"PRAY, ALWAYS PRAY"
NO. 2800

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, OCTOBER 12, 1902.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 3, 1878.

"In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you, for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God."
John 16:26, 27.

THE present time in which we live is highly favored and ought to be highly valued. Let us never grudge the Patriarchs their communion with God when, sometimes, He spoke personally into their ear, or revealed Himself visibly to them. Blessed are our eyes, for they see, and our ears, for they hear the things which kings and Prophets waited for in vain. That which was denied to them has been revealed to us and we are, therefore, peculiarly privileged. Though John the Baptist, living on the very verge of the Gospel dispensation, was the greatest man who had been born of woman, yet the least in the kingdom of Heaven is greater than he—and we are now living in that kingdom of Heaven, although there is, at present, much to mar the glory of the reign of Christ on earth. Be grateful, therefore, O you sons of men who are also sons of God—be grateful that you live in this truly golden age, for, with all its sorrows and all its shortcomings, it is an age of great mercy and of high privilege!

I venture even to set the present period above that brave age in which Jesus dwelt here among men. We are very apt to look upon that time as being the sunniest era which the Church of God ever enjoyed, yet it was not so. The dispensation of the Holy Spirit is of a higher order than the dispensation of the humiliated and suffering Savior. That was the day of the Church's childhood, when her Lord instructed her by pictures and taught her letters, but kept back many of the grander and deeper Truths of God because she was not able to bear them. But now the Holy Spirit has been given to lead us into all Truth and He takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us. It was but the twilight of the Gospel dispensation, or only its dawning hour when our Lord was here. True, He is the Sun of Righteousness, but His disciples saw only a little of His Glory, for their eyes were but slightly opened and they had less of the Light of God from Him than we have, though the blessedness of His corporeal personal Presence is denied to us.

At that time there was much backwardness in prayer even among the Apostles of Christ. Just before our text, we read that Christ said to them, "Hitherto have you asked nothing in My name." We read of our Master praying—

"Cold mountains and the midnight air,
Witnessed the fervor of His prayer"—

but we read very little about the prayers of the disciples. They did once get as far as to say, "Lord, teach us to pray," but very little did any of them seem to know, then, of the power of prayer. Now, the Lord has not only taught us to pray, but He has also given us the Holy Spirit to help our infirmities and to make intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered. In many other respects upon which I need not, now, dwell in detail, we are far in advance of the highly-favored 12 who remained with Christ, or the privileged 70 who were sent forth by Him to teach, to preach and to heal the sick. It is a blessed period in which we live and I want you who are believers in Christ to prize your privileges. If you have been lamenting your lot, I want you to feel that your birth could scarcely have been at a more auspicious period and that to be living in the time when the Spirit of God has been given—and His sacred influences are exercising their power in the Church—is a high honor which God has granted to you!

I am led to make these remarks because our text commences with the words, "At that day," which is the present period, the time when Christ has returned to His Father's right hand after His terrible death-pangs on Calvary—the period when we are no longer full of sorrow because He died, but our sorrow has turned into joy on His account and on our own, too. It is "at that day" that the blessings I am going to speak of are given to us, so that we are even now enjoying them, or ought to be doing so.

Taking the text as referring to the period in which we live, I notice, first, *the Believer's daily exercise*—"In that day you will ask in My name." Secondly, we have *the Believer's privileged position*—"I do not say to you, that I shall pray the Father for you, for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God." Then, thirdly, I shall try, practically, to suggest what should be *the Believer's natural conclusion* from the blessed Truth of God which is here revealed to us.

I. First, then, let us notice THE BELIEVER'S DAILY EXERCISE. It is to ask and to continue asking—"In that day you will ask in My name."

It is a very simple matter to ask, but how gracious it is, on the part of God, to append to such a simple thing as asking the promise of giving! He has not said, "Deserve the blessing," but, "Ask for it." He does not say, "Purchase it," but, "Ask for it." Not, "Labor until you at length procure it by your own toil," but, "Ask for it." Brothers and Sisters, if Heaven is to be had for the *asking* and if all that is needed to bring us to Heaven is to be had for the *asking*, who would not ask? Whatever else a Believer may fail to do, he should never fail, surely, in asking! If we have never asked God for anything at all, we may be quite sure that we were never converted. A prayerless soul must be a Christless soul. But if we are really in Christ, we must have practiced the sacred art of asking and we ought to go on continually with it. If there is any difficulty in our minds, let us ask, for the Holy Spirit can solve it. If there is any need in our homes, let us ask, for our Heavenly Father can supply it. If there is any weakness in our spiritual nature, let us ask, for God can strengthen us. If there is any longing desire of our soul which even leads to great heaviness of spirit, let us ask, for our desire can be granted if it is a right one—and our heaviness can be removed. To ask, my Brothers and Sisters, is very simple—and let the Lord's name be praised that, usually, the best asking is that which is the most simple!

To ask anything of God does not require that you should use a set form of words. The children in your family do not read a petition to you when they need any favor at your hands—they state their need in childish language—you understand them and grant their request if it is a right and proper one—and compliance with it is within your power. Act in just the same way with your God! We are often far too careful about picking and choosing the phrases that we use in prayer. Do you think that God is pleased with a display of oratory, or that He takes notice of your elocution when you come to the Throne of Grace? It may suit a teacher of English composition to criticize your sentences, but God thinks much more of your *desires* than of the words in which they are expressed. It may be natural for a scholar to consider the accuracy of your terms, but God especially marks the earnestness of your soul. There is no other place where the heart should be so free as before the Mercy Seat. There, you may talk out your very soul, for that is the best prayer that you can present. Ask not for what some tell you that you should ask, but for that which you feel the need of—that which the Holy Spirit has made you to hunger and to thirst for—ask for that.

Ask always. Your whole life should be spent in asking! When the morning breaks, ask for the mercy needed during the day. And when the day has closed its eyelids and you go to your bed, ask for the protection and rest that you need during the night. Ask when your voice can be heard only by your God in secret. And ask when your tongue may not be able to move, but only your spirit whispers into the ear of God. Never hesitate to ask because of the greatness of the blessing you desire. The Lord is a great God though you are so little—and He delights to give great things to those who ask them at His hands. And be not backward to ask because of your unworthiness. You can never have any worthiness of your own—therefore, if a sense of unworthiness would check your prayer, now, it might always hinder you from praying. Yet the Lord bids you pray, so it must be right for you to pray! Ask when you have fought for something and cannot win it. Ask when you have toiled for it and cannot gain it—ask and have it! Come before your God in all the rags of your sinfulness and conscious ill-desert and ask, for that is all you have to do. "Ask, and you shall receive," is the message that shines out with heavenly radiance over the Mercy Seat. Read it and obey it—open your mouth wide, for God will fill it.

Our Lord told His disciples that in addition to asking, *they were to ask in His name*—"In that day you will ask in My name." That is the most delightful way of asking. We often say, at the end of our petition, "Lord, grant it, for Jesus'

sake," and that is a very proper plea. It means, "Because of what Jesus did, will You not deal well with me? I have done nothing that can ensure a favorable answer to my supplication, but will You not give it to me because Jesus deserves it? For His sake, hear me, O Lord!" That is a good way to pray, but it is a still better way if you can use the name of Christ and ask in His name. You know what you do at a shop when another bids you go there and purchase goods in his name and charge them to his account. Or suppose that you have authorized your servant to go to a certain shop and you have said to the trader, "Whatever he comes for in my name, let him have it." Perhaps he has no money of his own. Possibly he is a very poor person, but, armed with your authority, he can get from that trader as much as you could get if you were to go. His warrant carries him as far as your name has weight. So, Jesus says to us, "Use My name when you are speaking to My Father." "And how far may I go in using that name?" As far as Christ Himself can go! Whatever power there is about the name of Jesus, whatever influence it has in His Father's heart, that power and that influence we are permitted to exercise in prayer! My Lord, I used to ask You to do certain things for Your Son's sake, but now I come with a still stronger plea, for He has bid me use His name and ask that You will do for me even as You would do for Him. My Father, if You can refuse your First-Born, then you can refuse me. And if I am asking for such a thing as He could not ask for, neither would I wish to ask for it—I desire to make this the gauge of my prayer, both for its extent and for its acceptance. If He would have refused to pray it, so also would I. And if that which I ask at Your hands seems a blessing to me, but would not have seemed a blessing to Him, I would say, "Not as I will, but as You will," that I may still be able to use His name. No right-minded man would use another person's name improperly—and if you are asking God for something for yourself merely with a selfish motive, you must not defile that blessed name of His by linking it with such a prayer as that! But, using His name aright, you have great liberty and a high privilege in being permitted to come and pray, not only for the sake of Jesus, but also in the *name* of Jesus!

Our text tells us that this asking in the name of Christ is to be the constant exercise of Christians "in that day." What is that day? According to the context, it is *the time of persecution*—"They shall put you out of the synagogues, yes, the time comes that whoever kills you will think that he does God a service." At such a time as that, Christians are sure to pray. We have not, perhaps, in England, at the present day, a tenth of the prayer that used to go up in the dark days of Queen Mary. Ah, Beloved, when Brothers and Sisters are in prison for the faith—when they are likely to be laid on the rack—when the little church has to be called together because the pastor is to be burned tomorrow morning and the young people all want to be up early to stand round and to cheer him with their weeping eyes if they cannot do anything more for him. And when the youngsters come home and their fathers ask them why they went there, they say they went to learn the way if they should have to die in the same manner themselves—ah, then, prayer is a reality! And when they gather together in out-of-the-way corners and in lonely caverns—when they dare not raise their voices lest the watchers should hear them and take them to prison—yet, in solemn undertones they cry unto the Lord—then it is real prayer! It is that effectual fervent prayer of righteous men that avails much. Then it is, if ever, that the Church of God does really pray! If any of you are, in your little way, at all subject to persecution, be sure to pray, for our Savior said, "In that day you will ask in My name." Let that persecution be a sort of reminder to you of your duty and privilege! If you have been at all slack in prayer and somebody treats you ill for Christ's sake, say, "Now is the time for me to pray more earnestly than ever, for Jesus said, especially of the time of persecution, 'In that day you will ask in My name.'"

If you read further on in the chapter, you will find that "that day" is *when the Spirit of God has instructed the followers of Christ*. "In that day," He said, "you shall ask Me nothing." That is, "You shall put no questions to Me, for the Spirit of God shall instruct you. He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you." Now, the more Light of God and understanding a man gets from Heaven, the more he will pray. If there is any so-called light that makes a man lax in prayer, that light is darkness. Some time ago, when there were a great many people about who professed to be perfect, I heard of one who had grown so conceited that she said her mind was so conformed to the will of God that there was no need for her to pray because her mind and God's mind were so perfectly at one. Yes, and when a person imagines that he is so good that he need not pray, he had better begin by crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." I daresay you have heard of those people who climb so high up the ladder that they fall down the other side—and that is exactly what people do when they begin to carry any Truth of God to extravagance and push a point beyond its legitimate issues. That which makes you cease to pray is of the devil, so say to him, "Get you behind me, Satan." The very

suggestion that you can do without prayer must have come from beneath—it cannot have come from above. The more the Spirit of God teaches a Christian the things of God, the more it makes him ask in the name of Jesus Christ.

Once again, that day is *a day of great joy*—"your sorrow shall be turned into joy...In that day you will ask in My name." Perhaps someone says, "But sorrowful times are good time for prayer, are they not?" I grant you that they are, but, oh, when sorrow is turned to joy, doubt gives place to faith and Hope, herself, becomes eclipsed by a measure of delightful fruition—then is the time to pray! When your heart is ready to dance and your mouth is full of sweetness, then draw near to God in prayer. When He has given you most, then ask all the more from Him! Suppose this is a good day with you—a day of glad tidings—then seize such a good opportunity to pray! There is a high tide in your affairs just now—then take it at the flood, that it may lead you on to spiritual wealth and wash you up high and near to your God! O Beloved, if ever in your lives you pray, let it be especially when the Lord reveals Himself so graciously to you that your heart is glad and your glory rejoices! Let that be a day of asking in the name of Jesus Christ!

Brothers and Sisters, I wish I could speak even more impressively upon this most delightful theme. For if there is one point, more than others, that touches the very vitals of Christian existence, it is this prayerfulness—this asking of God and receiving from Him in answer to our earnest believing supplication. Is prayer a reality with you, dear Friends, or is it a mere mockery? Is it a sort of religious rite that you feel bound to perform, or has it become as essential to your spiritual being as breathing is to your natural being? Is it now to you a matter of course that you should pray? Is it as natural for you to ask of your Father who is in Heaven as it is for your little children to ask of you who are fathers on earth? I feel that it must be so with me—not praying merely because I ought, but because I love the sacred exercise—not praying at a certain hour because it is the set time for prayer, but praying because I *want* to pray, praying because I *must* pray! A man scarcely needs to be reminded that he must breathe. It is essential to his very life that he should breathe and it is essential to our spiritual life that we should pray. I never thought it necessary to prepare a discourse to exhort you to eat, neither ought it to be necessary to exhort Christians to pray. It should be to you an instinct of your new nature, as natural to your spiritual being as a good appetite is to a man in health. There should be a holy hunger and thirst to pray. And the soul never prays so well as when it is reminded, not by the hour of the day or night, but by its real needs—and when it resorts to its place of private prayer, not because it thinks it ought, but because it feels that it must, and shall, and will go there—and is delighted at the privilege of having communion with its God!

My objective, in the second part of my sermon, will be to stir you up to such a feeling as that, so I will say no more upon this first portion of my theme, the Believer's daily exercise—"In that day you will ask in My name."

II. Well now, secondly, we have THE BELIEVER'S PRIVILEGED POSITION with regard to praying.

Believers ought to be abundant in prayer because, first, *they have the holy Spirit to prompt them.* Is that in the text? Yes, or, at least it is implied in the text, for Jesus says, "In that day you will ask." But how could He affirm so positively that we should ask unless He intended to send His Spirit to lead us to ask? The promise is, itself, *a guarantee that He will see it fulfilled!* So we have the Holy Spirit to prompt us to pray—but not merely to prompt us to pray, but to tell us for what we should pray, "for we know not what we should pray for as we ought" until He teaches us! Someone perhaps asks, "Why do you pray, when everything is settled by the Divine decree?" It is true that everything is so settled and it is for that very reason that we pray! The Spirit of God leads us to desire exactly what God has decreed and though we cannot open and read the book of His decrees, the Holy Spirit can read that book, so He guides us to pray in accordance with its secret records—and He also makes intercession for us "according to the will of God." "For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so, no man knows the things of God, but the Spirit of God."And what the Spirit of God knows to be the mind of God, He makes our mind to be, also, and thus we also pray "according to the will of God." A true prayer is the echo of the eternal purpose of God. We say that "coming events cast their shadows before them" and our prayers are the shadows before God's mercies. Who would not pray when prayer becomes to him a consecrated mystery in which one Person of the Sacred Trinity operates upon his mind and excites his desires? It ought to lead us to be much in prayer because our prayers are prompted by the Holy Spirit—

"Pray, always pray, the Holy Spirit pleads
Within you all your daily, hourly needs."

Next, we ought to be much in prayer *because we have the high honor of being allowed to use the name of Christ in our prayer*—"In that day you will ask in My name." If a king were to entrust us with his seal, or if that king had the

power to make money as fast as he willed it simply by his signature—and he allowed us the use of that signature—I do not think many of us would remain poor. If he would only give us that privilege, we would take care to make considerable drafts before we had finished with his seal and signature! And our Lord Jesus does, as it were, take off the signet ring from His finger and says to His servants, "Ask in My name." And, therefore, we issue drafts upon the Infinity of God! There is no limit put to our requests except this, "All things, whatever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive." Oh, how this ought to encourage us to pray! Shall we allow such a golden opportunity as this to pass by unused? O Believers, with the Holy Spirit to tell you what to ask and the Lord Jesus to endorse your asking, will you not pray without ceasing?

But, beyond all this, there is the great encouragement to constant prayer which we derive from the fact that *our Lord Jesus Christ is continually making intercession for us*. Our poor prayers are blotted, blurred and stained with sin. But our Great High Priest sprinkles them with His own most precious blood and so purifies them, and then, with His own dear hands, He lays them before the Mercy Seat—and for His sake they are sure to be accepted! "If any man sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." And He is always pleading for us. So, as we have a Divine Intercessor within the veil who never forgets to present our prayers before His Father's Throne of Grace, how boldly ought we to come to the Mercy Seat! And what large things we ought to ask of God in Christ's name!

Our text, however, seems to me to suggest that our Lord Jesus wished to prevent His disciples from making a mistake concerning His intercession, so, on this occasion, He said, "I do not say to you, that I will pray the Father for you." There was no need that He should say that just then, for He had already said it a great many times, so He needed not to repeat it. But, at that time, He seemed as if He meant to say, "I do not want you to exaggerate even My intercession at My Father's expense. I will intercede for you, but you must not imagine that I do so because My Father is unwilling to hear you when you come to Him in My name. You must not get into your minds the strange idea that, by My pleading, I shall make My Father willing to bless you, for the Father Himself loves you.'" This brings us to a very precious point which is that we should be greatly encouraged to pray, not only because the Spirit prompts us and the Son intercedes for us, but *because the Father Himself loves us*.

Oh, how we ought to pray now that we have the ear—no, more, the very *heart* of the King! To have such a Teacher as the Holy Spirit and such an Advocate as our Lord Jesus Christ ought to be a great encouragement to us—but to have the heart of the King, Himself, is best of all! "The Father Himself loves you." You know, dear Brothers and Sisters, that shallow thinkers often make mistakes concerning the Father and the Son in relation to the Atonement. They think that the Atonement of Christ was necessary to make the Father love His people, whereas the Truth of God is that the Father, *because* He loved His people, gave His only-begotten Son to make propitiation for them! God was always love, as truly love as the Son was and is—we must make no mistake about that matter. So, concerning Christ's intercession, there is a tendency, in certain quarters, to fall into the error of supposing that the Father is difficult to please and that Jesus must pacify Him before He will grant our requests. It is not so, "for the Father Himself loves you." I think that when a sinner is coming to God, he had better, at first, fix his eyes wholly upon Jesus the Mediator, but as for those of us who have believed in Jesus, we are forgiven, we are in a totally different position from that in which the unbeliever stands. We have had our sins blotted out and we may come to the Father Himself—of course, always coming through the Mediator—yet all the while rejoicing in His gracious assurance, "The Father Himself loves you."—

"Pray, always pray, though weary, faint, and lone,
Prayer nestles by the Father's sheltering Throne."

The text says that the Father loves us *because we have loved Jesus, and have believed that He came forth from the Father*. Do not make the mistake of imagining that the love of God to us is caused by our love to Christ. Oh, no! "We love Him because He first loved us." The first love of God is a love of benevolence—a love of compassion—a love towards the unworthy and the undeserving. God, out of love, forgives us and saves us, but there is another love, besides that, which we must never forget. When He has brought us to love His dear Son—when He has brought us to trust in Him because we believe that He came forth from the Father, then the Father has a love of complacency and delight toward us. You can easily see the difference between the two kinds of love, for it is often illustrated in human history. A man finds a poor child in the street and he takes pity upon it, carries it into his house, clothes it and cares for it. That is one kind of love—the love of benevolence. But suppose that child should develop into a beautiful boy, or a lovely girl, who, with engaging

manners, should ingratiate himself or herself into the very heart of the one who was so kind to it in earlier days? Then there springs up a second sort of love.

The man says, "I loved that child when I picked it up, a bundle of rags and filth, and misery, but look at its loveliness now! See how this little one takes to the rest of the family—see how grateful it is—how it loves me! I cannot help loving it more than I did at the first." That is another kind of love altogether, and the Lord has just such a love as that, only of an infinitely higher kind, toward all who trust and love His Son! You know that the Father loves Jesus Christ so much that when He sees that you, also, love Him, He loves you all the more for that reason. He had unbounded confidence in Christ when He sent Him into the world—and when He sees that you, also, have confidence in Him, He loves you, too, for you two are agreed upon that matter. Nothing binds people together so much as a common love to the same object. If there is some one person who is dear to both, there is at once a tie between the two. How often a husband's heart is held firmly by the wife because, between the two, there is a little one who is dear to both of them! Perhaps, in some foolish fit of anger, they might have parted from one another, but their child is the bond that holds them together. And between us and our God, in a sense infinitely above my poor comparison, there is a wonderful union because He confides in Jesus, and we confide in Him, too. He loves Jesus, and we love Him, too, and now, because of this, our Savior says to us, "The Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God."

I cannot explain this marvelous mystery, but I want you who know that you do love Christ, and believe that He came forth from God, to open your whole souls and try to take in this sublime Truth of God, "*The Father Himself loves you*." Not, "pities you." Not, "promises to help you." Not, "considers you," but, "the Father Himself loves you." It is no use attempting to explain what love is—you must feel it if you would realize what it is. You did not doubt your mother's words when you were little and she caught you in her arms and said, "I love you." You believed her, you rested in her love and you returned it as far as you could. So the great God says to you, "I love you because you love My Son. There are many faults and failings in you, but you love My Son, so I love you." Did you not say, just now, "Lord, you know all things, you know that I love You"? You said that to the Lord Jesus and, because it is true, the Father Himself loves you! I remember when one of the sweet passages in Solomon's Song came home to my heart with absolutely ravishing power—it seemed to carry me right out of myself—it was that verse in which the Heavenly Bridegroom says to His spouse, "You are all fair, My love; there is no spot in you." That is what the Lord says to His people as He sees them in Christ. When He perceives that they love Christ, He calls them His Hephzibah, that is, "My delight is in her." "The Father Himself loves you." This little sentence is not so much a theme for preaching as for quiet meditation! You need to get alone into your chamber, sit down and just ring that silver bell again, and again, and again, "the Father Himself loves you." Do you love *me*? Why should He love *me*? How can He love *me*? Yet Jesus knows and, as He says it is so, then so it is, glory be to His holy name!

III. I have little time left to speak of THE BELIEVER'S NATURAL CONCLUSION which he is to draw from these words of Christ.

He says, first, "*If all this is true, then, what power I have*! What power I have at the Mercy Seat with the Spirit to prompt me, Christ to plead for me and the Father, Himself, smiling at me as I come—and saying to me, 'Come and welcome, for I love you; none can be more welcome than you are. Come, My child, ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.'" But, Beloved, have you ever really believed that you have this power? Have you not asked and hoped when you ought to have asked and *believed*? Have you not asked as if there was just a bare possibility that you might be heard? Have you not prayed as though your many pleadings and your abundant tears *might* move the hard heart of God? Has not your supplication often been presented on some such theory as that? If so, I hope that in future you will be able to rise to the Believer's true position and say, "I am God's child and He loves me—and coming to Him through Jesus Christ His Son, and moved by His Holy Spirit, I will ask of Him whatever I need, for I know that I shall receive that which I have asked of Him in the name of Jesus and for His sake."

If you ever realize that you have that power, (and I earnestly hope that you will), *take care that you use it*. Use it for your children, use it for all your relatives, use it for any of the seat-holders who sit near you and are unconverted. Pick them out and pray for them by name—and be not content till you hear that they are saved! May I ask you also to use this power in prayer on my behalf? I shall be so rich if you who have power with God will pray for me! My preaching will be poverty-stricken if you cease to pray for me. You who can pray, I beg you to plead with God for His Church, for His

Truth, for His cause on the earth. These are dark days, but you can bring on a spiritual summertime if you know how to pray that effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man that avails much. The Truth of God seems, for a while, to be suffering defeat, and the battle for the right waxes hotter and fiercer, but the banner of victory will soon float in the breeze if you know how to pray aright! The praying legion is the conquering legion! Bring to the front the men and women who can pray—and the devil will tremble and flee, for well he knows that those who are mighty with God are mightier even than he is. The history of the future depends very largely upon the prayers of the present. If you and other Believers restrain prayer, you may help to bring on long, dark, chilly winters for the Church of God—but if you and they are aroused to go up, as Elijah went to Carmel and if, with your face between your knees, you cry mightily unto the Lord God of Israel, surely, as the Lord lives, you shall see the skies covered with clouds and there shall be "a sound of abundance of rain."

I speak reverently, yet truthfully, when I say that the keys of Heaven swing at the belt of the man who knows how to pray. I mean not commonplace praying, such as some practice, but such prayer as I have been speaking of—prompted by the Spirit of God—first purified and then presented by the Savior—and offered by a man who knows that the Father Himself loves him. I am awestruck as I think of the tremendous power of which prayer is capable. It is not Omnipotent, yet it commands Omnipotence. It is not Omniscient, yet prayer is as the very eyes of God! He who can truly pray has first read the heart of God and then spoken out what is there. Prayer overcomes the Eternal! What more can I say of it? When Israel sinned against the Lord, Moses pleaded for the guilty nation even after God had said to him, "Let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of you a great nation." But the prevailing prayer won the day, for, "the Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people." May God teach you, who are loved of the Father because you love the Son, to pray such a prayer as that of Moses!

In a specially-careful manner, my Brothers and Sisters in Christ, we ought to mention the answers to prayer which we have received. It would not be prudent, proper, or even possible, to mention all of them, for there are love passages in prayer between Christ and the soul which never must be told unless it is in choice company, and on rare occasions. Some of our communing with the Lord Jesus are too sacred, too spiritual, too heavenly ever to be spoken of this side the gates of pearl—but the bulk of the Lord's replies to our petitions are such as might be written across the skies, that every eye might read them. Make sure that you do not bury these gracious facts in the lead of ingratitude. Imitate David, who tells us in Psalm 118:5, "I called upon the Lord in distress: the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place."

Yes, and do not only declare how God answers prayer, but tell of the power of faith in all the ways in which it moves itself. Sit down at the fireside and talk of faith's doings to your children, that they may tell them to their children and to the generations yet to follow—that all men may know that all things are possible to him that believes. Recount the fulfillment of promises to faith, deliverance from trouble through faith and the enjoyment of supreme happiness through faith. Sound it forth in all your neighborhoods that, "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes." Ring out clearly such words as these—"Trust you in the Lord forever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." Tell everybody why you know that it is so, for you have turned to friends in the time of trouble and they have given you the cold shoulder. You have even been foolish enough to hope for help from great men who had it in their power to aid you, but they have looked down upon you with disdain and wondered how you dared to ask such aid from their high mightiness!

Let all men know that the Majesty of Heaven has never thus treated your humble appeals. From the Throne of the Highest there has never come a harsh reply, or a contemptuous rejection of your lowly suit. No, the Lord has been better to you than even your hope expected or your faith believed! God has answered you richly, helped you efficiently, gladdened you abundantly and filled your spirit with a sweet content. Truly, God is good to Israel! It is no vain thing to wait upon the Lord. The path of faith is the path of strength and safety!

How unhappy is the lot of some here present who never pray! It matters little what other power you possess—if you have no power with God, you are powerless! To those who never pray, or who insult God with an empty form of prayer in which there is no heart, there will come a day when *they will pray.* As surely as they live and die as they now are, they will pray! But their prayers will not be answered. Dives prayed for a drop of water to cool his burning tongue, but his request was refused, for it was too late to pray, then—yet he might have had the Water of Life to drink had he prayed while he was upon the earth! It is in Hell that prayer, of a sort, abounds, but the answer to such petitions is, "Because I

have called, and you refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded; but you have set at nothing all My counsel, and would none of My reproof; I, also, will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear comes." Ask now, I entreat you, for God will hear you if you call upon Him now. But "when once the Master of the house is risen up, and has shut the door," no knocking "at that day" will avail to get it open again! No pleading, moaning, groaning, crying or wailing will then prevail, for prayer will have had its day, and Justice, with drawn sword, will stand before the Mercy Seat, barring the way to it forever.

The Lord bring you all to believe in Jesus, and to fervently love Him with a pure heart before it be too late, for His dear name's sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—782, 735.

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