

MEN WHO PRAYED

*Being familiar, heart-to-heart talks with the
reader concerning the lives of the Old
Testament saints who offered
prayer to Jehovah*

BY
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WITH A FOREWORD BY
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A FOREWORD

One who has been for twenty-five years entrusted with the stewardship of directing the affairs of the China Inland Mission in the North American home field, as Mr. Frost has, has had occasion to learn much about God's faithfulness. And, as he once pointed out to the writer, Mr. Frost has come to count God's faithfulness as far more dependable and important than man's faith. From the riches which he has found God is ready to lavish upon those who commit themselves to him in prayer, the author of this book brings some of his best treasures for the devotional life of those who would travel with him day by day in a prayer excursion through the Old Testament.

That these prayer studies are rewarding will be testified to by the many who have already had access to them in the pages of "Daily Bible," the magazine of The World's Morning Watch. Still others have been put under obligation to Mr. Frost through his wise and searching discussions of problems of the prayer life in the columns of The Sunday School Times. Thus his name and the privileges of prayer have come to be associated together with special reason.

One may be prepared for surprises in following these meditations. That Lord who says, "Behold, I make all things new," can enable one whose life is made ever new by him to reveal new things to others. And this is one of the charms of the book. Over and over again, from the opening passage in the third chapter of Genesis which reveals a prayer where the average reader would see none, on through the ex-

perience of abandoned Hagar and her babe in the wilderness when we are shown that it was the babe's prayer, not the discouraged mother's, that God heard, and again when a two-word prayer of Abraham's at the climax of the supreme test of his life shows us the greatness of the man of faith, these prayer studies bring us into a recurring challenge of the unexpected, and show us how little we know of both the Bible and prayer.

The book reveals the peril of answered prayer, the folly of praying small, the variety of God's ways of answering prayer, our unceasing need of prayer, the cure for fear. It satisfies by declining to attempt to explain all mysteries. It encourages the faint-hearted in prayer as it assures us that we shall "one day stand awed before the discovery that not a prayer of ours for the righting of the wrong has been lost." It invites to patient endurance in prayer, reminding us that the crown is not always given on the same day as the cross. There are rich wayside lessons on the wonders of the grace of God. Our need of continued learning is urged in the reminder that "all the godly men who have ever lived have sought to make what learning they have obtained the means of obtaining more learning." The lesson that Elijah, as a man of prayer, was the man for the hour, is overtopped by the lesson that, above all, there was a God for the hour; and that our God is always such. And that the man who prays must sooner or later become a man who sings is brought to us in the experience of the "uneloquent" Moses. The love of poetry which has made itself prominent in Mr. Frost's life comes out here—for many have had occasion to be grateful to him for his own consecrated gift of song.

It is good that the reader is not allowed to finish the book without a vision of "the final victory of the Christ upon this earth," when our Lord shall return

and "make this world what it ought to have been from first to last."

The book is more than a study of prayer; it is a study also of men who prayed, and men of vastly different types, so that we can all find our encouragement and guidance in these pages. But it is pre-eminently a discovering to us of the riches of our privilege in prayer. The message of the whole is that "prayer turns trembling saints into great victors." How thankful we may be that God gives us, through such a book as this, his own invitation to take up a lasting abode in the faith roll of victors!

CHARLES GALLAUDET TRUMBULL.

MEN WHO PRAYED

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Prayer is the most potential thing in the world. It is not that prayer is anything, but rather that God is everything., For prayer lays hold on God, or, more accurately, permits God to lay hold on man, so that it brings God into human affairs as the Infinite One. And when the Almighty is in the midst of things he proves himself to be the invincible, all-conquering God.

So then the man who prays is the most potential man in the world. It is not that man is anything, but rather that God is everything. For the man who prays puts himself in his true place as a suppliant, and God in his true place as the Benignant and Beneficent One. And when God's grace is thus set free it flows earthward in floods of blessing so that the desert places of life are made to rejoice and blossom as the rose.

What we need then in this world is prayer. And what is necessary to obtain prayer is to secure men who will pray. Not men who will think about prayer, or will talk about prayer, or will purpose some time or other to take time for prayer, but who will now and continually pray. Theorizing and good intentions do not move the arm that moves the world. What does this is nothing else or less than sacrificial prayer. "This kind goeth not out save by prayer and fasting!"

But the best way to learn how to pray—aside from praying—is to contemplate the lives of those who have prayed. If the Apostles had watched and listened to Jesus when he was praying there would have been less need for them to come to him with the petition: "Teach us to pray." And, no doubt, Timothy and Titus learned most from Paul about prayer, not from his epistles, but from his life and practice. To see and hear a man pray is to have the lesson of prayer reduced to its utmost simplicity, and, at the same time, to have its effect raised to its highest power. We ourselves do best when we have the vision of others doing their best. This is the potency of personal example and influence.

So it is our purpose to meditate upon prayer. But we are going to do this by meditating upon the lives of those who have prayed. Passing chronologically through the record of the Old Testament, it will be our sacred privilege to gaze upon this and that saint as he is upon his knees before Jehovah, to look into his upturned face and to listen to his out-poured petitions. And in this secret place, and holy exercise, even while we seek to learn how to pray, may we too bend the knees in prayer—and pray!

Adam. Genesis 3:8-13.

8. *And they heard the voice of Jehovah God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Jehovah God amongst the trees of the garden.* 9. *And Jehovah God called unto the man, and said unto him, Where art thou?* 10. *And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.* 11. *And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?* 12. *And the man said, The woman whom*

thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. 13. And Jehovah God said unto the woman, What is this thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

This is the first passage in Holy Scripture which records a prayer. For the words of Adam and Eve in the above verses amount to this. It is the kind of prayer which lost souls may utter, namely, a cry, and in its lowest form, namely, confession. Adam and Eve had prayed before this, for prayer is communion with God, and it is evident before the fall that this was a frequent experience with them. But now, they have disobeyed, having eaten the forbidden fruit, and when Jehovah—Jesus in angelic form—comes into the garden in the “cool of the day,” seeking for his usual intercourse of fellowship and love, they flee from his holy presence and have no communion to give. But Jehovah’s love was one that would not let them go, and the divine voice called his shrinking creatures to his side. There, he drew from them the whole sad story of their sin and shame. This was in grace. And the answers, for the most part, were honestly given. Thus the way was opened for God to pronounce in their hearing that wondrous promise concerning the Seed, (verse 15; Galatians, 3:16), who was to bring redemption by bruising the serpent’s head. Moreover, Adam and Eve believed. Thereupon Jehovah, having shed the blood of presumably, two lambs, took their skins and clothed his children with them. Adam and Eve, therefore, though they brought ruin upon the human race, were forgiven their sin, and are among the redeemed. And all this came to pass, through standing in the presence of Jehovah, and making a clean breast of sin. Confession is not pleasant to any one. But it is the best way, for it is the only pathway to

pardon and blessing. Where any soul ever honestly confesses sin, God openly and forever forgives sin; (I John, 1:9).

Abel. Genesis 4:1-7.

1. And the man knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man with the help of Jehovah. 2. And again she bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 3. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah. 4. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And Jehovah had respect unto Abel and to his offering: 5 but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. 6. And Jehovah said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? 7. If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door: and unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

This story of Cain and Abel records man's first act of believing worship outside of the Garden of Eden. It does not give us any words of prayer in connection with the worship offered. But it describes the act of worship, and this in itself is prayer. Adam and Eve had been instructed by God to worship him through a slain lamb, and then without doubt, they had instructed their sons to offer their worship in the same manner. So it was that these two sons came into the presence of God for worship, the younger with a slain lamb, and the elder with no lamb but with the fruit of the ground. And God accepted the one. But he rejected the other. For the slain lamb signified to God acknowledged sin and the

merits of the Christ who was to come, while the fruit represented unacknowledged sin and pretended self-righteousness. But note the long-suffering grace of Jehovah. Cain had evidently turned from the altar to his home, angry of heart and with his countenance fallen. Nevertheless Jehovah follows him there, points out a lamb—the word “sin” means sin-offering—which was crouching at his hut door and tells him that the lamb’s desire shall be unto him and that he shall rule over him. Cain, therefore, had a second chance. But as the outcome shows, he rejected this extended mercy. He refused to shed the blood of the lamb; and so it was that he ended by shedding the blood of his brother. Abel, on the contrary, continued to walk in fellowship with God; and later he had the high privilege of becoming the first martyr. Such are the differences of worship in attitude and outcome.

Abram. Genesis 15:1-7.

1. After these things the word of Jehovah came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. 2. And Abram said O Lord Jehovah, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and he that shall be possessor of my house is Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: (and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir). 4. And, behold, the word of Jehovah came unto him, saying, This man shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. 5. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and number the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. 6. And he believed in Jehovah: and he reckoned it to him for righteousness. 7. And he said unto him, I am Jehovah that brought

thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.

In this passage we have the first record, subsequent to the fall, of intercommunion between God and a worshipper with the intercommunion expressed in words. The two speakers were Jehovah and Abram, and the intercourse was intimate in nature and far-reaching in consequence. And it is interesting to note that God began the conversation, answering Abram's thoughts rather than his words, and drawing out from him thus the expression of his heart sorrow and longing. Abram had given up much for God; (12:4). But it seemed to him as if Jehovah had taken little account of this, for he had failed to give him that which alone could satisfy his life, namely, a child and heir. And hence, on Abram's part, a bowed head, and a fearful heart! It was just then that Jehovah spoke, and drew out from Abram his prayerful petition: "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." And then he added: "He that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir." Thereupon Jehovah brought Abram out into the field and pointed to the stars saying: "So shall thy seed be!" And Abram believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. So in due time, the man of prayer and faith saw his child and heir. And he named him Isaac, which means, laughter. How encouraging all this is. God does not need to wait until we put our heart-desires into words; he knows our thoughts afar off. Also, God takes the initiative in prayer, drawing out into expression our heart-longings, in order that he may make them the occasion of answering our petitions. And, finally, he answers us beyond our highest expectations, for when we ask for one thing he gives us that thing and a host of things be-

sides; and when we finally behold these, they are like the stars, not only in number, but also in beauty and glory.

Genesis 17:15-18.

15. And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. 16. And I will bless her, and moreover I will give thee a son of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be of her. 17. Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be borne unto him that is a hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? 18. And Abraham said unto God, Oh that Ishmael might live before thee!

Men had found that it was well to pray, since God was quick to answer, and such saints as Abram became bolder and bolder in prayer, as their lives lengthened out. But men then, as since, made mistakes in praying, asking for little when they might have asked for much, or asking for the wrong thing when they ought to have asked for the right thing. In the present instance, Abram made a serious mistake. It was a case of reaping, even in prayer, what he had sown. For his faith had failed through long waiting, and he had gotten a child before the appointed time by a miserable trick; (16:1-4). It was all unworthy of the one who had believed the promise of God. So when God gently but firmly insisted upon his own way, in order that the promised blessing might be given to Abraham and to his seed forever, all that Abram could do was to cry out: "O, that Ishmael might live before thee!" And God answered the prayer; (verse 20). Ishmael did live. But what has been the result? The Ishmaelites, that

is, the Arabians; and then Mohammedanism, and then a scourge of fire and blood in Asia and Europe. And as Ishmael mocked Isaac upon the day of his weaning, (21: 8, 9), so Mohammedanism has mocked Christianity ever since, it being the stoutest, bitterest foe it has. So then, it is a solemn thing to become impatient with God, and to try to obtain a coveted blessing in some other time and way than the one appointed. God will often grant an answer, under such conditions. But the answer will be more in judgment than in blessing. That is a terrible word in Psalms 106: 15: "He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul." Beware of such an experience!

Genesis 18: 27-33.

27. And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes: 28 peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, I will not destroy it, if I find there forty and five. 29. And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for the forty's sake. 30. And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there. 31. And he said, behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for the twenty's sake. 32. And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for the ten's sake. 33. And Jehovah went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.

Abram is now over one hundred years old. He has had his name changed from Abram—which means a high father—to Abraham—which means a father of a multitude; (17:5)—and he has heard the covenant affirmed and reaffirmed. The effect of this upon Abraham is to strengthen his faith, to encourage him to make larger ventures in prayer, and to give him to hope as not before in the abundant mercies of God. As for God, he is proving to Abraham that he is indeed his shield and reward. Hence, when Jehovah came down to judge the guilty city of Sodom, he says: “Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?” Jehovah never thought for a moment of divulging his sacred secret to poor backslidden Lot in Sodom. But Abraham was a man whose heart was perfect toward him, who was steadily learning his lessons, and whom he could call his “friend,” (James 2:23). So he took his friend into his confidence. But no sooner had he done so than there sprang from Abraham’s heart and lips—just as God intended there should do—a torrent of petition. “Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?” “Peradventure there be fifty, peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty; peradventure there shall be forty, thirty, twenty, ten there?” Abraham has become bold in his old age. Note as further evidence of this his challenging word: “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” And besides, for the first time, he has become an intercessor. Formerly, his thought was upon himself. Now, it goes forth to his nephew Lot, and to those with him. And so it is with all those who learn to pray, and who grow in grace and in knowledge as they pray. They go from faith to faith and from strength to strength.

Lot. Genesis 19:17-22.

17. And it came to pass, when they had brought

them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the Plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. 18. And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my lord: 19 behold now, thy servant hath found favor in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy loving kindness, which thou hast showed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest evil overtake me, and I die: 20 behold now this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one. Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live. 21. And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow the city of which thou hast spoken. 22. Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

Taking it for granted that Lot was a child when he lived in Ur, he must have been, when he was in Sodom, about sixty years of age. So then he had had a good opportunity to know God. But he had made a sad failure of it all. Not that he did not believe in God, and, in his inmost heart hate sin, (II Peter 2:7); but simply this, he had become a double minded man and he was unstable in all his ways; (James 1:8). Hence, he had come to be, amongst other things, small minded in his prayer life. One can not imagine Lot keeping in Sodom the "morning watch," for a few mornings alone with God would have put him out of that place and would have sent him back to Abraham with a big confession of sin. What his prayer life probably meant was this, he prayed when he got into trouble. It follows then, that he prayed small, asking only for those things which concerned himself and which would get him out of some present distress. Hence, his prayer as recorded in verses 18-20: "Oh,

not so my Lord; behold now, thy servant hath found favor in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy loving kindness which thou hast showed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest evil overtake me, and I die; behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one; oh, let me escape thither (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live." And yet the God of grace heard and answered even such a prayer as this. But think of what the God of holiness must have thought of his child and servant. If you want to pray big, live big.

Ishmael. Genesis 21:14-19.

14. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and gave her the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. 15. And the water in the bottle was spent, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. 16. And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bow-shot: for she said, Let me not look upon the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lifted up her voice, and wept. 17. And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. 18. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thy hand; for I will make him a great nation. 19. And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink.

It went hard with Abraham before he had gotten through with his sin in bringing Ishmael into the world, and he found, as others have done, that while

it takes only a moment to sow a handful or two of seed, it takes a long time to reap the harvest thereof. For the day came—as God had promised—when Isaac was born. And then also, the sad day came when Abraham, commanded by God, had to take Hagar, the bond woman, and Ishmael, the beloved son, and put them far away from his sight, turning them out into the wilderness. Nevertheless, note God's overflowing grace. He tells Abraham that he will be with Hagar and Ishmael, and that out of Ishmael, as well as out of Isaac, shall come a great nation. Then came the desert, the water spent in the bottle, the putting down of the child under a bush, the apparent end of all resources, and hence, threatened thirst, and starvation and death. But God was watching over all, and his love and power were boundless. Hagar, apparently was too much absorbed with her grief to pray; and it may be that she was too angry at Sarah and Abraham to be willing to pray. But not so with Ishmael. "God heard the voice of the lad." And this became Jehovah's opportunity to act. At once he spoke to Hagar; in another moment, he had shown her a well of water; and in still another moment, the poor lad's life was saved. We do not know what Ishmael said when he cried beneath the bush. Probably he did not say anything. It is not necessary for a babe to speak in order to get a mother's love and care; and it was sufficient to God that his helpless child in a desert place had cried out in deep distress. So then, child of God, if you can not pray in the day of calamity, just cry. There is a loving and powerful Watcher above who will hear and answer.

Abraham. Genesis 22:1-12.

1. And it came to pass after these things, that God did prove Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. 2. And he said, Take now

thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. 3. And Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. 4. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. 5. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship, and come again to you. 6. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took in his hand the fire and the knife; and they went both of them together. 7. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold, the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? 8. And Abraham said, God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son: so they went both of them together. 9. And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built the altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. 10. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. 11. And the angel of Jehovah called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham; and he said, Here am I. 12. And he said, Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.

Abraham, arguing naturally, might well have concluded that he was about at an end of his bitter experiences. But God had other conceptions of what his servant needed, and presently he asked of him to

endure and suffer yet more. Yet Abraham did not falter, though God asked the hardest possible thing of him. For when God said: "Take now thy son, thine only son whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering," he did exactly what he was told to do. He arose early in the morning, prepared the wood for the altar, saddled the ass, took his son, and started for Moriah. And he never stopped journeying till he got there. And when he was there, he built an altar, he laid his son and his heir upon it, and he prepared to kill him, in a devoted act of God-fearing worship. We do not know that Abraham had prayed aloud during any of the past three days, and it is probable that he did not. There are times when the heart is too tense for the lips to express its thoughts, and it is likely that this was one of them. But presently a Voice called and that broke Abraham's silence. And what was the expression of his communion with God? Only this. "Here am I;" or more literally, "Here I!" This was a short prayer indeed. But it meant everything. Like Lord Tennyson's prayer, "O, thou Infinite; Amen!" it covered all that ten thousand words might have expressed. It is plain that sometimes short praying is very good praying.

Eliezer. Genesis 24:6-12.

6. And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again. 7. Jehovah, the God of heaven, that took me from my father's house, and from the land of my nativity, and who spake unto me, and who sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife for my son from thence. 8. And if the woman be not willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath;

only thou shall not bring my son thither again. 9. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter. 10. And the servant took ten camels, of the camels of his master, and departed, having all goodly things of his master's in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor. 11. And he made the camels to kneel down without the city by the well of water at the time of evening, the time that women go out to draw water. 12. And he said, O Jehovah, the God of my master Abraham, send me, I pray thee, good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master, Abraham.

Abraham was a fortunate man, for he had a good servant. Indeed, Eliezer was so good that it is almost a question which was the better, the servant or the master. Remember this; Eliezer, until Isaac was born, was heir to all that Abraham had. Remember also, that Abraham now asked him to go and get Isaac a bride, which was almost sure to put him out of the line of succession. And then remember, that the servant never once murmured, showed no resentment or jealousy, and fulfilled his commission faithfully and loyally to the end. Moreover, he showed, as his master had done, that he too was a man of prayer; and that he had learned how to pray in a supremely unselfish and devoted manner: "And he said, O Jehovah, the God of my master Abraham, send me I pray thee good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master, Abraham!" And it was a wonderful answer which he got from God. The reply was not as quickly given as the reply to Abraham at the altar. God has different ways of answering prayer, and this one was one of slow processes. Nevertheless, it was just as certain and sure. For step by step God drew the godly and praying servant to his

goal. Thus, in due time, Eliezer saw standing before him a "damsel who was very fair to look upon," and later he heard her glad consenting word: "I will go." So he brought Rebekah back to Abraham and Isaac, and Isaac took her and loved her and was comforted. And the moral of the story is this: God is no respecter of persons, but will as quickly accept of the life and hear the prayer of a servant as he will that of a servant's master.

Isaac. Genesis 25:19-24.

19. *And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham begat Isaac: 20 and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Paddanaram, the sister of Laban the Syrian, to be his wife. 21. And Isaac entreated Jehovah for his wife, because she was barren: and Jehovah was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. 22. And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, wherefore do I live? And she went to inquire of Jehovah.*

23. *And Jehovah said unto her,
Two nations are in thy womb,
And two peoples shall be separated even from thy
bowels:
And the one people shall be stronger than the other
people;
And the elder shall serve the younger.*

24. *And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.*

Abraham died at the age of one hundred and seventy-five. And he had not lived in vain. For besides his long and fruitful testimony to God in the midst of evil days, he left behind him one who bore his name and worshipped his God. And Isaac was no mean successor to the father of the faithful. He

had watched his father, as boys do, and had seen that the Lord was with him. So he had concluded, on his own account, that Jehovah was the living God, and was worthy of all worship. Hence, he served Jehovah as his father had done. And God quickly responded; (verse 11). But the old story of disappointed hope and of foreboding fear was lived over again. As in the case of Abraham, so now in the case of Isaac, there was no son and heir. Where now were the promises of God, and the nation which was to be like the stars for multitude? There was only one thing left to do; and that was to pray. With most men this is a dire place of calamity to reach, and it may have seemed so to Isaac. Nevertheless, he did pray. As verse 21 says: "He entreated the Lord for his wife." Of course, in doing so, he was asking for the impossible. But in this case, he was asking a thing of One with whom nothing is impossible. And so presently, he has, not one son, but two sons, and there is in prospect, not one nation, but two nations. Jehovah is evidently a mighty God, and a generous one.

Jacob. Genesis 32:24-30.

24. And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. 25. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was strained, as he wrestled with him. 26. And he said, let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. 27. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. 28. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for thou hast striven with God and with men, and hast prevailed. 29. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that

thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. 30. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for, said he, I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.

It is a good thing to teach the children to pray, for when they are old they will not depart from it. This is the reason why you find Jacob at the ford Jabbok, when he was about ninety years of age, wrestling with Jehovah even as Jehovah was wrestling with him. Jehovah started the wrestling, for he would not let Jacob return to the land of promise until he had made him a fit person to inherit the land and the promise. At the same time, Jacob kept up the wrestling, saying to Jehovah: "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." The way God finally had to take to bless him was to touch his thigh and bring his servant into the dust. But thus he made a new man out of Jacob. For after God cast him down, he lifted him up. And it has been like this ever since. If a man really wants to go up into the land of promise, he will be sure to meet God on the border of the land, for that land is a place of high privilege, and Jehovah only gives it to the strong. And if one wants to be strong, God will first make one weak, since it is only those who have no might to whom he increases strength. So when Jehovah meets you, my brother, hold on and cry out, saying, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me!" After an experience like this at some ford of Jabbok, you will call the name of the place Peniel, which means God's face, for you will have seen Jehovah face to face; and so wonderful will the experience be that your marvel will be, not that you have to walk the rest of your days with a limp, but that you are living at all.

Genesis 35: 1-7.

1. *And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel,*

and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, who appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. 2. Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the foreign gods that are among you, and purify yourselves, and change your garments: 3 and let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. 4. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and the rings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem. 5. And they journeyed: and a terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob. 6. So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan (the same is Bethel), he and all the people that were with him. 7. And he built there an altar, and called the place Elbeth-el: because there God was revealed unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother.

There were two great qualities in Jacob which showed that the root of the matter was in him, and which made him a better man in God's sight than the naturally nobler Esau. The first of these was a fear of God, and the second was a longing for God's favor. Hence we have the words in verse 1: "And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there, and make there an altar unto God." God wanted to get his child into the center of the land, away from all border entanglements and hindrances, to the old-time altar with its victim, and to sacred Bethel. But God's invitation had a curious effect upon Jacob; it made him think of his sins. In his backslidden condition he had allowed idolatry to creep into his family, and he had not bothered himself much about it. Drawing near to God, however,

suddenly brought his sin into the light, and he saw it was black and foul. So you hear Jacob's words: "Put away the foreign gods that are among you, and purify yourselves, and change your garments." So they put away their false gods, went to Bethel, and worshipped. And what was the effect of such worship after such a cleansing? Just this: Jacob changed the name of Bethel to El-beth-el. Beth means house, and El means God. So Beth-el means the house of God. But El-beth-el means God of the house of God. In other words, what he had been conscious of previously had been the place; now his consciousness is of the Person. This marks a mighty spiritual advance in Jacob, and in all others who have had a like experience. In our backslidden uncleaned days we need something like a cathedral to help us reach God. In our cleansed and restored days, when we have God in his fulness and his person is everything, we can worship him anywhere and everywhere.

Joseph. Genesis 37: 3-11.

3. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colors. 4. And his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren; and they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. 5. And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it to his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. 6. And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: 7 for, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves came round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. 8. And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more

for his dreams, and for his words. 9. And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it to his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed yet a dream; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. 10. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren; and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? 11. And his brethren envied him; but his father kept the saying in mind.

Like father, like son, is often a spiritual law, provided the father fears and serves God. In this case it was like great great-grandfather like great great-grandson, for the good influence began with Abraham and was now coming out in Joseph. It is a good thing, therefore, for a man to live with his eyes looking forward to his posterity; and it is a good thing also for a man to live with his eyes looking backward to his ancestry. So now Joseph comes on the scene, a young man of seventeen, performing his daily tasks as a shepherd with all diligence, and so lovable that he is the joy of his old father's heart. Such boys usually get favors shown to them; and Jacob made a coat for Joseph which, with its fine texture and many colors, showed that he had been chosen as the priest and prince of the family, and, therefore, the heir. Now this young man began to dream. There was nothing particularly strange about this, for most men dream. The thing that distinguished him was this, that he began to dream upward, about heavenly things, and the things which God was going to do. One can often tell what a man's day-time thoughts are by his night-time dreams, and it seems fair to conclude that the reason that Joseph dreamed nightly of things divine was because he occupied himself daily with things

divine. In short, Joseph had learned to practice the blessed art of constant communion with God. He did not shut up his worship to the times when he stood before the altar. All the world was a sanctuary to him, for God was everywhere. Hence, he worshipped always and in every place. And so, at last, he dreamed even his dreams in communion with God.

Genesis 40:1-8.

1. And it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker offended their lord the king of Egypt. 2. And Pharaoh was wroth against his two officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers. 3. And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound. 4. And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he ministered unto them: and they continued a season in ward. 5. And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream, in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were bound in the prison. 6. And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and saw them, and, behold, they were sad. 7. And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in ward in his master's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sad to-day? 8. And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell it me, I pray you.

It does not always follow, because a man walks in fellowship with God, that he never gets into trouble. In fact, it is often the reverse of this, because it is the godly man whom God can trust with trouble. Thus in time Joseph's turn for trouble came. First, his

brothren sold him into Egypt. Then a wicked woman in high life lied about him. And then his master, without inquiry or trial, put him into prison. Wherever he was, however, the Lord was with him and he was a prosperous man. This meant that Joseph did not get sour over his trials, but kept sweet; and that in bright days and in dark days, in prosperity and in adversity, he kept in fellowship with God. And this is the explanation of the fact that those two fellow-prisoners of his, the butler and the baker, picked him out as the man who could help them in their troubles. Men may pass by the godly man when things are going right; but, as doves flock to their windows, they turn to the godly man when things go wrong. So the heathen butler and baker having dreamed sent for the godly dreamer to interpret their dreams. Now it was no more in Joseph to interpret a dream from God than it was to dream a dream from God; indeed the interpreting was more difficult than the dreaming. But Joseph put his trust in Jehovah. As he said later to Pharaoh: "It is not in me; God shall give Pharaoh an answer." And so even the interpretation became possible; and he made known to the butler and baker the meaning of their dreams. Evidently, the man who communes with God does not stand still. He grows. And hence God uses him more and more.

Jacob. Genesis 46:1-7.

1. *And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac. 2. And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I. 3. And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: 4 I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely*

bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes. 5. And Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba: and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. 6. And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him: 7 his sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt.

One of the saddest things in Christian experience is to see the spiritual declension which sometimes takes place in the lives of men in their old age. The path of the just should be as the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day; and generally it is. Now and again, however, it is the opposite of this. But with Jacob it was different. He had been living in the promised land, quietly holding on to the promises of God and maintaining his fellowship with him, in spite of his sorrow because of the loss of Joseph. And now God had brought a sudden joy and comfort to Jacob's heart. The old man had heard that his boy was alive and wanted to see him. It was a long journey to take; but he set forth for Egypt. Old Jacob, however, was not like some men now, who when they have to go on a journey from home leave their religion behind them. We read: "Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac." In other words he had only gone a little way when he stopped to worship. These old patriarchs did not know anything about building cathedrals; but they did know how to build altars. And God seemed well pleased with their doing so, for it was at these altars that he made his revelations to his servants. So when God saw Ja-

cob's altar with its sacrifice, he spoke. And all he said at first was this: "Jacob, Jacob." And all Jacob said was this: "Here am I." But this was everything. It meant that communion was the same as it had been of yore, only deeper and sweeter. Then came the comforting, strengthening words: "I will go with thee."

Job. Job 1:14-22.

14 that there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: 15 and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. 16. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. 17. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have taken them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. 18. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: 19 and, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. 20. Then Job arose, and rent his robe, and shaved his head and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped; 21 and he said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken away; blessed be the name of Jehovah. 22. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

Jacob was now dead; but his sons and grandsons were living to perpetuate his name and the worship of his God. One of these sons was Issachar, and this Issachar had a son named Job, who probably was the person of our story; (46: 13). So the father and the son had been under Jacob's direct influence. Issachar, in spite of his strength, did not become a well developed follower of Jehovah; (49: 14, 15). But Job grew exceedingly in spiritual wisdom and character. Hence, we have the picture of this man, established with sons and daughters, with houses and lands, with sheep, camels, oxen and asses, and, best of all, with the fear of God in his heart, and with an altar not far from the front door of his home; (1:1-5). But suddenly the fair sky of his prosperity blackened, and a storm of adversity burst upon him. His wealth, his servants, his children were swept away from him, and finally he stood before God bereft and undone. Many men, under such circumstances, would have done what later Job's foolish wife told him to do; they would have cursed God and died; (2:8-10). But not so with Job. He was a worshipper of Jehovah and he had learned something of his rights over his creatures. And so he just braced himself against the storm, and sang his song of triumph in the midst of it: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; Jehovah gave and Jehovah hath taken away; blessed be the name of Jehovah!" It is a wonderful thing to sing in the night and dark of adversity. Somehow, under such conditions, songs reach a long ways. For brave old Job set thousands to singing by his song, and its music has come down even to us. My brother, the next time adversity comes to you, join in, and pass the music on.

Job 23: 1-3.

1. *Then Job answered and said,*

*2. Even to-day is my complaint rebellious:
My stroke is heavier than my groaning.*

*3. Oh that I knew where I might find him!
That I might come even to his seat!*

Job had not yet touched his lips to the cup of bitterest pain. But now the steady hand of Jehovah presses this upon him. He had allowed Satan to destroy property and loved ones; he now allows the Adversary to lay hands upon his body, to take his good health away and to make him a loathing to his wife and his friends. For Job had to learn, as many another saint has had to do, that there is one thing which is higher and better than good health, which is the will of God. This often means good health, and even healing when health is gone. But sometimes it means bad health, and the continuance of it. With Job just then it meant sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. But worse than this, it meant three well meaning but badly informed friends sitting around him and making his days and nights intolerable by telling him that he was a big sinner and deserved all that he was getting. Do you wonder that the song rather died away for a time? Some of us, under such circumstances, would never have sung again and would have been tempted to change singing into cursing. But Job did not go so far as this, for if you will listen, you will hear in his words more than once the sound of praiseful music. Nevertheless he was perplexed, and, not understanding and worn out, he cries out for God, just as a tired child at night cries out for his mother: "Oh, that I knew where I might find him!" And so it was, not long afterwards, that the Lord took him up and gave him rest. After all, "bitter cups" are not so bitter if they lead us to God and if their end is comforting and peace.

Job 42:5-10.

*5. I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear;
But now mine eye seeth thee,*

*6. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent
In dust and ashes.*

7. And it was so, that after Jehovah had spoken these words unto Job, Jehovah said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.

8. Now therefore, take unto you seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you; for him will I accept, that I deal not with you after your folly; for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.

9. So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as Jehovah commanded them: and Jehovah accepted Job. 10. And Jehovah turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: and Jehovah gave Job twice as much as he had before.

Job learned his lesson at last. It was a long and hard process, but he finally discovered, first, that God can allow pain and still love, and second, that love often inflicts pain. And this is the way Jehovah finally taught Job. First, he let him and his three friends talk themselves out. Then, when silence had fallen upon them, he began to speak. And those four men soon found out that *he* had something to say. This was especially so with Job. For Jehovah began to speak directly to him and to ask him a few questions. He enquired where he was when he, God, created the earth, the heavens and the seas; whether the gates of death had ever swung open to him; whether he could produce the rain, or snow, or lightning; and

whether he could do so simple a thing as to tame some of the wild animals which he knew. But mercifully, Jehovah brought his address to a close, or Job would have been almost annihilated. As it was, he was left in the dust. Yet, God had not quite finished with Job. He wanted to find out if he really had learned his lesson, and if he was prepared to give him, wholly and forever, the right of way. So he said, in effect: "Now, Job, you offer a prayer for your three friends." That was a hard commission. Those men had put their daggers of criticism into his tender sores up to the hilt; and how could he pray for them? But he did. "And Jehovah turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends; and Jehovah gave Job twice as much as he had before." There is a mighty difference between the Job of the first chapter and the Job of the last chapter. In the first, you have a perfect man; in the last, you have a perfect man perfected.

Moses. Exodus 2:5-10.

5. And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river side; and she saw the ark among the flags, and sent her handmaid to fetch it. 6. And she opened it, and saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children. 7. Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? 8. And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. 9. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. 10. And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he be-

came her son. And she called his name Moses, and said, Because I drew him out of the water.

Moses, though he knew it not, made a good start in life. He wept, and his plaintive cry reached the ears and heart of God in heaven. This, strictly, was not a prayer. And yet it had in it the first element of a prayer, for prayer is often but a cry:

“An infant crying in the night,
“An infant crying for the light,
“And with no language but a cry.”

And how God, though unseen and unheard, did work in little Moses' behalf! First of all, he chose the king's daughter, who had position and money, to be his deliverer. Then he inclined her to go bathing on that particular day. Then he sent her and her attendants to a special part of the river. Then he constrained them to walk on the river bank in the right direction. Then he made them to notice the tiny boat of bulrushes. Then he put curiosity into the heart of the princess and led her to send her maid for the ark. Then, when the basket was opened and she saw the weeping babe, he put compassion into her heart for him, in spite of her father's murderous edict. And finally, he actually so arranged matters that the princess agreed to pay the mother for taking care of her own child! If Pharaoh had only realized it, he might better have given up from the beginning contesting affairs with a God like this. And if Moses had but realized it, he could have left himself and his people with utter rest of heart in the hands of a God like this. And if we could only realize it, we could leave our children and ourselves as children without a care in the hands of a God like this. For, though Jehovah be unseen and unheard, he is always listening, always seeing, always feeling and always

working in our behalf. Provided, remember, that we be as little children.

Israel. Exodus 2:23-25.

23. And it came to pass in the course of those many days, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. 24. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25. And God saw the children of Israel, and God took knowledge of them.

The people of Israel were in a bad way. They had prospered under the Pharaoh who had known Joseph. But Joseph was dead, and the king was dead, and times had changed. Things had gone from good to bad; and then they had gone from bad to worse. And the saddest part of the matter was that God was silent. Israel knew that in the days of their fathers Jehovah had often spoken; and more than once, at such times, he had showed his mighty power. Besides, they remembered, he had given far reaching promises, about a land, a victorious and happy people, a nation powerful and exalted. But now, the fount of their national life was quenched for they were forbidden to have children; and as for prosperity and a land of promise, they were in Egypt and slaves! So all they could do was to work on in hopeless bondage, and sigh and moan. However, they soon found out that their sighs and groanings were prayers. "And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob." Ah, God always hears, and he never forgets. His silence does not mean that he is not listening and is not planning. Probably, it means that the best time of deliverance has not yet come, and

that he is anxiously, impatiently waiting for the moment to arrive when he may prove his love and power. Cromwell said to his soldiers just before a great battle: "Know ye soldiers all, that God always comes to man's help in the *nick of time*." Yes, God is always on time; not behind, and also not before. Happy the man who learns how to wait as he prays, and who never loses patience with God.

Moses. Exodus 3:1-9.

1. Now Moses was keeping the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the back of the wilderness, and came to the mountain of God, unto Horeb. 2. And the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. 3. And Moses said, I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. 4. And when Jehovah saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. 5. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. 6. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. 7. And Jehovah said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; 8 and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. 9. And now, behold, the

cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: moreover I have seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.

Great men often need to be made much greater before they can be used of God. The reason is that their greatness is not the kind of greatness which God can use. Moses had been trained in all the learning of the Egyptians, he had refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he had chosen to suffer affliction with the people of God, he had esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, he had, in his zeal, slain a man who had dared to lay his hands upon an Israelite, and now he was on the backside of the desert instead of in the palace, feeding sheep, brooding over the wrongs of his people, and wishing that God loved them as much as he did. Yes, this last was what had crept into his mind—the sequel proves it. And at once, you have the fact of his utter unpreparedness for high and holy service. The truth of the matter is, Moses, in spite of much good, was wrong at heart. He thought too much of himself, and altogether too little of God. And there is but one cure for a man like this; he must see God. Hence the bush, the flame, the warning, the voice, and, at last, the promise. And all this came to Moses because he was a man, after all, who was in communion with God. He too could say when God called: "Here I." As a soldier, when the head officer appears to give his orders, stands at attention and salutes, Moses, when God came upon the scene and spoke, answered him at once, and was ready for instructions. And thus God taught him. Oh, for a host of Knights of the Burning Bush! Will you be one?

Exodus 3:13-16.

13. *And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come*

unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? 14. And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I am hath sent me unto you. 15. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations. 16. Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, hath appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt: 17 and I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. 18. And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, hath met with us; and now let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to Jehovah our God.

More than one thing happened at that burning bush. More than one thing usually happens when God takes a man in hand. For there are generally so many things to be done with men that the Lord cannot stop at the one thing. So God went on with his servant. Moses had thought that he himself was the purposeful worker and that God was indifferently quiescent. But he is to learn that Jehovah, though he knows how to keep silence when silence is best,

is the greatest of all workers, when the time for work has come. So God reveals to Moses two new things. The first is this; he tells him who he really is. Up to that time God had been known under two names, Lord, that is, Creator, and Jehovah, that is, the self-existent One. But now he says to Moses: "I am that I am," and you may tell the children of Israel that "I am" has sent you. It must have made Moses' head almost reel when he heard this. "I am that I am," and "I am!" What did these names mean? Nay rather, what did they not mean? Moses did not understand, any more than you and I do. And that is exactly what God was counting upon. In effect, he was saying to Moses: "You are afraid of the Israelites and the Egyptians; and well you may be. But I am not afraid of them, because I am Eternal Infinitude. Now just act, not in your name, but in my Name. Here it is. Take it and use it; and then see what will happen." And the second thing is this; the Worker said to Moses: "Go!" The days of silence were over. God had revealed himself as Everlasting Almightyness. It was enough. The time for work had come.

Exodus 4:1-8.

1. *And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, Jehovah hath not appeared unto thee.*
2. *And Jehovah said unto him, What is that in thy hand? And he said, A rod.* 3. *And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it.* 4. *And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail: (and he put forth his hand, and laid hold of it, and it became a rod in his hand),*
5 *that they may believe that Jehovah, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and*

the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee. 6. And Jehovah said furthermore unto him, Put now thy hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, as white as snow. 7. And he said, Put thy hand into thy bosom again. (And he put his hand into his bosom again; and when he took it out of his bosom, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh). 8. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign.

It is a bad thing for a man to answer back to God. He usually gets the worst of the argument. God had been wonderfully gracious to Moses, teaching him patiently and fully, and it should have been enough. But Moses was a man, through and through, with all the frailty that this implies. It was thus, while he was in the process of learning, that he dared to argue with God. And Moses answered and said, "But!" Oh, these buts! Beware of them. They are exceedingly foolish to begin with, when God has once spoken, and besides they are ruinous in their effect. Take, for illustration, this "but." "But they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice." Of course not. God knew that as well as Moses. And it was for that reason that he had said: "Say unto the children of Israel, 'I am' hath sent me unto you." However, Jehovah will take the man where he is, will remember that he is still in the kindergarten class, and hence, will seek to teach him by an object lesson which he will not forget. "What is that in thine hand?" "A rod." "Cast it on the ground." Behold, a serpent, and Moses fleeing for his life! "Put now thine hand into thy bosom." He did. And, behold, it was as leprous as snow! The gracious God readjusted matters in both cases, for Moses had had

enough. But fearful as he was, he was learning what the "I am" meant, and what the God of the Burning Bush could do. It is a great thing, if we do make the mistake of answering God, to have him answer back, for there is none that teaches like him.

Exodus 4: 10-17.

10. *And Moses said unto Jehovah, Oh Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: for I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.* 11. *And Jehovah said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh a man dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? is it not I Jehovah?* 12. *Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt speak.* 13. *And he said, Oh Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.* 14. *And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is there not Aaron thy brother the Levite? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.* 15. *And thou shalt speak unto him, and put the words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do.* 16. *And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and it shall come to pass, that he shall be to thee a mouth, and thou shalt be to him as God.* 17. *And thou shalt take in thy hand this rod, wherewith thou shalt do the signs.*

It is strange the undue value the natural man puts upon eloquence. From the natural standpoint, of course, there is reason for this, for the big talkers are usually the ones who catch the ear of the multitudes. But any one who knows the ways of God ought not to make such a mistake. When has God put a premium upon eloquence? There is no reason to suppose

that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were eloquent talkers; and yet God accomplished mighty things through them. And so with later saints, such as Joshua, Caleb and Samuel. Possibly David and Solomon were eloquent; but this was not the source of their power. And as for the Apostles and Paul, who were used of God most of all, we know that they deliberately set their faces against oratorical effort and effect. (Acts 4:13; I Corinthians 2:1-4). But these were lessons which Moses had not yet learned. And so we find him talking with God about his being "slow of speech" and of a "slow tongue." God might have told him that such characteristics were to be much desired; (Ecclesiastes 5:2). But he takes another line of argument with him. "Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh a man dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or blind? Is it not I Jehovah?" Then he adds: "Now, therefore, go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt speak." The worshipper at the burning bush lost a blessing that day. He refused to count upon God's power; and the result was that the Lord's anger was kindled against him. So Jehovah gave to Aaron the ministry which he purposed to give to Moses. It is a serious thing to trifle with God's grace and power. To do so is to run the risk of losing something which one may ultimately greatly covet.

Exodus 4: 29-31.

29. And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel: 30 and Aaron spake all the words which Jehovah had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. 31. And the people believed: and when they heard that Jehovah had visited the children of Israel, and that he had seen their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.

Here are three verses interjected in the midst of our story, and they bring into sight as complete and beautiful a scene of true worship as can be found. In these days of false worship, mostly out of our churches but sometimes in our churches, it is a good thing to go back to the times when ideals were new, and when God was first luring men on toward the reaching of the noble and true in religious experience. And here we have what we seek. Moses had left the desert and the burning bush. He has obeyed God's word, "Go and return into Egypt," and he, with Aaron, has presented himself to the people of Israel. Then follows what the three verses describe. First, we have Moses and Aaron as God's prophet and priest. Then we have the elders, the fathers in Israel, gathering into their presence in true orderliness and dignity. Then we have the two divinely appointed witnesses speaking to them and to Israel "all the words of the Lord," nothing less and nothing more. Then we have these two God-sent men performing the divinely appointed signs. Then we have the people believing the words and the signs, being at last assured that God did know and care. And finally, we have all the assembly, ministers, elders, and people, reverently bowing their heads and humbly worshipping Jehovah. These, in spite of infirmities and sins, were saints indeed. And God seeing them praying and praising moved heaven and earth for their sakes, to deliver them and to provide for them. One wonders what would happen now if Jehovah could look down into the four quarters of the earth and see the whole church worshipping him in this wise.

Exodus 5:1-4; 19-23.

1. And afterward Moses and Aaron came, and said unto Pharaoh, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me

in the wilderness. 2. And Pharaoh said, Who is Jehovah, that I should hearken unto his voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, and moreover I will not let Israel go. 3. And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice unto Jehovah our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword. 4. And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, loose the people from their works? get you unto your burdens. 19. And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case, when it was said, Ye shall not diminish aught from your bricks, your daily tasks. 20. And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh: 21 and they said unto them, Jehovah look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savor to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us. 22. And Moses returned unto Jehovah, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou dealt ill with this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? 23. For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath dealt ill with this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.

Most men imagine, if they get right with God, that it will be all light from that time on. But they soon find out that darkness follows light as surely as light follows darkness. Why? Ah, my brother, suppose you explain. And if you cannot explain, suppose you ask wiser persons than you and I are to explain. And if they cannot explain, suppose we agree to leave it all for God to explain, when the long day has come and all the shadows have fled away. Well, as it is now, so it was then. Poor Moses was face to face with mysteries, and he got all mixed up. He had

given up everything at the burning bush. He had obeyed God even to going back into Egypt. He had won the hearts of his people. And then he had gone boldly into the presence of murderous Pharaoh, demanding that he should let Israel go and worship in the wilderness. And the whole thing had ended in a miserable fiasco. Pharaoh had shown no fear of him, nor of his God. He had simply told him to be gone, and then had plunged Israel into deeper bondage and groaning than ever. And finally, to make things doubly worse, those sedate elders had met him in the way, and had charged all of Israel's new sorrows upon him, even when he was trying to do his very best for them. And that had been the breaking down point. "And Moses returned unto Jehovah and said, Lord, since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath dealt ill with this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all." Well, let us leave Moses there. But, meanwhile, my friend, as touching mysteries, it will be well for us if we remember this: the unconverted man has mystery in the dark, and the converted man has mystery in the light; and it is a good deal better, since mystery must be, to have it in the light than in the dark.

Exodus 6:1-8.

1. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for by a strong hand shall he let them go, and by a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land. 2. And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am Jehovah: 3 and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as God Almighty; but by my name Jehovah I was not known to them. 4. And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their sojournings, wherein they sojourned. 5. And moreover I have heard the groaning of the children of

Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. 6. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am Jehovah, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm, and with great judgments: 7 and I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God, who bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8. And I will bring you in unto the land which I sware to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for a heritage: I am Jehovah.

Evidently Moses did some praying after he left the presence of the threatening Pharaoh and that of those murmuring elders. And possibly this was one reason why God had allowed the threatening and the murmuring to take place. At any rate, there was now a great stirring in heaven. Doomed Pharaoh did not suspect it, and the blind elders did not perceive it. But the man who had done his best was let into the secret, in spite of his collapse. So we hear God speaking from his sanctuary: "Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh;—wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am Jehovah, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm, and with great judgments;—I am Jehovah." Yes, God is a terrible God when once he bares his arm. It is well that he is also a God of grace, or else no flesh could be saved. And yet, however long grace may be extended, the day of judgment must surely come. Thus it was that Moses was soon to be surprised at what his feeble prayers and faith had wrought at the throne of the Almighty. And we saints of now-a-days, marvelling at God's tol-

erance of wrong, will one day stand awed before the discovery that not a prayer of ours for the righting of the wrong has been lost. For the words in Revelation 8:4-5 will yet be fulfilled: "And the smoke of the incense, which came *with the prayers of the saints*, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand; and the angel took the censer and filled it with fire off the altar and cast it into the earth; and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings and earthquake." So then, child of God, while you pray be patient.

Exodus 8:12-15.

12. And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh: and Moses cried unto Jehovah concerning the frogs which he had brought upon Pharaoh. 13. And Jehovah did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the courts, and out of the fields. 14. And they gathered them together in heaps; and the land stank. 15. But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as Jehovah had spoken.

There had been stirring times in Egypt since Moses had been thrown back in prayer upon Jehovah. God had not done his worst; but his less than worst had been terrible indeed. There had been a bewildering succession of judgments—rods turned into serpents, the fish in the river dying till the river stank, and frogs coming up out of the river and covering the land. So, like a good many ungodly scoffers in days of calamity, Pharaoh thought it was time for somebody to pray. In other words, the godless king, as he saw the jumping frogs swarming even into his palace, made up his mind that prayer to Jehovah was not such a bad thing—provided he could get rid of the frogs. Thus he called Moses and Aaron and said: "Intreat the Lord, that he may take away the frogs

from me." Brave man! Where is all his vaunting now? And the marvel of the story is this, that those two good men went out from the presence of Pharaoh and prayed that the frogs might go. And the greater marvel is this, that God answered the prayer because he was willing to still further extend his mercy toward Pharaoh, in spite of the fact that he had already often rejected it. "And the Lord did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields." Yes, God is a God full of mercies and compassions, and he would have us pray in behalf of godless men, both high and low; (I Timothy 2:1-4). It does not always follow, however, that God's mercies and compassions will touch men's hearts and bring them to repentance. It is often now as it was then. "When Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them, as Jehovah had spoken."

Exodus 11:1-7.

1. *And Jehovah said unto Moses, Yet one plague more will I bring upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether.* 2. *Speak now in the ears of the people, and let them ask every man of his neighbor, and every woman of her neighbor, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold.* 3. *And Jehovah gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people.* 4. *And Moses said, Thus saith Jehovah, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: 5 and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind*

the mill; and all the first-born of cattle. 6. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there hath not been, nor shall be any more. 7. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that Jehovah doth make a distinction between the Egyptians and Israel.

By this time, there had been a good many prayer meetings in Egypt. Judgments had come so thick and fast and they had been so terrible that the king had kept Moses and Aaron busy supplicating God in his behalf. Pharaoh is not to be blamed for this. Most men who had been overwhelmed with lice and flies and boils and hail and locusts would have thought of prayer, however little they might have thought of it before. What Pharaoh is to be blamed for is this, that he did not go to the prayer meetings and join in them. And in this he was not unlike many modern men, who have not even the excuse of being kings. They like to know that prayer meetings are going on, especially when evil is threatened, but they are above attending them. The fact of the matter is, they and Pharaoh agree in simply wishing a God who will help them out of trouble. As for sin, or love, or service, these are indifferent questions to them. Pharaoh's philosophy was evidently this: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." As for religion, the worship of a bull or monkey was good enough for him. Some time ago, a rich, well-educated man gravely told me that he expected to turn into a butterfly when he died; and any such man, whether in the past or present, finds it quite satisfying to worship a beast or a reptile—or himself. So the time inevitably came by God's appointment, when there were no more prayer meetings in Egypt. It is a solemn time when God has to say to an intercessor concerning a person or people;

“Ephraim is joined to his idols; let him alone.” And this he did say, at last, to Moses and Aaron concerning Pharaoh and the Egyptians. So the voice of prayer ceased. And when that happened, judgment fell.

Exodus 12:21-28.

21. *Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out, and take you lambs according to your families, and kill the passover. 22. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. 23. For Jehovah will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, Jehovah will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. 24. And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever. 25. And it shall come to pass, when ye are come to the land which Jehovah will give you, according as he hath promised that ye shall keep this service. 26. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? 27 that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of Jehovah's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped. 28. And the children of Israel went and did so; as Jehovah had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.*

The climax had been reached, so far as Pharaoh and his people are concerned. They were walking upon the edge of a precipice, heedlessly and wilfully, and they were soon to pitch headlong over. But God was not purposing to let his beloved people go over with

them. Since they were trusting in him, a strong right arm was about them and it would keep them from all evil. However, there was only one way by which they could be saved. They had to be what the Egyptians were not, true worshippers of Jehovah. And as for worship, it was the old story of the lamb, slain and its blood shed, and they redeemed through a substituted life. So God told the Israelites to take a lamb, to kill it between the two evenings—midway between sun down and sun set—to sprinkle its blood upon the side posts and the lintel, to go within their homes, to stand dressed as pilgrims, to feed upon the roasted lamb, and thus to worship him; (12:1-11). This they did. And immediately thereafter God's deadly work of judgment began. "It came to pass at midnight that Jehovah smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon;—and there was a great cry in Egypt." What an awful picture! And what a contrast between the old days and the new, between the two peoples as they were and as they now are. Before, the Egyptians exalted and dominant, and Israel debased and persecuted. But now, Israel saved and at peace, and the Egyptians judged and punished. Evidently, the blood-red line of God is far flung, and it divides between heaven and hell. Happy the man who for time and eternity is on the right side of it.

Exodus 12:29-36.

29. And it came to pass at midnight, that Jehovah smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle. 30. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for

there was not a house where there was not one dead. 31. And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve Jehovah, as ye have said. 32. Take both your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also. 33. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, to send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We are all dead men. And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading-troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. 35. And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they asked of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: 36 and Jehovah gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. And they despoiled the Egyptians.

God never gives darkness, but that he also gives light. Thus the dark night which fell upon Egypt meant the breaking of the day to the Israelites. Even in the very midst of Egypt's night, there had been light in the dwellings of the Israelites, (Exodus 10:23); and now, there was the bright shining of joy, as they were led out from the long darkness of suffering and sorrow. At that time, a nation was born in a day, for under the mighty hand of God those despised, down-trodden slaves raised up their heads, straightened their backs, stood erect, and marched forward toward the Promised Land under the banner of Jehovah and with the proud step of a people who were at last free. And they went out, honored and enriched by their one-time persecutors, for they had suddenly become a great and feared people. God, as he had promised (6:6), had redeemed them "with an outstretched arm and with great judgments," and he was perfecting that which concerned them. Thus

their path was from strength to strength and from glory to glory. How good it is to walk with God! He ever makes the path of the just to shine more and more unto the perfect day. Evidently, it had been a great thing for Israel to have such a man as Moses in their midst. His intercessions for his people had prevailed and had turned their darkness into light.

Exodus 12:40-42.

40. Now the time that the children of Israel dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. 41. And it came to pass at the end of four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of Jehovah went out from the land of Egypt. 42. It is a night to be much observed unto Jehovah for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of Jehovah, to be much observed of all the children of Israel throughout their generations.

From this time on, for a considerable space, we shall be intimately associated with Moses and the children of Israel as worshippers of Jehovah. The book of Exodus which we have before us has to do with the going of these out of Egypt and through the wilderness of Arabia. This, however, is but the outward aspect of the story. Beneath the surface, lies the great spiritual lesson of worship. God is undertaking to teach Moses and his fellow pilgrims, in preparation for life in the promised land, how to commune with him. As we have seen, that teaching began at Egypt's brick-kilns and at Midian's burning bush. Now it is to be continued at Sinai and on the desert sands, and the primary lessons are to be developed into those of a higher order. And Jehovah begins—as he always does—at the beginning. He reminds Moses and the Israelites that their going out of

Egypt and being in the wilderness is to be no happening; that what is about to take place is to be the result of divine interposition. He, Jehovah, is to be their Saviour, and they are to be led forth by his mighty hand. So it was that Moses told his people that they were to keep that which made deliverance possible, namely, the passover, well in mind: "It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord." In other words, the remembrance of this experience was to be the basis, from henceforth, of all their worship. And, this means simply this. Out of death was to come life; and out of life, worship. This was the divine order for Moses and Israel. And it has been the divine order for all the saints ever since.

Exodus 13:3-5.

3. And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand Jehovah brought you out from this place: there shall no leavened bread be eaten. 4. This day ye go forth in the month Abib. 5. And it shall be, when Jehovah shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite, which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month.

Most of us would have to acknowledge that our forgetfulness is abounding. Indeed, it would appear that such an experience is common to mankind. And this is particularly true of spiritual things. Men do succeed in remembering evil. A missionary who had been born and raised in India said recently that he would give his right arm if he could forget the sin that he had learned from the heathen before he was ten years of age. But the same missionary

would confess that he was obliged to try hard to remember the good in life. So it is with all of us. And thus it was with Moses and the Israelites. God was to do a wonderful thing for them in leading them out of Egypt. But he knew that they would soon forget this. They would remember Egypt's fish, and cucumbers, and melons, and leeks, and onions, and garlic, and a good many other things of the earth, earthy, (Numbers 11:4-5); but they would utterly forget him, his bared arm, his stretched out hand, his mighty voice, his almighty deliverance, and his call to a separated life; (Psalm 78:10, 11). So he has to say: "Remember this day!" How infinitely sad this is! And what a long sorrow God has had in this respect! For from Moses' time to this, men have always been forgetting him and his holy things. Kipling had a true prophetic vision when he wrote:

"Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!"

Exodus 13:12-16.

12. *That thou shalt set apart unto Jehovah all that openeth the womb, and every firstling which thou hast that cometh of a beast; the males shall be Jehovah's.*
13. *And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break its neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy sons shalt thou redeem.* 14. *And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand Jehovah brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage: 15 and it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that Jehovah slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast: therefore I sacrifice to Jehovah all that openeth the womb, being males;*

but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem. 16. And it shall be for a sign upon thy hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for by strength of hand Jehovah brought us forth out of Egypt.

In these passages of Scripture Jehovah is teaching Moses the conditions of worship. In the previous chapter the essential thought was that of remembrance, a thought reiterated in the Ten Commandments where God said: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." In this passage, the essential thought is that of redemption. As a matter of fact, Israel's national and individual life was forfeit before God because of sin, and the only reason why the people had lived when the Egyptians were killed is because they had acknowledged their worthiness of death by the slaying of the lamb and the sprinkling of its blood. And this was not a temporary but a permanent condition. Hence, Jehovah demanded that there should be a permanent acknowledgment of the fact. The firstling, therefore, was to be God's, in token that all belonged to God. Afterwards, Jehovah altered the arrangement by taking for his service the tribe of Levi instead of the first-born males of the families of each tribe, (Numbers 3:5-8); but the principle remained the same, for the conditions were unchangeable. And, since the principle is still existent, these are the conditions now. There is not one of us who has a right to life, for sin has put us all under death. But redemption has overcome death and made life possible. Hence, he who has bought us, owns us; and he who owns us, owns all of us. Seneca, the Stoic, wrote long ago: "It is a great thing to have at the same time the frailty of a man and the security of a god." He spoke more truly than he knew. This is exactly where we Christians are: in ourselves, delivered unto death; in Christ, alive from the dead, and God's for evermore.

Exodus 14:13-16, 21, 22.

13. And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah, which he will work for you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. 14. Jehovah will fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. 15. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward. 16. And lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thy hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go into the midst of the sea on dry ground. 21. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and Jehovah caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. 22. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

It is one thing to be confident toward men and another to be confident toward God. Moses had taken high ground before Israel and he was not minded to turn back from it. But he was in terrible straits. So, while he spoke bravely to his fellow-pilgrims, he cried secretly to God in great anguish of spirit. God, however, had but one answer for his servant. He had taught him enough for the present and it was no time for moaning. The hour for action had come, and what were needed were faith and obedience. "And Jehovah said unto Moses, wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." God seems hard of heart at times. But it is the hardness of heart which the surgeon has who wounds the patient in order that he may save his life, the kind that the teacher has who disciplines the scholar in order that he may develop his mind, the

kind the parent has who refuses to fondle the child till the task has been fulfilled in order that he may beautify his spirit. This only is the "hardness of heart" which God had toward Moses. He loved him infinitely, and he purposed to use him mightily. He had heard his former prayers, and they were fully answered. So then, he must hold him to action, however hard this process might be to his servant. And Moses finally understood. He rose, stretched forth his rod, and commanded his people to go forward. And Israel went forward and went through, out of Egypt into the wilderness, a ransomed and saved people. How blessed it was that the man of God did not fail in his hour of testing, and that he learned, not only how to pray, but also how to act.

Exodus 15:1-8.

1. *Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto Jehovah, and spake, saying,*

I will sing unto Jehovah, for he hath triumphed gloriously:

The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

2. *Jehovah is my strength and song,
And he is become my salvation: This is my God,
and I will praise him;*

My father's God, and I will exalt him.

3. *Jehovah is a man of war:*

Jehovah is his name.

4. *Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea;*

And his chosen captains are sunk in the Red Sea.

5. *The deeps cover them:*

They went down into the depths like a stone.

6. *Thy right hand, O Jehovah, is glorious in power,
Thy right hand, O Jehovah, dasheth in pieces the enemy.*

7. *And in the greatness of thine excellency thou overthrowest them that rise up against thee:*

Thou sendest forth thy wrath, it consumeth them as stubble.

8. *And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were piled up,*

The floods stood upright as a heap;

The deeps were congealed in the heart of the sea.

This is a bit of poetry thrown in in the midst of prose. And it is from the pen of Moses! That is, it is by the man who said he was not eloquent, and could not speak, and, therefore, could not be used by God for his glory. How little he knew himself. And, above all, how little he knew God. Great occasions often make great men, and this occasion of national deliverance was indeed a great one. But also, a great God can always make great men, and Moses certainly had such a God. And so it was that Jehovah made a great poet of Moses; for when he set his heart to singing he also set his lips to singing. And a nobler song than this has never been sung, for it is all about God, his strength, his might, his power, his holiness, and his everlasting exaltation. That is what gives the song its eternal quality, the evidence of which is found in the heavenly ages, where the saints are still singing the "song of Moses the servant of God;" (Revelation 15:3). So man of God, whoever you are, do not doubt God and what he can make of you. The present Poet Laureate of England began his career with pills and bandages, which do not suggest the dream-like qualities of a poet. But he is now a master-workman in words, in phrases, in rhyme, and in delicate expression. And Moses was a rugged, hard-headed and a somewhat hard-hearted man of action. And he became a poet whose singing is beyond that of all poet

laureates. Ah, God can do anything! And who knows but that he will one day make a poet out of you. At any rate, keep singing God's praises in your heart. Then, if Jehovah wants it, he will teach you to sing these also with your lips.

Exodus 15:20-21.

20. And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. 21. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to Jehovah, for he hath triumphed gloriously, The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

Sometimes good things as well as bad are infectious. Here it is the good thing of praise. Moses sang his praise to God. And Moses had a sister, Miriam, who heard him, and then she began to sing her praise to God. And Miriam had hundreds of Israelite sisters in the camp who heard her, and they began to sing their praises to God. And so it went from Moses down to the last woman in the camp, till there was a processional chorus, with Miriam at the head of the line, timbrel in hand, answering every song with a response of victorious jubilation. And it is probable that even the men in the camp, before the women were done, were beating time with hands and feet, and humming the refrain. And, remember, it was Moses—the one who was “slow-of-speech”—who started the whole out-burst of song. So it is well worth while to learn to live in such close communion with God that his glorious victories will at once set the heart to voicing praiseful songs. For as surely as this comes to pass, the song will pass from heart to heart and lip to lip. And the best place to begin to sing is where Moses began, at home, where some brother or sister may hear you. For it is when

brothers and sisters unite in song that whole camps begin to praise.

Oh, then, add your note rejoicing
 To the praise,
 Thanks to God for all things voicing
 Through the days;
 Till the earthly singing's done,
 Till the heav'nly is begun,
 Till the anthem, round Christ's feet,
 Swells complete!

Exodus 15:22-27.

22. *And Moses led Israel onward from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. 23. And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. 24. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? 25. And he cried unto Jehovah; and Jehovah showed him a tree, and he cast it into the waters, and the waters were made sweet. There he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them; 26 and he said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of Jehovah thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his eyes, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases upon thee, which I have put upon the Egyptians: for I am Jehovah that healeth thee. 27. And they came to Elim, where were twelve springs of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters.*

Moses was to find, before he finished with the wilderness experiences, that it was not to be, exclusively, a

time of song. It might have been, if Moses and Israel had chosen to make it such. But events were to follow that would make singing hard indeed; and, in the stress and strain of temptation, the song was to die quite away. And it did not take much or long to bring this change to pass. A three days' march into the wilderness without water was all that was required. If Israel had stopped to think of it, the Jehovah who had rolled the waters of the Red Sea backward into a heap could easily have opened springs in desert places. But they did not stop to think. They were hot and thirsty, they could see no shade and no streams, the springs to which they had finally come were not sweet but bitter, and hence there seemed but one thing to do, to stop their singing and to express their discontent. "And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?" And then poor Moses stopped his singing. However, even in these circumstances, he did not abandon God or hope. There was one thing he could do; and this he did. "He cried unto Jehovah." And then the record adds: "And Jehovah showed him a tree, and he cast it into the waters, and the waters were made sweet." How quick God is to answer prayer! Also, how infinite his resources are! For what was there in a tree to turn bitter waters into sweet? But there was everything in God and a tree to do so. Charles Kingsley said in dying: "How beautiful is God!" And it is true. He is for ever and increasingly beautiful, as we discover more and more what he is and what he can do. So just bring God into your wilderness places, O pilgrim saint; and even if praise fails, do not let prayer fail. For Jehovah, in answer to your cry, will make even the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose.

Exodus 16:1-4, 35.

1. *And they took their journey from Elim, and all*

the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. 2. And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron in the wilderness: 3 and the children of Israel said unto them, Would that we had died by the hand of Jehovah in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots; when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger. 4. Then said Jehovah unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or not. 35. And the children of Israel did eat the manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat the manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.

That cry of Moses, as recorded in the previous chapter (15:25), had a far reaching effect. It evidently stirred the heart of God, for from the moment it reached him, he began to work in behalf of Moses and his people in supplying their need, not only of water, but also of bread. And he kept on thus working for full forty years. In former generations we saw God doing things for Israel, for the sake of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, long after those patriarchs were dead and had ceased to pray. And now, there is a single cry, and then an answer full of blessing, and reaching over a long period of time. How little it takes to induce the God of grace to show grace; and how full and unending the grace is when once it begins to manifest itself! This is the Godward aspect of the story; and it is full of beauty and encouragement. But there is also a manward aspect,

and this is as dark as the other is bright. The reason that Moses sounded his plaintive cry in the ears of Jehovah was because of the sinful murmuring of the Israelites; and the reason that grace was "grace upon grace" was because there was need of such, since the murmuring was long continued. It was well for the Israelites that Moses stood as an intercessor between themselves and Jehovah, or else it would have meant, not grace, but judgment. However, the intercessor was there, the cry was sounded forth, God heard, the fountain of mercy was opened, and it continued to flow. And, remember, Moses was a type of the greater Intercessor, even Jesus, who *ever liveth* to make intercession for us.

Exodus 17:1-6.

1. *And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, by their journeys, according to the commandment of Jehovah, and encamped in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink. 2. Wherefore the people strove with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why strive ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt Jehovah? 3. And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore hast thou brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? 4. And Moses cried unto Jehovah, saying What shall I do unto this people? they are almost ready to stone me. 5. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Pass on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thy hand, and go. 6. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shalt come water out of it,*

that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

One has said that "present tests are for future trusts." Moses certainly found this so. Probably, he saw little reason in all that was taking place in the nature of trial and sorrow. But God did; and hence the experiences not only came, but also continued. This murmuring, with its ingratitude and cruel criticism, had been like a dagger-thrust in Moses' heart, and the cry to God was the expression of his soul's anguish. But God's answers of grace healed the wound and revived the spirit. Thus God prepared his servant for further trusts of trial and sorrow. And it was not long before these were upon him. The wilderness walk meant hardship of a severe kind, for it was no easy thing for a multitude of people to find food and drink in such a place. Hence, as they went on, they might have water without food, and then again have food without water. So the murmuring kept up, until Moses was almost distracted by it. Indeed, now there was more than murmuring; there was muttering of a sinister kind, as only an ungoverned mob can express. "And Moses cried unto Jehovah saying, What shall I do unto this people? they are almost ready to stone me." Poor man! he was finding out what many a leader of men has since found out, namely, that "uneasy lies the head that wears the crown." However, he was also finding out that God was the real King and that he was on heaven's throne. Hence, finally, his appeal was to him. And how easily the King of kings settled the difficulty. "Thou shalt smite the rock—and there shall come water out of it." Moses did this; and the water came out in floods. So, man of God, you who bear responsibility, when faces scowl and tongues wag, look up!

Exodus 17:8-16.

8. Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. 9. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to-morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand. 10. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. 12. But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. 13. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. 14. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. 15. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi: 16 and he said, Jehovah hath sworn: Jehovah will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

The true man of God goes from victory to victory. But this means that he also goes from conflict to conflict, for if there are no conflicts there can be no victories. Moses was finding this out with unmistakable certitude. His life was coming to be filled with contests. As soon as he overcame one enemy, another would lift up his head. When it was not in the camp, it was out of the camp; and when it was not out of the camp, it was in the camp. But the marvelous thing about it was that Moses was having good reason to conclude that God was just as equal to one event as to another. Indeed, he was discovering,

however many the conflicts, that God never lost a battle. This is what made fighting worth while. At the same time, the process was not an easy one. Moreover, the present experience was peculiarly hard. For by this time, Moses had perceived that his particular place was that of an intercessor; and that his particular duty was to pray. If he only could have gotten down on to the plain, sword in hand, and have hewed and hacked at the enemy, that would have been easy. But to sit up on the mount, holding up his hands, inactive, and "doing nothing but pray," that was hard indeed. Many saints since then have broken down just here. They say: "It is action that tells;" and away they go down to the plain and into the battle. This sounds well, and it looks well. But the difficulty is, that battles are often lost in this way. Some men must fight. But other men, if victories are to be won, must keep their lonely watch with God. So, brother, if Jehovah has appointed you to hold up holy hands on the mount, do not let anything on earth or in hell tempt you into the valley. Whether any one approves of it or not, just stay where he has put you and do what he has told you. And be assured, when you have learned to do this, it will not be long, however great the conflict, before you will have occasion to shout: "Jehovah-nissi," the Lord is my banner!

Exodus 19: 1-6.

1. In the third month after the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. 2. And when they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the wilderness of Sinai, they encamped in the wilderness; and there Israel encamped before the mount. 3. And Moses went up unto God, and Jehovah called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus

shall thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 4. Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. 5. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: 6. and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

The intercessor is not a man of inaction. The Rev. Hudson Taylor once said: "I have seen many men work without praying, though I have never seen any good come out of it; but I have never seen a man pray without working." It is possible to do the one; but it is not possible to do the other. The reason is, first, that prayer leads to work; and second, that prayer is work. This is true because prayer sets God to working; and it is also true because, when he works, he sets his servants to working with him. It was this way with Moses. He had obediently and patiently sat on the mountain at Rephidim, while Joshua fought in the valley. Now, having reached Sinai and having come face to face with new crises, he goes up into the mount to commune with God and to get new wisdom and strength from him. And what an immediate and blessed response there was. "And Jehovah called unto him out of the mountain." This is the way it always is when we seek Jehovah. But mark what God goes on to say: "Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;" "These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel." In other words, God turned the intercessor into a preacher. From that time onward, Moses was kept busy carrying messages from Jehovah to his people. Oh, preacher, do you want to

know how to preach and work? The way is this. Just go up into the mount and commune with God; and wait there until he has spoken to you! After that you will not have to hunt for a sermon, or for something to do.

Exodus 19:16-20.

16. And it came to pass on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud; and all the people that were in the camp trembled. 17. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. 18. And mount Sinai, the whole of it, smoked, because Jehovah descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. 19. And when the voice of the trumpet waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. 20. And Jehovah came down upon mount Sinai, to the top of the mount: and Jehovah called Moses to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.

The man of prayer is a man of power. By God's appointment, he who prays puts into action God's omnipotence. It is not that God makes himself inferior to man. It is this rather, that he gives to man the privilege of being the occasion of making his superiority manifest. It is thus that God at one time said: "Ask me of things to come—and concerning the work of my hands command ye me." He is ever waiting to be petitioned, to be commanded, in order that he may display his glorious might. And this is the lesson which Jehovah was now seeking to teach to Moses. He had brought his servant into the "School of Prayer," and he was instructing him, line

upon line and precept upon precept. Probably, Moses in praying just then had no thought of setting the lightning flashing and the thunder rolling. Nevertheless, this is what he did. That day he went up into the mount (19:3), he came into contact with the God of heaven and earth, who could do anything and everything. And just then it was his desire to prove to Israel—and thus to men of all places and time—that he was the Mighty and Terrible God. So Moses' prayer gave Jehovah the occasion which he desired. Hence it says: "Mount Sinai, the whole of it, smoked, because Jehovah descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly." It is a wonderful thing to commune with God. When you speak to him, you speak to One who does according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. Therefore, when you pray, look out for something great.

Exodus 20:18-21.

18. And all the people perceived the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they trembled, and stood afar off. 19. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. 20. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before you, that ye sin not. 21. And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.

Moses had now become the mouthpiece of God. He was God's echo, speaking only what he heard God speak and speaking all that he heard God speak. So it came to pass that he who heard Moses' voice heard

God's voice. This was a good arrangement for the people, under the circumstances, for they were not ready to bear more: "Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." At the same time, they missed the blessing which the greater worshipper obtained, for they worshipped "afar-off," while Moses worshipped "face to face." But mark what such communion meant to Moses: "And Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was." There had been times when Jehovah had revealed himself to his servant in the light, as at the burning bush. But now, he was only to be found in the "thick darkness." And as between the two experiences, no doubt Moses preferred the revelation of God in the light. Darkness, and especially thick darkness, is not inviting, for it is cheerless, oppressive, terrorizing. But Moses knew that it was, just then, where God was to be found, and whatever it might imply, he must reach him. So he chose the darkness. St. Augustine used to address God as the One "most hidden, yet most manifest." Yes, it is often in the deepest gloom that God is most easily discovered, and it is ever in the deepest darkness that he is most clearly discerned as the God of Light. So then, friend, the next time, you see a great, black, forbidding cloud, do not shrink from it, but make for it, and never stop till you reach the very center of it. For it will be there that you will find God—and glory!

Exodus 24: 1, 2, 5-11.

1. And he said unto Moses, Come up unto Jehovah, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off: 2 and Moses alone shall come near unto Jehovah; but they shall not come near; neither shall the people go up with him. 5. And he sent young men of the children

of Israel, who offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto Jehovah. 6. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. 7. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that Jehovah hath spoken will we do, and be obedient. 8. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which Jehovah hath made with you concerning all these words. 9. Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: 10 and they saw the God of Israel; and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the very heaven for clearness. 11. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: and they beheld God, and did eat and drink.

God extends some blessed invitations to those who seek to worship him. Here it is: "Come up unto Jehovah." And note, however the invitation is put otherwise, it is always, "come up." Jehovah is infinitely above us, and there must be a going up to reach him. And this is the reason he invites us to come. He wants to lift us above the levels of sin, selfishness, inactivity, wrong desire and small understanding, on to the higher levels of blamelessness, devotion, zeal, ardent affection, and large vision. And note again, there is but one way in which to ascend and draw nigh: "And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto Jehovah." The way away from God was a way of sin, and hence the way back to God is a way of blood. So, if you do not like the blood, do not attempt to come. But if you do like the blood, come at once, and all the way

up, until you are very nigh; (Ephesians 2:12, 13). This was the choice of Moses and his companions. And they saw the God of Israel—Jesus in angelic form—high, and lifted up, enthroned and glorified. Yea, they saw God, and did eat and drink in his presence. Have you ever had such an experience? It may be yours, if you will.

Exodus 24:12-18.

12. And Jehovah said unto Moses. Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee the tables of stone, and the law and the commandment, which I have written, that thou mayest teach them. 13. And Moses rose up, and Joshua his minister: and Moses went up into the mount of God. 14. And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you; whosoever hath a cause, let him come near unto them. 15. And Moses went up into the mount, and the cloud covered the mount. 16. And the glory of Jehovah abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. 17. And the appearance of the glory of Jehovah was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. 18. And Moses entered into the midst of the cloud, and went up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.

God does not deal alike with all of his servants. He has indeed his favorites. But probably it is much as it is in the average family; the child is loved most who loves most. This, at any rate, is true; Moses had a great hunger for God. If he thought Jehovah was in the fire of the burning bush, he made for the bush. If he thought he was in the thick darkness of the

cloud, he made for the cloud. If he thought he was on the mount, he made for the mount. If he thought he was on the peak of the mount, he made for the peak of the mount. He was insatiate. Nothing would satisfy him but God's glory, God's voice, God's presence, God himself. And this is the sort of a man who gets, not only the general, but also the special invitations. Here and now it is: "Come up to me into the mount, and be there." There was going to be a private "at home," and God and Moses were to be the persons present. Oh, but it is worth while turning from sin, denying self, taking time for prayer, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, to be treated by Jehovah like this! And Moses accepted the invitation: "Moses went up into the mount of God." And then the Scripture adds: "And the cloud covered the mount; and the glory of Jehovah abode upon mount Sinai." There we will leave Moses, for what it meant to him is too sacred for us even to try to imagine. Only, let us make sure to be like God's servant in being insatiate, so that some day Jehovah may bring us also into the secret place of the Most High to satisfy our longing souls with himself.

Exodus 25:1-9.

1. *And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, that they take for me an offering: of every man whose heart maketh him willing ye shall take my offering. 3. And this is the offering which ye shall take of them: gold, and silver, and brass, 4 and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, 5. and rams' skins dyed red, and sealskins, and acacia wood, 6, oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense, 7, onyx stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breastplate. 8. And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. 9.*

According to all that I show thee, the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the furniture thereof, even so shall ye make it.

Moses, during the forty days and nights on the mount was to learn some deep lessons. He was to be shown the plan of God in respect to acceptable and ideal worship, for all time and peoples. And this was to be done, not only by word of mouth, but also by visible portrayal. Just as an architect will explain to the master-workman his plan of a building, and then besides, present to him a model of the building, so God was going to appeal to both hearing and sight, to both spirit and sense. The object of this was twofold; first, that the plan might be understood, and second, that it might never be forgotten. Thus the final word was: "According to all that I shall shew thee, the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the furniture thereof, even so shall ye make it." And thus Jehovah did—as the following chapters show—down to the last minute detail. And the wonderful thing about the revelation was, that God granted to every person concerned a place in the fulfillment of his plan, the only condition being that he should be one whose heart should make him willing. The rich man could bring gold, silver, or onyx stones, and the poor man, if he had nothing else, could bring goat's hair. What was going to make each gift equally valuable was, first, that it was for God; and second, that it came from the heart. And these are the first principles of all true worship now. We must be sure to build our sacrificial temples of prayer and praise "after the pattern;" and then, we can come with little or much, according to our ability, knowing that all will be alike precious to God.

Exodus 25: 10, 11, 17-22.

10. And they shall make an ark of acacia wood:

two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. 11. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about. 17. And thou shalt make a mercy-seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. 18. And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold; of beaten work shalt thou make them, at the two ends of the mercy-seat. 19. And make one cherub at the one end, and one cherub at the other end: of one piece with the mercy-seat shall ye make the cherubim on the two ends thereof. 20. And the cherubim shall spread out their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, with their faces one to another; toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubim be. 21. And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. 22. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.

Moses must have been surprised as God unfolded his plan for a place of worship. Usually, architects and builders begin with the outward part and build inward. But God began with the inward part and built outward. And, much to the surprise of all natural minded men, God has been working in this manner ever since. Man reforms; God regenerates. Man says, "Do!" God says, "Be!" Man says, "If you do, you will be;" God says, "If you be, you will do." These are radical distinctions. And they are all suggested by God's plan of worship here set forth. Je-

hovah began his temple of worship and the worship itself at the very heart of all, namely, at the ark. Now this ark represented Christ as the God-Man, the shining gold standing for his deity, and the fragrant shittim wood for his humanity. Then the mercy-seat above represented Christ as the Mediator, over which the cherubims bent in adoring worship, where blood was sprinkled in sign of perfect reconciliation, and where God could meet with man in full and blessed communion. This portion of the tabernacle being established, all else could be added to it. And thus it is now. It is the Christ who must first be lifted up, if the worshipper is to draw nigh. And when he is given his true place, all else of worship and service may follow.

Exodus 25:23-30.

23. And thou shalt make a table of acacia wood: two cubits shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. 24. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, and make thereto a crown of gold round about. 25. And thou shalt make unto it a border of a hand-breadth round about, and thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about. 26. And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that are on the four feet thereof. 27. Close by the border shall the rings be, for places for the staves to bear the table. 28. And thou shalt make the staves of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them. 29. And thou shalt make the dishes thereof, and the spoons thereof, and the flagons thereof, and the bowls thereof, wherewith to pour out: of pure gold shalt thou make them. 30. And thou shalt set upon the table showbread before me alway.

Moses now saw God's plan being enlarged, outwardly. The ark was in its place, and beyond it was to be a table of shewbread. This too, was to be of shittim wood, overlaid with gold. And it was to bear upon its top twelve loaves of bread, the number representing the twelve tribes of Israel. So the worshippers, being warranted in drawing nigh, were not to be left unsupplied. They were to be fed by the hand of the Lord, from the table of the Lord, and thus they were to be forever satisfied. Besides, the very name "shewbread" was to signify that their food was to be the Lord himself, for the word means, "bread of faces," which presents the fact that God's presence was to be there. This is why Jesus, in his day, said: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever." For, just as the ark and mercy seat spoke of Christ, so also the table of shewbread spoke of him.

Exodus 25:31-33, 37-40.

31. And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made, even its base, and its shaft; its cups, its knops, and its flowers, shall be of one piece with it; 32 and there shall be six branches going out of the sides thereof; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side thereof, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side thereof: 33 three cups made like almond-blossoms in one branch, a knop and a flower; and three cups made like almond-blossoms in the other branch, a knop and a flower: so for the six branches going out of the candlesticks. 37. And thou shalt make the lamps thereof, seven: and they shall light the lamps thereof, to give light over against it. 38. And the snuffers thereof, and the snuffdishes thereof, shall be of pure gold. 39. Of a talent of pure gold shall it be made, with all these vessels. 40.

And see that thou make them after their pattern, which hath been showed thee in the mount.

It must have been a heartening experience to Moses to see that the worship of Jehovah was going to mean life, unending and abundant. But he may have wondered, at once, if it was to mean also the supply of man's need of light. Because life without light must, after all, leave the soul inadequately provided for. Man needs life and light, the one supplementing and complementing the other. But Moses' wondering thoughts, if he had them, were soon brought to an end. In God's economy and order, life came first; but after life came light. Hence, Jehovah, having placed in the sanctuary the table of shewbread, put over against it the candlestick, or lamp-stand. As to this lamp-stand, it was to be made of "pure," or refined gold, since it was to set forth the divine Christ. Also, it was to have one upright stem, and six side branches, and seven lamps, signifying the divine fulness of the provision. And lastly it was to have golden tongues and snuff dishes, in order that the lamps might be kept constantly trimmed and burning, since the divine light was never to go out. It was with all this in view that Jesus said: "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." And Christ thus made plain that he was the consummation of all that the tabernacle worship proclaimed concerning light, for he was to be the true, unending and ever illuminating light of the soul.

Exodus 27: 1, 2, 18-21.

1. And thou shalt make the altar of acacia wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof shall be three cubits. 2. And thou shalt make the horns of it upon

the four corners thereof: the horns thereof shall be of one piece with it: and thou shalt overlay it with brass. 18. The length of the court shall be a hundred cubits, and the breadth fifty every where, and the height five cubits, of fine twined linen, and their sockets of brass. 19. All the instruments of the tabernacle in all the service thereof, and all the pins thereof, and all the pins of the court, shall be of brass. 20. And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure olive oil beaten for the light, to cause a lamp to burn continually. 21. In the tent of meeting, without the veil which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall keep it in order from the evening to morning before Jehovah: it shall be a statute for ever throughout their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel.

Besides the table of shew-bread and the seven-branched lampstand, there was to be in the holy place a golden altar of incense, (30:1-11), which sets forth the prayerful and praiseful intercession of Christ in behalf of his people; (John 17:9-26). This, as related to worship, was highly significant, for it meant that the worshippers could only be supplied with life and light through the mediation of Christ. There preceded this revelation, however, that which the above passage refers to, namely, a setting forth of the outward features of the tabernacle. These were as follows: there were to be curtains, boards, and bars; there was to be a veil between the most holy and the holy place; there was to be a brazen altar and laver in the outer court; and there were to be curtains, hanging upon pillars, surrounding the tabernacle and enclosing all. Thus, each portion was to be a part of the great whole, and thus the whole was to be the means by which Israel was to have access to God. By these means, and by these only, the worshipper was to

find acceptance before God, to secure communion with God, and to obtain blessing from God. And such results were to come to pass because all things, inward and outward, stood for and spoke of Christ. That is a wonderfully explanatory word in Revelation, (19: 10), where it says: "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." For it means nothing short of this, that all prophecy, whether in Old or New Testament, whether in declaration, sign, symbol or type, points to Christ. With this thought in mind, we may interpret and understand the tabernacle, in part and in whole. Hence, that precious word of the Psalmist: "In his temple, everything saith, Glory!"

Exodus 28: 40-43.

40. And for Aaron's sons thou shalt make coats, and thou shalt make for them girdles, and head-tires shalt thou make for them, for glory and for beauty.

41. And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and upon his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office. 42. And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover the flesh of their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach: 43 and they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they go in unto the tent of meeting, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy place; that they bear not iniquity, and die: it shall be a statute for ever unto him and unto his seed after him.

There was but one more present revelation which Jehovah was to make to Moses in the mount respecting worship, and then his instructions would be complete. So far, he had described the tabernacle of worship, which was to be the worshipper's environment. Now, he was to describe the worshipper himself, as, in this

environment, he was to offer his worship. And God makes this revelation in connection with the consecration of Aaron and his sons, who, it is to be remembered, represented the people of Israel as a whole. And briefly, the revelation is this. First, those who were to be consecrated had to belong to the right family, (verse 40); second, they had to be clothed with the right dress, (verses 40-42); third, they had to have the right anointing, (verse 41); and fourth, they had to be consecrated in the right manner, (verse 41). And what does this mean as related to ourselves? The New Testament makes the meaning plain. Belonging to the right family speaks of our regeneration and of our becoming God's priests through the Spirit, (John 3:3, 5; I Peter 1:23; Revelation 1:5, 6); having the right dress on signifies our being clothed with the righteousness of Christ and of our being glorified and beautified in him, (Revelation 19:8; I Corinthians 5:21); having the right anointing sets forth our being baptized by the Spirit and of our being thus introduced into the one body of Christ, (Acts 2:1, 2; I Corinthians 12:13); and being consecrated in the right manner means our having the hands filled with Jesus, (28:41, margin, 29:22-24), and the lifting up of him in the presence of God and men. Thus, as it was with the worshipping, so it was with the worshipper. It was Christ throughout.

Exodus 32:7-14.

7. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, that thou broughtest up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: 8 they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed unto it, and said, These are thy gods, O Israel, that brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 9. And Jehovah

said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: 10 now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation. 11. And Moses besought Jehovah his God, and said, Jehovah, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, that thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? 12. Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, saying, For evil did he bring them forth, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. 13. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. 14. And Jehovah repented of the evil which he said he would do unto his people.

Moses on the mount had had visions, no doubt, of days of ease and quiet when again he would be with his people. He had left them to learn the way of God in worship more perfectly, and he would return to teach them all that he had been taught. He was ignorant of the fact that while he was communing with God his people had utterly corrupted themselves, turning from Jehovah and choosing to worship instead one of their old time gods. But God had seen it all. With that long patience which is only known to deity, he had gone on communing with Moses on the mount, though beholding the false and vile worship on the plain. God's patience, however, never means indifference; and, now that the communing is over, he must break into Moses' dreams of peaceful days and reveal to him the wickedness of Israel: "Thy people

that thou broughtest up out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves; now, therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation." The shock which these words must have given to Moses, no one can imagine. But it is notable, the effect which they produced. A smaller man than he would have been less affected by the disappointment of it all, and would have greedily seized upon God's offer to make of him a great man. Not so, however, with this man of prayer. Communion with God had given to him a quick instinct for the divine. Hence, he began immediately to plead with Jehovah, telling him what the Egyptians would say, reminding him of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and urging him to turn from his wrath and keep to his promises. This was a bold attitude, and it led to equally bold language. But intercourse with God creates audacity, for, face to face with him, the soul learns that he is ever just and that it is his prerogative to show mercy. And thus Moses in his zeal for Israel, forgot all about himself, never mentioning what God had offered to make of him. There could be but one outcome to such an attitude and to such an intercession: "And Jehovah repented of the evil which he said he would do unto his people."

Exodus 32: 30-35.

30. *And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto Jehovah; peradventure I shall make atonement for your sin. 31. And Moses returned unto Jehovah, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. 32. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. 33. And Jehovah said unto Moses,*

Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. 34. And now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them. 35. And Jehovah smote the people because they made the calf, which Aaron made.

It was one thing for Moses to be up on the mount and so out of sight of Israel and their sin; but it was another thing for him to be down on the plain in full view of what that sin was and meant. Up on the mount, Moses had stood, pleading with God that he would show patience and grant forgiveness; down on the plain, he broke the tables of stone, seized the obnoxious calf, burnt it in the fire, ground it into powder, strewed it on the ground, made the children of Israel to drink of it, arraigned Aaron before all of the people, condemned him and them for their sin, ordered the Levites to take their swords and fall upon the idolaters, and never paused until he had slain a full three thousand of them. And in all this, apparently, Moses sinned not. This was righteous indignation, righteously expressed; and it was but a reflection of what had been and was in the heart of God. For we must not mistake the meaning of God's grace when, in answer to Moses' pleadings, he restrained himself from judgment. His grace was in proportion to Israel's sin, and if his grace was great, so also was the sin. In this wise, Moses was learning something of the mind of God concerning evil, and was expressing something of the abhorrence of God for the same. And yet Moses had not forgotten the lessons learned on the mount. In spite of wrath, he had come to have a heart of love. Hence, back to the mount and to God he went, and down before his holy presence he bowed. And what a prayer he breathed!

“Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold; yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written!” This was nothing less than the spirit which was in Christ, who was accursed for men. It is plain, therefore, that Moses was anticipating, both in judgment and in intercession. Though he knew it not, he was foreshadowing both the shame and glory of Calvary’s cross.

Exodus 33:7-11.

7. Now Moses used to take the tent and to pitch it without the camp, afar off from the camp; and he called it, The tent of meeting. And it came to pass, that every one that sought Jehovah went out unto the tent of meeting, which was without the camp. 8. And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the Tent, that all the people rose up, and stood, every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the Tent. 9. And it came to pass, when Moses entered into the Tent, the pillar of cloud descended, and stood at the door of the Tent: and Jehovah spake with Moses. 10. And all the people saw the pillar of cloud stand at the door of the Tent: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man at his tent door. 11. And Jehovah spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his minister Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the Tent.

A great preacher has said: “Although flesh and blood cannot enter into heaven, heaven can enter into flesh and blood.” It began to be so with Moses. His going into the mount was not entering into heaven, but it was going into a place where heaven entered into him. For Moses’ ascension into the mount meant

entering into the presence of God, and, as God met and communed with him, heaven came and possessed him. Thus it was, that those mountain top times were wonderful experiences to Moses, and also to God. For Heart met with heart up there, the larger with the smaller, to the joy of each. And now, this experience of communion is brought lower down, from the mountain top to the desert sands. For the tabernacle has been pitched, and the ark is in its place, and Moses can enter into the holy place to worship Jehovah as the Life, the Light, and the infinitely Sweet and Fragrant One. So it is, as Moses found God higher up, he now finds him lower down, a gracious, loving and communing Lord: "And Jehovah spake with Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." And do you ask what he said? Moses does not say. Nor does Jehovah say. And wherefore? Ah, love has secrets which it never betrays. Be this your only anxiety, therefore, to go, in your turn, into the holy place in order that Jehovah may also speak face to face with you. And believe me, you will hardly be able to tell in that hour whether it is that heaven has entered into you or that you have entered into heaven.

Exodus 33:12-17.

12. *And Moses said unto Jehovah, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found favor in my sight. 13. Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found favor in thy sight, show me now thy ways, that I may know thee, to the end that I may find favor in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people. 14. And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. 15. And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us*

not up hence. 16. For wherein now shall it be known that I have found favor in thy sight, I and thy people? is it not in that thou goest with us, so that we are separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth? 17. And Jehovah said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken; for thou hast found favor in my sight, and I know thee by name.

The man of God and prayer has the upward look. And the man of God and prayer has the forward look. Looking upward necessarily means looking forward. For when one gazes upon God, he sees big; and when one sees big he sees all around, including forward. It is thus that the man of God and prayer becomes a seer. And it is thus that God speaks, sooner or later, to such an one even as he spoke to John the seer: "Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must come to pass hereafter." And so it happened that Moses discerned that God, in spite of Israel's sin, meant to lead that people on and through. This was a great discovery. At the same time, it was startling. For it implied that Jehovah was expecting him to be patient and courageous like himself, and hence, not to give up or turn back, whatever might come to pass. And yet how could he be and do this? He knew now that he had been a failure, for his leadership had ended in the terrible climax of the golden calf and judgment. And what could he expect hereafter of a better kind? No, he could not go on—except under one condition. There must be another leader besides himself, and a better one. Hence his cry: "If thy Presence go not with me, carry us not up hence!" Ah, the seer had seen, not simply things, but also persons. He had seen Israel, and himself—and God! And the sight had put God on the throne, and all men, including himself, into the

dust. This was a seer, indeed; and such seers become the best leaders. For hear what God has to say to Moses: "My Presence shall go with thee; and I will give thee rest." From that time on, the Leader was to lead the leader. And, of course, with such an Over-leader, the under-leader, having no burdens, was to enjoy unbroken peace of mind and heart. Happy, happy man!

Exodus 33:18-23.

18. *And he said, Show me, I pray thee, thy glory.*
19. *And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and will proclaim the name of Jehovah before thee; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.* 20. *And he said, Thou canst not see my face; for man shall not see me and live.* 21. *And Jehovah said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon the rock: 22 and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand until I have passed by: 23 and I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back; but my face shall not be seen.*

A well-known writer once said: "All the way to heaven is heaven." And Moses was finding it so. He had indeed seen the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. This had not meant exemption from trials and sorrows. But in the midst of each darkness there had been a great light. The Presence had been with him. And, best of all, it was to be with him to the end. And yet soul-satisfaction begets soul-hunger. What he had experienced made him long for more. And just now he desired to see Jehovah's glory. He had seen something of it on the mount; but he longed to behold it as it was in heaven,

ay, and as it was in the very person of God. If he could only see this, he argued, he could go anywhere, do and bear anything, for Jehovah's sake. For he would understand then what the Presence was and would mean. And so the communer with God cries: "Show me, I pray thee, thy glory." But the Revealer makes what must have seemed to Moses a strange reply: "I will make all my goodness pass before thee." Now, Moses had not asked for goodness; he had asked for glory. Why then did Jehovah say "goodness"? The answer is written large in Scripture and experience. In God's economy, grace is first, and glory is last; and pilgrim saints must needs pass through the grace in order to reach the glory. As to Moses, while it was true that he was journeying to the celestial city, there was many a weary mile to be traversed before he should reach there. And what he needed, God gave, namely, goodness. And yet he was not to be left without something of the glory. At least, he might see God's back, provided he would hide within the rock. This Moses did. And in the shelter of that place, he learned that God's hinder parts are more glorious than the faces of a multitude of kings. And from that time on to the end, it was goodness, unending and ever increasing.

Exodus 34: 4-9.

4. And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up into mount Sinai, as Jehovah had commanded him, and took in his hand two tables of stone. 5. And Jehovah descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of Jehovah. 6. And Jehovah passed by before him, and proclaimed, Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth; 7

keeping lovingkindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation. 8. And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped. 9. And he said, If now I have found favor in thy sight, O Lord, let the Lord, I pray thee, go in the midst of us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance.

Because one has learned lessons, it does not follow that one has no lessons to learn. Life is a progression in knowledge. Peter had been long in the School of God, and yet he wrote, for himself as well as for others: "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." And all the godly men who have ever lived have sought to make what learning they have obtained the means of obtaining more learning. As one has well said: "The perseverance of the saints consists in their unlimited capacity of beginning over again." And thus Moses, in his time, went from knowledge to knowledge. He had learned much. But he now desires to learn more. Hence, you have him hewing out new tables of stone, going up into the mount, and getting back into the presence of God. He wants Jehovah to rewrite his ten sayings upon the tables, and to begin anew his instructions to him and to his people. And God takes him at his word, for he meets with him and begins at once to instruct him. But he commences his new lessons in a most unexpected manner. He does not begin by rewriting the commandments. This is what the Word says: "And Jehovah—proclaimed the name of Jehovah." In other words, God brought his servant, as it were, into his theological seminary, and

gave him as his theological task—for theology is the science of God—the study of himself. This, after all, was Moses' need. If he should not know Jehovah, he would be a weakling and valueless; if he should know him, he would be strong and do exploits. And as for ourselves, this is the need of all those who would serve God; and it is the lesson which God will insist upon teaching us. So then, you who know God, just begin over again in studying him. Yea, though you be a graduate of a theological seminary, offer yourself anew to God to be taken into his school and under his instruction. But as you do so, remember this, that not all of God's seminaries are made of brick and mortar, and that not a few of them will be found to be made up of trial, suffering and sorrow.

Exodus 34: 29-35.

29. *And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of the testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses knew not that the skin of his face shone by reason of his speaking with him. 30. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him. 31. And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses spake to them. 32. And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that Jehovah had spoken with him in mount Sinai. 33. And when Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. 34. But when Moses went in before Jehovah to speak with him, he took the veil off, until he came out; and he came out and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. 35. And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone; and Moses put the*

veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

The last sight which we had of Moses (34:8) was on the mount, his head bowed to the earth, and worshipping Jehovah. Now we see him descending the mount, bearing in his hands the tables of testimony, calling to Aaron and the rulers of the congregation, drawing near to the children of Israel, and giving to each and all the commandments which Jehovah had given to him. But a new and wonderful thing had taken place since Moses had last seen his people. His face, unknown to himself, had become glistening white. The worshipper had become like the One whom he had worshipped. He had made, by this time, so many journeys to the mount, he had dwelt so often and long in the midst of glory, he had looked so closely and longingly into the divine Face, that he had caught the likeness and now bore the image of the heavenly. A clergyman once said of another clergyman, that he was one "upon whose face the ten commandments were written." Thus it was with Moses. Only it was more than this. He was one upon whose face appeared the God of the ten commandments, in all his beauty and glory. And so he had to put a veil over his face, for the children of Israel could not bear the sight. Ah, communing with Jehovah has more than one result. It does produce thundering and lightning, and earthquakes and voices. But most and best of all, it reproduces God in the midst and sight of men. A missionary in China, who had communed much with God, was called, even by the heathen, "Mr. Glory-face." Oh, that there were whole families of Glory-faces; fathers, mothers, sons and daughters! This dark world needs such, beyond describing.

Exodus 40:9-16.

9. *And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein, and shalt hallow it, and all the furniture thereof: and it shall be holy.* 10. *And thou shalt anoint the altar of burnt offering, and all its vessels, and sanctify the altar: and the altar shall be most holy.* 11. *And thou shalt anoint the laver and its base, and sanctify it.* 12. *And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tent of meeting, and shalt wash them with water.* 13. *And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments; and thou shalt anoint him, and sanctify him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.* 14. *And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them: 15 and thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office: and their anointing shall be to them for an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations.* 16. *Thus did Moses: according to all that Jehovah commanded him, so did he.*

The end of the teaching was drawing near. God has made many revelations to Moses, some of a public and some of a private kind, some concerning outward and some concerning inward things. But the purpose of all had been to make it plain how God was to be worshipped by men, singly and collectively. And at last all seemed complete. It is probable, if Moses had been questioned, that he would have declared that nothing remained to be said or done. The tabernacle was set up, the formula of service was known, the priests were chosen and prepared; what more could God desire? It is true that Jehovah appeared to be waiting for something, for his glory had not yet descended from heaven to the tabernacle. But this could not mean that anything was lacking on earth! And yet something was lack-

ing, and unless it was supplied, there would be no acceptable worship or service. What was it? It was an anointing. The tabernacle and all its contents, the altar and all its vessels, the laver and its base, Aaron and his sons, all had to be touched and sanctified by the holy oil. What a lesson is this for the individual, and also for the "great congregation." Do we not catch in it the fore-sounding of the Master's voice? "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." There is no other way. To come into the holy Presence in the Spirit is true worship, and it means acceptance; to come apart from the Spirit is blasphemy, and it means rejection. And so Moses did according to all that Jehovah had commanded him.

Exodus 40:34-38.

34. Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle. 35. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of meeting, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle. 36. And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward, throughout all their journeys: 37 but if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. 38. For the cloud of Jehovah was upon the tabernacle by day, and there was fire therein by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

The end of the story, so far as Moses is concerned, has been reached. The servant and friend of God has learned his lessons and has put them into practice. The Spirit declares, (verse 16): "Thus did Moses; according to all that Jehovah commanded him; so did he;" "So Moses finished the work." He

had not been sinless. But he had been faithful; (Hebrews 3:2). Above all, he had been willing and anxious to be taught of God, and he had done his best in applying what he had learned to life. As a result, he had become a great worshipper of Jehovah, and had come to know him and be like him. Hence, Jehovah trusted him with confidence and secrets, with revelations of himself which he could not make to any other. As the Psalmist tells us: He made known his "doings unto the children of Israel;" but he made known his "ways unto Moses." And now, Jehovah brings to pass the consummation of his servant's prayer and faith and obedience: "Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle." And so great was the glory that even Moses was not able to enter into the place where he had been so often, but had to stand without till the glory-cloud had somewhat lifted and dimmed. Browning describes Atlas as "a giant standing vast in the sunset." So Moses appears to our eyes at this the sunset of his life. And—let us lay the lesson to heart—what made him vast was communion with Almighty God.

Joshua. Joshua 1:1-3; 7-9.

1. Now it came to pass after the death of Moses the servant of Jehovah, that Jehovah spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, 2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. 3. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, to you have I given it, as I spake unto Moses. 7. Only be strong and very courageous, to observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest have good success whither-

soever thou goest. 8. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate thereon day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. 9. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not affrighted, neither be thou dismayed: for Jehovah thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Moses is dead and lies buried on Nebo's mount. And now Joshua is suddenly exalted into a place of large responsibility, with an unknown land before him, and with mighty nations arrayed against him. But who is he that he may hope to lead Israel under such circumstances? To be sure, he has had not a little experience with Moses, having been his servant, having gone into the mount with him, having attended him in the ministry of the tabernacle, and having fought and won some great battles under his leadership. But it is one thing to be great when a greater one is at hand to lean upon, and it is quite another thing to be great when one stands alone. And this last was the present situation. So Joshua felt that he was in a difficult position; and the man who had learned to commune with Jehovah, stood silent, his heart failing him, and fear possessing him. But it was just then that the anticipating, communing Jehovah drew near: "As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee; be strong, and of good courage." And yet, how was he to be strong and of good courage? He was not like Moses. He was but a plain man, a man of military affairs, who must fight hard and win by means of his unsheathed sword! But once again the communing voice is heard: "Only be strong and very courageous to observe to do according to all the law;—turn not

from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest have good success whithersoever thou goest." After all, the way of one servant of God or of another is just the same. As it had been with Moses, so it was to be with Joshua—the eyes fixed upon Jehovah, the ears open to his commands, and the heart constantly choosing to obey! Moses had learned the lesson. And now it was Joshua's turn to learn.

Joshua 5:13-15.

13. And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? 14. And he said, Nay; but as prince of the host of Jehovah am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? 15. And the prince of Jehovah's host said unto Joshua, Put off thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.

Joshua had learned his lesson. Or, at least, he thought he had. He had heard the voice of Jehovah, and had chosen to cleave to him, had crossed the Jordan into the promised land, had dedicated himself and Israel to a separated life, and now stood ready to march against Jericho and all the nations beyond. It must have been what the Scotch would call a "bonnie sicht" to see the young soldier standing erect, with his face full turned toward his foes, and with the fire of courage and passion gleaming in his eyes. Here, if ever, was a prepared warrior, lacking nothing to make him a victor over all. And Joshua had caught the popular opinion concerning himself, and he would have humbly acknowledged that he was ready to fight

the battles of Jehovah to the last issue of success and glory. And lo, suddenly, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand! What could this mean? He knew not. But Joshua was no coward. In a moment he had given the stranger challenge: "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" Then came back an unexpected, a withering answer: "Nay, but as Prince of the host of Jehovah am I now come!" Poor Joshua! How little he had understood his heart, and his life's need! He was not so prepared for the conflict after all. And it was for this reason that the God who had withstood Jacob, now withstands him. And what a change is wrought in that short hour. The leader of Israel drops on bended knee before his Prince and worships him. Then, humbled, he breathes this prayer: "What saith my lord unto his servant?" The answer is short, but searching: "Put off thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy." Joshua is indeed a leader. But he is not the leader. Jehovah alone is this. As for Joshua he is beginning to learn, what every true spiritual leader must learn, that the place of victory is only to be found at Jehovah's feet.

Joshua 7: 6-13.

6. And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of Jehovah until the evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust upon their heads. 7. And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord Jehovah, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over the Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to cause us to perish? would that we had been content and dwelt beyond the Jordan! 8. Oh Lord, what shall I say, after that Israel hath turned their backs before their enemies! 9. For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear

of it, and will compass us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do for thy great name? 10. And Jehovah said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore art thou thus fallen upon thy face? 11. Israel hath sinned; yea, they have even transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: yea, they have even taken of the devoted thing; and have also stolen, and dissembled also; and they have even put it among their own stuff. 12. Therefore the children of Israel cannot stand before their enemies; they turn their backs before their enemies, because they are become accursed: I will not be with you any more, except ye destroy the devoted thing from among you. 13. Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow: for thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel. There is a devoted thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the devoted thing from among you.

If Joshua had wanted any evidence of his and his people's need of God, he would have found it in the experience which followed the taking of Jericho. That warfare had been accomplished with little difficulty, for the fight had been in the open. There had been the march, the blowing of the horns, the fall of the city, miraculous indeed, but all in sight and not difficult to be understood. But now, the enemy was within the camp, unseen, unknown, subtle, weakening, destroying. All that could be seen and known was the sad fact that the victorious and supposedly invincible army had lost a battle, had turned and fled, and were confused and overwhelmed. This was hard on the army, and harder still on its over-confident leader. He had staked his all on God, had followed his Prince to Jericho, had sent his warriors confidently forward against the men of Ai, and then had

seen his banners laid low in the dust in a tragic rout and flight. What could it all mean? And so Joshua fell on his face before Jehovah, complaining and beseeching. The brave leader had come to an end of himself sooner than he had expected. God was the only One, who could help him out, and his appeal was to him. And God did help him out, in an instant: "Get thee up; wherefore art thou thus fallen upon thy face? Israel hath sinned." There was an eye which had seen what Joshua's eyes had not seen, and hence, there was a leader who knew exactly what to do. Lord Bacon has a saying that "all colors agree in the dark." Joshua had been in the dark, and thus he had not discerned. But with God there is no dark, for the dark and light are both alike to him. Hence, he saw, and understood. And hence also, he knew how to turn defeat into victory. And this he did, most gloriously.

Joshua 8: 30-34.

30. Then Joshua built an altar unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, in mount Ebal, 31 as Moses the servant of Jehovah commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of unhewn stones, upon which no man had lifted up any iron: and they offered thereon burnt-offerings. unto Jehovah, and sacrificed peace-offerings. 32. And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote, in the presence of the children of Israel. 33. And all Israel, and their elders and officers, and their judges, stood on this side of the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, that bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, as well the sojourner as the home-born; half of them in front of mount Gerizim, and half of them in front of mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of Jehovah had commanded at the first, that they should bless the

people of Israel. 34. And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the book of the law.

Joshua had been humiliated before God and Israel. His "ever victorious army." had not proved itself invincible, and he, its leader, had been put to shame. Not that Jehovah had proved to be an unforgiving God, for he had opened the way to cleansing and restoration, and there had followed a new fight and victory. Nevertheless, it had been a hard experience, and the process of recovery had been a bitter one, even through blood. The man who had stood over against Jericho, with sword unsheathed, with gleaming eye, and with a challenge upon his lips, did not feel so confident as he had done, either of his people or of himself. The spirit of independence was giving way to a spirit of dependence, for a great sense of need was springing up in his heart. Besides, he was very grateful that God had not deserted him in that last evil hour, and that he had graciously wrested victory out of defeat. What better could he do, therefore, than to build an altar to Jehovah, and worship him? And this he did. And then he did something besides. God had told him that his personal strength was to be found in cleaving with all his heart to Moses' law; and what was good for him was good for his people. Hence, he wrote out the whole law on stone and read it forth to the assembly of Israel, including the women and children. Abraham Lincoln, during the Civil War, once said: "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for the day." Joshua, in somewhat similar circumstances, was anticipating the great President's experience. He was making the discovery that even the

greatest of men, without God, are nothing but dismal failures. Hence, God's Word, and worship and prayer were meaning more and more to him.

Joshua 9:3-6; 14-16.

3. But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai, 4 they also did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine-skins, old and rent and bound up, 5 and old and patched shoes upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and was become mouldy. 6. And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We are come from a far country: now therefore make ye a covenant with us 14. And the men took of their provision, and asked not counsel at the mouth of Jehovah. 15. And Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation swore unto them. 16. And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they were their neighbors, and that they dwelt among them.

There are certain men whom Satan can not defeat so long as he appears before them, as it were, in hoofs and horns. But some of these same men will go down before his attack instantly if their foe changes his dress and appears as an angel of light. Such men need to take heed to Mrs. Browning's saying. "The Devil is never so much of a devil as when he is a gentleman." For a change of dress changes no man, and least of all Satan. Now this truth suddenly became realized in Joshua's life, much to his sorrow and shame. Joshua had led his people fairly well up to this point. To be sure he had suffered defeat before

the men of Ai. But he had taken Jericho, had dealt drastically with Achau, and had finally defeated those who had defeated him. And now all at once, he found himself utterly deceived and discomfited by a trick which a private in the ranks, not to speak of the general of the army, ought to have discerned. The truth of the matter is, Joshua, as has happened with many a successful leader, had lost his balance. Those victories had thrown him off guard, and he had come to the conclusion that no one was quite so wise as himself. So, when these men with old sacks upon their asses, with wine-skins, old and rent, with old shoes and old garments appeared upon the scene, the great Joshua said: "These be men from a very far country." But at the end of three days, he heard that they were his near neighbors! And the whole story comes out in its boldness and badness, by the simple word which the Spirit adds: "The men took of their provision, and asked not counsel at the mouth of Jehovah." Oh, Joshua—who ever you may be—there is not a moment of time, there is not a circumstance of life, when you can afford to leave the feet of Jehovah! There, there only, is wisdom, safety and peace!

Joshua 10:12-14.

12. Then spake Joshua to Jehovah in the day when Jehovah delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel; and he said in the sight of Israel,

Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon;

And thou, Moon, in the valley of Aijalon.

13. And the sun stood still, and the moon stcyed,

Until the nation had avenged themselves of their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jashar? And the sun stayed in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. 14. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that Je-

Jehovah hearkened unto the voice of a man: for Jehovah fought for Israel.

One of the most marvellous things in God's dealings with men is the quick recovery which he grants to them after a period of declension, where their hearts are at all perfect toward him. The scripture record is full of such instances—Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon being witnesses to the same. There are two reasons for this: first, God is a God of grace and power; and second, there is such a thing among men as learning by experience. So it was now with Joshua. He had had a hard and sad time of it. However, it had not been in vain. More and more, he had bent before Jehovah, more and more, he had come to depend upon him. Thus like many another saint, he had learned how to snatch gain out of loss, success out of failure. And so it was, as conflicts multiplied, that defeats decreased and victories increased. And just at this time a supreme test was made of courage and faith. For five great kings and armies had allied themselves against him and were ready to "look him in the face," as the old saying is, that is, were ready to give him battle and to smite him hip and thigh. But the man who had learned, went forth with never a fear. And the man who could trust turned the tide of battles, and himself did the hewing and hacking. And then the valiant warrior did what no other warrior has ever since done; he bade the sun and the moon to stay their courses till Israel had avenged themselves of all their enemies. And his bold prayer was heard and answered. Jehovah held the sun from going down, and fought for his servant that day as he had never fought for man before. So it is well worth while to repent of a back-sliding and to get right with God. Such men, after all, often make the best fighters for God.

Joshua 11:15-20.

15. *As Jehovah commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua; and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that Jehovah commanded Moses.* 16. *So Joshua took all that land, the hill-country, and all the South, and all the land of Goshen, and the lowland, and the Arabah, and the hill-country of Israel, and the low-land of the same;* 17 *from mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir, even unto Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon under mount Hermon: and all their kings he took, and smote them, and put them to death.* 18. *Joshua made war a long time with all those kings.* 19. *There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: they took all in battle.* 20. *For it was of Jehovah to harden their hearts, to come against Israel in battle, that he might utterly destroy them, that they might have no favor, but that he might destroy them, as Jehovah commanded Moses.*

This is God's obituary of his servant Joshua. Joshua was not yet dead, but the Spirit in the record anticipates the close of his life and sums up his virtues. And it is a great record of a great man. Remember, it is God who makes it, and then think upon this fact, that he declares that this faithful servant of his "left nothing undone of all that God commanded Moses." How many of us would like to have God write our life histories, if he were to be as frank as he is here? It is a happy thing for us that men fulfill that office for us, and, in doing so, that there is a gracious conspiracy among them to put in the good and to leave out the bad. But Joshua was a man of another kind, whose life bore the search-light of God's truth and statement. He had had his failures—verse 19 speaks of the chief of these—but his successes were

in excess. And it was all because Joshua had lived in the presence of a communing God and had himself communed with God. The phrase at the beginning of the obituary explains everything: "As Jehovah commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua: and so did Joshua." That is, Joshua was a Knight of the Open Ear and Heart, listening to the commands which Jehovah gave, and obeying them at once and to the full. And hence all that follows—victory upon victory! Oh, that there might be a whole army of such knights, rank upon rank, and all marching breast forward to the foe! Then the shout of victory would again be heard, and then this record of divine approbation would be oft repeated.

Israel. Judges 1:1-4.

1. And it came to pass after the death of Joshua, that the children of Israel asked of Jehovah, saying, Who shall go up for us first against the Canaanites, to fight against them? 2. And Jehovah said, Judah shall go up: behold, I have delivered the land into his hand. 3. And Judah said unto Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I likewise will go with thee unto thy lot. So Simeon went with him. 4. And Judah went up; and Jehovah delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand: and they smote of them in Bezek ten thousand men.

There is no loss in any community to compare with that of a great and good man. And the loss of Joshua was second only to that of Moses. These were days when God was ruling and guiding through leaders, and hence, the death of a leader was calamitous. But God was not dead. He had given Moses to understand that he was the living God, and both Moses and Joshua had believed, and had acted upon

this great fact. And now God stood ready to prove, in spite of the deaths of his servants, that he was still the Living One, and that he would be with any and all who would put their trust in him. So when the children of Israel, bereft of Joshua, turned to Jehovah for direction in time of threatened battle, they found that in the word of a King there is power. Hence, it was not long before two other great nations were subdued before Israel, and soon, the shout of victory was once more heard throughout the camp. A Chinese tablet on a government college in the Swatow district reads: "If you are planning for ten years, plant trees; if you are planning for a hundred years, plant men." Moses and Joshua had planned, as it were, for a hundred years, and hence they had left behind them a race of men. For as these leaders had turned in every crisis to Jehovah, their followers now did the same, with like blessed results of guidance and power. Happy people to have such leaders! And happy leaders to have such a people! And, above all, happy leaders and people to have such a God as Jehovah!

Judges 6:7-10.

7. And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah because of Midian, 8 that Jehovah sent a prophet unto the children of Israel: and he said unto them, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage; 9 and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drove them out from before you, and gave you their land; 10 and I said unto you, I am Jehovah your God; ye shall not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell. But ye have not hearkened unto my voice.

There was need of leaders in these days. Israel was safely in the land, and most of their enemies had been subdued. But new foes were springing up and old foes were reviving. This, however, was a small matter as compared with another difficulty. The people of Israel had begun to decline in spiritual fidelity; (6:11). In the face of all that God had said and done, in spite of full remembrance of the exhortations and warnings of Moses and Joshua, they were playing fast and loose with their precious heritage of truth. Thus power had vanished away. And immediately, there follows the pitiable spectacle of this once victorious nation frightened beyond measure at the sight of the frowning faces of the Midianites, and hiding for refuge in the caves and dens of the mountains; (6:2). How quickly loss of communion with God destroys the strength of a man. In such circumstances, a giant becomes a dwarf, in a moment of time. And yet Israel had the child's heart within, and, as a child when frightened will cry for father or mother, so this people cried out for Jehovah. Then God, waiting and listening for such a cry, sent a prophet, who declared what the matter was, rehearsing his glorious acts and their shameful forgetfulness and sin. This brought Israel into the dust—as the following passages show—and gave God the opportunity to raise up the leader they needed. It is all a weary story so far as man is concerned. But how wonderful it is, from God's standpoint! There seems to be no end to Jehovah's love and patience. But it would have been better for Israel not to have tried that love and patience so much. And, my brother;—ah, you know what the moral of that conclusion is, do you not?

Gideon. Judges 6:11-18.

11. And the angel of Jehovah came, and sat under the oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto

Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine-press, to hide it from the Midianites. 12. And the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him, and said unto him, Jehovah is with thee, thou mighty man of valor. 13. And Gideon said unto him, Oh, my lord, if Jehovah is with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where are all his wondrous works which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not Jehovah bring us up from Egypt? but now Jehovah hath cast us off, and delivered us into the hand of Midian. 14. And Jehovah looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and save Israel from the hand of Midian: have not I sent thee? 15. And he said unto him, Oh, Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is the poorest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. 16. And Jehovah said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man. 17. And he said unto him, If now I have found favor in thy sight, then show me a sign that it is thou that talkest with me. 18. Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and lay it before thee.. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again.

However bad the times are, God never seems to lack a prepared leader for his use. Whether it is that evil times produce good leaders, or that God develops good leaders in view of evil times, is immaterial. The blessed fact is, that with the evil comes the man, and that the man is of the kind who is able in some measure to counteract the evil. And what would have become of this sinful world if it had not been so?

“For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,
Both for themselves and those that call them
friends?”

Yes, the pathetic thing of life is, that men quickly turn themselves into "sheep and goats" by ceasing to pray, particularly if there be not in their midst one to teach them to do so. It is thus that God comes on the scene, in days of deepest need, with a Man. And this is what took place now. Israel was terribly at fault, and Midian was God's scourge of judgment because of sin. Nevertheless, Israel was God's people, and they could not cry out in pain without their cry piercing his heart. So the angel of Jehovah came from heaven to earth and drew near to Gideon, who was beating out wheat in a winepress. All the time, his eye had been upon that humble but devoted servant of his, and, when the moment of need came, he knew him and where to find him: "And Jehovah looked upon him and said, Go in this thy might, and save Israel from the hand of Midian. Have not I sent thee?" And finally Gideon accepted the commission and became the Man for the Hour. From that moment, there was one in Israel's midst who knew God and could do exploits; and hence, the nation could now be saved.

Judges 6:19-24.

19. *And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of meal: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him under the oak, and presented it. 20. And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so. 21. Then the angel of Jehovah put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there went up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and the angel of Jehovah departed out of his sight. 22. And Gideon saw that he was the angel of*

Jehovah; and Gideon said, Alas, O Lord Jehovah! forasmuch as I have seen the angel of Jehovah face to face. 23. And Jehovah said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die. 24. Then Gideon built an altar there unto Jehovah, and called it Jehovah-shalom: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

Gideon was a brave man; but he needed encouragement. Indeed, there are no brave men who are above needing an uplift of this sort. For what we call bravery, after all, is a comparative thing, and all men are subject to fear, if the danger be great enough. This is particularly true when men draw near to the border line which lies between this life and the other, where foes and forces are hidden and unseen. And this was just the case with Gideon. He had had some pretty close dealings with the angel of the Lord, and an awe had fallen upon his soul. And now this same angel—it was Jesus—was telling him to go up against a mighty enemy on no better assurance of protection than that an unseen and unfelt One was to be with him. Who will blame him then for shrinking back in fear? “Oh Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold my family is the poorest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house;” (6:15). And so he craves one token. If God will give it to him, he will, fear or no fear, go forth in Jehovah’s name. He must know that it is God himself who speaks with him and who sends him. And what a token it is which Jehovah gives to him! When Gideon had laid his offering at the angel’s feet on the rock upon which he stood, that wondrous Being touched it with his staff and fire came out of the rock. Fire out of a rock? Yes, out of a hard, non-igniting, non-combustible rock! This was enough for Gideon. The courage he needed had come. He would follow anywhere a God who

could work like this. And then the man of God bowed and worshipped. He built an altar to Jehovah, and he called it, Jehovah-shalom, which means, Jehovah-peace!

Judges 6:36-40.

36. And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast spoken, 37 behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the threshing-floor; if there be dew on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the ground, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast spoken. 38. And it was so; for he rose up early on the morrow, and pressed the fleece together, and wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water. 39. And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be kindled against me, and I will speak but this once: let me make trial, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. 40. And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

Gideon did a particularly brave thing after that. At the commandment of the Lord, he went to the grove where the altar of Baal was, cut down the wood, overthrew the altar, and right then and there offered a burnt offering to Jehovah; (6:25-27). To be sure, because he could not do the deed by day, he did it under cover of the night. But he knew that the story would out as surely as the morning would dawn, and that eyes would soon be turned in his direction. Nevertheless, he did what God told him to do, leaving the consequences with him. And the consequences came quickly enough, and of a sort which would have made the stoutest heart quail. "Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the chil-

dren of the east assembled themselves together; and they passed over and encamped in the valley of Jezreel." Recent discoveries have explained what great and terrible nations these were; and here they are combining against one man. What is Gideon to do? He decides upon this; he will commune with Jehovah, and ask fresh evidence of his presence and power. Hence, the wet and dry fleece. And then, new courage and new action. Do you wonder that it says that the Spirit of Jehovah clothed himself with Gideon; (6:34)? He was indeed a man after God's own heart, for he was one who feared no foe, provided Jehovah was with him. On the tomb of Lord Lawrence in Westminster Abbey are engraven simply his name and the date of his death. And then there follow these words: "He feared man so little because he feared God so much!" This was Gideon's quality. And it is the quality of all men who are truly brave in fighting the battles of the Lord.

Israel. Judges 10:9-14.

9. *And the children of Ammon passed over the Jordan to fight also against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim; so that Israel was sore distressed.* 10. *And the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah, saying, We have sinned against thee, even because we have forsaken our God, and have served the Baalim.* 11. *And Jehovah said unto the children of Israel, Did not I save you from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines? 12. The Sidonians, also, and the Amalekites, and the Maonites, did oppress you; and ye cried unto me, and I saved you out of their hand.* 13. *Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will save you no more.* 14. *Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them save you in the time of your distress.*

Gideon went to his rest at last, his warfare accomplished, his battles fought and won. But the enemies of Israel did not die. Indeed, such enemies have always a way of living on, which is very distressing. If they only would die, life would be easier for some of us. But here they are again, as vital, as forceful as ever in the past. And so Israel had to begin all over again, just as if no questions of contest and conquest had ever been settled. And the worst of the matter was, sin had taken hold of the nation once more, and the inevitable weakness had followed. Milner, in his Church History, says that great reformations seldom seem to last in their purity more than thirty years. However this may be, Israel in this single generation had lost almost all that under Gideon it had gained. And yet something was left. They had at least learned that there is such a relationship between sin and judgment as there is between cause and effect. And hence, when judgment came, they cried out to Jehovah: "We have sinned against thee, even because we have forsaken our God, and have served the Baalim." And now note, backsliding friend, what Jehovah answered: "Wherefore I will save you no more." Let us make no mistake. God hates sin. And he hates it in the man of God as much as he hates it in any one else. So we sin at our peril. If we persist in grieving God in face of our enemies, some day, even though we may cry to him, he will deliver us over to our enemies.

Judges 10: 15-18.

15. And the children of Israel said unto Jehovah, We have sinned: do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; only deliver us, we pray thee, this day. 16. And they put away the foreign gods from among them, and served Jehovah; and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel. 17. Then the chil-

dren of Ammon were gathered together, and encamped in Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled themselves together, and encamped in Mizpah. 18. And the people, the princes of Gilead, said one to another, What man is he that will begin to fight against the children of Ammon? he shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.

It is undoubtedly true that God hates sin. But it is never true that he hates the sinner. He hated sin enough to pour upon that One who was made sin for us his infinite wrath. But he loved the sinner enough to make that wrath-bearing an infinite and eternal redemption for men. Moreover, when men repent of sin and confess it openly, God is ever ready to devise a way to restore his banished to himself. The Chinese translation of "God is love" is this: "The heart of God assuredly is love." And it certainly is. It is for this reason, that as often as you have man repenting of the evil he has done, you have God repenting of the evil he has purposed doing. In such a case, heart meets Heart, and love meets Love, and the prodigal son finds himself in the arms of a pitying and forgiving Father. And thus it was with Israel on this occasion. The people finally realize and confess the heinousness of their guilt, and like light flashing from the sun through a rift in stormy clouds, God sends to them his love and benediction. There is an infinitude of tenderness in the words which describe Jehovah's feelings: "And his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel." Another than he would have let them suffer their just deserts. But the God whose heart assuredly is love hastens to forgive and restore. How good it was for Israel that they had as their Savior such an One as Jehovah! And how good it is for us that this Jehovah is also our Savior! Seneca said of the Romans: "None of

us has strength to rise; oh, that some one would stretch out a hand!" Thank God, that word, which expressed the inarticulate cry of the world, has been answered! Some one has stretched out his hand—and that some one is Jehovah, Christ!

Jephthah. Judges 11:30-35.

30. *And Jephthah, vowed a vow unto Jehovah, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver the children of Ammon into my hand, 31 then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth from the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, it shall be Jehovah's and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering. 32. So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; and Jehovah delivered them into his hand. 33. And he smote them from Aroer until thou come to Minnith, even twenty cities, and unto Abel-cheramim, with a very great slaughter. So the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel. 34. And Jephthah came to Mizpah unto his house; and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she was his only child; besides her he had neither son nor daughter. 35. And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me; for I have opened my mouth unto Jehovah, and I cannot go back.*

Jephthah was a great man in Israel. But, as often happens in the case of great men, he made a fatal mistake. It is an open question whether he put his daughter to death. Indeed, there is good reason to believe that he did not, but rather that he dedicated her to a life of perpetual virginity. Nevertheless, he made a vow, in a time of prayer, in a rash spirit,

without due consideration of what it might involve. There is terrible danger of going beyond the leading of the Spirit in times of fervency, especially with intense souls. At such times, one needs to keep oneself well in hand lest overmuch feeling should lead to overmuch devotion. There is such a thing as the restraint as well as the constraint of the Spirit, and saints should seek for the one as well as for the other. For the purpose of the Spirit is always to keep us well within the will of God, and this means spiritual sanity and balance of the highest order. Besides this, Jephthah made a second fatal mistake in keeping his rash vow. The ideal thing is not to vow rashly. But if one has made such a mistake, it is clear that it only adds wrong to wrong to keep the vow thus made. The course to take, in such a case, is to confess the sin of the vow, and then to break the promise as speedily as possible. Herod made the terrible mistake of promising to his dancing girl to grant any request which she might make, (Matthew 14:6-10), and he only added sin to sin when he committed murder to fulfill his vow. To keep one's word in such a case is simply the expression of a godless man's sense of honor. The man of God, however, is to be governed by other and higher principles.

Manoah. Judges 13:8-11; 17-19.

8. Then Manoah entreated Jehovah, and said, Oh, Lord, I pray thee, let the man of God whom thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born. 9. And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband was not with her. 10. And the woman made haste, and ran, and told her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath ap-

peared unto me, that came unto me the other day. 11. And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I am. 17. And Manoah said unto the angel of Jehovah, What is thy name, that, when thy words come to pass, we may do thee honor? 18. And the angel of Jehovah said unto him, Wherefore asketh thou after my name, seeing it is wonderful? 19. So Manoah took the kid with the meal-offering, and offered it upon the rock unto Jehovah: and the angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on.

In all these days the spiritual life of Israel flows back and forth as waves do upon the seashore. The people are at one time good and at another time bad. But alas! the tide, spiritually speaking, seemed more often out than in. For the decline of religious conviction and practice was frequent and prolonged. As often as God sent a prophet into the midst of the people, there was a partial and temporary recovery. But, let the prophet die, and his message was soon forgotten. Thus it had been up to the present; and just now, religion was at a low ebb. Then came God's offer of a new life and of another deliverance. Jehovah promised the wife of Manoah that she should bear a son, and that he should save Israel. This set Manoah praying about the promised child, as to how he should be brought up. And there followed this a reappearing of the Angel, and a repetition of his instructions. At this, Manoah's heart was stirred; he sought to detain the Angel, he enquired as to his name, and he offered him the sacrifice of a kid. But all Manoah had for an answer was this, the hearing that his name was Wondrous, and the sight of his doing wondrously. And yet this was enough. Of all the lessons the tried and discouraged child of God

needs to learn, especially in times of spiritual declension, this is the chief, that God is still the Wonderful One and that he is able to do wonderful things. Such a revelation heartens the servant of God, reminding him that the times are not beyond God's reach and control, and that he can be counted upon to do the miraculous. And this is the effect that the revelation had upon Manoah and his wife. It brought and left them, where all true children of God in time of trouble should be, on their faces before Jehovah, worshipping him, and counting upon him to do the thing, whatever it might be, that the hour and need demanded.

Samson. Judges 16:28-31.

28. And Samson called unto Jehovah, and said, O Lord Jehovah, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. 29. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house rested, and leaned upon them, the one with his right hand, and the other with his left. 30. And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead that he slew at his death were more than they that he slew in his life. 31. Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the burying-place of Manoah his father. And he judged Israel twenty years.

The child whom God gave to Manoah and his wife was Samson. From the beginning, he was dedicated to holy service, and from the beginning Jehovah blessed him, (13:24). Thus the time came when the

Spirit of Jehovah began to move him, and to use him in delivering Israel; (13:25). And so long as this relationship existed between the Spirit and Samson, all went well. The strong man remained strong, and he so increased in strength that he became a super-man, counting otherwise impossible things—such as the carrying away of the great gates of Gaza—as but trifles. The day came, however, when the Spirit-filled man began to live in the flesh and for the flesh, (16:1, 4), and from that hour the strong man became a weakling, and the super-man was reduced to the level of a beast. The great teacher Confucius said: “He who sins against God, finds no place for prayer.” So it was now. Samson, lying in the lap of Delilah, could tell her everything; but he could tell God nothing. And it was for this reason that his strength went from him and he became as any other man. But through seven times heated furnace fires, he was brought back to God. Once more, therefore, he learned to pray: “And Samson called unto Jehovah, and said, ‘O Lord Jehovah, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes!’ ” It was not much of a prayer. But God answered it, and wrought with his servant that day, even unto judgment and death. And before we condemn Samson overmuch, let us remember that others besides him have lived after the flesh and have prayed strange prayers, and in days of a good deal more light and knowledge than those of this long-ago prophet and judge. And also let us remember this; if Jehovah was so quick to answer blinded, captive, generally mixed-up Samson, how much more ready will he be to answer us.

Hannah. I Samuel 1:10-17.

10. *And she (Hannah) was in bitterness of soul,*

and prayed unto Jehovah, and wept sore. 11. And she vowed a vow, and said, O Jehovah of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thy handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thy handmaid, but wilt give unto thy handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto Jehovah all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head. 12. And it came to pass, as she continued praying before Jehovah, that Eli marked her mouth. 13. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. 14. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. 15. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I poured out my soul before Jehovah. 16. Count not thy handmaid for a wicked woman; for out of the abundance of my complaint and my provocation have I spoken hitherto. 17. Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace; and the God of Israel grant thy petition that thou hast asked of him.

Charles Kingsley once said: "There are two kinds of freedom; the false, where a man is free to do what he likes, the true, where a man is free to do what he ought." It was this former freedom which had come to characterize the nation of Israel. The way the Spirit puts it is this: "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes;" (Judges 21:25). In other words, it was a time when there was no recognized law in the land, temporal or spiritual, each man being a law unto himself. There can be but one end to such a condition of things as this, whether in one land or another, whether in one time or another, namely, anarchy. If men will have no common law then they

will have no common peace. So democracy had run riot in Israel, and the nation was distracted. However, there was a King on heaven's throne, and his eyes beheld and his heart pitied the children of men. Moreover, there were a few earnest souls on earth, and they longed with unutterable longing for nobler times and ways. Hence, you have the tabernacle courts at Shiloh and the divine Presence there. And hence, you have a few worshippers seeking that Presence with ardent devotion. And hence, you have, in process of time, a childless wife there, murmuring out her heart sorrow before God. And hence finally, you have divine compassion and empowering, and then a son, Samuel, who was destined to be one of the greatest of the prophets in the restoring of Israel to the kingship and law of Jehovah. How simple the story is in its outward aspect. But how deep it is in its inward aspect. The seen—a tabernacle, a woman, a prayer! The unseen—the listening Jehovah, the working Spirit, a man, and a nation spiritually revived and energized! And thus it always is; the commonplace invading, by prayer and faith, the uncommonplace, and then the uncommonplace pervading the commonplace.

I Samuel 2:1, 2; 5-8.

1. *And Hannah prayed, and said:
My heart exulteth in Jehovah;
My horn is exalted in Jehovah;
My mouth is enlarged over mine enemies;
Because I rejoice in thy salvation.*
2. *There is none holy as Jehovah;
For there is none besides thee,
Neither is there any rock like our God.*
5. *They that were full have hired out themselves
for bread;
And they that were hungry have ceased to hunger:*

*Yea, the barren hath borne seven;
 And she that hath many children languisheth.
 6. Jehovah killeth, and maketh alive:
 He bringeth down to Sheol, and bringeth up.
 7. Jehovah maketh poor, and maketh rich:
 He bringeth low, he also lifteth up.
 8. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust,
 He lifteth up the needy from the dunghill,
 To make them sit with princes,
 And inherit the throne of glory:
 For the pillars of the earth are Jehovah's,
 And he hath set the world upon them.*

Hannah had found praying so effectual that she broke out into praise. And her song became a rhapsody. Fervent, passionate, the words flow out of heart and lip in an uncontrollable tide of adoration. She knew nothing about our well-known words: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning." But the spirit of their thought was hers, for she had asked for a child from him who alone could give life, and there her loved babe lay cradled in her arms! A gruff preacher once said: "When you get anything good, don't look round, look up!" And so Hannah, who had gotten something very good, looked up. And looking up, she praised. Moreover, her praise was of a very practical kind. She evidently argued, praise is not only of the lips, it is also of the hands. Hence, she spoke; and hence also, she gave. "For this child I prayed: and Jehovah hath given me my petition which I asked of him; therefore also I have granted him to Jehovah; as long as he liveth he is granted to Jehovah;" (1: 27, 28). How touched Jehovah must have been! This is the kind of praise that is indeed sweet to

him; our receiving from him, in order that we may give to him. Father, mother, have you ever praised the Father of Lights like this?

Samuel. I Samuel 3:7-11.

7. Now Samuel did not yet know Jehovah, neither was the word of Jehovah yet revealed unto him. 8. And Jehovah called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And Eli perceived that Jehovah had called the child. 9. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Jehovah; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. 10. And Jehovah came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel said, Speak; for thy servant heareth. 11. And Jehovah said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.

God seems to delight in little children. He appears to take pleasure in them whether they be those of tender years or those of older years with tender hearts. And so it was here that he passed by the older Eli and spoke to the younger Samuel. Now as a matter of fact, Eli was better informed about God than was Samuel, for Eli was an old man and was the high priest, while Samuel was but a lad and had not yet received any revelations from Jehovah; (verse 7). But there was a great difference between the two, and, from God's standpoint, it was in Samuel's favor. Eli, with all his knowledge, had lost the child's instinct of obedience, (3:12-14); while Samuel, ignorant as he was, had that instinct highly developed; (3:10). Thus Jehovah picked out Samuel as the one who should hear his message and do his will.

And it is a great principle this, in the divine ordering. It is always the one, whether older or younger, who has the mind to obey who will get the visions and hear the voices. To such, God will surely appear and speak. So the best thing any one can do is to obey. And the best way to obey is to be a child. For it is when one is little and dependent and helpless that one will be most ready to cry out: "Speak, Jehovah, for thy servant heareth." Even the Chinese master, Confucius, saw this truth, for he said: "The great man is he who does not lose his child's heart." And the Master of all, taking a little child in his arms, declared: "He that is least among you all, the same is great." Therefore, great man, if you want God to speak to you, to use you, and thus to exalt you, go back to where you were at the beginning and become again a little child.

I Samuel 7:3-9.

3. And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto Jehovah with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ash-taroath from among you, and direct your hearts unto Jehovah, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. 4. Then the children of Israel did put away the Baalim and the Ash-taroath, and served Jehovah only. 5. And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray for you unto Jehovah. 6. And they gathered together to Mizpah, and drew water, and poured it out before Jehovah, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against Jehovah. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah. 7. And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Phil-

istines. 8. And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto Jehovah our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. 9. And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt-offering unto Jehovah: and Samuel cried unto Jehovah for Israel: and Jehovah answered him.

There are times in the history of nations when a single man is of more value than a multitude of men. This is because quality is more valuable than quantity, and because individual character is more effective than numerical force. Indeed, national life, good or bad, usually reduces itself to the question of a man. Given the right man at the head, and you have a good nation. Given a wrong man at the head, and you have a bad nation. This is particularly true in the spiritual realm. It is an old and true saying: "Like priest like people;" and it is the antithesis of all true relationship when conditions are such that this saying has to be reversed and made to read: "Like people like priest;" (Hosea 4:9). This shows the importance of praying for good leaders, civil and spiritual. Indeed, no prayer is more important than this. Paul wrote: "I exhort therefore, *first of all*, that supplications, prayer, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men; for kings and all that are in high place." Now, these principles were as much in force in the old days as they are now. And, possibly, they had particular place and power in Israel's day. And so it was, that Samuel, in his time, was one who stood between the Living and the dead. He was the one great factor of life and righteousness between God and Israel. Without his presence, influence, prayers and exhortations, Israel must perish. With these, Israel might live. It was a heavy responsibility for Samuel to bear. But it was in God's

economy, and if Samuel would be a prophet-judge there was no escape. And Samuel, by the grace of God, rose to his task and fulfilled his ministry. Thus we see the nation brought back to God, cleansed, unified, vitalized, empowered. But you say, this was a long way back, and in peculiar times. Let me tell you that it is no fanaticism to believe that Mr. Moody did more for the true national life of America in his day than all of the politicians of his time, and that it is perfect mental and spiritual sanity to hold that God is still blessing this land for his sake. Who then, will be a man like this, standing in our day between the Living and the dead?

Saul. I Samuel 28:11-16.

11. Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. 12. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice; and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul. 13. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what seest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I see a god coming up out of the earth. 14. And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a robe. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground, and did obeisance. 15. And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do. 16. And Samuel said, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing Jehovah is departed from thee, and is become thine adversary?

Samuel had fulfilled his mission. He had by his prayers and faith restored God to Israel and Israel to God. And then, he had fallen on sleep and had been gathered to his fathers, his soul going to the great under world, called Sheol. But evil days had come on, even before Samuel had died. For king Saul had departed from God, and the people had followed him. As for Samuel, it made little difference now that he no longer had Saul as his companion, for he was with the blessed dead and at rest. But as for Saul, he knew not what to do without Samuel, for he was greatly disquieted because of his enemies. And worst of all, God had departed from him. So the man who had once prayed had only one thought: he would not repent and turn back to God in prayer and faith, but he must see his old-time friend, Samuel, by fair means or foul. And it meant by foul means, for the witch of Endor was the only one whom he knew, apart from God, who could bring the prophet up from death's dark domain. And thus we have the pitiable spectacle of the great king, disguising himself and slinking off in the dead of night to the witch, that he might ask her to try her uncanny incantations in bringing up his friend. The plan worked. But Saul got little comfort out of it. For the dead Samuel was as much on God's side as the living Samuel had been: "To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me; Jehovah will deliver the host of Israel also into the hands of the Philistines." Poor Saul! How much better it would have been, even in this last hour, to have turned back to God, to have cast himself upon his mercy, and to have left himself wholly in his hands. There is no value in turning to a witch, or to any one else, when the soul has sinned. God alone can forgive and restore. So the thing to do for the man who has prayed and sinned is to confess the sin and then to pray again. Any-

thing else than this will lead the soul deeper into sin and thus further away from God.

David. II Samuel 7:18-22.

18. Then David the king went in, and sat before Jehovah; and he said, Who am I, O Lord Jehovah, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me thus far? 19. And this was yet a small thing in thine eyes, O Lord Jehovah; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come; and this too after the manner of men, O Lord Jehovah! 20. And what can David say more unto thee? for thou knowest thy servant, O Lord Jehovah. 21. For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou wrought all this greatness, to make thy servant know it. 22. Wherefore thou art great, O Jehovah God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God besides thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

Saul's sun had set in dark eclipse. And David's sun had risen in brightsome glory. The man who had ceased to pray gave place to him who made it a habit to pray. And thus it was that Israel was once more restored to the favor and ways of Jehovah. But this was not brought to pass by David in a day, nor without great trial and sorrow. Sin, though confessed and forgiven, leaves behind it terrible results, and it is no easy task for the godly man to undo what godless men have brought to pass. However, Jehovah was with David, and he gradually established him upon his throne as the ruler and blessing of his people, adding promise to promise concerning him and his house. Thus the time came, when he made the proclamation to David that blessings were to abound, not simply to him, but also to his seed after him: "When thy days are fulfilled and thou shalt sleep with thy

fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, that shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom." Now note the effect which this grace and favor had upon David: "Then David the king went in and sat before Jehovah." In other words, he immediately sought Jehovah's presence in the holy place, and, having found it, sat in silence before him. Afterwards, he broke forth into praise. But that time of silent adoration was as expressive as the words which followed it. A friend of mine was once staying in an inn with a noted evangelist. Waking at midnight, he found his companion gone from the bed where he had been sleeping and outstretched upon the floor. At the same time he heard him sobbing as if his heart would break. Startled, he asked his friend if he was sick or in sorrow. No, neither of these was the matter. What then was it? "Only this," was the reply: "God is so good, so good!" So one does not always have to speak in order to pray. Some times one prays best when one says least, yea, when one is absolutely silent before God—except, perhaps, for sobs!

II Samuel 12:15-23.

15. And Nathan departed unto his house. And Jehovah struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick. 16. David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. 17. And the elders of his house arose, and stood beside him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. 18. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead; for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he hearkened not unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him

that the child is dead! 19. But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David perceived that the child was dead; and David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead. 20. Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel; and he came into the house of Jehovah, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat. 21. Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. 22. And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who knoweth whether Jehovah will not be gracious to me, that the child may live? 23. But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.

David was one who had large experience in the prayer life. He reached its heights, and he touched its depths. Here, we have him going down into its depths, for he not only prays, but also fasts. The occasion is the sickness of his beloved child. Sin or no sin, David loved his offspring; and here was the child of Bath-sheba upon whom he had peculiarly fixed his yearning hope. To be sure, it was plain that Jehovah had smitten him because of his sin and in judgment. But he knew the compassions of God; and who could tell but that he might yet show mercy? So David prayed, and in praying refused all food. So far as food is concerned, he wanted it not, for his grief and anxiety displaced all sense of hunger. It is an illustration of the expulsive power of a new affection, the attachment to God in prayer meaning a detachment from the usual necessities of life. And this gives us the true conception of what fasting is.

Most people regard fasting as a means to the end of prayer. They argue: prayer is spiritual and eating is carnal; let me put away the carnal and I shall attain to the spiritual. And hence, they cease to eat in order that they may pray. But this is not the scriptural presentation. There, prayer is the means to the end and fasting is the result. The thought is, there may be such absorption in prayer that there will be no desire for food. Hence, the Word most often says, not "fasting and prayer," but rather, "prayer and fasting;" (Acts 13:2, 3). And hence, this passage says: "David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted." And what a splendid outcome there was! When the great king got God's answer, though it meant death, he arose, washed, anointed himself, and went about his daily affairs without further sign of sorrow. Jehovah had spoken, and to the true-hearted David, his answer was the end of all controversy.

II Samuel 15:30-34.

30. And David went up by the ascent of the mount of Olives, and wept as he went up; and he had his head covered and went barefoot: and all the people that were with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up. 31. And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O Jehovah, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness. 32. And it came to pass, that, when David was come to the top of the ascent, where God was worshipped, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head. 33. And David said unto him, If thou passest on with me, then thou wilt be a burden unto me: 34. but if thou return, to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; as I have been thy father's serv-

ant in time past, so will I now be thy servant; then wilt thou defeat for me the counsel of Ahithophel.

It is generally held as an established fact that a praying man is an unpractical man. It is supposed that prayer is so heavenly in its quality that it is not earthly in its application. Whether this is or is not true depends, not upon prayer, but upon the man. There are men who pray who are not practical. But again there are other men who pray who are pre-eminently practical. Now David was a true example of this last. He was a praying man. But also, he was a practical man. It was his first instinct, in times of trouble, to think upward. But when he had thought upward, he began to think downward. His first appeal was to God for needed wisdom. Then he made a definite application of this wisdom to the affairs of life. Hence, we have the picture before us which the passage gives: "And David said, O Jehovah, I pray thee turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness." This is the prayer. "And David said unto him (Hushai), if thou passest on with me, then thou wilt be a burden unto me; but if thou return to the city—then thou wilt defeat for me the counsel of Ahithophel." This is the practical application of the prayer. And this balance between prayer and action will always be preserved in the experience of the well equipped saint. He will be a great prayer. And also he will be a great planner and worker. The Rev. J. Hudson Taylor was phenomenal in his prayer life. And it is a well known fact that he was one of the most exact business men who have ever been engaged in the missionary enterprise. As an evidence of this, he once spent three whole days searching out and correcting a mistake in his Mission accounts which amounted to three farthings. Most men—even most business men—would have passed

over such a little matter. But praying, practical Mr. Taylor demanded perfection in his accounts.

II Samuel 18:29-32.

29. And the king said, Is it well with the young man Absalom? And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, even me thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was. 30. And the king said, Turn aside, and stand here. And he turned aside, and stood still. 31. And, behold, the Cushite came; and the Cushite said, Tidings for my lord the king; for Jehovah hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee. 32. And the king said unto the Cushite, Is it well with the young man Absalom? And the Cushite answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise up against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is. 33. And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

There is no sorrow which comes quite so close home to a father's heart as the death of a son and heir. This is particularly true when the father is a king and the son is in direct line of succession to the throne. And it is even more particularly true when the son upon whom the father-king has set his heart has played false to his love and care. History is full of such examples. They are indeed the pre-eminent tragedies of history, ancient and modern. David, therefore, in this episode of his life, was putting his lips to a cup of bitterness from which many a man has been forced to drink. But not all have had the heart to suffer which David had. In his case it was not simply the grief of a common father and king. No one can read David's Psalms without understand-

ing that this heart vibrated under the touch of human experience as few other hearts have ever done. His was a soul which was pregnant with passion, good or bad, and his life experiences were soul travail. Moreover, the good exceeded the bad, so that he had spiritual visions and longings, together with spiritual exultation and despair. And here, it was despair, deep and bitter. His first-born son, upon whom he had set his heart, had played the traitor and had died a traitor's death. What then could David do but seek for some lonely place and cry out his heart-sorrow before God? And this he did. To the chamber over the gate he went, where he had no doubt often met with God, and there in the comforting Presence he moaned out his soul's anguish: "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" And he found peace at last; for there is no sorrow so great that the Heart in heaven may not share and bear it. And thank God! that Heart is open still!

II Samuel 22: 1-7.

1. *And David spake unto Jehovah the words of this song in the day that Jehovah delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul:*
2 *and he said,*

Jehovah is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer, even mine;

3. *God, my rock, in him will I take refuge;*

My shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge;

My saviour, thou savest me from violence.

4. *I will call upon Jehovah, who is worthy to be praised:*

So shall I be saved from mine enemies.

5. *For the waves of death compassed me;*

The floods of ungodliness made me afraid:

6. *The cords of Sheol were round about me;
The snares of death came upon me.*

7. *In my distress I called upon Jehovah,
Yea, I called unto my God:
And he heard my voice out of his temple,
And my cry came into his ears.*

The Spirit of God declares that David was the "sweet psalmist of Israel;" (II Samuel 23:1). This means much more than that his psalms were pleasant to the ears of men. It signifies also that they were satisfying to the heart of God. Then God can be reached by our music here on earth, and it is not a matter of indifference to him whether or not we sing his praise. Yea, the Spirit assures us that praise means much to him, for he has written it down: "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me." And note that this song of praise follows hard after the death of Absalom. In other words, there is first the heart-break, and then the song. How unnatural this is! Man's order is; first the song and then the heart-break, and after the heart-break, no more song. But David was more than a man; he was a Spirit-filled man, and such an one could sing after the heart-break as well as before. Indeed, as we learn from the thirty-fourth Psalm, this singer could sing even in the midst of the heart-break. For that Psalm, with its glorious opening, was written when he was fleeing from the face of Saul and when he was feigning himself to be mad in order that he might not be put to death by the king of Gath; yea, when hunted like a partridge upon the hills, he takes his pen and writes: "I will bless Jehovah at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth." What wonder that God called David the "sweet singer!" And what wonder that the Psalmist has set pilgrim saints to singing after him! Out from the land of Palestine

his songs of praise have sounded; and thence, they have echoed, from hill to hill and from plain to plain, around the world! And Jehovah is ever waiting for others to re-echo their refrain, for his own sake and for the sake of the children of men. And blessed is that man, whoever he may be, who thus learns to sing!

“Hail to the coming singers!
Hail to the brave light-bringers!
Forward they reach and share,
All that we do and dare!”

II Samuel 24:10-14.

10. *And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto Jehovah, I have sinned greatly in that which I have done: but now, O Jehovah, put away, I beseech thee, the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.*
11. *And when David rose up in the morning, the word of Jehovah came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying,*
12 *Go and speak unto David, Thus saith Jehovah, I offer thee three things: choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee.*
13. *So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thy foes while they pursue thee? or shall there be three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise thee, and consider what answer I shall return to him that sent me.*
14. *And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of Jehovah; for his mercies are great; and let me not fall into the hand of man.*

It has often been questioned how God could say of David, that he was “a man after his own heart;” (I Samuel 13: 14, Acts 13: 22). Such a phrase seems to imply a state of sinlessness on David's part, or, at

least, of such a high degree of holiness that it was near to sinlessness. And yet nothing is clearer in the Scriptures than the fact that David was far from being sinless. It may well be asked then; if he was not sinless, or almost sinless, what was it that made him after God's own heart? The passage before us gives an answer, and it is one of broad application. David had numbered Israel, which had been forbidden. In doing this he had committed a great transgression. But, as in the case of Uriah and Bath-sheba, he does not seem to have been fully conscious of his sin until God sent his prophet to him with his divinely ordered message of arraignment. From that moment, the situation is perfectly plain to David. He sees what he has done, he realizes the heinousness of his guilt, and he perceives that judgment must fall. And it is just here that David's quality of mind and heart, which God delighted in, came out. The average man would have been dense as to the sin, he would have argued with the prophet and God about the judgment, and he would have harbored bitter and resentful thoughts against God when judgment had once fallen. But David was just the opposite of all this. He was quick to see, quick to confess, and quick to submit. In other words David's perception of God—what he was, what he demanded, and what he had a right to do—was always clear and true. The needle of his life might be deflected by the attraction of sin, but it was never long before it swung back to its true point of affinity. Now God did not delight in David's deflection. But he did greatly delight in his quick return and attachment to himself, and it is this of which the Spirit speaks. This, then, is the quality of mind and heart which God desires to see in us. Not sinlessness as yet; but attachment to himself, so strong and loyal, that, though temptation may temporarily affect it, nothing may ever really mar or destroy it.

II Samuel 24:22-25.

22. *And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good unto him: behold, the oxen for the burnt-offering, and the threshing instruments and the yokes of the oxen for the wood: 23 all this, O king, doth Araunah give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, Jehovah thy God accept thee. 24. And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will verily buy it of thee at a price; neither will I offer burnt-offerings unto Jehovah my God which cost me nothing. So David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. 25. And David built there an altar unto Jehovah, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. So Jehovah was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.*

David is finding out, at last, that it is an unalterable law of God that "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." Moreover, he was discovering that this law was as sure of application to the saint as it was to the sinner. To be sure, David did not know anything about the formula of the words quoted, for it was left for Paul to put the thought into its present expression. But he knew its truth very practically, for he had sowed, and now he was reaping. And if he had stopped to consider the matter—as he may have done—he would have come to understand that there were three great facts connected with sowing and reaping. First, that one reaps *what* he sows. Second, that one reaps *all* that he sows. And third, that one reaps *more* than he sows. Now all these things were true of David; to look back over his life is to see it. He sowed adultery with Bath-sheba, and he reaped adultery in the life of his son Amnon, who humiliated his own sister. He sowed murder in respect to Uriah, and he reaped a terrible murder by

his son Absalom killing his son Amnon. And he sowed pride's satisfaction in numbering his warrior people, and he reaped pride's humiliation by seeing a pestilence from Jehovah take off seventy thousand of his choicest warrior men. So it does not do for any man, saint or sinner, to trifle with divine laws. However, David was the beloved of the Lord, and there was a way in which Jehovah could remember mercy with such an one even in the midst of wrath. So the angel of the Lord appeared to the prophet Gad, and the revelation was made that the pestilence would be stayed if an altar should be erected. And how quickly David responds! At once, the sinner shows that he is, as well, a saint: "And David built there an altar unto Jehovah, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings." And there behind the altar and its victim, the man of God offers his worshipping prayer. "So Jehovah was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel." It is the law of God that reaping follows sowing. But it is also the law of God that where sin abounds, grace much more abounds.

Solomon. I Kings 3:4-10.

4. And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt-offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar. 5. In Gibeon Jehovah appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. 6. And Solomon said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great lovingkindness, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great lovingkindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. 7. And now, O Jehovah my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am

but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in. 8. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. 9. Give thy servant therefore an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to judge this thy great people? 10. And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.

The great David was succeeded by the greater Solomon. It is not always so in life that the son exceeds the father. But in this case, it was not a devolution but an evolution, from the weaker to the stronger, from the lesser to the greater. And the reason is not far to seek. It is found, not in natural inheritance, nor in mere fortuitous conditions, but rather in the purpose of God, and in the great decision which Solomon made in a day of spiritual crisis. Matthew Henry says: "A great man at his wit's end is not at his faith's end"; and it was faith, not wit which triumphed in Solomon's life. At the same time the choice of faith resulted in the gift of wit: "Give thy servant therefore an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to judge this thy great people? and the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing." It was one of the many illustrations of the fact that where saints have asked for the less God has given the more. For Solomon rejected the temptation to ask for long life and riches, and only asked for that which would make him truly useful in the service of God, namely, discretion; and then Jehovah gave him discretion, and long life and riches besides. Such is the result of putting God first and foremost in the life. No man ever makes him supreme and suffers loss. For Jehovah will not be left in any

man's debt. When a man holds on, God takes away; but when a man lets go, he gives, and that liberally.

I Kings 8:22-26.

22. *And Solomon stood before the altar of Jehovah in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread forth his hands, toward heaven; 23 and he said, O Jehovah, the God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath; who keep-est covenant and lovingkindness with thy servants, that walk before thee with all their heart; 24 who has kept with thy servant David my father that which thou didst promise him: yea, thou spakest with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thy hand, as it is this day. 25. Now therefore, O Jehovah, the God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel, if only thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me as thou hast walked before me. 26. Now therefore, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spaketh unto thy servant David my father.*

This is a prayer by Solomon of sixty-one verses. It is one which would be called now, in certain circles, "the long prayer," it being offered in public, before the congregation, and at considerable length. But it does not appear that Solomon wearied in offering it or the people in hearing it. Somehow the old-time saints thought prayer well worth while, whether in private or public, and therefore they never thought of turning the prayer into a prayer-ette. And somehow, God also thought prayer well worth while, for he never told any saints to abbreviate or condense, as if He were weary of listening. Moreover, Jehovah seemed particularly pleased this day, that Solomon

and the people asked all that they did, for when Solomon had finished his petitioning, Jehovah, appeared to him and said: "I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication that thou hast made before me; I have hallowed this house which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever." And has God changed? Man has changed, it is plain; and Robert Herrick's words seem often true now:

"Be brief in praying:
"Few beads are best when once we go a-Maying."

For many of the saints are always "a-Maying" in these times of pleasure-seeking, so that praying, in public and private, is little in evidence. No, God has not changed. He still delights in prayer, and he is as ready to answer it as he was in the days of old. What is needed then, in the face of the world's need, is a revival of prayer. Nothing else and less than this will prove effective before Jehovah and in behalf of the wandering sons of men. So then, my brother, when some true Solomon prays long, do not think of the time. Listen all through, and at the end say a sympathetic and praiseful, Amen!

Elijah. I Kings 18: 36-39.

36. *And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening oblation, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, O Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.* 37. *Hear me, O Jehovah, hear me, that this people may know that thou, Jehovah, art God, and that thou has turned their heart back again.* 38. *Then the fire of Jehovah fell, and consumed the burnt-offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.* 39. *And when all the*

people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, Jehovah, he is God; Jehovah, he is God.

It was not a long period of time between Solomon and Ahab. But it was long enough for the people of Israel to utterly corrupt themselves. Indeed, it never takes long to go down hill. It is the up hill climbing which consumes time. And so Israel was once more in a bad way. This time, it is, like king like people, for King Ahab had plunged himself into an abyss of wickedness and his people had followed him. "But God!" How often this is the saving phrase in spiritual experience. And so it is now. For Jehovah has a new man for the hour, a man unknown, without history of family or school, without reputation before king, priests or people, rugged, an ascetic from the wilderness, but prepared by the Spirit for a crisis. And thus Elijah flashes out of and through the darkness with a great light, even as a meteor flames its way across a midnight sky. And how his light does burn for its appointed time, consuming as to the man, enlightening as to the surrounding gloom of national life. And it is all because he prays. Hence, here upon the mountain top, face to face with apostate Israel, you have the triumph of prayer: "O Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel." And the Scripture adds: "Then the fire of Jehovah fell." Yes, the man for the hour! But, above all, the God for the hour! And, remember, Jehovah is always the God for the hour, provided there is a man who trusts him and calls upon his name. This then is for what he waits—mountain-top intercessors.

I Kings 19: 1-8.

1. And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. 2. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah,

saying, *So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time.* 3. *And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there.* 4. *But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper-tree: and he requested for himself that he might die, and said, It is enough; now, O Jehovah, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.* 5. *And he lay down and slept under a juniper-tree; and, behold, an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.* 6. *And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.* 7. *And the angel of Jehovah came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee.* 8. *And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.*

Action often results in reaction. A crisis, therefore, is frequently followed by a collapse, and a victory by a defeat. It ought not to be like this. In the life of Jesus it was never so, and in the life of Paul it was seldom so. Nevertheless, this is the record of many a saint, and too, of many a good saint. And it is the record now of Elijah. Those had been tense hours on Mount Carmel, when he had defied the priests and followers of Baal, and they had resulted in a great and glorious triumph for Jehovah. But just as a tense string upon a violin, from which has been drawn exquisite melodies, may suddenly break, so the prophet's life broke down, in spite of its victories, after the conflict was over. Hence it was that that message from Jezebel overwhelmed Elijah. And hence it is that you see the prophet fleeing for his life, taking refuge

in the wilderness, and hiding beneath the shade of a juniper tree. But even there, Elijah prays: "It is enough now, O Jehovah, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers." It was a mixed-up prayer—as some other prayers have been—but it showed that the prophet was thinking of God and was in vital connection with him. Moreover, Jehovah answered the prayer. The way he did it, however, was the way he has often done, namely, by giving just the opposite of what was asked. In other words, Jehovah exercised his highest prerogative in answering prayer, by giving the better instead of the good, and the best instead of the better.

I Kings 19: 9-14.

9. *And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of Jehovah came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?*
10. *And he said, I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword: and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.*
11. *And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before Jehovah. And, behold, Jehovah passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before Jehovah; but Jehovah was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but Jehovah was not in the earthquake: 12 and after the earthquake a fire; but Jehovah was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. 13. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entrance of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?*
14. *And he said, I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy*

prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

It is strange how many saints are obsessed with the idea that they are the only ones in the universe who care and that all responsibility lies with them. They look around and see a perishing world, they look up and see a silent heaven, and then they look down and wish that other men and God himself would love as they love and would act as they act. This was where good, brave old Elijah was just now: "I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." Alas, for God! According to Elijah's estimate he was in a bad plight. Jehovah, for some unknown reason, would do nothing, and there was but one true-hearted prophet left, and he was likely to perish! What would happen then? Cromwell once sent his secretary upon an important mission. The secretary took his servant—who was a godly man—and started upon his journey. At evening they put up at an inn, and soon both master and servant were in bed. The servant went to sleep. But at midnight, he awoke, and, as he lay awake, he heard his master in the adjoining room, sighing and tossing to and fro, evidently unable to sleep by reason of anxiety. Finally, the servant went to his master's door, when the following conversation took place: "Master, may I ask thee some questions?" "Yes, what are they?" "Who ruled the world before thou was born?" "Why, God did." "And who will rule the world after thou art dead?" "Why, God will." "Then, master, hadst thou not better let him rule it now?" "Thank you," said the master, and thereupon he went to sleep. And it is not an unfair deduction to make, that it would not be a bad thing if

some of the rest of us would go to sleep—at least, so far as our undue sense of importance is concerned.

Elisha. II Kings 4: 32-37.

32. *And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed.* 33. *He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto Jehovah.* 34. *And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon him; and the flesh of the child waxed warm.* 35. *Then he returned, and walked in the house once to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.* 36. *And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son.* 37. *Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground; and she took up her son, and went out.*

Elijah had been succeeded by Elisha, and a double portion of the spirit of the first prophet now rested upon the second. But, as happened in the case of all other prophets, trying circumstances soon put the reality of the prophet's power to the test. Just before this, Elisha had performed a remarkable miracle, by inducing God to give the Shunammite woman, with whom he lodged, a son, in spite of her barrenness and the husband's old age. But soon after, calamity overtook father, mother, son and prophet, for the son died. What now was to be done? Could he pray for life? Would God hear and answer prayer for such a thing as this? He did not know; nevertheless he would make the venture of faith. And so Elisha went into the house where the child lay and shut himself in with the lifeless body. And there, in that house of death, a great transaction took place: "He went in there-

fore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto Jehovah." From that moment, there was more in that room than Death; there was also the God of Life. And the praying, believing prophet was the link between the two. So mouth to mouth, and eyes to eyes, and hands to hands he lay upon the body, meanwhile pleading with Jehovah. And finally the boy stirred, and opened his eyes, and lived. And do you call it an old time miracle, a picture of the far away past? Nay, but you can see it, and more, any day, where dead souls are being saved. Jerry McCauley was a life-giving prophet like this, and Finney, and Moody. And so also, you may be, if you will pray and believe. But, remember, when you do this, be sure and lie full length upon the body of the dead. For it is not only prayer and faith, but also contact which saves.

II Kings 6: 14-17.

14. Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about. 15. And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, a host with horses and chariots was round about the city. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my Master! how shall we do? 16. And he answered, Fear not; for they that are with us are more than they that are with them. 17. And Elisha prayed, and said, Jehovah, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And Jehovah opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

There were brave knights in the days of old, and Elisha was one of them. He wore the flower of a blameless life, and hence he had undying courage in his soul. And this was true whether he faced foes in twos or threes, or in hundreds or thousands. Num-

bers were not the things which counted with him, because God outnumbered all. Hence you see the prophet quiet and calm, when other men are losing their hearts and heads for fear of their foes. There have been modern men like this. Martyrs singing in flaming fires, missionaries praising in the gloom of foreign lands, ministers at home believing on in spite of overwhelming odds—these men also have endured because they have seen the things which are invisible. And now, Elisha smiled in the face of his foes. It was not that he did not see them. There they were in plain sight, encamped about the city, silent, grim, innumerable; and he well knew their prowess and determination. It was because he saw something besides. There was an encampment within an encampment, a host within a host, the army of God between himself and his enemies. Smiling was not difficult under such circumstances. So all he had to do when his young servant gave up hope was to pray that he too might see: "And Elisha prayed and said, Jehovah, I pray thee, open his eyes that he may see." It is probable that those two had a praise meeting after that. And the story explains many things concerning ourselves. It is fear, after all, that makes cowards of us all. And we fear because we do not see. How constantly then we need to pray: "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things!" And how constantly we need to remember, as we pray, that the "chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands upon thousands."

Hezekiah. II Kings 19:1-5.

1. *And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of Jehovah. 2. And he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah the prophet the son of*

Amoz. 3. And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of contumely; for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth. 4. It may be Jehovah thy God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to defy the living God and will rebuke the words which Jehovah thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left. 5. So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah.

A great king had arisen in Judah, whose name was Hezekiah. But as great, and even good kings have often found, he had plenty of battles to fight for Jehovah before he had finished with his reigning. Indeed, it often seems that the greater and better a man is, and the higher up he is, the more he is called upon to engage in conflicts. It is the price which a man has to pay for place and power. And besides, in the divine economy, it is God's way of keeping the man in dependence upon himself, who alone can maintain a man in place and power. So Hezekiah found himself a captive in his city, surrounded, hedged in, and shut up, where the only thing he could do was to look up. Thank God! his enemies could not roof him over, and he could still look past sunlit or starlit sky to where the Mighty One sat upon his throne. And it was because there was the upward look, that you have him going into the house of Jehovah and sending for the prophet Isaiah. In other words, he prayed and set the prophet to praying. And, depend upon it, whether in those or these days, where two saints get praying; the enemies of Jehovah had better look out. Yea, from that moment, those God-defying, blasphemous Assyrians, with their glittering ranks of men, horses and chariots, were doomed. If they had only known it, they would have done well to turn and flee for their lives with utmost speed. For now the God

of praying Hezekiah and Isaiah was against them, and it was only a matter of time before judgment, sure and terrible, would fall.

II Kings 19: 14-19, 35.

14. And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house of Jehovah, and spread it before Jehovah. 15. and Hezekiah prayed before Jehovah, and said, O Jehovah, the God of Israel, that sittest above the cherubim, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou has made heaven and earth. 16. Incline thine ear, O Jehovah, and hear; open thine eyes, O Jehovah, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, wherewith he hath sent him to defy the living God. 17. Of a truth, Jehovah, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, 18 and have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone; therefore they have destroyed them. 19. Now therefore, O Jehovah our God, save thou us, I beseech thee, out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou Jehovah art God alone. 35. And it came to pass that night, that the angel of Jehovah went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when men arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies.

God did not deliver Hezekiah in a day. He seldom delivers any saint in a day. There have been many saints who have wished he would do so, and who have pleaded mightily that he would. But, from first to last, Jehovah has taken his own way of deliverance, including the incidents of time, place and process. Some of these saints are in the glory now, and they are all praising God that his ways were not as their

ways. And other saints are going home to glory by and bye, and as soon as they get there, they too will praise him that his ways were not as their ways. So it is a good thing to praise God now that his ways are above our own. However, delay does not mean that Jehovah will not act at all. Sooner or later, he will always deliver: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous"—never mind why—"but Jehovah delivereth him out of them all"—this is the important fact. And this is the way Hezekiah found it. Taking the blasphemous letter which he had received, he went up into the house of Jehovah and spread it before him. What a simple minded man he was to spread a letter out before God, the writing up, just as if such an One could not read it as easily folded as unfolded, as easily right side down as right side up. But faith is ever simple, and it is such childlike acts as this which appeal to Jehovah. But mark it, the prayer which accompanied the act was anything but simple. For though faith may be childlike, it is never childish. And that prayer stirred God's heart and hand. At last the time for action had come. Then the cloud of judgment burst, and the enemies of the Lord were carried away as by a flood.

II Kings 20 : 1-7.

1. In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith Jehovah, set thy house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live. 2. Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto Jehovah, saying, 3 Remember now, O Jehovah, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. 4. And it came to pass, before Isaiah was gone out into the middle part of the city, that the word of Jehovah came to him,

saying, 5 Turn again, and say to Hezekiah the prince of my people, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of Jehovah. 6. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. 7. And Isaiah said, Take a cake of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered.

King Hezekiah had run his course well and had proved himself pleasing to Jehovah. But this did not exempt him from sorrow. And now it was one of a personal kind, and of the sort which is hardest to bear, for he was sick. It is curious, how many great men break down spiritually when physical ailment comes on. They wage a good warfare till then. But at the sight of sickness they collapse. Possibly, it is because they can overcome other foes, but feel helpless before this foe. Possibly, too, it is because they do not like physical pain, and fail to understand why God should allow it. At any rate, many cease to trust and pray just then, and hence down they go into despair. Now Hezekiah was a great example to us in the time of his sickness. He did not collapse, even when the prophet Isaiah told him he must die. What he did do was this: he turned himself to the wall, and he prayed Jehovah that he might live. And Jehovah answered him so quickly that Isaiah had only time to get a few streets away from the house before he was brought to a stop. There God turned him back to Hezekiah, telling him to reverse the divine decree. Now, Mr. Philosopher, do you want a problem to occupy you for the rest of your life? Meditate then upon the question, as to how God could tell the prophet to say

in one breath, "Thou shalt die," and in the next breath, "Thou shalt not die," with only a prayer between. But, Mr. Saint, do not you spend five minutes in thinking upon the philosophy or non-philosophy of it; just you go on believing and praying; for that is exactly what happened and what will happen again and again. And also, Mr. Saint, do not forget what we started with: When it is your turn to be sick, do what Hezekiah did; just turn over to the wall, get alone with God, and tell him—your Father—all.

Jabez. I Chronicles 4: 9, 10.

9. And Jabez was more honorable than his brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow. 10. And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my border, and that thy hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it be not to my sorrow! And God granted him that which he requested.

Jabez! Who is he? Did you ever hear of him before? No, not in the scriptural record. Nor will you ever hear of him again. Who then is Jabez? Abraham you know, and Moses you know, and many another saint you know; but who is this man? Well, this is the answer: Jabez is the man who prayed. That is his only distinction. But it appears that with God this was very much, for he interrupts his narrative to tell us this in detail. So it is worth while to learn what we can about him. And what appears is this. First, he was a man in a crowd, for his name occurs in a long list, containing hundreds of names. Second, he was a common place man, there being no mention of his father, mother, wife, sons, daughters, city or pursuits, his only reputation being that he was

somewhat more honorable than his brethren. Third, he was a man who had a bad beginning in life, for his mother had good reason to give him the name Jabez, which means sorrowful; and hence, he probably was one who had a somewhat unhappy continuance in life, for it could not have been exhilarating, to say the least of it, to be called "Mr. Sorrowful," all of his days. And finally, he was a man who, through prayer, had risen above his circumstances, conquered his difficulties, and turned his sorrow into joy. This is not a long history. But, after all, it is a great one. For it reveals the fact to all the world that no one need be the victim of environment, mentally or spiritually, provided he prays. So cheer up, my humble, unknown, discouraged friend. Whether you may ever be great in men's eyes or not, you may be in God's eyes, which is infinitely better. And, remember, all you have got to do to reach this end is this, to kneel down beside Jabez and to pray.

Jonah. Jonah 2:1-9.

1. *Then Jonah prayed unto Jehovah his God out of the fish's belly.*

2. *And he said,*

*I called by reason of mine affliction unto Jehovah,
And he answered me;*

*Out of the belly of Sheol cried I,
And thou heardest my voice.*

3. *For thou didst cast me into the depth, in the heart of the seas.*

And the flood was round about me;

All thy waves and thy billows passed over me.

4. *And I said, I am cast out from before thine eyes;*

Yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.

5. *The waters compassed me about, even to the soul;*

The deep was round about me;

The weeds were wrapped about my head.

6. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains;

The earth with her bars closed upon me for ever:

Yet hast thou brought up my life from the pit, O

Jehovah my God.

7. When my soul fainted within me, I remembered Jehovah:

And my prayer came in unto thee, into thy holy temple.

8. They that regard lying vanities forsake their own mercy.

9. But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving;

I will pay that which I have vowed.

Salvation is of Jehovah.

There are some students who think—and not without reason—that Jonah died in the belly of the great fish, and that, when he was vomited out upon dry land, it was a real resurrection, and hence, that he became a complete type of the resurrected Christ; (Matthew 12: 40). However this may be, it is certain that the prophet lived long enough to turn that fish's belly into a sanctuary, if the true definition of a sanctuary is, "a house of prayer." For there, in that strange place, he prayed unto Jehovah, or, as he states the experience: "I called by reason of my afflictions unto Jehovah, and he answered me." And a careful study of the passage will show that the prayer was a good and great one. For while the prayer itself is not fully recorded, enough is given to make us aware of the fact that it had much to do with his great need and God's greater mercies; and besides, that praise was interjected into the petitions, in spite of every untoward circumstance. All this is more than interesting; it is most encouraging. Evidently, there are no places or

conditions in which the saint may not pray and praise. And evidently also, there is no saint so far gone from God where his cry will not reach his ear and heart. Very touching is Jonah's attestation to this last, blessed fact: "When my soul fainted within me"—he was evidently *in extremis*—"I remembered Jehovah, and my prayer came in unto thee, in thy holy temple." And it is evident that Jehovah was not *in extremis*, for he sent help from his sanctuary, even to such an one, and even unto a mighty deliverance out of death.

Amos. Amos 7:1-6.

1. *Thus the Lord Jehovah showed me: and, behold, he formed locusts in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth; and, lo, it was the latter growth after the king's mowings.* 2. *And it came to pass that when they made an end of eating the grass of the land, then I said, O Lord Jehovah, forgive, I beseech thee: how shall Jacob stand? for he is small.* 3. *Jehovah repented concerning this: It shall not be, saith Jehovah.* 4. *Thus the Lord Jehovah showed me: and, behold, the Lord Jehovah called to contend by fire; and it devoured the great deep, and would have eaten up the land.* 5. *Then said I, O Lord Jehovah, cease, I beseech thee: how shall Jacob stand? for he is small.* 6. *Jehovah repented concerning this: This also shall not be, saith the Lord Jehovah.*

We are sometimes tempted to pity the Old Testament saints, in view of the fact that they did not enjoy our greater privileges; and the thought, if humbly held, is not an unscriptural one; (Hebrews 11:40). But we must acknowledge—and to our shame—that these same saints often exceeded us in their access to God and in their power to move his mighty arm. Here, for instance, is a saint who is little known and

little spoken of, who is ranked among, not the major, but the minor prophets, but who, through prayer, actually interrupted the whole processes of judgment and nature. We may well admit that Jehovah was at that time allowing himself to be more easily influenced in such matters than he is now, for he was then choosing to reveal himself, as it were, in dramatic and tragic ways. The facts of the case, however, are not so easily explained away as this. The truth of the matter is, these great heroes of the faith believed Jehovah would do the miraculous, and prayer to them for such was almost considered by them to be the equivalent of its fulfillment. Hence, little Amos was big with faith, and the obscure one did marvellous things. Many Chinese Christians are like this; they ask great things, they expect great things, and they get great things. It becomes an open question, therefore, whether our spiritual refinement has not refined most of our spirituality away. If it has, we need not pity the Old Testament saints; but we need to go back to them, to sit at their feet, and to humbly learn the lessons which they are so fitted to teach us.

Isaiah. Isaiah 6:1-7.

1. *In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. 2. Above him stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. 3. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. 4. And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. 5. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Je-*

hovah of hosts. 6. Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: 7 and he touched my mouth with it, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin forgiven.

There was once a man who prayed that God would give him a vision of himself. The prayer, though often repeated, was not answered for many days. But one night the man seemed to see the glory of God. And no sooner did he catch the vision than he cried out in agony of soul: "O God, draw back thine arm; I can stand no more!" Thus it has ever been when there has been contact between God and man. In the nature of the case, in all relationships and under all conditions, infinite space is between the character of God and the character of man; and, in consequence of this, as sure as God draws near to man or man draws near to God, man begins to see his blackness in the divine light, and to shrink back startled and undone. And thus it was now with Isaiah. Already, the prophet had received much from God. He had been saved, separated unto holy service, and chosen by the Spirit to witness against Israel; and now he was in the full tide of a Spirit-inspired utterance. One would naturally think that a saint like this would be prepared for the highest spiritual experience, by very reason of his holiness. And there is a measure of truth in the thought, for it was because he was what he was that he saw what he saw. Nevertheless, note the record: "I saw also the Lord sitting upon the throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple."—"Then said I, woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

God help the man then who thinks he is all right! There is no person on earth who more needs to see Jehovah than such an one as this.

Jeremiah. Jeremiah 11:1-5.

1. The word that came to Jeremiah from Jehovah, saying, 2 Hear ye the words of this covenant, and speak unto the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem; 3 and say thou unto them, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel: Cursed to the man that heareth not the words of this covenant, 4 which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the iron furnace, saying, Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I command you: so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God: 5 that I may establish the oath which I swear unto your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as at this day. Then answered I, and said, Amen, O Jehovah.

Jeremiah had had enough dealings with Jehovah by this time to know what he thought of Israel; and he had had enough dealings with Israel to know what they thought of Jehovah. Jehovah had spoken clearly to Jeremiah concerning Israel, stating that they had forsaken him; (1:16); and Israel had spoken alike clearly to Jeremiah concerning Jehovah, saying that they would no longer worship or serve him; (2:31). Moreover, Jehovah had made it perfectly plain to Jeremiah what he might expect when he should witness against Israel, namely, persecution of a serious kind; (1:17-19). The situation, therefore, was as clear as daylight. It was simply this: Jehovah was against Israel; Israel was against Jehovah; and Jeremiah stood between. This meant, of course, sooner or later, a crash, and the man who stood between the two opposing parties was bound to be hurt. And any one

who knows the story of Jeremiah understands how serious the hurt was. And yet in the face of all these facts, Jehovah says to Jeremiah: "Speak unto the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel: Cursed be the man that heareth not the words of this covenant." What will happen now? Will Jeremiah falter and fail; or will he nerve himself and set himself resolutely to his task? It is the crisis of Jeremiah's life, and Jehovah's honor and glory are at stake. To obey will be to run his character into the mould of God and to exalt the holy name. To fail will be to ruin his prospect of growth and usefulness and to dim the luster of the divine glory. What then was Jeremiah's decision and answer? Oh, but the prophet did pray gloriously that day, as he announced his decision to God! The prayer was not a long one. Indeed, it was but the ending of a usual prayer. But it meant everything. This is what it was: "Amen, O Jehovah!" And after that, regardless of consequences, the prophet went and told Israel what God thought of them, and what he purposed doing to them. This was prayer and works. And this is the kind of praying that counts.

Habakkuk. Habakkuk 1:1-5.

1. *The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see.*
2. *O Jehovah, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear? I cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save.* 3. *Why dost thou show me iniquity, and look upon perverseness? for destruction and violence are before me; and there is strife, and contention riseth up.* 4. *Therefore the law is slacked, and justice doth never go forth; for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore justice goeth forth perverted.* 5. *Behold ye among the nations, and look, and wonder marvellously; for I am working a*

work in your days, which ye will not believe though it be told you.

There followed the great Jeremiah, a prophet whose life was as obscure as his name is generally unknown and unpronounceable. This was Habakkuk. But it is to be remembered that in heaven no saint's name is unknown and unpronounceable, for the One who could say to Moses, "I know thee by name," can speak thus to every one of his people, however hidden his life may be. And the particular reason why God knew Habakkuk—apart from his general knowledge of him—was this, that he was a man who came often into his presence in the act of prayer. It is a good thing to get well acquainted with Jehovah; and also, it is a good thing to make Jehovah well acquainted with us, and there is no better way to do this than to call often upon him. And Habakkuk took this last way to introduce himself to God. There are only three chapters in the book which bear the prophet's name, but in these chapters there are as many prayers, and one of them takes up a whole chapter, with a total of nineteen verses. Besides this, the book opens with a prayer, which means, that the prophet no sooner began to write than he began to pray. Happy man! But note, that the present was not a very happy prayer. Habakkuk was overwhelmed with sorrow because of the condition of Israel and because of a silent heaven. Hence, he prayed; and hence also, he prayed sorrowfully, exactly as he felt. And after all, this is the way we should pray, provided we are in fellowship with God. Prayer is not meant to make us unnatural; nor does unnaturalness result in making us pray. We are to speak to Jehovah out of full hearts, just as we think and feel. And such praying in Habakkuk's case proved most effectual. Scarcely had

he begun, when Jehovah answered. And the answer was all that the prophet's heart could desire.

Daniel. Daniel 2:14-20.

14. Then Daniel returned answer with counsel and prudence to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, who was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon; 15 he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Wherefore is the decree so urgent from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel. 16. And Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would appoint him a time, and he would show the king the interpretation. 17. Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: 18 that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his companions should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. 19. Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. 20. Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever; for wisdom and might are his.

Daniel is the next great prophet who comes upon the scene. And if Elijah was a meteor in Israel's spiritual night, Daniel was a fixed star therein. For over seventy years he shone in the firmament, until, so far as this life is concerned, he had burned himself out in the service of God. And all through his life he was, pre-eminently, a man of prayer. Just here and now, he is at a prayer meeting in Babylon, where three persons were helping one person, and all the four were in ardent intercession. For it was a time of crisis, an impulsive king having decreed death to the wise men if their wisdom should fail to reveal his dream. But observe, the meeting was soon turned

into a praise meeting. For those four intercessors had not waited long upon God before prayer was answered. Then Daniel began leading the little band in a "Hallelujah Chorus." After that the prophet went into the presence of the king and told him all of the secrets of his mind and heart. And what he told him was one of the greatest prophetic revelations which God has ever made to man, unveiling history thousands of years forward to our present day, and past our present day, no one knows for how long a time. No doubt Daniel thought it hard when ruthless hands carried him away to Babylon. But he soon found out, while they could take him out of Jerusalem, that they could not take him out of God. Hence, in far away Babylon, he could pray and praise, and, as a result, could be mightily used by Jehovah. The world was greatly moved by Edward Everett Hale's story, "A Man Without a Country." But no such story can ever be written of a saint, for wherever he is, he is always in his home-land, since his citizenship is in heaven and his life is in God.

Daniel 6:4-11.

4. Then the presidents and the satraps sought to find occasion against Daniel as touching the kingdom; but they could find no occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. 5. Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God. 6. Then these presidents and satraps assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. 7. All the presidents of the kingdom, the deputies and the satraps, the counsellors and the governors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a strong interdict, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man

for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. 8. Now, O king, establish the interdict, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. 9. Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the interdict. 10. And when Daniel knew that the writing was signed he went into his house; (now his windows were open in his chamber toward Jerusalem;) and he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. 11. Then these men assembled together, and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God.

This story comes to us from Babylon like good news from a far country. What heartening cheer there is in it. To think, at such a time and in such surroundings, that God had a man at his disposal of this sort. How it quickens faith and resolution to remember it. How it nerves the heart, in these our days and surroundings, to be like this brave prophet of old and to do what he did. For after all, while times have altered they have not changed, and while conditions have changed they have not altered. Look around you anywhere and you will see "great Babylon." Moreover, those high in authority have decreed—at least by practice and example—that men shall not pray. And most of all, our coward hearts tell us that praying is not convenient so long as a scoffing world is looking on. Hence, up there on the street in Babylon where the saints live, you see many a window down and many a shutter closed. Oh, shame upon us, we who bear the name of Christians! Was Jesus, in the days of his flesh, such an one as this? Was Paul? Was Peter? Was Daniel? Good, brave old Daniel! He was a man who was worth ten thousand men of the average kind. Before a golden image, the king and

the kingdom could not get him to bend the knee. But when God came into view, the king and the kingdom could not keep him upon his feet. Ah, this is the kind of man whom God is ever waiting for! So Coleridge speaks well when he sings:

“Be not afraid to pray; to pray is right;
 Pray if thou canst with hope, but ever pray,
 Though hope be weak or sick with long delay;
 Pray in the darkness if there be no light;
 And if for any wish thou dare not pray
 Then pray to God to cast that wish away.”

Daniel 9: 20-23.

20. *And while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before Jehovah my God for the holy mountain of my God; 21 yea, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. 22. And he instructed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee wisdom and understanding. 23. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment went forth, and I am come to tell thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision.*

The chapter from which this passage is taken records another long prayer. Through it, we are suddenly caught up and carried away to Daniel's chamber window, we see the praying prophet looking across the desert sands toward Jerusalem, and we hear him making his supplication to Jehovah. But this is not all. Indeed, it is not the most. The vision which is largest and best is that of heaven and God. It is a

winsome sight to see a saint upon his knees. But it is nothing less than enrapturing to see, while the saint is praying, heaven opened and the things which are taking place there. And here is this sight, as far as it can be given, clear and unmistakable. The vision then is of Jehovah on the heavenly throne, surrounded by myriads of beautiful beings, but taken up with the sight of a lone man far away on earth engaged in prayer. Further, it is that of Jehovah waiting to listen to not more than the beginning of the man's petition, though he allows the whole to be spoken, and of his at once calling Gabriel, who stands in his presence, and commanding him to fly swiftly to the praying saint. And then, it is that of the great angel going upon his way to earth in order to tell the praying one that his petition is heard and answered, and hence, that he is to receive from the Most High wisdom and understanding. But even this is not all, for next, it is the vision of the angel uncovering, as it were, the very heart of God, for he says to Daniel in Jehovah's behalf: "Thou art greatly beloved;" or, as the margin expresses it: "Thou art very precious." What wonder that Daniel, at another time and under similar circumstances, fainted and was sick certain days. It was just as well for him that he saw and heard no more. And it is just as well for most of the saints, that they do not see all that takes place in heaven when they pray. For there is such a thing in experience as an overweight of joy.

Daniel 10:10-14.

10. And, behold, a hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands. 11. And he said unto me, O Daniel, thou man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright; for unto thee am I now sent: and when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trem-

bling. 12. Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel; for from the first day that thou didst set thy heart to understand, and to humble thyself before thy God, thy words were heard: and I am come for thy words' sake. 13. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days; but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me: and I remained there with the kings of Persia. 14. Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for the vision is yet for many days.

It was kind of God to explain to Daniel why he had not been able to answer his prayer at an earlier time. He might well, from his high, sovereign standpoint, have left his servant without an explanation. For any man ought to be content, if he prays aright, to leave the issue with him who is all-wise and all-loving; and to show a contrary spirit is to display an unwarrantable distrust. But God does not always do what he might do; he sometimes does what he simply may do, since he delights to stoop low and lift up. His course, therefore, with the children of men is frequently the generous one, in the sense that it is the one which only grace could suggest. And this is the course which Jehovah takes in this instance with much perplexed Daniel. The old prophet had done some mighty praying—the prayer is recorded in the ninth chapter—and he had evidently been heard of God, for the divine voice responded to him. But the answer had been slow and long in coming, which had given the prophet great concern. And it was just then that the hand of the Mighty One touched him, and that the voice of the Compassionate One explained to him the cause of the delay. And the explanation is meant, not only for Daniel, but also for us. So, mark it, praying saint, there are actually some things

—since God is working in harmony with his own laws —which he can not do; and one of these things is that he can not answer an individual's prayer without reference to each and all other beings in his universe. Prayer sets God working. But when God works, he works not simply in relation to the part, but also in relation to the whole; (Genesis 15:16).

Nehemiah. *Nehemiah 1:4-11.*

4. *And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days; and I fasted and prayed before the God of heaven, .5 and said, I beseech thee, O Jehovah, the God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and lovingkindness with them that love him and keep his commandments: 6 let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee at this time, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, while I confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: yea, I and my father's house have sinned. 7. We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the ordinances, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses. 8. Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye trespass, I will scatter you abroad among the people: 9 but if ye return unto me, and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts were in the uttermost part of the heavens, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to cause my name to dwell there. 10. Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand. 11. O lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of*

thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who delight to fear thy name; and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. (Now I was cupbearer to the king.)

There are times in life when the saint can get no light or comfort from his surroundings. God seems to have forgotten, friends seem to be helpless, providences seem to be antagonistic, and the "powers that be," of whatever kind they are, seem to control the situation for evil. Not a few saints have found themselves in such a situation, and have been led into utter despair through it. And it must be confessed that it becomes a serious question as to what course can be taken under such circumstances. For if God is silent, and man is helpless, what can a saint do before the things which are against him? The answer is clear and decisive. He can do what Nehemiah did; he can believe, and pray, and wait. And no man—as Nehemiah's case proves—ever did these things in vain. As for Nehemiah, his outlook was as hopeless as ever stretched out before the eyes of man; and yet God, in time, wrought mightily in his behalf. And as for other saints, all history proves that it has never been without profit that a man has waited upon and waited for God. And mark how Nehemiah got his victory over his circumstances. He fell back, full length, upon the promises of God. Nothing else was visible. But these were. And, before the prophet's eyes, they stood out as bright as glory-light, and under his feet they were like rock. Ah, these are the saints who overcome the world! They are men of iron, patient, unbending, enduring, invincible, triumphant. And they are the men, of all men, who are needed to-day.

Levites. Nehemiah 9:5-8, 32.

5. Then the Levites, Jeshua, and Kadmiel, Bani,

Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said, Stand up and bless Jehovah your God from everlasting to everlasting: and blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. 6. Thou art Jehovah, even thou alone; Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all things that are thereon, the seas and all that is in them, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee. 7. Thou art Jehovah the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; 8 and foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite, and the Girgashite, to give it unto his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous. 32. Now therefore our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and lovingkindness, let not all the travail seem little before thee, that hath come upon us, on our kings, on our princes, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people, since the time of the kings of Assyria unto this day.

The Old Testament saints did know how to pray. And New Testament saints do well when they study their prayers in order to imitate them. Here, for instance, is another "long prayer," it being one of thirty-eight verses. And there is contained in it almost all of the best characteristics of the most highly developed prayers of the New Testament. First, observe its decorum. The Levites say: "Stand up and bless Jehovah." Second, observe its reverence: "Our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God." Third, observe its adoration: "Blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing

and praise." Fourth, observe its ascription of praise: "Thou art Jehovah, even thou alone; thou hast made the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all things that are thereon, the seas and all that is in them, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee." Fifth, observe its faith: "Thou art Jehovah the God, who didst alone choose Abram—and gavest him the name of Abraham, and foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him—and hast performed thy words." Sixth, observe its plea: "For thou art righteous." And seventh, observe its boldness; (verse 38): "And yet for all this"—in spite of all sin—"we make a sure covenant and write it; and our princes, our Levites, and our priests seal unto it." Now, these are high qualities in praying, beyond which we can scarcely go. May we set our hearts to come at least as high as these old-time saints did. For this is the kind of praying which subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, and obtained promises.

Ezra. Ezra 10:1-5.

1. Now while Ezra prayed and made confession, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there was gathered together unto him out of Israel a very great assembly of men and women and children; for the people wept very sore. 2. And Shecaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have married foreign women of the peoples of the land: yet now there is hope for Israel concerning this thing. 3. Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law. 4. Arise; for the matter belongeth

unto thee, and we are with thee: be of good courage, and do it. 5. Then arose Ezra, and made the chiefs of the priests, the Levites, and all Israel, to swear that they would do according to this word. So they swore.

Ezra was a prophet who had many problems to solve. He lived and served in a time of national revival and reorganization, which included a departure from Babylon and a settlement in the promised land. The broader a problem is, the more complex it is; and this one was as broad as the whole nation and its political and spiritual interests. Thus, nothing but divine wisdom was sufficient, and hence the only effective power in obtaining such was prayer. And this was particularly true in respect to the family life. For things there had become so mixed up that they were beyond all human skill to understand and control them. It is a comparatively easy task to handle problems of church and state. But often, when the minister who rules his church with discretion, and the king who rules his state with ability attempts to manage his social affairs and family life he finds the task altogether beyond him. And this now was Ezra's situation. He had made a splendid success of things until he had come up against the problem of the family. There he came to a standstill. However, he proved to be a wise man, for he stopped talking and went to praying: "Ezra prayed and made confession, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God." And where everything else failed, and would have continued to fail, prayer succeeded. The simple explanation of the fact is this: Ezra had been operating on the outside, and God operated on the inside; and it is only inside working which produces conviction of sin and readiness to right wrong. And, fathers and mothers, there is a lesson here for you. You have exhorted, besought, and perhaps

scolded your children for years, and without effect. Now, make a great resolution. Do not say a word more; but pray, pray, pray! Then see—provided you also love—if your wayward boy or girl does not come to you some day to confess sin and to seek for help.

Joel. Joel 1:15-20.

15. *Alas for the day! for the day of Jehovah is at hand, and as destruction from the Almighty shall it come.* 16. *Is not the food cut off before our eyes, yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God?* 17. *The seeds rot under their clods; the garners are laid desolate, the barns are broken down; for the grain is withered.* 18. *How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate.* 19. *O Jehovah, to thee do I cry; for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field.* 20. *Yea, the beasts of the field pant unto thee; for the water brooks are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.*

The blessings of Israel, for the most part, were those of a national and natural kind. It is not so with the church, this body being a scattered and spiritual people, and also being identified with a rejected and suffering Christ. But in those earlier days, God promised that the keeping of his commandments would mean fruitful harvests, abundance of food, freedom from sickness, and protection from all enemies; (Deuteronomy 7:12-24). As a result of this, any Israelite knew at once, if the reverse of these things was experienced, that sin had entered into the national life. Hence, when the harvest failed, when famine came, when pestilence occurred, or when foes overcame, there was immediate thought of transgres-

sion, though not always of repentance and confession. This last, often, was not developed until some prophet came forth, with his prayer Godward and his warning manward. Hence, the oft appearance of the prophets, one succeeding another, as Israel wavered to and fro between righteousness and unrighteousness. And hence, just now, this prophet, Joel, and his requiem. But note that the prophet, face to face with such calamitous circumstances as confronted him, had only one thought in mind. He would pray. For he evidently argued, if prayer will not prove effective, nothing else will. And this is not a bad place for any saint to be brought to, namely to be shut up to prayer. Such a condition, prayer being offered, gives God a chance to work. And work he did for Joel. And work he will for all others who put their trust in him. That is a true and wonderful word spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "For from of old men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen a God besides thee, who worketh for him that waiteth for him." But, when we pray, let us ever remember, as one has said: "To pray is but one-half of the Christian's privilege; to watch for the answer is the other half."

Ezekiel. Ezekiel 2:1-6.

1. *And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak with thee.* 2. *And the Spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet; and I heard him that spake unto me.* 3. *And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to nations that are rebellious, which have rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me even unto this very day.* 4. *And the children are impudent and stiffhearted: I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah.* 5. *And they, whether*

they will hear, or whether they will forbear (for they are a rebellious house), yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them. 6. And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns are with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they are a rebellious house.

Ezekiel followed Joel. And it was the case of a good man following a good man, as it always is when God is ruling over the lives of men. Apostolic succession is a New Testament doctrine. The Old Testament doctrine is that of prophetic succession. And the Old Testament as well as the New Testament succession was ever and only of the Holy Spirit. Here this is most manifest. For Ezekiel, by the Spirit, gathered up Joel's message, and enlarged and emphasized it. And the connecting link, as it is between all of the prophets, is that of prayer. They were prophets because they were chosen of God. But they were chosen of God because they were pre-eminently men of prayer. Moreover, they had to be men of prayer, all through. For in those old-time days the office of a prophet was no sinecure. The prophets had their "keep," but often it was pretty poor fare; they had their distinction, but frequently this made them the objects of bitter attack; and they had their recompense, but generally this was after they were dead. There is one notable thing, however, in each and every case; God never deceived one of them. He told them frankly and plainly just what they were to expect. The result of this was that the prophets went into their work with their eyes wide open. And the further result was, that they faced their service with their hearts crying out to the living God for courage and strength. And so they were made bold

for service and suffering. All this is the explanation of the present passage. Some hard days are before Ezekiel. Hence Jehovah communes with his communing heart, and fortifies his servant for all that is to come. How wonderful are the ways of God with him who prays and believes!

Ezekiel 4: 9-15.

9. Take thou also unto thee wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentils, and millet, and spelt, and put them in one vessel, and make thee bread thereof; according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon thy side, even three hundred and ninety days, shalt thou eat thereof. 10. And thy food which thou shalt eat shall be by weight, twenty shekels a day: from time to time shalt thou eat it. 11. And thou shalt drink water by measure, the sixth part of a hin: from time to time shalt thou drink. 12. And thou shalt eat it as barley cakes, and thou shalt bake it in their sight with dung that cometh out of man. 13. And Jehovah said, Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their bread unclean, among the nations whither I will drive them. 14. Then said I, Ah Lord Jehovah! behold, my soul hath not been polluted; for from my youth up even till now have I not eaten of that which dieth of itself, or is torn of beasts; neither came there abominable flesh into my mouth. 15. Then he said unto me, See, I have given thee cow's dung for man's dung, and thou shalt prepare thy bread thereon.

Not a few of us have wished, from time to time, that we might be like the prophets of old. It must have been a fine thing, we think, to have been chosen by Jehovah to represent him, to have visions, to hear voices, to speak authoritatively, to pass judgments upon men. As to judgments, most of us rather like dealing with thunder and lightning—provided they

do not come our way, (Luke 9:54), for there is something exhilarating in the thought of being, for instance, like Elijah on the mountain top commanding God's fire to fall. But it is to be remembered that not all of the prophets were used of Jehovah like this, and that some of them were asked to do some rather trying and tedious things. Here, for instance, is Ezekiel. He had visions, and he heard voices. But he had to pay a heavy price for these privileges. Just now, he was told to lie on one side without turning for three hundred and ninety days, and then to turn over and lie on the other side for an extra forty days. In addition, he was given some unmentionably disagreeable things to do. At this last, Ezekiel burst out into a pleading prayer, and God modified his instructions. Nevertheless, the prophet had to do all else that he was told to do, to the last word and letter; for when he prayed to be the servant of Jehovah, Jehovah took it for granted that he meant all that he said. This, therefore, is the question as related to yourself; do you really desire to be Jehovah's prophet? For, mark it, my brother, before Jehovah gets through with you, he will bid you lie low and be still, if not physically then spiritually, until you are worn and undone. Think twice, therefore, before you pray to be a prophet! Nevertheless—in the language of the New Testament—"If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work."

Ezekiel 5:1-4.

1. *And thou, son of man, take thee a sharp sword; as a barber's razor shalt thou take it unto thee, and shalt cause it to pass upon thy head and upon thy beard: then take thee balances to weigh, and divide the hair. 2. A third part shalt thou burn in the fire in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled; and thou shalt take a third part, and*

smite with the sword round about it; and a third part thou shalt scatter to the wind, and I will draw out a sword after them. 3. And thou shalt take thereof a few in number, and bind them in thy skirts. 4. And of these again shalt thou take, and cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire; therefrom shall a fire come forth into all the house of Israel.

It occasionally happens in times of communion, when God is doing the talking, that we begin to wish that he would not go on. It is all right so long as we speak to Jehovah. And it is all right when Jehovah speaks to us about subjects which concern other people. But when he speaks to us concerning ourselves; or even when he speaks of others and asks us to act with him in making his meaning clear to them, it often turns out to be a distasteful experience. In the present instance, it was the last of the cases mentioned. Jehovah was teaching Israel, as it were, through kindergarten processes, and he was asking Ezekiel to help him in making his meaning plain. This meant, while Jehovah did the speaking, that Ezekiel had to do the acting, portraying in his own life what Jehovah purposed doing against Israel and Jerusalem. It is likely that Ezekiel thought that he had finished such acting when he had lain on his side for four hundred and thirty days; or, at least, that he hoped that he had. But he was mistaken. Jehovah had only paused; he had not come to a full stop. Hence, the divine voice went on with its instructions, and Ezekiel had to go on with his acting. What the poor prophet thought of this we are not told. But it is probable that we are not far from the truth when we conclude that he must have longed to have God take some other way of teaching, or use some other prophet as his demonstrator. But all this, after all, is not the

full point of the story. The real end of it is this. The man who prayed did as he was told. And this is going to be the end which Jehovah will insist upon with everyone who prays and who is ambitious to be used of him. It is not simply our prayers which count with God; it is also our attitude behind our prayers. For to pray without intention of doing, whatever the cost, is not to pray. But to purpose doing and then to pray, is to pray indeed, yea, into the very ear and heart of God.

Ezekiel 8: 1-5.

1. And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I sat in my house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, that the hand of the Lord Jehovah fell there upon me. 2. Then I beheld, and, lo, a likeness as the appearance of fire; from the appearance of his loins and downward, fire; and from his loins and upward, as the appearance of brightness, as it were glowing metal. 3. And he put forth the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of my head; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the gate of the inner court that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy. 4. And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, according to the appearance that I saw in the plain. 5. Then said he unto me, Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north. So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold, northward of the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry.

There are compensations in the prayer life and in the service of God. For even though prayer leads to service of a hard kind, the hard service leads to God's

acceptance and blessing. There was to be now a series of unfoldings of divine displeasure against Jerusalem, and Ezekiel was to voice the purpose of wrath and judgment. Moreover, this was to end, as related to the prophet, in rejection and suffering. So Jehovah, in his great tenderness, resumes his communing with his servant, and thus strengthens him for his task. And in doing this, he takes a way which is universal with him in dealing with men, whether in revelation or providence. In God's economy, light precedes darkness, grace precedes wrath, mercy precedes judgment. This does not mean that darkness, wrath and judgment do not eventually come. This is the mistake which men who experience light, grace and mercy frequently make. It only means that God endeavors to save from the one by granting the other. Where the plan fails is in the hardness of the heart of man and in his rejection of the divine purpose. But when God has a saint to deal with—as is now the case—he gives light and grace and mercy in abundant measure, with something of the glory added to it. We are told in "Thinking Black" that there is an African saying to the effect, that wherever you see a well-worn trail you may know that it leads up to a big chief. This is also true in spiritual experience. The way of prayer and service, thank God! is well worn, and hence we may know that it leads to Almighty God. So there ought to be no fear concerning the way, because of confidence in the love of him whom we shall reach at the end of the way. For it will be in our case as it was in Ezekiel's: "And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there!"

Ezekiel 37: 1-9.

1. *The hand of Jehovah was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of Jehovah, and set me*

down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones. 2. And he caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. 3. And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord Jehovah, thou knowest. 4. Again he said unto me, Prophecy over these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of Jehovah. 5. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah unto these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live. 6. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah. 7. So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and, behold, an earthquake; and the bones came together, bone to its bone. 8. And I beheld, and, lo, there were sinews upon them, and flesh came up, and skin covered them above; but there was no breath in them. 9. Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

Out of death comes life; out of suffering comes strength; and out of sorrow comes joy. And it remains for the saint to determine whether the end in view makes the process to be taken worth while. Some saints had thought so. Abraham, Moses, David, Peter and Paul did. And so also did Ezekiel, as we have seen. And the blessed thing about it is, that evidently God was always of the same mind. For as surely as any saint chose the shame of the cross, so surely did he give him the glory of the crown. There was one thing, however, which to the saint was somewhat trying. The crown was not always given on

the same day as the cross. Nevertheless, sooner or later, the recompense came; and all the saint was asked to do was to keep straight on until God's time and place of rewarding was reached. As to Ezekiel he did keep on, unfalteringly, steadily, like the hero-saint he was. And the result was—as recorded in this passage—that Jehovah took him apart with himself, to speak wonderful mysteries to him and to make gracious and large use of him. And what greater recompense can any man have than this? To receive such favor from Jehovah is indeed to have a crown, beyond any that earth may give. It is to such an one that he speaks and says: "Fear not—I am thy exceeding great reward." And what matter it, if the rest of the rewarding be reserved till the other world? One moment of the bliss of the Presence there will outweigh all the sorrow here. This was the thought which carried the Master through his earthly life: "Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame." May we have grace then to follow in his steps, that we may sit down with him, one day, "at the right hand of the throne of God."

Zechariah. Zechariah 3:1-5.

1. *And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of Jehovah, and Satan standing at his right hand to be his adversary. 2. And Jehovah said unto Satan, Jehovah rebuke thee, O Satan; yea, Jehovah that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? 3. Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. 4. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take the filthy garments from off him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with rich apparel. 5. And I said, Let them set a clean mitre upon his head. So*

they set a clean mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments; and the angel of Jehovah was standing by.

The shadows are beginning to gather over the nation of Israel. God has borne long with his people. But as surely as grace has a beginning, so surely it has an ending; and when grace ends judgment falls. But the night was not yet. At present it is but the setting sun and the lengthening out of the twilight shades. For grace is long, and it has its light even amidst the gloom. There are to be, therefore, a few more prophets, Zechariah, Malachi, and the greatest of them all, namely, John the Baptizer. After this will be the national rejection of the Holy One, and then—Titus and his legions, and war, famine, torture, murder, death, and the dispersion of those who remain. So then, in this twilight gloom, Zechariah arises, who is another man of prayer, and thus a light in a dark place. And once more, Jehovah appeals not only to faith, but also to sight. For he shows to the prophet, and through him to Israel, Joshua, the high priest, standing in the holy place, essaying to worship Jehovah, but Satan the accuser, standing at his right hand, while Joshua, instead of being attired with the usual priestly garments, is clothed with filthy rags. Now, all this was a picture of the people of Israel, who had been made a priestly nation for holy worship and service, but who had ceased to wear priestly garments and had clothed themselves, even in holy places, with garments of unrighteousness, so that Satan had rightful cause to be their adversary. But the revelation went further on, and it showed to the worshipping Zechariah what God's grace, even in the midst of such declension, could do. For it revealed, besides the adversary, an Advocate, even the Angel of Jehovah, who was ready to answer every

charge. And it was this greater One who said: "Take the filthy garments from off him"—"I will clothe thee with rich apparel." So the evening was lengthened out, and the twilight became a gloaming.

Zechariah 4:8-14.

8. *Moreover the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, 9 The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent me unto you. 10. For who hath despised the day of small things? for these seven shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel; these are the eyes of Jehovah, which run to and fro through the whole earth. 11. Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof? 12. And I answered the second time, and said unto him, What are these two olive branches, which are beside the two golden spouts, that empty the golden oil out of themselves? 13. And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these are? And I said, No, my lord. 14. Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.*

It does not follow, because days are dark, that there may not be any light. That far-back picture of darkness enshrouding Egypt, and yet with light in all of Israel's dwellings, is a promise of what God can do for any people, in any place, and at any time. Moreover, this is true, not only for a people, but also for an individual amidst a people, though that man be the only one amongst ten thousand who may fear Jehovah. From Abraham onward, individual saints had found this to be true; and cases are not wanting in these modern, darksome days of ours, in spite of

untoward surroundings of state, church, social and family life, where persons have stood out clear and bright for God, to the glory of his holy name. All this is the explanation of the life of Zechariah. He walked amidst the shadows. But just as the sun will sometimes throw its beams through a rift in the clouds upon some wayside flower, so Jehovah, in spite of shadows, shone upon his prophet with a great light. And this light meant, not only an illumination, but also an explanation, which is the reason of the vision which is before us. For passing by the historical meaning of the passage, this may be gathered from it. Light must have a supply; so, behind the light is the oil, and behind the oil are the golden tubes, and behind the tubes are the olive-trees. And thus it is with spiritual service, of what ever sort it is. Behind the light of worship and service is the Spirit, and behind the Spirit is Christ, and behind the Christ is God. It is not any easy thing, in these present evil days to maintain one's testimony for Jehovah. Nevertheless, it is possible. And the way to do it is to make sure that the connection backward and upward is always intact and free from obstruction.

Zechariah 14:16-21.

16. *And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations that came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, Jehovah of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.*
17. *And it shall be, that whoso of all the families of the earth goeth not up unto Jerusalem to worship the King, Jehovah of hosts, upon them there shall be no rain.*
18. *And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, neither shall it be upon them; there shall be the plague, wherewith Jehovah will smite the nations that go not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.*
19. *This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punish-*

ment of all the nations that go not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. 20. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holy unto Jehovah; and the pots in Jehovah's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. 21. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holy unto Jehovah of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and boil therein: and in that day there shall be no more a Canaanite in the house of Jehovah of hosts.

The tested servant of Jehovah becomes often the trusted servant of Jehovah. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Zechariah were brought through valley-deeps of suffering: but they were led up to mountain tops of blessing. And the closing of their eyes in the darkness of the valley meant the opening of them upon the mountain, to scenes of infinite light and beauty. This, then, is the portion of worshipping, praying Zechariah. He is led through, and out, and up; and behold, he stands now upon dizzy heights, with hand shading his eyes from heaven's light, looking down time and space, seeing the glory which is to come—the chosen, beloved, and trusted prophet of God. For this is a high and far vision which his words give to us. It is even the vision of the final victory of the Christ upon this earth, when every knee shall bow before him and every tongue shall confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father; (Philippians 2:5-11). And how interesting it is to see that old Jerusalem is to be the center of it all, where Jesus lived and taught and died. Yes, the great re-adjustment will some day come; the cry of, "Crucify him!" will be changed to, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" and the crime of the ages will give place to that act of faith and love which will make this world what it ought to have been from first to last.

And to show how deep and wide that change will be, God says that the infinitely holy word which was once found only upon the golden plate of the high priest will then be written upon even the bells of the horses. May the music of those bells soon be heard in this old-time, sinful, suffering world, to the joy of men, and to the glory of the Name which is above every name! So then, as we pray, may we say with that other seer, John: "Amen; come, Lord Jesus!"

Malachi. Malachi 3:16-18.

16. Then they that feared Jehovah spake one with another: and Jehovah hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared Jehovah, and that thought upon his name. 17. And they shall be mine, saith Jehovah of hosts, even mine own possession, in the day that I make; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. 18. Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

Besides John the Baptist, Malachi is the last of the prophets. And what is his message within the deepening darkness of apostatizing Israel? Is it one of discouragement? Is it an abandonment of all things good and holy? Is it the confession that life and worship and service are things which are not worth while? Malachi, like all the later prophets, speaks of sin and judgment. But he too stands above the clouds and sees afar off. And there in the sunlight he sings a song of faith and hope, rejoicing in the God of his salvation. Ah, prayer turns trembling saints into great victors! There is no such thing as surrender, or even discouragement, to a man who dwells in the secret place of the Most High and abides under the

shadow of the Almighty. And the reason is that he sees, there in the height, heavenly sights, and hears heavenly sounds, and beholds the world below, far away, and under Jehovah's feet. And so it is that Malachi drops down from that height this closing message of benediction to our longing, waiting souls. And he tells us that it is indeed worth while to fear Jehovah, and to speak—whether in testimony or in prayer—concerning his holy name. For the prophet assures us that there is a Listening One in that glory, and that a book of remembrance is being written before him, and hence, that he will never forget the saint who has remembered him, or who has even thought upon his name. And then, the prophet adds concerning such, as from the Lord himself: "They shall be mine, saith Jehovah of hosts, even mine own possession." Therefore, shall we not pray, that this Voice may reach us? It will be thus, and thus only, that we shall be wooed and won to a new dedication of heart and lips to the worship of God in believing, prevailing, and adoring prayer. And oh, blessed issue of it all, we too, then, shall be numbered by Jehovah among the men who prayed!

We have tarried long in the secret place and have listened to many intercessors as they have prayed. We have lived, in thought, through centuries, and have looked upon the persons of the greatest and best of the old-time saints. We have seen that the one holy experience that joined together these saints of the ages was prayer, and that the one sacred exercise which made them the men of power that they were was prayer. We have learned the lesson, therefore, with which we began, namely, that prayer is the most potential thing in the world, and that the

man who prays is the most potential man in the world. And also we have learned this chiefest lesson that the essential and most important factor in prayer is, not the saint who is upon his knees, but the God who is upon his throne. For we have seen—given a man who prays, however simply and humbly—that God answers prayer, graciously, abundantly, overwhelmingly.

But what is going to be the end of our meditation? Are we going back to our dreaming about prayer; or are we going to pray? In the case of these Old Testament saints prayer cost. It meant much time, separation from friends and pleasures, physical weariness, often tears and agony of heart and soul. And this is the price which we shall have to pay if we give ourselves to prayer. And we willing, like these old-time saints, to face the cost, and to pray?

God is pleading for more men who will pray. And thus he is pleading for you and me. There is need up there in heaven and down here on earth for men who will be God's remembrancers, and who will give him no rest until he has made his people a praise in the earth; and this need is Jehovah's plaintive plea. If we fail him in this crisis we shall rob him of his glory, the world of its blessing, and ourselves of a high privilege and of an eternal reward. But if we answer with Jeremiah: "Amen, O Jehovah!" we shall accomplish mighty things for God and men, and secure such infinite compensation for ourselves that it will be beyond our imagining. For the word of Isaiah, the prophet and seer, is still true: "For from of old men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen a God besides thee, who worketh for him that waiteth for him." Which means, that waiting for God will give us time to wait upon God; and waiting upon God will give us patience to wait for God; and waiting upon and for

God will give us—God. So then, beloved friend, day by day, through one event and another, for things great and small, always, everywhere, in all things—whatever others may do—let us pray!

