

PREVAILING PRAYER¹

By Tony Marshall Anderson

"As a Prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." -- Gen. 32:28
Dedicated To His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him.

The Foreword

The labor of love represented in this little book has been presented in hope that it will be a means to promote a greater interest in the power of prayer. The reader will please accept my witnessing to the truth concerning my personal experience in praying. It is not I, but Christ. To Him be the glory and the praise for all that has been achieved by prayer. It was not possible to give a complete exposition of the Scriptures quoted in this message on prevailing prayer. My one desire has been to encourage the people of God to devote more time to prayer and diligently labor to understand the promises relating to prayer.

Your Servant in Christ, T. M. Anderson

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1 A Covenant of Prayer

In the Month of January, 1950, I entered into a covenant of prayer with the Savior. At the time this covenant was made I was teaching in the Department of Bible at Asbury College. It was my purpose to do some writing on the Epistle to the Hebrews, and I had made plans to begin this work in January. In order to have the time to devote to my writing it was necessary for me to arise early in the morning, because my schedule of teaching began at eight o'clock. I arranged my daily work so that I could retire early in the evening, and arise about two o'clock and begin my writing.

At the beginning I realized the need of special help from the Lord; and I prayed earnestly that He would enable me to understand the Scriptures; and help me prepare a written message that would glorify Him, and enlighten His people. On January the sixth I was suddenly awakened at midnight: at the time I did not know what had aroused me so suddenly, and knowing that I had a full day of work before me, I felt it necessary to sleep a few more hours. At that moment the Savior spoke to me: He asked me if I could remain awake long enough to give Him time to talk with me in the quiet hours of the morning? He reminded me that there is a fast in denying ourselves of sleep, even as there is a fast in abstaining from food.

For five hours I waited before the Savior in holy worship and communion. My soul did greatly rejoice in His Presence, and my spirit was refreshed; and my body felt no weariness from loss of sleep. It was during the quiet hours after midnight following the visitation of the Savior that I entered into a covenant of prayer with Him. I took account of my time spent in prayer during the average day. I felt ashamed before the Lord when I discovered how little time had been given to prayer. It had been my daily practice from the time I was converted to pray evening and morning. The family altar was established at the beginning of my married life. In my pastorate, and in my calling to the field of evangelism, I had not failed to pray and rest my soul on the Savior. But in all of these years of ministry, I had never known the power and pleasure of prevailing prayer like it was revealed to me when I waited five delightful hours in the Presence of the Savior.

Since making this covenant of prayer, my cares and concerns of daily life rest upon my soul lighter than the clothing on my body. I have discovered the secret of casting all my cares upon Him; I have found the place of His rest. My body is often weary in His work; but my spirit knows no weariness, my soul dwells at ease, and my heart is quiet and undisturbed in a world of trouble.

There was a time when the burden of preaching was almost more than my body could stand. I was restless in the night, and would awaken with the distressing responsibility of the work hanging over me. It took sleep from my eyes, and greatly impaired my health. It is clear to me now that I had not learned the secret of rest. I was pushing and pulling in my own strength, and was not trusting to the Spirit of God to bring things to pass. I have the same responsibilities of preaching, and have the same concern about the victory in the work of the Savior: but I have found rest unto my soul, and have learned that His yoke is easy, and His burden is light.

When I entered into this covenant of prayer it was not as an experiment; it is an imperative necessity in my life. It has been a delight to my heart to meet Him at the throne of grace while the day is young. It has become a fixed habit of life to pray; I consider it to be more important than my daily bread.

I am persuaded that a covenant of prayer is the norm of spiritual living. The Psalmist yearned for the abiding place with the Lord; for he said, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble he will hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me upon a rock." (Psalms 27:4-5)

When I made the covenant of prayer with the Savior it was necessary for me to arrange the plans and pursuits of my personal life so that there would be no conflict with my time devoted to prayer. I discovered that the things of daily living were crowding and congesting my spiritual life, and like Martha, I was careful and troubled about many things.

The legitimate things of life are not evil, but when we permit them to master us it is wrong in the sight of the Lord. In a very real sense, I emptied myself of all earthly possessions and cares before the Lord. I took my personal interests, such as my teaching, and my preaching, and my time for a vacation, and my home, and placed them in a heap before the Savior; and I separated my heart and mind from them. I reckoned myself to be dead to all earthly things. I made a solemn promise to the Savior that I would not allow the

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temporal things of life to interfere with my worship and praying. I made a vow to take sufficient time to wait in His Presence, and watch with Him in prayer. I considered it to be far better to sacrifice my personal affairs, and count all things loss for Christ, rather than gain the whole world, and suffer spiritual loss to my soul.

I have adopted the words of a Psalm in my covenant of prayer. "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord: in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up." (Psalm 5:3) It has been my practice for many months to keep the morning watch with the Savior. Some amazing results have been obtained by prevailing prayer during the silent hush of the new day. The achievements of these sacred hours spent with the Savior have exceeded my greatest expectations. I know that I have not fathomed the depth of God's infinite goodness made available by prayer; neither have I explored the vast reaches of His mercy disclosed in the promises of answered prayer.

It is not my purpose to overlook the necessity of praying at all times. The Psalmist said, "Evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud." (Psalm 55:17) However I do not believe it is possible to place too much emphasis upon the value of praying in the still hours of the morning. The Savior evidently made this a practice of His life, for it is recorded, "In the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." (Mark 1:35)

The hours between midnight and six o'clock in the morning are the most peaceful hours of the entire day. The duties and distractions of the preceding day have ended, and the cares and burdens of the new day have not begun. If one has retired at a reasonable time; and the body has rested for a few hours, and the mind has been cleared and relieved of the confusions of the day, then he can prevail with God in prayer, as at no other time. I find the most practical time of the morning is from three o'clock to five. If one cannot spend but thirty minutes in prayer, I suggest that four o'clock be the chosen hour to meet God. To put off praying until a later time, one will often be hindered by the labors and engagements of the new day.

2 The Scriptures Revealed in Answer to Prayer

During the quiet hours of the morning, in January, 1950, I prayed the Savior would be pleased to give me a greater measure of understanding in His Word. For many years I had made a study of the Scriptures; in fact, I could read several books of the Bible without looking at the printed pages. But I knew that the Scriptures had a depth of meaning, and a vast store of eternal truth that I had not been enabled to see and fully understand by my own reasoning. I realized my need of an enlarged concept of God's plan of redemption to enhance the effectiveness of my ministry. It was the one earnest desire of my heart to have a complete revelation of Christ and His saving truth to enable me to preach the gospel.

At the time I prayed nothing unusual happened; but not many days after that season of prayer, when I began to lecture in the class room at Asbury College, the Word of God began to be revealed to my heart and mind with a depth of meaning that I had not known in all the years of my ministry. I listened to my own lecture with great amazement and interest. I said things about the truth of Christ, and the plan of redemption that had not been previously prepared in my notes for the lecture. The truth which surged in my soul, and poured out of my heart was not a result of my own reasoning; it was a revelation of the Word of God far beyond my own thinking. I knew that the Spirit of the Lord was guiding me into the redemptive truth of Christ, and taking the things of Christ and showing them unto my hungry heart according to the Savior's promise.

My soul was in great peace, and His living Word was like fire in my heart and mind. To this good hour, by the mercy and grace of my Lord, this flaming truth abides in my heart, and the Spirit continues to reveal the Word in a greater measure to my mind day after day. My soul yearns to know more about the Savior, and more about His eternal truth, that I may be enabled to proclaim His power to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. My Lord has been pleased to increase the fruitfulness of my ministry. He has given the unspeakable pleasure of seeing many souls saved by His grace. I witness to the glory of my Christ, that He has blessed my humble ministry for more than forty years. But after I entered into a covenant of prayer with Him, and have faithfully kept watch with Him in the silent hours after midnight, He has given me more than seventeen thousand and five hundred souls, in less than two years.

Several pastors and evangelists have been influenced to make a covenant of prayer with the Savior, and have met Him in the morning watch. Many have witnessed to the power of God in their preaching, and to an increase in the fruitfulness of their messages from the Word. Great revivals have followed as a direct result of praying in the restful hours before the dawn.

3 A Spiritual Awakening in Answer to Prayer

A few weeks after I had made the covenant of prayer with the Savior, I learned that several students in Asbury College were praying for a revival. Some of these earnest souls prayed all night; and others joined them in prayer after midnight. On February the twenty-third, 1950, during the morning service in the chapel, the great revival began. It continued with great power day and night more than a week. The news of it spread all over the Nation, and into some foreign countries. People came hundreds of miles to attend some of the services. It is a conservative estimate to say that at least five thousand persons were directly influenced in spiritual living by this wonderful visitation from God.

The morning that the revival started my soul was aflame with a desire to see a manifestation of God's saving power. It was impossible to contain the surging passion of my heart any longer. With the permission of the Dean, I exhorted the students to seek the Lord; for I believed it was God's time to answer the prayers of His people, and give us a great revival. At that moment the Holy Ghost moved upon the entire student body with deep conviction. In all the years of my ministry in the field of evangelism, I have never witnessed any revival to compare with this marvelous visitation from the Savior. It was a revival born in the hours of agonizing prayer when a faithful few sacrificed sleep to be alone with God.

The small part that I may have contributed to this spontaneous revival was a direct result of intercessory prayer. In a morning in late January, preceding the gracious manifestation of God, I was praying and worshipping before the Lord. My soul was in great agony of intercession. It seemed that my body was being crushed under the burden of prayer for the salvation of the lost. My pain of spirit was exceeding severe, and my heart was broken with sorrow for the unsaved, and my tears streamed down my face. I began to confess the sins of the world to the Savior like they were my own sins.

My travail of soul continued for about thirty minutes; and I knew that in some peculiar way I had entered into the sufferings of Jesus, and was sharing His supplication with strong crying and tears. I obtained the assurance that He had heard my petition. From that

hour it has been my sincere belief that a revival will come to this benighted world if the people of God will deny themselves of food and sleep, and will agonize in prayer with the Savior. Is it possible that we are too indolent and indifferent to feel the deep concern over the lost that our Lord felt when He saw the multitudes going astray like lost sheep? Can it be true that we are too sleepy to watch with Him a few hours in the Gethsemane of prevailing prayer?

4 A Revelation Of God in Answer to Prayer

"Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us..

"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

A man can express much in a few words of prayer. When Philip made this request for a revelation of the Father, he voiced the deepest longing of a human heart; no man can be satisfied without a full revelation of God. Philip did not ask the Savior for the impossible, because He said to Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

It was not the exclusive privileges of the disciples to see the Father revealed in the Son. If the immortal Christ could satisfy the heart of an earnest seeker after God in the days of His flesh, He is the same Christ today, and He is rich in mercy toward all that seek Him. Christ only, can satisfy our hungry hearts by a revelation of the Heavenly Father. No man hath seen God at any time, but the only begotten Son hath declared Him. Jesus came into this world to make the Invisible God visible to mankind; for Jesus Christ is the brightness of the glory of God, and the express image of His Person. This immutable truth abides: the fleeing centuries have not impaired its eternal worth, and the dust of the ages has not obscured it.

I am a witness to this living truth. During the peaceful hours of the morning, in January, 1950, I was praying and waiting in worship before the Savior, when suddenly He stood before me, and I saw Him clearly with the eyes of my understanding. I ceased praying and remained silent in His Presence. The moment was too sacred for me to speak to Him. I do not know how long He continued with me; the passing of time was not noticed: to me, eternity had begun, and time had ceased. When my Lord manifested Himself to me that eventful morning, He opened a door into the heavenly world to me; and by His good grace, I have not lost sight of His Blessed Face for one moment since that momentous hour.

The manifestation of the Savior marked an epoch in my life; it was an entrance into a new realm of eternal light to me. I had come into a world of unlimited possibilities in spiritual achievements. I remembered the promise, "Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." The Eternal Christ is the Door: and He had opened to me a measureless expanse of moral and mental development. From that hour of gladness, my soul has felt no restrictive limitation; I am free to explore the infinite resources of God; for He has set my feet in a large room. This gracious revelation of the Savior enabled me to understand what David meant when he said, "I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is at my right hand, that I should not be moved." (Acts 2 :25, Psalm 16 :8) No language can adequately express my boundless joy when the Savior stood before me that morning. I know it was not a beautiful dream, I walked about the room and rejoiced in His Presence. Someone may ask if there is a scriptural basis for believing that the Savior will reveal Himself to us in this age of reason. I asked myself the same question, and began to seek diligently for a word of revealed truth to support my faith in the reality of the experience which I had received.

Was I a misguided soul, led astray by my own over-wrought imagination? Was I a hapless victim of a mental disorder? Could it be that the vision was a hallucination created out of my wishful thinking? These were some of the questions presented to my mind.

My searching of the Scriptures was rewarded by finding revealed truth to assure my heart before Him. I recalled the words of Jesus spoken to His disciples: "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also ... He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him." The Savior spoke these words following the request of Philip, "Shew us the Father." These words of the Savior glowed with a new light, and imparted a new meaning to my rejoicing heart. This promise was sufficient to confirm my faith in the reality of the Savior's manifestation. I needed no other promise to support my faith, and substantiate my sincere claim.

The Scriptures affirm that the disciples did see the Savior after His passion: "He shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of things pertaining to the kingdom of God. (Acts 1 :3)

It is the fact of a living Christ that establishes the foundation of our faith for eternal life: because He lives, we shall live also. How could one know that Christ lived if He never revealed Himself at any time after His death? The fact of a living Savior makes the new birth a reality to an immortal soul. It is a living Christ that makes the experience of entire sanctification a vital reality in life.

We know that the Savior manifests Himself to a penitent soul seeking for pardon. We do not doubt the fact that Christ reveals Himself to the believer seeking to be sanctified. In view of these fundamental facts, shall we say it is incredible to think that the Savior would manifest Himself to an humble seeker in prayer?

Shall we take the unwarranted position that the only time the Savior manifests Himself is in the two epochs of grace known as pardon and purity? God's infallible Word declares He did manifest Himself to His people in the ages past. A prophet foresaw Him revealed in the flesh, and called His Name Immanuel, which means, God with us.

If the only time that men have seen God is in the dateless past, then we, in this age of the gospel are deceived in our hearts; and there is no truth to support our faith in a risen Savior. If God has clothed Himself in perpetual silence, and wills to remain invisible to mortal man in this dreary world, then our faith is vain, and our hope of life is a delusion. I am not presenting these truths from the Word of God to defend my claim to have seen the Savior while praying in the early morning. I was not seeking such an experience: I was praying and worshipping when suddenly He manifested Himself to me. To my own heart it was a confirmation of the promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28:19)

If this promise contains no reality, and He is not present with us always, even unto the end of the world, then it has no place of value in our faith. It is utterly meaningless, and stands as a vain and pretentious claim of the Savior. This is the cold logic to which one is driven, if the Savior is not manifestly Present with us in all time, and throughout all eternity. If our minds fail to grasp the import of this revealed truth; and if our faith is too feeble to appropriate the promises, it may be because we have substituted ritualism for reality, and have emphasized the figurative rather than the factual in religion. There is a faith which obtains the substance of the things hoped for, and brings to the soul the evidence of things not seen.

It is deplorable to see how far the church has drifted into rationalism. She has apparently lost sight of Divine revelation as a basic fact of saving faith. Many of the devout people in the church are obviously lacking in spiritual discernment; some refer to these realities as mysticism. To the world the promised manifestation of the Savior is unknown. He was in the world, and the world knew Him not. In the estimation of the world, we are crazy to profess to have received a manifestation of the Savior. The unbelievers in the church voice the same disbelief that characterizes this rationalistic generation. They are like Festus who said with a loud voice, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." But the ages have felt the spiritual impact of this dynamic man, who said to Jesus, "What wilt thou have me do."

The manifestation of the Savior in answer to prayer should not be considered the unusual in Christian experience; it is evidently the norm of spiritual life. It is recorded that the place was shaken where they were assembled together in prayer, and the believers were filled with the Spirit. This was a filling subsequent to the fullness of the Spirit received on the day of Pentecost. It was not a "third blessing"; it was a mighty visitation of God, reaffirming His promise to be with them to the end of the world. I do not expect a manifestation of God's power sufficient to shake a building, but in the light of this truth, I have a scriptural foundation for my faith to expect a manifestation of the Savior in answer to an importunate prayer offered in a time of desperate need.

Unless the preachers and people in the Holiness movement take time to pray, and give less time to programs and plans, the movement will soon be in woeful want of spiritual power to withstand the evils of the modern age. The Almighty God revealed in His beloved Son is our refuge and strength. We must prevail in prayer in these last days or utterly perish. Our hope and our help cometh from God, Who has promised to answer the agonizing prayers of His people.

5 The Secret Place of Prayer in the Heart

"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret." (Matthew 6:6) There is a time to pray, and there is a place to pray. It was a custom of our Lord to depart into a solitary place, and there pour out His heart to the Father. He often found relief from His burden of prayer among the friendly hills; and in the unbroken silence of the desert. Jesus evidently meant to disclose the pattern of His own praying in these words spoken to His disciples about praying in secret. The closet was a secret chamber in an Oriental home, generally used for a place of privacy. Jesus selected this secret place to impress us with the necessity of having an appointed time, and a secret place to commune with our Heavenly Father. Jesus speaks of "Thy closet." He recognizes that we can have, and must have a secluded place to meet with God in prayer. To Him, a secret place for prayer was a necessary part of His own life; it was built into His living like the closet was built into the home.

We cannot build a strong Christian character without making room in our lives for secret prayer; for every thing pertaining to holy living is received by prayer and supplication. Perhaps it is difficult for someone to understand that prayer proceeds out of the heart and mind of the worshiper. We must begin our praying in secret with a sincere purpose in mind and heart. What we have to say to God, we must say it from the heart, and not to be heard of men like the hypocrites.

We cannot make our hearts and minds a storeroom for earthly things, and at the same time have a secret place to meet God. Jesus said, "Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to the Father. We are not ready to pray until our hearts and minds are divested of the cares and concerns of this world. When we have emptied our hearts of earthly things, and have shut the door of the mind against the din and confusion of this restless world, we can pray with the assurance of being heard. We cannot get God's door open until we get our door shut. When the mind is wandering, and the heart is filled with business affairs, the door is not closed, and we cannot pray. We have the power of will to shut the door of the heart and mind, and to concentrate all of the heart and mind in secret prayer. It requires effort of will, and a strong determination of the mind to overcome the distractions of daily living, and enter the closet and shut the door. But the reward for the self-denial is worth the efforts of the will to obtain it. When we have completely overcome these clamoring concerns of life, and mastered our many physical infirmities by the help of the Spirit, we can prevail in prayer. In the peaceful seclusion of our innermost souls we can commune with the Heavenly Father in perfect confidence; and the Father which seeth our hearts in secret shall reward us openly.

There is a quiet place where we can be separated from the confusions which clutter our minds and crowd our hearts in daily life; it is a sacred place where the multiplicity of things cease to congest our souls. It is a secret retreat where the door is closed, and the babel of boisterous voices calling for our attention cannot be heard, and all business pursuits bidding for our services are forgotten. There is a sheltered place for prayer where the floodgate of the soul can be opened, and the heart be relieved of its burden in the Presence of a sympathetic Father. It is the refuge of the soul where our tears can freely flow, and their unspoken language is understood. It is a silent and solitary place where the prying eyes of men cannot behold our sorrows and sufferings, and no one can make us ashamed and afraid. The blessed Savior has disclosed the holy place, the hallowed room of secret prayer, where we can enter by faith, and close the door against our family, and our friends, and our foes, and on the pinions of prayer, pass beyond the limits of time, and invade eternity by the invincible power of the Name of Jesus.

I have often been so bewildered and hindered by my infirmities of body and mind that I did not know what to pray for as I ought. I was unable to utter the yearnings of my own heart. But the cry of my heart was heard in heaven, because the Holy Spirit had helped my infirmities. "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." (Rom. 8:26-27)

This promise gives us great encouragement to pray from our hearts. The cry of the heart will be assisted by the indwelling Spirit, and He that searches the heart knows the mind and purpose of the supplicating saints, and will reward them openly. We could not pray without ceasing unless much of our praying was done in the heart. It would be a physical impossibility to cry unto God day and night if we could not pray in the secret chambers of the soul. The secret praying of the heart is infinitely more than thinking a prayer. There is a language of the heart that God understands; there is a whisper of the soul, unheard on earth, but heard in heaven.

Praying in secret is not a substitute for praying in public; we cannot use this sacred privilege to justify our unwillingness to engage in the public worship of God in prayer. Jesus prayed in secret, and He prayed in public; His disciples were blessed and edified by hearing Him pray.

6 A Sufficient Provision For Prayer

"Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." (Matthew 6 :8)

After revealing the truth about the secret place of prayer, the Savior continued His discourse on prayer, and revealed the Heavenly Father's provision for answering prayer. We should take sufficient time to meditate on this revealed truth; because it is exceedingly important to have an understanding of this essential fact before we pray. We may know in a general way that God knows all things; but we continue to live in spiritual need, and struggle alone with our problems, and suffer alone in our troubles. We suffer these things because we have failed to fully grasp the import of this consoling revelation about the Father's provision for our diversified needs.

The Savior's words assure us that the Heavenly Father has anticipated our many needs before we were born. Out of the generosity and infinite goodness of His loving heart, He has made a sufficient provision to satisfy every desire of our hearts, and to meet every demand of our lives. It did not require one sleepless night of us to provide these things. We did not shed a single tear, or give one drop of our blood to provide them. We have not given a sacrifice from our flocks or our fields to purchase the things we need. Our Heavenly Father's great compassion for us has motivated Him to provide for our wants. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

The fact that our Father has provided for our needs reveals that the unlimited resources of God are made available through prayer. It is written, "My God shall supply all of your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4 :19) Who can measure the extent of His riches in glory? When we have comprehended the fact of the Father's abundant supply for us, even before we ask Him, we can have the faith to ask Him for all things needful in life, and He will grant the requests in the Name of Jesus, our Lord.

I deem it necessary to stress the importance of the asking, because there is no other way to obtain the things we need. In the white light of the revealing words of Jesus regarding these things, there is no valid reason, and certainly no justifiable excuse, for spiritual poverty and want. But the evidence of spiritual need is apparent everywhere among the people of God. Moral weakness and spiritual instability is prevalent in the church. These deplorable conditions will cease to exist if the people of God will pray, and by faith draw upon the limitless riches of God in Christ Jesus. But we cannot expect Him to supply our needs when we are too indifferent and unconcerned to ask Him in faith.

If I can do nothing more than enlighten the saints of God about the power of prevailing prayer; and encourage them to explore the vast resources of the Father's provision for their needs, it will be a reward sufficient to compensate me for my labors of love. What I have learned in the school of prayer with the Master, is worth all it cost me in time to tarry in His Presence, and worship Him in spirit and in truth.

7 A Scriptural Pattern of Prayer

"After this manner therefore pray ye." (Matthew 6:9-15)

The Lord's prayer is not a form of prayer, it is a pattern of prayer. The manner of our praying will follow this pattern of praying if we ask according to the instructions of Jesus. The prayer proceeds in an orderly manner from the opening words to the final Amen. There is perfect continuity in the prayer; it begins with worship and ends with praise.

The prayer follows the Savior's words, "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him;" and embraces in its scope every need of man. If we offer the words of this prayer in humility and sincerity, we have a right to expect our Heavenly Father to answer the petition, and supply our needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Therefore let us come with confidence before our Father and make our requests known to Him.

"Our Father which art in Heaven."

It has been stated that the secret place of prayer is in the heart of the worshiper; but the opening words of the Lord's prayer are addressed to "Our Father which art in heaven." There is no contradiction in the truth, for we know that the secret prayers of our hearts are spoken humbly to our Heavenly Father. There is no dividing line between a holy heart and a holy heaven; the Everlasting Father dwells in our hearts, and He dwells in heaven. When we say "Our Father which art in heaven," we must have in mind that there is a throne of grace where we can come with boldness, and obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. I am convinced that no one can pray intelligently without first knowing the needs of his own heart, and knowing where the place of prayer is established.

I asked a preacher to give me his concept of praying. He said that he conceived of God being a Great Spirit everywhere present, and that he prayed with this thought in mind. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. But one cannot say "Our Father which art in heaven," if He is everywhere in general. Obviously this is not the concept of praying to the Father which Jesus reveals in the pattern of prayer. The Scriptures reveal the proper concept of approaching God in prayer. We see it prefigured in the ritualistic law of Israel's' worship. The Lord dwelt in the most holy place in the temple. The high priest entered this sacred place once each year, and offered the blood of the sacrifice for the sins of the people, and prayed for them before the Lord.

We also know that when the people prayed they looked toward the temple where the Lord dwelt, and prayed facing the most holy place. The people dwelling in strange lands where they had been led captives, prayed with their faces turned toward Jerusalem, where the temple was located. In the covenant of grace we have a Great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God. He is the only Mediator between God and man; and He is seated on His mediatorial throne at the right hand of God.

We must follow the pattern of the worshipers in Israel, and turn our faces toward heaven, where Christ is seated on His mediatorial throne at the right hand of the Father. When we say, "Our Father which art in heaven, we should have a mental picture of these facts as revealed in the plan of Salvation. I find it impossible to pray in faith until I have first formed a mental image of these fundamental facts. I must envision the Savior seated on His mediatorial throne to have a basis for praying in faith. I must see Him in the office of the Great High Priest before I can ask for the things I need.

The place of the Savior at the right hand of God is not fiction; neither is it a figure of speech. It is the abiding truth revealed in the infallible Word of God. The plan of salvation is a reality, and not a ritual. I cannot conceive of Jesus being in any place in the plan of salvation except at the right hand of the Father performing the work of the High Priest of our profession. I consider it necessary to emphasize these fundamental truths to show that, "Our Father which art in heaven," is not in some remote place far removed from us;

but that He is in a place where we can see Him with the eyes of our understanding, and turn our faces toward Him in prayer, and be heard.

"Hallowed be thy name."

Prayer is a part of worship, it approaches the Heavenly Father with a true spirit of reverence and respect for His Name. Prayer recognizes the Holiness of the Father, and the sanctity of His Presence. coming boldly to the throne of grace does not extend to any one the right to be irreverent in his approach to God. To worship the Lord at the beginning of prayer will be rewarded by His blessing and a conscious sense of His pleasure. If one prays thirty minutes, he will be richly benefited in spirit if he will worship the Lord at least one half the time of praying. It is a part of prayerful worship to make love to the Savior. He is pleased to have us tell Him of our love; and it pleases Him to have us say that we love Him because of what He is in His Adorable Person. Let the Savior hear you say that you are not following Him because of the things received from Him; tell Him that he is all, and in all to you in time and eternity. If you are sincere in you praise, you are sincere in your prayers.

Prayer is offered in the Name of the Savior, and prayer should recognize the meaning of the Name of the Savior. I find and unutterable joy to my own soul to recall the Names of the Lord recorded in the Scriptures. These Names have great meaning, because they reveal certain qualities of the Nature of the Lord. For an example, consider the Name, Almighty God. We can see at once that this Name reveals the unlimited power of God; and assures us that this invincible power is supporting our faith and hope for eternal life. The Lord said to Moses, "I AM THAT I AM," denoting Eternal Existence, and an Eternal Presence with His people. The prophet called Him Immanuel, which means, "God with us." The Name of Jesus Christ the Son of God is precious to the praying saints. His Name is Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Hallowed be Thy Name, Thou Blessed Son of God. Thy Name is above every Name, for Thou art The King of kings, and Lord of lords. Thou art the Holy One, The Amen, and the Beginning and the End, the Alpha and Omega, the first Cause, the fixed center, and the final conclusion of all creation. In thee we live, and move, and have our being. "Hallowed be Thy Name," in the heavens above, and in the earth, which is Thy footstool.

"Thy Kingdom come."

The prayer brings us to recognize our need of the government of Almighty God. Prayer will bring our souls into perfect submission to the Sovereignty of God; and we will never question His right to reign over us in Supreme Authority.

The soul of man is one place where the Lord does not reign as King. All men have been created with the right of free will, and the power of choice. A man can accept the kingdom of God or reject it, and God will respect the right of man's choice. When we say, "Thy kingdom come," we state our choice to be governed by the Heavenly Father. When we say these words, we must yield the throne of our self-government to the Father, and give Him the undisputed authority to rule over our lives. If we say "Thy kingdom come," we must issue an invitation in prayer for the Lord to enter our hearts, and extend His Eternal Kingdom to include all that we are in body, and soul, mind and strength.

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

The Lord's prayer shows the need of man to be in obedience to the will of God. Prayer brings the will into complete conformity with the Divine will, and links heaven and earth in a oneness of spiritual relationship. When the will of man is in perfect accord with the will of God, his obedience on the earth will be like the obedience rendered in heaven. The willingness of the man to serve the Lord, and his purpose to please Him, will equal that of the angels in heaven. We have no basis for believing that our Heavenly Father will answer prayer, and give us the things we need, unless we sincerely say "Thy will be done."

The pattern prayer asks for harmony with the will of God for all time to come. The days ahead may bring poverty and privation, trials and troubles, nevertheless, "Thy will be done." The Father's will can mean sacrifice and suffering, for it presents the cross to us. There is no escape from the sufferings of the cross; there is no crown without a cross. When we offer the Lord's prayer we agree to all that the will of God contains for the present, and for the future: to refuse is to perish; but to yield means eternal life.

"Give us this day our daily bread."

Jesus discloses the fact that the worship of God is first in the order of the pattern prayer; and that we must say, "Thy Name," and "Thy Kingdom," and "Thy Will," before we can ask for our daily bread. We must recognize the Giver before we request the gift.

We frequently present our wants before we prayerfully worship. We pray about our needs, and forget to pray in His Name.

Our Father is not unmindful of our need of daily bread. This fact is vividly shown by the Savior's interest in the needs of His disciples. They could not forget the morning He stood on the shore of the sea, and said, "Children, have ye any meat?" He had compassion on them in the time of need; He fed them when they were hungry, and blessed their labors with a miracle. The same loving Jesus told us to ask the Heavenly Father for our daily bread. The prayer does not imply that the supply of bread will be greater than our daily requirement. But if the goodness of God grants us an abundance, and gives us security against a future want; let us not turn our hearts away from Him. "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them." (Psalm 62:10)

When one devotes so much time and effort to earn his daily bread, and neglects to pray and worship God, that man will suffer impoverishment of soul. To do this to the hurt of the soul is evil in the sight of the Lord. In this age of strife and selfishness, we can become slaves to our tasks, and allow our temporal needs to overshadow our spiritual needs. By all means, let us keep the worship of the Lord in the first place, and not seek earthly things more than we seek eternal things. Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added.

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

The pattern prayer brings us to a recognition of our indebtedness to our Heavenly Father. We have a moral obligation that must be settled by prayer. We have incurred the displeasure of God by transgressing His law, for sin is a transgression of the law. We have no merits to plead; and no money to pay the obligation. But our gracious Heavenly Father is willing to forgive us our debts; He does not ask us to pay, He only asks us to pray.

Our forgiveness is conditional: we must forgive our debtors, before God will forgive our debts. Our Lord said, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you."

There is no pardon for the person that will not grant a pardon; there is no answer to the prayer of the man who will not forgive.

"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

Our Heavenly Father knows that we have need of protection, and has enabling grace to preserve His people in the hour of temptation. We are not to assume that we will not be carried into temptation; we must ask the Father to provide a way of escape when we are tempted. I have no fear of the Lord leading me into temptation without a purpose; but I am afraid of becoming careless and failing to watch and pray, and as a result, be overcome by temptation. We are safe as long as we pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen" Indeed we ascribe all the praise, and glory to Our Heavenly Father, and to the Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave us the pattern of prayer.

8 The Throne of Grace

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace for help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:16) It has been stated previously that the approach to the throne of grace is through Jesus, our High Priest. I have also said that it is important to form a mental picture of the Savior seated on His mediatorial throne, which is the throne of grace. If one does not have a Scriptural concept of the mediatorial throne, he will find it difficult to pray because his mind will have no certain resting place. Wandering thoughts are due to a lack of concentration.

If we come "boldly" to the throne of grace, we must base our confidence upon the infallible Word of God, believing that we shall obtain mercy, and find grace for help in the time of need. We can approach the throne of grace with courage and confidence, having no doubts and fears about being heard. The Savior will not deny His faithful people; He will answer their prayers, and give them the desires of their hearts.

We base our faith and courage upon the fact, that we have an High Priest that can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, because He has been tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. The Savior is not unmindful of our infirmities of body and mind. He is sympathetic and understanding; He knows the meaning of our tears, and He knows the troubles which beset us in this world. Our prayers for mercy and help can touch Him, for He has been tempted in every point as we are tempted. He can sustain us in every trial, and enable us to win in every conflict; He has suffered for us in the flesh. When we come to the throne of grace, we are not required to make an apology for our infirmities of body and mind; we do not need to explain our limitations. The Savior knows us, and is waiting to hear our prayers.

We should not overlook the fact that obtaining mercy is first in the order of praying at the throne of grace, for it is the Mercyseat. We have no meritorious claims of our own; we have nothing to commend us to God. Our only hope is in obtaining mercy, and not be rejected in a time of need. The consoling words of the Psalm encourage us to pray: "For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee." (Psalm 86:5)

When we have come humbly to the Mercyseat, and obtained mercy in the Name of Jesus, we shall find grace for help in time of need. In the clear light of this truth, let us come unashamed and unafraid, and make our requests known unto God. The Lord has enabled me to pray the prayer of faith a few times in my life; but I have discovered more about the power of prayer since making the covenant of prayer with the Savior, than I knew in the forty years of my ministry. I have learned how to take people into the Presence of the Savior, and talk with Him about their needs. I witness to the power of prevailing prayer, that my Heavenly Father may be glorified in His Son.

I entered a small cafe late one evening after a service at the church. The manager told me that his wife was seriously ill in a hospital; he said she had been unable to speak for several days. Immediately my heart was burdened for the sick woman. I told the husband that I would pray for his wife, for which he was very grateful. About four o'clock in the morning, I took this unknown woman on my prayer, and held her up before the Savior. He gave the assurance that He had heard my prayer, and would help her. I returned two days later, and entered the little cafe. When the manager saw me, he cried out, "Mother is up, mother is up, and talking, and walking about the room." His daughter said to me, "Mister, what did you do to my mother?" I told her that I held her mother up before the Lord in prayer. She began to weep, and said, "Mister, hold me up to God in prayer, I am such a wicked girl." This sick woman was ninety miles from the place where I prayed, but the distance did not prevent the answer to prayer.

I was praying in the quiet hours of the morning in February, 1950; when I formed the mental picture of the Savior on His mediatorial throne, and presented my request, I was enabled to see certain facts about the person for whom I was praying. By a power never before known to me, I was enabled to see into the past lives of persons, and remind them of certain incidents in their past that affected them in their spiritual lives. I certainly did not seek gift of spiritual discernment, if this was such a gift. But in more than a hundred incidents I have not been mistaken at any time.

My daughter Ruth, lived more than a hundred and fifty miles from my home. Ruth was unsaved, and my heart was greatly burdened for her. I took her on my prayer, and presented her before the Savior at the Mercy Seat. I saw the Savior lay His hand on her head, I could see her curly hair between His fingers. I told my wife about the vision, and we wept before the Lord, and gave Him thanks. The next morning when I prayed for Ruth, I saw kneeling by her bed in prayer; I saw the same thing the third morning. But the fourth morning when I prayed, I saw her standing, and knew that she had been saved by grace.

In a letter she said that the Saviour had put His hand on her head, and her mind was cleared of all confusion, and she recalled the truth of salvation, and had been saved by grace.

I was in a hotel in Nashville, Tennessee, in March, 1950. In the quiet hours of the morning I prayed for my son, who lived three hundred miles from where I was praying. I presented my unsaved boy before the Saviour at the Mercy Seat. The Saviour spoke to me, and said, "I will save your boy tomorrow, kneeling at the couch in your living room in your home." I called my son by phone, and asked him to meet me at my home the next day. He gave me no assurance that he would come; but when I arrived home, my son was there to meet me as I had expected. The Lord saved him kneeling by the couch in my living room at my home according to His promise to answer prayer. My Father which seeth in secret had rewarded me openly.

There was a young woman who was unmoved by the power of God manifested in the great revival at Asbury College, in 1950. She told some of the students that it was nothing but emotionalism and excitement, and that she would have nothing to do with it.

Several students requested me to join them in prayer for the girl to be saved. About four o'clock in the morning I presented this girl before the throne of grace. I did not know the young woman, but the moment I began to pray for her, I saw her running out of a lighted building, and running toward the darkness. The vision so impressed me, that I told some of the students to inform the young woman that I had seen her running from God.

About nine thirty that night, the young woman came to my home. She sat on a small footstool in front of me, and in anger told me that she wanted no part of the revival, that it was all emotionalism and religious excitement. I could not reason with her; for she was very angry at me for sending word to her about running from God. In my own mind, I was convinced that her attitude toward the revival was a pretense, and that she was covering her sins. I told her I could find her real reason for rejecting the Saviour; and I began to pray for her. When I presented her before the Saviour, I saw a large hall, and an orchestra, and the leader of the orchestra standing before a microphone. But my attention was drawn to a young man playing the piano; I knew he had something to do with this girl's attitude toward Christ. When I asked the girl about the young man, she began to cry; and confessed that she had been attending the dance, and was at one time planning to marry the piano player. She said it was a secret, and was amazed that I knew it.

I began to pray again for her, and I saw a lighted room, and a table set with glasses for liquor: and I saw this young woman filling the glasses with liquor. When I asked her if she drank liquor, she began to scream, and said, "That is a cocktail party given in my home, and I gave a preacher's daughter her first drink. I have damned her, I have damned my best friend." She confessed covering her many evil deeds by pretending that she did not believe in the revival. She had no more fight against conviction left in her; she was completely broken in spirit, and was contrite of heart. Once more I took her to the Saviour in prayer; and I obtained mercy for her at the throne of grace. The merciful Lord saved her instantly; and she shouted with great joy for deliverance from sin.

An elderly man was seeking help at the altar. He was in deep despair, and discouraged by the trials which had beset him in recent months. He was distressed by his doubts, and had given up his testimony of salvation. He was eighty-five years of age, weak, and sick in body. It was my joy to take this man before the High Priest, who can be touched by the feeling of our infirmities. Knowing the truth, I came boldly to the throne of grace, and lifted this man up before the sympathetic Christ in prayer. I saw a little white church situated in a grove, out in the country. I saw a young man converted at the altar in that church; I could see him shaking hands with the people, and rejoicing with them. I saw the young man had dark hair, and a little mustache; and in some way, I knew that the elderly man at the altar was the young man I had seen in the little church. He told me that he was saved sixty-five years ago in the little white church in the country. He said, "My hair was dark, and I had a little mustache."

When I told him that the Lord had shown me these things, and that he had been converted in the little white church. The Savior blessed this humble man, and his doubts departed, and the joy of the Lord filled his heart. It was a time of need in the life of this man, and a merciful Savior had answered prayer, and given help in the nick of time.

Let us pray always, and not faint. God has promised to avenge His own elect which cry day and night unto Him.

9 Praying in His Name

"If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." (John. 14:140)

The Father has given all things into the hands of His Son. The Word says, that God hath appointed the Son heir of all things. All power in heaven and in earth is given to Jesus, our Lord: and all praying must be done in His Name, because He is the only Mediator between God and man. Our right to ask in the Name of Jesus is based upon our relationship to Him, and to the Heavenly Father through Him. A child has a right to ask bread of his father by virtue of his relationship. But a beggar at the door cannot base his right to ask food upon relationship, because he is not a member of the family. The master of the house may give food to the beggar out of pity for his plight. But a Father gives food to his child out of the loving kindness for his own child.

Our Heavenly Father does not answer the prayers of His children because He has pity for them. He answers their requests out of the pleasure of His heart. The Word shows this to be true. Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." (I John. 3 :24.) If our hearts condemn us because of disobedience and neglect, we cannot pray with confidence. But if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. The Savior places no limitations on the potentialities and power of prayer in His Name. He said, "If ye shall ask anything in my Name, I will do it." The power of prevailing prayer is unlimited, because the resources of the Father are unlimited. He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. Our God has resources of power and riches far beyond our finite minds to comprehend, and exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask.

When we examine the Savior's promise to give us anything we ask in His Name, we find the fundamental facts of the prayer of faith. In the words of the promise, the Savior reveals His Word, and His Will, and His work. These three facts are one, and constitute the basic facts on which we rest our praying in His Name. The prayer of faith must rest first upon the Words of the Savior. The Word of God stands at the beginning of all revealed truth. Christ Jesus is the Word made flesh. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

The Savior disclosed this eternal truth about prayer, saying: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." (John. 15:7) I am convinced that there are many people who believe the words of Jesus concerning praying in His Name. They have assented to the truth of His word, but do not have His words abiding in them. This fact is reflected in their living and in their praying. When questioned about the results achieved in prayer, they readily admit that nothing unusual has ever come to pass. When they hear of the unusual manifested in answer to prayer, they are reluctant to believe it to be true.

We must believe from the heart that His promise is true because His word is back of every promise. We must not permit our reasoning to lead us into doubts when we pray in His Name. When we substitute reasoning for revelation we abandon faith and limit the Power of God. The prayer of faith rests upon the Will of the Savior to answer prayer in His Name. If one will make a careful search of the context, he will find the will of the Savior clearly revealed. The scope of His will embraces all the needs of the children of God. If they need consolation, He said, "I will not leave you comfortless." If they need love, He said, "I will love ... and my Father

will love." If they need a revelation of God, He said, "I will manifest myself." These promises are unlimited in possibilities, and they are all expressions of the will of the Savior.

The prayer of faith rests upon the Work of the Savior. "I will do it," said Jesus. There are many things to be given in answer to prayer, and there are many things to be done by the Savior in answer to prayer. Our children receive both our gifts and our services in life. There are some things to be done for them; things that require action and achievement. The same is true concerning the children of God. Our Lord pledges Himself to act on our behalf; He places Himself under obligation to serve His own children, and work for them in life.

In His infinite condescension He took upon Himself the form of a servant. He revealed this truth in an amazing manner when He washed the disciple's feet. We saw the Maker of worlds in the form of a Servant; the King of kings kneeling at the feet of men. "I will do," said the Master. Yes it is true, He will answer your cry for help. He will show Himself strong and mighty to perform the work of redemption, and bring His people into their eternal inheritance. He is our Defense, and our Delight, and our Deliverer. His eyes are not dim, and His ears are not dull of hearing. His arms are not weak, and His footsteps never lag. He watches over us in the night, and He leads us by day. His hands were pierced by the nails of His cross, but they are hands that hold us securely in His loving care. His feet were wounded by a single spike, but He hurries to walk with us in the winding path of the just, which leads to the home of the soul. He carries our burdens on His strong shoulders, and puts the everlasting arms about us in the embrace of love.

The Architect of the ages has extended His works beyond this world, and has gone to prepare a place for us in the home of the Father. He has laid the foundations of the Holy City on the rock of His eternal Word. When our journey on earth has ended, He will open the gates of gold, and give us an abundant entrance into the everlasting Kingdom. Therefore the prayer of faith rests upon the oneness of the Saviour's Word, and His Will, and His Work.

I have labored to show that the faith to ask anything in His Name must rest upon the Word, and the Will, and the Work, of the Savior. It is now my purpose to show how faith operates on the basis of these three facts. There are numerous passages of Scripture revealing the power of faith but we select only one to show how faith operates in praying in His Name. "Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." (Mark 11:22-24)

The first statement made by the Saviour is, "Have faith in God." If we have faith in His Word, and in His Will, and in His Work. The Savior's next statement shows how faith can engage the power of God to remove the mountain: "Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea." It is evidently true that the man who has faith in God does not remove the mountain by his own works. He employs the power of God to do the work required to remove the mountain. Therefore according to the words of Jesus, our faith in God can command things to come to pass, and the Omnipotent God will obey the command of faith, and do the work. (See Isaiah 45:11)

Following these amazing facts about the power of faith, the Saviour shows how faith is applied to prayer. He said, "When ye pray, believe that ye receive, and ye shall have." He reveals that the desire of the heart will be granted on the condition of faith. If we doubt not in our hearts, but believe that the things we say shall come to pass, we shall have our prayer answered. Unbelief is the only thing that can limit the power of God, and prevent Him from answering our petitions.

In order to illustrate the working of God in answer to the prayer of faith, let us think of a man desiring to have the mountain removed. He is aware of the greatness of the undertaking, and knows that he is unable to move the mountain by his own efforts. But he knows of a company that can move it, and plans to engage them to do the work. Before he engages the company to perform the task required, the man must have faith in their word, and in their will, and in their work. His faith in the company will enable him to employ a power that he does not possess.

Now let us suppose that the man desiring to have the mountain removed has a doubt regarding the word of the company he plans to employ. He begins to reason about the possibility of the company being unwilling to do the work required. His unbelief will defeat his purpose, and leave him with the location of the mountain unchanged. Perhaps the Savior directed our attention to a mountain to impress us with the fact that there are insurmountable barriers which we cannot remove by our own efforts. But we can command the power of God by faith, and He will remove the mountainous difficulties for us. I am convinced that the littleness of our faith prevents God from doing many things for us which He has promised in His Word. We have allowed our own reasoning to limit our faith in God. I have heard it said that the day of miracles is past. But where may one find this to be a fact revealed in God's Word? It does not exist as a fact. The man who says that the day of miracles is past, is evidently seeking an alibi to justify his own unbelief.

The Savior said, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to my Father." (John. 14 :12) Jesus connected this promise with the promise to answer prayer in His Name. In the light of this truth we cannot doubt the fact of miracles. I cannot doubt the power of God to heal the sick any more than I can doubt His power to save a sinner. The Savior did not promise to impart a supernatural power to any man to work miracles; neither did He empower a man to save a sinner, or sanctify a believer. But He did link the man that believed the Word of God with a power to pray the prayer of faith to heal the sick, and convert the sinner, and sanctify the believer.

When Peter and John healed the lame man at the gate of the temple they were performing the works of the Savior by faith. Peter said, "Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?" "Through faith in his name (Jesus) hath made this man strong." (Acts. 3 :12,16) We have no power or holiness of our own that can heal the sick; but we have the Name of Jesus Christ: and in His Name we obtain the power to work the works of God. My prayer is that the Blessed Savior will increase our faith; and enable us to draw upon the unlimited power of God by prayer.

10 The Savior Prays For His People

"He ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Hebrews 7:25)

The people of God can derive great comfort from the fact that the Savior is interceding for them. He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing that He ever liveth to intercede for them.

Prayer is apparently an essential part of the plan of salvation because the Lord has made it a part of His changeless Priesthood. Speaking of the Savior, the Inspired Word says, "Who in the days of His flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared." (Hebrews 5 :7)

The Son of God was not offering up prayers and supplication with strong crying and tears because He was afraid to die on the cross; He was interceding for lost souls. He knew that eternal death was the penalty for sin. He knew that mankind lived in darkness and under the shadow of death. His passion of prevailing prayer was motivated by the fear that we would perish in our sins; and His Infinite love and compassion moved Him to pray fervently that we might be saved.

The pardoning mercy of the Heavenly Father is made an essential part of the redemptive work of the Savior through His intercession. When He was suffering on the cross, He prayed, "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do." Our sanctification is a part of the plan of salvation; for the Savior prayed, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. (John. 17:17)

The prayers of our Lord are living realities in redemption. His prayers are made available to us by faith, and become effectual in us the moment we believe on His Name. When a sinner asks for pardon he is immediately joined in prayer by the Savior. The same is true when the believer prays to be sanctified. If we will consider the prayers of the Savior to be living realities, and not look upon them as events recorded in sacred history, we will be able to appropriate them by faith, and receive the spiritual benefits for which He prayed. The Savior's prayers live forever because He breathed into them the power of an endless life.

In order to illustrate this truth, let us think of a man earnestly praying to be sanctified. Now visualize the Savior kneeling by the man praying for him to be sanctified. The living prayer of the Savior, saying, "Sanctify them," is joined with the man's prayer to be sanctified, and the answer is assured by faith in the Word of God. When one grasps this fact about the Savior's praying, he can obtain every blessing of redeeming grace provided in the plan of salvation. Jesus is able to save all men to the uttermost extent of their sins, seeing that He ever liveth to make intercession for them.

The second fact revealed about the Savior's prayers for His people is that He intercedes for their preservation in this world. "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou has given me, that they may be one as we are ... I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from evil." (John. 17: 11,15)

He is able to save His people to the uttermost extent of their probationary sojourn in this world, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. God permits His people to be tried; and what He permits He will not prevent. He never grants His people an indulgence to sin; but He does enable them to endure temptations to sin. I am not convinced in my own thinking, that God permits His people to suffer the temptation to sin for the purpose of proving their sincerity, and their loyalty to Him. I certainly do not look upon the Savior's temptation in the wilderness as a test of His fidelity. I know that in some peculiar way He was suffering for His people. The Scriptures say, "In all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." (Hebrews 2 :17-18)

We are never under the necessity to sin at any time in life; but we are liable to sin unless we are watchful and pry without ceasing. The Savior has made provision for His people if they are overcome in an hour of trial. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2:1

This blessed truth is brought to light by the words of Jesus spoken to Simon Peter: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." (Luke 22 :31-32)

This wonderful truth shows us that the purpose of Satan is overcome by the Prayer of the Savior. We can find great consolation in knowing that every satanic plan, and infernal purpose of the enemy, is thwarted by the prayers of the Blessed Lord.

Suppose a man, that is sanctified, is overcome by temptation in an unguarded moment, and commits sin. Is it necessary for him to return to his first works, and repent, and be reclaimed from his backslidings? This question has been presented to me many times. My answer is, if the man did not sin willfully; if he did not plan and purpose in his heart to sin: then the gracious Savior's intercession will prevail for him, and sustain him in his relationship to God. But it must be understood by all, that the man must confess his sin, and trust in His Lord's mercy in such an hour. He must do this immediately, and not continue in the displeasure of God, and presume upon His mercy. Simon Peter wept bitterly after he had denied the Lord in an hour of severe trial. He had not made his plans to curse, and deny that he knew the Savior. The prayer of Jesus sustained the faith of his erring disciple. The traitorous Judas made plans to betray Jesus, and died without hope, and without the help of the prayers of Jesus. I am persuaded that there are many faithful persons in this evil world, who have found, that the Advocate with the Father, sustained them in a time of trial. Perhaps they grieved the Lord, and felt the sting of conscience; but when they came before Him in tears, they found Him a merciful and a faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

My final word of exhortation is: do not presume on the prayers of the Saviour, and be led into a false security. But make much of the fact that He is at the right hand of God, and makes intercession for us. In my own praying, I often ask the Saviour to pray for me. I ask Him to tell the Father that I love Him; and give Him thanks for sending His Son into the world to save me from sin. I have often prayed to Jesus, and requested Him to tell the Father that I was pleased with His Sovereign will in my life; and tell Him I was pleased with His will for my life. My soul has been greatly refreshed in these seasons of prayer.