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≡ ST. AUGUSTINE ≡

THE CONFESIONS
OF ST. AUGUSTINE

(Books One to Ten)

GENERAL EDITOR ∞ ROSALIE DE ROSSET

M O O D Y C L A S S I C S

MOODY PUBLISHERS
CHICAGO



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THE FIRST BOOK



CONFESSION OF THE GREATNESS AND UNSEARCHABLENESS OF
GOD, OF GOD'S MERCIES IN INFANCY AND BOYHOOD, AND
HUMAN WILFULNESS; OF HIS OWN SINS OF IDLENESS, ABUSE OF
HIS STUDIES, AND OF GOD'S GIFTS UP TO HIS FIFTEENTH YEAR.

1. GREAT ART THOU, O Lord, and greatly to be praised; great is Thy power, and Thy wisdom infinite (Pss. 145:3; 147:5). And Thee would man praise; man, but a particle of Thy creation; man, that bears about him his mortality, the witness of his sin, the witness, that *Thou resistest the proud* (Jam. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5): yet would man praise Thee; he, but a particle of Thy creation. Thou awakest us to delight in Thy praise; for Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless, until it rest in Thee.

Grant me, Lord, to know and understand which is first, to call on Thee or to praise Thee? and, again, to know Thee or to call on Thee? For who can call on Thee, not knowing Thee? For he that knoweth Thee not, may call on Thee as someone other than Thou art. Or, is it rather, that we call on Thee that we may know Thee? But *how shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?* (Rom. 10:14) or *how shall they believe without a*

preacher? And they that seek the Lord shall praise Him (Ps. 22:26). For *they that seek shall find Him* (Matt. 7:7), and they that find shall praise Him. I will seek Thee, Lord, by calling on Thee; and will call on Thee, believing in Thee; for to us hast Thou been preached. My faith, Lord, shall call on Thee, which Thou hast given me, and by which Thou hast inspired me, through the Incarnation of Thy Son, through the ministry of the Preacher.¹

2. And how shall I call upon my God, my God and Lord, since, when I call for Him, I shall be calling Him to myself? and what room is there within me, where my God can come into me? Where can God come into me, God who made heaven and earth? Is there, indeed, O Lord my God, anything in me that can contain Thee? Do then heaven and earth, which Thou hast made, and wherein Thou hast made me, contain Thee? or, because nothing which exists could exist without Thee, doth therefore whatever exists contain Thee? Since, then, I too exist, why do I desire that Thou shouldest enter into me, who were not, if Thou wert not in me? Why? Because I am not now in hell, and yet Thou art there also. For *if I go down into hell, Thou art there*. I could not be then, O my God, could not be at all, wert Thou not in me; or, rather, unless I were in Thee, *of whom are all things, by whom are all things, in whom are all things*. Even so, Lord, even so. Where do I call Thee, since I am in Thee? or whence canst Thou enter into me? For where can I go beyond heaven and earth, that there my God should come into me, who hath said, *I fill the heaven and the earth?*

3. Do the heaven and earth then contain Thee, since Thou fillest them? or dost Thou fill them and yet overflow, since they do not contain Thee? And where, when the heaven and the earth are filled, pourest Thou forth the remainder of Thyself? Or hast Thou no need that anything contain Thee, who containest all things, since what Thou fillest Thou fillest by containing it? For the vessels which Thou fillest restrict Thee not, since, though they were broken, Thou wert not poured out. And when Thou art *poured out* on us (Acts 2:18), Thou art not cast down, but Thou upliftest us; Thou art not scattered, but Thou gatherest us. But Thou who fillest all things, fillest Thou them with Thy whole self? or, since all things cannot contain Thee wholly, do they contain part of Thee? and all at once the same part? or each its own part, the greater more, the smaller less? And is, then, one part of Thee greater, another less? or, art Thou wholly everywhere, while nothing contains Thee wholly?

4. What art Thou then, my God? What, but the Lord God? *For who is Lord but the Lord! or who is God save our God!* (Ps. 35:3). Most highest, most good, most potent, most omnipotent; most merciful, yet most just; most hidden, yet most present; most beautiful, yet most strong; stable, yet incomprehensible; unchangeable, yet all-changing; never new, never old; all-renewing, and *bringing age upon the proud, and they know it not*; ever working, ever at rest; still gathering, yet needing nothing; supporting, filling, and over-spreading; creating, nourishing, and maturing; seeking, yet having all things. Thou lovest, yet without passion;

art jealous, without anxiety; repentest, yet grieveest not; art angry, yet serene; changest Thy works, Thy purpose unchanged; receivest again what Thou findest, yet didst never lose; never in need, yet rejoicing in gains; never covetous, yet exacting usury (Matt. 25:27). Thou receivest over and above, that Thou mayest owe; and who hath anything that is not Thine? Thou payest debts, owing nothing; remittest debts, losing nothing. And what have I now said, my God, my life, my holy joy? or what saith any man when he speaks of Thee? Yet woe to him that speaketh not, since the mute are even the most eloquent.

5. Oh! that I might rest on Thee! Oh! that Thou wouldest enter into my heart, and inebriate it, that I may forget my ills, and embrace Thee, my only good. What art Thou to me? In Thy pity, teach me to utter it. Or what am I to Thee that Thou demandest my love, and, if I give it not, are wroth with me, and threatenest me with grievous woes? Is it then a slight woe to love Thee not? Oh! for Thy mercies' sake, tell me, O Lord my God, what Thou art unto me. *Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation* (Ps. 18:31). So speak, that I may hear. Behold, Lord, my heart is turned to Thee; open Thou the ears thereof, and *say unto my soul, I am thy salvation*. After this voice let me run, and take hold on Thee. Hide not Thy face from me. Let me die—lest I die—only let me see Thy face.

6. Narrow is the mansion of my soul; enlarge Thou it, that Thou mayest enter in. It lies in ruins; repair Thou it. It contains that which must offend Thine eyes; I confess and know it. But who shall cleanse it? or to whom should I cry, save Thee? *Lord,*

cleanse me from my secret faults, and spare Thy servant from the power of the enemy. I believe, and therefore do I speak (Pss. 19:12–13; 116:10; 32:5). Lord, thou knowest. *Have I not confessed against myself my transgressions unto Thee, and Thou, my God, hast forgiven the iniquity of my heart? I contend not in judgment with Thee* (Job 9:3), who art the truth; I fear to deceive myself; *lest mine iniquity lie unto itself* (Ps. 26:12). Therefore I contend not in judgment with Thee; *for if Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall abide it?* (Ps. 130:3).

7. Yet allow me to speak unto Thy mercy, me, *dust and ashes* (Gen. 18:27). Yet allow me to speak, since I speak to Thy mercy, and not to scornful man. Thou too, perhaps, despisest me, yet wilt Thou *return and have compassion* upon me (Jer. 12:15). For what would I say, O Lord my God, but that I know not whence I came into this dying life (shall I call it?) or living death. Then immediately did the comforts of Thy compassion take me up, as I heard (for I remember it not) from the parents of my flesh, out of whose substance Thou didst sometime fashion me. Thus there received me the comforts of woman's milk. For neither my mother nor my nurses filled their own breasts for me; but Thou didst bestow the food of my infancy through them, according to Thine ordinance, whereby Thou distributest Thy riches through the hidden springs of all things. Thou also gavest me to want no more than Thou gavest; and to my nurses willingly to give me what Thou gavest them. For they, with an heaven-taught affection, willingly gave me, what they abounded with from Thee. For

this my good from them, was good for them. Nor, indeed, from them was it, but through them; for from Thee, O God, come all good things, and *from my God is all my health*. This I since learned, Thou, through these Thy gifts, within me and outside me, proclaiming Thyself unto me. For then I knew but to suck; to be satisfied in what pleased, and cry at what hurt my flesh; nothing more.

8. Afterwards I began to smile; first in sleep, then waking: for so it was told me about myself, and I believed it; for we see the like in other infants, though of myself I remember it not. Thus, little by little, I became conscious where I was; and to have a wish to express my wishes to those who could satisfy them, and I could not; for the wishes were within me, and they without; nor could they by any power of theirs enter within my spirit. So I tossed about at random limbs and voice, making the few signs I could, and such as I could, like, though in truth very little like, what I wished. And when I was not presently obeyed (my wishes being hurtful or unintelligible), then I was indignant with my elders for not submitting to me, with those owing me no service, for not serving me; and avenged myself on them by tears. Such have I learnt about infants from observing them; and, that I was myself such, they, without knowing it, have shown me better than my nurses who knew it.

9. But my infancy died long since, and I live. But Thou, Lord, who for ever livest, and in whom nothing dies: for before all that can be called "before," Thou art, and art God and Lord of all

which Thou hast created: in Thee abide, fixed for ever, the first causes of all things unabiding; and of all things changeable, the springs abide in Thee unchangeable: and in Thee live the eternal reasons of all things unreasoning and temporal. Tell me, Lord, Thy suppliant; say, all-pitying, to me, Thy pitiable one; say, did my infancy succeed another age of mine that died before it? Was it that which I spent within my mother's womb? for of that I have heard something, and have myself seen women with child? and what before that life again, O God my joy, was I any where or any body? For this have I none to tell me, neither father nor mother, nor experience of others, nor mine own memory. Dost Thou laugh at me for asking this, and bid me praise Thee and acknowledge Thee, for all I do know?

10. I acknowledge Thee, Lord of heaven and earth, and praise Thee for my first rudiments of being, and my infancy, whereof I remember nothing; for Thou hast endowed man that he should from others guess much concerning himself; and believe much on the strength of weak women. Even then I had being and life, and (at my infancy's close) I could seek for signs, whereby to make known to others my sensations. Whence could such a being be, save from Thee, Lord? Shall any be his own artificer? Or can there elsewhere be derived any channel, which may stream essence and life into us, save from Thee, O Lord, in whom essence and life are one? for Thou Thyself art supremely Essence and Life. *For Thou art most high, and art not changed* (Mal. 3:6), neither in Thee doth Today come to a close; yet in Thee doth it

come to a close; because all such things also are in Thee. For they had no way to pass away, unless Thou upheldest them. And since *Thy years fail not* (Ps. 102:27), Thy years are this very day. How many of ours and our fathers' years have flowed away through Thy "today," and from it received the measure and the mould of such being as they had; and still others shall flow away, and so receive the measure of their degree of being. But *Thou art still the same* (Ibid), and all things of tomorrow, and all beyond, and all of yesterday, and all behind it, Thou hast done today. What is it to me, if anyone comprehend not this? Let him also rejoice and say, *What thing is this!* (Ex. 16:15). Let him rejoice even thus; and be content rather by not discovering to discover Thee, than by discovering not to discover Thee.

11. Hear, O God. Alas, for man's sin! So saith man, and Thou pitiest him; for Thou madest him, but sin in him Thou madest not. Who remindeth me of the sins of my infancy? *for in Thy sight none is pure from sin, not even the infant whose life is but a day upon the earth* (Job 25:4). Who brings this to my mind? Doth not each little infant, in whom I see what of myself I remember not? What then was my sin? Was it that I hung upon the breast and cried? For should I now so do for food suitable to my age, justly should I be laughed at and reprov'd. What I then did was worthy of reproof; but since I could not understand reproof, custom and reason forbade me to be reprov'd. For those habits, when grown, we root out and cast away. Now no man, though he roots out the bad, wittingly casts away what is good

(John 15:2). Or was it then good, even for a while, to cry for what, if given, would be harmful? bitterly to resent, that persons free, and its own elders, yea, that very authors of its birth, served it not? that many other persons besides, wiser than it, obeyed not the orders of its good pleasure? to do its best to strike and hurt, because commands were not obeyed, which had been obeyed to its hurt? The weakness then of infant limbs, not its will, is its innocence. Myself have seen and known even a baby envious; it could not speak, yet it turned pale and looked bitterly on its foster-brother. Who knows not this? Mothers and nurses tell you, that they subdue these things by I know not what remedies. Is that too innocence, when the fountain of milk is flowing in rich abundance, not to endure one to share it, though in extremest need, and whose very life as yet depends thereon? We bear gently with all this, not as being no or slight evils, but because they will disappear as years increase; for, though tolerated now, the very same tempers are utterly intolerable when found in later years.

12. Thou, then, O Lord my God, who gavest life to this my infancy, furnishing thus with senses (as we see) the body Thou gavest, equipping it with limbs, ornamenting its proportions, and, for its general good and safety, implanting in it all vital functions, Thou commandest me to praise Thee for these things, *to confess unto Thee, and sing unto Thy name, Thou most Highest* (Ps. 92:1). For Thou art God, Almighty and Good, even hadst Thou done nothing but only this, which none could do but Thou: whose oneness is the mould of all things; who out of Thy own

fairness makest all things fair; and orderest all things by Thy law. This age then, Lord, whereof I have no remembrance which I take on others' word, and guess from other infants that I have passed, true though the guess be, I am yet reluctant to count in this life of mine which I live in this world. For no less than that which I spent in my mother's womb, is it hid from me in the shadows of forgetfulness. But if *I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me* (Ps. 51:7), where, I beseech Thee, O my God, where, Lord, or when, was I Thy servant innocent? But, lo! that period I pass by; and what have I now to do with that, of which I can recall no trace?

13. Passing hence from infancy, I came to boyhood, or rather it came to me, displacing infancy. Nor did that depart,—(for whither went it?)—and yet it was no more. For I was no longer a speechless infant, but a speaking boy. This I remember; and have since observed how I learned to speak. It was not that my elders taught me words (as, soon after, other sorts of learning) in any set method; but I, longing by cries and broken accents and various motions of my limbs to express my thoughts, so that I might have my will, and yet unable to express all I wished, or to whom I willed, did myself, by the understanding which Thou, my God, gavest me, practise the sounds in my memory. When they named any thing, and as they spoke turned towards it, I saw and remembered what they called what they would point out, by the name they uttered. And that they meant this thing and no other, was plain from the motion of their body, and natural language, as it

were, of all nations, expressed by the countenance, glances of the eye, gestures of the limbs, and tones of the voice, indicating the affections of the mind, as it pursues, possesses, rejects, or shuns. And thus by constantly hearing words, as they occurred in various sentences, I understood gradually for what they stood; and having broken in my mouth to these signs, I thereby gave expression to my will. Thus I exchanged with those about me these current signs of our wills and so launched deeper into the stormy exchanges of human life, yet depending on parental authority and the desires of my elders.

14. O God my God, what miseries and mockeries did I now experience, when obedience to my teachers was proposed to me, as proper in a boy, in order that in this world I might prosper, and excel in the art of speech, which should serve to the "praise of men," and to deceitful riches. Next I was sent to school to get learning, in which I (poor wretch) knew not what use there was; and yet, if slow in learning, I was beaten. For this was judged right by our forefathers; and many, passing the same course before us, formed for us weary paths, through which we were fain to pass; multiplying toil and grief upon the sons of Adam. But, Lord, we found that men called upon Thee, and we learnt from them to think of Thee (according to our powers) as of some great One, who, though hidden from our senses, couldst hear and help us. For so I began, as a boy, to pray to Thee, my aid and refuge; and broke the restraints of my tongue to call on Thee, praying Thee, though small, yet with no small earnestness, that I might not be beaten

at school. And when Thou heardest me not (*not thereby giving me over to folly*) (Ps. 21:3), my elders, yea, my very parents, who yet wished me no ill, laughed at my punishments, my then great and grievous ill.

15. Is there, Lord, any man of soul so great, and cleaving to Thee with so intense affection (for a sort of stupidity will in a way do it); but is there any one, who, from clinging devoutly to Thee, is endowed with so great a spirit, that he can think as lightly of the racks and hooks and other torments (against which, throughout all lands, men call on Thee with extreme dread), mocking at those by whom they are feared most bitterly, as our parents laughed at the torments which we suffered in boyhood from our masters? For we feared not our torments less; nor prayed we less to Thee to escape them. And yet we sinned, in writing or reading or studying less than was exacted of us. For we lacked not, O Lord, memory or capacity, whereof Thy will gave enough for our age; but our sole delight was play; and for this we were punished by those who yet themselves were doing the same thing. But elder folks' idleness is called "business;" that of boys, being really the same, is punished by those elders; and none pities either boys or men. For will any one of sound discretion approve of my being beaten as a boy, because, by playing at ball, I made less progress in studies which I was to learn, only that, as a man, I might play in an unseemly fashion? And what else did he, who beat me? who, surpassed in some trifling discussion with his fellow-tutor, was more embittered and jealous than I, when beaten at ball by a play-fellow?

—≡≡ GEORGE MUELLER ≡≡—

ANSWERS TO
PRAYER

FROM
GEORGE MUELLER'S NARRATIVES
COMPILED BY
A. E. C. BROOKS

GENERAL EDITOR ∞ ROSALIE DE ROSSET
MOODY CLASSICS

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Beginning and Early Days of the Orphan Work



THAT THE TRIAL OF YOUR FAITH, BEING MUCH MORE
PRECIOUS THAN OF GOLD THAT PERISHETH, THOUGH IT BE TRIED
WITH FIRE, MIGHT BE FOUND UNTO PRAISE AND HONOUR AND
GLORY AT THE APPEARING OF JESUS CHRIST.—*1 Peter, 1:7*

MR. GEORGE MUELLER, the founder of the New Orphan-Houses, Ashley Down, Bristol (institutions that have been for many years the greatest monuments of modern times to a prayer-answering God), gives in that most valuable and instructive book, "A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Mueller," Vol. I., among other reasons for establishing an Orphan-House, the following:—

"Sometimes I found children of God tried in mind by the prospect of old age, when they might be unable to work any longer, and therefore were harassed by the fear of having to go into the poorhouse. If in such a case I pointed out to them, how their Heavenly Father has always helped those who put their trust in Him, they might not, perhaps, always say, that times have changed; but yet it was evident enough, that God

was not looked upon by them as the LIVING God. My spirit was oftentimes bowed down by this, and I longed to set something before the children of God, whereby they might see, that He does not forsake, even in our day, those who rely upon Him.

“Another class of persons were brethren in business, who suffered in their souls, and brought guilt on their consciences, by carrying on their business, almost in the same way as unconverted persons do. The competition in trade, the bad times, the overpeopled country, were given as reasons why, if the business were carried on simply according to the Word of God, it could not be expected to do well. Such a brother, perhaps, would express the wish, that he might be differently situated; but very rarely did I see *that there was a stand made for God, that there was the holy determination to trust in the living God, and to depend on Him, in order that a good conscience might be maintained.* To this class likewise I desired to show, by a visible proof, that God is unchangeably the same.

“Then there was another class of persons, individuals who were in professions in which they could not continue with a good conscience, or persons who were in an unscriptural position with reference to spiritual things; but both classes feared, on account of the consequences, to give up the profession in which they could not abide with God, or to leave their position, lest they should be thrown out of employment. My spirit longed to be instrumental in strengthening their faith, by giving them not only instances from the word of God, of

His willingness and ability to help all those who rely upon Him, but to show them by *proofs*, that He is the same in our day. I well knew *that the Word of God ought to be enough*, and it was, by grace, enough to me; but still, I considered that I ought to lend a helping hand to my brethren, if by any means, by this visible proof to the unchangeable faithfulness of the Lord, I might strengthen their hands in God; for I remembered what a great blessing my own soul had received through the Lord's dealings with His servant A. H. Franke, who in dependence upon the living God alone, established an immense Orphan-House, which I had seen many times with my own eyes. I, therefore, judged myself bound to be the servant of the Church of God, in the particular point on which I had obtained mercy: namely, in *being able to take God by His word and to rely upon it*. All these exercises of my soul, which resulted from the fact that so many believers, with whom I became acquainted, were harassed and distressed in mind, or brought guilt on their consciences, on account of not trusting in the Lord; were used by God to awaken in my heart the desire of setting before the church at large, and before the world, a proof that He has not in the least changed; and this seemed to me best done, by the establishing of an Orphan-House. It needed to be something which could be seen, even by the natural eye. Now, if I, a poor man, simply by prayer and faith, obtained without asking any individual, the means for establishing and carrying on an Orphan-House, there would be something which, with

the Lord's blessing, might be instrumental in strengthening the faith of the children of God, besides being a testimony to the consciences of the unconverted, of the reality of the things of God. This, then, was the primary reason for establishing the Orphan-House. I certainly did from my heart desire to be used by God to benefit the bodies of poor children, bereaved of both parents, and seek in other respects, with the help of God, to do them good for this life;—I also particularly longed to be used by God in getting the dear orphans trained up in the fear of God;—but still, the first and primary object of the work was (and still is): that God might be magnified by the fact, that the orphans under my care are provided with all they need, only by *prayer and faith* without anyone being asked by me or my fellow-laborers whereby it may be seen, that God is faithful still, and hears prayer still. That I was not mistaken, has been abundantly proved since November, 1835, both by the conversion of many sinners who have read the accounts, which have been published in connection with this work, and also by the abundance of fruit that has followed in the hearts of the saints, for which from my inmost soul, I desire to be grateful to God, and the honor and glory of which not only is due to Him alone, but, which I, by His help, am enabled to ascribe to Him."

“Open Thy Mouth Wide”

In the account written by Mr. Mueller dated January 16, 1836, respecting the Orphan-House intended to be estab-

lished in Bristol in connection with the Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad, we read:—

“When, of late, the thoughts of establishing an Orphan-House, in dependence upon the Lord, revived in my mind, during the first two weeks I only prayed that if it were of the Lord, He would bring it about, but if not that He graciously would be pleased to take all thoughts about it out of my mind. My uncertainty about knowing the Lord’s mind did not arise from questioning whether it would be pleasing in His sight, that there should be an abode and Scriptural education provided for destitute fatherless and motherless children; but whether it were His will that I should be the instrument of setting such an object on foot, as my hands were already more than filled. My comfort, however, was, that, if it were His will, He would provide not merely the means, but also suitable individuals to take care of the children, so that my part of the work would take only such a portion of my time, as, considering the importance of the matter, I might give, notwithstanding my many other engagements. The whole of those two weeks I never asked the Lord for money or for persons to engage in the work.

“On December 5th, however, the subject of my prayer all at once became different. I was reading Psalm 131, and was particularly struck, more than at any time before, with verse 10: *“Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.”* I thought a few moments about these words, and then was led to apply them

to the case of the Orphan-House. It struck me that I had never asked the Lord for anything concerning it, except to know His will, respecting its being established or not; and I then fell on my knees and opened my mouth wide, asking Him for much. I asked in submission to His will, and without fixing a time when He should answer my petition. I prayed that He would give me a house, i. e., either as a loan, or that someone might be led to pay the rent for one, or that one might be given permanently for this object; further, I asked Him for £1000; and likewise for suitable individuals to take care of the children. Besides this, I have been since led to ask the Lord, to put into the hearts of His people to send me articles of furniture for the house, and some clothes for the children. When I was asking the petition, I was fully aware what I was doing, i. e., that I was asking for something which I had no natural prospect of obtaining from the brethren whom I know, but which was not too much for the Lord to grant."

"December 10, 1835.—This morning I received a letter, in which a brother and sister wrote thus:— 'We propose ourselves for the service of the intended Orphan-House, if you think us qualified for it; also to give up all the furniture, &c.' which the Lord has given us, for its use; and to this without receiving any salary whatever; believing that if it be the will of the Lord to employ us, He will supply all our needs, &c."

"Dec. 13.—A brother was influenced this day to give 4s. per week, or £10 8s yearly, as long as the Lord gives the means;

8s. was given by him as two weeks' subscriptions. Today a brother and sister offered themselves, with all their furniture, and all the provisions which they have in the house, if they can be usefully employed in the concerns of the Orphan-House."

A Great Encouragement

"Dec. 17.—I was rather cast down last evening and this morning about the matter, questioning whether I ought to be engaged in this way, and was led to ask the Lord to give me some further encouragement. Soon after were sent by a brother two pieces of print, the one seven and the other 23 3/4 yards, 6 3/4 yards of calico, four pieces of lining, about four yards altogether, a sheet, and a yard measure. This evening another brother brought a clothes horse, three frocks, four pinafores, six handkerchiefs, three counterpanes, one blanket, two pewter salt cellars, six tin cups, and six metal tea spoons; he also brought 3s. 6d. given to him by three different individuals. At the same time he told me that it had been put into the heart of an individual to send tomorrow £100."

One Thousand Pounds

"June 15, 1837.—Today I gave myself once more earnestly to prayer respecting the remainder of the £1000. This evening £5 was given, so that now the whole sum is made up. To the Glory of the Lord, whose I am, and whom I serve, I would state again, that every shilling of this money, and all the articles

of clothing and furniture, which have been mentioned in the foregoing pages, have been given to me, *without one single individual having been asked by me for anything.*"

Orphans for the Building

In a third statement, containing the announcement of the opening of the Orphan-House, for destitute female children, and a proposal for the establishment of an Infant Orphan-House, which was sent to the press on May 18, 1836, Mr. Mueller wrote:—

"So far as I remember, I brought even the most minute circumstances concerning the Orphan-House before the Lord in my petitions, being conscious of my own weakness and ignorance. There was, however, one point I never had prayed about, namely that the Lord would send children; for I naturally took it for granted that there would be plenty of applications. The nearer, however, the day came which had been appointed for receiving applications, the more I had a secret consciousness, that the Lord might disappoint my natural expectations, and show me that I could not prosper in one single thing without Him. The appointed time came, and not even one application was made. I had before this been repeatedly tried, whether I might not, after all, against the Lord's mind, have engaged in the work. This circumstance now led me to lie low before my God in prayer the whole of the evening, February 3, and to examine my heart once more as to all the motives concern-

ing it; and being able, as formerly, to say, that His glory was my chief aim, i.e., that it might be seen that it is not a vain thing to trust in the living God,—and that my second aim was the spiritual welfare of the orphan-children,—and the third their bodily welfare; and still continuing in prayer, I was at last brought to this state, that I could say *from my heart*, that I should rejoice in God being glorified in this matter, though it were *by bringing the whole to nothing*. But as still, after all, it seemed to me more tending to the glory of God, to establish and prosper the Orphan-House, I could then ask Him heartily, to send applications. I enjoyed now a peaceful state of heart concerning the subject, and was also more assured than ever that God would establish it. *The very next day*, February 4, the first application was made, and since then 42 more have been made."

"Just for Today"

Later on, when there were nearly 100 persons to be maintained, and the funds were reduced to about £20, Mr. Mueller writes:—

"July 22 [1838].—This evening I was walking in our little garden, meditating on Heb. xiii. 8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." Whilst meditating on His unchangeable love, power, wisdom, &c.—and turning all, as I went on, into prayer respecting myself; and whilst applying likewise His unchangeable love, and power and wisdom, &c,

both to my present spiritual and temporal circumstances:—all at once the present need of the Orphan-House was brought to my mind. Immediately I was led to say to myself, Jesus in His love and power has hitherto supplied me with what I have needed for the Orphans, and in the same unchangeable love and power He will provide me with what I may need for the future. A flow of joy came into my soul whilst realising thus the unchangeableness of our adorable Lord. About one minute after, a letter was brought me, enclosing a bill for £20. In it was written: “Will you apply the amount of the enclosed bill to the furtherance of the objects of your Scriptural Knowledge Society, or of your Orphan Establishment, or in the work and cause of our Master in any way that He Himself, on your application to Him, may point out to you. It is not a great sum, but it is a sufficient provision for the exigency of today; and it is for today’s exigencies, that, ordinarily, the Lord provides. Tomorrow, as it brings its demands, will find its supply, etc.”

“[Of this £20 I took £10 for the Orphan fund, and £10 for the other objects, and was thus enabled to meet the expenses of about £34 which, in connection with the Orphan-Houses, came upon me within four days afterwards, and which I knew beforehand would come.]”

Waiting for Help

“Nov. 21, 1838.—Never were we so reduced in funds as today. There was not a single half-penny in hand between the

matrons of the three houses. Nevertheless there was a good dinner, and by managing so as to help one another with bread, etc., there was a prospect of getting over this day also; but for none of the houses had we the prospect of being able to take in bread. When I left the brethren and sisters at one o'clock, after prayer, I told them that we must wait for help, and see how the Lord would deliver us this time. I was sure of help, but we were indeed straitened. When I came to Kingsdown, I felt that I needed more exercise, being very old; wherefore I went on the nearest way home, but round by Clarence Place. About twenty yards from my house, I met a brother who walked back with me, and after a little conversation gave me £10 to be handed over to the brethren, the deacons, towards providing the poor saints with coals, blankets and warm clothing; also £5 for the Orphans, and £5 for the other objects of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution. The brother had called twice while I was gone to the Orphan-Houses, and had I now been one *half minute* later, I should have missed him. But the Lord knew our need, and therefore allowed me to meet him. I sent off the £ 5 immediately to the matrons."

≡ THOMAS À KEMPIS ≡

THE IMITATION
OF CHRIST

GENERAL EDITOR & ROSALIE DE ROSSET

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Of the Imitation of Christ, and Contempt of All the Vanities of the World



“HE THAT followeth me, walketh not in darkness,”¹ saith the Lord. These are the words of Christ, by which we are taught, how we ought to imitate his life and manners, if we will be truly enlightened, and be delivered from all blindness of heart.

Let therefore our chief endeavor be, to meditate upon the life of Jesus Christ.

2. The doctrine of Christ exceedeth all the doctrines of holy men; and he that hath the Spirit, will find therein a hidden manna.

But it falleth out, that many who often hear the gospel of Christ, are yet but little affected, because they lack the spirit of Christ.

But whosoever would fully and feelingly understand the words of Christ, must endeavor to conform his life wholly to the life of Christ.

3. What will it avail thee to dispute profoundly of the Trinity,

if thou be lacking in humility, and art thereby displeasing to the Trinity?

Surely high words do not make a man holy and just; but a virtuous life makes him dear to God.

I had rather feel compunction than understand the definition thereof.

If thou didst know the whole Bible by heart, and the sayings of all the philosophers, what would all that profit thee without the love of God,² and without grace?

Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity,³ except to love God, and to serve him only.

This is the highest wisdom, by contempt of the world to tend toward the kingdom of heaven.

4. Vanity therefore it is, to seek after perishing riches, and to trust in them.

It is also vanity to hunt after honors, and to climb to high degree.

It is vanity to follow the desires of the flesh, and to labor for that for which thou must afterward suffer more grievous punishment.

Vanity it is, to wish to live long, and to be careless to live well.

It is vanity to mind only this present life, and not to foresee those things which are to come.

It is vanity to set thy love on that which speedily passes away, and not to hasten thither where everlasting joy abides.

5. Call often to mind that proverb that, "The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing."⁴

Endeavor therefore to withdraw thy heart from the love of visible things, and to turn thyself to the invisible.

For they that follow their lusts, do stain their own consciences, and lose the favor of God.

1. John 8:12
2. 1 Cor. 13:2
3. Eccles. 1:3
4. Eccles. 1:8

Of Thinking Humbly of Ourselves



ALL MEN naturally desire to know;¹ but what does knowledge avail without the fear of God?

Surely an humble husbandman that serveth God is better than a proud philosopher that, neglecting himself, laboreth to understand the course of the heavens.

Whoso knoweth himself well, is lowly in his own sight and delighteth not in the praises of men.

If I understood all things in the world, and were not charitable, what would that help me in the sight of God, who will judge me according to my deeds?

2. Cease from an inordinate desire of knowing, for therein is much distraction and deceit.

The learned are well-pleased to seem so to others, and to be accounted wise.²

There are many things, which to know is of little or no profit to the soul:

And he is very unwise, that is intent upon other things than those that may serve for his salvation.

Many words do not satisfy the soul; but a good life comforteth the mind, and a pure conscience giveth great assurance in the sight of God.

3. How much the more thou knowest, and how much the better thou understandest, so much the more severely shalt thou therefore be judged, unless thy life be also more holy.

Be not therefore extolled in thine own mind for any art or science which thou knowest, but rather let the knowledge given thee make thee more humble and cautious.

If thou thinkest that thou understandest and knowest much, know also that there be many things more which thou knowest not.

Do not seem to be overwise, but rather acknowledge, thine own ignorance.³

Why wilt thou prefer thyself before others, since there be many more learned, and more skillful in the Scripture than thou art?

If thou wilt know or learn anything profitably, desire to be unknown, and to be little esteemed by man.

4. The highest and most profitable reading is the true knowledge and consideration of ourselves.

It is great wisdom and perfection to esteem ourselves as nothing, and to think always well and highly of others.

If thou shouldst see another openly sin, or commit some

heinous offence, yet oughtest thou not to esteem the better of thyself; for thou knowest not how long thou shalt be able to remain in good estate.

We are all frail,⁴ but thou oughtest to hold none more frail than thyself.

1. Eccles. 1:13

2. 1 Cor. 8:1

3. Rom. 12:16

4. Gen. 8:21

Of the Doctrine of Truth



HAPPY IS HE whom truth by itself doth teach,¹ not by figures and words that pass away; but as it is in itself.

Our own opinion and our own sense do often deceive us, and they discern but little.

What availeth it to make a great dispute about dark and hidden things;² whereas for being ignorant of them we shall not be so much as reproved at the day of judgment?

It is a great folly to neglect the things that are profitable and necessary, and *give* our minds to that which is curious and hurtful: we have eyes and see not.³

2. And what have we to do with *genus* and *species*?

He to whom the Eternal Word speaketh, is delivered from a world of unnecessary conceptions.

From that one Word are all things, and all speak that one; and this is the beginning, which also speaketh unto us.

No man without that Word understandeth or judgeth rightly.

He to whom all things are one, he who reduceth all things to one, and seeth all things in one; may enjoy a quiet mind, and remain peaceable in God.

O God, who art the truth, make me one with thee in everlasting charity.

It is tedious to me often to read and hear many things: in thee is all that I would have and can desire.

Let all doctors hold their peace; let all creatures be silent in thy sight; speak thou alone unto me.

3. The more a man is united within himself, and becometh inwardly simple, so much the more and higher things doth he understand without labor; for that he receiveth intellectual light from above.⁴

A pure, sincere, and stable spirit is not distracted, though it be employed in many works; because it works all to the honor of God, and inwardly being still and quiet, seeks not itself in anything it doeth.

Who hinders and troubles thee more than the unmortified affections of thine own heart?

A good and godly man arranges within himself beforehand those things which he is outwardly to act;

Neither do they draw him according to the desires of an evil inclination, but he ordereth them according to the direction of right reason.

Who hath a greater combat than he that laboreth to overcome himself?

This ought to be our endeavor, to conquer ourselves, and daily to wax stronger and to make a further growth in holiness.

4. All perfection in this life hath some imperfection mixed

with it; and no knowledge of ours is without some darkness.

An humble knowledge of thyself is a surer way to God than a deep search after learning;

Yet learning is not to be blamed, nor the mere knowledge of anything whatsoever to be disliked, it being good in itself, and ordained by God; but a good conscience and a virtuous life is always to be preferred before it.

But because many endeavor rather to get knowledge than to live well; therefore they are often deceived, and reap either none, or very slender profit.

5. Oh, if men bestowed as much labor in the rooting out of vices, and planting of virtues, as they do in moving of questions, neither would there be so much hurt done, nor so great scandal be given in the world, nor so much looseness be practiced in monasteries.

Truly, at the day of judgment we shall not be examined what we have read, but what we have done;⁵ not how well we have spoken, but how virtuously we have lived.

Tell me now, where are all those doctors and masters, with whom thou wert well acquainted, while they lived and flourished in learning?

Now others possess their livings and perhaps do scarce ever think of them. In their lifetime they seemed something, but now they are not spoken of.

6. Oh, how quickly doth the glory of the world pass away!⁶ Oh, that their life had been answerable to their learning! then

had their study and reading been to good purpose.

How many perish by reason of vain learning⁷ in this world, who take little care of the serving of God:

And because they rather choose to be great than humble, therefore they become vain in their imaginations.⁸

He is truly great, that is great in charity.

He is truly great that is little in himself, and that maketh no account of any height of honor.⁹

He is truly wise, that accounteth all earthly things as dung, that he may gain Christ.¹⁰

And he is truly learned, that doeth the will of God, and forsaketh his own will.

1. Psalm 94:12
2. Eccles. 3:9-11
3. Psalm 115:5
4. Matt. 11:25; Luke 10:21
5. Matt. 25
6. Eccles. 2:11
7. Titus 1:10
8. Rom. 1:21
9. Matt. 18:4; 23:11
10. Phil. 3:8

≡ ANDREW MURRAY ≡

THE TRUE
VINE

GENERAL EDITOR & ROSALIE DE ROSSET

MOODY CLASSICS

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The Vine



I AM THE TRUE VINE. —*John 15:1*

ALL EARTHLY THINGS are the shadows of heavenly realities—the expression, in created, visible forms, of the invisible glory of God. The life and the truth are in heaven; on earth we have figures and shadows of the heavenly truths. When Jesus says: “I am the true vine,” He tells us that all the vines of earth are pictures and emblems of Himself. He is the divine reality, of which they are the created expression. They all point to Him, and preach Him, and reveal Him. If you would know Jesus, study the vine.

How many eyes have gazed on and admired a great vine with its beautiful fruit? Come and gaze on the heavenly Vine till your eye turns from all else to admire Him. How many, in a sunny climate, sit and rest under the shadow of a vine? Come and be still under the shadow of the true Vine, and rest under

it from the heat of the day. What countless numbers rejoice in the fruit of the vine! Come, and take, and eat of the heavenly fruit of the true Vine, and let your soul say: "I sat under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste."

I am the true vine.—This is a heavenly mystery. The earthly vine can teach you much about this Vine of heaven. Many interesting and beautiful points of comparison suggest themselves and help us to get conceptions of what Christ meant. But such thoughts do not teach us to know what the heavenly Vine really is, in its cooling shade and its life-giving fruit. The experience of this is part of the hidden mystery, which none but Jesus Himself, by His Holy Spirit, can unfold and impart.

I am the true vine.—The Vine is the living Lord, who Himself speaks, and gives, and works all that He has for us. If you would know the meaning and power of that word, do not think to find it by thought or study; these may help to show you what you must get from Him to awaken desire and hope and prayer, but they cannot show you the Vine. Jesus alone can reveal Himself. He gives His Holy Spirit to open the eyes to gaze upon Himself, to open the heart to receive Himself. He must Himself speak the word to you and me.

I am the true vine.—And what are you to do, if you want the mystery, in all its heavenly beauty and blessing, opened up to you? With what you already know of the parable, bow down

and be still, worship and wait, until the divine Word enters your heart and you feel His holy presence with you and in you. The overshadowing of His holy love will give you the perfect calm and rest of knowing that the Vine will do all.

I am the true vine.—He who speaks is God, in His infinite power able to enter into us. He is man, one with us. He is the crucified One, who won a perfect righteousness and a divine life for us through His death. He is the glorified One, who from the throne gives His Spirit to make His presence real and true. He speaks—oh, listen, not to His words only, but to Himself, as He whispers secretly day by day: “I am the true Vine! All that the Vine can ever be to its branch, I will be to you.”

* * *

Holy Lord Jesus, the heavenly Vine of God’s own planting, I beseech You, reveal Yourself to my soul. Let the Holy Spirit, not only in thought, but in experience, give me to know all that You, the Son of God, are to me as the true Vine.

The Husbandman



AND MY FATHER IS THE HUSBANDMAN. —*John 15:1*

A VINE MUST have a husbandman to plant and watch over it, to receive and rejoice in its fruit. Jesus says: "My Father is the husbandman." Jesus was "the vine of God's planting." All He was and did, He owed to the Father; in all things He only sought the Father's will and glory. He had become man to show us what a creature ought to be to its Creator. He took our place, and the spirit of His life before the Father was ever what He seeks to make ours: "Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things" (Romans 11:36). He became the true Vine, that we might be true branches. Both in regard to Christ and ourselves the words teach us the two lessons of absolute dependence and perfect confidence.

My Father is the husbandman.—Christ ever lived in the spirit of what He once said: "The Son can do nothing of him-

self" (John 5:19). As dependent as a vine is on a husbandman for the place where it is to grow, for its fencing in and watering and pruning, Christ felt Himself entirely dependent on the Father every day for the wisdom and the strength to do the Father's will. As He said in the previous chapter (John 14:10): "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." This absolute dependence had as its blessed counterpart the most blessed confidence that He had nothing to fear: The Father could not disappoint Him. With such a Husbandman as His Father, He could enter death and the grave. He could trust God to raise Him up. All that Christ is and has, He has, not in Himself, but from the Father.

My Father is the husbandman.—That is as blessedly true for us as for Christ. Christ is about to teach His disciples about their being branches. Before He ever uses the word, or speaks at all of abiding in Him or bearing fruit, He turns their eyes heavenward to the Father watching over them and working all in them.

At the very root of all Christian life lies the thought that God is to do all, that our one work is to leave ourselves in His hands, in the confession of utter helplessness and dependence, in the assured confidence that He gives us all we need. The great lack of the Christian life is that, even where we trust Christ, we leave God out of the count. Christ came to bring us to God. Christ lived the life of a man exactly as we have to

live it. Christ the Vine points to God the Husbandman. As He trusted God, let us trust God, that everything we ought to be and have, as those who belong to the Vine, will be given to us from above.

Isaiah said: "A vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." Before we begin to think of fruit or branches, let us have our heart filled with the faith that as glorious as the Vine is the Husbandman. As high and holy as is our calling, so mighty and loving is the God who will work it all. As surely as the Husbandman made the Vine what it was to be, will He make each branch what it is to be. Our Father is our Husbandman, the surety for our growth and fruit.

The Branch



EVERY BRANCH IN ME THAT BEARETH
NOT FRUIT HE TAKETH AWAY. —*John 15:2*

HERE WE HAVE one of the chief words of the parable—*branch*. A vine needs branches: Without branches it can do nothing, can bear no fruit. As important as it is to know about the Vine and the Husbandman, it is to realize what the branch is. Before we listen to what Christ has to say about it, let us first of all take in what a branch is and what it teaches us of our life in Christ. A branch is simply a bit of wood, brought forth by the vine for the one purpose of serving it in bearing its fruit. It is of the same nature as the vine, and it has one life and one spirit with it. Just think a moment of the lessons this suggests.

There is the lesson of *entire consecration*. The branch has but one object for which it exists, one purpose to which it is entirely given up, to bear the fruit the vine wishes to bring forth. And so the believer has but one reason for being

a branch—but one reason for his existence on earth—that the heavenly Vine may through him bring forth His fruit. Happy the soul that knows this, that has consented to it, and that says, “I have been redeemed and I live for one thing. As exclusively as the natural branch exists only to bring forth fruit, I too; as exclusively as the heavenly Vine exists to bring forth fruit, I too. As I have been planted by God into Christ, I have wholly given myself to bear the fruit the Vine desires to bring forth.”

There is the lesson of *perfect conformity*. The branch is exactly like the vine in every aspect—the same nature, the same life, the same place, the same work. In all this they are inseparably one. And so the believer needs to know that he is partaker of the divine nature, that he has the very nature and spirit of Christ in him, and that his one calling is to yield himself to a perfect conformity to Christ. The branch is a perfect likeness of the vine; the only difference is the one is great and strong, and the source of strength; the other little and feeble, ever needing and receiving strength. Even so the believer is, and is to be, the perfect likeness of Christ.

There is the lesson of *absolute dependence*. The vine has its stores of life and sap and strength not for itself, but for the branches. The branches are and have nothing but what the vine provides and imparts. The believer is called to, and it is his highest blessedness to enter upon, a life of entire and unceasing dependence upon Christ. Day and night, every moment,

Christ is to work in him all he needs.

And then there is the lesson of *undoubting confidence*. The branch has no care; the vine provides all; it has but to yield itself and receive. It is the sight of this truth that leads to the blessed rest of faith, the true secret of growth and strength: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." What a life would come to us if we only consented to be branches! Dear child of God, learn the lesson. You have but one thing to do: Only be a branch—nothing more, nothing less! Just be a branch; Christ will be the Vine that gives all. And the Husbandman, the mighty God, who made the Vine what it is, *will as surely make the branch what it ought to be.*

* * *

Lord Jesus, I pray, reveal to me the heavenly mystery of the branch, in its living union with the Vine, in its claim on all its fullness. And let Your all-sufficiency, holding and filling Your branches, lead me to the rest of faith that knows that You work all.

≡ JOHN BUNYAN ≡

THE PILGRIM'S
PROGRESS

FROM THIS WORLD TO THAT WHICH IS TO COME
DELIVERED UNDER THE
SIMILITUDE OF A DREAM

GENERAL EDITOR ~ ROSALIE DE ROSSET

MOODY CLASSICS

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Pilgrim's Progress



THAT THE TRIAL OF YOUR FAITH, BEING MUCH MORE
PRECIOUS THAN OF GOLD THAT PERISHETH, THOUGH IT BE TRIED
WITH FIRE, MIGHT BE FOUND UNTO PRAISE AND HONOUR AND
GLORY AT THE APPEARING OF JESUS CHRIST.—*1 Peter, 1:7*

AS I WALKED through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where was a den,¹ and laid me down in that place to sleep; and as I slept, I dreamed a dream. I dreamed, and behold I saw a man clothed with rags standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, a Book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back (Isaiah 64:6; Luke 14:33; Psalm 38:4). I looked, and saw him open the Book and read therein; and as he read he wept and trembled; and not being able longer to contain, he break out with a lamentable cry, saying:

PILGRIM: What shall I do? (Acts 2:37; 16:30; Habakkuk 1:2–3).

In this plight, therefore, he went home, and restrained himself as long as he could, that his wife and children should not perceive his distress; but he could not be silent long, because

¹ *Bedford Jail, in which the author was a prisoner for conscience' sake.*

that his trouble increased. Wherefore at length he break his mind to his wife and children; and thus he began to talk to them:

PILGRIM: O my dear wife, and you my children, I, your dear friend, am in myself undone by reason of a burden that lieth hard upon me. Moreover, I am certainly informed that this our city will be burned with fire from Heaven; in which fearful overthrow, both myself, with thee my wife, and you my sweet babes, shall miserably come to ruin, except (the which yet I see not) some way of escape can be found, whereby we may be delivered.

At this his relations were sore amazed, not for that they believed that what he had said to them was true, but because they thought that some frenzy distemper had got into his head. Therefore, it drawing toward night, and they hoping that sleep might settle his brains, with all haste they got him to bed. But the night was as troublesome to him as the day; wherefore, instead of sleeping, he spent it in sighs and tears. So when the morning was come, they would know how he did. He told them:

PILGRIM: Worse and worse.

He also set to talking to them again; but they began to be hardened. They also thought to drive away his distemper by harsh and surly carriage to him. Sometimes they would deride, sometimes they would chide, and sometimes they would quite neglect him. Wherefore he began to retire himself

to his chamber to pray for and pity them, and also to condole his own misery; he would also walk solitarily in the fields, sometimes reading, and sometimes praying; and thus for some days he spent his time.

Now I saw, upon a time when he was walking in the fields, that he was (as he was wont) reading in his Book, and greatly distressed in his mind: and as he read, he burst out as he had done before, crying.

PILGRIM: What must I do to be saved? (Acts 16:30–31).

I saw also that he looked this way, and that way, as if he would run; yet he stood still, because (as I perceived) he could not tell which way to go.

Pilgrim Meets Evangelist

I looked then, and saw a man named Evangelist coming to him, who asked:

EVANGELIST: Wherefore dost thou cry?

PILGRIM: Sir, I perceive by the Book in my hand, that I am condemned to die, and after that to come to judgment (Hebrews 9:27); and I find that I am not willing to do the first (Job 16:21–22), nor able to do the second (Ezekiel 22:14).

EVANGELIST: Why not willing to die, since this life is attended with so many evils?

PILGRIM: Because I fear that this burden that is upon my back will sink me lower than the grave, and I shall fall into Tophet (Isaiah 30:33). And, sir, if I be not fit to go to prison,

I am not fit to go to judgment, and from thence to execution; and the thoughts of these things make me cry.

EVANGELIST: If this be thy condition, why standest thou still?

PILGRIM: Because I know not whither to go.

Then he gave him a parchment roll, and there was written within, "Flee from the wrath to come" (Matthew 3:7).

The man therefore read it, and, looking upon Evangelist very carefully, said:

PILGRIM: Whither must I flee?

EVANGELIST: (Pointing with his finger over a very wide field), Do you see yonder wicket gate? (Matthew 7:13–14.)

PILGRIM: No.

EVANGELIST: Do you see yonder shining light? (Psalm 119:105; 2 Peter 1:19.)

PILGRIM: I think I do.

EVANGELIST: Keep that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto, so shalt thou see the gate; at which, when thou knockest, it shall be told thee what thou shalt do.

So I saw in my dream that the man began to run. Now he had not run far from his own door, when his wife and children, perceiving it, began to cry after him to return; but the man put his fingers in his ears, and ran on, crying, "Life! life! Eternal life!" (Luke 14:26). So he looked not behind him (Genesis 19:17), but fled toward the middle of the plain.

The neighbors also came out to see him run (Jeremiah

20:10); and as he ran, some mocked, others threatened, and some cried after him to return; and among those that did so, there were two that resolved to fetch him back by force.

Obstinate and Pliable Pursue Him

The name of the one was Obstinate, and the name of the other Pliable. Now by this time the man was got a good distance from them; but, however, they were resolved to pursue him, which they did, and in a little time they overtook him. Then said the man:

PILGRIM: Neighbors, wherefore are ye come?

NEIGHBOR: To persuade you to go back with us.

PILGRIM: That can by no means be. You dwell in the city of Destruction, the place also where I was born: I see it to be so; and dying there, sooner or later you will sink lower than the grave, into a place that burns with fire and brimstone. Be content, good neighbors, and go along with me!

OBSTINATE: What! And leave our friends and our comforts behind us!

CHRISTIAN: Yes (said Christian, for that was his name), because that *all* is not worthy to be compared with a *little* of that I am seeking to enjoy (2 Corinthians 4:18). If you will go along with me, and hold it, you shall fare as I myself; for there, where I go, is enough and to spare (Luke 15:17). Come away, and prove my words.

OBSTINATE: What are the things you seek, since you leave

all the world to find them?

CHRISTIAN: I seek an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away (1 Peter 1:4); and it is laid up in Heaven, and safe there (Hebrews 2:16), to be bestowed, at the time appointed, on them that diligently seek it. Read it so, if you will, in my Book.

OBSTINATE: Tush! Away with your Book; will you go back with us or no?

CHRISTIAN: No, not I, because I have laid my hand to the plow (Luke 9:62).

OBSTINATE: Come then, neighbor Pliable, let us turn again, and go home without him. There is a company of these crazy-headed coxcombs, that when they take a fancy by the end are wiser in their own eyes than seven men that can render a reason.

PLIABLE: Then don't revile. If what the good Christian says is true, the things he looks after are better than ours. My heart inclines to go with my neighbor.

OBSTINATE: What! More fools still! Be ruled by me and go back. Who knows whither such a brain-sick fellow will lead you? Go back, go back, and be wise.

CHRISTIAN: Come with me, neighbor Pliable; there are such things to be had which I spoke of, and many more glories besides. If you believe not me, read here in this Book; and for the truth of what is expressed therein, behold all is confirmed by the blood of Him that made it (Hebrews 9:17–21).

PLIABLE: Well, neighbor Obstinate, I begin to come to a point; I intend to go along with this good man, and to cast in my lot with him. But, my good companion, do you know the way to this desired place?

CHRISTIAN: I am directed by a man, whose name is Evangelist, to speed me to a little gate that is before us, where we shall receive instruction about the way.

PLIABLE: Come then, good neighbor, let us be going.

(Then they went both together.)

OBSTINATE: And I will go back to my place; I will be no companion of such misled, fantastical fellows.

Now I saw in my dream that when Obstinate was gone back, Christian and Pliable went talking over the plain; and thus they began their discourse.

CHRISTIAN: Come, neighbor Pliable, how do you do? I am glad you are persuaded to go along with me. Had even Obstinate himself but felt what I have felt of the powers and terrors of what is yet unseen, he would not thus lightly have given us the back.

PLIABLE: Come, neighbor Christian, since there are none but us two here, tell me now further what the things are, and how to be enjoyed, whither we are going.

CHRISTIAN: I can better conceive of them with my mind than speak of them with my tongue; but yet, since you are desirous to know, I will read of them in my Book.

PLIABLE: And do you think that the words of your Book are

certainly true?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, verily; for it was made by Him that cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

PLIABLE: Well said; what things are they?

CHRISTIAN: There is an endless kingdom to be inhabited, and everlasting life to be given us, that we may inhabit that kingdom forever (Isaiah 45:17; John 10:27–29).

PLIABLE: Well said; and what else?

CHRISTIAN: There are crowns of glory to be given us, and garments that will make us shine like the sun in the firmament of Heaven (2 Timothy 4:8; Revelation 22:5; Matthew 13:43).

PLIABLE: This is excellent; and what else?

CHRISTIAN: There shall be no more crying, nor sorrow; for He that is owner of the place will wipe all tears from our eyes (Isaiah 25:8; Revelation 7:16–17; 21:4).

PLIABLE: And what company shall we have there?

CHRISTIAN: There we shall be with seraphim and cherubim (Isaiah 6:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17; Revelation 5:11), creatures that will dazzle our eyes to look on them. There also we shall meet with thousands and ten thousands that have gone before us to that place; none of them are hurtful, but loving and holy, everyone walking in the sight of God, and standing in His presence with acceptance forever. In a word, there we shall see the elders with their golden crowns (Revelation 4:4); there we shall see the holy virgins with their golden

harp (Revelation 14:1–5); there we shall see men that by the world were cut in pieces, burned in flames, eaten of beasts, drowned in the seas, for the love they bare to the Lord of the place (John 12:25); all well, and clothed with immortality as with a garment (2 Corinthians 5:2, 3, 5).

PLIABLE: The hearing of this is enough to ravish one's heart. But are these things to be enjoyed? How shall we get to be sharers thereof?

CHRISTIAN: The Lord, the Governor of the country, hath recorded that in this Book (Isaiah 55:1–2; 7:37; Revelation 21:6; 22:17), the substance of which is, if we be truly willing to have it, He will bestow it upon us freely.

PLIABLE: Well, my good companion, glad am I to hear of these things; come on, let us mend our pace.

CHRISTIAN: I cannot go so fast as I would, by reason of this burden that is on my back.

The Slough of Despond

Now I saw in my dream, that just as they had ended this talk, they drew nigh to a very miry Slough that was in the midst of the plain; and they being heedless, did both fall suddenly into the bog. The name of the Slough was Despond. Here, therefore, they wallowed for a time, being grievously bedaubed with the dirt; and Christian, because of the burden that was on his back, began to sink in the mire.

PLIABLE: Ah, neighbor Christian, where are you now?

≡ R. A. TORREY ≡

HOW TO
PRAY

GENERAL EDITOR ~ ROSALIE DE ROSSET

MOODY CLASSICS

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The Importance of Prayer



IN EPHESIANS 6:18 we read words that put the tremendous importance of prayer with startling and overwhelming force:

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

When we stop to weigh the meaning of these words, then note the connection in which they are found, the intelligent child of God is driven to say,

“I must pray, pray, pray. I must put all my energy and all my heart into prayer. Whatever else I do, I must pray.”

The *Revised Version* (RV) is, if possible, stronger than the King James:

“With all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons

in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints."

Note the *alls*: "with *all* prayer," "at *all* seasons," "in *all* perseverance," "for *all* the saints." Note the piling up of strong words, "prayer," "supplication," "perseverance." Note once more the strong expression "watching thereunto," more literally, "being sleepless thereunto." Paul realized the natural slothfulness of man, and especially his natural slothfulness in prayer. How seldom we pray things through! How often the church and the individual get right up to the verge of a great blessing in prayer and just then let go, get drowsy, and quit. I wish that these words "being sleepless unto prayer" might burn into our hearts. I wish the whole verse might burn into our hearts.

By why is this constant, persistent, sleepless, overcoming prayer so needful?

1. *There is a devil.*

He is cunning, he is mighty, he never rests, he is ever plotting the downfall of the child of God; and if the child of God relaxes in prayer, the Devil will succeed in ensnaring him.

This is the thought of the context. Verse 12 reads: "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in

the heavenly places" (RV). Then comes verse 13: "Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand" (RV). Next follows a description of the different parts of the Christian's armor, which we are to put on if we are to stand against the devil and his mighty wiles. Then Paul brings all to a climax in verse 18, telling us that to all else we must add prayer—constant, persistent, untiring sleepless prayer in the Holy Spirit, or all else will go for nothing.

2. Prayer is God's appointed way for obtaining things, and the great secret of all lack in our experience, in our life, and in our work is neglect of prayer.

James brings this out very forcibly in chapter 4 and verse 2 of his epistle: "Ye have not because ye ask not." These words contain the secret of the poverty and powerlessness of the average Christian—neglect of prayer.

Many a Christian is asking, "Why is it I make so little progress in my Christian life?"

"Neglect of prayer," God answers. "You have not because you ask not."

Many a minister is asking, "Why is it I see so little fruit from my labors?"

Again God answers, "Neglect of prayer. You have not because you ask not."

Many a Sunday school teacher is asking, "Why is it that

I see so few converted in my Sunday school class?"

Still God answers, "Neglect of prayer. You have not because you ask not."

Both ministers and churches are asking, "Why is it that the church of Christ makes so little headway against unbelief and error and sin and worldliness?"

Once more we hear God answering, "Neglect of prayer. You have not because you ask not."

3. Those men whom God set forth as a pattern of what He expected Christians to be—the apostles—regarded prayer as the most important business of their lives.

When the multiplying responsibilities of the early church crowded in upon them, they "called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, fully of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But *we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word*" (Acts 6:2–4). It is evident from what Paul wrote to the churches and to individuals about praying for them that much of his time, strength, and thought were given to prayer (Romans 1:9 RV; Ephesians 1:15–16; Colossians 1:9 RV; 1 Thessalonians 3:10; 2 Timothy 1:3 RV).

All the mighty men of God outside the Bible have been

men of prayer. They have differed from one another in many things, but in this they have been alike.

4. *Prayer occupied a very prominent place and played a very important part in the earthly life of our Lord.*

Turn, for example, to Mark 1:35. "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." The preceding day had been a very busy and exciting one, but Jesus shortened the hours of needed sleep that He might arise early and give Himself to more sorely needed prayer.

Turn again to Luke 6:12, where we read, "And it came to pass in those days that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." Our Savior found it necessary on occasion to take a whole night for prayer.

The words *pray* and *prayer* are used at least twenty-five times in connection with our Lord in the brief record of His life in the four Gospels, and His praying is mentioned in places where the words are not used. Evidently prayer took much of the time and strength of Jesus; a man or woman who does not spend much time in prayer cannot properly be called a follower of Jesus Christ.

5. *Praying is the most important part of the present ministry of our risen Lord.*

This reason for constant, persistent, sleepless, overcom-

ing prayer seems if possible even more forcible.

Christ's ministry did not close with His death. His atoning work was finished then, but when He rose and ascended to the right hand of the Father, He entered upon other work for us just as important in its place as His atoning work. It cannot be divorced from His atoning work; it rests upon that as its basis, but it is necessary to our complete salvation.

What that great present work is, by which He carries our salvation on to completeness, we read in Hebrews 7:25: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing *he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*" This verse tells us that Jesus is able to save us unto the uttermost, not merely *from* the uttermost but *unto* the uttermost unto entire completeness, absolute perfection, because He not merely died but because He also "ever liveth."

The verse also tells us for what purpose He now lives, "*to make intercession*" for us, to pray. Praying is the principal thing He is doing in these days. It is by His prayers that He is saving us.

The same thought is found in Paul's remarkable triumphant challenge in Romans 8:34: "Who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, *who also maketh intercession for us*" (RV).

If we then are to have fellowship with Jesus Christ in His present work, we must spend much time in prayer; we

must give ourselves to earnest, constant, persistent, sleepless, overcoming prayer. I know of nothing that has so impressed me with a sense of the importance of praying at all seasons, being much and constantly in prayer, as the thought that that is the principal occupation at present of my risen Lord. I want to have fellowship with Him, and to that end I have asked the Father whatever else He may make me, to make me at all events an intercessor, to make me a man who knows how to pray, and who spends much time in prayer.

This ministry of intercession is a glorious and a mighty ministry, and we can all have a part in it. The man or the woman who is shut away from the public meeting by sickness can have part in it; the busy mother; the woman who has to take in washing for a living can have part—she can mingle prayers for the saints, and for her pastor, and for the unsaved, and for foreign missionaries, with the soap and water as she bends over the washtub, and not do the washing any more poorly on that account; the hard-driven man of business can have part in it, praying as he hurries from duty to duty. But of course we must, if we would maintain this spirit of constant prayer, take time—and take plenty of it—when we shall shut ourselves up in the secret place alone with God for nothing but prayer.

6. Prayer is the means that God has appointed for our receiving mercy, and obtaining grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:16 is one of the simplest and sweetest verses in the Bible. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." These words make it very plain that God has appointed a way by which we shall seek and obtain mercy and grace. That way is prayer; bold, confident, outspoken approach to the throne of grace, the most holy place of God's presence, where our sympathizing High Priest, Jesus Christ, has entered in our behalf (verses 14–15).

Mercy is what we need, grace is what we must have, or all our life and effort will end in complete failure. Prayer is the way to get them. There is infinite grace at our disposal, and we make it ours experimentally by prayer. Oh, if we only realized the fullness of God's grace that is ours for the asking, its height and depth and length and breadth, I am sure that we would spend more time in prayer. The measure of our appropriation of grace is determined by the measure of our prayers.

Who is there that does not feel that he needs more grace? Then ask for it. Be constant and persistent in your asking. Be importunate and untiring in your asking. God delights to have us "shameless" beggars in this direction; for it shows our faith in Him, and He is mightily pleased with faith. Because of our "shamelessness," He will rise and give us as much as we need (Luke 11:8). What little streams of mercy and grace most of us know, when we might know rivers overflowing their banks!

7. *Prayer in the name of Jesus Christ is the way Jesus Christ Himself has appointed for His disciples to obtain fullness of joy.*

He states this simply and beautifully in John 16:24: "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." "Made full" is the way the *Revised Version* reads. Who is there that does not wish his joy filled full? Well, the way to have it filled full is by praying in the name of Jesus. We all know people whose joy is filled full; indeed, it is just running over, shining from their eyes; bubbling out of their very lips, and running off their fingertips when they shake hands with you. Coming in contact with them is like coming in contact with an electrical machine charged with gladness. Now people of that sort are always people that spend much time in prayer.

Why is it that prayer in the name of Christ brings such fullness of joy? In part, because we get what we ask. But that is not the only reason, nor the greatest. It makes God real. When we ask something definite of God, and He gives it, how real God becomes! He is right there! It is blessed to have a God who is real, and not merely an idea. I remember how once I was taken suddenly and seriously sick all alone in my study. I dropped upon my knees and cried to God for help. Instantly all pain left me—I was perfectly well. It seemed as if God stood right there and had put out His hand and touched me. The joy of the healing was not so great as the joy of meeting God.

There is no greater joy on earth or in heaven than communion with God, and prayer in the name of Jesus brings us into communion with Him. The psalmist was surely not speaking only of future blessedness but also of present blessedness when he said, "In thy presence is fullness of joy" (Psalm 16:11). Oh, the unutterable joy of those moments when in our prayers we really press into the presence of God!

Does someone say, "I have never known any such joy as that in prayer"?

Do you take enough leisure for prayer to actually get into God's presence? Do you really give yourself up to prayer in the time that you do take?

8. *Prayer, in every care and anxiety and need of life, with thanksgiving, is the means that God has appointed for our obtaining freedom from all anxiety, and the peace of God, which passes all understanding.*

"Be careful for nothing," says Paul, "but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7). To many this seems, at the first glance, the picture of a life that is beautiful, but beyond the reach of ordinary mortals; not so at all. The verse tells us how the life is attainable by every child of God: "Be careful for nothing," or as the *Revised Version*

reads, "In nothing be anxious." The remainder of the verse tells us how, and it is very simple: "But in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." What could be plainer or more simple than that? Just keep in constant touch with God, and when trouble or vexation, great or small, comes up, speak to Him about it, never forgetting to return thanks for what He has already done. What will the result be? "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus" (RV).

That is glorious, and as simple as it is glorious! Thank God, many are trying it. Don't you know anyone who is always serene? Perhaps he is a very stormy man by his natural makeup, but troubles and conflicts and reverses and bereavements may sweep around him, and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, guards his heart and his thoughts in Christ Jesus.

We all know such persons. How do they manage it?

Just by prayer, that is all. Those persons who know the deep peace of God, the unfathomable peace that passes all understanding, are always men and women of much prayer.

Some of us let the hurry of our lives crowd prayer out, and what a waste of time and energy and nerve force there is by the constant worry! One night of prayer will save us from the many nights of insomnia. Time spent in prayer is not wasted but time invested at big interest.

If we would only spend more time in prayer, there would be more fullness of the Spirit's power in our work. Many and many a man who once worked unmistakably in the power of the Holy Spirit is now filling the air with empty shoutings and beating it with his meaningless gesticulations, because he has let prayer be crowded out. We must spend much time on our knees before God, if we are to continue in the power of the Holy Spirit.

9. Prayer is the means that Christ has appointed whereby our hearts shall not become overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this life, and so the day of Christ's return comes upon us suddenly as a snare.

One of the most interesting and solemn passages upon prayer in the Bible is along this line (Luke 21:34–36). "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." According to this passage there is only one way in which we can be prepared for the coming of the Lord when He appears, that is, through much prayer.

The coming again of Jesus Christ is a subject that is

awakening much interest and much discussion in our day; but it is one thing to be interested in the Lord's return, and to talk about it, and quite another thing to be prepared for it. We live in an atmosphere that has a constant tendency to unfit us for Christ's coming. The world tends to draw us down by its gratifications and by its cares. There is only one way by which we can rise triumphant above these things—by constant watching unto prayer, that is, by sleeplessness unto prayer. *Watch* in this passage is the same strong word used in Ephesians 6:18, and *always* the same strong phrase *in every season*. The man who spends little time in prayer, who is not steadfast and constant in prayer, will not be ready for the Lord when He comes. But we may be ready. How? Pray! Pray! Pray!

10. *Because of what prayer accomplishes.*

Much has really been said upon that already, but there is much also that should be added.

(a) Prayer promotes our spiritual growth as almost nothing else, indeed as nothing else but Bible study; and true prayer and true Bible study go hand in hand.

It is through prayer that my sin is brought to light, my most hidden sin. As I kneel before God and pray, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me" (Psalm 139:23–24),

God shoots the penetrating rays of His light into the innermost recesses of my heart, and the sins I never suspected are brought to view. In answer to prayer, God washes me from mine iniquity and cleanses me from my sin (Psalm 51:2). In answer to prayer, my eyes are opened to behold wondrous things out of God's Word (Psalm 119:18). In answer to prayer, I get wisdom to know God's way (James 1:5) and strength to walk in it. As I meet God in prayer and gaze into His face, I am changed into His own image from glory to glory (2 Corinthians 3:18). Each day of true prayer life finds me more like my glorious Lord.

John Welch, son-in-law to John Knox, was one of the most faithful men of prayer this world ever saw. He counted that day ill-spent in which seven or eight hours were not used alone with God in prayer and the study of His Word. An old man speaking of him after his death said, "He was a type of Christ."

How came he to be so like his Master?

His prayer life explains the mystery.

(b) Prayer brings power into our work.

If we wish power for any work to which God calls us, be it preaching, teaching, personal work, or the rearing of our children, we can get it by earnest prayer.

A woman with a little boy who was perfectly incorrigible once came to me in desperation and said:

“What shall I do with him?”

I asked, “Have you ever tried prayer?”

She said that she had prayed for him, she thought. I asked if she had made his conversion and his character a matter of definite, expectant prayer. She replied that she had not been definite in the matter. She began that day, and at once there was a marked change in the child, and he grew up into Christian manhood.

How many a Sunday school teacher has taught for months and years, and seen no real fruit from his labors, and then has learned the secret of intercession and by earnest pleading with God has seen his scholars brought one by one to Christ! How many a poor teacher has become a mighty man of God by casting away his confidence in his own ability and gifts and giving himself up to God to wait upon Him for the power that comes from on high! John Livingstone spent a night, with some others like-minded, in prayer to God and religious conversation, and when he preached next day in the Kirk of Shotts five hundred people were converted or dated some definite uplift in their lives to that occasion. Prayer and power are inseparable.

(c) Prayer avails for the conversion of others.

There are few converted in this world unless in connection with someone’s prayers. I formerly thought that no human being had anything to do with my own conversion,

for I was not converted in church or Sunday school or in personal conversation with anyone. I was awakened in the middle of the night and converted. As far as I can remember, I had not the slightest thought of being converted, or of anything of that character, when I went to bed and fell asleep; but I was awakened in the middle of the night and converted probably inside of five minutes. A few minutes before I was about as near eternal perdition as one gets. I had one foot over the brink and was trying to get the other one over. I say I thought no human being had anything to do with it, but I had forgotten my mother's prayers, and I afterward learned that one of my college classmates had chosen me as one to pray for until I was saved.

Prayer often avails where everything else fails. How utterly all of Monica's efforts and entreaties failed with her son! But her prayers prevailed with God, and the dissolute youth became St. Augustine, the mighty man of God. By prayer the bitterest enemies of the gospel have become its most valiant defenders, the greatest scoundrels the truest sons of God, and the vilest women the purest saints. Oh, the power of prayer to reach down, down, down where hope itself seems vain, and lift men and women up, up, up into fellowship with and likeness to God! It is simply wonderful! How little we appreciate this marvelous weapon!

(d) Prayer brings blessings to the church.

The history of the church has always been a history of grave difficulties to overcome. The Devil hates the church and seeks in every way to block its progress; now by false doctrine, again by division, again by inward corruption of life. But by prayer, a clear way can be made through everything. Prayer will root out heresy, allay misunderstanding, sweep away jealousies and animosities, obliterate immoralities, and bring in the full tide of God's reviving grace. History abundantly proves this. In the hour of darkest portent, when the case of the church, local or universal, has seemed beyond hope, believing men and believing women have met together and cried to God and the answer has come.

It was so in the days of Knox, it was so in the days of Wesley and Whitefield, it was so in the days of Edwards and Brainerd, it was so in the days of Finney, it was so in the days of the great revival of 1857 in this country and of 1859 in Ireland. And it will be so again in your day and mine! Satan has marshaled his forces. Christian Science with its false Christ—a woman—lifts high its head. Others making great pretensions of apostolic methods, but covering the rankest dishonesty and hypocrisy with these pretensions, speak with loud assurance. Christians equally loyal to the great fundamental truths of the gospel are glowering at one another with a devil-sent suspicion. The world, the flesh, and the Devil are holding high carnival. It is now a dark day, *but*—now “it is

time for thee, Lord, to work; for they have made void thy law" (Psalm 119:126). And He is getting ready to work, and now He is listening for the voice of prayer. Will He hear it? Will He hear it from you? Will He hear it from the church as a body? I believe He will.