

PRAYER AND ITS ANSWER

ILLUSTRATED IN THE FIRST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

OF THE

FULTON STREET PRAYER MEETING

BY

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NEW YORK

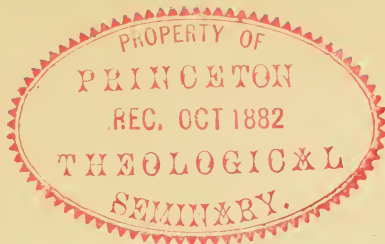
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1882

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GRANT, FAIRES & RODGERS,
Electrotypers and Printers,
52 & 54 N. Sixth St.,
Philadelphia.

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PRAYER AND ITS ANSWER.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

AT the close of the first year of this quarter of a century, the late Charles Scribner, Esq., father of "Charles Scribner's Sons," came to me and said, "I want you to write a book. It is now one year since the Fulton Street Prayer Meeting was established. The reports have been read with great interest and usefulness; they ought now to be condensed into a volume to show the power of prayer."

"And that," I replied, "The 'Power of Prayer' will be the name of the book."

"The very thing," said Mr. Scribner, and after further conversation, we then and there decided to make and publish the volume.

In due time it appeared. It had a circulation almost unexampled among religious books of that day. In many places it was taken by special agents and offered

at the door of every house in the town. Pastors commended it from the pulpit, and sought to introduce it into all the families of the congregation. It came to be as readily sold on the railroad cars and at bookstands as the cheap novels.

One day I was at a stationer's, and the proprietor introducing himself to me related this story: "A few years ago I was penniless. Going into Scribner's bookstore, I persuaded him to trust me with a few copies of your book, the 'Power of Prayer.' Taking them out I went from door to door, among the shops and stores, and soon sold them all at the regular retail price. Returning with the money, I paid for those I had first taken, and left the balance in part pay for another lot. I pursued this business till I made money enough to set up a bookstand of my own, and then to take this store, and now I have two wagons constantly employed in carrying home goods to my customers."

The book was reprinted in London, and in a cheap edition was very widely circulated in Scotland and Ireland. Some towns were supplied by the donation of individuals who distributed one copy to each family. Hundreds of souls were reported as converted through the means of this book. I do not know how many copies were published in London, but I saw an advertisement of the sixty-fifth thousand.

A clergyman of the Church of England wrote to me a letter full of gratitude for the book, and saying "that it had been the means of his conversion, for he had not hitherto known what it is to be converted, and that a revival of religion had now been enjoyed in his parish."

An American pastor wrote to me that a clergyman of the Church of England whom he met abroad, gave him a similar account of his experience on reading the little volume. In seminaries for youth it was read aloud, and narratives of its salutary influence were sent to me in numerous letters.

Requests for special prayer came to Fulton Street in great numbers from those who had read the book, and afterwards testimonies came from many who had received or witnessed remarkable answers.

Two rival editions were published in the French language in Paris. In the interior of France meetings were held in rural villages, at which successive chapters of the book were read instead of an address, and great interest was awakened, amounting in many instances to what we would call a revival.

At the Cape of Good Hope it was translated into the Dutch language, and an edition of three thousand copies was sold. A missionary from that distant land gave me delightful facts to show the good wrought by it among the Boers.

Into how many languages it was translated I do not know. I have heard of it in the Eastern world, and everywhere of its being used for the encouragement of God's people to pray and to believe.

The secret of its power is no secret. It does not lie in the literary merit of the book, for it has none. It is the power of facts to confirm the faith of the children of God in the promises of His Holy Word. Here are scores and hundreds of instances not reported on hearsay evidently, but recorded in the hand-writing of those who have themselves felt what they testify, and the records are made in the fear of God by those who have tasted His grace, and wish to give to Him the glory of the good they have experienced. There is here no motive to deceive. There is no temptation to exaggerate. It is the simplest story in all the world, the story of humble saints and sinners who have found that God hears and answers prayer. They tell us what God has done for their souls, and we put it on record to the praise of Him who hears and answers prayer.

At the end of five* years of daily prayer in Fulton Street, I prepared another volume of the same records, and after fifteen years still another, and these have been widely read and an abundant blessing has attended their circulation. They are witnesses for God that He fulfils all His promises.

And now at the end of a quarter of a century of daily prayer in one place, it seems meet to make one more, the last undoubtedly that I shall make, to show the marvellous loving-kindness of the Lord our God, His infinite power and goodness in giving good things to them who ask Him. Twenty-five years of daily prayer in one place! WITH THE ANSWERS! Do I know that these are answers? May they not be coincidences only? How do I know that the event had aught to do with the prayer that was made? Well, I do not know, except as the faith that is in me assures me that God is and is a rewarder of all them that diligently seek Him. The Christian religion is a religion of *faith*. Science is forever changing its ground and shifting its theories. The earth is a vast grave-yard in which dead sciences are buried. What is *knowledge* to-day is an exploded theory to-morrow. Heaven and earth shall pass away. The word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the testimony of the prayer-meeting. It is an abiding proof that there is a connection between the asking and the having, so manifest to the petitioner that he *knows*, as no scientist dare to say he knows, that what he asks for in faith, he will receive. This is the secret power of this book, and all its predecessors in the same line of Christian thought. There is no metaphysics in it. There is no attempt to

explain the *rationale* of prayer. God has told us to pray and has promised to answer our requests. And here is the record of facts to show that He has kept His word. This assures us that He will do so in the future. He is the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever. He heard His children in olden times when they cried. He answered them out of the cloud and the whirlwind. In all ages He has been true to His promises. And what this age of ours needs more than all else, is FAITH. We have grown to be an unbelieving age. We want science to prove everything though science never *proved* anything. One theory is good until another seems to be better. God is, and God is the only sure foundation on which the human mind may rest.

Let the Pagan philosophers of the 19th century rage, and call to naught the fanatics who believe and pray. God has them in derision and so will we. Unto us has come the revelation of his Word, whose promises are none other than the infinite verities of Him who cannot lie. We take them as they stand, and seeing Him who is invisible we pray.

Prof. Dawson, of Montreal, a scientist and Christian, illustrates the reasonableness of prayer in terms that should make an impression on the mind of those even who do not accept the principle of faith as its basis. He says :

"A naturalist should be the last man in the world to object to the efficacy of prayer, since prayer is itself one of the most potent of natural forces. The cry of the young raven brings its food from afar without any exertion on its part, for that cry has power to move the emotions and the muscles of the parent-bird and to overcome her own selfish appetite. The bleat of the lamb not only brings its dam to its side, but causes the secretion of milk in her udder. The cry of distress nerves men to all exertions, and to brave all dangers, and to struggle against all or any of the laws of nature that may be causing suffering or death.

"Nor in the case of prayer are the objects obtained at all mechanically commensurate with the activities set in motion. We have all seen how the prayer of a few captives, wrongfully held in durance by some barbarous potentate, may move mighty nations and cause them to pour out millions of their treasure to send men and material of war over land and sea, to sacrifice hundreds of lives, in order that a just and proper prayer may be answered. In such a case we see how the higher law overrides the lower, and may cause even frightful suffering and loss of life, in order that a moral or spiritual end may be gained. Are we to suppose then that the only being in the universe who cannot answer prayer is that One who alone has all power at His command? The weak theology which professes to believe that prayer has merely a subjective benefit is infinitely less scientific than the action of the child who confidently appeals to a Father in heaven."

I have very rarely read a passage which more happily assists the mind in reaching resting ground in thinking of the subject of prayer. What good, the unbeliever asks, does it do to pray? And many terse and able thinkers and writers have dwelt upon the effect of prayer upon the soul that prays, claiming that the chief end of prayer is its reflex influence. We do not claim that there is no knot just here to be untied. We admit that we pray to an unchangeable God. But we also know that He, in His infinite wisdom and power, adapting means to ends with forethought and skill, has established this connection between prayer and the answer so intimate, direct and inseparable that He bestows upon His people in answer to their prayers the blessings which would not have been given if they had not prayed.

We must embrace the fact that in God we have our being; that we are surrounded by Him, so that our secret desires, our groanings that cannot be uttered, are witnessed by His Spirit, and He sympathizes with that emotion which pervades the world of believing man. One good man praying for rain, is heard by the Almighty; the clouds gather and the needed showers descend. And when a concert of prayer combines the hearts of thousands, in many lands, so that the human race may be said to be putting forth a united cry, is it

to be thought a thing incredible, that He who doeth all things according to the counsel of his own will, should be inclined to grant the request? If He tells His creatures that this is his way of governing the world He has made, can we doubt that He is *influenced* to do, in answer to prayer, what would not have been done without?

When the unbelieving objector tries to push us to the wall by opposing the inflexible will of God to our theory of prayer, we answer him by saying that our religion has its ground in faith. We believe, and therefore speak. Our faith is that God hears and answers, and faith is the fruit of the Spirit, which reveals to us the truth in the divine word. When God instructs us to pray for what we want, and connects the gift with the asking, as a condition precedent, it is the very substance of our religion to accept the offer and expect the fulfilment of the promise. To be bothered about the nature of God, the infinite littleness of our efforts, and the vastness of His concerns, as reasons why He will not take notice of our requests, is all idle. The very hairs of our heads, and the sparrows, are under His eye. How much more the moral and spiritual interests of the world in which He reigns, and which have their issues in eternity.

These considerations help us to see through what is

impenetrable by the natural eye. They are spiritually discerned. Our life is hid with Christ in God. What we do not comprehend is nevertheless as credible as what we see with the eye of sense, for knowledge is not confined to natural objects only, but is as perfect in the moral as in the external world. We know whom we believe. And this is as logical and rational as any other truth which comes home to our consciousness and is the basis of our action in the daily duties of life.

Then let us pray. Whatsoever we want let us pray for it. Health, life, eternal life, salvation for our friends, whatsoever things we have need of, let us go with our desires to God who giveth liberally. His will ought to be our will, and asking in submission to it, we have whatever we ask.

These facts and considerations are preliminary to the narratives to be presented in this volume. The grace of God is to be made manifest in the wonderful manner in which the desires of His people are granted. And to us who believe there is no way by which the results can be explained except on the theory that they are answers to prayer.

CHAPTER II.

THE GOLDEN HOUR.

The Missionary of the Meeting—Jeremiah Calvin Lanphier—One Man's Consecration—A New Idea—The Noon Meeting Established—The Hour of Prayer—Strangers Heard From—China—Australia—The Tie that Binds—The Requests—From Far and Near—Their Variety, Number, Urgency—The Pilgrim's Mecca—God's Wonders—A Missionary's Story—Canada—California—Good for All Climes—Saved in South Africa—The Fulton Street Meeting in Australia—On Chinese Waters.

THIS volume would not be complete without a reference to the servant of God who was the divinely appointed agent in the institution of the noon meeting. In June, 1857, the Consistory of the North Reformed Dutch Church were deeply impressed with the desirability of placing a lay missionary at work in the lower part of the city. Very earnestly they prayed that God would direct them to the right man. In His gracious providence they were led to select Mr. Jeremiah Calvin Lanphier, then an energetic, active business man. Mr. Lanphier was very much startled at the suggestion that he should give up his business and enter upon missionary work ; but after much careful and prayerful reflection

tion, he could not but feel that the suggestion was the call of God. On July 1st, 1857, he commenced his new labors, and passed up and down through our city streets visiting the poor and needy. In the course of his work, as he threaded the teeming avenues of commerce, he met throngs of business men hurrying along their way, often with careworn faces, and anxious, restless gaze. As day by day he witnessed these, the missionary was led to think that a daily noon prayer-meeting, where business men might attend for a whole hour, or a few moments, as inclination might suggest or circumstances permit, would be a boon and a blessing. He made the subject a matter of prayer, and the way opening, the work was commenced. In the following September such a meeting was instituted, and has continued to the present time. Each week day since, summer and winter alike, holiday or working day, has witnessed a company of worshippers at the throne of grace right in the heart of the busiest part of the ever-busy metropolis.

Small was the beginning, and little did the missionary think to what this small beginning would hereafter grow. The brother, referring to the time of his consecration to mission work, upon one occasion, said: "The subject was laid upon my heart, and was a matter of constant consideration for some time. At last I re-

solved to give myself to the work, and I shall never forget with what force, at the time, those words came home to my soul :

“Tis done, the great transaction, done,
I am my Lord's, and He is mine ;
He drew me, and I followed on,
Charmed to confess the voice divine.’

It has been a time of great joy to me as I have been looking over the records of so many years of missionary work, and I have many times seen the appropriateness of the texts that seemed to come direct from the Lord, as I first entered on my labors. The one was, ‘Be not weary in well doing;’ and the other, ‘I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.’”

Out of that solitary consecration to the service of Christ, who can tell what results have come. Only He, who knows all things, knows how many souls have been saved in connection with the meeting. Many incidents have been published in years gone by, but by far the larger number have not been told. We could fill volumes, however, with such accounts of the work of the Lord as have been mentioned here from time to time. The missionary has been most richly blessed in personal work with persons who have attended the service. He quickly recognizes a stranger, and seems instinctively to know the man whose heart is sore. Many a visitor has wondered when he has been greeted and

addressed in words that only a tried soul could fully appreciate. "How do you know that I am in trouble?" not a few have asked the missionary, little thinking, perhaps, that his eye had been upon them all through the service. Men under the deepest conviction have come here, and the missionary has taken them to his study, there to pray with them, and to point them to the Lamb of God, the world's burden-bearer. The enslaved of appetite have come to find liberty for bondage. Tried business men have sought a few minutes' interview with our brother, and in prayer the load has been lifted, and the power of prayer has been proved again and again.

The influences of the service are by no means confined to the single hour of prayer, although it is around this hour that the interest centres. And yet so simple is this service that strangers sometimes ask wherein lies the secret of its power? That power is with God. There is nothing at all peculiar in the conduct of the meeting. Precisely at twelve the leader arises and announces a hymn. Two or three verses are sung. The missionary leads the singing. He is a lover of sacred song, and his strong, clear, resonant voice carries the tune along. He sings quickly, and none may drag with such a chorister. A brief passage of Scripture is read, containing perhaps some earnest exhortation or

some of the promises, the ancient promises so often tried and still so true. Then a brief prayer is offered, and a dozen or more of the written requests for prayer are presented. If written in few words, they are read in full. If scarcely to be deciphered, or possibly filling page after page, the subject is presented in as few words as the request contains pages. The meeting is then "thrown open," and any who choose are welcome to take part, praying or speaking as they may feel led. No one speaker must occupy more than five minutes, and those who occupy only three are the more appreciated. Strangers are particularly invited to speak. The meeting has been conducted on the same principles, guided by the same rules, carried on in the same informal manner from the start. It is very much the same as it has always been in many respects. It is still attended by busy merchants and toiling mechanics. The lawyer lays down his brief, and the 'longshoreman his grappling-hook, both bent on enjoying a few minutes' fellowship with God, and as they come, they realize—

"There is a spot where Jesus sheds
The oil of gladness on our heads ;
A place than all besides more sweet,
It is the blood-stained mercy-seat."

During the service no time is lost. The cordial invitation to strangers is accepted by one. He forgets

that he is a stranger. The motto over the leader's desk has caught his eye. It reads: "Jesus only." That name binds all hearts. Where Jesus is, there is union and communion. Since all rejoice in a common Saviour, a common Father, a common throne of grace, the stranger feels that he is among brethren. He has come a long distance, all the way from Australia. He tells us that the records of the noon meeting are read with deepest interest there. The people of God in that distant land find their faith strengthened as they read of the gracious answers to prayers offered here, granted by the Lord of the mercy seat, the God of the whole earth. He is prompted to lead the brethren in prayer, and gladly they bow their heads and lift their hearts as he leads in a fervent supplication for the blessing of our Father in heaven for friends far and near

Another rises to speak. He has not come so far, but still his home is many hundreds of miles distant. Some time since he sent a request for prayer here. He longed for the salvation of his son, and God heard prayer and saved the young man. He wants to acknowledge the Lord's mercy to him in the place where he sought prayer. That is not the only request he has sent. The church of which he is a member was asleep and cold. Zion languished, and souls were not being brought to the Saviour. Christians seemed altogether absorbed,

some in business and others in pleasure, and so there was little Christian labor and indifferent Christian living. He and others sent their request to the noon meeting, and repeated it more than once. They continued in prayer themselves, praying the more fervently as they realized that Christian friends here were entreating the Lord on their behalf. By and by the longed-for blessing came. The season of spiritual drouth was relieved by one of great awakening. Christians arose to newness of life. Several backsliders were restored. Scores of souls were led to confess their sins and their Saviour. Long as he lived he would gratefully remember the noon prayer-meeting.

The brother has warmed our hearts, and we are ready for more singing, and after the song other written requests for prayer are read. These "requests" form a prominent feature of the meeting. Never a day passes in which a number of them are not received. It is no uncommon occurrence to receive forty in a day. Hard must be the heart of any who could peruse the letters of a single day unmoved. The curse of sin is worldwide, and sorrow and suffering are sin's sisters. Amid the fruits of the tropics, sin's fruits thrive and multiply. The snow-clad north is no stranger to the penalty of sin, and so letters from all parts of the world are brought here. A missionary school teacher in China

asks prayer for some most unpromising scholars. One of the Master's faithful workers on the far off frontier of our own land is greatly tried in his labors. There are many discouraging circumstances, and it helps him to know that he will be lovingly and earnestly remembered at this sacred shrine. A mother in England is concerned about her boy. He is in America surrounded with temptations, and she desires the prayers of those, who, through so many years, have sent their petitions heavenward, for the unconverted sons of Christian workers.

The requests come from all classes and from persons of all ages. One writer signs herself "A poor widow." Her surroundings are of the most lowly kind. She lives in very straitened circumstances, but she has a rich Father in heaven, and in her poverty she is rich in faith. She needs special guidance just now, and so she appeals to these members of the great family of the faithful, to pray with and for her. The next petition is from a wife. Its appearance shows that it comes from a richer home. The writer lives in one of the city's most desirable neighborhoods, and is abundantly supplied with the luxuries of life. But what of this while her husband is far from God, ridicules religion, and is doing his utmost to bring up their son in the same evil way? The request of an aged grandmother for prayer

for her grandchildren whose parents are in heaven, is followed by that of a young girl who says she wants to be a Christian. She feels she has been a great sinner, and does not know to whom she may go for counsel and advice. In the religious paper, which makes its weekly visit to the household of which she is a member, she reads the records of the prayer service. She thinks that here, if anywhere, she will find sympathising hearts, who will remember her in their intercessions at the throne of grace. The next communication is from a business man. His way is sadly hedged up. Payments must be made but money promised him, and needed for these payments, is not forthcoming. He has read the words, "Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you." He knows that Jehovah Jireh will help him. But the burden is a heavy one, and while it is far more than he can carry, it seems to him as though he must have help, even to roll it to the mercy seat, so he asks the business men at the meeting to pray for him. He may pray in his own place of business at the noon hour, or he may be at the meeting while his request is read, and join silently in the prayers that will be offered audibly in his behalf.

We have made mention of China and Australia. It certainly adds a charm to the meeting to know that like the sun, its lines have gone out into all the earth. Said

a brother one day, "Thousands of miles from this sacred spot we thought of it. At the noon hour, the hour of prayer, devout Jews looked toward Jerusalem, the followers of Mahomet turned toward Mecca, but our party of Americans turned their faces in the direction of the Fulton Street Prayer-meeting." How blessed is this fellowship of spirit.

"Though sundered far by faith we meet,
Around one common mercy-seat."

At the throne of grace distance vanishes, and we join hearts where we cannot join hands.

"This is my first visit to the Fulton Street Prayer-meeting," exclaimed a missionary, "and though I had intended keeping silence, the words we sung just now—

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform"

impelled me to rise. A little over twenty-one years since while laboring in Southern India, I was delighted, in common with my co-laborers, as well as somewhat surprised, to see numbers of persons coming to the missionaries to ask what they must do to be saved. There were so many inquirers that it was evident an unusual interest had been awakened among them, and we said one to another, 'Some one must be praying for us.' Before long we heard of the institution of this noon-day

prayer service, and heard, too, that at the loving solicitation of interested friends our work had been very earnestly remembered in prayer. That work is still in progress, and our experience since proves that God still moves in a mysterious way when he would perform His wonderful work."

"Last summer," writes a missionary from Ontario, Canada, "I asked you to pray that my work might be blessed, and that the Lord would use me as an instrument in the conversion of souls. I never heard whether the request reached you or not, but I know it must have, for a revival commenced then under my ministrations which continued for four months, when I was called to leave that place. During that time ninety souls professed to find Christ. I am now just commencing in a very important field, and there have already been indications of the Spirit's work among the young people. Pray God to bless my labors here very abundantly. I will let you know the results, for I know God will answer prayer."

A pastor in Contra Costa County, California, writes:

"Will you earnestly pray for a great outpouring of God's Spirit upon this place? We have been holding special services for three months. Some souls have been converted, and many Christians have afresh consecrated themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ; but we feel that we need a wider, richer blessing. Some think that this is the hardest town in California, but it is none too hard

for the Lord. Some of my people are holding on with unwavering faith."

"I am glad to hear prayer asked for any place in California," a minister exclaimed, "for I know from experience that California needs the blessing of the Lord. I know the place from which this request comes, and there are other parts of that State which need our prayers. I have been laboring in California for twenty-two years, and well I remember reading of the inauguration of the Fulton Street meeting. Many a time since I have heard of God's gracious answers to your prayers, and been encouraged in my prayers and in my work for souls. To-day my long-cherished desire to stand here and tell you what a comfort the meeting has been to me is granted, and I thank God that He has permitted me this joy."

The usual invitation had been extended to strangers, when a young man rose and said :

"I have never been in this meeting before, but I find no little joy in being here to-day. I have heard it spoken of so often in all quarters of the world. Away down in the diamond fields of South Africa, and off in the gold fields of Australia, and in many other places I have met those who have been here, and several who have been blessed here, and some who have found the Saviour. A great deal has been said about financial trouble to-day. I think I know something about that. In San Francisco the earnings of several years were swept away in a single day through the failure of a bank

there. In that day of trial, as well as in many a stormy day besides, I have had peace and joy, realizing that my anchor is cast within the veil, and possessing the glorious sheet anchor of God's Word. Brethren, I found this Word a strong support in every clime and under all circumstances."

"I shall never forget," said another, "how that in a time of much trouble down in Southern Africa, I went into the public library in one of the towns there and came across a book containing the early history of this meeting, and the record of many blessed answers to prayer. It was a source of great comfort to me, and the memory of what I read then has helped me in many an hour of trial since." The book referred to was the "Power of Prayer."

A letter was received, one noon, from a pastor in Geneva, Switzerland, written in French and asking prayer for a Christian sister who needs God's help and guidance.

The stranger from Australia, already mentioned, came in one noon to say farewell. About to return home he desired to speak of the influence exerted by this concert of prayer in distant realms. For instance, when he was seeking peace with God and was striving to attain thereto by the works of his own hands, he came in contact with a volume containing the records

of the early days of the meeting. By the experiences of the new converts therein mentioned he was led to see that he was on the wrong track, and was moreover directed into God's way of peace. It had been, therefore, with peculiar feelings of delight that he had made his first visit here; and he had now, he said, increased cause for thankfulness in the kindness shown him by American Christians and his fellowship with them.

We had just been reminded of the sentiment expressed in the lines :

"Where'er we seek Thee Thou art found,
And every place is hallowed ground,"

when a friend in broken English told us that eight years previously the Lord met him on Chinese waters. The speaker was then a sailor, and although a young man, had, in company with others of his calling, gone, he believed, into all the haunts of sin and sinful pleasure that a sailor ever entered. But God spoke to him as his vessel lay moored in the far-off harbor, and showed him how dreadful a sinner he had been. By the side of this terrible picture of himself he saw the cross. Christ crucified to make atonement for the sinner's guilt was revealed to him, and from the hour in which he first trusted redeeming love, and so found peace and pardon, his heart had ever been filled with gratitude to God, and again and again with joy he ex-

claimed: "By the grace of God I am what I am." He rejoiced, too, that not only he had Christ for himself, but he had been permitted to lead some other souls to the same wonderful Saviour. When first saved he imagined there was no higher joy for him on earth, but the joy of leading others to Jesus was even richer.

CHAPTER III.

THE TIE THAT BINDS.

Happy Meetings—The Evangelist and the Convert—India and Turkey—The Skeptical Young Man ; He Asks Prayer—Burdened Souls—The Convict's Request—Long-continued Prayers—Ninety-Four Souls—Dissipation and Death—Pioneer Life—A Letter from the other World—A California Wife's Letter, &c., &c.

“Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love ;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.”

If earth's partings are painful its meetings are often pleasant and profitable, as the following incidents prove.

A brother rose to express his gratitude to God for his conversion. He had been brought to Christ a few years since under the preaching of the word of God by a well-known evangelist. This occurred in a Western city, and he had not seen the evangelist for a long time. The speaker thought his case one of special mercy, for there were peculiar circumstances attending his early training, and then his conversion, that in his mind enhanced the greatness of the grace which saved him. The speaker was immediately recognized by a

brother at the far end of the room who at once recalled his features, his name and the incidents connected with his conversion. Moreover, he recalled the fact that some Christian people had expressed doubts of the genuineness and lasting nature of the professed conversion. This brother was the evangelist in question, and was glad indeed to find that the convert still held to his colors. He had hardly recognized the speaker when the latter recognized him, and could not refrain from expressing his surprise and gratitude at thus meeting the friend who, under God, had brought him to Jesus. The happy interchange of mutual congratulations on the part of these brethren which followed the service was witnessed by many with no little interest, and the whole incident seemed suggestive of just such meetings in a world where partings are not known.

Upon another occasion a circumstance of peculiar interest occurred. A converted Brahmin who was at the time a guest of friends in this city, attended the prayer service one noon and spoke out of a heart full of love for Christ and his gospel. He was immediately followed by the pastor of an Armenian Christian Church in Constantinople. Once a follower of Mahomet, this brother is now a loyal servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. The meeting over, the two speakers were introduced to

each other. It was an interesting sight, and it needed no great force of imagination on the part of those who witnessed the greetings between these brethren, to look forward to that assembly which shall be made up out of every nation, tribe and tongue, and that shall forever speak the praises of the saving name of Jesus.

There are requests which are in themselves answers to prayer. Such was that of a young man who desired the missionary to present his case for prayer. He had often brought written requests from his mother, asking the meeting to pray for his conversion ; but when handing them to the missionary he would say, "I know what this is, but it is perfectly useless. I have no faith in prayer, and I do not believe in any of these things. I am an atheist."

Sometimes the missionary would talk to him seriously, and before the young man knew it he had him upon his knees, the centre of a small group of praying friends. To all this he raised no objection, but was content simply to assert his unbelief in anything religious. He came to the meeting, however, on the occasion mentioned sufficiently convinced of the reality of prayer to ask the friends to pray for him. The very fact that he thus sought prayer for himself was in measure an answer to his mother's long continued supplications. Can we doubt what the result will be?

Who can estimate the weight of care and sorrow in the requests presented at a single service? In the record of one day greatly condensed and rapidly noted we find the following subjects laid upon the hearts of God's people: Three unsaved young men; a lady friend without Christ, long prayed for, but still careless about her soul; a sister who has just lost her husband, and in her bereavement knows not the consolation of the love of Jesus; a friend fast locked in Giant Despair's Doubting Castle, who has forgotten all about the never-failing key called "Promise;" a friend in financial trouble and want, feeling the need of more faith; a Chicago business man who believes in prayer, but is in great pecuniary embarrassment,—were the cases embraced in a few of the letters.

Two earnest pleas for prayer follow. The first is from a son who says: "I would request your prayers for my father, who is dying of consumption, that he may be converted before he dies." The next is from a friend in Maryland, asking prayer for a physician who is dying under circumstances of peculiar sadness, that he may be led to cast himself wholly on Christ for salvation. "Pray fervently, for his time is short," the writer adds. Another in Indiana is anxious that prayer should be offered for her husband and two sons. The husband, a man of seventy-eight, is a victim of strong drink. Three

friends in a town in Ohio unite in a request for prayer. They have just organized a mission Sunday-school in one of the poorest parts of the city, and they desire the prayers of Christians in New York for God's blessing on their labors. A friend in Virginia says: "This is the third time within a week that I have begged your prayers for the conversion of a precious soul. I am in deep earnest, for I feel that God is ready and willing to hear. Did Jesus when here on earth turn off a single soul who came to ask help for a loved one? Never! Pray that He may answer me now, for I have been praying three years for this soul."

A request from "a sorrowing wife" in Cincinnati, asking prayer for her unconverted and dissipated husband, is followed by a request from a porter in a large New York city dry goods house, asking prayer for an infidel clerk who is a ringleader among his fellow clerks, and would be a power for good if converted. The writer adds: "There are two of us praying for him, but we are only porters, and that makes it hard for us to approach any of the clerks." Blessed be our God, porters can pray, for none are so lowly as to be denied access to the mercy-seat.

The variety of subjects embraced is indeed suggestive. One needy soul writes: "Christian friends will you please pray for me? I need your prayers. I am just

out of prison after serving one year. I am trying to lead a better life. I lost all my friends while I was in prison. Do not forget to pray for me." "Pray," says another burdened heart, "for my sister, who is dying that she may be saved, and for my son that he may give his heart to Christ." A wife begs prayer for her unconverted husband. He is a moralist and sixty-eight years of age. She has been praying for his conversion for the past forty years. A little scrap of paper bore the words, "Please pray for my poor inebriate son.—His Mother." But this is not an unusual request. More requests are sent for prayer for the liberation of the slaves of strong drink than for any other class of needy ones.

Not a few of those who ask for prayers have been regular petitioners for a long period of time. In one of the weekly reports of the meeting the fact was noticed that a lady had sent every week for two years or more, a request for prayer for her husband's salvation. She wrote in reply stating that for nineteen years she had been pleading at the throne of grace for his deliverance from the power of sin. She reads week by week with great encouragement the reports of answers to prayer, rejoices to believe that the meeting will unite with her in spirit at the mercy seat, and beseech God to save her husband. A sin-

gular letter is that from an invalid. She asks the prayers of God's people for the salvation of ninety-four persons and she adds in confidence, the names of these subjects of her own prayers. Some are inquiring for the way of life; others are, so far as can be seen, without concern about the salvation of their immortal souls.

"Urgent" stands out in every line of some of the letters. A case presented one noon was that of a man sick unto death. Having neglected every opportunity for insuring the eternal salvation of his soul, he was now on a death-bed unprepared to die. Another touching case was that of a lady seventy-four years of age, sent in her own behalf. She has lived all these years, and yet is a stranger to Christ and His saving grace. She feels her lonely and sad condition, and asks prayer that even at this, the eleventh hour, Jesus may bring her to Himself. This earnest request was received from a Christian worker: "I beg you pray with all your hearts for the salvation of a young man—he has given his life to the world and run a brief and dissipated career. He is now dying of consumption and has but a few days to live. He is a stranger to the grace that saves, and I do beseech you to pray that this very day he may seek and find the Saviour."

Another request seems to give us a glimpse of pioneer life and to suggest the regard in which we who

can regularly enjoy the privileges of the sanctuary, should hold this means of grace. From a small village in Texas "a young mechanic" presents a request on behalf of the people there. He is one of the five Christians in the place. Looking to God for help and blessing, these five have started a Sunday-school, but they earnestly desire that some one may be sent or raised up among them to preach the Gospel there and that many souls may be saved.

"A letter from the other world," a friend suggested that one request might be called. More than ten years ago a mother wrote a letter addressed to the noon meeting, asking prayer for the salvation of her daughter. In younger years this daughter was a professor of religion, but, at the time when the request for prayer was written, was on the broad road to destruction, evidently never having possessed the life she professed. The writer asked prayer for a younger daughter and for a son. The two latter were just entering upon womanhood and upon manhood, but had not given their hearts to Christ. The letter was signed "A mother's humble prayer," but it was not sent to the meeting. The mother died, and now her husband, the father of the three subjects of prayer, has passed away. Among his papers this letter was found by the son therein mentioned, who forwarded it to the meeting, and supple-

ments it with his own request for prayer for himself and his two sisters, adding the unhappy intelligence that as yet neither of them has been born again. There was a solemnity about the incident that all present seemed to feel, and most earnest supplication was made to God that the desire of that now sainted mother might be soon and fully granted.

One noon the meeting was led by a friend formerly resident in California. He was not a little surprised to find, among a number of requests, one from that State. It was dated at a little place with which he was familiar; he recognized the handwriting. The letter was a communication of a Christian lady residing in a California village, in which at present there is no church and no regular preaching of the gospel. There are but four professing Christians. The writer of the letter is one, but her husband is an infidel. For years past she has been praying for his salvation. A neighbor who is a Christian has an unconverted wife, who ridicules everything religious. When an effort is made to arrange for a church service, and the aid of a minister from a city not many miles distant is secured, the infidel husband and the worldly wife are leaders in an opposition movement. In the house of another neighbor the writer of the present letter saw some accounts of the noon prayer-meeting in New York. She re-

solved to request its prayers in behalf of the place and people, but a letter addressed to a prayer-meeting, and mailed at the village post-office would, she knew, never reach the intended destination. So she sent her communication to an acquaintance eight miles off. This acquaintance forwarded it to New York. The letter was interesting in itself, but it was listened to with added interest when the leader stated how well he knew the writer, the place, and its associations. Such coincidences, if coincidences they can be called, are frequently to be noted, and deepen very considerably the interest felt in the communications received.

CHAPTER IV.

THE OMNIPOTENT POWER.

Answers to Prayer—Eight Men Saved—The California Academy—The Pennsylvania Pastor's Letter—A Brother Prays and a Wanderer Returns—Worth Waiting for—A Father in England—A Long sought Blessing—A Sudden Blaze—Scholars Saved—Notes of Thanksgiving—A Family Made Happy—A Mother's Request—The Prisoner and the Chaplain—A Wonderful Story—A Happy Sequel—Enough of this Folly—What the Bells Said—More Strains of Praise—Prayer and Effort—A Bow of Promise.

King Ahasuerus extended the golden sceptre to Queen Esther, and asking for her request, said it should be granted to the half of his kingdom. A royal promise that, but our King who sits on the throne of heavenly grace, bids us ask and it shall be given, assuring us that *all* things are ours. An old writer says, "Whosoever," is written on the outside of the door of mercy while he who enters finds "Whatsoever" inscribed upon the inside. Prayer is an omnipotent power. Realizing all this, God's people sing,

"Thou art coming to a King,
Large petitions with thee bring,
For His grace and power are such
None can ever ask too much."

Answers to prayer are expected at the Fulton Street

meeting. Doubtless many who send requests forget to acknowledge the Lord's goodness in answering. Of the ten lepers healed by the Saviour only one returned to give thanks. The acknowledgments which are made however, from time to time, serve to cheer the hearts of those who pray.

The full record of the Lord's responses to His people's supplications is a long one, for our God repeats himself in His works of grace and mercy. The incidents which follow are given without reference to time or place. They have been gathered from the weekly records faithfully kept for years past, and serve to show the efficacy of prayer, no matter what the need or desire of the human heart. An evangelist had been impressed with the deep faith of a godly woman who told him she had long been praying for the conversion of eight men. In the world's way of thinking, these were hopeless cases. The conversion of any one of them would have been regarded as something most improbable. Within nine weeks those men were led by the power of God's truth, to see themselves and their need of a Saviour, and all made confession of their faith in Jesus. No concerted measures were put forth, nor were special means used in the interest of these particular individuals. A series of services was held for the preaching of the Gospel, a spirit of prayer had fallen on God's people, many

precious souls were harvested for the heavenly garner, and a godly, praying woman who had waited long at the mercy-seat received the desire of her heart. These eight men were only some of many led to the Saviour.

The principal of a young ladies' seminary, in California, sent a request for prayer in behalf of her students. She desired that they might be led to see clearly their need of a Saviour, and turn to Christ in this important stage of their lives. From the very day the request was forwarded, the Spirit of God seemed to manifest His presence in a very distinct manner. Many of the students were stricken with deep conviction of sin. Then one and another came out into the light, that a consciousness of sin forgiven and peace with God alone can give, and when the term closed, twenty-four had publicly professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ by uniting with His Church.

A pastor in Pennsylvania writes: "A few weeks since I requested your prayers for God's blessing upon our special efforts for the salvation of souls. Your prayers and ours have been answered. Last Friday evening twenty-five persons expressed a desire to find Christ. On Sunday, in our school over fifty scholars sought the prayers of God's people. Several heads of families are among the number professing conversion, but there is a large class of unsaved men that we want

to reach. The wives of these men are Christians. They are among our best citizens and are regular attendants at the house of God. Some of them seem to be very near the Kingdom but they do not enter in."

A believer in prayer had long been praying for the return home of a younger brother, and his widowed mother had been, if possible, even more earnest in her pleadings at the mercy seat. Every effort had been put forth with a view of finding the whereabouts of the wanderer. Both mother and brother felt discouraged as their efforts seemed unavailing. One day while he was meditating on the next step to be taken, something said to the anxious brother "Why not leave it all with Jesus? He can bring the wanderer back." He at once went upon his knees and in prayer laid the burden on the Lord, and gave up all anxiety on the point. Very soon after the younger brother returned. God had touched his heart and led him to resolve to come home and to confess his sin to God and to his mother and brother. A very little conversation revealed the fact that it was at the very time the elder brother was praying that the younger brother's heart was moved with the impulse to return.

It is becoming that we should be patient in our persistency at the mercy seat. Patience and perseverance are never more thoroughly Christian graces than when

features of prayer. David *waited* patiently for the Lord, and of saints of later date it is recorded that they *continued* instant in prayer. God's blessings are well worth the waiting for, and the heart appreciates them more when at last they come. A friend said that for many years he had been praying to God to save his father in England. This father was now seventy years of age and had long been skeptically inclined. The speaker had been very much comforted within a week past, however, by receiving a letter from his parent, in which the latter says that he is studying his Bible, seeking to find the way to Christ, and trusted that, in his next letter, he should be able to tell his son that he had become a Christian.

A minister came in one noon with a grateful heart. For many a month he had been waiting before God in earnest prayer for visible results of his long-continued seed sowing. His prayers and preaching had been directed along that line, but the blessing tarried. Yet prayer was to be answered, Christians were to be quickened, and unconverted souls were to be led to the Saviour, all in God's good time. The work commenced in the Sabbath-school. A few loving, faithful words spoken without excitement, at the close of a Sunday afternoon session, were blessed of God and seemed to be as the spark which explodes the powder. One after

another of the scholars was deeply moved. It was evident that a signal work of grace was in progress. An inquiry meeting was organized, and many sought to know more perfectly the way of life. Over a score of the scholars were soon rejoicing in a hope in Christ, and spoke intelligently of the work which they believed grace had wrought in their souls. This church and its pastor could be named, but it is only one of numbers of similar cases, all proving that they who spend their time in true prayer do not spend it in vain.

So many were the letters of thanksgiving one noon that there was danger of forgetting the requests. Prayer had been asked not long before for a husband and wife. Their hearts were in God's work, but trouble had come. The husband had no employment, and the prospect was dark and dreary, at least from a human standpoint, and circumstances were indeed unpromising. The Lord came to their relief however. Daylight dawned, the way was opened up before them, employment was found, and their hearts were set to the tune of praise. "I asked your prayers that I might become a Christian," wrote another. "I wanted to find Christ. I was borne down by the weight of my sin, and knew that only Jesus could give me peace. But all was dark, and I could not find my way to Him. I begged you to pray that I might be brought to the Saviour, and God has brought me.

Thank Him with me." Another thus wrote: "A few months ago your prayers were desired for the salvation of our dear mother. It was indeed sad to see her out of Christ. I rejoice to tell you that she has entered the fold, and is happily trusting in that blessed Saviour." "Some weeks since," said one more of these thankful hearts, "I wrote you a letter requesting you to pray that a dear friend of mine might be saved. While my letter was on its way the friend was happily converted."

"I must bear testimony to the goodness of God, too!" exclaimed a young man, whose joy was a burden to him, until he could tell of it and thus share it. "I was very anxious for the salvation of the soul of a friend of mine. I had been praying earnestly, and constantly, that my friend might be saved. Then I felt compelled to speak to the individual on this most important theme, and though the way seemed difficult, I determined to do what I was assured was my duty, and I am thankful now that I did. I have a letter from him which says: 'I bless God that I can say I am now a child of God. I had been wishing to become a Christian, and it was while you were conversing with me on the subject the other day that I saw the way to Jesus, and was enabled to give my heart to Him. Ah! friends, what a power we have in prayer. Shall we not use it more?'"

"Last time I spoke," said another, "I told you of the sad condition of a mission in which I am greatly interested. It was almost deserted, although located in

a neighborhood where sorely needed. It is surrounded by those who do not attend church services. The Lord has heard prayer, and our room is now filled to overflowing at every service, and many are seeking the way of peace."

What the infidel and unbeliever would call circumstance and coincidence, the Christian delights to call the overruling providence of God. The following incident is surely a marked case of this, and a most gracious answer to prayer. A mother was present one noon during the week with her son. Each could say, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." It is now some years since that mother presented her first request for prayer. "Pray that my son who is in prison may be converted," it read. The request was not forgotten, but one friend, whose heart was peculiarly touched by it, prayed to God to bless the chaplain of the prison in which the son was confined, and to give him such a measure of the Holy Spirit as should make him successful in winning some of the souls of the prisoners to Christ. The correspondent of a newspaper who was present thought the incident worthy of note, and mentioned it in a brief report of the meeting for his journal. A copy of the journal came into the hands of a gentleman in Kansas. The name of the prison whose chaplain had been prayed for was mentioned, and the gentleman read the

account with interest, for the chaplain was his brother. To him he sent the paper, marking the item. He determined to read it to his usual Sunday congregation, made up of the inmates of the prison. He did so, and after reading it, noticed a deathly pallor on the face of a young man before him. Inquiring of him the reason, the young man replied to the effect that he was sure that that mother was his own. It was just like her. He was the son for whom prayer was asked. He spoke truly. He was the young man, and was soon led to the Lord Jesus. A year after, the mother was in the meeting, and, coming to the brother who, twelve months before, had prayed so earnestly, reminded him of the circumstance, and told him that her son had been led to the Saviour. Still later, the same brother related the incident, referred to the presence of the mother and also of the son, whose term of servitude had expired. A free man once more in the eyes of the law, he had become a free man in Christ Jesus. The story was told so touchingly and tenderly, that every heart was moved, and praised God afresh for His faithfulness in hearing and answering prayer.

The power of prayer was well illustrated in an incident related by a missionary. Fifteen young men banded themselves together to form a club for gay and frivolous pleasures. Two of the number were employed

in a large store. Some of their fellow-clerks determined to pray for these two young men, and indeed for all of the fifteen. They met each night for some weeks to pray. One night, as the two were about to proceed to a ball, one said to the other: "We have had enough of this folly; let us give it up and become Christians." The other agreed and they had scarcely exchanged vows when the village church bell rang out a call to the week night prayer meeting. It seemed to these young men the voice of God. They attended the prayer meeting, asked those assembled to pray for them, sought sincerely after a saving knowledge of Christ, and were soon happy and devoted Christians. A gracious revival marked the history of the church, and twelve more of the fifteen members of the pleasure club were among the fruits. The remaining one moved away from the place and was lost sight of, but who shall say that he too may not have been brought to the Saviour. It matters not where prayer is offered. It is everywhere the same potent force, "moving the arm that moves the world."

The mercy of the Lord endureth forever, and He who set David's heart singing "I love the Lord because He hath heard my voice and my supplications," still makes the hearts of His people to rejoice in His unspeakable goodness. "I bring three thanks-offerings" exclaimed a friend one noon, "first for prayer heard in the case of

a lady long sick, but who has been restored to soundness of health ; then for a soul brought to the Saviour for whom many of us have long prayed and also for help given in time of financial need. About a month ago I brought a request for your prayers from a gentleman in great embarrassment. Everything seemed very dark. The mortgage on his house was to be foreclosed, and claims were crowding in upon him on every side. Immediate ruin threatened him and you business men know just what that is. At half-past twelve that day his case was remembered here in very earnest prayer ; At half-past three he received a little note from me bidding him trust God and keep his eyes heavenward, and at half-past four he received help. The cloud was lifted and the way opened marvellously, and my friend and his wife desired that I should ask you to thank God with them for His great mercy."

True prayer does not lessen effort. The more the Christian prays the more he is inclined and encouraged to labor in the direction of the prayers offered. It is with him who truly prays as with a Sunday-school teacher whose letter says: "I asked your prayers for the salvation of my scholars in the Sunday-school. There were eleven of them. Having presented the request, I felt that I must pray more earnestly myself, and then I felt that I must be more earnest in my efforts with them.

They were all old enough to be Christians, being young men, and so I took them one by one alone, and talked with them about their souls. I found that some of them were under conviction, and had been wishing for several weeks that I would speak to them. Three of my scholars are now rejoicing in Christ, and I trust others soon will be. I thank you for your prayers and would ask you to continue them." Thus so far from substituting prayer for effort, we but prepare ourselves by prayer for heartier labor. Happy they who freely mingle prayer and toil till God responds to the one and rewards the other.

CHAPTER V.

GIFTS FROM THE KING.

An Infidel Saved—A Dying Father—A Cheering Letter—A Parent's Faith—A Precious Legacy—A General Saved—Thanksgiving Again—My Father Is Saved—A Despairing Father—Saved at Last—A Sore Contest—The Pledge on the Fly-leaf—Prayer in a Parlor—The Victory Gained—Expelled from College—Playing the Piano in a Beer Saloon—Seeking Christ—Finding Peace.

Nothing is too hard for the Lord ; not even the heart of adamant. The infidel is not beyond the power of God's Holy Spirit, and prayer for the infidel's salvation can and does prevail. An interesting letter was received from a lady in Pennsylvania, in which she says :

“To the glory of God I write to tell you that my brother, for whom I begged your prayers some time ago, has given up his infidelity and has found peace in Jesus, after a long and hard struggle. I had prayed for his conversion for nearly twenty years. How much reason I have to praise God ! The twenty years of prayer seems long now, but in the light of eternity it will seem but a short time, in view of the value of an immortal soul.”

The story told by an evangelist bears testimony to the fact that “God's delays are not of necessity God's

denials." "You who meet here do not need to be told that God answers prayer," he said. "But for the encouragement of parents praying for the salvation of their children, I want to relate an incident that occurred in connection with our work in Kansas. We were holding services in a church in Leavenworth. Among those attending was a young sailor, who seventeen years before had run away from home and gone to sea. That night he was laid under deep conviction of sin, and was soon enabled to trust in Jesus as his Saviour. As soon as he was converted, he wrote home to tell his parents what had occurred. Only once before in all that seventeen years had he written to them. But year after year the father prayed for his runaway boy, and firmly believed that he should some time hear of the young man's salvation. When the letter reached its destination it found the father within a few hours of death. With joy the dying parent received the tidings of answered prayer, and then his happy spirit took its heavenward flight."

Some prayers God does not fully answer until those who have offered them are with the multitude who have exchanged prayer for praise. The following was one of a number of suggestive incidents related one noon. An elder in a Presbyterian church said to the pastor, "I wish you would pray for my son; pray that he may become a Christian. I believe he will, though I may

not live to see him converted." Not long after the elder died. Until his death family prayer had been a regular institution in his household. Now it had ceased, but for a few days only, as one morning the son coming into his mother's room and bringing with him the family Bible, exclaimed: "Mother, I can bear this no longer; when father was alive we had family prayers, and we must have them again." The young man was deeply moved, and there and then he and his mother knelt in prayer, beseeching God to give him peace in believing. While praying peace came, and the young man was soon an earnest worker in the church of which his father was so long an honored elder.

This was told of another son: His mother had prayed for many years that God would save her boy; to her sorrow she saw him continue in his evil ways, going farther and farther from God, and eventually becoming a professed sceptic, denying the existence of a God; but she still continued to pray for him. By and by God answered those prayers. The son was called to his mother's death-bed, but reached home too late to see her alive. He found her dead, but before she died she had written a note to him, in which she told him that her only sorrow was that he was still unsaved and on the way to hell. That letter brought him to his senses; he was convicted of sin, and although he had long denied

the existence of a God, he was soon upon his knees crying "God be merciful to me a sinner." For some days he carried a broken heart, but at his mother's grave-side the Saviour spoke peace to his soul, saying: "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." The legacy of a mother's prayers is a priceless blessing, and it can never be lost, since God is the executor.

"It is the assurance of God's own word, and our experience has proved it over and over again," said another, "that He hears and answers prayer. I shall never forget presenting a request for prayer for a general, a courageous man, and one of great culture, but not a Christian. I was on a visit to New York city, and came in here especially to ask you to pray for his conversion. The request made a deep impression, and was remembered by all who led in prayer that day. A week after I was in Washington, and a few days after my arrival there, I received a letter from my friend, telling me that his whole life had been changed; that he had become a Christian. I could tell you other cases in which God has answered the prayers you have offered at my request.

Among the many requests for prayer for unconverted sons, came the following call for praise. It was from a mother and read: "About a year ago I sent a request for your prayers for three sons. With a heart over-

flowing with gratitude, I write to tell you that they are all within the fold. They have all given themselves to the Lord, and are earnestly working to help bring other souls to Christ."

A letter from a lady was written in strains of thanksgiving, to tell how graciously the Lord had heard prayer for those dear to her. "First, I asked you to pray for my husband's conversion," she wrote. "The Lord in mercy answered those prayers, and my husband has for some time been a consistent member of the church. Then I sought your prayers for the salvation of my brother and his daughter, and both of these have been led to the Saviour. Encouraged by these answers, I begged you to pray for our cold, dead church, and oh, what a glorious awakening followed. Sixty-five precious souls have been born again, and our members refreshed and blessed, have consecrated themselves anew to the Master."

How many are the springs of joy which God starts in human hearts by His saving grace. With bright and glowing countenance a young man expressed his gratitude to God for the salvation of his father. "Repeatedly have I asked you to pray for him," he said, "and you will remember that I told you how my mother had prayed year after year for him, and then how she prayed for my salvation too. Not much over a year ago, when

I was a thorough sceptic, and it seemed as though the answer to my mother's prayer was farther off than ever, just then God showed me my miserable condition, and led me as a humble penitent to the cross, there to find life and peace. Since then my prayers have mingled with those of my mother in my father's behalf. For some time he seemed almost persuaded to become a Christian, but did not get beyond that. With unspeakable joy I have come to tell you that he has at last come over on the Lord's side. My father is saved!"

"It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord," said a deeply afflicted saint of years gone by. We wonder sometimes why God's answers to our prayers are so long in coming; and when the supplications of years for some specific object remain unanswered, it seems hard to hope and difficult to wait. For two or three years a father was in the habit of occasionally rising in the Fulton Street Meeting to ask the prayers of God's children for his son, a young man whom he represented as being godless and dissipated, and whose wild ways were breaking the hearts of his father and mother. There were occasions when the young man gave promise of better things. He seemed determined to reform, would accompany his mother to the house of God, express contrition for his wrong doing, and avow his purpose to

live a different life. But alas ! the hopes of his parents were raised only to be destroyed. At length he was taken ill and the doctors said there was no hope of his recovery. The father and mother were in deep distress. Many years of prayer had been offered in his behalf and now unsaved he lay upon his deathbed. The thought was distracting. The father repeated his request, beseeching the friends to implore God in his goodness, not to let the young man die unsaved. The father's plea was that of a soul almost ready to give up hoping altogether. A minister present suggested that doubtless this sickness would prove for the glory of God ; and that through it the Lord would lead the young man to see his need of a Saviour. This proved to be the case. The son died ; but two weeks before his death he sought and found a saving interest in Christ. He gave abundant and very clear testimony of his intelligent and hearty acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as his sorely needed and only Saviour.

Brown stone fronts do not of necessity keep out sorrow. The leader of the meeting one noon was a gentleman who was then engaged in evangelistic work. While holding a series of meetings in a city not far from this, a young lady attended one of the services and was very deeply impressed. Although the daughter of wealthy parents who moved in good society, she had

become the victim of an appetite for drink. Of the means used by her to administer to her burning thirst and of the disgrace brought upon herself and upon her family, it needs not that aught be said. As she heard at the meeting, the story of one and another who, by the help of God, had cast aside the intoxicating cup, she resolved to make one more effort to conquer herself. In her own room that night ere she retired to rest, she wrote out a pledge in the fly leaf of a Bible given her in her childhood by a dear friend, and therefore much treasured. It began with the words: "By the help of God," and in humble dependence upon His strength, she expressed her resolve to be free and then signed her name. Within a day or two her mother, while in the daughter's room, caught sight of the little Bible as it lay open upon the table. Her eyes lighted on that which had been written. She read the words with eager delight and, with a heart full of gratitude to God, prayed the Lord to have mercy upon her daughter and to lend His gracious aid. Days passed, days of more or less conflict between the old appetites and the new resolves. At length there came a day in which the appetite seemed uncontrollable. The poor girl felt she must have a drink or die. Her mother was in terrible distress and brought the girl into the parlor, there, if possible, to detain her till the craving

should be brought into subjection. Looking out of the window, the mother saw the speaker passing by. She called him in and explaining the circumstances, all three knelt in prayer. The gentleman prayed, the mother prayed, the daughter prayed,—each of them audibly—prayed that strength might be given in this hour of direful temptation and victory be assured. God heard those earnest pleadings and the vow was kept, the temptation overcome. She has since been restrained most graciously and has been enabled to give her heart entirely to the Lord.

Towards the close of the noon service, one day, a young man said “This is the third time that I have been with you Christian friends, and I am glad indeed that I have been here. I would most earnestly ask you to pray for me. I want to become a true Christian. My life during the past few months has been a sad one. Nine months ago I was expelled from college for intoxication. Since then I have been playing the piano in a liquor saloon in Brooklyn for an existence, thus using my talents to help ensnare and ruin other young men. I cannot stand this kind of life any longer, and I beg you to pray for me. I had a praying mother, but she is now in Heaven. Do not forget me.” Several brethren then led in prayer commending the returning prodigal to God. Three days after a young business man, a

regular attendant at the meeting, said: "You will remember the young man who asked our prayers a few days since for his salvation. After the service three or four of us conversed with him and prayed with him. We pledged ourselves to continue in prayer for him after we should part. Yesterday he came into my office to see me and as I was out, left a letter for me. In that letter he says: 'I am sorry not to have seen you, for I wanted to assure you that I have realized that peace which passeth all understanding, and I am now going home to see my people; to-morrow, if possible. I want to put all pride under foot and to hold up Christ and Him crucified. Please let the Christian friends who prayed for me know that I am trusting in the Saviour. I will let you know what kind of a reception I get at home. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and bless His holy name!'"

CHAPTER VI.

MORE ANSWERS TO PRAYER.

An Evangelist's Request—A Brand from the Burning—A Bad Business—Out of Employment—Working for Souls—The Officer Saved—Finding Peace—Seeking Rest—Healing for the Sick—An Old Promise—A Sick Wife—A Mother's Faith—A Concert of Prayer—Indirect Results.

Evangelists oftentimes come into the meeting before commencing to labor in fields of Christian service near to them, and on their return to the city bring glad tidings of God's goodness in the revival of the hearts of His people and the salvation of lost souls. Upon one occasion a young brother, whom God has greatly blessed in his efforts for souls, desired to return thanks. A brief while previously he asked prayer that he might have the blessing of God as he went to a place in this State to which he had been invited by some Christian friends to come and labor in the Gospel. He went according to arrangement and was met at the railway station by the minister of the church in which he was to work. The minister said to him, "It is quite useless for you to come here; you cannot do any good. This place is a perfect Sodom." But the brother had most

earnestly besought the Lord that he might at least have one soul and that if it were the Lord's will he might see some one brought to Christ who had been notoriously wicked. The Lord gave him his desire, for at the first night's meeting a young man was present, led, humanly speaking, from curiosity, who had long been the terror of the place. Strange to tell he became deeply interested in all that transpired and when an invitation was extended to any who desired to become Christians, to manifest the desire, he was at once upon his feet asking the people of God to pray that he might find mercy. His consciousness of sin appeared to be very deep and real, but before the speaker left the place he had heard the young man express the belief that God for Christ's sake had pardoned all his sins. His was not a solitary case of conversion as others made the same confession of sin and expressed the same hope in Christ. The brother who related this incident was once engaged in the brewing business. He made money and deemed himself a successful business man. He never thought about the claims of God upon him or about the world to come. But it pleased God to awaken him and to lead him to a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. He no sooner became a Christian than he felt that his business was inconsistent. It produced evil effects, and therefore could not be for God's glory. So, without

hesitation, he gave it up once and forever. He looked about for other employment, but for a long time looked in vain. He was repeatedly offered positions in the old business, very remunerative ones, but these he steadily refused. The prospect grew very dark but he still hoped in God, and out of the darkness came the dawn. Employment was secured; he and his dear ones were provided for in a way that gave no trouble to his conscience. More recently he has been called to labor as an evangelist and has rendered acceptable help to many a pastor who longed to see the Lord's work revived.

The God of the mercy-seat is constantly invoked to convert souls who come into the meeting strangers to His saving grace, and encouraging answers to such prayers are oftentimes recorded. Said the leader one noonday: "The last time I led this meeting I was impressed to say a word to any present who might be hungering after Christ. I entreated any sin-sick soul within sound of my voice to cast itself on Jesus and so find peace. A woman rose and at once resumed her seat, as though to intimate that she was that sin-burdened soul. After the service I spoke to her, and found that she was longing to know God's way of salvation. 'You have but to believe on Jesus and you will be saved,' I said to her. 'But what am I to believe?' she eagerly exclaimed. I told her that Jesus said: 'Him that cometh

unto Me I will in no wise cast out.' 'If you come to Him He will save you, will He not?' I asked. She admitted that He would, and when I asked her if she did with all her heart, as well as she knew how, come to Jesus, she said that she was sure that she did. 'Well, then,' I replied, 'does He not save you?' 'I do not feel that He does,' she said, sorrowfully. 'But if He does not reject He must receive, must He not?' was my next question. She admitted that also. 'And He says He will in no wise reject,' I said. 'And now casting feeling aside, do you believe Him when he says so?' 'I must believe it since He says it,' she answered more cheerfully. 'Then if you believe His word you are saved,' I said, and in a moment joy lit up her face as she exclaimed: 'Is that all? Oh, I feel as if a load had been lifted from my heart.'

If these pages contain over and over again the story of men delivered from the power of strong drink, it is because that story is so repeatedly told in the meeting. A man of respectable family and considerable talent wandered in the streets of New York in utter despair, longing to get away from the haunts of men, and to find some place where temptation could not reach him. He was heartily ashamed of himself, yet knew not how he might overcome the miserable appetite that enthralled him. In the course of his wanderings and quite unin-

tentionally, so far as he was concerned, he found himself in the Fulton Street Prayer-meeting. Here he heard a Christian brother speak of the rest that remains for God's people, and of the rest enjoyed by them here below. To the wanderer's heart these words were like rain on parched and thirsty ground. Could there be rest for him? Was there hope for him? Could Jesus save him and give him liberty from the chains that fettered him? Such were the questions he asked himself, and when the meeting closed he told the story of his misery to one present, who pointed him to Christ as not only able but willing to save all who trust Him, no matter how helplessly and hopelessly lost in themselves. To this gracious Saviour he came and found rest and deliverance.

"The prayer of faith shall save the sick," is written in a Book, the promises and assurances of which are good for all time. And while this is an age in which the miracles of healing as witnessed in the apostolic times are not needed in order to establish our faith in God or the claims of the Gospel, it is none the less incumbent on God's people to remember that He is yet the healer of our diseases. Prayer, therefore, should precede, accompany and follow the means used for the restoration of the sick. Many such ones are prayed for in the meeting, and full often is the voice of thanksgiv-

ing heard directed unto the Lord for His healing mercy. A lady lay apparently at the point of death. Her husband was a physician, and with other physicians who had attended her pronounced death within a few days inevitable. The lady's mother was a missionary, and had spent many years abroad in distant and laborious fields, where, but for the support, the guidance and the consolation secured in answer to prayer, she would have succumbed before the difficulties in her way. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" she was led to ask herself; and her past experience, and her simple faith in God as her Father both said "No." She came to the prayer-meeting, bringing her petition with her, but that day the requests were very numerous, and it, with others, was simply laid upon the desk without being read. That did not satisfy the importunate mother, and after the service, promise was made her that next day it should be the first request presented, and that it should be read in full. The next day she watched at home. A few minutes before noon she saw her daughter sink back in her bed as though dead. Still the mother knelt at the throne of grace and clung to the promise: "The prayer of faith shall save the sick." Noon came, and a few minutes after the request was laid before the meeting and earnest prayers were offered. These prayers the Lord graciously answered, for just at

a few minutes after noon, while prayer was being made, the daughter rallied, and the mother's joyous heart poured forth its thanksgivings to God.

On another occasion prayer was asked in behalf of a very efficient and useful Sunday-school worker, who had been prostrated by sickness. The physicians said there was little hope of recovery, but friends agreed to pray God to spare the sick man and restore him to health and usefulness. So urgent were they that they set apart a day for special supplication before God for the subject of their heart's anxiety. Friends in Jersey, where the sufferer lived, friends in Colorado, friends in England prayed in concert on the day designated, and from this meeting earnest entreaties arose on the same occasion. It pleased God in answer to prayer to bless the means used, and to restore the subject of so many entreaties at the throne of grace to sound health. He lived to devote his spared life to God's service in his wonted business calling, and in the special sphere of religious work that had so long engaged his heart.

We close this chapter with the statement of one, who, long a resident in this country, was born in a land across the sea. It is in further testimony to the value of the indirect results of this mother of meetings. "I am in measure indebted under God," said the brother, "to this meeting for the salvation of my soul. Soon after it was

started, and when I was living nearly three thousand miles away from this city, it was determined by some Christian people to hold just such a service in the town in which I resided. They hoped that similar blessings might be vouchsafed. Recovering very suddenly from the effects of what at first seemed to be a fatal accident, but which happily proved otherwise, I remember that on the day that I was first permitted to go out of doors I determined to visit the newly-established noon prayer-meeting. I felt anxious to acknowledge my gratitude to God for sparing my life. While at the service I heard a request read in which prayer was asked for the salvation of a young lady then very near death. I was led at once to ask myself, What if that were my case? If I were dying what would the end be? I had no assurance of peace with God, although seriously inclined and intending to be a Christian some day. That night I sought as never before the divine pardon for my sins, and the assurance of life everlasting. I had resolved to take neither sleep nor rest until I was assured I was a saved lad. Seeking earnestly I soon realized the joy of salvation. The first day I visited the prayer-meeting in token of my gratitude to God for a physical deliverance. On the next day I went to praise Him for delivering me spiritually. Nor did my heart alone thank God, for a letter of thanksgiving stated that the young

lady prayed for had passed away, expressing her firm hope in the saving mercy of God through Jesus Christ. As that prayer-meeting was a fruit of this, I felt that I ought to mention this incident here."

CHAPTER VII.

HELP FOR BUSINESS-MEN.

Help for Business-Men—Just in Time—Employment Found—A Word in Season—Jehovah Jireh—A Case of Conscience—A ten per cent. Rise—A Colored Widow's Rent Paid—Old Papers of Good Account—A Lesson From the Oxen—Comfort in a Word—Money in His Pocket—How it Came There—Supplies Stopped—A Blessing in Disguise—An Old Credit—A Supper Postponed and a Widow Helped—An Empty Pocket-book—Medical Mission Work—A Delayed Check.

The Fulton Street Prayer-meeting is a business-men's meeting, and it is natural that business men should bring their requests for prayer when in difficulties of a financial nature. It should be no strange thing to us that God's people should commit their way in commercial life to Him. Does He not assure us that He cares for the ravens and sparrows, and that He takes the census of the hairs upon our heads? He knows well our needs, and our Saviour bids us pray to "Our Father in Heaven," to "give us this day our daily bread." The injunction to pray is of itself an assurance that God will supply our daily wants. The subjoined incidents are but a few of the many related from time to time in the meeting, and the reader must decide for himself whether to conclude that they are coincidences

or answers to prayers which the All Wise Father has prompted His children to offer. Such we, at least, shall ever deem them to be. A merchant was in great distress about a note he had to meet. It was coming due the next day, and he had absolutely nothing with which to meet it. "I prayed God to help me in the great dilemma," he said, "and as I prayed, I felt distinctly impressed to read the sixth chapter of Matthew. I did so, and when I came to the last verse and read the words 'Take no thought for the morrow for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself: sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof;' I felt that that was God's response to my prayer, and I just resolved to take Him at His word and leave the morrow to His care. It came, but no money, and I had not received the money up till noon. But the needed amount came and came just in time." A gentleman was interested in the case of two tried friends who had long sought but failed to secure any employment. He had said to each of them "Send a request to the noon prayer-meeting." There was no particular virtue in this prayer-meeting above any other, they were reminded; but the act of sending such a request, if honestly and conscientiously done, was an acknowledgment that prayer was God's appointed means of securing a blessing. The requests were written and despatched by the individuals them-

selves and they continued their own earnest pleadings for guidance before God. The Lord heard, and one of them found most desirable employment before twenty-four hours passed, while the other was directed into a position a very few days after.

The brother who related these incidents and some others in token of God's continued goodness at the mercy seat, is in the habit of coming back to give glory to God for answers to prayers previously requested. Upon this particular occasion as he passed up the aisle, he caught sight of a friend, and grasping this friend's hand, whispered the words: "Jehovah Jireh"—only that and nothing more, but in that is the solution of many a difficult problem. The friend to whom he spoke was deep in thought. Difficulties were about his path in the Lord's service. "Where shall the needed help be secured?" he had just asked himself, when there came the words, "Jehovah Jireh." They were laden with comfort to him and dispelled all doubt. The help was soon forthcoming and the dealing of God's hand was plainly manifest. The help needed was of a financial nature.

We are to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. Such is the Divine order. Doing this, the supply of all temporal need is assured. "The night before last," said one, "a young man lost his

position. He was bidden by his employer to do something which he knew to be wrong. The deed was revolting to his conscience, and he politely but firmly declined to do it. On maintaining his ground, he was told that his services were no longer needed. His employer would judge so far as right and wrong were concerned and he was to do just what he was requested. If that arrangement did not suit him he could leave immediately. He at once resigned, and went home wondering where he should next secure employment. It was a matter of great importance for he was without means of his own, and had a wife and family dependent upon him for support. He resolved to leave the matter with the Lord. Next day he started to come to the noon prayer-meeting to present his case for prayer. He was detained, however, but in spirit he continued in prayer all that day. At night his employer called to see him. He wanted him back. A conscientious Christian man was needed in the position he had filled, and the employer owned that he would have acted just as his clerk did under similar circumstances. His position awaited him with an increase of ten per cent. in his salary. He went back rejoicing in the goodness of God which had more than made up to him what he supposed he had lost by faithfulness to conviction.

Business men are not alone in their need of financial help. A friend with a feeling for the wants and woes of others, started out one morning with the heavy burden of another on his heart. A colored widow who loved and trusted God was unable to pay her rent. The landlord said that if she could pay a certain small amount that day she could stay the remainder of the month. She did not know where to raise the money, and sought the missionary's aid. He had nothing, but bid her be of good cheer, for the Lord would certainly provide. He came to the prayer-meeting that noon with the widow's need uppermost in his mind, but asked no one for help, for this he never does. At the meeting he was given some tracts, and reading a notice on these that more could be had for distribution free of cost, he went to the place of publication and received a supply for use in his mission work. The gentleman who handed him the tracts then took from his pocket a small roll of bills, suggesting that perhaps he could distribute them to advantage. He thanked the donor, but did not count the bills until out of sight, when he found them exactly sufficient to meet the widow's rent. He had not given the slightest intimation of the case to the donor, nor indeed did he speak of money at all, the gentleman being a stranger. But the money was soon put to good account, and he thought he was even more

happy than the widow over the gracious answer to prayer.

God's providences are interwoven with infinite wisdom, and all tend towards the good of His people for time and for eternity. A lady in whose behalf prayer was asked had lost her husband a short while previously, and was in great embarrassment from want of means. Her husband was a lawyer, and his sickness and death entailed unexpected expenses upon the widow, as well as loss of the accustomed resources. Some of these expenses had been met by her, but for others provision had yet to be made. A sum of nearly fifty dollars was to be called for by a certain day. She had nothing towards it, and in this dilemma her case was presented for prayer. She received the needed help just at the essential moment. She had been destroying some of her husband's old papers. A friend in New York, a lawyer, had looked them over, and pronounced them as without value; but another acquaintance who saw her destroying some of them begged her to desist, suggesting that they might some day prove of service to others. She heeded his suggestion, and within a day or two an attorney from a Western city came to see her. He wanted evidence in a case of importance, and had been directed to the deceased lawyer's widow as the only one likely to give him the evidence which he sought. He

found her and asked leave to look over the husband's papers. He discovered some papers most necessary to the case in hand. They were several years old, but would serve to complete a chain of evidence. Fifty dollars was offered for them in cash, besides the promise of an early payment of two hundred more. Had these papers been destroyed, much injury would have been inflicted on others. Thus it pleased God to relieve a widow's need.

How many of us have been driven to the mercy-seat by our trials. Without them we should often neglect the throne of grace. A friend said he had been visiting one of the chosen of God who had been in a strait more than once in the past. But she had always been fed, and warmed, and clothed, and bore constant testimony to God's faithfulness. One Saturday night her supplies were entirely exhausted. She knelt in prayer and asked the Lord to supply her need during the Sabbath following. She had not long to wait for the required supplies. A lady soon after called, bringing with her a basket filled with good things. "Here is the answer to your prayer," said the visitor and left. The old lady was quite sure this was God's answer to her supplication, and none the less so because her prayer might have been overheard. She was rather deaf, and she ventured to think she might have prayed somewhat loudly, and so have unconsciously made known her need

to some others besides her Father in heaven. She told her visitor that she could never bear her many trials but for the mercy-seat. At home, when a child, she was wont to watch her father's oxen as they strained every nerve and muscle to drag a heavy load up-hill. Again and again it brought them to their knees, but they invariably succeeded. Her burdens had many a time brought her to her knees, and in her weakness she had received grace and strength from on high.

The following incident was related to show that he who casts his care upon God will be well cared for. A missionary was laid aside for some time through sickness. For several weeks he received his accustomed salary, but soon he was told that he must not expect this any longer. This was serious news, and the good man felt it keenly, but his wife grieved more about it than he did. After bidding her take courage and trust in God, he requested her to turn over the pages of the Word of God and read to him the first words on which her eyes might light. The wife did as desired, and her eye fell on the last verse of the last chapter of the Second Book of Kings. The missionary took this as an assurance that God would honor his faith. In the course of a day or two he was waited on by some friends, who told him that an *allowance* would be made him as long as he was sick and needed it. In view of the

verse previously read, the use of the word "allowance" seemed striking to both husband and wife.

A gentleman who divides his visits to the noon prayer-meetings between two of these institutions, as time permits or circumstances suggest, visited one of the two one noon, and was impressed with the thought that he should give some money to a stranger who sat in front of him. The idea was a singular one, but he could not shake it off. Presently the stranger rose to speak, but neither by word nor appearance did he in any way suggest any sense of need of money. Still the gentleman behind him determined to act upon his singular impulse, and, not knowing how else he should carry out his purpose, thrust a five dollar bill into the stranger's coat pocket. No sooner was the deed done than he began to accuse himself of great folly and want of forethought. The bill would be lost, drawn out with the handkerchief, and dropped in the street, and his intended beneficiary would know nothing of it. Then came the thought, that if this impulse was of God, the money would reach its proper destination. The stranger had left home in the morning heavily burdened, and returned home in the evening in the same condition. Money was sorely needed. As he parted with his wife, he had encouraged her by expressions of confidence that somehow the Lord would provide during the day. That

night no help came, but he still trusted. Next morning early, while pulling something from his pocket, the five-dollar bill fell out and dropped upon the floor. He could hardly believe his eyes. He called his wife and some of the other occupants of the house to see it, and regarding the help thus strangely sent as a direct answer to prayer,—for he and his wife had been praying all the previous day for aid,—he knelt down and gave vent to his feelings of gratitude to God. Owing to sickness, he had been brought into great straits, and the help was most timely. That day he attended another noon prayer-meeting, and related the incident to show how true was the assurance that the Lord would provide. Two other attendants at the meeting heard the story told with more than ordinary interest. One of the two was the friend who afterward related all the circumstances, and the other was the gentleman who had placed the five-dollar bill in the needy man's pocket. He had been telling his friend of his strange impulse, and was not a little gratified to learn that the money had not been lost. He was still better pleased to hear that it had proved so timely an answer to prayer. The strangers soon made one another's acquaintance, and other happy results followed.

Our God is ever mindful of His people and their wants. A widow in a certain city was in need. One

of her two sons had been very sick, and the other could not find employment. The poor woman's means were exhausted, and destitution was staring her in the face. She had requested her grocer to send her some coal, for her cellar was as empty as her pocketbook, and the coal came but the storekeeper was not inclined to increase the bill due to him for supplies; so, as the widow had no money, the coal was taken back to the grocer's bin. Now she was in a dilemma, for the grocer would not supply her with life's necessities, and in utter discouragement she sat down to think of her unhappy circumstances. "Mother," said her son, "let us ask God; I know He will help us." Together they knelt at the throne of grace, and after making known their wants to Him, they felt wonderfully relieved. But when one hour, one whole hour passed and no help came, the mother was inclined to be distrustful. Another hour slipped by, and still another, and another, till the twilight fell. No answer to prayer! no help from God had come. "Alas," thought the widow, "now I am forsaken." "Patience, mother," said the son, and just then the door-bell rang. God had sent a friend with a little help. Again the door-bell was heard, and a letter was delivered containing two dollars and a half. Then the other son came home with more cheering news than usual, and later yet, a lady who heard that the grocer's

man had taken back the coal, feared something was wrong and came to help. Next day more abundant aid was received. "God be thanked," said the son who had been sick, "that ever the grocer refused to leave the coal, for the occurrence has taught us more of our God—a lesson we shall never forget."

"When the Lord has done well by us we ought to tell of it," said one. "I was in a dilemma about the payment of a certain sum of money. The payment had to be made, but the money was not forthcoming. I laid my burden on the Lord, and felt sure I should be helped. I was prompted that morning to go down town and call on some of my old acquaintances of years gone by, whom I had not seen in a long time. I used to do a great deal of business with them, but all that had ceased. Imagine my surprise when they informed me that there was a sum of money standing to my credit on their books. They had long lost sight of me, and did not know how to send this money to me, but on my calling they paid me the amount. It was six times as much as the sum for which my immediate need called."

Thus doth He, who provided the manna for His people Israel in the wilderness, supply the wants of those who, in trusting Jesus, have become members of the Israel which is by faith. Thus as out of the hard rock streams of refreshing flowed, so out of experiences

hard as the rock, flow streams of blessing for the comfort of God's tried but trusting people.

A friend said one day, "I like to think of the Lord, not only in the greatness of His power, but in His wonderful condescension. He condescends to those of low estate. We are sometimes tempted to think so much of His greatness, that we fear He will not hear our prayers when we cry to Him about some small trouble. A widow who has recently lost a sister by death, and who has herself been prostrated mentally and physically by her bereavement, and by the care of four sick children, sent her request for prayer recently, telling you she had come to the Red Sea of trouble. She was hemmed in on every side. There seemed to be no way out of her difficulties. Her usual resources from her work had failed her, for sickness and nursing the sick had prevented her daily toil. Meanwhile bills had run up at the stores where she was accustomed to deal, and as a Christian she felt tried on this account, and was ashamed to seek extended credit. She wrote to me, and then at my suggestion besought your prayers. In her letter to me she mentioned the fact that she was fifty dollars in debt. She did not ask me for help, but only begged me to pray the Lord to help her. That night a lady brought, unasked, thirty dollars; and next day the sorrowing, suffering sister received twenty dollars more

from a friend at a distance. There was an interesting history connected with the thirty dollars. The husband of the lady who brought it belonged to a club, a rule of which involved a fine of one dollar for absence from any regular meeting. The fines had reached thirty dollars, which amount the members thought to dispose of for a supper, and the husband mentioned the fact to his wife. She was prompted to plead the widow's cause, expressing the belief that, having incurred the expense of a funeral for her sister she must be in need of help. The husband secured the consent of his club associates, and the money was donated as suggested.

A friend said he was spending his first hour in this city while thus meeting with God's people in prayer. He desired guidance, for he believed that where God guided, the divine favor and blessing were sure. He was anxious to enter upon a certain Christian work, for which he believed there was room in this city, but wanted to see God's way before he took a single step forward. He felt a little delicacy in mentioning personal matters, but a recent incident in his own experience was calculated to encourage some present, and he would venture to mention it. He was temporarily in another city before coming to New York. While there his means were exhausted, and as he had a wife and five children, the prospect was not cheering from a

human standpoint. But he knew that the Lord had care of him and all would be well. At length the pocket-book was literally empty, not containing so much as a cent. When the last cent had been disposed of, however, there came a letter from across the ocean, bringing the equivalent of fifty dollars.

The brother who related the foregoing now conducts a medical mission in this city. It is a work of faith, and its conduct involves seasons of trial. One noon he acknowledged that all along the Lord had been opening the way before him step by step, and so he had learned to wait upon God for the supply of his wants. On the day previous he and his associates had received less money than usual, which was rather a trying circumstance, as a payment was due the next morning, and there was no bank account from which to draw, and no one, as far as they knew, from whom they could ask aid. Then they cast their burden on the Lord, and retired to rest with an easy mind. The next morning came, and by the first mail was received a check for more than the amount required. This check, which was a contribution to the funds of the institution, was accompanied with the statement that the donor had made it out some days before, but had accidentally omitted to send it. To the recipients it seemed as though the Lord in His wise providence had kept the check back until the needed hour.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE OLD, OLD STORY.

The Spiritualist Saved—Running Away From Himself—Making a Promise and What Came of it—Too Far Gone, Yet Saved—On Ruin's Road—A Timely Question—In Strange Company—A Drunkard in the Meeting—Two Captains Saved—Whither Bound?—Shut Out—A Startling Thought—A Happy Young Man—A Mistake Corrected—Stop—A Miracle of Grace—A Thrilling Scene—Father and Son—Forty Years of Prayer—They Called Him Brother.

The story of redeeming love, though so often repeated, is a wonderful one, and as refreshing as it is wonderful. The personal testimonies to the power of God's saving grace, given from time to time in the meeting, are often thrilling, and as heaven is to resound with shouts of sovereign grace, these experiences almost seem as echoes of the heavenly songs. One who for eighteen years had been deluded with the hallucinations of spiritualism told his story. He got along with the spiritualists until his children died. The loss of his loved ones sorely tried him, and when, soon after, his wife was snatched away by death, the trial proved overwhelming. In vain he sounded all the depths of spiritualism for comfort. It yielded none. Meanwhile he heard the Lord saying to him, "My son give Me thine heart;" but he

resisted the loving appeal, determined, as he had lived so long a spiritualist, to continue one to the end of his life. For some days he struggled against the solemn convictions which the Holy Spirit was forcing upon him, but he could not get away from them. In his distress he sought out a Christian prayer-meeting and seized the earliest opportunity to make his case known. He stated boldly that he had despised the doctrine of the atonement thus far, but now felt that he was a great and terrible sinner before God, and begged the prayers of those assembled. He desired to find a saving interest in the very atonement he had so long ignored. His confession was whole hearted as well as humble, and had no sooner been made than he realized the truth of the words: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Peace came as he spoke. He realized that his sins were atoned for by Christ, that the Saviour's crimson blood had washed the dark stain away.

The meeting felt much interest in a friend who said he was on his way home and would like the prayers of Christians, for God's blessing on his efforts to do something for Christ among his relatives and neighbors at home. Three years before he came to this city a miserable man. He had lived a sinful life and when spoken

to on the affairs that make for the soul's everlasting welfare, he avowed himself an atheist. He left home and friends to get away from himself, to get away from his father's Christian counsels, and his mother's constant prayers. His parents told him he could never get away from God, and never get away from himself. He laughed at all their warnings, and left for New York. But he found no peace in the great city. His sin came with him. Then he bethought him that the North river was left to him, and he would bury himself and his sorrows there if brighter days did not soon dawn. He was led in the midst of his gloom to the place where prayer was wont to be made. Here he heard requests for prayer for just such sinners as he was, from just such mothers as was his. It was too much for him. He was greeted kindly by Christian friends who fain would have forced him into the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus. But his heart was obdurate, and he felt that he could not succumb all at once. He determined to search for light, however, and by and by he realized most certainly and solemnly the presence of God. Then he passed through a conviction of sin such as he had never experienced and under which he could not rest. He cried for mercy and earnestly sought therefor till it appeared to him that he stood alone with Christ who bid him be of good cheer for his sins were forgiven

him. Such had been God's dealings with him and he was now on his way home to confess the Saviour in the very place and among the very people where he had so boldly denied Him.

A happy looking man rose to testify to his joy in the Lord Jesus. His heart seemed to be so full of bliss that it had overflowed and made his eyes sparkle and his countenance shine. "I must tell you what my dear Master has done for me," he said. "It will be a month to-morrow since I found Christ. I was wandering through the streets one day, as I had wandered many a time before, without aim or purpose, when a gentleman stopped me and invited me to come to a mission meeting. I wanted to get rid of him; so I took the address of the place where the meeting was held and said I would come. I did not mean to go to the meeting at all, but God intended I should go. Conviction of sin came upon me, and when night fell I was only too glad to go to the mission service, for I felt that I must get rid of the load on my heart, and I thought that some one there would tell me how to be saved. I went, and Jesus revealed His saving mercy to me. Now, dear friends, I want you to pray that I may find my wife and child again, and pray that they may be converted. Two years ago they were compelled to leave me, owing to my dissipation and rascality." This convert's prayer

was answered, for shortly after the wife and child returned to him, and he publicly renewed his expressions of gratitude to God.

“I rejoice in the saving power of Jesus,” exclaimed another. “When He saves He saves to keep. He saves to the uttermost. I was a poor, miserable, degraded drunkard. I did not believe there was anything in store for me but shame, and disgrace, and sorrow. Not one of all who knew me believed I should ever be anything better than I was. My wife had lost heart. ‘He is too far gone,’ she would say, ‘for me to hope he will change.’ Yet it pleased God to save even me. Five years ago I first found mercy. For some weeks after I experienced the saving love of God. I wondered whether my happiness would last. It seemed too good to be of long continuance, but it has lasted ever since. The power of grace can overcome the power of every degraded appetite. Christ is able to keep from falling those who put their trust in Him.”

A young man said that in this meeting he first found the Saviour. He was wandering down the street, aye, and wandering on the broad road to ruin, too, when he entered the prayer service. He had lived to no purpose and was a miserable man. Some one in the meeting saw him, and noticing that he wore a sad countenance, spoke to him asking if he was a Christian. The ques-

tion went as an arrow to his heart. In that hour he resolved to forsake his evil ways and turn to the Lord. He found this possible when he sought help of God, and now rejoiced to believe that his feet were treading the narrow way to life eternal.

“I came here about six years ago,” was the story of another, “in a very unfit condition for any public assembly. For many years I had heard of this meeting, and, that being my first visit to New York, I determined to come and see for myself the service of which I had so repeatedly heard. I had long been a slave to drink, and I was under its influence when I came here. Soon after I entered, a Christian brother prayed. There was something about that prayer which made me feel that this was no place for me. The society of God’s children was not for me. When I left the meeting God’s convicting power was laid upon me in great measure, and I felt compelled to cry for mercy. The Lord showed me mercy and saved me. I have proved His grace sufficient to keep me ever since. By His grace He has enabled me to lead a few souls to the Saviour, a privilege indeed.”

A sea-captain spoke with great enthusiasm as he told us the story of his salvation. He had been a Christian for only seven months, but declared that in that time he had known more real satisfaction and joy than in all

the years of his previous experience. It had been his peculiar pleasure, too, to lead another sea-captain to the Lord Jesus Christ. The latter had been laid on a bed of sickness, his death-bed, in fact, as it afterwards proved. Many of his old comrades called to see him, but they had nothing better to talk about than business, and the old man wearied of their conversation. He realized that he was nearing the grave and that he had more important matters calling for his concern than any which had ever before engaged his attention. "Whither bound?" was the question which stirred his soul. So when the speaker told the sick man of the joy he had found in Christ, the sufferer felt that this was just what he needed. His visitor commanded a vessel which plied between New York and a southern port, and so his visits were not so frequent to the sick man's chamber as he could have wished; but he prayed, and God heard his prayer. Upon the occasion of his last visit to the dying man, he had the joy of hearing him say that he too had found the peace which passeth understanding. When next he called, he found that his friend had departed this life, but when dying had given utterance to the joy he felt in the possession of a hope in Jesus.

A young man told the meeting he had been a drunken, blaspheming, fighting man. He stumbled

accidentally, as he supposed, but providentially as the results proved, into the prayer-meeting. As he entered, the leader of the meeting was reading an account of the Flood and the deliverance of Noah and his family so safely housed in the Ark. "And the Lord shut him in," were the words that fell on the young man's ear as he took his seat. "And the rest of the world were shut out," something seemed to say to him; and then he thought of the day when the storm of God's wrath against sin should fall on all not safe in the spiritual ark, the Lord Jesus Christ. He remembered his past life, so crowded with sin, and it seemed to him as though the door of mercy were already closed against him. "Outside, outside," everything around him seemed to say. But God had not forsaken him; mercy was in store for him. While in the darkness of despair, the Sun of Righteousness shone upon his soul, and he saw that where sin abounds God can make grace much more abound. He sought pardon through the blood of the atoning Lamb, and found it.

Another said he had never dreamed of finding pleasure in religion but had regarded it as a dull and dreary affair. "Some years ago I came in here," he went on to say, "a lover of pleasure and not of God. I was fond of the world, and while I thought religion might do for the old or sick, it seemed to me foreign to youth

and health and happiness. Still, there was something which impressed me in the service which I attended. Here were business men who could leave their absorbing business concerns to spend an hour or part of an hour in the prayer-room. Young men were here, too, and they looked and spoke as though they knew a pleasure and joy to which I was a stranger. The impression of that hour deepened, until I was led to seek in Christ the peace and happiness which I had foolishly thought the world could yield. Thus I have learned that the only real liberty is in having the love of God shed abroad in the heart."

Once again the power of prayer was shown in the case of a gentleman who having become a victim of strong drink, did not stop in his career until he was a veritable sot. His friends used various means and repeated their well-meant efforts for his restoration. At last discouraged at the failure of all their attempts, they gave up the task in despair. But two Christian ladies pledged themselves and each other to pray for the man's salvation. They prayed long and earnestly, and yet the subject of their many supplications pursued his evil way. One day they sent an urgent plea for prayer to the noon-meeting. They were present and heard the request read. Their silent prayers ascended while brethren prayed audibly. As this intercession

was being made at the throne of the heavenly grace, the man, while on the way to the resort at which he was wont to feed his miserable appetite for rum, felt himself most strangely arrested. He could not go a single step farther. He returned, wondering what mysterious influence thus stayed him in his course. It was undoubtedly the hand of God. From that day there was a change. The many prayers of faithful loving hearts were heard in high heaven, and what human efforts never could avail to do, grace accomplished. The subject of so many supplications became a happy useful Christian. Surely his salvation was a miracle of grace.

An affecting scene was witnessed one noontide. Side by side sat a father and son. The son was a man of mature years, and the father bore many marks of old age. The son rose to express his gratitude to God for deliverance from a cruel bondage. For forty years he had been a dissipated man. He had run greedily in the way of evil and every single day of those forty years, he had trampled under foot the prayers and pleadings of his Christian father. Through twice a score of years his faithful parent had besought the Lord to save the wanderer. Moreover, with entreaties as persistent, he had sought to induce the son to turn to the Lord and seek pardon for his guilt and power to forsake his sin. But the blessing tarried long, and hope

deferred had depressed the weary waiting heart of the father. Yet still he prayed and still he pleaded until at last the Lord granted him his heart's desire. The son was led by one who had trodden the same evil paths, but who had since tasted the joys of the new life, to seek the Saviour. Seeking earnestly, he found Christ, and found Him to be a friend indeed.

While the father of this returned prodigal sat on one side of him, on the other side sat the friend who had been God's instrument in his salvation. He told us, in a few words, how he himself had been saved. He had been for years a sad profligate. When in the lowest condition of dissipation and disgrace, some praying Christian women in the city where he lived, sought him out. They won his heart by a word of which they made use. They called him "brother," and this when he regarded himself as a poor lost outcast. These godly women told him of Christ, who, with a heart full of sympathy for the enslaved, and hands ready to liberate them, said: "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." He could not but feel that there was something in religion that should induce women of such respectability and social standing to give him a thought. That they should call him "brother," was strange and inexplicable, and he could not understand it until grace solved the mystery.

CHAPTER IX.

TROPHIES OF GRACE.

The Canal Boat Captain—A Wife's Prayers—Chief of Sinners—Bethel Work—One of the Saved—A Stranger's Story—Leading others to Christ—Hope for the Hopeless—An Old Man's Story—A Young Man's Story—Bread Cast upon the Waters, Returning after Many Years—Bent on Suicide—A Strange Sound—Finds a Friend—A Strange Prayer—The Power of Song—Ready to Sink—The Fountain Hymn—Frowning Providences—Portuguese Hymn—Old Memories Revived.

A regular attendant at the meeting is a canal boat captain who "followed the canal," as he said, from fifteen years of age until he was thirty-two, lived without any concern about the claims of God upon him or the welfare of his immortal soul. The Lord gave him a praying wife, and she was as earnest and devoted a Christian as he had been a servant of sin and Satan. She was wont to plead at the mercy seat for the salvation of her Christless husband. After two years of loving service as a wife, she died. Before she died, however, she prayed God most importunately, that her husband might be saved. That prayer was answered. There came over the man's mind an overwhelming sense of his sinfulness. This continued for eleven months, and with the sorrow occasioned by the loss of his wife,

made him feel that life was insufferable. So deep was his conviction of sin that he felt there could be no other such sinner upon the face of the globe. By and by there seemed to come a supreme moment, when he must be rid of his awful load, or die. His eye lighted on a Bible, and picking it up he sat down to read it. Here was hope, here comfort. Here were light and life. There came upon him a strange sense of the presence of God. Deeply solemnized he continued to read. These words attracted him: "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." His case exactly, he thought. "I am a sinner, chief of sinners, and I believe that," he said to himself, his faith resting on the assurance that Christ had indeed come, and come to save him. In a moment there came a flood of heavenly light. The darkness was gone; salvation's day had dawned. He had made the blest exchange, for condemnation, justification; for death, life; for hell, heaven. Since his conversion, the brother has had the joy of pointing other souls to Christ, especially among men of his own calling. He has fitted up a chapel on a canal boat, where services are held for these men, who are frequently regarded as so hard to reach. The influences of redeeming grace have blessed many of them and made them new creatures in Christ Jesus.

Gospel services, held at night, have been attended by men whose lives have been spent in sin ; utterly godless, reckless men. At these meetings hearts have been melted and rough men have been seen weeping like children. The work has special significance in the winter. In the warm weather the canals are open and the men are scattered, so the winter months are the harvest time.

A young man rose one day to tell of God's dealings with him. He was a canal boat man "a canaller," he said, as careless and godless as the worst of them, but he heard of Christ at these Bethel services, and seeing some of his comrades in evil seeking mercy and forgiveness from God, he felt that if they needed to confess their sins and cry for mercy, he did too. He was laid under deep conviction and found no rest till he came to Christ.

A stranger cheered our hearts with the story of his own conversion to Christ and then with the story of the conversion of two others whom, under the blessing of God, he had been enabled to lead to the Saviour. Strong drink had been his trouble and the hateful appetite had entirely ruined him, when he was led to see not only his abject misery, but also the guilt of his misspent life. He had scarcely discovered his lost estate when grace revealed to him the way of salvation

through the Crucified. It was then no difficult matter for him to accept Jesus, for he had no questioning as to his need of such a Saviour. He was too thoroughly alive as to his condition as a sinner, to question his need of Divine interposition. His plea at heaven's throne was a very simple one—"Lord save or I perish,"—but it was as successful as it was simple, and he rejoiced in the liberty wherewith Christ makes free.

The brother, when saved himself, at once felt concerned about the salvation of others. He spoke to several of his shopmates about the Saviour, but at first with but little encouragement. But by and by he was called to the death bed of one to whom he had spoken, and to whom his changed life spoke with even greater force than his most earnest words. To use the speaker's own language, he told this dying man, "in his own crooked way," of salvation as he had received it through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The sick man was an earnest listener and soon gave evidence that the Holy Spirit had effected the all important change in his heart. Another case was that of one of his shopmates, who used to ridicule all efforts made to turn him from the error of his way. He would frequently say, "Well, mate, when I am taken sick, I shall send for some one to pray for me who has lived a different kind of life from what you have lived." This may or may

not have been the feeling of the man's heart, but before long he was taken sick, and without delay sent for his converted shopmate. The latter cheerfully responded to the call, although realizing that he was, in himself, very unfitted for the work. In that realization lay, in measure, the secret of his power, for it led him to seek Divine aid. The same way of salvation was plainly set before this sick man, and he too, gave testimony to his felt interest in Jesus of Calvary.

The testimony of a brother, well advanced in years, touched every heart. Until two years previously the speaker had been a drunkard of the lowest type. He had sold himself, body and soul, to the debasing appetite for strong drink. "I was a poor, degraded drunkard," he said, with considerable emotion, "and my friends had given me up in despair. They said there was no hope for the poor old man; he would live and die a drunkard. But Jesus, the blessed Lord Jesus, saw me, and He took pity on me and saved me.) Friends, I was in despair about myself, but, weighed down by my sin, I just simply gave myself to the Lord Jesus, and He saved me. Since then I have been kept from my besetting sin by His grace, and not a drop of the stuff, that sunk me so low, has passed my lips. I speak all this in gratitude and adoration to the Saviour, for saving me when lost, and for His keeping grace during

the past two years. May the same grace keep me till the end and prepare me for my final call."

A young man said he was only nine months old in the divine life. Brought up in the Church of Rome, his faith was of a most superstitious kind, and equally superficial. He had been the willing slave of sin and a dissipated young man. He was induced by an acquaintance to attend a prayer meeting one night, where many such as he, had been led to see their need of a Saviour and turn from their errors and follies without the mediation of a priest, saint, or the Virgin Mary, to the Lord Jesus Christ. Going simply out of curiosity he was deeply impressed with what he saw and heard. Men who had been brought up in sin told the story of their redemption in Christ and of the great joy they had found in Him. It was evident to the young man that they lived a life far happier than his, and that religion was at the foundation of it. He went again and again, and then feeling his need of a Saviour on account of his lost condition, he cried to God for mercy. He had never been taught to pray, but he found himself crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Nor did he plead in vain, for he soon became assured that God had heard his prayer, and for Christ's sake had forgiven him all his sins. He was very happy in his newly found joy, and rejoiced still more as grace

enabled him to overcome his former sins, which had so completely obtained the mastery over him. But he soon discovered that he should need the grace of God in other ways. All his old comrades called him turn-coat because he had gone back on Rome as well as rum, while they were wedded to both. Moreover, his own family, more particularly his mother, would have nothing more to do with him, save as far as it was in their power to persecute him. Yet none of these things moved him, save to lead him to prayer for more grace.

We are to cast our bread upon the waters with the expectation of finding it even after many days. A friend said he had reason to express great gratitude to God for his saving goodness. Forty years ago an acquaintance gave him a religious book. The gift was made the occasion of a prayer to God by the giver that it might prove the means of the recipient's conversion. The giver died some years ago and the incident had passed from the speaker's memory. Forty years after the volume came to light in an unexpected manner, and its contents, the memory of the giver, the fact of his death, the circumstances under which the book was given, all told upon his heart. Deep conviction of sin ensued, and conversion resulted. We are to sow the seed at all times, too, to sow in the morning and in the evening, not to withhold our hand. Results are with

God, and although many are revealed in time, eternity alone will reveal others. The missionary related a most encouraging incident. Two days previously a stranger greeted him after the service. The stranger knew the missionary well but was not recognized in return. This was his story :

“Eleven years ago I was a Christless man. I wandered one noon through the streets of this city, without friends, without home, without means, and utterly without hope. I determined to die and was on my way to commit suicide. As I passed down Fulton Street, I heard the sound of singing, hymn singing it was. I was surprised at such a sound in the busiest hour of the day. I turned to find that I was passing a church, since pulled down. My curiosity prompted me to enter. I had scarcely taken my seat when a gentleman in front of me of whom I knew nothing and who knew nothing of me, rose to pray. In his prayer he asked the Lord to bless and save any despairing ones present, and keep any one who might be possessed of self-destructive intentions from putting those intentions into practice. I was considerably astonished, and was arrested in my wicked designs. After the service you spoke to me, and finding out my need, you took me home with you, fed me, and kept me for the night. I was laid under deep conviction of sin ; you pointed me to Christ, and I was enabled to look to Him as my Saviour.”

The brother detailed his movements since his con-

version, spoke of his finding work, meeting with great success, and of his then very happy condition and surroundings near a distant city. He introduced to the missionary his wife and children, and was profuse in his expressions of thanks to God for finding for him such a friend in the dark hour of despair.

The meeting has a hymn-book of its own. It is not a large volume, and its hymns are among the oldest of our sacred songs. The missionary sets them to the best known tunes, so that all may sing, and the singing is always hearty. One or two verses are sung at a time, seldom more, and oftentimes the songs have proved as useful and helpful as the prayers. While the voices blend the hearts blend, too, and many a man has been brought to his feet to tell some story of the Lord's goodness and mercy which the strain of a hymn has recalled.

We had been singing the words "Just as I am without one plea," &c., when a stranger arose and said:

"That was the hymn which brought me to Christ. I long felt that I was a sinner, but I thought myself too bad for Jesus, so I endeavoured to improve myself a little. The more I tried to make myself better the worse I seemed to grow. Then I gave up all my attempts in despair. I heard that hymn sung and it shed new light in my heart. I saw that I was to come to the Saviour just as I was. It was because I was a sinner that Jesus invited me to come, and because of this

that I needed a Saviour. I came,—came just as I was, and found pardon. That was a glad day for me, and the gladness has been increasing ever since.”

On another occasion the words

“Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God,” etc.

led a friend to tell of God’s grace as manifested to him. The Saviour had come to him a year before and had saved him when a drunkard, a gambler and a profane man. He was a great sinner, but Jesus had mercy on him. The Lord had knocked hard at his door before it was opened, but at last he yielded. He had a little boy whom he dearly loved. The lad sickened and died. On the day of the funeral he himself was sick from the effects of dissipation and could not attend the solemn service, but these warnings haunted him. He realized that God was speaking to him, and convicted of his sin he sought and found the Saviour.

The leader one noon said he was present for the last time. He was about to seek a permanent home in Kansas. He had often been in the meeting before, but upon one occasion his attendance was fraught with eternal results. He came in a helpless, hopeless, lost man. He had been a sad slave of dissipation. Friends had long since ceased to indulge the hope of his improvement, and he just felt that he was sinking

into ruin here and hereafter. He sat near the leader's desk, despondent,—aye, despairing. Who could help him? He could not sink much lower on earth,—but with no one to pity and no one to save, he must soon sink into the hell that seemed greedily gaping to receive him. Never more miserable, just then his ear was arrested by the words of a verse of a hymn, called for by the friend in the chair :

“How can I sink with such a prop
As my eternal God?”

were all the words he caught, but they set him thinking ; thinking that possibly the Lord had led him to the meeting, and that there was yet hope for him. Next day he presented his request for prayer, and ere long was rejoicing in Christ as his Saviour. He has been a very active and useful Christian since, and on the occasion of his farewell visit to the meeting, was about to start West, there to work for the divine Master.

Another blessed God for “the Fountain Hymn.” “Fourteen months ago I was a poor sinner,” he said ; “a very profane man, and a miserable prodigal. I was invited into a meeting where God's people were praying for poor outcasts like me. As I entered I heard them singing of the ‘fountain filled with blood,’ and that song went to my heart. I felt that if ever a man had sin I had, and if ever a man needed cleansing I did ; and so

I sought the prayers of Christians in my behalf. I was soon rejoicing in Christ, and since then I have learned that God can help His people in temporal matters as well as in spiritual. He who gave His Son to die for the salvation of our souls, will not fail to help us in providing for the need of the body."

A business man entered the meeting heavily burdened and sadly cast down. He had hardly taken his seat when the leader called for two verses that proved a great comfort to him. The meeting sung—

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform."

And again—

"Behind a frowning providence,
He hides a smiling face."

He felt that he was certainly walking beneath a frowning providence, but he had not felt so assured of the smiling face beyond. The song cheered his heart, however, and strengthened his faith. He went away determined to look for the smiling face, and soon it appeared to him from out of the cloud. The Lord most graciously helped him. Well may we bless God for the songs of Zion, that like bees fresh from the blossoms, are laden with honey and sweetness.

A city missionary related another incident, showing the power of Christian song. He brought with him one noon an unconverted gentleman and his wife. They

had come to New York city on a pitiful errand, namely, to identify the body of a murdered son. As they were without the consolation of the Gospel in this their hour of trial, the missionary brother felt deeply for them, and induced them to attend the prayer-meeting with him. Among the verses sung was the one commencing—

“The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose ;”

and it was sung to the old familiar strains of “Portuguese Hymn.” The sorrowing father’s heart was touched. He had not heard those words sung for well nigh fifty years. Then his mother used to sing them and to the very same tune. He was deeply affected, and the missionary hoped not without good and lasting results.

CHAPTER X.

A CHAPTER FOR MOTHERS.

Mothers' Prayers—Sorrowing Hagar—A Mother's Gift—The Old Story—A Prodigal's Return—He Would Not Give Up—A Rich Legacy—A Scandinavian's Story—Birthday Reflections—After Twenty Years—A Half Century of Prayers—An Unspeakable Debt—A Happy Man—A Sailor's Mother—Praying Fathers—The Saved Actor—Only One Cure—Only Three Words—Jesus, Altar, Come—A Wife's Prayers—Amazing Grace—A Praying Sister—A Mighty Change.

The majority of the requests received are from mothers for sons. Precious in God's sight are a mother's prayers. He who pitied Hagar as she watched her dying boy in the wilderness, pities sorrowing mothers now. He who stayed the mournful procession near Nain, and restored to a widowed mother her only son, when death had laid him low, brings to life to-day the sons spiritually dead. It is fitting that a few of the answers to mothers' prayers should be recorded here, and grouped in a chapter for mothers. This story was related by a minister who led the meeting. For many years a mother besought the Lord to save her son, but the son seemed the same unconcerned young man in spite of all her pleadings. By and by the mother died

—died not having seen the desire of her heart, but strong in the confidence that her God would yet grant her request. The young man was a student at college when his mother thus passed away. Soon after her decease he took down from a shelf in his room at college, a little book that had long remained unused. It was a Bible—a gift from his mother. He opened it when he caught sight of these lines upon the fly-leaf:

“Remember, love, who gave you this,
When other days shall come,
When she who had your earliest kiss
Sleeps in her narrow home;
Remember, 'twas a mother gave
The gift to one she'd die to save.

“A parent's blessing on her son
Goes with this holy thing;
The love that would retain the one
Must to the other cling;
Remember 'tis no idle toy,
A mother's gift! Remember, boy!

The young man's heart was touched. That night he attended prayer-meeting. He was under deep conviction of his need of a Saviour, and in a very little while he made public avowal of his allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ.

A minister rose to request prayer for the unconverted son of a Christian mother. This mother had requested him to present her plea to the meeting. The speaker said

that such a request invariably touched his heart, for to his mother's prayers he owed, under God, his salvation. This touched another heart, for immediately a stranger sprang to his feet to express his indebtedness to a mother's prayers. Six years before his mother was left a widow with two sons. Their father left each of them some property. They wasted their substance in riotous living, and continued in a life of sinful dissipation until their mother's heart was broken. One of the two sons died. The other, having spent all, began to be in want. He was ashamed of himself, and resolved to get as far away from home as possible. He left his native land and came to this country seeking a shelter from the power of his own evil heart and the chains of evil habit which for years had bound him. He could not get away from his mother's prayers, however, for they followed him everywhere. At length he heard the voice of Jesus calling him and hearing, he heeded. He marvelled at the grace which saved him and could only declare that the half was never told.

A young man said one day, "I am with you for the first time, and I want to thank you for your prayers offered in my behalf. For many years my mother prayed for me, and then sent a request here asking you to supplicate with her at God's throne of grace. In one of the printed reports of the meeting that re-

quest was noticed, and caught my eye. I could not forget it: the thought that I was thus prayed for haunted me, and I could get no rest until I went to the Saviour, confessed my sin, and found forgiveness. I bless God that my mother would not give up praying for me, and that she was led to send the request here, for that was the means under God of my being brought to Christ. This was an encouraging incident, following as it did, the presentation of a request from a mother who wrote: "I have been praying for thirty years for the conversion of my son; oh, pray God to save him now."

How rich is the legacy of a mother's prayers, and how blessed when God, who treasures up those supplications, answers them in the salvation of the loved one, even when those who prayed are in eternity. The change that grace effects in a man's heart and life was the subject of remark at one of the meetings. "I will present you two pictures," said one, "pictures of myself at two different periods of my career. A few years since I came from Boston to New York. Sin had made me poor, and I had begged a pass. There was not a man on the boat so miserable as I. I was just trying to get away from myself, and I wished most earnestly that I could get away from God. The thought that there was a God terrified me. If I only

could have persuaded myself that death would end all, I would not have hesitated to make away with myself. Alas! I could not get away from the just and holy God and I could not get away from my miserable, sinful self. How wretched I was! It seems hardly credible that one human heart could contain so much agony as I then endured. As soon as I reached New York, in spite of a determination to forsake past follies, I made as quickly as possible for the nearest rum-hole. I knew that drink would drown my sorrows for a while. That is the first picture. This year I made the same journey on the same boat, on the same day of the month as before, but, oh, how changed my condition! I was no more a moral wreck, a miserable, dissipated, drunken man. God had saved me. In one of your meetings in this city held two years ago I heard Jesus preached as the Saviour of the lost. If ever a man was lost, I was, and I felt that I must be the very one that Jesus came to save. My sins were many and great, but I found his mercy greater, and trusting him I became a saved man. Friends, my salvation was an answer to prayer. My mother was a praying woman, and her last dying words were spent in supplication to God to save her dissipated boy. My father, too, continued to pray for me, old man as he was, till he heard to the joy of his heart, that God had plucked me

a brand from the burning, and made me a new creature in Christ Jesus.

A Scandinavian said: "God hears and answers prayer I know, for he heard and answered my mother's prayers for me. Years and years ago, in our home in Scandinavia, she prayed that I might give my heart to Jesus. But my mother and my father died before I felt any concern about my soul. After their death I came to this country, and then I followed the sea, and then served in the army. Go where I would, on land, or sea, I could not escape the memory of that mother's prayers. They pursued me everywhere, until at last I gave my heart to Jesus and became a Christian man. I do not expect ever to give my testimony here again, as I am going far away, and I ask you to pray that I may be honest and earnest in my Christian life. Pray, too, for one in whom I am interested. I am hoping for his conversion. He asked me what conversion meant. I told him that it was to 'right-about-face.' He knows what that means, for he has been in the army. Do pray that he may turn from sin and seek the Saviour."

Another said that a faithful mother's prayers had been answered in his case. He was not a Christian when that mother died, but on her death-bed she made him promise, that upon every anniversary of his birthday he would consider his spiritual condition and examine his standing before God. His mother passed away, and soon came the first birth-day. It found him

wandering far in sin. The second found him still further gone in his ways of evil, but the memory of that dying mother aroused him. Serious reflection followed, and while in this serious frame of mind he entered the prayer-meeting—accidentally, he then thought—and there seeing himself a sinner before God, he sought and found the way of life.

On another occasion a gentleman said :

“ I am a monument to the efficacy of a mother’s prayers, and to the faithfulness of God, who has promised to hear His people when they pray. For more than twenty years did my Christian mother plead with God for the salvation of my soul. I often wonder she did not get discouraged, but she had God’s sure word of promise to lean upon, and she resolutely held to that. She needed this support for her faith, for while she prayed I went farther and farther from God. But it pleased the Lord at length to answer the pleadings of a score of years, and when He did answer there was joy in that faithful mother’s heart I assure you. Eight months ago God in great mercy showed me what a poor, miserable sinner I was. Then I not only felt the weight of my flagrant, high-handed transgressions, but I felt also the solemn weight of my mother’s prayers. I knew she had been praying for me. I had known this all along, and I felt then that it was no small sin to have trampled under foot, as it were, a mother’s earnest, constant pleadings. But if this were sin, how much more guilty had I been in trampling under foot the Saviour’s blood? The enor-

mity of my guilt grew upon me. I felt that it was high time to seek God's face, and plead in my own person the blessing my mother had so long sought for me. I was soon happy in the consciousness that great as my sin had been it was all forgiven, and the stain of it clean gone forever, washed away in the blood of the Lamb. Thanks be to God for His saving love, and thanks be to Him again for a Christian mother's prayers."

Twenty years of faithful prayer is something wonderful; how much more so half a century of earnest pleading. This surprising story was told in the meeting:

"I desire to bear testimony to the power of prayer. For fifty years I led a life of sin. Through all those years my faithful Christian mother prayed for my salvation. Year by year passed, and still I was not saved; and when she died at the age of ninety-four, I was still an unsaved, godless man. But in the year that my mother died, it pleased God to have mercy upon me, and I became a saved man in Christ Jesus. This Jesus is my hope to-day. He is my salvation and my glory."

"I can never forget what I owe, under God, to a mother's prayers," said another. "Year after year, year after year, for so many years she prayed for me. At times she would speak to me about Christ, but I used to argue with her. She could not always answer my arguments, but she could keep on praying; and what arguments can stand against a mother's prayers? God met me when I was professing to believe that there was

no God and led me to Himself. Since then He has wonderfully blessed me, and I can see His hand in everything. I do not know how to thank Him as I ought and would like to do for all His goodness."

A sailor bore the same testimony to the power of a mother's prayers. When he left home for a seafaring life he was a wild, reckless fellow, with no fear of God before his eyes. His mother had long prayed for his conversion. He knew this, and sometimes taunted her about her continued praying, and its apparent lack of any result. Her reply was, "Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days. I shall yet have the answer to my prayers, my son. In God's good time he will save you." The son only laughed, but away at sea he was laid by God the Holy Spirit under deep conviction of sin, and could not rest until he had found rest in Christ. He had since found the grace of the Lord Jesus a source of great joy on land and sea, at home or abroad, when a prisoner of war, and on the sick bed in the hospital. Everywhere Christ had proved precious.

We must not ignore the value of a father's prayers. Not infrequently are fathers heard from here. Grace does not run in the blood, and godliness is not always contagious, as Christian fathers often supplicate long and earnestly for their graceless sons. The meeting is

sometimes led by a friend, who, for many years, was an actor. Although the son of pious parents, his father being a minister of the Gospel, he departed from the right way and sought evil associations. He journeyed fast on ruin's road. His brother on the contrary cleaving to the counsels of father and mother, made the God of his parents his God, and entered the Christian ministry. Father, mother, and son, united their prayers before the throne on behalf of the recreant prodigal. Years passed, and still the unsaved and unheeding son walked in forbidden paths. But at length God's set time to answer the prayers of years had come; the man was awakened to a sense of his sad estate, was convicted of sin, and led to the Lord Jesus Christ as his only hope of salvation. Just as he was saved, the father was taken to his eternal rest and reward, and passed away praising God for answered prayer. The son is now engaged in very active service for Christ.

In broken English a young sailor gave his testimony to the efficacy of a father's prayers.

"I came to this country," said he, "thinking to be a free man in a free country. I wanted liberty. Many a time had my father prayed for me and his parting words were, 'May God bless you, my son.' Not many days after I landed I entered a Methodist church, simply out of curiosity. I wanted to see what went on there. I heard the preacher inviting those desiring salvation to come to the

altar. I knew by the motions he made and from seeing the people going forward, what he meant, though the only three words he said that I understood, were, 'Jesus,' 'altar,' 'come.' Still, I felt as if I ought to go forward. I felt in my heart that I was a sinner and that I ought to be on my knees seeking pardon from God. Well, I went up to the altar, and while there, some of the brethren spoke to me, but I did not comprehend what they said. For some days I sought peace and then God forgave my sins for Christ's sake. Some months after that I resolved to go home and tell how great things Jesus had done for me. My faith was tested on the way, for a great storm arose and threatened to sink the vessel. To a fellow-passenger who asked me if I was not terrified, I replied, 'No indeed, for if I do not reach the city of Hamburgh, I shall reach the city of the New Jerusalem. I am on the good ship Zion, and that always makes a safe voyage.' Arriving at home, I told the story of the Cross to some of my old acquaintances, and precious souls were saved. Since my return to this country I have been studying for the ministry and wonderfully has God helped me thus far."

Tried, but faithful wives plead for prayer for their husbands. Their petitions are often very touching and if our human hearts are moved, shall not the heart of the Father of mercies be moved yet more? A friend well advanced in life, whose hairs had whitened with the passing years, with deep emotion, sought to tell

what Christ had done for him. He had only recently become a Christian. "This is my experience," he said, "this is my testimony." And with difficulty his quivering lips repeated the words :

"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound !
That saved a wretch like me ;
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see."

He essayed to say more but could not, and sat down entirely overcome with feeling. This brother's wife had been a Christian for many years, very pious and devout. Her pleadings in her husband's behalf, long rose heavenward, and she had with sorrow seen him growing gray in his indifference about his soul's salvation. Quite recently she noted a change. He attended God's house on the Sabbath, and during the week was frequent in his attendance at noon and night prayer meetings. She discovered that he was concerned about his soul, and was greatly encouraged in her prayers. He soon after found peace with God.

"The last time I was here," said another friend, "one of the requests for prayer read thus : ' Pray for my husband's salvation. I shall pray for him as long as I live.' That was my wife's petition. Her heart was set on my salvation. A score of years she had been praying for me, and told me repeatedly that if she died before I became a Christian, she would spend her last

breath in prayer to God in my behalf. My friends, God has heard that faithful wife's prayers, has heard the prayers you offered for me at her request, and I am here to-day a saved man. I want you to pray for my boy. He has been long away from home but God can take care of him and make a Christian man of him and since prayer was heard for me, I am sure that the Lord will hear prayer for my boy."

Many a brother owes his salvation, under God, to the faithful counsels and constant prayers of a God-fearing sister. The annals of this meeting alone, could they be all read, would abundantly prove the truth of the statement. Such a case as the following is but one of many. "I stand before you a living witness to the power and efficacy of prayer," said one present for the first time. "Some months since, a sister wrote, asking you to pray for the salvation of her brother, then wandering in the way of darkness and death. He was a wretched lost sinner, but God heard the oft repeated cry of that sister, and heard your prayers and saved the wanderer. That brother stands before you in answer to prayer, a redeemed man. I bless God for the power of prayer. I bless Him for saving my soul; Oh, what a mighty change, what a wonderful change, the love of God can make in the heart of a poor, miserable, ruined sinner! Pray in faith, friends, for God does hear and answer your prayers."

CHAPTER XI.

GATHERING IN THE SHEAVES.

Working for Christ—I have It—Missing the Boat, and a Midnight Inquirer—Going after Souls—A Tract in a Hospital—A Happy Impulse—Finding Christ in Prison—The Business Man—A Sleepless Night—The Journeyman Printer—The Captain's Story—Stop the Ship—The Sailor and the Book—A Drifting Anchor and What it Led to—A Song in a Shipper's Office.

Many an instance of Christian work is related at the noon service full of encouragement to those who are seeking to turn souls to the Saviour. Moreover, oftentimes such recitals are helpful to those who, realizing their lost condition as sinners, desire to find saving help. That help is to be found in Jesus only.

This was felt by one who told the following:

"I was brought in contact with a poor man who was a slave of strong drink. Coming from a respectable family, and at one time in a responsible and comfortable position, he had learned by experience the sad connection between rum and ruin, and was in a pitiable condition. I pointed him to Christ as the only Saviour from sin, and his only hope of deliverance from the debasing appetite that had so long enthralled him. He told me that he was too

miserable a sinner for Jesus to have anything to do with. Then I took the word of God and read to him passage after passage, to show him that Jesus could save the worst of sinners. I prayed for him and he prayed for himself, and after praying for some time he jumped to his feet, exclaiming, 'I have it! I have it!' He had been seeking pardon and had found it, and the peace of God filled his soul."

In nothing so much as in Christian work do great results spring from little sources. The missing of a boat may produce effects that shall prove eternal. A person well advanced in life had just taken his seat, when another friend, with a crown of silver, said: "I never see that brother's countenance without calling to mind an incident that occurred in connection with this meeting twenty years ago. This friend had come from a distance to New York, and while here attended the Fulton Street Meeting. He said to me at the close: 'Is it not wonderful? I shall go home and tell my people all about it.' He started for home that afternoon, but missed his boat. He was then invited to spend the night up town, and to conduct the evening prayer-meeting in one of our churches. He did so, and told in the meeting the story of the noon service. A young man present was very much impressed, and on retiring for the night sought in vain to get to sleep. He was under conviction of sin, and felt his need of a

Saviour. His sense of sin became so insufferable that, rising from his bed, he hurried to the house of a minister and asked of him the all-important question, 'What must I do to be saved?' Before long he was rejoicing in Christ. Well for him was it that he sought thus earnestly, for although in good health at that time, he died a few months after."

Were we more earnest in our efforts to win souls, surely we should oftener know the joy of seeing the work of the Lord prosper in our hands. As a case in point, a brother related an incident which had occurred in his own experience. He was exceedingly interested in a very reckless man and longed to see him won as a trophy of God's redeeming grace. He prayed earnestly that the man might be led to seek Christ. At length some special services were to be held with a view of gathering just such characters within the sound of the Gospel. The speaker went to the house of the man for whom he was praying, intending to invite him to the services. The man was out, but a message was left with his mother, so worded that it produced a favorable impression upon his mind, and though he had not been to church for many years, he came to the newly organized services. Here he was shortly led to see the error of his ways, and to turn to the Lord. When asked by his interested friend how he had been induced to come

to the meeting, his reply was: "Well, you came after me, and I knew by your coming and your message, that you were interested in me, and wanted to see me saved." The speaker believed there was a great deal in going after souls and that it was a forcible adjunct to prayer.

A brother who labors assiduously among the sick in our hospitals, said: "It is not often that I know of the results of my work, but recently I found a poor man who had met with a bad accident while under the influence of liquor, and was brought to the hospital a mere wreck of his former self. I talked with him a little and left a tract with him. That tract proved to be a message from God to his soul. He came to himself and before he left the hospital he came to the Father. Until then his home had been a miserable one. But what was long a blighted hovel, soon became a bright and happy spot, and the family altar, and a wife made glad, and children, once more to be pitied than orphans,—but now rejoicing, are among the fruits of the seed sown in that poor, sick man's heart, as he lay upon his hospital bed."

A friend thought we lost many golden opportunities of winning souls for Christ by not heeding God's call. His own experience had led him to pray for greater promptness in yielding to the voice of duty. He had for some time past been anxious for the eternal welfare

of the soul of an acquaintance. "Why not call on him and speak with him on the subject?" something seemed to say. He believed that the impulse to call came from God, and on Christmas day made him a visit. He found his friend at home, and had a very happy interview with him. The young man's heart was in a receptive condition, and he seemed glad to be spoken with. He was indeed anxious to become a Christian, and for instruction in the way of life. He soon found peace with God, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The speaker believed that when God's voice called to any service we should instantly obey, assured that God will open the way.

Very similar was the testimony of another: "I think, brethren," he said, "that we too often look for some startling occurrence to show us the way, when if we would but take the light of God's Word to guide us, we should find the way made very plain. The other day I heard that a man whom I knew was in prison. I thought, perhaps, that I ought to go and see him, but I hesitated until I should feel more decidedly guided by God. I sought His guidance, and then there came to my mind these words, 'I was in prison and ye came unto me.' I accepted that as a direction to go, and the Lord was graciously pleased to bless my efforts. The young man was shortly after released, but he staid there

long enough to see, as he read God's Word, what a horrible pit of sin he was in, and to see, too, how Christ, the Lamb of God, could deliver him. He has since made confession of Christ, has joined the Church, and is showing his love by his works. All this was the result of seeking the very simple guidance of the Bible."

The opportunities of doing good are as numerous as the stars of the firmament. Two business men came to the missionary one noon. One was a Christian, the other was not. The Christian man had sold the other a bill of goods on the day previous. A favorable opportunity had occurred to say with propriety a word about matters of eternal moment, and the good seed was dropped. The purchaser went away, but carried in his heart the words spoken. They disturbed his peace and prevented sleep that night. He was not a Christian; it was time that he should be one; God had often spoken to him before; he must heed the call; such were his thoughts. Next day he sought out the merchant who had been so faithful with him, and begged him to pray that he might be brought to know his interest in Christ as a Saviour. The two repaired to the missionary's room, and ere the noon service commenced a very happy prayer-meeting was held by them.

Sowing the Gospel seed by all waters, by morning light, and as the day declines, God will bless it in His

good time and way. As a happy example, we quote the following from the lips of a business man :

“A man came into my store yesterday to show me two Bibles which he was about to present to two girls under these circumstances. Not very long ago he was a drunken printer. In God’s great goodness he was converted, and becoming a Christian he could not keep his joy to himself. In the place where he worked several girls were engaged; among them two who quickly noticed the change in the once dissipated workman. They quickly found out the cause, too, for he felt glad of an opportunity to tell others what Christ had done for him. They jeered at all he said, and thenceforth made him an object of their constant ridicule. ‘Never mind,’ he said, ‘I shall live to see the day when you will sue for pardon from God. I shall pray for you, and I know God will save you.’ He shortly after left the place and found employment elsewhere. Recently, while walking through the streets, one of the two girls mentioned met him, and in conversation recalled the prediction he had made, and told him it had come true. Both girls had found the Lord Jesus precious to their souls, and attributed their first conviction to this man’s faithful words while working with them at the printer’s case. He was so gladdened that he shouted aloud in the street ‘Glory be to God.’ He brought the two Bibles to me to have the name of the recipient and an appropriate text inscribed in each, as he desired to give them the best of all gifts, the Word of God.”

The salvation of one immortal soul is surely worth

any service and any sacrifice ; for does not Heaven hold festival over the sinner that repenteth ? A stranger said with evident feeling, " I wish you would pray for me ; pray that I may have this Christian experience of which I hear so much, and which brings such joy. I never felt serious concern for the salvation of my soul until the friend now sitting at my side spoke to me on the subject." After he had finished, the friend referred to, arose and said : " I am the captain of a steamer, and met the previous speaker with a number of others at the office of our company. I spoke to them about the blessings of salvation. He alone of the company paid any real attention to what I was saying. Indeed all the rest made light of it. While talking, word came to me that my ship was ready, and so I was in haste to get on board and be off. As I was going, this friend said to me, ' Captain, when can I speak to you again on these matters ? ' ' Now ! ' I replied, and gave orders to stop the vessel so that I might prolong the conversation. I have brought him here, hoping that you will pray for him and that he may find life and light." Many earnest prayers followed, and after the meeting a small company gathered with the seeking man in the pastor's study, attached to the chapel, there to pray. As prayer was made he was enabled to cast his burden of sin on Christ, and left, believing that God had graciously

saved him. Surely it was worth while to stop the vessel for a few hours if thereby a soul might be stayed in its downward career and led to Christ.

A missionary who visits the ships which come to port, related the following occurrence: Paying a visit to an Italian ship, he found everybody very busy except the cook. To the cook he immediately addressed himself and found the man a willing listener. He was a Catholic and understood little of spiritual matters. Some time ago, however, on board another ship, he had seen a Bible, and in the little time he could secure, he had perused some of its pages. His engagement in that particular vessel was brief, and he had to close the precious volume all too soon, for his mind was thoroughly aroused, and he wanted to learn more of the wonderful doctrines there set forth. He knew that his Church forbade him the use of the Book, but what he read stimulated his appetite for more, and he longed to procure a copy. At that time an opportunity offered for him to ship to New York. No sooner was the offer made than something seemed to say to him, "Go, and when you reach port some one with a Bible will meet you." So he asked his visitor for a Bible, and was soon made the happy possessor of the invaluable treasure, printed in his native tongue. His visitor continued his calls until the ship sailed, and learned on his last visit

that a Catholic priest had been on board and distributed a number of tracts among the men. These tracts were written against the so-called "Heresies of Protestantism," and with these and God's own Word in his hands, more than one sailor left port. Prayer was offered, that the blessing of the Lord might follow the distribution of his own Word, and defeat the artful devices of the priest.

A sea captain related his experience. A few weeks previously he had anchored in one of the harbors on the Eastern coast because of a storm, expecting next day to weigh anchor and be off again. His mate said the anchors would never hold in the storm. "Oh, yes, they will," was the captain's reply; "they have always held us fast." But the anchors did not hold and the vessel drifted on shore, and, though little damaged, delay was caused. The Lord brought good out of the delay, though the captain could hardly see how the drifting of his boat when he was in a hurry to be off, could be among the "all things" which work together for good, &c. The man of the sea found a good many sailors in port storm-bound like himself; so he invited them to a meeting, preached Christ to them as the refuge of the lost, and more than one afterwards professed to have given his heart to the Lord Jesus.

This brother is always on the alert for an opportunity

to point a soul to the Saviour, or to impress the minds of the careless and indifferent with the importance of eternal things. While passing through a down-town street he caught sight of the office of an old employer, and determined to make a call. He found there two young men who entered the office when they were boys, and were only boys when he left. When they saw him they greeted him as the old Methodist captain. He was not a Methodist, he told them, but they persisted that he knew a number of Methodist tunes, and must sing them one with a chorus. He did not feel at all prepared to sing just then, but who could say that this might not be an opportunity to sing home the Gospel to their hearts? So with this thought in his mind, he prayed God to direct him, and commenced singing those solemn lines:

“And must I be to judgment brought,
And answer in that day, &c.”

At the end of each verse he sang the chorus:

“The judgment day is rolling round, &c.”

When the captain finished the first stanza, he noticed that the young men were very still; at the close of the second verse the tears were in their eyes, and when the third was sung both seemed deeply moved, and one at least besought the captain to pray for him. The prayers of the meeting were asked for both these young men.

CHAPTER XII.

A STRING OF PEARLS.

Gathering up the Fragments—A Dying Man's Hallelujah—The Great Difference; Sugar and Tobacco—The Child and the Flower—The Argosies of Prayer—Wax Flowers want no Water—Fire Proof—Themistocles and the Land Breeze—Lost in Song—The Farmer's Sluice Gate—Straightening Arrows—Value of Storms—Clinging in the Darkness—Learning to Sing—A Lesson from a Bird Cage—The Frost and the Rosebuds—The Sacred Fire—All Sunshine—No Frost, No Sugar.

Many happy thoughts are expressed by one and another at this meeting, and even though of a fragmentary character, may we not with profit, gather up the fragments? The power of God's grace is a frequent theme. A brother said he rejoiced more and more in the salvation of grace. He was once poor and blind, deformed and leprous,—aye, dead in sin; but grace came to him and enriched him to all eternity, opened his eyes, healed his deformity, cured his leprosy, and gave him everlasting life. He felt like shouting with a minister of whom he had recently been reading, "Hallelujah! glory to God and the Lamb!" This minister lay dying. He was thinking of the goodness of the Lord, manifested in saving him, and constantly

gave vent to his feelings of joy by shouting the words above mentioned. His son, a physician, begged him to desist from shouting and express himself more quietly, lest he should hasten his dissolution. "Ah," said he, "Angels may whisper, but a soul redeemed by blood divine must shout. Hallelujah, glory to God and the Lamb!"

Practical thoughts on the nature of true Christianity and the effects of grace in the heart and life are calculated to prove most helpful to the business men who fill the place of service. The difference between the unconverted sinner and the true Christian was thus pungently set forth by one. "I was asked," said he, "the difference between saints and sinners not long since, my questioner suggesting that the same sun shone on all and the same rain and other blessings of nature benefited all. 'I once lived in Louisiana,' I replied, 'and had many acres of sugar-cane under cultivation. Take a knife and cut where you pleased, it would yield nothing but sugar, and even when it was taken to be crushed and ground, it yielded all sweetness. That is the Christian. Not far from me was a tobacco plantation. Sugar and tobacco equally enjoyed the blessings of nature; but no matter what part of the tobacco plant you cut, it was always bitter. That is the sinner.' 'But what of the backslider?' asked my friend. 'He

is like a bell that is cracked and needs to be placed in the hands of the founder, that it may be recast, and so made to ring out again its sweet and beautiful notes. God can restore the backslider.' ”

Alas, the Christian is not all sweetness. He has not as yet attained to the beauty of the Rose of Sharon and the fragrance of the Lily of the Valley. But he rejoices to labor together with the sanctifying Spirit for his furtherance in the divine life. “Can you imagine a man who should work until he had cleared the mortgage off his house, but who should then allow it to remain in a sadly dilapidated condition and full of rubbish and cobwebs, and dirt, and the garden around it to abound in weeds?” asked one. “As Christians,” he added, “the mortgage that sin had placed upon our souls has been cleared off, but there is much other work to be done. There are roots of passion and sinful desire in our hearts ; there are the cobwebs of selfishness and the rubbish of worldliness all to be got rid of. Let us not be content till the beauty of holiness is seen in our lives.”

The remarks of another were in the same strain :

“We need to dwell in the presence of Jesus if we would be like him,” he said. “At an exhibition of flowers it transpired that a poor little girl whose home was in a narrow alley in a low part of a great city, had

won the premium for the most beautiful flower exhibited in one class. The president was surprised, and asked her how she managed to produce so beautiful a flower under such unfavorable circumstances. She told him that she had been instructed to give it plenty of water and sunshine; and so every morning after breakfast she would place it in the sunshine, and when that sunshine was gone from her flower she would carry her treasure to some other sunny spot, and so give it plenty of sunshine. Thus we need to get much of the sunshine of Christ's presence, if we would bring forth this wondrous beauty of holiness."

Not in vain has God, even our God, bidden the seed of Israel to seek his face. This fact was happily illustrated as follows:

"Our prayers are not sent heavenward in vain. When ships are sent to sea they are destined for a particular port. On their homeward journey they bring us many necessities and luxuries from foreign lands. Our prayers are ships. We send them to no uncertain port. They are destined for the throne of grace; and while they take a cargo of supplications from us, they come back argosies laden with the riches of divine grace. There are countless blessings not indigenous to this earthly soil which we feel we must have, but can only get from heaven. Not the least of these blessings is the robe of righteousness, which adorns the soul of the believer. This cannot be woven upon earthly looms. It is a garment of heavenly weaving, and is given in answer to prayer."

They who possess spiritual life, realize the need of spiritual sustenance. A gentleman asked a frequent attendant of the meeting, "Why do you need to go to church on Sundays so much, and to prayer-meetings so often in the week? I never go to church, and yet I get along." The reply was suggestive. "I looked at his wax flowers and told him that they needed neither sunshine nor water, for beautiful as they were they were dead, while my geraniums and other flowers needed both because they had life. The gentleman is a very moral man, but knows nothing of spiritual life. Men that are dead need no food, but the living man must have food or starve." What wonder then that day by day so many regular attendants are to be found at the meeting? They find here the food their spiritual natures crave.

Business men surrounded by manifold temptations especially need the helpful influences of prayer. A speaker at one of the anniversaries said "he had often wondered that so few proved false to their trust in commercial life. He believed that in many cases business men met temptation panoplied in prayer. A friend who was a telegraph official recently showed him a piece of paper which to all appearances was of a very ordinary nature. His friend, however, placed it in the flame, when it was found to be fire-proof. It had previously

passed through a chemical operation, and so the flame could not harm it." "There is the Christian," said the speaker, "panoplied in prayer, imbued with God's Spirit. Thus like the three Hebrew young men, he passes unharmed through the fiery furnace of temptation."

In the Christian life and in Christian labor prayer is all powerful, for in prayer we lay hold of God's omnipotence. A minister said he had been deeply impressed with the thought that power comes from God. In the battle of Waterloo, some of the English troops were ordered to fall on their faces for a time, so as to let the deadly fire of the French artillery go over them. At the right moment the command came to spring to their feet and show fight. So it was suggested, as the soldiers of the Lord, we need often to fall flat upon our faces before Him in humiliation of heart, and wait until He calls on us for action. At the naval battle of Salamis, Themistocles, the hero of the Greeks, tarried on shore until nine o'clock in the morning. Every patriotic heart wondered why he did not sally forth to the attack of the foe at six o'clock, and the suggestion was rife, that Themistocles had sold his country. But the hero knew well that at nine o'clock a land breeze would spring up, which would send his boats to sea and save the strength of the rowers for fighting. In those days, while twenty men rowed the war vessels, others did the

fighting. By waiting for the land breeze, Themistocles secured forty fighting men for each vessel. That land breeze represents the power from on high,—the power that God sends to secure the victory to His people.

Realizing ever his dependence upon divine aid, the Christian remembers that they preach best and work best who best show forth Christ. We are told to let our light shine, but unless the source of our light be Christ living in the heart, there will be no bright steady light shining through us. We are to be lost in our work so that men about us will only know us by our work. We shall work the best when we sink self, just as the lark sings its sweetest notes when soaring heavenward, it is lost to sight, and its existence realized only by its song. The Christian must be known by the work he does. Then as he does all by Christ, he will seek to do it for and unto Christ, and many another soul will be blessed for Christ's sake.

“You may look upward to see the clear blue of the sky and the silver-tipped clouds if you wish,” said one, “but you need not always look up, for by looking into the clear waters of some lakes you can see the cloud and the sky most beautifully reflected. Would you minister to Christ? You need not think of him as in heaven only, but you can find him and minister to him in the persons of the sorrowing and suffering ones around you.”

The revivifying and refreshing influences of prayer were well set forth by a figure familiar to many a farmer, and to many who have watched the farmer's operations. In some places the farmers find it necessary in order to secure crops, to cut canals and sluice-ways to various parts of their farms, so as to irrigate them. These sluice-ways are controlled by gates, and when any portion of the farm, the corn-field, or melon patch, or any other part needs water, the farmer has but to lift the sluice-gates, and the water flows to the thirsty land and withering vegetation, bringing reviving and growth. Just as simply, just as surely, just as swiftly, do floods of grace coming from the river of water of life, flow to the soul which prepares itself to receive them by seeking for them in prayer.

So many requests are received from friends in trial who desire deliverance, oftentimes deeming immediate deliverance the best possible boon, that the uses of trial form an important subject for discussion. A friend, who has himself passed through much of trial and trouble, one day said he thought he caught an idea of many of the Christian's trials in the Indian method of making arrows. The Indians cut the green branches from the trees, and while these are yet green take off the bark, hang them up to the living limbs of the tree, and attach a great weight at the lower end and there let them hang.

This process serves to take out the “kinks” in the branches and to straighten them. Thus, the speaker believed, the trials of the Christian acted as these heavy-weights, serving to take out the “kinks” which are so abundant even in the people of God. Another likened trials to snow-storms, and said that the Apostles never would have been the men they were had it not been for the storms. We must expect storms if we were to be thorough Christians. In spring-time, when the snow-storms fall, the snow soon melts, and carries into the ground the fertilizing ammonia from the air. So the storms of trial bring grace and glory into the Christian’s soul.

The experience of a business man in relation to seasons of darkness and trial led him to testify that after the darkness there comes a sweeter light, and after the trial a deeper peace, that makes the troubles and afflictions welcome. The brother had discovered that the Good Shepherd in leading his sheep from one pasture to another and richer one, leads them sometimes along rough ways and narrow tracks, but is none the less a good guide, and leads safely all who follow him. He was often comforted by the words :

“Cling but closer, for the darkness,
To the hand that leadeth thee ;
There are dangers, doubtless, in thy pathway,
Which ’twould blind thine eyes to see :

He who leads thy trembling footsteps
Hath himself the pathway trod ;
'Tis the Man of Sorrows leads thee ;
Now enthroned the mighty God."

Trials have their good effect in this world and in the world to come. "Why, brethren," exclaimed an enthusiastic brother, "we are by and by to join the army of those who have all come up out of great tribulation, and I can hardly see how we shall feel at home there if we have been—

* * "Carried to the skies,
On flowery beds of ease."

When we meet the martyrs and all God's saints who have fought and conquered, who have suffered and endured, who have labored and been patient, we shall be glad to be able to look back to our pathway of trial, and remember that we, too, toiled and suffered. Then, too, the glory will be all the brighter for the clouds that overshadow us now, and the rest and the joy will be deeper for the labors and sorrows of our course here below."

Another while travelling out West had been struck by the singing of a canary. It warbled tunes with wonderful sweetness and precision. Upon making inquiries concerning the mysterious powers of the little

songster, he was told that when young it had been confined in a dark room and kept with but little food, not more than sufficient to barely sustain life. In its confinement it had learned by the power of imitation the sweet songs it now sung. The darkness and the scarcity of food were alike necessary to the training. The brother suggested that many of God's people are kept in the darkened chamber of affliction, and are even made acquainted with a measure of want for just such a purpose. In the ages to come, amid the glory and abundance of the heavenly world, they will sing the songs of that clime in strains sweeter far than could have been possible had they been spared the weary training that seems so distressing.

A minister added his testimony as to the value of present results. He visited New Orleans at a time when the yellow fever was taking off many victims daily. The morning after his arrival the first thing that greeted the eyes of the people on looking out of the windows was frost, and then they said: "Alas for our rosebuds; our winter roses are all killed." But a moment after they were exclaiming: "Thank God! for now the plague will be stayed; the yellow fever cannot stand the frost." Thus does trial come to us, nipping and killing many a rosebud of earthly hope, but sent of God to destroy the fever of worldliness, or sinfulness, or selfishness that

is destroying us. These frosts of disappointment, though seeming so sad at first, result in after blessing, for which we find good reason to thank God.

The experience of one reminded him of a mountain road up which he once clambered. It was rough, circuitous, toilsome, and in every respect uninviting. A fellow-traveller grumbled all the way up, judging that as the road was so rough, the summit would be as dreary. Yet when the summit was gained, the prospect on every side was enchanting, and well repaid one for the weary journey. Moreover, the way by which they had come no more looked dreary. It seemed to be lost amid green foliage and beautiful blossoms. The speaker suggested that there are points gained in life from which we look back in our pathway of trial with gratitude to God for all the way His hand has led us.

"I was asked the other day if I never had any dark hours," said one who is exceedingly happy in his illustrations. "I said I frequently had, but I thought these were permitted by God as all the dark hours and trials of Christians, in order that they may learn to look to God as the author of all light and joy. The followers of Zoroaster were bidden periodically to put out the fires on their hearths, and to rekindle them from the sacred fires in the temple, that they might not forget that fire

was a heavenly gift. Thus should our dark hours teach us our dependence upon God for all of joy and peace."

We certainly look too often and too long at our troubles. A useful suggestion was that of a business man: "If you look at the sun," said he, "for a few minutes, and then turn to look at any other object, you cannot see it because your eyes are filled with sunshine. Every way you look it seems to be all sun. And so it will be with our troubles. Let us look not at them, but at God, and then our eyes and our hearts will be so full of sunshine that the troubles we shall not be able to see."

"Away up in Vermont when in the month of March there comes a frost we rejoice," another said, "because the frost ensures a good supply of maple sap. If there is no frost, however, the maples yield no sweet sap. It is thus with Christians. God sends the chills and frosts that He may afterwards make us yield the sweet sap of Christ-like love and grace. We had no stoves when I was a boy and lived in Vermont. When we retired we covered the fire with ashes so that we might keep it in till morning. Then when we needed to use the fire we raked away the ashes, and if there was a live coal left how it did burn. God permits troubles and sorrows to come to us, and they are the ashes which He puts over the fire to keep it alive until He is ready to use us. In His good time we flame and burn again."

CHAPTER XIII.

LOST AND SAVED.

A Sad Letter—A Ruined Man—An old Acquaintance—Hope for the Hopeless—A Terrible Struggle—Victory Achieved.

Is it of any use to pray? is the principal question of the times; and as facts are better than theories, and example more than argument, I will give you one instance out of hundreds that might be cited from personal observation.

Early in the spring of 1862, I received the following note from a man who had been a writer of poetry and prose, and his translations of Latin verse had been prominently published over his real name. He wrote :

“NEW YORK, March 6.

“DEAR SIR: You have doubtless heard of the disgrace that I have brought upon myself by the sin and folly into which I have fallen, and I am ashamed to come to you. But seeing in the *Tribune* an advertisement of a book by you on prayer, I was reminded of the kindness of your manner to me in former days, and I was led to ask if it were not possible for me to be saved by prayer. Will you pray for me, a ruined man?

“Your unworthy servant,

J. B. L.”

I recognized his name at once as that of an old acquaintance, of whom I had lost sight for several years. But I had heard nothing of the sin and shame of which he spoke in his letter, and was shocked to hear of it, especially from his own confession. As the letter was dated from his place of business down-town, I thought it would be more agreeable to him *not* to have me call on him there, and I wrote him a few lines upon the instant, as follows:

“March 6.

“MY DEAR FRIEND: I never heard until this moment that you were in trouble of any kind. But come and see me; the worse you are, the more welcome you will be when you come to me. I want to see you, and, with the help of God, to serve you. Come as soon as you can; the sooner, the better. Of course I will pray for you, and will be always

“Your friend and brother.”

The next day at noon he entered my room, a bloated, blear-eyed, trembling drunkard; wreck, ruin, shame, all over his wretched face. I took him by the hand with cordial welcome, and he said, “You *see!*” “Yes,” I replied, “it speaks for itself; there’s no need to ask what’s the matter. But tell me all about it; how long has it been so, and why can’t you get out of it?”

He sat down, and with tears running down his face, and shaking as if an ague-fit were on him, he told me

his story. I can give it from memory, and very nearly in his own words:

“This thing has been going on from bad to worse for several years. The passion has grown upon me until it is impossible to break it up. I took your letter home last night as the first thing that I had laid hold on, and my wife and I wept over it, and my daughters put their arms around my neck, and said, ‘Now *we* will try and get over it,’ and we all prayed; they prayed for me; and my wife and I got up in the night and prayed, and this morning I prayed for help, and promised them not to taste a drop till I had seen you; and *I drank three times on the way down*, and am utterly unable to resist the appetite that eats my life like a canker. I have thought God might help me, if you will pray for me; but I don’t know; I guess it’s all up with me, and if I were dead it would be better for all of us.”

I talked as hopefully to him as possible, promised to pray for him, as the least and the most that I could do for him; but I confess that the sight of the man so changed, his visage so marred, the bloodshot eyes, the sickening countenance, the shaking limbs of a man of forty-five, said “no hope” so plainly that I was on the verge of despair. I exacted no promise from him; pledges from such a man were not as strong as straws; but I did say some things about home, and love, and hope that are too sacred to be repeated, though they were poured upon his dulled ear as if God were bid-

ding me to speak to a man dead to come back to life and joy and heaven. He left me with expressions of gratitude, and almost of hope; and I said, as he went out, "I will come to you at noon to-morrow."

Twenty-four hours went by; I went into his office in Pine Street, and I declare he positively looked better. He said, "I have not tasted a drop since I saw you; not a drop. I told my wife of the talk we had, and after supper we spent the evening singing and talking, and *they* prayed with me. It looks better, don't it?"

What I said to him is of no account, for words are nothing in the way of help to a drowning man; he wants a rope, an arm; a life-boat; and words are breath only, with no power to save. This was on Saturday. As I was walking up Broadway on Sunday, I was joined by a Christian gentleman belonging to the *Methodist* Church, who put his arm into mine, and at once said, "I have been reading that book of yours about prayer;" and as I began to tell him that I had *a case* on my heart and mind that would interest him, a *Unitarian* minister crossed the street and joined us, saying playfully. "If a man is known by the company he keeps, I shall be a gainer by joining you"; and then, taking an arm of mine, he said, strangely enough, the very same thing that my *Methodist* friend had said; and added, "I believe it,

every word of it; there is power in prayer; I know it, for I have tried it and proved it."

Then I related to them both the facts of my poor lost friend, and of my resolution to seek his rescue by prayer. The minister said: "It is as near hopeless as a case can be; when an intelligent, educated man becomes a sot, he is lost. I never knew one to be saved so far gone as that."

We had now reached the corner of Fourteenth Street and Broadway, and were to part. As we were shaking hands, we pledged ourselves to one another, Methodist, Unitarian, and Presbyterian, to pray for that man, and so separated. Next day I called on him again, and he met me with a smile of joy. Forty-eight hours since I had seen him, and he was yet firm, not having tasted of the cup of woe. He told me of the Sabbath, of his sitting with his wife and daughters in the church, "clothed and in his right mind." Day after day, and then, with longer intervals, I saw him at his office, and marked the progress of his deliverance from a thralldom the darkest, dreadfullest, and most hopeless to which poor mortal man is ever reduced. By-and-by he was welcomed into the number of church members. His health was re-established. He was happy in his family and useful in the community. I am pained to say that he fell several times. I did not think any the worse of

him for that ; for he was weak, and the old appetite, like a lurking devil, was always tempting him. But when he fell, he rose again. And he fought it out, and died in faith. I trust that he drinks now of the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb.

To the Tyndallians this is all Greek or nonsense. To us, who believe, it is the philosophy of the Christian religion. So far as I know, there were no other agencies employed to save this drunkard than those recorded in this chapter. In his besotted state, he saw an advertisement in a daily newspaper of a book on prayer by one who was once his friend. "There," he said, "is my only hope." He followed the star. He told me that he was touched by the words in my note to him : "The worse you are, the more welcome you will be when you come to me." The only new help he got by coming to me was the prayer of friends to whom I made known his pitiable state. If his life from that day was a better life ; if his wife had her tears and sorrow wiped away by the hand of Infinite Love ; if his daughters, young ladies, once more held up their fair faces covered with smiles of peace and joy ; if the household, after years of darkness and anguish, was now daily vocal with gratitude and praise ; if my poor drunken friend was brought up from a horrible pit and

miry clay, and had a new song put in his mouth, and is now among those whose robes are made white and whose sins are washed away—it is all, all the power of prayer.

CHAPTER XIV.

REVIEW AND SUGGESTIONS.

The review of these twenty-five years of prayer is a more effective argument against the skepticism of the day than any essay which the most learned theologian could construct. For, after all, the world by wisdom knows not God. Not the wise and prudent get into the secret of the power of prayer. The least in the kingdom of heaven—babes in Christ—are better instructed when these mysteries are revealed to them than are the scribes themselves. And so it comes to pass that a vast array of facts, combining all the force of circumstantial and personal testimony, carries conviction to the mind that God hears and answers prayer. This cheers the Church in whatever land and clime the reports are read.

These twenty-five years of daily prayer have been happily free from the appearance of any form of fanaticism. The line between strong emotion and a fanatical spirit is not easily made plain. The language and manner that appear to some wild and unreasonable, seems very gentle and moderate to those who are in the midst

of it partaking of the spirit of the hour. Without doubt the auspices under which the meeting was established, and under which, through all these years, it has been maintained, have tended to repress extravagance, and preserve the seasons of prayer from any excess in the manner and matter that have given to it its habitual character. The Reformed (Dutch) Church has the responsibility and control of the meeting. It is held in its rooms. Its missionary has it always in his care. Consequently its measures and order are in harmony with the conservative doctrine and practice of that venerable and orderly body of Christian believers. It would not be strange if zealous, excitable, and ill-regulated good people should sometimes seek to use the meeting for the spread of their peculiar views. Even the fanatically insane have now and then burst out in the midst of the meeting with hysterical utterances, to the great annoyance of the assembly. Such disturbances are very rare, and are always easily suppressed by the gentle and judicious treatment of the leader. The meeting itself has never been made the medium of publishing dangerous sentiments, or of exhibiting unusual and unscriptural methods. This is an important fact, to be considered when weighing the worth of such a protracted service. It has had no artificial or factitious excitement to keep it up. It has never been in the bad

sense of the word sensational. The interest has not been sustained by physical demonstrations, shoutings, trances, visions, or miracles of any sort. It has not sought to condemn the views of any in regard to the propriety and usefulness of other modes than its own. But the experience of a quarter of a century of prayer-meetings, held daily for one hour, in the middle of the day, in the midst of a busy city, and near the very centre of business, ought to be of value in determining the question, "How shall a prayer-meeting be made the most interesting and the most useful?" Had this one been conducted on the principal of physical excitement, with constant and successful efforts to make the meeting a scene where men and women would congregate for the sake of religious intoxication, there is no good reason to believe it would have survived its infancy. Long before this time it would have been consumed in its own fires, and its ashes would have been cold. But pursuing the sober and godly tenor of its way, retired, humble, noiseless, seeking only the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit, it has lived, flourished, and brought forth fruit abundantly. Relying on the promises, it has sought to keep within the terms of the covenant that God has made with His people. And its faith has been intelligent, rational, and calm. Therefore, there has been no fanaticism and no failure. The

meeting enjoys to-day the sympathy, confidence, and support of the best, most wise, sound, orthodox Christian ministers and pious laymen and women in this city, as it did in the first years of its fresh life.

Such a history has in itself elements of great value to the Church. The fact has led to the enjoyment of similar daily prayer-meetings in other places in this country and abroad, though none of them have attracted so large attention as the one in Fulton Street. Wherever they have been instituted, they have invariably been attended with the expected and promised blessing. And it is well to consider with prayerful solicitude the advantage that the Church would secure, if, in every Christian community, a place of prayer were to be found where two or three might daily gather together in the name of Christ for prayer.

There are churches in this city and in other cities open for the worship of God every day in the year. Roman Catholic churches are always open, and from hour to hour one person after another drops in, kneels, and in silence offers the service of prayer. This is not the form of the meetings for prayer in Protestant churches, nor am I aware that in Roman Catholic parishes, meetings are held that in any way resemble our prayer-meetings. In a religion that recognizes a priest between the sinner and the Saviour, and able to make

an offering that will be accepted in behalf of the sinner, the service peculiar to the Romish Church is natural. The priest offers the sacrifice. Again, in that system, the repetition of a number of prayers, the visits to designated shrines, and the making of appointed offerings may be a part of imposed penances for sin, and the penitent, solitary before a painted image of the crucified Redeemer, or of the Virgin Mary, may be performing works which are supposed to take away sin. But we, who know that the blood of Christ only can make atonement, take no part in a service that introduces a priest as a necessary process by which the soul is to be saved.

The idea of open churches and of daily public worship, social and official, such as is enjoyed in some churches in this and other cities, implies the exaltation of the religious sentiment to a higher plane than it occupies in the present age. The numbers in attendance on the Fulton Street Prayer-meeting are so small as to be scarcely appreciable in the midst of a million of swarming, busy, buying and selling people. One church crowded to repletion would hold but a few compared with the multitude that care for none of these things. But if any central church were open, and at noon every day a thousand men should spend half an hour in its courts in mingled prayer and praise, it would indicate a

higher stage of Christian life than now is to be found in the marts of commerce and the raging competitions of the Exchange. And will it be questioned that *the world*, in the sense which that word has in the New Testament, has obtained the place in the affections of millions, which the Church and religion, the service of Christ and the enjoyment of spiritual things ought to have and to hold? It requires no great amount of boldness to affirm that *worldliness* now, as in all ages and everywhere, is the foe and the prevailing foe of the Church. This present evil world is what men will live for, in spite of Sabbaths and sermons and the Providence of God. We do not regard it as fanaticism, nor even enthusiasm, to say that it would be in the highest degree becoming for moral and intelligent men of business to reverse the order of their estimate of secular and religious pursuits, and to seek first the kingdom of God, with the full assurance that all needful things, even riches, shall be added. It is rational to weigh worlds in the scales of reason, and to throw the light of divine revelation upon the transaction. And the result will prove to the satisfaction of the most exact, that he is a foolish speculator who buys or bargains without realizing the chances of life and the possibilities of eternity. Being "fervent in spirit" will not make a man less "diligent in business," and no man was ever less suc-

cessful in honest pursuits for taking time to make his "calling and election sure."

This is a plea for the assertion by Christians in everyday life of their purpose to restore to their proper relations the objects for which they live. If the highest and best purpose is to be rich and richer, then to live as men now live, seems to be about the best way to attain the desired end. But "it is not the whole of life to live." We are heirs of immortality. It is ours to feel "the power of an endless life:" to lay up riches where thieves, and swindlers, and defaulters never are to be found. This is the purpose to be kept in mind daily and hourly. Some pious teachers have enjoined their disciples to preserve at all times, in the most absorbing pursuit of business or pleasure, the thought of God's constant presence and restraining influence upon the heart and tongue. This is an impossible precept: it is a grade of spiritual life that is not compatible with the finite capacities of the human soul. In other words, no one of us can think of two things at the same time. The transition of the mind from one subject to another is inappreciably rapid, yet it is real. But it is true that our privilege is to live so habitually under the dominion of religious principle, the fear of God and love of His law governing our every thought, word and action, that in all intercourse with our fellow men, in trade and

social life, we shall act and speak with the same integrity and purity as if we were saying, "Thou God seest me."

Hypocrites will use the profession of religion as a cloak for sin. And it will continue to be a public scandal that the Church and Sunday-school furnish men who, in the guise of great Christians, were great villains. But among these who have brought reproach upon the Church there have been some who might have been saved. And who can doubt that the subordination of "the life that now is" to the power of the life to come, would be the salvation of many who are in the jaws of temptation ready to be destroyed, and that without remedy.

Of all the means within our reach to attain this plane of religious experience and enjoyment, there is nothing that can take the place of prayer. Private, domestic, social, and public, alone and with others, let us pray. These thoughts are expressed without reference to that state of religious experience and of church life which is known as a revival. The necessity of prayer, much prayer, believing and importunate prayer in order to the enjoyment of a religious revival by a church whose spiritual life has declined, there is no need that we try to prove. Mr. Moody, the well-known revivalist, says and well says: "What we all need is more power, the

power of the Holy Ghost for service and testimony; and the help of this divine person we are sure to obtain in answer to believing prayer. Let me entreat you, then, to be much in prayer, united prayer as well as individual prayer; for it is when we manifest love one to another that all men know that we are His disciples. Let minor differences be laid aside in view of the great end we are seeking to secure; and let us with one mind besiege the throne of grace. I have found that a united daily prayer-meeting at noon is invaluable as a centre and rendezvous for Christian workers."

And in sending out into the world this fourth book of the wonders of divine grace displayed in and through the Fulton Street Prayer-meeting, I indulge the hope that God may use it for His glory and the good of the Church by its encouragement to establish similar meetings in many other parts of this highly favored land and throughout the world. The want of *numbers* should not forbid the meeting. Two or three may claim the promise. In every college, seminary and school, in every city, village and parish in the world, there should be a place and time appointed for social prayer. God will be in the midst of it. He will write His name there. Souls will be saved by the power of prayer in such circles. Personal religion will be advanced. The kingdom of God will be hastened.

Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

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