

OVERCOMING CHRIST

NO. 2486

A SERMON
 INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, OCTOBER 11, 1896
 DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON
 ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 8, 1876

“Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me.”
Song of Solomon 6:5

THIS is the language of the heavenly Bridegroom to His spouse. In great condescension He speaks to her and bids her take note that her eyes have overcome Him. This morning [See sermon #1317, Overcome Evil with Good] our subject was overcoming evil with good. We have a very different subject this evening, for we are to talk about overcoming Him who is goodness itself, the perfection of everything that is excellent. Saints first learn the art of overcoming evil, and then they learn the way to overcome goodness too.

But how different, dear friends, are the weapons employed in these two warfares, for while this morning, as we spoke of overcoming evil, we saw that there was much for us to do, and I think that we all felt it was more than we could do apart from divine grace, yet here there is nothing to be done but just to give a look! The heavenly Bridegroom confesses Himself to be overcome by the very look of the eyes of His spouse, she has but to gaze steadily upon Him, and His heart is vanquished by the glances of her eyes.

Now, it must not be supposed because of the language of the text, that there is any opposition between Christ and His people which has to be overcome. He loves His bride far too well to allow any division of feeling to separate them in heart from one another. Nor is it to be imagined that the spouse had to gain some blessing from an unwilling hand, and therefore pleaded with her eyes as well as with her lips. Oh, no! There is a holy discipline in Christ's house that sometimes withholds the coveted blessing till we have learned to pray in downright earnest, but the power that wins the victory in prayer has its real basis in the love of Christ Himself.

It is because He loves us so much that He permits our prayers to conquer Him, it is not so much because we love Him as because He loves us, that He permits the look of our eyes to overcome His heart.

This then, is the subject for our meditation—the way in which God's people overcome the heart of Jesus Christ and make Him say, “Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me.”

I. First, dear friends, let us notice that **LOOKING ON HIS CHURCH HAS ALREADY OVERCOME THE HEART OF OUR HEAVENLY BRIDEGROOM.**

It was so *in the far-distant past*, not when she looked at Him, but when He looked at her, that she overcame Him. Ages upon ages ago, before the earth was, Christ had conceived in His heart the purpose to redeem from among men a people that should be precious in His sight forever and ever. Through the glass of divine foreknowledge, He looked at His people, He recognized the person of every one of them, He saw them all ruined in the fall, all stained with sin, all contaminated in nature by our first parents' disobedience and rebellion.

As He looked at them with a steady resolve that He would rescue them, and perfect them, and lift them up to a level with Himself, and make them into a race that would praise God forever in heaven with hallelujahs and hosannas beyond all the harmonies of angels, His heart so moved towards them that He longed for the time when He should enter upon the great work of their redemption.

Long ago, He said, “My delights were with the sons of men.” His heart was always projecting itself forward in anticipation of that happy, yet dreadful day when He should be called upon to redeem His people. Every time He thought of them, He was overcome with the very recollection of His great love towards them, and when the long-expected day did at last come—

*“Down from the shining seats above
With joyful haste He fled,”*

and was found as a Babe in Bethlehem’s manger, lying among the horned oxen feeding in the stable of the village inn.

Oh, marvelous mystery! that He, whom the heaven of heavens could not contain, was not satisfied to be God over all, blessed for ever, but for our sakes He must also become man. He was so overcome by the love He had for His chosen, that He left His Father’s throne of light to become one flesh with His people, and to be made a man like ourselves so that He might be next of kin to us. Ah, gracious Savior, Your church’s eyes did indeed overcome You when they brought You from amidst the royalties of heaven down to the sins and sorrows of earth!

You know too, *when He lived down here among men*, how often His inmost heart was stirred as He looked upon the people whom He loved. And specially do you recollect the scene on that last night when their redemption price was about to be paid. He took the cup that He was to drink and sipped at it, but His holy soul revolted from it, and with the bloody sweat upon His face He cried, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.”

Then He went back and looked upon His people. Truly, there was not much to see in them, He had taken three specially privileged apostles to be the representatives of all His chosen, and those three were asleep when He was in His terrible agony, yet somehow, the sight of them seemed to strengthen Him for the awful ordeal that He was enduring.

Backward and forward thrice He ran to gaze upon them, and they so overcame Him that He turned back and said to His Father, “Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt,” and He went through with that tremendous work of laying down His life for His people, and drinking the cup of wrath that was their due. They had overcome Him as He had looked at them.

And beloved, now that *our Lord is risen from the dead*, He still feels the power of the sight of His redeemed. The great joy of Christ at this moment is found in gazing at His redeemed ones. Look at Him as man, if you will, and what a wondrous Man He is! But remember also, that God has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, and what does the glorified and exalted Christ think as He looks on the myriads in heaven, all of whom would have been in hell but for Him?

Then He looks down to the saints on earth, and sees the myriads who are all trusting in Him, all conquering sin by His might, and all spared from going down to the pit by the merit of His precious blood, and He seems again to say, “Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me,” as if Christ felt that a glance at His people brought almost too much joy to Him.

What a day that will be when He shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, when all His people, raised from the dead, or changed in the twinkling of an eye, shall admire Him, and He shall be admired in them! And what will be the joy of His heart when the “great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,” all redeemed by blood, shall be gathered unto Christ, to be the delight of His heart forever and ever!

That will be a joy sufficient even for the immensity of His infinite heart as He sees in them the reward of His awful agonies, the rich return for the shedding of His precious blood. His benevolence—that great mainspring of all that He has done—will be gratified and satisfied as He looks on each one of His redeemed, and sees the fruit of His travail in every individual child of His grace, in each sinner reclaimed, in each saint preserved and perfected.

I can well conceive of Him saying in that day, “Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me.” The joy that Christ will feel in His own sight of His people, and in the glances of the multitudes that He has saved, must be a delight beyond anything we can even imagine.

II. Now I must pass to a second point, which is this, that THE EYES OF CHRIST’S CHOSEN ONES STILL OVERCOME HIM.

This is a practical point upon which we may profitably spend some little time, the eyes of Christ’s chosen ones still overcome Him.

And first, the eyes of His chosen overcome Him *when they look up in deep repentance*, glancing at Him hopefully through their tears. Let me try to give you a picture of such a case. Here is a poor soul, conscious of having sinned, and sinned deeply. Once sin was thought to be only a trifle, now it is seen to be a horrible evil, to be trembled at and hated. Once God was judged to be too severe in sending men to hell, but now the convicted one has nothing to say against God’s justice, for he is all taken up with speaking against himself and his sin.

There stands this poor soul, with red and weeping eyes, saying, “O God, I have sinned, and I am still sinning, and if You do cast me into the abyss I dare not challenge Your justice, yet have pity upon me, O Lord! God, be merciful to me a sinner!” When those tear-filled eyes are turned to the Lord Jesus and sin is confessed again and again with deep contrition and childlike repentance, it is not possible that He should long refuse to grant the pardon which we seek.

He seems to say to the poor penitent, “Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me. I cannot bear to see you weeping and sorrowing so. Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee, for I have loved you with an everlasting love. Go, and sin no more.” There is a wondrous power in the penitent eye, in the full confession that makes a clean breast of every sin before the face of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember, brethren, that when we have once repented, we do not leave off repenting, for penitence is a grace that is as long-lived as faith, and as long as we are capable of believing, we shall also necessarily need to repent, for we shall be always sinning. So, *whenever the child of God feels that he has gone astray in any way*, that, though he did live near to God, he has gone back and grown cold in heart, he has only to come to Christ again, and cry after Him, and confess his folly in having left Him and his ingratitude in having been so indifferent to Him, and Christ will receive him back again.

You cannot long mourn His absence, and seek to return to Him, and feel that you will die if you do not get back the realization of His sweet love again—you cannot be long in that state before He will be vanquished by your weeping eyes, and He will say to you, “Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me.”

And if a child of God, who has not lost fellowship with his Lord, is nevertheless, jealous lest he should do so—if his morning prayer is, “O my Lord, keep me from everything that would take me off from Thy love,” and if at night he looks back over his conduct during the day and says, “Cleanse thou me from every secret fault, for—

***“I am jealous of my heart,
Lest it should once from Thee depart,”***

if there be kept up this delightful tenderness of conscience towards Christ, so that our eyes, with weeping for very fear of sin, still look after Him, then shall we hold Him spellbound, and the deep sorrow of our loving hearts shall vanquish Him, and He will bestow the blessing which our soul is seeking.

Another kind of glance that has great power with the Lord Jesus is *when the soul looks to Christ for salvation*. Then it is that the eyes vanquish the Savior. It is hard at first to look to Christ, and believe that He can save you. I suppose some of you, dear friends, have a distinct recollection of the first faith-glance you ever took at Christ.

I well remember mine, it seemed so strangely simple, and yet so sublime and wonderful, that I could scarcely think it true that there was life in a look at Him. I did but glance half furtively at first, as if I thought it could not mean that such a sinner as I was could receive mercy from Christ simply by looking at Him.

Did He really mean me when He said, “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth”? I had long sought Him, and I had prayed to Him, but I could not conquer Him, nor win mercy from Him by my seeking and my praying, but oh! when my eyes, already red with weeping, looked at Him with a steady glance which seemed to say—

*“I do believe, I will believe,
That Thou didst die for me,”*

then did He cry, “Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me.’ ‘I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins.’”

Many times since then, you and I have looked to Jesus Christ *when a sense of sin has been very heavy upon us*. I suppose all of you who are really children of God sometimes get into that state in which you begin to ask, “Was I ever truly converted? Did my sins ever roll from my shoulders and disappear in the tomb of Christ?”

When these questions arise within your heart, go and stand once more, at the foot of the cross, and look at your suffering Lord. I have looked, and looked, and looked again, until I have seemed to look Him all over, and at last I have begun to sing—

*“Oh, ’tis sweet to view the flowing
Of my Savior’s precious blood,
With divine assurance knowing,
He has made my peace with God.”*

While the eyes of faith are thus resting upon Jesus, He is overcome by them, and He darts inexpressible joy into our hearts as He says to us, “Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me.” His heart is carried by storm by the faith-looks of His children.

We also give another overcoming glance *when we look to the Lord Jesus Christ for all things*. Worldlings do not understand the terms on which we are linked with Christ. To them Christ is a somebody who lived eighteen hundred years ago and then died, but to us He is alive, He is our familiar Friend, we are intimately acquainted with Him, we are in the habit of taking all our troubles to Him and asking Him for all that we need, and He removes our sorrows and grants us the desires of our hearts.

There are times with all of us when we get into trouble of one sort or another, and blessed be His name, He has taught us, when we are in trouble, to lift up our eyes to the hills from whence comes our help. Now perhaps, dear brother, you have for a while been looking to Christ and saying, “Lord, I believe You will help me, did You die to save me from hell and will You not supply me with bread and water while I am in the wilderness? Have you covered me with the robe of your perfect righteousness and will you not find me clothes to cover my nakedness and shield me from the weather? Have you done the greater, and will you not do the less?”

When another trouble comes, you keep on looking to Him still. You will not believe that He can be unkind, you give Him credit for loving you, and caring for you, so look to Him, and as you look you submit to His will and say, “I will never distrust You, my Lord.”

If He sends yet another rough providence, you continue looking to Him and only say, “Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me.’ Though Thou slay me, yet will I trust in Thee. I have known You too long to doubt You now, my blessed Lord. You have done too much for me in the past for me to turn away and say, ‘I will not trust Thee.’ My Lord and Master, You cannot make me believe that You do not love me, for I know You better. My inmost soul is assured that You do love me, so I look to You still,

and watch the movement of Your countenance, and as I look, my heart says, ‘My Lord, I cannot tell why You do smite Your servant again and again, yet if it be Your love that makes You smite, smite on. Whatever is most for Thy glory, do with me as Thou wilt.’”

When your eyes are like that, full of submission, full of hope, full of trust—it cannot be long before the Lord will, somehow or other, deliver you, for He will say, “I cannot hold out against you any longer. ‘Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me.’ ‘I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me.’ I will bring you out of the furnace, for I only sit there as Refiner till I see My own image in you, and when I see My eyes in your eyes, and My heart in your heart, and My character in your character, then will I bring you out of the furnace as gold seven times purified.” Blessed Spirit, give us such eyes as these, which shall overcome even the heart of Christ!

Again, there are the eyes of prayer which often overcome the Lord Jesus Christ, and this victory comes, sometimes, *when we are praying for ourselves*.

You know what it is in prayer, to come to Him and say, “Lord, I am in great straits, and Thou hast Thyself brought me there. It has not been through my folly, but it is by Your own act and deed that I am where I am. Now, Lord, You have promised that in six troubles You will deliver us, and in seven there shall no evil touch us. You have said, ‘Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be,’ now, Lord, You are God and You cannot lie, therefore will You not keep Your promise? Here, Lord, You see my difficulty and my trial, and Your inspired apostle has said that ‘all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose,’ Your servant David declared that ‘many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all,’ now Lord, I look to You to do this for me.”

It is one of the grandest things in all the world when a godly man, with the simplicity of a child, just believes God and fully trusts Him for everything. It has come to be a matter of marvel in this evil age, that a man can say that God grants him many mercies in answer to prayer. People hold up their hands and say, “Dear, dear, what a wonder!” A wonder that God hears prayer? It would be a greater wonder if He did not hear it.

Beloved, to me prayer is a matter of fact, for me to go and take a promise to God and ask Him to fulfill it, and to get it fulfilled, is as common and as usual and as much a matter of fact as it is for you who are in business to take checks and pass them across the counter at the bank, and receive the cash for them. Do you think that God is a fiction? If He is, then all our religion is a farce, but if God is real, then prayer is real too. Many of us know that it is real, for we have tried it, and still try it every day we live.

In every time of trouble, we bring the trouble to God’s feet and say, “Dear Lord, as You are true and faithful, You will help us through it,” and we find that He does help us through it. We speak what we do know, and testify what we have seen many a time. When a child of God, in deep distress, believes in his Father, and steadily looks to Him for deliverance, those eyes of his have mighty power, and God seems to say to him, “Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me.”

You cannot look steadily to God and say, “Lord, I am sure about Your faithfulness, I am sure about Your promise, and I cannot and will not doubt it,” but before long you shall see the hand of the Lord made bare for your deliverance, and you also shall be among the happy number who have to bear witness that, verily, there is a God in Israel. Thus does prayer prevail with God when we present it for ourselves.

So does it also overcome Him *when we pray on behalf of others*. Moses, you know, prayed for others and prevailed, do you, dear children of God, know what it is to wrestle with the Lord for the souls of others? I am sure that many of you do, there are your dear children, kinsfolk, friends, and neighbors whom you bring before the Lord.

I will tell you when you will win the day mother, when with tears you say, “O God, You have given me these children, now give them to me according to the spirit as well as according to the flesh.” You will overcome the Lord, dear Father, when you spread your suit before Him and say, “Deny my children what You will, but do save them, let them all be Yours in the day when You make up Your jewels.”

You will succeed when, rising from your knees, you set those children a Christian example, and having pleaded with God for them, you go and plead with them for God, and feel as if your heart would break if you did not see your boys and girls converted. When, like Hannah, you even come to be a woman of a sorrowful spirit because you feel that you must have your children brought to God, then the Lord Jesus will look at you till He will say to Himself, "I cannot let that poor soul cry and sigh in vain, it is not in My heart—the heart of one who was born of a woman—to let that pleading woman's prayer go without an answer." And to you He will say, "Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me. Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

And you, dear child of God, who are teaching in the Sunday school class, or you who are preaching in some small village station, when you get to feel inward grief of heart over those with whom you have to deal, when that grief increases till it comes to be a perfect agony, and you cannot help crying out for anguish of soul, when you feel as if you must have them saved, as if you would give everything you had if they might but be brought to Christ, when you even wake at night to pray for them, and in the midst of your business cares you get distracted with the thought that some whom you love are perishing, at such times as that your powerful eyes in prayer shall move the heart of Christ, and overcome Him, and He shall give you these souls for your hire.

Brethren, if we do not pray for sinners, for whom shall we pray? Sisters, if we do not plead for the abandoned, if we do not offer supplications for those who are perverse in heart, we have omitted to pray for the very persons who most need our intercession. Let us bring these hard hearts beneath the almighty hammer. Let us by prayer bring these lepers beneath the healing touch of Him who, despite their loathsomeness, can say to them, "Be ye clean." Let no degree of natural or inherited depravity, or of depravity that has come from long continuance in sin, hinder us from praying for all the unsaved whom we know, "O God, have mercy upon these guilty ones!"

I will not further enlarge upon this point, for it is settled beyond all question that those who love the souls of men will not be hindered from prayer for them on any account whatever. I conjure you, who have prayed for husband, or children, or friends, do not leave off pleading for them. If you have prayed for twenty years, and they are not converted, pray twenty years more, and if they have grown more wicked while you have pleaded, still pray on, and if heaven and earth and hell seem to combine together to bid you cease your supplications, still pray on.

As long as you live, make intercession for transgressors, and as long as they live, let your cries go up to God on their behalf. So shall you "overcome heaven by prayer" as you plead for the ungodly.

Once again, there is another time when the eyes of the believer seem to overcome the heart of Christ, and that is *when we have turned right away from the world, and looked to Him alone*. I have known it so, again and again, have you not too, beloved? In this world, at present, our Lord is somewhat concealed, He does not fully reveal Himself to His people. Here He says to us as He said to Mary, "Touch me not." He lets us wait till the veil shall be drawn up, and then we shall see Him face to face, and shall be like Him. Here we have to live by faith rather than by sight, and it is expectation rather than enjoyment that makes up much of our present bliss.

Yet at times I have known my Lord come wonderfully near to His servants, and lay bare His inmost heart to them. It seemed as if He could not help it, it has been at some such gathering as this, when we have gone right away from the world, and have forgotten its cares and pleasures for a while, and we have sat down to think only of Him.

Our soul has surveyed Him in His Godhead and His manhood, as our Prophet, Priest, King, and near Kinsman, living, dying, risen, ascended, soon to come, we have looked Him over and there has not been any part of His character which we have not admired, nor one office in which we have not trusted Him, nor one deed for which we have not blessed Him. We have come to think, "He is altogether lovely," and while we have been admiring Him in a perfect rapture, there has been added to it this sweet thought, He is all goodness, and He is all mine, from the crown of His head to the sole of His foot. "My beloved is mine, and I am his."

We have not said much and we could not have said much just then, we have been quite quiet and alone with our Lord, and we have felt that silence was the only eloquence we could use as we looked at Him again, and again, and again. At such seasons, my soul has felt ready to swoon away in His presence.

You remember how John in Patmos, when Jesus appeared to him, said, “When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead,” and well He might, for He had a brighter vision of His Lord than you and I can have at present. But even faith’s view of Him is enough to transport us straight away into heaven itself. Well brethren, whenever we are thus happily engaged in contemplation of our Lord, not only is He very near to us, but He is greatly moved by our love and He says to us, “Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me.” And meanwhile, to prove how overcome He is, He begins to reveal Himself more fully to us.

You may perhaps have read in the life of holy Mr. Flavell the extraordinary instance he records of the love of Christ being poured into his soul. He says that he was riding a horse, going to some engagement, and he had such a sense of the love of Christ that he completely lost himself for several hours, and when he came to himself again, he found his horse standing quite still, and discovered that he had been sitting on horseback all those hours, utterly lost to everything but a special revelation of the wonderful love of Jesus.

You may also have heard of Mr. Tennant, the mighty American preacher and friend of George Whitefield, who was found, lost and absorbed, in a wood to which he had retired, and his friends had to call him back, as it were, from the sweet fellowship he had been enjoying with Christ.

You may remember too, John Welsh, the famous Scotch preacher who had to cry out, “Hold, Lord, hold! I am but an earthen vessel, and if I feel more of Thy glorious love, I must e’en die, so stay Thy hand a while.”

There are such experiences as these, I will not inquire whether you have ever known them, but if you have, I will tell you one thing. All the infidels in the world, and all the devils in hell, will never make you doubt the truth of the Scriptures if you have once been face to face with Christ and have spoken with your Master as a man speaks with his friend. Such things have happened to those whose cloud-piercing eyes have been so fixed upon Christ that He at last has felt the mighty fascination of their loving and believing glances, and has revealed Himself in still greater measure to them, and made them even more blest than they were before.

Last of all, sometimes the eyes of Christians have great power in overcoming Christ *when they long for His appearing*. Have you never seen the saints lie dying with such language as this on their lips, “Why are his chariots so long in coming? Why tarrieth He?”

**“Hurry, my Beloved, fetch my soul
Up to Thy blessed abode:
Fly, for my spirit longs to see
My Savior and my God.”**

I have heard them say, with evident regret, “I thought to have been in heaven long ere now.” I have seen them almost grieve when the doctor has said that they were better, and that there was hope that they might last another month or two. They seemed to say, “Why should my banishment continue? Why should my release be postponed? These chains of clay which seem so hard to shake off, these fetters of brass, will they never drop from me? Must I still linger in this world of pain and sorrow, and sin, and suffering? Why not let me go?” And they have been like a poor thrush which I have sometimes seen a boy try to keep upon a little bit of turf, it longed for the broad fields, and beat itself against the wires of its cage.

So is it with our dear suffering friends at times, yet they have learned patiently to wait till their change came, but often their eyes have been so fixed upon their Lord that they have said to Him, “Wilt

Thou never come?” And at last, Christ has looked out of heaven so sweetly on those sick ones, and He has said, “Thine eyes have overcome me, come up higher.” And they have leaped out of their body into His bosom, and the pierced hands have received their blood-washed spirits, and they have been “for ever with the Lord.”

I am looking forward, and I trust we who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are all looking forward to that day when God will let us languish into life, when we shall see the bars of the prison opened once for all, and we shall pass through them, and leave this dying world behind to go to the land of the living, the land of the hereafter, where we too, shall be “for ever with the Lord!”

Keep your hearts always longing for that blessed hour. Keep your eyes always looking upward beloved. Set small store by anything here, and be always ready to depart, and so, full often, shall Jesus say to you, as though He could no longer bear that you should gaze upon Him, though indeed He loves it all the while, “Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me.”

God bless you all, beloved, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

GENESIS 32:22-30 AND EXODUS 32:7-14 AND MARK 7:24-30

We shall read three short portions of Scripture, all illustrative of the great truth that God has sometimes given grace to His people to overcome Himself, the Almighty has condescended to be vanquished by man.

First, let us read the story of Jacob in the book of Genesis, the thirty-second chapter, at the twenty-second verse—

Genesis Chapter 32 Verses 22-24. *And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two womenservants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok. And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over all that he had.*

And Jacob was left alone;

He had made a quiet oratory for himself by sending everyone else of the company over to the other side of the brook, his own resolve being—

*“With Thee all night I mean to stay,
And wrestle till the break of day.”*

24-25. *And there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw—*

When the wrestling Man, the Angel of the covenant, saw—

25-26. *That he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob’s thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.*

When we come nearest to God, we must have a deep sense of our own personal weakness, it must never be supposed, if our suit prevails with heaven, that there is anything in us, or anything in our prayers to account for our prevalence. Whatever power we have, must come from God’s grace alone, and hence, usually, when we pray so as to prevail with the Lord, there is at the same time a shrinking of the sinew, a consciousness of weakness, a sense of pain, yet it is just then that we are prevailing, and therefore we may rest assured that our prayer will be answered. The Angel said, “Let me go,” at the very time when Jacob felt the shrinking of the sinew, “He said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he (Jacob) said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.”

27-29. *And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast*

prevailed. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?

Holy desires will be realized, and believing prayers will be answered, but mere curiosity will not be gratified. Those who read the Scriptures with a view simply to find out novelties that may tickle their fancy, read in vain. The covenant Angel will give you what you will if it be needful for you, but He will not answer your idle questions. He said to Jacob, "Wherefore is it that you ask after my name?"

29-30. *And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.*

Thus did Jacob the wrestler overcome his God.

Now turn to the thirty-second chapter of the book of Exodus, where we find a description of the sin of idolatry into which the Israelites fell while Moses was absent in communion with God upon the mountain. The people brought their golden earrings to Aaron, and he made a calf, and they bowed before it, saying, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." While this wickedness was going on, Moses was on the mountaintop with God.

Exodus Chapter 32. Verse 7. *And the LORD said to Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves:*

See how JEHOVAH will not acknowledge these idolaters as His people. He says to Moses, "Thy people which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves."

8-10. *They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And the LORD said to Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: now therefore 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.*

What a great future was thus opened up before Moses! He might become another Abraham, and in him should all the nations of the earth be blessed. But Moses loves the people, even the people who have vexed and provoked him so many years. He still loves them so much that, even before he begins to pray for them, God says, "Let me alone," as if He felt the force of Moses' coming prayer, and would not have him offer it. O wondrous power of intercession, that by it even God's right hand is held back when it is lifted up to smite!

11. *And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand?*

Moses will not have it that they are his people, nor that he brought them out of the land of Egypt, but he declares that they are God's people, and that He brought them forth "with great power, and with a mighty hand."

12-14. *Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst to them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.*

So a second time the mighty power of prayer was proven, and the Lord hearkened to the voice of a man.

In the seventh chapter of the Gospel according to Mark, beginning at the twenty-fourth verse, is another story which you know well, which tells how the Lord Jesus was overcome by a woman's mighty faith.

Mark 7:24-29. *And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid. For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet; the woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. But Jesus said to her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs. And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of your daughter.*

Christ capitulated at once, yielded to the strong arms of conquering prayer and faith, and so the pleading woman had her will.

30. *And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.*

**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—784, 846
AND FROM “Sacred Songs and Solos”—38**

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.