not will it, and it cannot come to
4330 them. This is the great mystery of man's creation with a free will, and also of the renewal of his will
4331 in redemption, that God has made the execution of His will, in many things, dependent on the will
4332 of man. Of God's will revealed in His promises, so much will be fulfilled as our faith accepts.
4333 Prayer is the power by which that comes to pass which otherwise would not take place. And faith,
4334 the power by which it is decided how much of God's will shall be done in us. When once God
4335 reveals to a soul what He is willing to do for it, the responsibility for the execution of that will rests
4336 with us.

4337
4338 Some are afraid that this is putting too much power into the hands of man. But all power is put into
4339 the hands of man in Christ Jesus. The key of all prayer and all power is His, and when we learn to
4340 understand that He is just as much with us as with the Father, and that we are also just as much one
4341 with Him as He with the Father, we shall see how natural and right and safe it is that to those who
4342 abide in Him as He in the Father, such power should be given. It is Christ the Son who has the right
4343 to ask what He will: it is through the abiding in Him and His abiding in us (in a Divine reality of

4344 which we have too little apprehension) that His Spirit breathes in us what He wants to ask and
4345 obtain through us. We pray in His Name: the prayers are really ours and as really His.

4346
4347 Others again fear that to believe that prayer has such power is limiting the liberty and the love of
4348 God. O if we only knew how we are limiting His liberty and His love by not allowing Him to act in
4349 the only way in which He chooses to act, now that He has taken us up into fellowship with
4350 himself—through our prayers and our faith. A brother in the ministry once asked, as we were
4351 speaking on this subject, whether there was not a danger of our thinking that our love to souls and
4352 our willingness to see them blessed were to move God's love and God's willingness to bless them.
4353 We were just passing some large water-pipes, by which water was being carried over hill and dale
4354 from a large mountain stream to a town at some distance. Just look at these pipes, was the answer;
4355 they did not make the water willing to flow downwards from the hills, nor did they give it its power
4356 of blessing and refreshment: this is its very nature. All that they could do is to decide its direction:
4357 by it the inhabitants of the town said they want the blessing there. And just so, it is the very nature
4358 of God to love and to bless. Downward and ever downward His love longs to come with its
4359 quickening and refreshing streams. But He has left it to prayer to say where the blessing is to come.
4360 He has committed it to His believing people to bring the living water to the desert places: the will of
4361 God to bless is dependent upon the will of man to say where the blessing must descend. Such
4362 honour have His saints.' And this is the boldness which we have toward him, that if we ask
4363 anything according to His will, He heareth us. And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask,
4364 we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of Him.'

4365
4366 I See this illustrated in the extracts from George Muller at the end of this volume.

4367
4368
4369
4370
4371 THIRTIETH LESSON.

4372
4373 An holy priesthood;'

4374
4375 Or, The Ministry of Intercession.

4376
4377 An holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.'—I Peter ii. 5.

4378
4379 Ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord.'—Isaiah lxi. 6.

4380
4381 THE Spirit of the Lord God is upon me: because the Lord hath anointed me.' These are the words
4382 of Jesus in Isaiah. As the fruit of His work all redeemed ones are priests, fellow-partakers with Him
4383 of His anointing with the Spirit as High Priest. Like the precious ointment upon the beard of Aaron,
4384 that went down to the skirts of his garments.' As every son of Aaron, so every member of Jesus'
4385 body has a right to the priesthood. But not every one exercises it: many are still entirely ignorant of
4386 it. And yet it is the highest privilege of a child of God, the mark of greatest nearness and likeness to
4387 Him, who ever liveth to pray.' Do you doubt if this really be so? Think of what constitutes
4388 priesthood. There is, first, the work of the priesthood. This has two sides, one Godward, the other
4389 manward. Every priest is ordained for men in things pertaining to God' (Heb. v. 1); or, as it is said
4390 by Moses (Deut. x. 8, see also xxi. 5, xxxiii. 10; Mal. ii. 6): The Lord separated the tribe of Levi, to
4391 stand before the Lord to minister unto Him, and to bless His Name.' On the one hand, the priest had
4392 the power to draw nigh to God, to dwell with Him in His house, and to present before Him the

4393 blood of the sacrifice or the burning incense. This work he did not do, however, on his own behalf,
4394 but for the sake of the people whose representative he was. This is the other side of his work. He
4395 received from the people their sacrifices, presented them before God, and then came out to bless in
4396 His Name, to give the assurance of His favour and to teach them His law.

4397
4398 A priest is thus a man who does not at all live for himself. He lives with God and for God. His work
4399 is as God's servant to care for His house, His honour, and His worship, to make known to men His
4400 love and His will. He lives with men and for men (Heb. v. 2). His work is to find out their sin and
4401 need, and to bring it before God, to offer sacrifice and incense in their name, to obtain forgiveness
4402 and blessing for them, and then to come out and bless them in His Name. This is the high calling of
4403 every believer. Such honour have all His saints.' They have been redeemed with the one purpose to
4404 be in the midst of the perishing millions around them, God's priests, who in conformity to Jesus, the
4405 Great High Priest, are to be the ministers and stewards of the grace of God to all around them.

4406
4407 And then there is the walk of the priesthood, in harmony with its work. As God is holy, so the priest
4408 was to be especially holy. This means not only separated from everything unclean, but holy unto
4409 God, being set apart and given up to God for His disposal. The separation from the world and
4410 setting apart unto God was indicated in many ways.

4411
4412 It was seen in the clothing: the holy garments, made after God's own order, marked them as His
4413 (Ex. xxviii.). It was seen in the command as to their special purity and freedom from all contact
4414 from death and defilement (Lev. xi. 22). Much that was allowed to an ordinary Israelite was
4415 forbidden to them. It was seen in the injunction that the priest must have no bodily defect or
4416 blemish; bodily perfection was to be the type of wholeness and holiness in God's service. And it
4417 was seen in the arrangement by which the priestly tribes were to have no inheritance with the other
4418 tribes; God was to be their inheritance. Their life was to be one of faith: set apart unto God, they
4419 were to live on Him as well as for Him.

4420
4421 All this is the emblem of what the character of the New Testament priest is to be. Our priestly
4422 power with God depends on our personal life and walk. We must be of them of whose walk on earth
4423 Jesus says, They have not defiled their garments.'

4424
4425 In the surrender of what may appear lawful to others in our separation from the world, we must
4426 prove that our consecration to be holy to the Lord is whole-hearted and entire. The bodily perfection
4427 of the priest must have its counterpart in our too being without spot or blemish;' the man of God
4428 perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works,' perfect and entire, wanting nothing' (Lev. xxi.
4429 17-21; Eph. v. 27; 2 Tim. ii. 7; Jas. i. 4). And above all, we consent to give up all inheritance on
4430 earth; to forsake all, and like Christ to have only God as our portion: to possess as not possessing,
4431 and hold all for God alone: it is this marks the true priest, the man who only lives for God and his
4432 fellow-men.

4433
4434 And now the way to the priesthood. In Aaron God had chosen all his sons to be priests: each of
4435 them was a priest by birth. And yet he could not enter upon his work without a special act of
4436 ordinance—his consecration. Every child of God is priest in light of his birth, his blood relationship
4437 to the Great High Priest; but this is not enough: he will exercise his power only as he accepts and
4438 realizes his consecration.

4439
4440 With Aaron and his sons it took place thus (Ex. xxix.): After being washed and clothed, they were
4441 anointed with the holy oil. Sacrifices were then offered, and with the blood the right ear, the right

4442 hand, and the right foot were touched. And then they and their garments were once again sprinkled
4443 with the blood and the oil together. And so it is as the child of God enters more fully into what THE
4444 BLOOD and THE SPIRIT of which he already is partaker, are to him, that the power of the Holy
4445 Priesthood will work in him. The blood will take away all sense of unworthiness; the Spirit, all
4446 sense of unfitness.

4447
4448 Let us notice what there was new in the application of the blood to the priest. If ever he had as a
4449 penitent brought a sacrifice for his sin, seeking forgiveness, the blood was sprinkled on the altar, but
4450 not on his person. But now, for priestly consecration, there was to be closer contact with the blood;
4451 ear and hand and foot were by a special act brought under its power, and the whole being taken
4452 possession of and sanctified for God. And so, when the believer, who had been content to think
4453 chiefly of the blood sprinkled on the mercy-seat as what he needs for pardon, is led to seek full
4454 priestly access to God, he feels the need of a fuller and more abiding experience of the power of the
4455 blood, as really sprinkling and cleansing the heart from an evil conscience, so that he has no more
4456 conscience of sin' (Heb. x. 2) as cleansing from all sin. And it is as he gets to enjoy this, that the
4457 consciousness is awakened of his wonderful right of most intimate access to God, and of the full
4458 assurance that his intercessions are acceptable.

4459
4460 And as the blood gives the right, the Spirit gives the power, and fits for believing intercession. He
4461 breathes into us the priestly spirit—burning love for God's honour and the saving of souls. He
4462 makes us so one with Jesus that prayer in His Name is a reality. He strengthens us to believing,
4463 importunate prayer. The more the Christian is truly filled with the Spirit of Christ, the more
4464 spontaneous will be his giving himself up to the life of priestly intercession. Beloved fellow-
4465 Christians! God needs, greatly needs, priests who can draw near to Him, who live in His presence,
4466 and by their intercession draw down the blessings of His grace on others. And the world needs,
4467 greatly needs, priests who will bear the burden of the perishing ones, and intercede on their behalf.

4468
4469 Are you willing to offer yourself for this holy work? You know the surrender it demands—nothing
4470 less than the Christ-like giving up of all, that the saving purposes of God's love may be
4471 accomplished among men. Oh, be no longer of those who are content if they have salvation, and
4472 just do work enough to keep themselves warm and lively. O let nothing keep you back from giving
4473 yourselves to be wholly and only priests—nothing else, nothing less than the priests of the Most
4474 High God. The thought of unworthiness, of unfitness, need not keep you back. In the Blood, the
4475 objective power of the perfect redemption works in you: in the Spirit its full subjective personal
4476 experience as a divine life is secured. The Blood provides an infinite worthiness to make your
4477 prayers most acceptable: The Spirit provides a Divine fitness, teaching you to pray just according to
4478 the will of God. Every priest knew that when he presented a sacrifice according to the law of the
4479 sanctuary, it was accepted: under the covering of the Blood and Spirit you have the assurance that
4480 all the wonderful promises to prayer in the Name of Jesus will be fulfilled in you. Abiding in union
4481 with the Great High Priest, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.' You will
4482 have power to pray the effectual prayer of the righteous man that availeth much. You will not only
4483 join in the general prayer of the Church for the world, but be able in your own sphere to take up
4484 your special work in prayer—as priests, to transact it with God, to receive and know the answer,
4485 and so to bless in His Name. Come, brother, come, and be a priest, only priest, all priest. Seek now
4486 to walk before the Lord in the full consciousness that you have been set apart for the holy Ministry
4487 of Intercession. This is the true blessedness of conformity to the image of God's Son.

4488
4489 LORD TEACH US TO PRAY.'

4490

4491
4492
4493 O Thou my blessed High Priest, accept the consecration in which my soul now would respond to
4494 Thy message.
4495
4496 I believe in the HOLY PRIESTHOOD OF THY SAINTS, and that I too am a priest, with power to
4497 appear before the Father, and in the prayer that avails much bring down blessing on the perishing
4498 around me.
4499
4500 I believe in the POWER OF THY PRECIOUS BLOOD to cleanse from all sin, to give me perfect
4501 confidence toward God, and bring me near in the full assurance of faith that my intercession will be
4502 heard.
4503
4504 I believe in the ANOINTING OF THE SPIRIT, coming down daily from Thee, my Great High
4505 Priest, to sanctify me, to fill me with the consciousness of my priestly calling, and with love to
4506 souls, to teach me what is according to God's will, and how to pray the prayer of faith.
4507
4508 I believe that, as Thou my Lord Jesus art Thyself in all things my life, so Thou, too, art THE
4509 SURETY FOR MY PRAYER-LIFE, and wilt Thyself draw me up into the fellowship of Thy
4510 wondrous work of intercession.
4511
4512 In this faith I yield myself this day to my God, as one of His anointed priests, to stand before His
4513 face to intercede in behalf of sinners, and to come out and bless in His Name.
4514
4515 Holy Lord Jesus! accept and seal my consecration. Yea, Lord, do Thou lay Thy hands on me, and
4516 Thyself consecrate me to this Thy holy work. And let me walk among men with the consciousness
4517 and the character of a priest of the Most High God.
4518
4519 Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins IN HIS OWN BLOOD, AND HATH MADE
4520 US kings and priests unto God and His Father; TO HIM be glory and dominion forever and ever.
4521 Amen
4522
4523
4524
4525 THIRTY-FIRST LESSON.
4526
4527 Pray without ceasing;'
4528
4529 Or, A Life of Prayer.
4530
4531 Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks.—I Thess. v. 16, 17, 18.
4532
4533 OUR Lord spake the parable of the widow and the unjust judge to teach us that men ought to pray
4534 always and not faint. As the widow persevered in seeking one definite thing, the parable appears to
4535 have reference to persevering prayer for some one blessing, when God delays or appears to refuse.
4536 The words in the Epistles, which speak of continuing instant in prayer, continuing in prayer and
4537 watching in the same, of praying always in the Spirit, appear more to refer to the whole life being
4538 one of prayer. As the soul is filling with the longing for the manifestation of God's glory to us and
4539 in us, through us and around us, and with the confidence that He hears the prayers of His children;

4540 the inmost life of the soul is continually rising upward in dependence and faith, in longing desire
4541 and trustful expectation.

4542
4543 At the close of our meditations it will not be difficult to say what is needed to live such a life of
4544 prayer. The first thing is undoubtedly the entire sacrifice of the life to God's kingdom and glory. He
4545 who seeks to pray without ceasing because he wants to be very pious and good, will never attain to
4546 it. It is the forgetting of self and yielding ourselves to live for God and His honour that enlarges the
4547 heart, that teaches us to regard everything in the light of God and His will, and that instinctively
4548 recognises in everything around us the need of God's help and blessing, an opportunity for His
4549 being glorified. Because everything is weighed and tested by the one thing that fills the heart—the
4550 glory of God, and because the soul has learnt that only what is of God can really be to Him and His
4551 glory, the whole life becomes a looking up, a crying from the inmost heart, for God to prove His
4552 power and love and so show forth His glory. The believer awakes to the consciousness that he is
4553 one of the watchmen on Zion's walls, one of the Lord's remembrancers, whose call does really
4554 touch and move the King in heaven to do what would otherwise not be done. He understands how
4555 real Paul's exhortation was, 'praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit for all the
4556 saints and for me,' and continue in prayer, withal praying also for us.' To forget oneself, to live for
4557 God and His kingdom among men, is the way to learn to pray without ceasing.

4558
4559 This life devoted to God must be accompanied by the deep confidence that our prayer is effectual.
4560 We have seen how our Blessed Lord insisted upon nothing so much in His prayer-lessons as faith in
4561 the Father as a God who most certainly does what we ask. 'Ask and ye shall receive;' count
4562 confidently on an answer, is with Him the beginning and the end of His teaching (compare Matt. vii.
4563 8 and John xvi. 24). In proportion as this assurance masters us, and it becomes a settled thing that
4564 our prayers do tell and that God does what we ask, we dare not neglect the use of this wonderful
4565 power: the soul turns wholly to God, and our life becomes prayer. We see that the Lord needs and
4566 takes time, because we and all around us are the creatures of time, under the law of growth; but
4567 knowing that not one single prayer of faith can possibly be lost that there is sometimes a needs-be
4568 for the storing up and accumulating of prayer, that persevering pray is irresistible, prayer becomes
4569 the quiet, persistent living of our life of desire and faith in the presence of our God. O do not let us
4570 any longer by our reasonings limit and enfeeble such free and sure promises of the living God,
4571 robbing them of their power, and ourselves of the wonderful confidence they are meant to inspire.
4572 Not in God, not in His secret will, not in the limitations of His promises, but in us, in ourselves is
4573 the hindrance; we are not what we should be to obtain the promise. Let us open our whole heart to
4574 God's words of promise in all their simplicity and truth: they will search us and humble us; they
4575 will lift us up and make us glad and strong. And to the faith that knows it gets what it asks, prayer is
4576 not a work or a burden, but a joy and a triumph; it becomes a necessity and a second nature.

4577
4578 This union of strong desire and firm confidence again is nothing but the life of the Holy Spirit
4579 within us. The Holy Spirit dwells in us, hides Himself in the depths of our being, and stirs the desire
4580 after the Unseen and the Divine, after God Himself. Now in groanings that cannot be uttered, then
4581 in clear and conscious assurance; now in special distinct petitions for the deeper revelation of Christ
4582 to ourselves, then in pleadings for a soul, a work, the Church or the world, it is always and alone the
4583 Holy Spirit who draws out the heart to thirst for God, to long for His being made known and
4584 glorified. Where the child of God really lives and walks in the Spirit, where he is not content to
4585 remain carnal, but seeks to be spiritual, in everything a fit organ for the Divine Spirit to reveal the
4586 life of Christ and Christ Himself, there the never-ceasing intercession-life of the Blessed Son cannot
4587 but reveal and repeat itself in our experience. Because it is the Spirit of Christ who prays in us, our
4588 prayer must be heard; because it is we who pray in the Spirit, there is need of time, and patience,

4589 and continual renewing of the prayer, until every obstacle be conquered, and the harmony between
4590 God's Spirit and ours is perfect.

4591
4592 But the chief thing we need for such a life of unceasing prayer is, to know that Jesus teaches us to
4593 pray. We have begun to understand a little what His teaching is. Not the communication of new
4594 thoughts or views, not the discovery of failure or error, not the stirring up of desire and faith, of
4595 however much importance all this be, but the taking us up into the fellowship of His own prayer-life
4596 before the Father—this it is by which Jesus really teaches. It was the sight of the praying Jesus that
4597 made the disciples long and ask to be taught to pray. It is the faith of the ever-praying Jesus, whose
4598 alone is the power to pray, that teaches us truly to pray. We know why: He who prays is our Head
4599 and our Life. All He has is ours and is given to us when we give ourselves all to Him. By His blood
4600 He leads us into the immediate presence of God. The inner sanctuary is our home, we dwell there.
4601 And He that lives so near God, and knows that He has been brought near to bless those who are far,
4602 cannot but pray. Christ makes us partakers with Himself of His prayer-power and prayer-life. We
4603 understand then that our true aim must not be to work much and have prayer enough to keep the
4604 work right, but to pray much and then to work enough for the power and blessing obtained in prayer
4605 to find its way through us to men. It is Christ who ever lives to pray, who saves and reigns. He
4606 communicates His prayer-life to us: He maintains it in us if we trust Him. He is surety for our
4607 praying without ceasing. Yes, Christ teaches to pray by showing how He does it, by doing it in us,
4608 by leading us to do it in Him and like Him. Christ is all, the life and the strength too for a never-
4609 ceasing prayer-life.

4610
4611 It is the sight of this, the sight of the ever-praying Christ as our life, that enables us to pray without
4612 ceasing. Because His priesthood is the power of an endless life, that resurrection-life that never
4613 fades and never fails, and because His life is our life, praying without ceasing can become to us
4614 nothing less than the life-joy of heaven. So the Apostle says: Rejoice evermore; pray without
4615 ceasing; in everything give thanks.' Borne up between the never-ceasing joy and the never-ceasing
4616 praise, never-ceasing prayer is the manifestation of the power of the eternal life, where Jesus always
4617 prays. The union between the Vine and the branch is in very deed a prayer-union. The highest
4618 conformity to Christ, the most blessed participation in the glory of His heavenly life, is that we take
4619 part in His work of intercession: He and we live ever to pray. In the experience of our union with
4620 Him, praying without ceasing becomes a possibility, a reality, the holiest and most blessed part of
4621 our holy and blessed fellowship with God. We have our abode within the veil, in the presence of the
4622 Father. What the Father says, we do; what the Son says, the Father does. Praying without ceasing is
4623 the earthly manifestation of heaven come down to us, the foretaste of the life where they rest not
4624 day or night in the song of worship and adoration.

4625
4626 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

4627
4628
4629
4630 O my Father, with my whole heart do I praise Thee for this wondrous life of never-ceasing prayer,
4631 never-ceasing fellowship, never-ceasing answers, and never-ceasing experience of my oneness with
4632 Him who ever lives to pray. O my God! keep me ever so dwelling and walking in the presence of
4633 Thy glory, that prayer may be the spontaneous expression of my life with Thee.

4634
4635 Blessed Saviour! with my whole heart I praise Thee that Thou didst come from heaven to share with
4636 me in my needs and cries, that I might share with Thee in Thy all-prevailing intercession. And I
4637 thank Thee that Thou hast taken me into the school of prayer, to teach the blessedness and the

4638 power of a life that is all prayer. And most of all, that Thou hast taken me up into the fellowship of
4639 Thy life of intercession, that through me too Thy blessings may be dispensed to those around me.

4640
4641 Holy Spirit! with deep reverence I thank Thee for Thy work in me. It is through Thee I am lifted up
4642 into a share in the intercourse between the Son and the Father, and enter so into the fellowship of
4643 the life and love of the Holy Trinity Spirit of God! perfect Thy work in me; bring me into perfect
4644 union with Christ my Intercessor. Let Thine unceasing indwelling make my life one of unceasing
4645 intercession. And let so my life become one that is unceasingly to the glory of the Father and to the
4646 blessing of those around me. Amen.

4647

4648

4649

4650 GEORGE MULLER, AND THE SECRET OF HIS

4651

4652 POWER IN PRAYER

4653

4654 WHEN God wishes anew to teach His Church a truth that is not being understood or practised, He
4655 mostly does so by raising some man to be in word and deed a living witness to its blessedness. And
4656 so God has raised up in this nineteenth century, among others, George Muller to be His witness that
4657 He is indeed the Hearer of prayer. I know of no way in which the principal truths of God's word in
4658 regard to prayer can be more effectually illustrated and established than a short review of his life
4659 and of what he tells of his prayer-experiences.

4660

4661 He was born in Prussia on 25th September 1805, and is thus now eighty years of age. His early
4662 life, even after having entered the University of Halle as a theological student, was wicked in the
4663 extreme. Led by a friend one evening, when just twenty years of age, to a prayer meeting, he was
4664 deeply impressed, and soon after brought to know the Saviour. Not long after he began reading
4665 missionary papers, and in course of time offered himself to the London Society for promoting
4666 Christianity to the Jews. He was accepted as a student, but soon found that he could not in all things
4667 submit to the rules of the Society, as leaving too little liberty for the leading of the Holy Spirit. The
4668 connection was dissolved in 1830 by mutual consent, and he became the pastor of a small
4669 congregation at Teignmouth. In 1832 he was led to Bristol, and it was as pastor of Bethesda Chapel
4670 that he was led to the Orphan Home and other work, in connection with which God has so
4671 remarkably led him to trust His word and to experience how God fulfils that word.

4672

4673 A few extracts in regard to his spiritual life will prepare the way for what we specially wish to quote
4674 of his experiences in reference to prayer.

4675

4676 In connection with this I would mention, that the Lord very graciously gave me, from the very
4677 commencement of my divine life, a measure of simplicity and of childlike disposition in spiritual
4678 things, so that whilst I was exceedingly ignorant of the Scriptures, and was still from time to time
4679 overcome even by outward sins, yet I was enabled to carry most minute matters to the Lord in
4680 prayer. And I have found "godliness profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now
4681 is, and of that which is to come." Though very weak and ignorant, yet I had now, by the grace of
4682 God, some desire to benefit others, and he who so faithfully had once served Satan, sought now to
4683 win souls for Christ.'

4684

4685 It was at Teignmouth that he was led to know how to use God's word, and to trust the Holy Spirit
4686 as the Teacher given by God to make that word clear. He writes:—

4687

4688 God then began to show me that the word of God alone is our standard of judgment in spiritual
4689 things; that it can be explained only by the Holy Spirit; and that in our day, as well as in former
4690 times. He is the Teacher of His people. The office of the Holy Spirit I had not experimentally
4691 understood before that time.

4692
4693 It was my beginning to understand this latter point in particular, which had a great effect on me; for
4694 the Lord enabled me to put it to the test of experience, by laying aside commentaries, and almost
4695 every other book and simply reading the word of God and studying it.

4696
4697 The result of this was, that the first evening that I shut myself into my room, to give myself to
4698 prayer and meditation over the Scriptures, I learned more in a few hours than I had done during a
4699 period of several months previously.

4700
4701 But the particular difference was that I received real strength for my soul in so doing. I now began
4702 to try by the test of the Scriptures the things which I had learned and seen, and found that only those
4703 principles which stood the test were of real value.’

4704
4705 Of obedience to the word of God, he writes as follows, in connection with his being baptized:—

4706
4707 It had pleased God, in His abundant mercy, to bring my mind into such a state, that I was willing to
4708 carry out into my life whatever I should find in the Scriptures. I could say, “I will do His will,” and
4709 it was on that account, I believe, that I saw which “doctrine is of God.”—And I would observe here,
4710 by the way, that the passage to which I have just alluded (John vii. 17) has been a most remarkable
4711 comment to me on many doctrines and precepts of our most holy faith. For instance: “Resist not
4712 evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man
4713 will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall
4714 compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would
4715 borrow of thee, turn not thou away. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them
4716 that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matt. v. 39-44).
4717 “Sell that ye have, and give alms”(Luke xii. 33). “Owe no man any thing, but to love one
4718 another”(Rom. xii. 8). It may be said, “Surely these passages cannot be taken literally, for how then
4719 would the people of God be able to pass through the world?” The state of mind enjoined in John vii.
4720 17 will cause such objections to vanish. WHOSOEVER IS WILLING TO ACT OUT these
4721 commandments of the Lord LITERALLY, will, I believe, be led with me to see that to take them
4722 LITERALLY is the will of God.—Those who do so take them will doubtless often be brought into
4723 difficulties, hard to the flesh to bear, but these will have a tendency to make them constantly feel
4724 that they are strangers and pilgrims here, that this world is not their home, and thus to throw them
4725 more upon God, who will assuredly help us through any difficulty into which we may be brought by
4726 seeking to act in obedience to His word.’

4727
4728 This implicit surrender to God’s word led him to certain views and conduct in regard to money,
4729 which mightily influenced his future life. They had their root in the conviction that money was a
4730 Divine stewardship, and that all money had therefore to be received and dispensed in direct
4731 fellowship with God Himself. This led him to the adoption of the following four great rules: 1. Not
4732 to receive any fixed salary, both because in the collecting of it there was often much that was at
4733 variance with the freewill offering with which God’s service is to be maintained, and in the
4734 receiving of it a danger of placing more dependence on human sources of income than in the living
4735 God Himself. 2. Never to ask any human being for help, however great the need might be, but to

4736 make his wants known to the God who has promised to care for His servants and to hear their
4737 prayer. 3. To take this command (Luke xii. 33) literally, 'Sell that thou hast and give alms,' and
4738 never to save up money, but to spend all God entrusted to him on God's poor, on the work of His
4739 kingdom. 4. Also to take Rom. xiii. 8, 'Owe no man anything,' literally, and never to buy on credit,
4740 or be in debt for anything, but to trust God to provide.

4741
4742 This mode of living was not easy at first. But Muller testifies it was most blessed in bringing the
4743 soul to rest in God, and drawing it into closer union with Himself when inclined to backslide. For it
4744 will not do, it is not possible, to live in sin, and at the same time, by communion with God, to draw
4745 down from heaven everything one needs for the life that now is.'

4746
4747 Not long after his settlement at Bristol, THE SCRIPTURAL KNOWLEDGE INSTITUTION FOR
4748 HOME AND ABROAD' was established for aiding in Day, Sunday School, Mission and Bible
4749 work. Of this Institution the Orphan Home work, by which Mr. Muller is best known, became a
4750 branch. It was in 1834 that his heart was touched by the case of an orphan brought to Christ in one
4751 of the schools, but who had to go to a poorhouse where its spiritual wants would not be cared for.
4752 Meeting shortly after with a life of Franke, he writes (Nov, 20, 1835): 'Today I have had it very
4753 much laid on my heart no longer merely to think about the establishment of an Orphan Home, but
4754 actually to set about it, and I have been very much in prayer respecting it, in order to ascertain the
4755 Lord's mind. May God make it plain.' And again, Nov. 25: 'I have been again much in prayer
4756 yesterday and today about the Orphan Home, and am more and more convinced that it is of God.
4757 May He in mercy guide me. The three chief reasons are—1. That God may be glorified, should He
4758 be pleased to furnish me with the means, in its being seen that it is not a vain thing to trust Him; and
4759 that thus the faith of His children may be strengthened. 2. The spiritual welfare of fatherless and
4760 motherless children. 3. Their temporal welfare.'

4761
4762 After some months of prayer and waiting on God, a house was rented, with room for thirty children
4763 , and in course of time three more, containing in all 120 children. The work was carried on it this
4764 way for ten years, the supplies for the needs of the orphans being asked and received of God alone.
4765 It was often a time of sore need and much prayer, but a trial of faith more precious than of gold was
4766 found unto praise and honour and glory of God. The Lord was preparing His servant for greater
4767 things. By His providence and His Holy Spirit, Mr. Muller was led to desire, and to wait upon God
4768 till he received from Him, the sure promise of 15,000 for a Home to contain 300 children. This first
4769 Home was opened in 1849. In 1858, a second and third Home, for 950 more orphans, was opened,
4770 costing 35,000. And in 1869 and 1870, a fourth and a fifth Home, for 850 more, at an expense of
4771 50,000, making the total number of the orphans 2100.

4772
4773 In addition to this work, God has given him almost as much as for the building of the Orphan
4774 Homes, and the maintenance of the orphans, for other work, the support of schools and missions,
4775 Bible and tract circulation. In all he has received from God, to be spent in His work, during these
4776 fifty years, more than one million pounds sterling. How little he knew, let us carefully notice, that
4777 when he gave up his little salary of 35 a year in obedience to the leading of God's word and the
4778 Holy Spirit, what God was preparing to give him as the reward of obedience and faith; and how
4779 wonderfully the word was to be fulfilled to him: 'Thou hast been faithful over few things; I will set
4780 thee over many things.'

4781
4782 And these things have happened for an ensample to us. God calls us to be followers of George
4783 Muller, even as he is of Christ. His God is our God; the same promises are for us; the same service
4784 of love and faith in which he laboured is calling for us on every side. Let us in connection with our

4785 lessons in the school of prayer study the way in which God gave George Muller such power as a
4786 man of prayer: we shall find in it the most remarkable illustration of some of the lessons which we
4787 have been studying with the blessed Master in the word. We shall specially have impressed upon us
4788 His first great lesson, that if we will come to Him in the way He has pointed out, with definite
4789 petitions, made known to us by the Spirit through the word as being according to the will of God,
4790 we may most confidently believe that whatsoever we ask it shall be done.

4791

4792 PRAYER AND THE WORD OF GOD.

4793

4794 We have more than once seen that God's listening to our voice depends upon our listening to His
4795 voice. (See Lessons 22 and 23.) We must not only have a special promise to plead, when we make a
4796 special request, but our whole life must be under the supremacy of the word: the word must be
4797 dwelling in us. The testimony of George Muller on this point is most instructive. He tells us how the
4798 discovery of the true place of the word of God, and the teaching of the Spirit with it, was the
4799 commencement of a new era in his spiritual life. Of it he writes:—

4800

4801 Now the scriptural way of reasoning would have been: God Himself has condescended to become
4802 an author, and I am ignorant about that precious book which His Holy Spirit has caused to be
4803 written through the instrumentality of His servants, and it contains that which I ought to know, and
4804 the knowledge of which will lead me to true happiness; therefore I ought to read again and again
4805 this most precious book, this book of books, most earnestly, most prayerfully, and with much
4806 meditation; and in this practice I ought to continue all the days of my life. For I was aware, though I
4807 read it but little, that I knew scarcely anything of it. But instead of acting thus and being led by my
4808 ignorance of the word of God to study it more, my difficulty in understanding it, and the little
4809 enjoyment I had in it, made me careless of reading it (for much prayerful reading of the word gives
4810 not merely more knowledge, but increases the delight we have in reading it); and thus, like many
4811 believers, I practically preferred, for the first four years of my divine life, the works of uninspired
4812 men to the oracles of the living God. The consequence was that I remained a babe, both in
4813 knowledge and grace. In knowledge, I say; for all true knowledge must be derived, by the Spirit,
4814 from the word. And as I neglected the word, I was for nearly four years so ignorant, that I did not
4815 clearly know even the fundamental points of our holy faith. And this lack of knowledge most sadly
4816 kept me back from walking steadily in the ways of God. For when it pleased the Lord in August
4817 1829 to bring me really to the Scriptures, my life and walk became very different. And though ever
4818 since that I have very much fallen short of what I might and ought to be, yet by the grace of God I
4819 have been enabled to live much nearer to Him than before. If any believers read this who practically
4820 prefer other books to the Holy Scriptures, and who enjoy the writings of men much more than the
4821 word of God, may they be warned by my loss. I shall consider this book to have been the means of
4822 doing much good, should it please the Lord, through its instrumentality, to lead some of His people
4823 no longer to neglect the Holy Scriptures, but to give them that preference which they have hitherto
4824 bestowed on the writings of men.

4825

4826 Before I leave this subject, I would only add: If the reader understands very little of the word of
4827 God, he ought to read it very much; for the Spirit explains the word by the word. And if he enjoys
4828 the reading of the word little, that is just the reason why he should read it much; for the frequent
4829 reading of the Scriptures creates a delight in them, so that the more we read them, the more we
4830 desire to do so.

4831

4832 Above all, he should seek to have it settled in his own mind that God alone by His Spirit can teach
4833 him, and that therefore, as God will be inquired of for blessings, it becomes him to seek God's
4834 blessing previous to reading, and also whilst reading.

4835
4836 He should have it, moreover, settled in his mind that although the Holy Spirit is the best and
4837 sufficient Teacher, yet that this Teacher does not always teach immediately when we desire it, and
4838 that therefore we may have to entreat Him again and again for the explanation of certain passages;
4839 but that He will surely teach us at last, if indeed we are seeking for light prayerfully, patiently, and
4840 with a view to the glory of God.' [4]

4841
4842 We find in his journal frequent mention made of his spending two and three hours in prayer over the
4843 word for the feeding of his spiritual life. As the fruit of this, when he had need of strength and
4844 encouragement in prayer, the individual promises were not to him so many arguments from a book
4845 to be used with God, but living words which he had heard the Father's living voice speak to him,
4846 and which he could now bring to the Father in living faith.

4847
4848 PRAYER AND THE WILL OF GOD.
4849

4850 One of the greatest difficulties with young believers is to know how they can find out whether what
4851 they desire is according to God's will. I count it one of the most precious lessons God wants to
4852 teach through the experience of George Muller, that He is willing to make known, of things of
4853 which His word says nothing directly, that they are His will for us, and that we may ask them. The
4854 teaching of the Spirit, not without or against the word, but as something above and beyond it, in
4855 addition to it, without which we cannot see God's will, is the heritage of every believer. It is
4856 through THE WORD, AND THE WORD ALONE, that the Spirit teaches, applying the general
4857 principles or promises to our special need. And it is THE SPIRIT, AND THE SPIRIT ALONE, who
4858 can really make the word a light on our path, whether the path of duty in our daily walk, or the path
4859 of faith in our approach to God. Let us try and notice in what childlike simplicity and teachableness
4860 it was that the discovery of God's will was so surely and so clearly made known to His servant.

4861
4862 With regard to the building of the first Home and the assurance he had of its being God's will, he
4863 writes in May 1850, just after it had been opened, speaking of the great difficulties there were, and
4864 how little likely it appeared to nature that they would be removed: But while the prospect before me
4865 would have been overwhelming had I looked at it naturally, I was never even for once permitted to
4866 question how it would end. For as from the beginning I was sure it was the will of God that I should
4867 go to the work of building for Him this large Orphan Home, so also from the beginning I was as
4868 certain that the whole would be finished as if the Home had been already filled.'

4869
4870 The way in which he found out what was God's will, comes out with special clearness in his
4871 account of the building of the second Home; and I ask the reader to study with care the lesson the
4872 narrative conveys:—

4873
4874 Dec. 5, 1850.—Under these circumstances I can only pray that the Lord in His tender mercy would
4875 not allow Satan to gain an advantage over me. By the grace of God my heart says: Lord, if I could
4876 be sure that it is Thy will that I should go forward in this matter, I would do so cheerfully; and, on
4877 the other hand, if I could be sure that these are vain, foolish, proud thoughts, that they are not from
4878 Thee, I would, by Thy grace, hate them, and entirely put them aside.

4879

4880 My hope is in God: He will help and teach me. Judging, however, from His former dealings with
4881 me, it would not be a strange thing to me, nor surprising, if He called me to labour yet still more
4882 largely in this way.

4883
4884 The thoughts about enlarging the Orphan work have not yet arisen on account of an abundance of
4885 money having lately come in; for I have had of late to wait for about seven weeks upon God, whilst
4886 little, very little comparatively, came in, i.e. about four times as much was going out as came in;
4887 and, had not the Lord previously sent me large sums, we should have been distressed indeed.

4888
4889 Lord! how can Thy servant know Thy will in this matter? Wilt Thou be pleased to teach him!
4890

4891 December 11.—During the last six days, since writing the above, I have been, day after day, waiting
4892 upon God concerning this matter. It has generally been more or less all the day on my heart. When I
4893 have been awake at night, it has not been far from my thoughts. Yet all this without the least
4894 excitement. I am perfectly calm and quiet respecting it. My soul would be rejoiced to go forward in
4895 this service, could I be sure that the Lord would have me to do so; for then, notwithstanding the
4896 numberless difficulties, all would be well; and His Name would be magnified.

4897
4898 On the other hand, were I assured that the Lord would have me to be satisfied with my present
4899 sphere of service, and that I should not pray about enlarging the work, by His grace I could, without
4900 an effort, cheerfully yield to it; for He has brought me into such a state of heart, that I only desire to
4901 please Him in this matter. Moreover, hitherto I have not spoken about this thing even to my beloved
4902 wife, the sharer of my joys, sorrows, and labours for more than twenty years; nor is it likely that I
4903 shall do so for some time to come: for I prefer quietly to wait on the Lord, without conversing on
4904 this subject, in order that thus I may be kept the more easily, by His blessing, from being influenced
4905 by things from without. The burden of my prayer concerning this matter is, that the Lord would not
4906 allow me to make a mistake, and that He would teach me to do His will.

4907
4908 December 26.—Fifteen days have elapsed since I wrote the preceding paragraph. Every day since
4909 then I have continued to pray about this matter, and that with a goodly measure of earnestness, by
4910 the help of God. There has passed scarcely an hour during these days, in which, whilst awake, this
4911 matter has not been more or less before me. But all without even a shadow of excitement. I
4912 converse with no one about it. Hitherto have I not even done so with my dear wife. For this I refrain
4913 still, and deal with God alone about the matter, in order that no outward influence and no outward
4914 excitement may keep me from attaining unto a clear discovery of His will. I have the fullest and
4915 most peaceful assurance that He will clearly show me His will. This evening I have had again an
4916 especial solemn season for prayer, to seek to know the will of God. But whilst I continue to entreat
4917 and beseech the Lord, that He would not allow me to be deluded in this business, I may say I have
4918 scarcely any doubt remaining on my mind as to what will be the issue, even that I should go
4919 forward in this matter. As this, however, is one of the most momentous steps that I have ever taken,
4920 I judge that I cannot go about this matter with too much caution, prayerfulness, and deliberation. I
4921 am in no hurry about it. I could wait for years, by God's grace, were this His will, before even
4922 taking one single step toward this thing, or even speaking to anyone about it; and, on the other hand,
4923 I would set to work tomorrow, were the Lord to bid me do so. This calmness of mind, this having
4924 no will of my own in the matter, this only wishing to please my Heavenly Father in it, this only
4925 seeking His and not my honour in it; this state of heart, I say, is the fullest assurance to me that my
4926 heart is not under a fleshly excitement, and that, if I am helped thus to go on, I shall know the will
4927 of God to the full. But, while I write this, I cannot but add at the same time, that I do crave the
4928 honour and the glorious privilege to be more and more used by the Lord.

4929
4930 I desire to be allowed to provide scriptural instruction for a thousand orphans, instead of doing so
4931 for 300. I desire to expound the Holy Scriptures regularly to a thousand orphans, instead of doing so
4932 to 300. I desire that it may be yet more abundantly manifest that God is still the Hearer and
4933 Answerer of prayer, and that He is the living God now as He ever was and ever will be, when He
4934 shall simply, in answer to prayer, have condescended to provide me with a house for 700 orphans
4935 and with means to support them. This last consideration is the most important point in my mind.
4936 The Lord's honour is the principal point with me in this whole matter; and just because this is the
4937 case, if He would be more glorified by not going forward in this business, I should by His grace be
4938 perfectly content to give up all thoughts about another Orphan House. Surely in such a state of
4939 mind, obtained by the Holy Spirit, Thou, O my Heavenly Father, wilt not suffer Thy child to be
4940 mistaken, much less deluded. By the help of God I shall continue further day by day to wait upon
4941 Him in prayer, concerning this thing, till He shall bid me act.

4942
4943 Jan. 2, 1851.—A week ago I wrote the preceding paragraph. During this week I have still been
4944 helped day by day, and more than once every day, to seek the guidance of the Lord about another
4945 Orphan House. The burden of my prayer has still been, that He in His great mercy would keep me
4946 from making a mistake. During the last week the book of Proverbs has come in the course of my
4947 Scripture reading, and my heart has been refreshed in reference to this subject by the following
4948 passages: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all
4949 thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" (Prov. iii. 5, 6). By the grace of God I do
4950 acknowledge the Lord in all my ways, and in this thing in particular; I have therefore the
4951 comfortable assurance that He will direct my paths concerning this part of my service, as to whether
4952 I shall be occupied in it or not. Further: "The integrity of the upright shall preserve them" (Prov.
4953 xi. 3). By the grace of God I am upright in this business. My honest purpose is to get glory to God.
4954 Therefore I expect to be guided aright. Further: "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts
4955 shall be established" (Prov. xvi. 3). I do commit my works unto the Lord, and therefore expect that
4956 my thoughts will be established. My heart is more and more coming to a calm, quiet, and settled
4957 assurance, that the Lord will condescend to use me still further in the orphan work. Here Lord is
4958 Thy servant.'

4959
4960 When later he decided to build two additional houses, Nos. 4 and 5, he writes thus again:—

4961
4962 Twelve days have passed away since I wrote the last paragraph. I have still day by day been enabled
4963 to wait upon the Lord with reference to enlarging the Orphan work, and have been during the whole
4964 of this period also in perfect peace, which is the result of seeking in this thing only the Lord's
4965 honour and the temporal and spiritual benefit of my fellow-men. Without an effort could I by His
4966 grace put aside all thoughts about this whole affair, if only assured that it is the will of God that I
4967 should do so; and, on the other hand, would at once go forward, if He would have it be so. I have
4968 still kept this matter entirely to myself. Though it be now about seven weeks, since day by day,
4969 more or less, my mind has been exercised about it, and since I have been daily praying about it, yet
4970 not one human being knows of it. As yet I have not even mentioned it to my dear wife in order that
4971 thus, by quietly waiting upon God, I might not be influenced by what might be said to me on the
4972 subject. This evening has been particularly set apart for prayer, beseeching the Lord once more not
4973 to allow me to be mistaken in this thing, and much less to be deluded by the devil. I have also
4974 sought to let all the reasons against building another Orphan House, and all the reasons for doing so
4975 pass before my mind: and now for the clearness and definiteness, write them down. . . .
4976

4977 Much, however, as the nine previous reasons weigh with me, yet they would not decide me were
4978 there not one more. It is this. After having for months pondered the matter, and having looked at it
4979 in all its bearings and with all its difficulties, and then having been finally led, after much prayer, to
4980 decide on this enlargement, my mind is at peace. The child who has again and again besought His
4981 Heavenly Father not to allow him to be deluded, nor even to make a mistake, is at peace, perfectly
4982 at peace concerning this decision; and has thus the assurance that the decision come to, after much
4983 prayer during weeks and months, is the leading of the Holy Spirit; and therefore purposes to go
4984 forward, assuredly believing that he will not be confounded, for he trusts in God. Many and great
4985 may be his difficulties; thousands and ten thousands of prayers may have ascended to God, before
4986 the full answer may be obtained; much exercise of faith and patience may be required; but in the
4987 end it will again be seen, that His servant, who trusts in Him, has not been confounded.’
4988

4989 PRAYER AND THE GLORY OF GOD. 4990

4991 We have sought more than once to enforce the truth, that while we ordinarily seek the reasons of
4992 our prayers not being heard in the thing we ask not being according to the will of God, Scripture
4993 warns us to find the cause in ourselves, in our not being in the right state or not asking in the right
4994 spirit. The thing may be in full accordance with His will, but the asking, the spirit of the supplicant,
4995 not; then we are not heard. As the great root of all sin is self and self-seeking, so there is nothing
4996 that even in our more spiritual desires so effectually hinders God in answering as this: we pray for
4997 our own pleasure or glory. Prayer to have power and prevail must ask for the glory of God; and he
4998 can only do this as he is living for God’s glory.
4999

5000 In George Muller we have one of the most remarkable instances on record of God’s Holy Spirit
5001 leading a man deliberately and systematically, at the outset of a course of prayer, to make the
5002 glorifying of God his first and only object. Let us ponder well what he says, and learn the lesson
5003 God would teach us through him:—
5004

5005 I had constantly cases brought before me, which proved that one of the especial things which the
5006 children of God needed in our day, was to have their faith strengthened.
5007

5008 I longed, therefore, to have something to point my brethren to, as a visible proof that our God and
5009 Father is the same faithful God as ever He was; as willing as ever to PROVE Himself to be the
5010 LIVING GOD in our day as formerly, to all who put their trust in Him.
5011

5012 My spirit longed to be instrumental in strengthening their faith, by giving them not only instances
5013 from the word of God, of His willingness and ability to help all who rely upon Him, but to show
5014 them by proofs that He is the same in our day. I knew that the word of God ought to be enough, and
5015 it was by grace enough for me; but still I considered I ought to lend a helping hand to my brethren.
5016

5017 I therefore judged myself bound to be the servant of the Church of Christ, in the particular point in
5018 which I had obtained mercy; namely, in being able to take God at His word and rely upon it. The
5019 first object of the work was, and is still: that God might be magnified by the fact that the orphans
5020 under my care are provided with all they need, only by prayer and faith, without any one being
5021 asked; thereby it may be seen that God is FAITHFUL STILL, AND HEARS PRAYER STILL.
5022

5023 I have again these last days prayed much about the Orphan House, and have frequently examined
5024 my heart; that if it were at all my desire to establish it for the sake of gratifying myself, I might find

5025 it out. For as I desire only the Lord's glory, I shall be glad to be instructed by the instrumentality of
5026 my brother, if the matter be not of Him.

5027
5028 When I began the Orphan work in 1835, my chief object was the glory of God, by giving a practical
5029 demonstration as to what could be accomplished simply through the instrumentality of prayer and
5030 faith, in order thus to benefit the Church at large, and to lead a careless world to see the reality of
5031 the things of God, by showing them in this work, that the living God is still, as 4000 years ago, the
5032 living God. This my aim has been abundantly honoured. Multitudes of sinners have been thus
5033 converted, multitudes of the children of God in all parts of the world have been benefited by this
5034 work, even as I had anticipated. But the larger the work as grown, the greater has been the blessing,
5035 bestowed in the very way in which I looked for blessing: for the attention of hundreds of thousands
5036 has been drawn to the work; and many tens of thousands have come to see it. All this leads me to
5037 desire further and further to labour on in this way, in order to bring yet greater glory to the Name of
5038 the Lord. That He may be looked at, magnified, admired, trusted in, relied on at all times, is my aim
5039 in this service; and so particularly in this intended enlargement. That it may be seen how much one
5040 poor man, simply by trusting in God, can bring about by prayer; and that thus other children of God
5041 may be led to carry on the work of God in dependence upon Him; and that children of God may be
5042 led increasingly to trust in Him in their individual positions and circumstances, therefore I am led to
5043 this further enlargement.'

5044
5045 PRAYER AND TRUST IN GOD.

5046
5047 There are other points on which I would be glad to point out what is to be found in Mr. Muller's
5048 narrative, but one more must suffice. It is the lesson of firm and unwavering trust in God's promise
5049 as the secret of persevering prayer. If once we have, in submission to the teaching of the Spirit in
5050 the word, taken hold of God's promise, and believed that the Father has heard us, we must not allow
5051 ourselves by any delay or unfavourable appearances be shaken in our faith.

5052
5053 The full answer to my daily prayers was far from being realized; yet there was abundant
5054 encouragement granted by the Lord, to continue in prayer. But suppose, even, that far less had come
5055 in than was received, still, after having come to the conclusion, upon scriptural grounds, after much
5056 prayer and self-examination, I ought to have gone on without wavering, in the exercise of faith and
5057 patience concerning this object; and thus all the children of God, when once satisfied that anything
5058 which they bring before God in prayer, is according to His will, ought to continue in believing,
5059 expecting, persevering prayer until the blessing is granted. Thus am I myself now waiting upon God
5060 for certain blessings, for which I have daily besought Him for ten years and six months without one
5061 day's intermission. Still the full answer is not yet given concerning the conversion of certain
5062 individuals, though in the meantime I have received many thousands of answers to prayer. I have
5063 also prayed daily without intermission for the conversion of other individuals about ten years, for
5064 others six or seven years, for others from three or two years; and still the answer is not yet granted
5065 concerning those persons, while in the meantime many thousands of my prayers have been
5066 answered, and also souls converted, for whom I had been praying. I lay particular stress on this for
5067 the benefit of those who may suppose that I need only to ask of God, and receive at once; or that I
5068 might pray concerning anything, and the answer would surely come. One can only expect to obtain
5069 answers to prayers which are according to the mind of God; and even then, patience and faith may
5070 be exercised for many years, even as mine are exercised, in the matter to which I have referred; and
5071 yet am I daily continuing in prayer, and expecting the answer, and so surely expecting the answer,
5072 that I have often thanked God that He will surely give it, though now for nineteen years faith and

5073 patience have thus been exercised. Be encouraged, dear Christians, with fresh earnestness to give
5074 yourselves to prayer, if you can only be sure that you ask things which are for the glory of God.

5075
5076 But the most remarkable point is this, that 6, 6s. 6d. from Scotland supplied me, as far as can be
5077 known now, with all the means necessary for fitting up and promoting the New Orphan Houses. Six
5078 years and eight months I have been day by day, and generally several times daily, asking the Lord
5079 to give me the needed means for this enlargement of the Orphan work, which, according to
5080 calculations made in the spring of 1861, appeared to be about fifty thousand pounds: the total of this
5081 amount I had now received. I praise and magnify the Lord for putting this enlargement of the work
5082 into my heart, and for giving me courage and faith for it; and above all, for sustaining my faith day
5083 by day without wavering. When the last portion of the money was received, I was no more assured
5084 concerning the whole, that I was at the time I had not received one single donation towards this
5085 large sum. I was at the beginning, after once having ascertained His mind, through most patient and
5086 heart-searching waiting upon God, as fully assured that He would bring it about, as if the two
5087 houses, with their hundreds of orphans occupying them, had been already before me. I make a few
5088 remarks here for the sake of young believers in connection with this subject: 1. Be slow to take new
5089 steps in the Lord's service, or in your business, or in your families: weigh everything well; weigh all
5090 in the light of the Holy Scriptures and in the fear of God. 2. Seek to have no will of your own, in
5091 order to ascertain the mind of God, regarding any steps you propose taking, so that you can honestly
5092 say you are willing to do the will of God, if He will only please to instruct you. 3. But when you
5093 have found out what the will of God is, seek for His help, and seek it earnestly, perseveringly,
5094 patiently, believingly, expectantly; and you will surely in His own time and way obtain it.

5095
5096 To suppose that we have difficulty about money only would be a mistake: there occur hundreds of
5097 other wants and of other difficulties. It is a rare thing that a day occurs without some difficulty or
5098 some want; but often there are many difficulties and many wants to be met and overcome the same
5099 day. All these are met by prayer and faith, our universal remedy; and we have never been
5100 confounded. Patient, persevering, believing prayer, offered up to God, in the Name of the Lord
5101 Jesus, has always, sooner or later, brought the blessing. I do not despair, by God's grace, of
5102 obtaining any blessing, provided I can be sure it would be for any real good, and for the glory of
5103 God.

5104
5105 [4] The extracts are from a work in four volumes, The Lord's Dealings with George Muller. J.
5106 Nisbet & Co., London.