

# PRAYER

## 1. What is prayer? “Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed.”

### R2251 [col. 1 ¶3]:

“Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed,” says the poet: and he says truly, for the Scriptures inform us that God is a “discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart;” and again, that in the case of the saints the spirit or intention is accepted by the Lord when we approach him in seasons of distress, when we can find no language in which to clothe our feelings and desires,—when we come to him with

spirit-groanings which we cannot utter in words. (Rom. 8:26.) Nevertheless both by words and example our Lord instructed us that our prayers should be uttered, formulated, and, if possible, not be left merely to incoherent feelings and groanings. It was to this end that he gave the instructions of the present lesson, in answer to the request of the apostles, “Lord, teach us to pray.” — Luke 11:1.

### F680 [¶2, first sentence]:

As the Scriptures explain, prayer is the attempt to gain access to the presence of God, and to hold communion with him.

## 2. What is the *privilege and power* of prayer?

### R1864 [col. 1 ¶6]:

To the thoughtful, appreciative mind, one of the greatest privileges which the Word of God offers is that of personal audience and communion with the King of kings and Lord of lords. When we consider how great is our God, and how exalted his station, how wonderful is the condescension that thus regards our low estate! He it is whose glory covereth the heavens, and whose kingdom ruleth over the whole universe. He it is who is without beginning of days or end of years: “From everlasting to everlasting thou art God.” He is the immortal, the self-existing One, “dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see.” The heavens declare his glory and the firmament showeth his handiwork. In all his vast universal domain there is nothing hidden from him, nor can he be wearied by its care. His wisdom, who can fathom? and his ways, who can

find them out? or who hath been his counsellor? His mighty intellect grasps with ease all the interests of his wide dominion, from immensity to minutia. His eye never slumbers nor sleeps, nor can the smallest thing escape his notice, not even a sparrow’s fall; and the very hairs of our heads are all numbered. It is his skill which clothes with life and beauty the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven. And are not we, the creatures of his hand, “fearfully and wonderfully made,” and the subjects, too, of his love and care? — “O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways; for there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

### R2004 [col. 1 ¶4]:

The privilege of prayer which God has provided for his people is one of the greatest boons imaginable. “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Heb. 4:16.) The mercy has been pro-

vided by God in the great sacrifice of Christ, sufficient to cover all “the sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;” but we must by faith approach the throne of grace in order to obtain this mercy. So, also, with all of our necessities as new creatures in Christ; grace to help

for every time of need lies waiting for us to claim it—at the throne of grace. Although our Heavenly Father knoweth what we need, and has made so abundant a provision for us, yet he will be inquired of, solicited, by his people, for

these mercies which he assures us he is far more pleased to give than are earthly parents to do good unto their children.

### 3. What is the *object* of prayer?

#### R2004 [col. 1 ¶5]:

God's appointment that his people should approach him in prayer is, therefore, not for the purpose of informing him of our needs, for these he knows far better than we do, but for our spiritual profit, that we may be kept in close touch with him, that we may continually realize his love and care and grace toward all who have come into the

divine family through Christ and the New Covenant. For this reason, while sending rain and sunshine upon the world in general, God holds in his hand many favors, great and small, for "his people," which he will bestow only in answer to their faith and prayers.

#### R2252 [col. 2 ¶2]:

"Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him." The Christian's prayer therefore is not for the purpose of giving information to God, nor for the purpose of calling attention to matters which he might overlook or forget; but on the contrary he is enjoined to pray and required to pray, because it will benefit himself: God withholds many of his blessings until we approach to ask them in prayer, in order that **we may realize our need** of his aid, and our dependence on him. Our prayers therefore are not to induce God to give us things which he desires to withhold from us, but are merely to secure the

things which **he desires us to have** and has promised to us, and is more willing to give than to withhold. And how wise is this divine arrangement: how many of God's people have realized great benefit from this divine arrangement that we must ask if we would receive, must seek if we would find, must "knock if it be opened unto us." And thus, in addition to the favors asked and received, the very necessity of prayer itself has brought us into close fellowship with the Lord—into the enjoyment of one of our greatest privileges and blessings.

#### F679 [¶1]:

"In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures forevermore," declares the prophet. (Psa. 16:11) It is because prayer brings the soul into the presence of the Lord that it prepares the way for divine blessing and superlative joys. Evidently the opening of the way for the Lord's people to approach the throne of grace is not with the object of their changing the divine will or plans. Such a thought is incompatible with every reasonable

consideration of the subject; hence, the Lord instructs us that proper praying is not along the line of making requests that our wills be done, in opposition to the divine will, but along the line of full submission to the latter. The Apostle declares of some, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss"—in harmony with your own desires, and not in harmony with the divine arrangement and plan. James 4:3

### 4. What is the *necessity* for prayer?

#### R2004 [col. 2 ¶8]:

Prayer is not a privilege merely, but also a necessity;—commanded as indispensable to our Christian growth. (Rom. 12:9-13; 1 Thes. 5:17.) Whoever

loses the desire to thank and worship and commune with the Father of mercies, may rest assured that he is losing the very spirit of son-

ship, and should promptly seek and remove the barrier—the world, the flesh or the devil. Every additional evidence of the Lord’s confidence in us by the revealing to us of his character and plan, so far from diminishing our worship and

**R2502 [col. 1 ¶1]:**

One of the points of the Adversary’s attack, surerest to have a baneful influence, is along this line. When the Lord’s people become overcharged with the cares of this life, instead of realizing their danger and seeking the help of the Lord to order the affairs of life differently, the suggestion comes that they are too weary to pray, or that another time will be more favorable: or perhaps they are so fully engrossed that reverence and acknowledgment to the Lord, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, is entirely forgotten: or perhaps sin lieth at the door, and they seek not to think of the Lord, and therefore avoid

**R2692 [col. 1 ¶1]:**

Prayer is good; it is absolutely indispensable to Christian life. It means, not only a living faith, but a growing faith. Experience will prove that neglect of either private prayer (Matt. 6:6) or prayer in the congregation of the Lord’s people (Acts 12:12; 1:14; 16:13; 1 Cor. 11:4,5; 14:13,14) is sure to lead to leanness of soul and lukewarmness in respect to spiritual things—unfaithfulness, coldness, death. On the contrary, communion with the Lord in prayer brings increased

**“Manna,” July 24:** The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. James 5:16

Communion with the Lord in prayer brings increased confidence in the Lord’s supervision of our affairs; increased faith in all the exceeding great and precious promises of His Word; increased realization of His leadings, past and present; increased love for all the brethren of

**R3640 [col. 1 ¶4]:**

Another thought connected with this is the propriety and necessity for prayer. We have been surprised occasionally to hear of some professed follower of Christ urging the impropriety of prayer—that all of life should be a prayer, and that there should be no formal kneeling before

prayers, should multiply them. If our hearts are good soil they will bring forth the more abundantly.

the throne of grace: or perhaps coldness has come in from some other cause, and the Lord seems afar off, and prayer becomes a mere formality and is by and by abandoned. The child of God who is in a proper condition of heart-harmony will desire to commune with his Creator,—not only to hear his Word, but also to offer thanksgiving and worship; as surely as he will desire natural food and drink for the sustenance of his natural body. Whoever has not this experience should seek it; and, according to our Lord’s promise, he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

confidence in the Lord’s supervision of our affairs; increased faith in all the exceeding great and precious promises of his Word; increased realization of his leadings, past and present; increased love for all the brethren of Christ, and increased solicitude for their welfare and spiritual progress. Prayer is thus closely and actively identified with progress in spiritual things, progress in the fruits of the spirit, toward God, the brethren, and all men.

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the Lord in worship and thanksgiving. Such a proposition is astounding to us—the logic of it is incomprehensible. True, indeed, we are to pray without ceasing. Our entire lives are to be so devoted to the Lord and to his cause, and our minds are to be so filled with appreciation of his

goodness, and our faith in him is to be so constant and so bright, that we will always have in mind his will in every matter, and thus be in the praying attitude of heart continually; but we hold that no Christian can maintain this heart attitude without going to the Lord in a more particular and formal

manner, and preferably upon the knees, and if possible sometimes at least in solitude—"Enter into thy closet and pray to thy Father who is in secret."

## 5. What is the necessity for *persistence* in prayer?

### R2005 [col. 2 ¶5, 6]:

True faith, then, makes sure of its ground by giving careful heed to the Lord's Word; and then, asking according to that Word, it has confidence in the results, and waits and prays and watches, perseveringly and patiently. "Watch and pray," and "believe that ye shall receive," were our Lord's frequent injunctions. He spake a parable about an unjust judge who was moved by the importunities of a poor widow to do her justice; and then inquired whether God, the true judge, would not in due time hear his elect Church, and avenge their cause justly, though he wait a long time,—until his own "due time." And we are told that he uttered this parable to the purport that God's people ought

to pray continuously, and "not to faint [yield]." —Luke 18:1.

Whatever might be our natural inclinations with reference to definiteness and persistence in prayer, we must take our instructions from the Scriptures; and, overcoming our natural predilections, we must as "little children" and as "dear children" conform our views and conduct to the instruction which is from above. Let us all, therefore, remember the words, "Ask [in my name] and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." (John 16:24.) The Heavenly Father has multiplied mercies, blessings and providences in store for his obedient and faithful children **who will ask for them.**

### R2865 [col. 2 ¶3]:

The lesson of the spiritual Israelite in this circumstance is in harmony with our Lord's words, "Men ought continuously to pray and not to faint." God wishes us to be persistent, and our persistence measures and indicates the depth of our desires. If the blessing in answer to our prayer does not come in the moment of asking we are to continue

"instant in prayer,"—patiently waiting for the Lord's due time, faithfully trusting him that he is willing to give the blessing which he promised, even though he may for a time withhold it with a view to our becoming the more earnest in seeking it.

### R3662 [col. 2 ¶4, 5]—Importunity In Prayer.

Our lesson relates chiefly to Nehemiah's prayer to the Lord after he had heard of the conditions in Judea—his prayer for the Lord's blessing and assistance, to the intent that the good promises of the Lord respecting his holy city and land might be fulfilled. Nehemiah does not give us the words of all his prayers, for we learn from other parts of the narrative that he prayed after this manner for four months before he began to have an answer. What we read, therefore, is supposed to be a general outline of the sentiments which he expressed in various forms at different times, praying with-

out ceasing during those four months. Of course during all this time he attended to his duties, but this prayer was always in his heart, the sentiment of his mind, and more or less associated with all his thoughts and plans and arrangements.

So it should be with all of the Lord's people of spiritual Israel. The things which we have only a slight desire for we may mention once or twice at the throne of grace, but those things which lie very close to our hearts become our continual prayer, associating in our minds with all of life's

duties and interests, the heart gravitating continually toward the thing we have desired of the Lord, and on suitable opportunities repeating to him the request—making sure that the thing we request is in accord with his promises. This is the kind of praying which the Lord commended say-

ing, “Men ought always to pray and not to faint”—that the Lord’s people ought to continue asking for the right things with some degree of persistency, and should not grow weary, hopeless, faithless, faint in their hearts.

## 6. To whom and *through* whom should we pray?

### R2252 [col. 1 ¶3]:

Our Lord’s instruction is, “Pray to thy Father,” “Pray, our Father which art in heaven.” But this instruction is to be coupled with the further instruction, “Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father **in my name** he will give it you.” (John 15:16; 16:23.) “No man cometh unto the Father but by me.” (John 14:6.) This excludes Jews, excludes Mohammedans, excludes the heathen, excludes all who have not a knowledge of Christ and a faith in him as the Redeemer. Only **believers** who **have** accepted Christ may approach God in prayer and call him “Father;” others may formulate petitions, but need expect no answers. It is only after we

have accepted Christ and had our sins forgiven through faith in his blood that we may have the “boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus by a new and living way which he has consecrated for us.” (Heb. 10:19,20.) These privileges which we enjoy under the New Covenant sealed and ratified by the blood of Jesus, had their correspondence and type in fleshly Israel and the Law Covenant sealed with the blood of bulls and goats; hence it was that the Jews as a people under their covenant were permitted to have access to God in prayer—tho not so directly and closely and intimately as we of the New Covenant.

### E457 [¶2, last two sentences]:

The betrothed Bride of Christ has no standing with the Father except in and through her beloved Bridegroom. Her requests are made in his name, through his merit, and must continue

so to be made, until that which is perfect is come, when she shall be received into glory—the full liberty of the sons of God, through the first resurrection.

## 7. Before whom should we pray?

### In Secret.

Matthew 6:5-9 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

### Before believers.

John 17:1-26 These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee

the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

John 11:41-42 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

Matthew 18:19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

### **Before believers and unbelievers.**

Luke 3:21 Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,

John 12:27-29 Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. [28] Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. [29] The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

Matthew 27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

### In the public assembly of the saints.

Acts 12:12 And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.

Acts 1:14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

1 Cor. 11:4,5 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

1 Cor. 14:13,14 Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

### R2251 [col. 1 ¶6] through R2252 [col. 1 ¶2]:

Amongst those who approach God in prayer as his children, different circumstances and conditions may have a bearing as respects the manner of worship: at times they may properly go aside and hold communion with the Father in secret,—where no earthly eye will see and no earthly ear will hear. Our Lord's own example should be an illustration of this privilege: we remember how it is written of him frequently that he went apart from his disciples and prayed alone, and how sometimes he spent the entire night in solitary prayer.

Prayer at other times may properly and profitably be offered in the presence of fellow-believers and audibly, as the prayer of all and in which all are interested and join. An illustration of this may also be drawn from our Lord's example: for instance, his prayers recorded in John 11:41,42; 17; Matt. 11:25,26; Luke 10:21; 11:1. These prayers could not have been recorded if they had not been heard by the apostles: and the very object of their utterances in **their presence** was evidently for their benefit and blessing, as well as for the benefit and blessing of all the household of faith

since then. The prayers of Moses and Solomon, David and Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel are also recorded, and hence were made publicly, at least before the Lord's people. The record respecting the early Church seems to imply that they met together as one family and that their prayers as well as their hymns and song-prayers were general, in common, for the benefit of the whole company present. This is implied in the account given in Acts 1:14 where it is declared, "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." Again, the words of one of their prayers are quoted in Acts 1:24; evidently this prayer was uttered audibly and in common. Again in 1 Cor. 14:16 the Apostle shows the thanksgiving of the congregation was and should be presented before the Lord not only audibly but in a language heard and understood by the worshipers, so that all might be able to say "Amen" to the thanksgiving and petition.

At times it may not be improper to give thanks to God in the presence of a mixed company—believers and unbelievers. Illustration of this course

is found in our Lord's own conduct. His prayer at his baptism in Jordan was witnessed evidently by the multitudes. (Luke 3:21.) Again our Lord prayed in public, in the hearing of the mixed gathering, at the grave of Lazarus. Again at the close of our Lord's ministry, when he prayed, "Father, save me from this hour," "Father, glorify thy name," the multitudes surrounding evidently heard or in some manner knew of the prayer, as is shown by the statement of John 12:29. Again our Lord's last prayer, on the cross, was audibly heard even by his enemies.—Matt. 27:46,50.

We have gone into details of proof respecting this subject because some of God's dear people have fallen into the error of supposing from this very lesson which we are about to consider, that it is wrong, sinful, to pray with or in the presence of others, either the Church or the world; they evidently put more stress upon our Lord's words, "Enter into thy closet, etc.," than our Lord intended, as we have shown from his own course of conduct, which certainly is the best illustration of the spirit of his teachings,—for "In him was no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." We remark incidentally, however, that we have no sympathy whatever with a practice which seems to be very common with the majority of Christians, namely, that of preaching at transgressors and scoring them, in prayers ostensibly offered to God. That this general disposition is recognized by others, is well illustrated by the following statement which appeared in a Boston secular journal, in a favorable comment upon the discourse of a very popular minister in that city. It said: "His prayer was generally acknowledged to be one of the finest ever offered to a Boston audience." There are in-

deed strong reasons for believing that many of the prayers offered are offered more to the congregations who hear than to the Almighty. This is a gross perversion of the wonderful privilege of prayer granted to God's children, and is of a piece with the hypocrisies of our Lord's day against which he warned his disciples, saying that those who thus pray are hypocrites and have their reward in being heard of men; for that is the reward they seek.

To this day the traveler in the far East will see and hear prayers in every direction. Some of them may be results of misdirected energy and conscience, but many of them no doubt, as intimated by our Lord, are the results of spiritual pride and desire to be thought pious. A traveler in the East writes: "I was awakened in the early morning by a sound of prayer that was evidently intended to be heard of men whether God should hear it or not; it was a prolonged and energetic intoning, with an occasional rise in the voice that would be sure to start the soundest sleeper—it was the dragoman [guide], who after the morning greeting, added, 'Did you hear me pray this morning, my master?' Indeed I did, was my reply. And then he told me of his zeal and earnestness in prayer." The customs of Christendom differ; and yet in every direction we may find evidence of the same spirit,—ambition to be thought pious, effort to make an impression upon men and women, rather than to hold communion with the Heavenly Father. Such hypocrisies cannot be too strongly guarded against in all those who seek and enjoy communion with the Father and with our Lord Jesus Christ.

## 8. What should be our *manner* of approach to God in prayer?

### **R1864 [col. 1 ¶8 through col. 2 ¶2]:**

Fallen creatures though we be, from the noble estate in which we were created, God so loved our race, even while we were yet sinners, as to make provision at great cost for our redemption and restitution and subsequent eternal glory. And therefore it is,—because he loves us,—that through Christ he extends to us the gracious favor of coming to him as children to a father. Wonderful is the condescension, wonderful the love and favor of our God!

Yet our God is a God to be revered: he is not one like ourselves, our equal, into whose presence we may come without that ceremony and decorum due to his glorious person and office. (Job 9:1-35.) The court of heaven has regulations and ceremonies of respect and due deference which must be complied with by every man who would gain an audience with the King of kings; and it behooves us to inquire what those regulations are before we presume to address him.

Here the Word of God gives explicit directions. Our Lord Jesus, the appointed "days-man" for which Job so earnestly longed (Job 9:32,33), said, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me. I am the way." (John 14:6.) Then he gave us an illustration of the manner in which we should address him, in what is known as the Lord's prayer. (Matt. 6:9-13.) The illustration teaches (1) that we (believers in Christ) may consider ourselves as in God's estimation reinstated (through faith in Christ) to the original position of sons of God, and that we may therefore confidently address him—"Our Father." (2) It indicates on our part worshipful adoration of the high and holy One, and profound reverence for the glorious character and attributes of Our God.—"Hallowed be thy name." (3) It expresses full sympathy with his revealed plan for a coming Kingdom of righteousness, which will be accord-

ing to his will.—"Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." This shows the attitude of heart to be toward righteousness, and fully submitted to the divine will and purpose, that God may work in it to will and to do his good pleasure. (4) It expresses in plain and simple language its dependence on God for daily needs, and the confidence of a child in the Father for the supply of those needs out of his abundant fullness.—"Give us this day our daily bread." (5) It seeks forgiveness for trespasses, and recognizes also the obligation thus incurred to render the same to those trespassing against us—"And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors;" and (6) it seeks to be guarded against temptations and to be fortified by God's abounding grace against all the wiles of the adversary\*—"And abandon us not to trial, but preserve us from evil."

**R2251 [col. 1 ¶4, 5]:**

While certain rules should govern all prayers, all approaches to God for communion, namely, that we should approach with humility and simplicity and reverence and in the name of Jesus, yet circumstances may govern in certain particulars:—

(1) The prayer of the sinner, the alien and stranger from God, should differ from that of the **child** of God who has received pardon and reconciliation along the divinely appointed lines.

For instance, the prayer of the publican, approved by our Lord, did not address Jehovah as "Father" but as God—"God be merciful to me a sinner." On the contrary, those who come into relationship with God under the terms of his covenant in Christ have the privilege not only of recognizing God as the Creator and Ruler, but also as their "Heavenly Father," and of addressing him as such.

**R3352 [col. 1 ¶3]—"Hallowed Be Thy Name."**

This expresses adoration, appreciation of divine goodness and greatness, and a corresponding reverence. In addressing our petition to the Lord our first thought is to be, not a selfish one respecting ourselves, nor a thought respecting the interests of others precious to us, but God is to be first in all of our thoughts and aims and calculations. We are to pray for nothing that would not be in accord with the honor of our heavenly Father's name; we are to wish for nothing for ourselves, or for our dear ones, that he would not fully approve and commission us to pray for. Perhaps no quality of heart is in greater danger of being blotted out amongst professing Chris-

tians today than this thought of reverence for God. However much we have grown in knowledge, and however much we have gotten free from superstitions and errors, and however advanced in some respects is the Christian's position of today over that of a century ago, we fear that reverence has been losing ground, not only in the nominal church, but with many of the members of the one "Church of the living God, whose names are written in heaven." Every loss of reverence is a distinct disadvantage, both to the Church and to the world, paving the way to various evils, and ultimately to anarchy.

## 9. What should be our *position* in prayer?

### R2501 [col. 2 ¶5]:

Daniel was not satisfied to merely close his eyes in prayer after he had retired to rest, as do many people living under the greater light of this Gospel age, and under greater privileges and opportunities and grander promises. He had a great God who was worthy of reverence and worship, and he was great enough as a man to appreciate that it was a privilege to have intercourse and fellowship with his Creator. He was not only not ashamed to bow the knee to the Almighty, but was unwilling to assume a less humble position before God than he and others assumed toward earthly kings. Our

### R3640 [col. 1 ¶4]:

Another thought connected with this is the propriety and necessity for prayer. We have been surprised occasionally to hear of some professed follower of Christ urging the impropriety of prayer—that all of life should be a prayer, and that there should be no formal kneeling before the Lord in worship and thanksgiving. Such a proposition is astounding to us—the logic of it is incomprehensible. True, indeed, we are to pray without ceasing. Our entire lives are to be so devoted to the Lord and to his cause, and our minds are to be so filled

judgment is that it is impossible for any Christian to maintain a proper consistent walk in life, and to build up such a character and faith structure as are represented by the Apostle as composed of “gold, silver and precious stones,” without prayer;—more than this, without regularity in prayer;—we would almost be inclined to say, without **kneeling** in prayer: and we believe that the experiences and testimonies of the truest and best of the Lord’s people who have ever lived will corroborate this.

with appreciation of his goodness, and our faith in him is to be so constant and so bright, that we will always have in mind his will in every matter, and thus be in the praying attitude of heart continually; but we hold that no Christian can maintain this heart attitude without going to the Lord in a more particular and formal manner, and preferably upon the knees, and if possible sometimes at least in solitude—“Enter into thy closet and pray to thy Father who is in secret.”

## 10. What are the *conditions of acceptable prayer* to God?

### F679 [¶2] through F681 [¶2]:

Along the same line our Lord admonished: “Use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do, for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking; but your heavenly Father **knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him**. Be not careful [worried], therefore, respecting what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, and wherewithal ye shall be clothed, for after these things do the Gentiles seek; but seek ye primarily the Kingdom of God and righteousness in harmony with it, and all these needful earthly things shall be added unto you—by your Father in heaven, according to his wisdom.” (Matt. 6:25-34) Again, our Lord says, “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) The following conditions are all-important:

(1) The one offering the prayer must be in Christ—must have come into vital relationship with him

by the acceptance of the merit of his atonement sacrifice, and by a consecration to his will and service; and, more than this, he must continue to abide thus in Christ as a member of his body, as a member of the New Creation, in order to have the privileges of prayer here referred to.

(2) He must also let the Lord’s Word abide in him; he must partake of the Word of truth and grace if he would have the wisdom necessary to ask, in harmony with the Lord’s will, things which he would be pleased to grant—otherwise, even though in Christ a New Creature, his prayers might frequently go unanswered, because “amiss.” It is only those who profess both of these qualifications who may expect to approach the throne of heavenly grace with full confidence, full assurance of faith that their petitions will be answered—in God’s due time. Only such can realize fullness of joy.

As the Scriptures explain, prayer is the attempt to gain access to the presence of God, and to hold communion with him. Who then may approach the throne of the heavenly grace to “obtain mercy and find grace to help in every time of need?” (Heb. 4:16) We answer, with the Apostle, that the world in general does not have this access, does not have this privilege of prayer. True, indeed, millions of heathen people are offering prayers to Deity with varying conceptions of who and what he is; but their prayers are not acceptable to God. “He that cometh unto God must believe that he is [must recognize him as the self-existing One], and that he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him [seek to know him, to obey him, to serve him].” (Heb. 11:6) Cornelius was one of this latter kind, who recognized the true God and revered him, and sought to know and do his will; and, as soon as the divine plan had reached the necessary stage of development to permit God’s favor to be extended to the Gentiles, his prayers and his alms received a response. He was not, however, permitted to have communion with God in the full, proper sense; but was instructed to send for Peter, who would tell him “**words**” by which he might be brought from his condition of alienation and separation into a condition of harmony and sonship, in which he would have the privilege of a son—the privilege of access to the Father at the throne of heavenly grace.

**R1865 [col. 1 ¶1]:**

Such are the principles which must ever characterize our attitude of mind and heart when we would avail ourselves of the privilege of addressing the throne of heavenly grace. In brief, our prayers, to be acceptable to God, must express confident faith, loving esteem and reverence, full sympathy with the divine plan and submission to the divine will, childlike depend-

**“Manna,” June 10:** Lord, teach us to pray. Luke 11:1

In brief, our prayers, to be acceptable to God, must express confident faith, loving esteem and reverence, full sympathy with the divine plan and submission to the divine will, childlike dependence upon God, acknowledgment of sins and shortcomings and desire for forgiveness,

The generally loose ideas which prevail in respect to this subject, under which it is supposed that any person, anywhere, and at any time and under any conditions, may approach the throne of grace with acceptance, are erroneous. As it was necessary, before Cornelius could use this privilege of prayer-communion, that he should hear and believe and accept the **words** of Peter—explaining to him the redemption through the blood of Christ and the reconciliation thus effected and the privilege thus granted of being brought into God’s family—so a like knowledge is equally necessary for every person.

The Apostle Paul expresses the same thought, declaring that Christ opened up for **us** “a new and living way,” or “a new way of life,” through the veil—that is to say, his flesh; and that we may have boldness as **brethren** to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. Such “brethren,” related to the great High Priest over the house of God, are exhorted to “draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith,” recognizing that their sins and iniquities have been fully covered, and that they themselves have been fully accepted of the Father. (Heb. 10:17-22) Again, the same Apostle declares that it is **we** who have an High Priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, who may “therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that **we** may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Heb. 4:15,16

ence upon God, acknowledgment of sins and shortcomings and desire for forgiveness, with a forgiving disposition on our part toward others, and an humble craving for the divine guidance and protection. These may not always all be expressed in words, but such must at least be the attitude of the soul.

with humble craving for the divine guidance and protection. These may not always all be expressed in words, but such must at least be the attitude of the soul. “Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed.”

### R3663 [col. 1 ¶6 through col. 2 ¶3]—Nehemiah's Fasting And Prayer.

The substance of the prayers of Nehemiah is stated: "I beseech thee, O Jehovah, God of heaven, the great and terrible God that keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments." Thus praying, he had before his mind the testimonies of God's Word respecting his dealings with Moses and the prophets and the kings of the past. He did not reproach the Lord as having failed with his part of the covenant, but, quite to the contrary, acknowledged that the Lord's ways and dealings with Israel had been just and true, and that the difficulties in which they were involved as a nation were the just penalties due them for their violations of the covenant made at Sinai. He expressed confidence also that the Lord would keep his covenant and have mercy upon the people, or upon those at least who would seek to walk in his paths.

He entreated, "Let thine ear now be attentive and thine eyes open that thou mayst hearken unto the prayer of thy servant which I pray before thee now day and night for the children of Israel, thy servants, while I confess the sins of the children of Israel, thy servants, which we have sinned against thee; both I and my father's house have sinned." No proper prayer can be offered to the great Creator that does not acknowledge in some manner the weaknesses, deficiency, imperfection, sin of those who approach the throne of grace. As the Apostle declares, even we who are new creatures in Christ approach the throne of heavenly grace to find mercy and grace to help in every time of need. But our boldness, our courage, is not that of self-confidence, but of confidence in him who loved us and who bought us with his precious blood—in him who died for our sins and under whose covering robe we have peace, forgiveness, harmony with God.

O, how much this means to us! More than it could have meant to Nehemiah or others living before the great atonement sacrifice had been made. It is our privilege to see how God can be just and yet be the justifier of him who believes on Jesus. We see that by the grace of God, Jesus Christ

has tasted death for every man, and that ultimately the merit of his sacrifice will be made applicable to every man through the Lord's own channels and agents.

Nehemiah was very open in his confession, and we believe that such an attitude is the proper one for all who would approach the Lord. Sins and weaknesses should be confessed to the Lord, however they may be reasonably screened from the eyes of others while we are seeking to do our best in walking not after the flesh but after the Spirit. He says, "We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, neither the statutes, nor the judgments which thou hast commanded thy servant Moses. Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress I will scatter you abroad among the nations: but if you turn unto me and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts were in the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence and will bring them into this place that I have chosen to set my name there. Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand."

This prayer, mentioning the Lord's threatenings and acknowledging the justice of them, and acknowledging also the transgressions and the infliction of the penalties, and this turning to the Lord's promises for forgiveness and mercy and reconciliation, exhibit the very proprieties of prayer which all should imitate—Jew or Gentile. The "Israelite indeed" who transgresses the divine precepts and is chastened of the Lord can plead the Lord's promise to be very merciful to those who are of a contrite heart, and ask forgiveness based upon the great redemption sacrifice, and may by faith accept the divine promise immediately and enter into rest of soul so soon as he shall have done all in his power to rectify the wrong bemoaned.

## 11. How should we distinguish between worshipping God “in spirit and in truth,” and mere lip-service?

Matthew 15:7-9 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, [8] This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. [9] But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

John 4:23,24 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. [24] God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

### R2070 [col. 1 ¶2, 3]:

The Lord does not say that there never had been previously true worshippers; quite to the contrary, the Scriptures teach that there were holy men of old whose prayers were acceptable before God and answered, yet they did not “worship in **spirit**” (for “the holy spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified,” —John 7:39); neither had they worshiped in the truth, for the truth would only be revealed by the spirit’s guiding them into it.—John 14:16,17.

The fact that we now are granted the “sealing” or “adoption” as sons of God, by the holy spirit, and a clearer knowledge of the truth as a result, and consequently possibilities of a more spiritual and intelligent worship, in no sense implies that

we are more worthy of the favors than were **some** of the ancient worthies. Neither did the giving of the Law to all Israel prove that all of that people were more worthy of God’s favors than **some** amongst the heathen who were left with less advantage every way. (Rom. 3:2.) When the due time came to send types of coming favors, God chose the nation of Israel as his agent in fore-**shadowing** Gospel blessings which would follow. But as it is not the hearer but the doer of a law that is justified by it, so it is not the one who has the greater opportunities as a worshiper that is blest most, but the one who uses his greater privileges and renders worship in accord with the **spirit** and the **truth** received.

### R2070 [col. 2 ¶1]:

Since the great antitypical sacrifice of the Atonement has made **actual** reconciliation for iniquity, it made possible the acceptance of consecrated believers as **sons of God** (See John 1:12), and accordingly made possible for **sons** the highest manifestation of the holy spirit, as a spirit of adoption, which in due time, the Millennial age, shall be poured upon all reconciled to God (of all flesh, regardless of national lines), under the New Covenant. (Joel 2:28.) During this Gospel age, this spirit of adoption is restricted to the class of sons, the “brethren” and “joint-heirs” with Christ, now being selected, “partakers of the divine nature,” begotten of the holy spirit as “new creatures.” The disciples came in contact with the holy spirit in our Lord (who had it in

fullest measure), and they were greatly blessed, because they (except Judas) did not resist its influence. Yet our Lord assured them that, with all their spiritual advantages, a still greater blessing would come to them as the result of his sacrifice and its presentation to the Father. He assured them that in his name the Father would send them the Comforter, the holy spirit, and that they should then have more than a contact with it; for it would abide **in them**. Through them it would exert an influence **upon** others (Acts 24:25), but none others than the “sons” could **receive** it, as an indwelling power, nor even become acquainted with it, for it is a seal or mark of sonship.—John 14:16,17.

### R2071 [col. 2 ¶3, 4]:

Indeed, in our Lord's declaration, "The Father seeketh such to worship him as worship him in spirit and in truth," we see that the whole mission of the Gospel may be properly understood to be for the purpose of seeking out from amongst mankind in general these true worshipers; and, properly enough, the early ministers of the Gospel sought first those who seemed to be earnest worshipers, and the message which they bore became a test to those who heard it, separating between the worshipers in form and those who truly and reverentially sought the Lord. Thus the Apostle Paul's ministry was summed up by his accusers in these words: "This fellow **persuadeth men to worship God** contrary to the law. — Acts 18:13.

Worship in spirit and in truth does not apply simply to prayer, praise, supplication and thanksgiving. It goes deeper than all these and takes hold upon the affections, upon the heart, and hence signifies not an "act of worship" but rather a life of worship—a life in which, through the begetting of the spirit and the knowledge of the divine

plan, the individual becomes so **at-one** with God and so in unison with the law of God and all the features of the plan of God that it is, in the words of our Lord, his meat and his drink to do the Father's will. This is worship in spirit and in truth. It will find its expression in bended knee and in orderly and reverential demeanor in approach to God in personal prayer, in family prayer and in company with the household of faith; and it will find its expression also in all the acts and words of life. The captivated heart will seek to bring every talent of the body into complete subjection to the will of God and of Christ. The whole of this is the worship which God seeketh; and, surely, only those who are thus captivated to the Lord in heart, and who serve him in spirit and in truth and endeavor to have his will done in their hearts, words and conduct, are in the full sense the true worshipers whom the Lord seeketh; the "little flock," the faithful "royal priesthood."

### E468 [top]:

He seeketh not such to worship him as could not do otherwise, nor such to worship him as would do so under constraint, but, as he declares, "He seeketh such to worship him as worship him in spirit and in truth" — voluntarily, from love and appreciation of his principles of righteousness, and of himself, which these represent. John 4:23

## 12. Why should our petitions be for help "in time of need"?

Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

### R2249 [col. 2 ¶2]:

Nor are we to seek divine aid far in advance, as, for instance, to be kept throughout the year to come, or month to come, or week to come: rather we are to know that if we have made a covenant with the Lord and are his, that he is near us at all times in every trial, in every temptation; and that his assistance is ready to our use, if we will but accept it and act accordingly. Hence, our prayers should be for help **in the time of need**, as well as general prayers for the Lord's blessing and care for each day. In the moment of temptation the

heart should lift itself to the great Master, in full assurance of faith, recognizing his love, his wisdom and his ability to help us, and his willingness to make all things work together for good to those who love him. Asking for assistance in such a time of need would surely draw to us the Lord's counsel and help and strength for righteousness, truth, purity and love; and thus we should be hourly victorious, daily victorious, and finally victorious.

### 13. Can we come *too often* to God in prayer, or is any affair of our lives *too trivial* to bring to his attention?

R1865 [col. 1 ¶3 through col. 2 ¶7]: —reproduced at the end of this section, p. 286.

### 14. Why will not our Heavenly Father give us the things needful *without our asking*?

R3128 [col. 2 ¶5]:

The question may arise, Why will not God give us the things which he sees us to need without our making petition to him and claiming his promises? Undoubtedly because we need previously to come into the proper attitude of heart to receive his favors and to be advantaged by them. Even as it is, we may be sure that we do not sufficiently appreciate the divine care bestowed upon us hitherto and now. Even in the attitude of

prayer and thanksgiving we probably do not discern one-half of our causes for gratitude, as we shall see them by and by, when we shall know even as we are known. It is the same with natural hunger. Unless we were so constituted that the gnawings of hunger would show us our need of food we would probably appreciate it less, even if we ate as much and with the same regularity.

R2865 [col. 2 ¶2]:

Here, the lesson proper, relating to Jacob's struggle with the angel, comes in. The angel appeared as a man, as was frequently the case in olden times; Jacob had recognized him, nevertheless, and laying hold of him urged that he as God's representative, sent to meet him, should give him a blessing. We cannot suppose for a moment that the angel was not powerful enough to release himself from the grasp of Jacob, and hence that the wrestling and struggle between them kept up until the morning light, the angel vainly pleading, "Let me go," and Jacob as persistently holding on and declaring, "I will not let thee go unless thou bless me." We must suppose, on the contrary, that the Lord was well pleased to bless Jacob, and had sent the angel for this very pur-

pose; and that the circumstances were intended as an opportunity to draw out Jacob's longing desires in this respect; to demonstrate to himself how much he really desired the Lord's favor, the Lord's blessing. And when the desired result had been obtained—when Jacob had evidenced the intensity of his desire for harmony with God and such blessing as God alone could give—then the blessing came—Jacob's victory. Not that Jacob prevailed to get from God, through his angel, something the Lord was not pleased to grant; but that he prevailed to obtain the coveted blessing by manifesting the zeal, the energy, the patience, and the faith which God was pleased to see and reward.

### 15. How may we learn not to "ask amiss," and thus have all our petitions answered?

1 John 5:14,15 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

**R2005 [col. 2 ¶7-9]:**

True, some of these proper and authorized and much desired requests are long delayed;—for instance, the Church for more than eighteen centuries has prayed, “Thy Kingdom come! Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.” God has heard, but has not answered yet. Nevertheless all who have thus prayed for and desired the Millennial Kingdom have been blessed by their faith in that Kingdom not seen as yet,—but evidently now very near. However, other requests—for daily food and for succor in temptation and deliverance from the Evil One,—have been promptly answered.

In this connection notice specially that the privilege of prayer, or any other favor of God, is not granted for selfish purposes. A thing which might

be properly desired and asked for in one case might be improper if asked for from some other motive. To desire and ask for something good in itself, in order that we might be glorified before our fellows, is a wrong request, because of a wrong motive.

The desire for a good thing, simply for ease and convenience, is an improper, selfish motive. The Apostle refers to such cases, saying, “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, to consume it upon your desires,”—i.e., for vain-glorious purposes or other selfish reasons. (Jas. 4:3.) To ask for some good thing simply to make a test of it, thereby to establish our faith, is seemingly an improper request, for none but the faith-**full** are promised anything.

**R3217 [col. 2 ¶2, 3]:**

What we thus see exemplified on a large and national scale we may see exemplified in a small way closer to us. How many of us in our ignorance and blindness have at some time in life prayed for the various systems of bondage, for the various sects of Christendom, and labored, too, for their upbuilding, only to find ourselves injured spiritually by that which we prayed for and labored for. We asked amiss, as did the Elders of Israel, while, instead, our hearts as well as theirs should have inquired continually for the ways of the Lord, for his leadings, not asking to have him favor and bless that which we ignorantly and mistakenly supposed to be for his glory and our own good. Let us learn to pray aright, as well as to labor and to hope aright; and in order so to do let us be swift to hear, slow to speak, swift to hearken to the Word of the Lord and to the lesson which he has already given us, and to his method of instructing us and guiding us and blessing us. Let us be slow to tell him what our preferences are; indeed, let us seek to attain that development of Christian character which will permit us always not to seek our

own wills, but the will and way of our Father in heaven.

The same principle will apply in the more private affairs of our daily lives. Several parents have told us, with aching hearts, of prayers answered which subsequently they could have wished never answered; they have told us of companions and children on their deathbeds for whose lives they had prayed with importunity and without either the words or the sentiment, Thy will be done, and how the Lord answered those prayers, and what terrible evils had come to them through the answers. All cases may not be alike, but the properly exercised and heart-developed children of God should expect to attain to the place where all of their prayers are answered, and answered in the best possible way, and most satisfactorily, because the Lord’s Word dwells in them richly. They would not ask amiss—would not ask anything contrary to the divine will and providences; but rather, trusting to the divine wisdom, their prayer would be, “Lord, thy will, not mine, be done.”

**R3338 [col. 2 ¶5]:**

The Master himself represented the difference between the things which the Gentiles might do and the things which we as his disciples might do, saying that our petitions and seeking should not merely be for the bread that perisheth, for after such things do the Gentiles seek—merely the earthly things and with importunity; but seek ye first, chiefly, the Kingdom of God and the righteousness which is appropriate thereto, and all these things of an earthly kind will be added unto you—in such measure as will be for your best interests. Our petitions, our requests, our cries to the Lord,

therefore, should be for the holiness of heart, for the filling of his Spirit, for the spiritual food, refreshment, strength; and as for the natural things, he knoweth the way we take and what would be to our best interests as New Creatures. We are to leave this to him: he would not be pleased to see us importuning him for things which he did not give us, for to do so would not be an exemplification of faith in him, but the reverse—an exemplification of doubt, a manifestation of fear, that he was forgetting or neglecting his promise to give us the things needful.

**R3354 [col. 1 ¶1]:**

Our Lord's words in conclusion of the lesson [to "Pray Without Ceasing"] are very soul-satisfying to those who have faith: "I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." We have the Master's words for this, but we are to remember the order as already expressed to us in prayer; we are to ask nothing that will not be hallowing and honoring to our heavenly Father's

name; we are to ask nothing that would be an interference in any measure or degree with the coming of his Kingdom, or the doing of his will on earth as in heaven; we are to ask in harmony with the divine plan, and to be assured that that divine plan, revealed in the Word and prayed for by us, will ultimately be fully accomplished, and that it will be a most heart-satisfying portion when we do receive it.

**R2865 [col. 2 ¶4]:**

Although Jacob was a natural man, not a "new creature in Christ Jesus," nevertheless his prayer is a model one, in that he did not specify even the earthly things which had been promised him. All he asked was a blessing, in whatever manner the Lord might be pleased to give it. Alas, how many spiritual Israelites seem to have a much less keen appreciation of proprieties in such matters than had Jacob! Many ask and receive not because they ask amiss, for things to be consumed upon their earthly desires—wealth or fame or temporal good things. (Jas. 4:3.) How many forget that the Lord has already promised to take care of the temporal necessities of his spirit-begotten children, and to do for them better than they would know how to ask or to think. How few seem to remember that as new creatures our conditions and desires should be specially for the things that pertain to the new creature, and that it is this class of blessing the Lord invites us to ask for and to wrestle to ob-

tain, assuring us that as earthly parents are pleased to give good gifts to their children, so our Heavenly Father is pleased to **give the holy spirit** to those who ask him. (Luke 11:13.) If the Lord's consecrated people could all be brought to the point where the chief aim in life, the burden of all their prayers, would be that they might have a larger measure of the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of holiness, the spirit of the truth, the spirit of Christ, the spirit of a sound mind, what a blessing it would mean! If, then, they should wrestle with the Lord until the breaking of the day their hold upon him would be sure to bring the desired blessing. The Lord has revealed himself to his people for the very purpose of giving them **this** blessing; nevertheless, he withholds it until they learn to appreciate and earnestly desire it.

## 16. Why does God *delay* answering our prayers?

Luke 11:5-8 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

### R3353 [col. 2 ¶4, 5]—Faith and Hope Developed by Delay.

In verses 5-8 [of Luke 11] our Lord gives us a parable, showing how importunity might bring an answer from an earthly friend who at first declined a request. Our Lord uses the illustration in respect to the heavenly Father, not by way of implying that God is averse to his people's requests and will only grant them when their comings become tedious to him, but by way of showing what patient persistency men will have in connection with some slight earthly favor desired, and as illustrating how the Lord's people need to be much more solicitous and earnest in respect to the heavenly blessings they desire. Our heavenly Father has good things; he has promised them to us; he takes delight in giving them to us, yet some of them are afar off. For instance, he has allowed his dear people to pray, Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven, for nearly nineteen centuries. Why has he not

answered the petition sooner? Why did he suggest that we should so pray, if the answer were to be so long delayed?

We reply that the Lord had a plan, including the time for the Kingdom, already mapped out before he taught us to pray for it; and that the prayer of now nearly nineteen centuries, going up from the hearts of his people, have been blessings to their hearts, and have led them to appreciate and long for the Kingdom far more than if they had not thus prayed. The longing for the Kingdom has been a blessing of itself and has been an encouragement, and so we are praying today, more earnestly perhaps than ever before, Thy Kingdom come, because we appreciate the need of God's Kingdom more and more as we get down to the time when it will be ready to be given to us.

### R2865 [col. 2 ¶3]:

The lesson of the spiritual Israelite in this circumstance is in harmony with our Lord's words, "Men ought continuously to pray and not to faint." God wishes us to be persistent, and our persistence measures and indicates the depth of our desires. If the blessing in answer to our prayer does not come in the moment of asking we are to continue

"instant in prayer,"—patiently waiting for the Lord's due time, faithfully trusting him that he is willing to give the blessing which he promised, even though he may for a time withhold it with a view to our becoming the more earnest in seeking it.

### R3663 [col. 1 ¶1-4]—Answers Long Delayed.

Doubtless there are many reasons why the Lord does not promptly grant such of our requests as are in accordance with his will, in harmony with his Word. We may not know all of these reasons, but some of them are apparent. Undoubtedly one reason for the Lord's delay in answering us often is to test the strength and depths of our desires for the good things that we request of him. For instance, he informs us that he is more willing to

give his holy Spirit to us who ask than are earthly parents to give good things to their children: yet the giving of his holy Spirit is a gradual process, and we are enabled to receive it only in proportion as we are emptied of the worldly or selfish spirit. It requires time to thus become emptied of self and prepared for the mind of Christ—in some it requires longer for this than in others, but all need emptying in order to receive

the refilling. He that seeketh findeth, but the more he seeketh the more he findeth; to him that knocketh it shall be opened, but his continual knocking and his increasing interest in the knocking means his increasing desire to enter, so that as the door of privilege, of opportunity, swings slowly open before him his courage and strength increase as he seeks to avail himself of the opening, and thus every way the blessing is greater than if the Lord were to answer the petitions more hastily.

Whenever we think of prayer and answers thereto we should remember our Lord's words, "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye may ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:7.) Ah, there are conditions in this statement. Those who abide in Christ must have gotten into him by faith, repentance and consecration, and to abide in him means that the faith will abide, the repentance for sin and opposition to it will abide, and the consecration to the Lord and his service will abide and be manifest.

The other condition also is a weighty one: "if my Word abide in you." Ah, how evident it is that the Lord meant to associate himself and his Word, the Scriptures, in the minds, in the hearts, in the lives, in the prayers of all who are truly his. We must search the Scriptures to know the will

of the Lord, to know what he has promised and what he has not promised, to know what we may ask and what we may not ask for, and ascertaining these, the fully consecrated one will not want to be, to have or to do anything except that which will be pleasing to the Lord in respect to him—"Thy will, not mine be done, O Lord," is his prayer. And when this position has been reached we can readily see that whatever would be asked by one thus well informed respecting the divine promises and fully submissive to the divine will, would be things which God would be well pleased to grant in answer to his requests.

We are to think of our heavenly Father as rich and benevolent, kind and generous, yet wise as well as loving. We are to suppose that he will have pleasure in giving us the desires of our hearts if those desires are in harmony with his plan, which plan he has already framed on such lines as to include our very highest and best interests and the highest and best interests of all his creatures. So, then,

"Faith can firmly trust him, come what may."

And his well-informed children can have all the desires of their hearts because their hearts are in full accord with the Lord, and they desire nothing of the Lord except the good things of his purpose and promise.

### **R3664 [col. 2 ¶2]:**

As Nehemiah's prayer was delayed of an answer four months, and no door of opportunity seemed to offer for him to bring the matter to the king's attention, so with us—patient endurance and faith may be amongst the lessons which the Lord wishes us to learn by the delay in the answers to our petitions. Likewise, doubtless, that four months of delay was used by the Lord in more or less a preparation of the king for cooperating

with the request of Nehemiah. And so with us it may be that, while we are praying, the Lord is not only preparing us for the blessing and opportunity and privilege we desire, but also preparing the circumstances and conditions which will bring us these opportunities and privileges in the best form. Let us, then, lay to heart and utilize the lessons of our Master's words, "Men ought always to pray and not to faint."—Luke 18:1.

## **17. Should we strive to co-operate with the Lord in answering our prayers?**

### **R3657 [col. 2 ¶1-3]:**

Persuaded that no other course was open than to risk her life in approaching the king, Esther sent word to her uncle and through him to all the Jews of the palace city that they should fast with her for three days, and this, of course, implied prayer. We cannot suppose that they abstained

absolutely from food and drink for three days, but that they went on short allowance, avoiding anything that would be specially pleasurable and all luxuries. This prayer and fasting convinces us that not all the Jews who had faith in the Lord had returned to Palestine, that some of this kind were

still scattered throughout all Asia. No doubt the exceptional trial of this time thus proved a great blessing and strengthening to the faith of Esther and her uncle and all the Jews.

At the close of the three days the queen, attired in her best royal robes to appear as attractive as possible, approached the king. Thus she used wisdom and sought to cooperate with her prayers for divine guidance and blessing. The king was very gracious to her and extended the golden sceptre, which she touched, and then perceiving that only some urgent matter of request had thus brought her into his presence he inquired what he could do for her, assuring her that it should be done even to the extent of half of his kingdom—the latter expression, however, being doubtless a mere formality indicating great interest.

The queen's plans were evidently all well thought out, although at this time she was only about fifteen years of age. Doubtless the Lord granted the wisdom necessary for the occasion.

#### **E224 [¶2] through E225 [¶2]:**

Nothing in the scripture under examination can in any manner be construed to imply that the Heavenly Father would be pleased to have his children ask him for another God—a third person of a trinity of coequal Gods. Such a thought is repugnant to the passage and its connections: and those who entertain such an erroneous view must necessarily be blinded to that extent to the true beauty and force of this promise. It would be strange indeed if one member of a coequal trinity of Gods referred to another as able and willing to give the third as earthly parents give bread, fish and eggs to their children. (See preceding verses.) The entire passage is consistent only when the holy Spirit is properly understood to be the divine mind or influence bestowed variously for the comfort and spiritual upbuilding of God's children.

Our text institutes a comparison between kind earthly parents giving natural food to their children, and our kind heavenly Parent giving his holy Spirit to them that ask him. But as the earthly parent sets the food within the reach of his family, but does not force it upon them, so our heavenly Parent has set within the reach of his spiritual family the good provisions of his grace, but he does not force them upon us. We must hunger and thirst for them, we must seek for them, not doubt-

She did not communicate her request, but rather led on the king's expectancy by inviting him first to come to a banquet which she had arranged in his honor, and to which also his most trusted officer, Haman, was invited. The appointment was kept, and at that banquet the queen again parried the inquiry as to her real desires by asking that the same two should honor her by attending a banquet on the day following also, and this was agreed to. Some of the Lord's dear people of the spiritual Israel are a little inclined to go to extremes and, trusting in the Lord, do nothing to forward the cause they wish to serve. We believe that Esther's course is a good example of propriety. We should both watch and pray, labor and wait, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. We should do all in our power while trusting to the Lord for the results, assured that he is able to make up all of our deficiencies, but at the same time leaving as little deficiency as possible.

fully, but with faith respecting his willingness to give us good gifts. When, therefore, we pray for the holy Spirit, and to be filled with the Lord's Spirit, we are to look about us and find the provision which he has made for the answer to these prayers, which he has thus inspired and directed.

We find this provision in the Word of truth; but it is not enough to find **where** it is: if we desire to be filled we must eat; assuredly we must partake of the feast or we will not experience the satisfaction which the eating was designed to give. He who will not eat of a full table will be empty and starved, as truly as though there were no food. As the asking of a blessing upon the food will not fill us, but thereafter we must partake of it, so the possession of the Word of God, and the offering of our petition to be filled with the Spirit, will not suffice us; we must eat the Word of God, if we would derive his Spirit from it.

Our Master declared, "The **words** that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life" (John 6:63); and of all who are filled with the Spirit it is true, as spoken by the prophet, "Thy words were found and **I did eat them.**" (Jer. 15:16; Rev. 10:9) It is absolutely useless for us to pray Lord, Lord,

give us the Spirit, if we neglect the Word of truth which that Spirit has supplied for our fulfilling. If we merely pray for the Spirit and do not use the proper means to obtain the Spirit of truth, we will continue to be at most only “babes in

Christ,” seeking outward signs, in proof of relationship to the Lord, instead of the inward witness, through the Word of truth, which he has provided.

## 18. For what should we pray?

### For the Holy Spirit.

#### R3665 [col. 1 ¶2]:

The Master tells us what we may freely ask, what we may be assured that the heavenly Father will be very willing to grant to us, though he bear long with us, though he give it gradually to us, and not perhaps as rapidly and as fully as we request it. His words are: “If ye, then, know how to give good gifts [earthly gifts] unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him.” (Luke 11:13.) The holy Spirit is the spirit of love—to God and to man. It cannot be given to us under present condi-

tions except gradually, as the old selfish, wrong spirit is deposed from our hearts. This, therefore, must be continually our prayer to the end of life’s journey, that we might be filled with the Spirit of the Lord, and thus praying means that we will be thus laboring day by day, and that the Lord will continually bless us, giving us the fruits of his Spirit in our hearts and in our lives more and more, its joy and peace and blessing.

**Luke 11:13** If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

**E222 through E225—Praying for the Holy Spirit.** Reproduced at the end of this section, p. 288.

### For wisdom.

**James 1:5,6** If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

#### F686 [¶2]:

What more could we ask on behalf of the world than divine providence has already arranged? Nothing! The glorious “times of restitution” promised in the Word more than meet all the grandest anticipations or hopes that the wisest of men could have ever entertained. We can, therefore, only thank God and acknowledge his goodness, seeking to cooperate therewith, and to realize our need of wisdom. Hence the invitation that we may ask this help of God’s holy Spirit or

power—“wisdom from on high.” “If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, that giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not.” (James 1:5) By this wisdom we may be enabled so to conduct ourselves, so to speak and act, as will be helpful to others; and in this direction, therefore, should be our prayers, that we may cooperate with God along the generous, benevolent lines which he has already marked out—to ask a betterment of which would be an absurdity.

## For one another.

1 Thes. 5:25 Brethren, pray for us.

John 17:20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

Ephes. 1:16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

Col. 4:2,3 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; [3] Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:

## For "the harvesters."

Matthew 9:38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

### R2636 [col. 1 ¶3]:

The harvest in the end of the Jewish age foreshadowed or typified the harvest of this Gospel age. And now, as then, Jesus is the Lord of the harvest, and his disciples, his messengers, are his agents in the gathering work. Now, as then, he seems to speak to these, saying that the harvest is great and that the laborers are few, and that if we have his spirit in the matter, and entreat him to send us forth in his service, he will be pleased to do so. And many are thus praying from day to day, and

seeking to see what more their hands can find to do in the harvest work. And the Lord is graciously with such to guide their service and to bless the results to their own good as well as to the good of others. As all of the disciples then prayed this prayer, and got opportunity to engage in some part of the harvest work, so now all true disciples should be praying this prayer and should be expecting and utilizing opportunities for service.

## For our enemies.

Matthew 5:44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

Acts 7:60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

*Manna, March 21:* Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you. Matthew 5:44

Here is a way to examine the real disposition of your own heart toward such. Would you cheerfully do them kindness and help them to the extent of your ability to see the error of their way and to overcome it? Can you tenderly pray for them and patiently bear with their weakness, their ignorance and lack of development, and try by a

noble example to show them a more excellent way? If such be the case, then it is the sin that you despise, and not the sinner. The sin you should hate, but the sinner, never. Not until God's unerring judgment declares that the sin and the sinner are inseparably linked together may love let go its hold upon a brother man.

## For “all men, for kings, and those in authority.”

1 Tim. 2:1,2 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

### R3600 [col. 1 ¶4 to end of answer]—Prayers For Earthly Rulers.

**Question.**—How should we understand the Apostle’s expression (1 Tim. 2:1-4), respecting the propriety of making prayer and supplication on behalf of “kings and all in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty”?

**Answer.**—We are to feel a keen interest in the whole world, its great and its poor. We are interested in them because they are our brethren and neighbors according to the flesh and because God loved them, had mercy upon them, and redeemed them with his blood, and has made a gracious provision for their reclamation by and by. In proportion as we are in accord with our Lord we must be in accord with all these features of his gracious plan, and this means a love for mankind and a desire to “do good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith.”—Gal. 6:10.

Having such a kind feeling for the world it is appropriate that we should have their interests in mind when we pray, “Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as in heaven;” indeed, any and everything which bears upon the interests of humanity must of necessity come close to the hearts of those who have the holy spirit of love. It is appropriate, therefore, that on proper occasions prayer and supplication be made on behalf of rulers, indicating our good wishes for their welfare and leading in ways of righteousness—even though we see them hastening in a wrong course toward evil conditions, sure to react to their injury.

### *Special occasions for prayer.*

#### R2006 [col. 1 ¶2-7]—“Ye Have Not, Because Ye Ask Not.” (James 4:2)

The trouble with many is that they do not avail themselves of the great stock of divine grace set apart for the benefit of those who, abiding in Christ, and his word abiding in them, do ask, do

The Apostle implies that these prayers for rulers should be to the intent that we may live a peaceable and quiet life—that God’s people may have the peace of God at all times ruling in their hearts, and never fearing the anarchistic or hateful spirit of the world, and of the blind leaders of the blind. So that if we cannot speak well of them nor cooperate with them for conscience’ sake we can at least bear them no grudge, but can pray for them, and make sure that we speak evil of no man.

Our Lord’s prayer, recorded in John 17, “I pray not for the world,” should not be understood in contradiction of the Apostle’s declarations in this text, but rather be interpreted to mean, I am not now praying for the world, “but for those whom thou hast given me.”

Neither are we to understand the Apostle to mean that we are to pray for something contrary to what the Lord has instructed us; we are not to pray for and to expect the conversion of kings and rulers and nations, so that the time of trouble will not be necessary and will not come. On the contrary, we are to understand that the trouble will come, because the world is not in the proper attitude of heart for the change of dispensation which is now due to take place. It must pass through the baptism of “blood,” “fire,” “wrath,” in order to be ready for the new order of things, and these, therefore, will be so many blessings for the time disguised. Our prayers are to be in full accord with what is written, but this will not hinder us from good wishes for all, and from a sympathetic realization that many are perverse because they are blinded by the god of this world.

seek and do find. Let no one suppose that all prayer must be selfish. Quite to the contrary, we have a wide field of prayer-liberty in full accord with the Lord’s Word and will.

Every trial of faith and patience is an occasion for prayer for the promised succor. Every failure to gain victory is an occasion for a prayer for forgiveness, and as well for divine blessing, that the lesson of our own weakness may be deeply impressed, so that in the next similar trial we may promptly apply for and lay hold upon the "grace to help" promised. Every victory over self is an occasion for prayer that we be not high minded and puffed up, but kept humble and watchful for the next attack from the great Adversary. Every service for the truth becomes an occasion for a prayer of thanks for the privilege of serving the Great King and mayhap to have suffered something for his cause; and a cause for supplication for further opportunities of service and grace to use them wisely.

If you have trials and temptations which you are able to overcome, and which are working out in your character patience, experience, brotherly-kindness, sympathy and love, rejoice and offer the prayer of thanksgiving and acknowledgment of divine mercy and help. If your trials seem heavier than you can bear, and likely to crush you, take the matter to the great Burden-bearer, and ask his help in bearing whatever would do you good, and release from all that would not do you good, but which would injure you. If your heart is full of a desire to obey the Lord's injunction and "forget not the assembling," and you are **unreasonably** hindered in a way that you have tried to overcome but cannot, take the matter to the Lord in prayer, and watch and wait and strive according to your prayer, and you will soon see a manifestation of divine power on your behalf. If you see a true brother, a true "soldier" faltering and in danger, let your heart be so full of love for all of the Lord's "brethren" that you will not only run to his relief, but also supplicate the throne of the heavenly grace unceasingly, until you have regained him, or until in his wilfulness he has renounced the "narrow way" entirely. And should the fault be your own, your prayers and efforts will surely be blessed and overruled to your own profit. If you have no burning zeal to preach the good tidings of great joy, pray earnestly and faithfully and persistently for it, and strive for it, and you will soon have it. If you have a zeal and love for the gospel, and lack ability to present it, pray for the ability while you make full use of what you have. If you

have the zeal and the ability and lack an opportunity, take it to the Lord in prayer as soon as you can, telling him that you are faithfully using all the opportunities you have. Then watch for more opportunities without slacking your hand to use the very humblest and smallest within your reach.

Have you a quarrelsome disposition, or other bad habits, which you realize are a burden to your home and family, and to your brethren in the Lord's household? Take it to the Lord in prayer, asking grace and help to overcome, and meantime using your best diligence and effort in harmony with your prayer.

Do you lack wisdom, so that your efforts to serve the Lord and the truth are usually failures? Take it to the Lord in prayer, remembering the promise, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not."—James 1:5.

Have you business complications brought about by your lack of judgment, or the dishonesty of others, or your generosity to the poor, etc.? And do these perplex you and hinder your progress in spiritual matters, and thus threaten your welfare as a "new creature?" This surely is a proper matter to lay before the Lord at the throne of the heavenly grace. And although it would not be right for you to attempt to dictate how your relief shall come, and you should not expect the Lord to work a miracle to prosper your imprudent venture, yet you can ask his wisdom to guide and overrule in the results, better than your wisdom could do it.

Here is a wide range of subjects (and it might be widely expanded) upon which we may go to the throne boldly in the name of Jesus and ask and receive, seek and find, God's grace sufficient. But the range of subjects upon which we may not approach God in prayer is also large. We may not ask anything to minister to pride or selfishness or ambition, nor anything which would injure another; nor anything which would conflict with the Lord's plan as revealed in his Word. Oh! how many "ask and receive not, because they ask amiss," that they may consume the desired favor upon their earthly desires.

**Manna, June 25:** Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving. Colossians 4:2

Every trial of faith and patience is an occasion for prayer for the promised succor. Every failure to gain victory is an occasion for a prayer for forgiveness, and as well for divine blessing, that the lesson of our own weakness may be deeply impressed, so that in the next similar trial we may promptly apply for and lay hold upon the "grace to help" promised. Every victory over self is an occasion for prayer that we be not high minded

and puffed up, but kept humble and watchful for the next attack from the great adversary. Every service for the Truth becomes an occasion for a prayer of thanks for the privilege of serving the Great King, and mayhap to have suffered something for His cause; and a reason for supplication for further opportunities for service and grace to use them wisely.

## 19. For what should we *not* pray?

1 John 5:16 If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

### R2612 [col. 1 ¶5]:

The "sin unto [second] death," for the forgiveness of which the Apostle declares it is useless to pray (1 John 5:16), is not only a wilful sin but a sin against clear knowledge; a sin for which no adequate excuse can be found. Because it is a sin against clear knowledge, or enlightenment in holiness, it is called the "sin against the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 12:31,32), for which there is no forgiveness.

### R2006 [col. 2 ¶1]:

Here is a wide range of subjects (and it might be widely expanded) upon which we may go to the throne boldly in the name of Jesus and ask and receive, seek and find, God's grace sufficient. But the range of subjects upon which we may not approach God in prayer is also large. We may not ask anything to minister to pride or selfishness

or ambition, nor anything which would injure another; nor anything which would conflict with the Lord's plan as revealed in his Word. Oh! how many "ask and receive not, because they ask amiss," that they may consume the desired favor upon their earthly desires.

### R3665 [col. 1 ¶1]:

It would be rather unsafe, we think, for any of the "new creation" to make request for temporal blessings. "After all those things do the Gentiles seek." (Matt. 6:32.) They seek those things because they know not of and appreciate not the

higher and better, the spiritual things. Spiritual Israelites are exhorted by the Lord to appreciate the spiritual clothing, the spiritual food, the heavenly riches, which moth and rust cannot corrupt, and to seek for these.

## 20. Is it proper to pray for the conversion of sinners?

### R2252 [col. 2 last of top and ¶1]:

We have heard public prayers which implied that the worshiper had as much or more wisdom than the Almighty; because in them he undertook to tell the Almighty how, when, where and what should be done the world over, at home and abroad;—how many should be converted at the meeting in which he was praying, and how the heathen everywhere, the world over, should

be dealt with.

All this is monstrously wrong. No man is in a fit condition of heart to approach God in prayer who has not first learned of his own ignorance and lack of wisdom, and learned also of the Lord's infinitely superior knowledge and wisdom and power and love. The Christian who is advanced in knowledge and experience in the heavenly way

will on the contrary be so filled with a realization of his own ignorance and insufficiency that he will rather go to the Lord praying, Lord teach us thy will, show me what is thy way and plan of salvation for Christendom and for the heathen, and show me how I may best be a co-worker with thee in the accomplishment of thy great and wonderful, wise and good purposes. Indeed, as the Christian's experience grows he is apt to come more

### **R3354 [col. 1 ¶2]:**

The asking, seeking and knocking are to be done by us individually. We may ask the Lord for a share in the Kingdom, and may labor for it, praying his blessing upon our labors; but we may not attempt to direct the divine arrangement and to ask the Lord to specially favor others in connection with the Kingdom. Because some one is related to us and very dear according to the flesh, is no reason why we should conclude that the Lord would necessarily choose such an one for a mem-

## **21. What is the *cost* of *selfish* prayers?**

### **R3061 [col. 1 ¶2-4]:**

Is it not sometimes after the same manner with the Spiritual Israelites? Do not some after being well fed on spiritual manna permit a selfish, craving spirit to interrupt their fellowship with the Lord to some extent—hankering for earthly, fleshly, good things;—forgetting the wisdom of our Leader, the Lord, and that his love which thus far has delivered us, and fed and led us, is still with us, as wise and as good as ever? Sometimes it is a repining against our lot in life, a desire for more ease and comfort and wealth and social influence, than are within our reach: sometimes it is a protest against our share of the aches and pains of the groaning creation and our inability to get rid of these: sometimes it is a protest against the illness and death of a loved one.

How unwise! Should not those who have been fed on the spiritual manna realize that all of Spiritual Israel's affairs are under the Lord's care and supervision? Should they not remember that,—He doth not willingly afflict the children of men, but for their good? (Lam. 3:33; Heb. 12:10.) Ah! some have found that the prayers of murmurers, even when answered, as were Israel's, sometimes bring unexpected draw-

and more to the condition of heart where his prayers to God will be chiefly **thanks** for mercies and favors already received, expressions of confidence in the Lord's willingness and ability to fulfil all the gracious promises of his Word, temporal and spiritual, and request merely that the divine will be done.

ber of his Bride. On the contrary, we are to preach the Word to such an one, to tell him of God's goodness and grace, and of the Kingdom, and of the blessing, and to encourage him to make a consecration of himself to the Lord; and, in connection with that consecration, we are to urge him to ask for himself, to seek for himself and to know for himself that he may receive and find and enter into the blessed favors of the Lord.

backs;—that selfish prayers are too expensive. Some have gained wealth and lost the truth and its service: some have gained health only to find that with it they gained other trials no less severe: some have had their dear ones restored to them from the very jaws of death, only to wish afterward that God had not answered their prayers;—or, more correctly, to wish that they had accepted the Lord's wisdom and providences trustfully, contentedly, uncomplainingly.

The lesson to Israel was, that they should trust the Lord implicitly; and accepting and using all that they had, all that the surroundings would supply, they should have used it as wisely and as thoroughly as possible—accepting all things, natural as well as miraculous, as God's gifts. And therewith they should have been content, thankful, happy. So, too, Spiritual Israel should use wisely such things as are within their reach—accepting all as God's gifts with thanksgiving; but their petitions should be for spiritual gifts—including patient-endurance and heart-contentment.

## 22. What is meant by “vain repetitions” in prayer?

### R2252 [col. 1 ¶4]:

“Use not vain repetitions as the heathen do.” The natural tendency of the human mind in approaching the Creator seems to be to feel its own poverty of expression, and to attempt to make up for this by repetitions. Thus the Chinese have the “praying wheels” in which long prayers that the worshiper cannot remember to repeat are turned round and round by him as representing his will, his wish, his prayers. The same principle is used amongst Roman Catholics, who repeat the same prayers scores and hundreds of times, and are promised by their priests certain special rewards for “saying” these prayers, a certain number of times,—the omission of so many days or years of future purgatorial sufferings. The same influences seem to operate upon Protestants tho less grossly, and often leads to long prayers and improper details of instruction to the Almighty. The Lord wished his followers to pray intelligently and realize that they were approaching an intelligent and reasonable God who knows already, far better than we, what

things we have need of; and who is more willing to give them to us than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children. Hence to repeat our petitions over and over is not only **vain**, in the sense that it will profit us nothing, but it indicates a low degree of spiritual development, very imperfect ideas respecting God, and a very imperfect relationship with him. The Christian neither needs to repeat certain prayers indefinitely, nor does he need to take up in prayer all the affairs of the world and the affairs of the Church, to tell God all about them and how they **ought** to be regulated. We have heard public prayers which implied that the worshiper had as much or more wisdom than the Almighty; because in them he undertook to tell the Almighty how, when, where and what should be done the world over, at home and abroad;—how many should be converted at the meeting in which he was praying, and how the heathen everywhere, the world over, should be dealt with.

## 23. How may we be “instant in prayer”?

### R2213 [col. 2 ¶4-6]: “Instant in prayer.”

No advice that the Apostle could give to the class addressed could be more vitally important than this. “Ah, whither could we flee for aid when tempted, desolate, dismayed? Or how the host of sin defeat had suffering saints no mercy-seat.”

Prayer, communion with God, is indispensably necessary to our spiritual welfare; and the appreciation of the privilege of communion with the Most High and with our Redeemer, or the lack of such appreciation, as the case may be, indicates tolerably clearly our fervency or our coldness with reference to the things of the Lord. People may be fervent in serving schemes or plans of their own, or human systems and theories, and have little desire for prayer; but those who serve the Lord and his truth from a hot, fervent heart, will so realize their imperfection and their own inability in the divine service, that they

will desire and will continually seek the Master’s guidance and direction with reference to the service they are rendering to him.

If, therefore, we ever feel a growing indifference, either to private prayer or to public worship or to social prayer-meetings, we may be assured that it is a very dangerous sign of one of two things. (1) Either that our love is growing cold, or (2) that our love is misplaced, misdirected, placed upon some earthly scheme or ambition, and is not fervent toward the Lord. And whichever is found to be the difficulty should be corrected at once. The appreciation of prayer, like the growth of love, and like the increase of fervency of spirit, is a matter for development; and the best fuel, as above suggested, is the consideration of the divine mercies already enjoyed.

**R1866 [col. 1 ¶2]:**

What a blessed privilege, dear fellow-disciples of the Lord, is ours, to be instant in prayer, to pray always—to lift up our hearts and minds to God at any time and in any place and to realize thus daily and hourly that the Father and our dear Lord Jesus continually abide with us. And

then, when the active duties of the day have been performed under his eye and supervision, or at any time when the soul realizes its necessity, how precious is the privilege of entering into our closets and there alone with God unburdening our hearts at the throne of grace.

## 24. What does it mean to “pray without ceasing”?

**R3136 [col. 2 ¶5, 6]:**

“Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks.” Only somewhat advanced pupils in the School of Christ are prepared clearly to comprehend this exhortation. Having surrendered their wills and all of the interests of the present life to the Lord, exchanging earthly interests for heavenly interests, the Lord’s people are less disposed than others to pray unceasingly for **earthly good things**. Having set their affections on things above, their prayers are in respect to those things,—the heavenly robe, the heavenly food, the heavenly favor. Their prayers are specially for such leadings of divine providence and such assistance of divine grace as will enable them to rejoice always in such experiences as their gracious Lord may deem best for their spiritual development. More and more they find their prayers to consist of thanksgiving for blessings already received, as well as for those yet to come, which they grasp by the hand of faith.

Their prayers are without ceasing, in that, having the condition of heart which is in fellowship

with the Lord and fully devoted to the doing of his will, they not only implore his blessing at the beginning of each day, and present their thanks at the close of each day, but in all of life’s affairs they seek to remember that they have consecrated their all to the Lord, and by faith look up to him in all of the affairs of life;—and in proportion to the importance of their undertakings they, by faith, realize the association of God’s providence with all the interests of life and give thanks accordingly. This is the will of God concerning us;—he wills that we live in such an attitude of constant regard for his will and for his blessing;—and he wills it in respect to us because it will be the condition most favorable to our progress in the narrow way, and which will best assist us in making our calling and election sure.

**R3351 [col. 1 ¶8]:**

We do not understand the Apostle to mean that the Lord’s people are to be continually upon their knees, but rather that their hearts are to be constantly in an attitude of prayer, mentally, spiritually, looking to the Lord for guidance in all the affairs of life, and to see that their conduct has the divine approval. This thought of perpetual communion with the Lord, continually looking to him for his smile, continually watching that no earth-born cloud arise and hide from us the Father’s face and blessing, is the attitude of the advanced Christian. To such an one every day and every hour is a

time of fellowship with the Lord. Whenever business cares, household worries, etc., interfere with such communion it is an evidence that we are being overcharged with the cares of this life, and the difficulty should be corrected: either we should rectify matters by diminishing our business responsibilities, etc., or, if this be impossible, we should counterbalance the cares of life with the more earnest and more repeated turning of our hearts to the Lord for guidance in even the trivial affairs of life, much more in the great ones.

## 25. How should we understand, “Ye shall ask *what ye will*, and it shall be done unto you”?

John 15:7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

R1998 [col. 2 ¶6 subhead through next page]—“Ask What Ye Will.” Reproduced at the end of this section, p. 289.

### R3407 [col. 1 ¶3, 4]:

This is the key to our Master’s words, “If ye abide in me and my Word abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you.” For us to have the ear of the Lord it is requisite that we shall abide in Christ—as members of his body, and through him children of the Father. It is necessary also that his Word abide in us—that we study the Lord’s promise, that we know what he has promised, so that we may ask only those things which he has already declared to us he is pleased to grant. Just another suggestion respecting what we may ask and what we may not request in prayer, leaving the fuller examination of the subject to another time. We may not ask the conversion of our friends, because the Lord has not told us thus to pray. He set us no such example, neither did the apostles, and the entire teaching of the Scriptures is to the contrary. We may, however, with propriety pray for wisdom and grace upon our hearts and upon our lips, that we may know how to present the Lord’s message clearly and forcefully and convincingly to those we love and desire to see brought under the influence of the Truth. The Lord’s arrangement is, “Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.”

God’s arrangement is, further, that the Truth shall not be injected into our minds in some miraculous manner when this is unnecessary, but that it shall be proclaimed by those who already have learned it. Hence the preaching of the Gospel is the Lord’s means by which he is pleased to grant the blessing of his Truth and through his Truth his grace, during this Gospel age, to those who are in a proper attitude of heart to receive the same. Take another illustration: We are not taught to pray for money or luxuries, but we may labor and ask the Lord’s blessing upon our labors, and such guidance of them as would be best, with a heart ready to receive with thankfulness much or little as the Lord may see best for us. Our only request may be for the absolute necessities as expressed in our Lord’s prayer, “Give us this day our daily bread.” We may also pray with propriety, “Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven,” and may be sure that in the Lord’s due time this petition, which has gone up for eighteen centuries to the throne of grace, shall be answered, and showers of blessing shall come from the presence of the Lord during the second presence of our King, flooding the world with times of restitution of all things.

### R3546 [col. 2 ¶1, 2]—Fruits of Membership in the Vine

Our Lord proceeds to tell us what some of the fruits of this union with him will be:—

First, such may ask whatsoever they will and it shall be done unto them. There is only one condition or limitation, namely, that before they are thus prepared to ask they must see to it that they give attention to the Lord’s word that they may ascertain what is his will and what they may ask according to his will. Those who abide in Christ

must have no will of their own, theirs must be the will of their Head, and their Head has already declared that his will is the Father’s will. These, then, are the limitations, that we have the Father’s will in our hearts and the Father’s promises in our hearts; then our requests will be in conformity to these and the Lord will be pleased to grant all such.

**F679 [¶1] through F680 [¶2]—“Ask and Ye Shall Receive, that Your Joy may be Full” (John 16:24)**

“In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures forevermore,” declares the prophet. (Psa. 16:11) It is because prayer brings the soul into the presence of the Lord that it prepares the way for divine blessing and superlative joys. Evidently the opening of the way for the Lord’s people to approach the throne of grace is not with the object of their changing the divine will or plans. Such a thought is incompatible with every reasonable consideration of the subject; hence, the Lord instructs us that proper praying is not along the line of making requests that our wills be done, in opposition to the divine will, but along the line of full submission to the latter. The Apostle declares of some, “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss”—in harmony with your own desires, and not in harmony with the divine arrangement and plan. James 4:3

Along the same line our Lord admonished: “Use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do, for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking; but your heavenly Father **knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him.** Be not careful [worried], therefore, respecting what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, and wherewithal ye shall be clothed, for after these things do the Gentiles seek; but seek ye primarily the Kingdom of God and righteousness in harmony with it, and all these needful earthly things shall be added unto you—by your Father in heaven, according to his wisdom.” (Matt. 6:25-34) Again, our Lord says, “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) The following conditions are all-important:

(1) The one offering the prayer must be in Christ—must have come into vital relationship with him by the acceptance of the merit of his atonement sacrifice, and by a consecration to his will and service; and, more than this, he must continue to abide thus in Christ as a member of his body, as a member of the New Creation, in order to have the privileges of prayer here referred to.

(2) He must also let the Lord’s Word abide in him; he must partake of the Word of truth and

grace if he would have the wisdom necessary to ask, in harmony with the Lord’s will, things which he would be pleased to grant—otherwise, even though in Christ a New Creature, his prayers might frequently go unanswered, because “amiss.” It is only those who profess both of these qualifications who may expect to approach the throne of heavenly grace with full confidence, full assurance of faith that their petitions will be answered—in God’s due time. Only such can realize fullness of joy.

As the Scriptures explain, prayer is the attempt to gain access to the presence of God, and to hold communion with him. Who then may approach the throne of the heavenly grace to “obtain mercy and find grace to help in every time of need?” (Heb. 4:16) We answer, with the Apostle, that the world in general does not have this access, does not have this privilege of prayer. True, indeed, millions of heathen people are offering prayers to Deity with varying conceptions of who and what he is; but their prayers are not acceptable to God. “He that cometh unto God must believe that he is [must recognize him as the self-existing One], and that he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him [seek to know him, to obey him, to serve him].” (Heb. 11:6) Cornelius was one of this latter kind, who recognized the true God and revered him, and sought to know and do his will; and, as soon as the divine plan had reached the necessary stage of development to permit God’s favor to be extended to the Gentiles, his prayers and his alms received a response. He was not, however, permitted to have communion with God in the full, proper sense; but was instructed to send for Peter, who would tell him “**words**” by which he might be brought from his condition of alienation and separation into a condition of harmony and sonship, in which he would have the privilege of a son—the privilege of access to the Father at the throne of heavenly grace.

**R3663 [col. 1 ¶2]:**

Whenever we think of prayer and answers thereto we should remember our Lord's words, "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye may ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:7.) Ah, there are conditions in this statement. Those who abide in Christ must have

gotten into him by faith, repentance and consecration, and to abide in him means that the faith will abide, the repentance for sin and opposition to it will abide, and the consecration to the Lord and his service will abide and be manifest.

**26. What relative privileges in prayer have *justified* and *consecrated* persons?****F681 [¶3] through F684 [¶1]:**

But while only the consecrated class, the underpriesthood, the New Creation, are thus encouraged to approach the throne with courage and confidence, very evidently all who even but tentatively belong to the "household of faith" may to some extent enjoy the privileges of thanksgiving and praise, and may rejoice in God, in a realization of the provision he has made for the complete forgiveness of sins through the merit of the atonement. Nevertheless, it is not their privilege to come with boldness, or in any other manner, into the Holy of Holies. Only the consecrated, the New Creation, the members of the body of the Priest, are privileged to enter into the presence of God in prayer in this special sense; and they only, therefore, may have the fulness of joy which the Master promised. Hence, while we may not even suggest to unbelievers the propriety of prayer, but should first instruct them with the "words," as Peter instructed Cornelius, that they may know him upon whom they must believe before they could have any standing before God, we may nevertheless, encourage all who have believed on the Lord Jesus to give thanks and to offer praise to the Father through Jesus Christ. Such should, however, be given freely to understand that their tentative justification through faith is not the accomplishment of the divine will in them, but merely the beginning of the proper course of approach to God—the first step in that approach—and that the second step of full consecration to the divine will must be taken by those who would enjoy the proper privileges of prayer, of communion with God and of the fulness of joy associated therewith.

It should be pointed out to them that a failure to take the second step would imply a disposi-

tion to receive the grace of God [justification] in vain. (2 Cor. 6:1) After enjoying prayer-privileges of this kind for a season, and refusing to go on to make a full consecration of themselves to the Lord, these should very properly feel a diffidence in respect to prayer—should feel it to be improper to be continually receiving divine favors and asking for more, while withholding from the Lord the consecration of their hearts—their reasonable service. As the consecrated class is in the Scriptures designated the spouse of Christ, so the general household of faith would properly represent those to whom the privileges of espousal are thrown open. The New Creation, as the espoused Bride of Christ, having surrendered heart and tongue and every power and energy to its Lord and his service, may reasonably and gratefully accept from him the blessings, privileges, protection, supervision and gifts which he has been pleased to promise to it as his espoused Bride.

As a woman who had rejected a suitor and had refused to give him her hand and heart could not reasonably look to him afterward for the care and protection and blessing and privileges and joys which he had already freely tendered her, so those who continually reject divine favor, to the extent of refusing to make a consecration of their little all to the Lord, could not with any propriety look to him, or ask of him the blessings which he has promised to those who love him and who manifest their love by their devotion, their consecration. A proper recognition should be made of this distinction between those who merely believe in the forgiveness of sins at the hands of the Lord and those who have appreciated that favor and gone on to consecration and full relationship with the Lord. The fact that these divinely drawn lines between the different classes of believers are not

more clearly recognized is a disadvantage to both. The distinction between the believers and unbelievers should be sharply defined. All of the former should be recognized as brethren, "of the household of faith," but not so the latter. Again, the distinction between those believers who have consecrated themselves and those who have not should be clearly traced, and the former should be recognized as the Church, the New Creation, the Royal Priesthood, to whom all the exceeding great and precious promises belong.

If these distinctions were clearly recognized it would be of advantage (1) to the world, leading to more thorough investigation and a more tangible faith; (2) of advantage also to the unconsecrated believers, leading them to realize that unless they go on to a full consecration they are not joint-heirs with the saints in any sense of the word, either in the future glories or the present privileges and joys. (3) To realize this would, we believe, have also a stimulating effect upon the unconsecrated, leading them more frequently to a positive deci-

sion by dispelling their unfounded imaginings that somehow or other merely believing in Christ, without consecration, constitutes them sons of God and heirs, and entitles them to participate in the richest divine promises which lay hold upon the present life and that which is to come.

The bruised reed we would not break, and the smoking flax we would not quench; but we would have the bruised reeds realize that in order properly to share in the blessings of God, present or future, they must avail themselves of divine favor upon divine conditions—they must wholly consecrate themselves, if they would cease to be bruised reeds, and become useful in the Lord's service. The smouldering faith we would not quench, but would fan it into a flame of sacred love which would induce a full consecration of self—a full sacrifice, according to the divine invitation, and thus lead to participation in the joys present and to come.

## 27. What privileges of prayer do the *children of consecrated parents* enjoy?

### F531 [¶1] through F532 [¶2]—Children Born in Justification

In all these matters the New Creature has a decided advantage over all others in respect to his children. They should, to begin with, be better born, better endowed at birth. And this prenatal endowment should be fostered from the very earliest moments of infancy. The babe of a few days is pretty sure to be nervous and irritable and distressed if the mother is so; an influence goes to the child, not only through the mother's milk, but telepathically, electrically, from her person to the child. What a general advantage, then, the New Creature has in the indwelling of the Spirit of the Lord, with its peace, love and joy; and how favored is the infant under such care! Humanly speaking, how great are its possibilities as compared with the possibilities of others in respect to noble manhood and womanhood; and, speaking from the standpoint of the Lord's Word, how great is its advantage when we remember that the children of the Lord's consecrated people, like themselves, are under the supervision of divine providence in respect to all of their affairs; that the children of believers, too, come under the terms of the

promise that "all things shall work together for good" to them!

It is not difficult to see that the children of New Creatures have a **tentatively justified** standing with God, in virtue of the relationship of their parents to him and to them. As the disobedience and alienation of Adam and Eve from the heavenly Father brought alienation to all their offspring, so, too, the reconciliation of the Lord's people, through the merits of the great atonement, not only brings them back to harmony with God, but their children as well are counted justified through their parents, and on account of their parents, up to such a time as the child shall have an intelligence and will of his own. The question is more complex, however, when one parent is the Lord's and the other is a stranger and alien from him; but the Apostle assures us that in such a case God counts the child as his, through whichever one of its parents is the Lord's disciple. The influence of the believing parent, the consecrated parent, is counted as offsetting and overruling the influence of the

unconsecrated parent, so far as the child is concerned. On this subject the Apostle says:

“Else Were Your Children Unholy  
[Sinful, Condemned].”

“The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the [believing] wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the [believing] husband [in respect to the subject under consideration, viz., the off-

#### **F684 [¶2]:**

As we have already noted, the Apostle declares that the children of believers are counted in with them as sharers in the divine grace of justification—as no longer unholy, but justified in a **tentative** sense. This justified standing and its relationship to divine care and providence continues from birth until the age of discretion; and such children evidently have much the same privilege as the justified in the matter of prayer, receiving also in like proportion of the joys and blessings resulting. From earliest infancy they should be taught to regard the Almighty, the God of their parents, as their God, and from an early age they should be given to understand that as the parent has his standing with God through Christ, so indirectly the child has its standing and relation-

ship with Christ through his parent. The consecrated parent or parents in every Christian home may be considered, therefore, as in a sense the priests of the household, and while the child may properly be encouraged to pray to the Lord, the lesson should not be neglected that the family and all of its interests and concerns are under divine supervision as a family, on account of the consecrated parent or parents, members of the New Creation. The child should be taught to look eagerly forward to the time when its expansion of mind and judgment would properly permit it to make full consecration of itself to the Lord, and thus to enter into the privileges and joys promised to such.

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## **28. How should we look out for the interests of each other through prayer?**

#### **R3223 [col. 2 ¶5]:**

The nobility of Samuel’s course may well be copied by the Lord’s people under various circumstances in life. When those who are near and dear to us flag in their love and devotion, they need all the more our sympathy and our prayers; and, as our dear Master showed us, even our enemies are to be prayed for and have our good wishes—that the Lord would grant them in his providence such opening of understanding, such experiences as in divine wisdom would be for

their highest welfare to bring them into full accord with himself, and thus back into harmony with us and all who are in harmony with him. The prophet indicates that, although he was ceasing to be their judge and ruler, he would not cease to be their instructor in the good and right way so long as the Lord’s providences might permit him to serve them, and so long as they would accept his aid.

#### **R1842 [col. 2 ¶4]:**

Here was a type of the value of intercessory prayer on behalf of those who sin not unto death. (1 John 5:16.) Let us bear in mind this privilege and duty of intercessory prayer for all such, and for our encouragement let us remember God’s dealings with his faithful ones of old. And let us beware of any thing

approaching to disloyalty to God—of any disposition to rebel against him and return to Egypt, the world; and also of that lack of faith which indicates a serious lack of appreciation of all of God’s favors and leading in the past and which therefore fails to trust him for the future.

## 29. What is the relation between *faith* and prayer?

James 1:6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

Mark 11:24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

### R2005 [col. 2 ¶1-4]:

Our prayers are not to be “vain repetitions,” formal requests for what we do not expect. We are to “ask in faith, nothing wavering,” (James 1:6.) And whatsoever things ye ask “believe that ye [shall] receive them,” for whatsoever is not of faith is sin, hypocrisy. —Mark 11:11,24; Rom. 14:23.

The child of God must therefore be a close student of his Father’s Word; because he is expected to ask that he may receive, that his joy may be full; and he is cautioned to ask only for such things as his Father has expressed a willingness to grant; and he must ask in faith or not at all.

There can be no doubt that in this matter of prayer, as in other matters, our Heavenly Father designs to cultivate faith in his people. He tells us that “Without faith it is impossible to please God;” and that “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith.” Hence, only those who exercise faith, and ask in prayer for the promised

favours, are really ready to receive them according to God’s judgment and arrangement. This being the case, it should be the prayer of God’s people to-day, as amongst the Apostles, “Lord! increase our faith.” And thus praying, and laboring to this end, each would be more and more helped in overcoming the world and its faithless influences.

True faith is not credulity. It is critical, and believes only upon good evidence. It criticizes closely and distinguishes clearly between the teachings of men and the substantiated Word of God. But, having found the Word of God, it trusts it implicitly, knowing that its Author cannot lie; and that all his purposes and promises will be accomplished.

### F691 [¶2]:

How necessary faith is to the attainment and retention of our present inheritance, the foretaste of coming blessings, is clearly shown by the Apostle James, who, after saying, “If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God that giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him”—adds, “But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.” (James 1:5-8) The Apostle thus shows how impossible it would be for anyone to become an overcomer without becoming strong in faith. Hence, the Scriptures everywhere inculcate growth in faith,

and all of the Lord’s people need to pray as did the apostles, “Lord, increase our faith”; and praying thus they need to use the means which God has designed for the fulfilment of this prayer. If their prayer be sincere they will use those means earnestly—they will seek the Lord in prayer, seek to know his Word, seek to obey it, seek and enjoy his service, seek to put on all the graces of the Spirit; and this being their attitude they will have strong faith, full assurance of faith, and “shall never fall, but so an entrance shall be ministered unto them abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”—in due time. 2 Pet. 1:10,11

**R3664 [col. 1 ¶4, 5]:**

Nehemiah's prayer to the Lord that he might grant him mercy in the sight of Artaxerxes shows that he had faith in the divine power. We have often wondered if a deficiency of faith along such lines is not a part of much of the trouble of the Lord's truly consecrated people to-day—of spiritual Israel. We know that sometimes they have severe trials from those who hate them, from those who perhaps despise them and deal unjustly with them, and we wonder to what extent they remember, as Nehemiah did, that God has full power to open ways and means before us whereby we may engage in his service, if he be willing to accept of our services, if we find favor in his sight, if our prayers of lips and of heart go up before him as a memorial, acceptable through Christ.

We remember in this connection a story told us by a sister at one of the Conventions. She said: "My husband is quite wealthy, has a large farm, well stocked, etc., and, although I have served faithfully for years, he is so opposed to the Truth and so seeks to hinder me in respect to it that he begrudges me even the small sum of the WATCH TOWER subscription or the price of books I need. When I heard of this Convention I felt a longing in my heart to go and meet with some of the Lord's dear people, and I took the matter to the Lord in prayer, telling him that if it were his pleasure I should greatly enjoy the privilege of attending the Convention, but I was willing to leave the matter entirely with him. I felt somehow that it would be quite probable that the Lord would open the way for me to go, and by way of cooperation I suggested the matter to my husband in good

time, saying that I would like very much to attend the Convention. He was violently opposed, and said that the distance to the railroad station was so great that I could not walk it, and that he would not allow me to use a horse. I replied quite calmly that I did not know, but somehow I felt that the Lord would be willing to have me go and would perhaps open the way yet for me. I answered quietly, because I had committed the matter entirely to the Lord, and was willing to abide by whatever his providence might mete out to me. I was even cheerful, therefore, notwithstanding my husband's words of opposition. He seemed to read my confident expectation and several times referred to the matter, reiterating that I should not go, that he would not allow me to take a horse, etc. I merely replied that I did not know, but that if it were the Lord's will that I should go, he would be able to open the way. About ten days before the Convention one of my husband's best horses took sick, and although he is very successful in doctoring his stock, and on this occasion called in a veterinary surgeon, the horse died. Then another good horse took sick and it died, and a third horse took sick. My husband began to realize that it might be the hand of the Lord in his affairs, and evidently associated his losses with his declaration that I might not use a horse to go to the Convention. He brought up the subject of the Convention himself, intimating in a very mild way a possibility of rescinding his previous decision. My quiet answer was the same, that perhaps the Lord would open the way. The third horse died, and my husband came to me and said, 'You may go to the Convention.' "

**30. What is the relation between prayer and *thanksgiving*?****R3128 [col. 2 ¶3, 4]:**

Anxiety and burdens are unavoidable to those who are depending on themselves, their own wisdom, their own strength, their own skill; but the members of the body of Christ, accepted in the Beloved, adopted into the divine family, sons of God, are assured over and over again in the Word that if they abide faithful all things shall work together for their highest welfare. Why should they be burdened? Why should they feel

anxious? He who guards their interests slumbers not. When Christians find themselves anxious, fearful, burdened, the evidence is that they are lacking in faith, and the probability is that they have either never grown to the point of having the proper faith in the Lord, or that they have allowed "earth-born clouds" and cares of this life to come between them and the Lord, so that they no longer have confidence that they are abiding in his love

and in his care. All in such condition should go at once to the throne of heavenly grace, and to the divine promises, and obtaining mercy at the former, and feeding upon the latter, they should grow strong in the Lord and in confidence in him, and their corroding cares will give place to faith, confidence, peace of heart, whatever the outward conditions.

Such is the counsel of the Apostle—that instead of continuing in the anxious condition, we should lay all of our affairs before the Lord, supplicating his promised providential care, acknowledging our own lack of wisdom;—and gladly accepting his wisdom and the provisions of his love, we

**R3306 [col. 1 ¶7]:**

We have already referred to the necessity for prayer, supplication, mentioned by the Apostle. We now observe that those who are dwelling in close fellowship with the Lord will be so appreciative of the favors and blessings already enjoyed that they will not feel like asking for greater blessings, but rather like giving thanks

**R2866 [col. 1 ¶3]:**

Jacob had a method of marking the special manifestations of divine providence,—as when he called the place in which he wrestled with the angel Peniel; as a reminder that there he had been privileged to see, representatively, the Lord's face, to receive the Lord's blessing, the light of his countenance. Similarly, it is profitable to the spiritual Israelites that we should make note in some special manner of all the Lord's mercies and providences toward us. Many feel poor as respects the Lord's favor and blessing, simply because they have failed to let them make a proper impression upon their hearts at the time they were received. Divine favors are soon lost from our leaky earthen vessels unless special notation is made at the time, either upon the tablets of memory, or in some other manner to refresh memory. Doubtless we would all have more Bethels and more Peniels did we but follow the course of setting up some

should make every request in a spirit of thanksgiving. This spirit of thanksgiving implies a recognition that the circumstances and conditions in which **we are**, have been supervised of the Lord, and that we are appreciative of his care and trust it for the future. Thanksgiving for what we have, and a full appreciation of the Lord's leadings hitherto and now, will preclude any anxiety for the future; for the thankful heart will conclude that he who favored us and redeemed us while we were yet sinners will much more favor and do for us now that we are his through the adoption that is in Christ Jesus.

with a realization that they have already received not only more than they deserved at the Lord's hands, but more than they could have asked or thought. And what has already been received is only a foretaste of the promised coming blessings.

kind of monuments, and there entering into some special covenant or vow with the Lord in return for his mercies. Quite in line with this thought, that Christians generally have multitudinous blessings, and favors more than they fully recognize, the Allegheny Church has for some years held "Cottage Meetings" in various quarters every Wednesday evening, for prayer, praise and testimony. And the testimonies called for are not the "years ago" sort, however good, but the fresh living experience of the **week**. And as each **seeks** for fresh evidences of divine love and watchcare daily, each finds that he has far more cause for rejoicing and thanksgiving and encouragement than he would have been aware of without such watchfulness and notation. Let us daily and weekly as well as yearly rear to God our Ebenezers, if we would increase our faith and joy and love.

### 31. What is the relation between *fasting* and prayer?

#### R2022 [col. 1 ¶4 to end]—Purification with Fasting and Prayer.

Although not under the Law Covenant, we may with propriety look back to God's dealings with the ancient worthies and the typical arrangements of the past and draw therefrom some lessons of value. One lesson is in the fact that those who celebrated the Passover (typifying the Gospel Church which partakes of Christ, our Passover Lamb) were required to cleanse themselves and their houses and to put away all leaven (a symbol of sin) and generally to purify. See Exod. 12:19,20; 13:7; John 11:55.

On the great occasion of the giving to Israel of the Law Covenant, washings, purifying, etc., were strictly enjoined. (See Exod. 19:15.) The antitype of that is the institution of the New Covenant of grace at the hands of the greater Mediator, Christ. The appropriateness of the still greater purifying of all who accept the New Covenant must be evident.

When Daniel the prophet sought the Lord in the special requests which God so specially answered, he "chastened" himself; that is, he sought by the practice of self-denial to bring himself into a special condition of heart and mind pleasing to God. (Dan. 10:2,3.) That his course was helpful to him and acceptable in God's sight is testified by the angel of the Lord—"O Daniel, a man greatly beloved [**margin**—"man of desires"], ... fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard." Verses 11,12. Compare also Chapter 9:3,4-18,20,21.

While the fastings, washings and purifyings of the Law Covenant represent conditions of self-denial and deadness to the world, which should be the attitude of all true believers at all times, yet we have good New Testament precedent for the observance of literal fasts, etc. Note the following:—

Our Lord fasted forty days at the beginning of his ministry, when specially seeking divine leading and instruction for the work; and we know not how often he fasted in secret.—Matt. 4:2.

"When ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance,...that they may appear unto men

to fast....But thou, when thou fastest,...appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret,...and he shall reward thee openly."—Matt. 6:16-18; 9:15.

In the Church at Antioch were several of the brethren who served the Church, and prayed and fasted and sought to be and to do what would be most pleasing to God. It was from among these earnest seeking ones that God chose Paul and Barnabas for special service. What a suggestion there is in this for all who are desirous of being used and useful in the service of the same Master. The Church at Antioch seemed to feel the importance of the matter, too, for when sending them forth at their expense, as their representatives and the Lord's, they fasted first and then prayed and laid their hands upon the missionaries (as recognizing them as their agents and representatives) and sent them forth.—Acts 13:2,3.

The Apostle mentions how he and his co-laborers approved themselves to the people of God, and among other items he mentions stripes, imprisonments and fastings. We are not to think of the Apostle as whipping and imprisoning himself, as do some of the monks and nuns, but as suffering these at the hands of unbelievers, on account of his faithfulness to the Lord, in declaring the good tidings of great joy—"Jesus and the resurrection"—of which he was not ashamed. So, likewise, some of his fastings may have been enforced fastings, because of his service of the truth; and, if so, no doubt they were all the more acceptable in God's sight.—2 Cor. 6:5; 11:27.

To those who have written to us of their desire to abandon the use of tobacco, etc., or who find in themselves any weaknesses which they long to overcome, we advise not only the continual washing of their hearts with the truth and praying and watching unceasingly, but also additionally the frequent use of literal water in a physical bath and occasional fasting unto God as a sign to him of your earnestness of heart—as a proof to yourself, as well as to God, that your prayer is not merely a momentary fancy but a deep, earnest heart-desire.

## R3659 [col. 2 ¶2-5]—Fastings of Spiritual Israelites

That there is an advantage in fasting and prayer to the spiritual Israelite is beyond question. Our case is not exactly that of the Israelites under Ezra, and yet there is some similarity. We are not guaranteed earthly blessings or earthly protection against earthly adversaries. As spiritual Israelites, however, we have a still higher guarantee, for in our estimation our spiritual interests as new creatures are higher and grander than all of our earthly interests, beyond comparison. We have the guarantee that, whatever shall befall us, the Lord is able and willing to overrule it for good if we trust in him. It is in proportion as this gracious promise of the Lord fails to be appreciated by us that we look to the world for protection. The very experience of realizing danger and feeling timidity may prove indeed a superior blessing to us if it will but lead us nearer to the Lord—through fasting and prayer.

Fasting, as we have seen heretofore, signifies self-denial. The thought is not the weakening of the body by absolute abstention from food, but rather a disciplining of the body by abstaining from delicacies, relishes, etc. No doubt such fastings are profitable to us in other ways than one. They not only relieve the physical system of over pressure, but with many tend to clarify the mind and make it more acute, more spiritually inclined. We all recognize this as a fact whether we can explain the philosophy of it or not. To all believers, especially to all starting upon a course of consecration, of self-devotion to the Lord and to his cause, we commend fasting in reasonable and proper ways, the denying to one's self the gratification of natural passions, and in general the living moderately, abstemiously, using this world and its comforts and blessings as not abusing them—the using of them in so far and in such a manner as will be to the highest advantage as new creatures in Christ. With the consecrated Christian this is not only the incident of a day but the course of a life. His every day is a fast day, a day of self-denial

as respects any and everything sinful, and as respects any and everything that would not inure to the spiritual advantage of himself or others.

Our fasting is like our baptism—it has a definite point of beginning and a definite point of ending. It begins with our baptism even unto death and it ends in death. These self-deniers, these fasters, are the self-sacrificers, the overcomers of the world, to whom the Lord has promised his special blessing of spiritual favors, peace, joy and all the fruits and graces of the Spirit in the present time, and by and by the everlasting blessedness of fellowship with himself in all the joys and perfections and completeness of the Kingdom condition—glory, honor and immortality.

Ezra says, "So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was entreated of us." This verse could be applied in full measure to the spiritual Israelites who, under the lead of the great High Priest of our profession, are traveling to the New Jerusalem. Their fasting and prayers to the Lord for protection and help along the narrow way and for success to the journey's end are heard, and the Lord assures us in advance that all such petitions are granted. It is our Father's good pleasure to give the holy Spirit to those who ask, and to make all things work together for their good, and to bring them under the leading of the great Chief Shepherd and ultimately to the Kingdom. In other words, "He is faithful who has called us, who also will do it." (1 Thess. 5:24)—he will do all he has promised to do, exceedingly more abundantly than we could have asked of him or expected. The whole matter is with us: if our consecration is based upon faith in the redemptive work of our Lord, if it is a full and complete consecration, and if we live it out day by day, the results will be all and more than we ever expected.

## 32. What is the value of *secret* prayer?

### F686 [¶3] through F687 [¶1]:

This great privilege of access to the presence of God, of entering by faith into the Most Holy, of

approaching the throne of grace, and obtaining mercy and finding help in every time of need,

may be adapted to all the varying conditions with which we are surrounded.

It is ours for personal use—that we may individually closet ourselves with the Lord and commune with him; and by his mercy this communion with him, this separation from distracting things, may be enjoyed when actually withdrawn from the company of others. Where this is impossible, and where no opportunity comes for bowing the knees, and raising the

voice even to a whisper, it is the privilege of the New Creation to have access to the Father in mental communion. When on the street, when surrounded by confusion and turmoil, the heart may uplift itself and seek both wisdom and strength at the throne of grace. How blessed are these privileges! Those who most use them most enjoy them. Unlike earthly things, they become the more precious as they become the more familiar.

### 33. What are the special advantages of *family prayer*?

#### F687 [¶2]:

Prayer in the family circle is the going of the family into the “secret closet”—into the Lord’s presence, away from the world. This may not always be possible; but where the opportunity exists, it should not be neglected. If, however, favorable occasion cannot be made, doubtless the Lord will take the will as instead of the performance, and grant blessings accordingly. The influence of the family altar and of the prayer incense ascending therefrom to the heavenly Father, and the acknowledgment there made of his grace, mercy, power and blessing, are sure to bring additional

blessing, not only to the Royal Priest who serves his family thus, but to every member of that family. A feeling of reverence for God, of responsibility to him and a realization of his loving, protecting care, goes with that family throughout the day. And if in the evening it be possible again to gather as a family to acknowledge divine mercies, and to render thanks, the blessing is only increased, as was the widow’s cruse of oil, as it was poured forth continually into vessel after vessel. 2 Kings 4:1-7

### 34. What is the value of prayer *in the Church*?

#### F687 [¶3]:

Prayer in the Church is the going of the Lord’s family into the “secret closet” of divine presence, apart from the world. It is vitally necessary to its progress, its health, its spiritual development. Its neglect is sure to result in a loss of power, a loss of privilege and service, and a corresponding loss of joy. We are wholly out of sympathy, however, with the kind of public praying referred to by a Boston newspaper, when, in reporting a religious meeting, it said: “Rev. Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ made the

most beautiful and eloquent prayer ever offered to a Boston audience!” There is too much of this matter of praying to the audience instead of praying to God. The Scriptures not only encourage public and audible prayers amongst the Lord’s people, but point out, also, that he who prays should remember his audience in connection with his ministry, and perform the service so that he who hears may be able to say “Amen,” whether audibly or in his heart. 1 Cor. 14:13-17

### 35. Are promiscuous public prayers authorized?

R2023—“Are Public Prayers Authorized?” Reproduced at the end of this section, p. 292.

### 36. What is the necessity for prayer in opening and closing meetings for the study of the Word of God?

F688 [¶1]:

It was the wisdom from above, the holy Spirit, which guided the Apostle Paul when going into a new city with the Gospel, to seek out those assembled at a place “where prayer was wont to be made.” (Acts 16:13) And it is a fact, still, that both the knowledge and the love of God abound most amongst those of his people who pray one for another, that their joy may be full. However many meetings the Lord’s people may have for the study of his Word, and for the building up of one

another in the most holy faith, we advocate that no service be considered as properly commenced except the Lord’s blessing upon the study be first invoked; and that no meeting be considered properly closed until the Lord be thanked for the privilege and blessings enjoyed, and for his blessing bestowed—that the Word of his grace may be meat indeed to the hearts of those who have heard with sincere desire to know and do his will.

### 37. What are some good suggestions respecting prayer and testimony meetings?

F314 [¶5]:

There should be not only devotional services connected with all meetings of the Lord’s people, but experience shows the profitableness of **each one**, in the hearing of his brethren, **confessing with his mouth**, either in testimony or in prayer, his devotion to the Lord.

F319 [¶1] through F322. Reproduced at the end of this section, p. 294.

### 38. Is it proper to pray for baptisms of the Holy Spirit?

E211 [¶1] through E216. Reproduced at the end of this section, p. 295.

F445 [¶1]:

We have already at considerable length called attention to the statement of John the Baptist, made to the Jews respecting Jesus, “He shall baptize you with the holy Spirit and with fire,” (Matt. 3:11)—thus pointing out the Pentecostal blessing upon faithful Israelites and the fire of God’s anger, “wrath to the uttermost” (1 Thess. 2:16), that came upon the remainder of that nation. The baptism of fire is not a blessing,

nor is it intelligently that Christian people sometimes pray for it. As there was such a baptism of fire in the end of the Jewish age upon the “chaff” of that nation, so our Lord indicates there will be in the end of this age a similar “fire” upon the “tare” class of Christendom—a baptism of fire, of trouble, which will be appalling; “a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation.” Dan. 12:1

### 39. May the consecrated pray for *physical healing*?

R2837 [col. 2 ¶4] through R2838 [col. 1 ¶3]:

As respects the Lord’s people expecting miraculous healing in answer to prayer: we do not think that they should expect miraculous healing, or pray for it. All of God’s people are surely welcome at the throne of grace, and they are invited to bring all their burdens and cares there and to obtain

mercy and find grace to help in every time of need. But the **saints** are never invited to pray for their own physical healing. They are, however, assured that it is the Father’s good pleasure to give the **holy spirit** to them that **ask it**. And the intimation clearly is that physical ailments, sor-

rows and pain work out for God's people the graces and fruits of the spirit if properly received and patiently endured. It is to those so afflicted that the Lord speaks as to St. Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee." With this assurance the Apostle could glory in **afflictions**; and so may we also learn to do.—2 Cor. 12:7-10.

This one prayer of the Apostle, repeated, he tells us, three times, is the only prayer for physical healing by any of the apostles, so far as the Bible-record shows. It was offered early in the Apostle's experience, before he had learned that his high calling was not to health and wealth and earthly blessings and ease in their enjoyment, but to **sacrifice** all these, that thus becoming a sharer in the sufferings of Christ he might attain to the heavenly condition—glory, honor and immortality—by and by. Thus also our dear Redeemer prayed not for earthly blessings for himself, and used not his powers selfishly. He could have commanded the stones to become bread, but he would not, and fasted forty days. He could have asked, and would have received for his defence and deliverance from his persecutors, twelve legions of angels; but he would not do so—instead he would endure whatever the Father might permit to be poured into his cup of bitter experience; accepting only the common blessings of nature open to all mankind. When weary he **rested**, or became so weak that he could not carry his cross, and sank under it. But he would not pray for strength. It would have been in opposition to his covenant or **consecration unto death** to have thus sought divine aid in resisting death.

But while there are no evidences of the apos-

### **F636 [¶1] through F637 [¶1]:**

How did Jesus do? and what course did his apostles pursue following in his footsteps? We answer that there is no record that Jesus or the apostles ever healed any of the Church. Is it urged that the Lord's healing of the sick indicated the divine will on the subject? We answer that not the healed ones, but the healer is our pattern. Our Lord miraculously fed the multitude; should we therefore expect to be miraculously fed? No—on the contrary. As the Chief of the New Creation refused to use **divine power** for his personal comfort, so should we. (Matt.

4:2-4; 26:53) If when he hungered he sent his disciples to buy bread, and when weary he rested on the well or elsewhere—and if while the loss or sacrifice of his vitality "touched" him, yet he never prayed for deliverance from these natural troubles, but cheerfully endured them as a part of his sacrifice—so should we.

4:2-4; 26:53) If when he hungered he sent his disciples to buy bread, and when weary he rested on the well or elsewhere—and if while the loss or sacrifice of his vitality "touched" him, yet he never prayed for deliverance from these natural troubles, but cheerfully endured them as a part of his sacrifice—so should we.

Physical healing in answer to prayer, as described in the Bible, was performed upon the public, not upon the Church, except (as in James 5:14-16) the saint had gotten into sin and into sickness as a chastisement for sin and so could not go to God in prayer for himself. Such should send for the Elders of the Church, and they should pray over him, for the forgiveness of his sin; "and tho he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and God will raise him up."

Altho we are chronologically in the dawn of the Millennium we incline to doubt that any special restitution blessings will be dispensed to the world until the Gospel Church, the elect royal priesthood, is completed and glorified; for this is to be their very work.

4:2-4; 26:53) If when he hungered he sent his disciples to buy bread, and when weary he rested on the well or elsewhere—and if while the loss or sacrifice of his vitality "touched" him, yet he never prayed for deliverance from these natural troubles, but cheerfully endured them as a part of his sacrifice—so should we.

More than this: our Lord intimates that it would have been a sinful misuse of power for him to have used the aid of the holy Spirit in the relief of such temporal needs, because it was at his disposal for another purpose. To have called on

divine power for his relief or protection from any part of the dying processes would have been sin; **because** he had made a covenant of sacrifice, and any appeal from its effects would have been “drawing back.” “If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.” Heb. 10:38; Matt. 26:53

Matters stand the same, exactly, with the Church, for we are following our Captain. For us to appeal for **divine aid** for our mortal bodies, which we have consecrated to death, would be in derogation of our covenant, by which we gave all our earthly advantages and rights as men (in the restitution privileges purchased by the precious blood) in exchange for the privilege of running as New Creatures the race for the great prize of “glory, honor and immortality.” To ask back what we surrendered implies a desire to withdraw the sacrifice, to cancel the covenant and to give up our

inheritance as New Creatures. This view of prayer for earthly things will be new to some, and to some it will doubtless bring a shock as they reflect that unwittingly they have done this very thing, and that God answered the prayer. Can it mean that they were thus rejected from the race for the prize? We think not. We believe that as an earthly parent would be long-suffering with his ignorant little child, so the Lord is patient toward his people, excusing their unintentional errors, and taking the intention instead of merely the words. And like as a parent might grant the improper request of his little one, so we believe the Lord has frequently honored the faith of his people even when improperly exercised. But the case is different as we grow in grace and knowledge; then it would be sin and might mean a turning back of divine favor—a rejection of the covenant.

**F644 [¶1] through F654.** Reproduced at the end of this section, p. 298.

**R2006 [col. 2 ¶2] through R2007 [col. 1 ¶1]—The Prayers of Christ Unselfish.** Reproduced at the end of this section, p. 302.

**R3588 [col. 2 ¶1-4]:**

The Lord was merciful to Hezekiah, hearing and answering his prayer. Isaiah had not gotten out of the king’s house on his homeward way until a message from the Lord came to him directing him to return to Hezekiah’s sick chamber to tell him that the Lord had heard his prayer and seen his tears and had added to his life fifteen years, directing him through the prophet to the medicine, the poultice which would bring relief—a poultice of figs. There is a lesson here: not that we should never use remedial agencies in connection with our troubles and ailments, but that we should recognize as behind the remedial agents the will of the Lord. The fig poultice would not have brought relief in this case aside from the divine interposition of divine power, but on the other hand the divine power preferred to operate through the poultice of figs rather than without it. It is not for us to dictate to the Lord how our blessings should come, but to seek to learn from these and other illustrations he has given us what would probably be his will respecting us and our afflictions.

The question arises, Did God change his plan and arrangements because of Hezekiah’s prayer,

and does he do so whenever a prayer is answered? We reply that in certain matters it evidently is as easy for the Lord to arrange them one way as another without any interference with his general plans. To our understanding the Lord would have allowed Hezekiah to die if he had not prayed. In other words, the Lord merely informed the king of what would have been the natural consequence of his case, and informed him for the very purpose of giving him an opportunity to ask in faith for his recovery. Thus the Lord waited to be gracious to him.

We are not in this wishing to imply that Hezekiah’s conduct and prayers should be a sample and a lesson to all of the Lord’s people under similar circumstances, that when ourselves or our dear ones are ill we should make specific request for the prolongation of their lives and recovery from their illness. There is a difference between our condition and our relationship to the Lord and that of Hezekiah. Although the king was a good man he lived before the Gospel

call began. He was, therefore, not one of the spirit-begotten ones, for the holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus had not yet suffered and had not yet been glorified. (John 7:39; 1 Pet. 1:11.) Those who are the Lord's consecrated people now, the "saints," should realize that they have entered into a new special relationship to the Lord, different from that of other men; that the Lord has agreed with them that their surrender of earthly life and all their earthly interests shall bring to them instead special spiritual favors, privileges, safe guardings, etc.

From this standpoint it would be unwise to ask the Lord for earthly privileges and advantages of any kind, since this might work to their disadvantage as New Creatures. Rather they are to remember the words of our Lord, that all man-

kind are seeking after the earthly things, but that the Father knoweth the things we have need of before we ask him, without our asking him. The preferable attitude of heart for the Lord's consecrated people therefore is—O, Lord, thou knowest far better than I what would be for my highest welfare, my highest spiritual interest. Thou hast promised that all things shall work together for good to me because I am thine, because I have been called according to thy purpose. I entreat of thee give what is best in all of life's affairs and withhold whatever seems unto thee best—"Thy will be done." For the Lord's consecrated people to undertake to move Jehovah's arm in respect to their affairs would seem to be the taking of the rudder out of his hands—would seem to be more or less of self-will, which we have pledged to the Lord shall be dead that his will may be done in us.

### **R3668 [col. 1 ¶5, 6]:**

**Question.**—Why might we not pray for physical healing if we felt sure we could thereby be of greater service in the Harvest work?

**Answer.**—We need to analyze our thoughts, and to remember that they are deceitful above all things; that they sometimes endeavor to cheat us as to their real motives. It seems to us that the craving which we all would have for physical healing is considerably of a piece with a desire we all would have to see some miracle performed—a desire to walk by sight and not wholly by faith. On the other hand, to our understanding the Lord's wish is that we of the Gospel age shall walk wholly by faith and not at all by sight. Hence the signs were permitted in the beginning of the age, for the establishment of the Church, and were subsequently dropped that the Church, established by the Word of the Lord in its hands, should walk by faith entirely. Another thought which might assist the craving for miracles of healing would be the relief from pain but this would be in the nature of a selfish wish also; and if the Lord should relieve from pain it would be one step toward relief from disease, and if disease were eradicated why not also pray for relief from homeliness, crooked heads, bad dispositions, etc.? In a word, why not ask the Lord to

make us over again? But this, as will be perceived, would be restitution, which is not a part of the divine order now, but God's arrangement for the next age. The object, as we have seen, of the calling of the Church in this age is to sacrifice, and we are to remember also that it is not the new creature that is sacrificed, but the old creature—the new creature is renewed day by day. The Lord heals all its diseases; that is to say, he cooperates with us for the healing of spiritual defects, and promises a completion of the work in the resurrection of the spiritual body. This is what we get in exchange for the surrender of earthly rights of restitution. We should be glad indeed that, coming to the Lord and being justified by faith, our poor old bodies, already almost dead, will be permitted to go down into death and the matter reckoned a complete sacrifice, whereas it is only a fragment. If, on the contrary, we were restored to physical perfection, it would mean that we would have a great deal more to sacrifice before we could possibly expect to die. Hence it is more favorable to us that the Lord reckons our bodies perfect and then sacrificed, because we have that much the less sacrificial service to perform, yet counted of him as complete sacrifice.

#### 40. What is our privilege with respect to the *healing of soul-sickness*?

Psalm 103:2-5 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle`s.

F145 through F149 ¶2]. Reproduced at the end of this section, p. 303.

#### 41. How should we regard modern faith-healing, miracles, etc.?

F638 ¶2 through F641 ¶1—If Satan Cast Out Satan His Kingdom Wanes. Reproduced at the end of this section, p. 306.

#### 42. How do we explain James 5:14-16?

James 5:14-16 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

R2008 [col. 1 ¶7] through R2009 [col. 2 ¶1]. Reproduced at the end of this section, p. 307.

#### F637 ¶2 through F638 ¶1—The Prayer of Faith Shall Save the Sick

This passage, and one found in Mark 16:17,18, are relied upon as proof texts to show that it is the divine intention that the New Creation should rely upon divine power for healing of sicknesses. The passage in Mark is easily disposed of: it is not to be found in the oldest Greek MSS, hence must be regarded as an interpolation, made somewhere about the fifth century.

As for the statement of James: It is evident from the sixteenth verse, that the sickness referred to is recognized as being a chastisement for sins—not a slight sickness, but a serious one, making it worthwhile to call together the elders of the Ecclesia.

The implication seems to be that sin lay so close to the door that the sick sinner felt practically cut off from fellowship with God. And under such circumstances we should expect that the **sins would be confessed and their forgiveness prayed for**; and just so the record reads: “The prayer of faith shall save the sick [from the condemnation in which he was] and the Lord shall raise him up [to health—the restoration being a sign of the forgiveness of the sin]—**though** he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him. See verse 15.

#### 43. What lessons should we learn from our Lord’s example in prayer?

##### R2649 [col. 1 ¶6 through col. 2 ¶4]:

Our Lord, after dispersing the multitude, sought the solitude of the mountain in prayer. Tho he sometimes prayed with his disciples in their hearing, so that they recorded the words of his prayer,

it is evident that he was not content with merely these opportunities, but frequently sought the Father alone, as he has counseled his disciples to do, saying, “Enter into thy closet [private apart-

ment] and pray to thy Father in secret." (Matt. 6:6.) All Christians of experience have realized the value of such secret personal communion with the heavenly Father, nor are we surprised that our Lord Jesus felt the need of a similar communion. His knowledge of the Father, and his fellowship with him before the world was made, so far from satisfying him and rendering prayer unnecessary, rather stimulated his desire for further fellowship and communion, especially as he was alone in the world—even his beloved disciples, not having yet been begotten of the spirit (John 7:39), could not enter into fellowship with him in respect to spiritual things, nor appreciate the trials which came to him as a perfect man, in a way in which they do not come to fallen humanity. He needed such fellowship with the heavenly Father for the refreshment of his own zeal, for the keeping warm of his own love and devotion, which was the basis of his consecration and his daily sacrificing of himself as a man, even unto death.

There is no intimation given that our Lord spent much time at prayer, morning and evening, yet we may reasonably suppose that he never neglected to seek the Father's face; but these brief seasons of worship and prayer daily were evidently supplemented by occasions like

### **R3551 [col. 1 ¶2]:**

Our Lord's entire life furnishes an illustration of what the Apostle commends to all the Church in the words, "Pray without ceasing." Our Lord evidently was always in that prayerful attitude of heart, which was filled with thankfulness to the Father in respect to all of life's affairs, which recognized his guardian care, which trusted him, confided in him and in every distressing circumstance looked to him to overrule and to cause all experiences to work for good. But our Lord's constant attitude of prayer without ceasing did not hinder his more particular devotions when he turned

the one mentioned in this lesson, in which our Lord spent, apparently, considerable of the night in prayer and communion with the Father. There is a lesson in this for the Lord's people. The duties of life, pressing upon us daily, are not to be neglected; each is to feel, as our Lord expressed it, "I must be about my Father's business," and this would imply, ordinarily, short prayers, which our Lord commended, saying, "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think they shall be heard for their **much** speaking. Be ye not therefore like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him." (Matt. 6:7,8.) And the example of a prayer, given his disciples, is brief. Nevertheless, in proportion as we feel the importance of the great work in which, by the Lord's favor, we are privileged to be co-laborers with him, our hearts should be and will be drawn to seasons of spiritual communion;—not necessarily a prayer in the sense of making **requests** of the Father, for much of such seasons will doubtless be devoted to thanksgiving for the mercies and favors already experienced, and for the gracious promises upon which we base our faith for the future, and communion with the Lord, in the sense of pondering his will respecting us, and how we may most acceptably serve and please him.

aside from the affairs of life to speak to the Father in secret—sometimes briefly and sometimes spending a whole night in prayer in the mountain solitude. Though he loved his disciples they were not yet begotten of the Holy Spirit and could not fully comprehend matters from his standpoint. The Father alone was able to comprehend the full situation, and hence the very isolation of our Lord from all human help drew him the nearer and the oftener to the Father in prayer.

#### 44. What was the nature of our Lord's petition in John 17:15-26?

John 17:15-26 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

R3551 through R3553—“I Pray for Them” (John 17:15-26). See *Tower* for the entire article.

#### 45. What is the import of “the model prayer” our Lord taught his disciples?

Matthew 6:9-13 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

#### R2004 [col. 2 ¶9] through R2005 [col. 1]—The Model Prayer.

All of our Lord's recorded prayers are beautiful in their simplicity, trustfulness and unselfishness; but the one usually termed “the Lord's prayer,” given as an example of a proper prayer, is certainly in every way a model, which we do well to follow closely in all our petitions.—Luke 11:2-4; Matt. 6:9-13.

(1) Its opening address is full of filial reverence and trust,—“Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name!” What could be more sweet and childlike! What could be more reverent than this bold approach, direct to the throne of the heavenly grace!

(2) It does not proceed hastily to the lesser things of a personal character, but, recognizing that God takes knowledge of all of earth's affairs, and has a gracious and sufficient remedy already provided, the model prayer acknowledges this,

and thus expresses faith and interest in God's plan as revealed in his Word, saying: “Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.” Yes, indeed, it is not only fitting that all who approach God in prayer should previously have searched to know something of what he has revealed concerning his will and plan, but also that after learning of it they should thus confess faith in God, that his plan, when fully executed, will more than meet all the necessities of our case. This is not a petition that God would bring in his Kingdom before his appointed time, nor an expression of an impatient longing for it; but an expression of hope and trust and patient waiting for that which we know will more than meet all proper expectations, and fulfill all the promises of God's Word. It also signifies our allegiance to the Kingdom and its laws and

spirit; and hence implies that so far as we are concerned, we will do all in our power to conform our lives to its precepts even now.

(3) Then coming to personal desires, it requests only the necessities,—the “bread and water,” which God assures us shall be sure to all who are truly his. It asks, “Give us this day our daily bread.” The request is not for wealth, nor luxuries, nor overplus, nor dainties and delicacies. It is simply an acknowledgment of God as the great Provider, and of our reliance upon him and his promises, leaving quantity and quality and everything else to divine wisdom and love, to be ordered to our highest good.

(4) Although our sins have been forgiven, and we have been received into the family of God as sons before we have any right to pray “Our Father,” yet we are very humbly to feel that we stand as “sons” by grace in Christ, and not in merit of our own. We therefore appropriately acknowledge that we are trespassers, daily, who do not and cannot do the will of God perfectly, praying, “Forgive us our trespasses,” our shortcomings.

(5) Next we acknowledge a principle of God’s justice, that mercy will be extended through Christ only in proportion as we realize the spirit of divine mercy, and are willing to exercise it toward others who come short of perfection in their dealings with us; hence we add, “as we forgive those who trespass against us.” This is equivalent to a bargain with God, that we accept his terms of mercy, and will expect none, except as we ourselves exercise it toward others. What a thought! If fully appreciated, how it would influence all of God’s sons to be kind and generous toward each other and toward all men in

thought as well as in word and deed.—See Matt. 5:24; 6:15.

(6) “And lead us not into temptation;” or, rather, since chastisements and temptations (or trials) are necessary to our discipline and preparation for the Kingdom (James 1:2-12), we must understand this as the *Emphatic Diaglott* indeed renders it, “Abandon us not to trial.” Since the trial of our faith worketh patience, experience and hope (1 Pet. 4:12; Rom. 5:3-5), and is needful for our perfecting in holiness (1 Pet. 1:6,7), the Father will not hinder us from having temptations, even though he himself tempteth no man. (Jas. 1:13.) A man is **tempted** when he is led astray and enticed by his own selfish, fallen desires; he **sins** when he yields to those desires. (James 1:14.) But in the hour of trial, temptation, who could come off conqueror without the promised “grace sufficient for every time of need” which will succor us and not permit us to be tempted above what we are able to bear, but will with the temptation provide also a way of escape?—1 Cor. 10:13.

(7) “But deliver us from evil,” or, as some prefer it, Deliver us from the Evil One. The great Adversary is as much on the alert to entrap us through the weaknesses of the flesh, as our Lord is ready to deliver us and give us victory. We are not sufficient of ourselves for such a contest against the powers of darkness, and hence have need frequently of this petition to the throne of grace, for as the Apostle declares, “our sufficiency is of God.”—2 Cor. 3:5. [Footnote: The remaining sentence with which this prayer is usually closed is spurious—not found in the ancient Greek MSS. It would appear to have been added at the time when an earthly exaltation of the Church had led some to believe that the Papal glory was the glory of God’s Kingdom.]

### **R3351 [col. 2 ¶4] through R3353 [col. 2 ¶3]:**

See *Tower* for this long excerpt explaining our Lord’s model prayer.

**R2252 [from subhead to end of article]—“After This Manner Pray Ye.”** Reproduced at the end of this section, p. 310.

## **46. What should be the *special* nature of our petitions?**

### **R3306 [col. 1 ¶8, 9]:**

Our requests should be, increasingly, for grace and wisdom and the fruits of the spirit and opportunities for serving the Lord and the brethren,

and for growing more and more into the likeness of God’s dear Son.

Under these conditions who can doubt that the

promised “peace of God beyond all understanding” would “guard” such “hearts” and their “thoughts”? This peace would of itself dispel one of the great evils that afflict the hearts of many. Selfishness and ambition would find little room in a heart so filled with gratitude. God’s peace, and not merely the peace of the world, would reign in such a heart, controlling ambitions and energies.

### **F685 [¶1] through F686 [¶1]:**

While the New Creatures in Christ Jesus are exhorted in the above text not to seek for, not to be anxious concerning, and not to pray for earthly things—what ye shall eat, what ye shall drink, and wherewithal shall ye be clothed, but to trust all these matters to the wisdom and love of the Father—they are instructed concerning one thing which the Father will be very pleased to have them pray for, and concerning which he will be pleased to answer their petitions largely. That one thing for which they should specially seek and specially pray is the holy Spirit—the spirit of holiness, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of the Truth, the spirit of a sound mind, the spirit of love. The Master’s words are, “If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good [earthly] gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him?” Luke 11:13

Here, then, we have distinct information respecting what should be the basis of all our petitions, if we would have them answered. Thus we must pray if we would not ask amiss. Our affections must be set on things above, and not on things beneath—upon the robe of Christ’s righteousness and our future glorious apparel, when we shall be like our Lord and see him as he is, rather than on earthly apparel. Our affections must be upon the spiritual food—upon the bread

Divine peace can dwell in our hearts and rule in them, so as to keep out the worry and turmoil of the world, even when we are surrounded by these disadvantageous conditions—even when the adversary himself is besetting us through deceived agents.

which came down from heaven, and upon all the precious promises of God of which Christ is the center and substance. These we must seek, these we must appropriate; and for these, therefore, the substance of our prayers will be. Thus our watching, praying and daily seeking will be in full accord. Moreover, thanksgiving must largely take the place of requests, from the time that we learn of the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the divine provision, for both the New Creation and for our dear ones according to the flesh, and for all the families of the earth. What could we ask for more or better than God has already promised?

Surely we could ask nothing more than has been promised respecting the future glories of the New Creation; nor could we ask more respecting the present joys of the same class. Every provision that reason could imagine, every want, every necessity, has already been anticipated for us and provided—given to us for the taking. We merely lack wisdom as to how to take, how to appropriate these divine provisions. Giving thanks, therefore, we merely ask for wisdom and grace so to partake of them that our joy may be full. Our requests, therefore, must be for increased filling with the holy Spirit—wisdom from above.

### **E222 [¶2] through E224 [¶1]—Praying for the Holy Spirit**

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him.” Luke 11:13

Although “all things are by the Son,” yet here as everywhere he gives the glory and honor, as the fountain of blessing, to the Father. The entire work of redemption and reconciliation is the Father’s work—through the Son. And our Lord declares that it is the Father’s good pleasure that we should

have more and more of his Spirit of holiness. He bids us seek for and ask for this, as the great supreme blessing. As for earthly blessings, our Redeemer tells us that our Heavenly Father knoweth what things we have need of—he knoweth better than we know what earthly

blessings will be helpful, and which would be injurious to us. We need not, therefore, as do the unregenerate and the heathen, think of and pray for earthly blessings; but rather, as those who have come into the relationship of sons, and who have full confidence in the Father's provision, we may expect that he will give what is best, and we may rest ourselves content in that promise and faith.

The Heavenly Father is pleased to have us desire and ask for more and more of the holy Spirit—a disposition more and more fully in harmony with his Spirit: and all who thus desire and ask and seek it shall obtain their good desires; the Father will be pleased to so order the affairs of such that hindrances to the Spirit, whether in them or in their environment, shall be overcome, that his loving Spirit may abound in them—that they may be filled with the Spirit. But in this there is no suggestion of necessity for fresh baptisms of the holy Spirit: the baptism came at the beginning, and now all there remains to do is to open the sluices in every direction, so as to let the holy Spirit of love and truth penetrate into and permeate every action, word and thought of our beings. We need divine aid, the operation of the Lord's wisdom and providence, to show us what clogs the sluices and to help us to remove the obstructions.

The Spirit of holiness in abundance can only be received by those who earnestly desire it and seek it by prayer and effort. The mind or spirit of the world must be driven out of our hearts, in proportion as we would have them filled with the holy Spirit, mind, influence. Self-will must also give place. And because it is in proportion as we are emptied of all things else that we are ready to receive of his fulness, therefore the Lord would have us come into this condition of earnest desire for filling with his Spirit of holiness, that we may be willing and anxious to displace and eradicate every other contrary influence and will.

This evidently is the thought of the Apostle, in his prayer for the Church at Ephesus, that "Christ [the Spirit of Christ] may dwell in your hearts by faith [that figuratively he may sit as king, ruler, director of every thought, word and deed]; that ye being rooted and grounded in love [the holy Spirit or disposition] may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth and height, and to appreciate the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with **all the fulness of God.**" (Eph. 3:19) He who is filled with the Spirit of Christ, and with a full appreciation of the love which he manifested, will have the Father's Spirit in full measure.

## 47. Why must we *watch* as well as pray?

**Mark 14:38** Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.

### **R2692 [col. 1 ¶2, 3]:**

Our Golden Text suggests, however, that more than praying is necessary. Praying that does not fully represent the sentiments of the heart is apt very quickly to degenerate into a mere form of words—drawing nigh to the Lord with the lips while the heart is far from him,—perhaps enwrapped in business or pleasure or sin. Whoever, therefore, would make progress in the spiritual way must not only pray with the spirit and with the understanding, but he must also watch—against the sinful tendencies of his own flesh—**self-gratification, selfishness**; also against the allurements of the world toward so-called

worldly pleasures, worldly ambitions, honor amongst men, the love of money, etc.; also against the wiles of the Adversary, whose deceitful attacks usually come upon the Lord's people as "an angel of light"—to deceive them into forms and ceremonies of Churchianity, substituting before the mind and affections and consecrated intentions, human sentiments and methods and works and objectives, as instead of "the hope set before us in the Gospel" (Col. 1:23) and its various exceeding great and precious promises, by whose incentive the Lord has called us to walk and to run, by faith and not by sight, following in the footsteps of our Re-

deemer.

Our lesson itself deals particularly with the watching; but in harmony with the Golden Text we know that all true watchers must also be prayers, and that all fervent prayers will also be watchers. Prayer represents the faith; watching

represents the works which must accompany it, so long as it is a living faith; for, as the Apostle declares, Faith without works is dead—it speedily loses its vitality, its value, its very existence.

### **R3178 [entire article]—“Lest Ye Enter Into Temptation.”**

“Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.”—Mark 14:38.

It seems peculiar that there should be greater liability of falling into sin at one season than at another; but, nevertheless, we have noticed for several years, and have before called to the attention of others, the peculiar force of temptations at the time of the Passover, every Spring. Year after year at this season we have noticed special liability of many or all to stumble, or “be offended.” Let us, therefore, take earnest heed to our Lord’s words, and earnestly watch and pray for others and for ourselves; and let each one be on his guard not to cast a stumbling-block before his brother.—Rom. 14:13; Heb. 2:1.

It was at the Passover season that our Lord said, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” Then many of his friends and followers said, “This is a hard saying; who can hear it?...and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?”—John 6:4,51, 60,66,67.

It was at the Passover season that Judas bargained for the betrayal of our Lord,—and a little later on accomplished it.

It was about the Passover season that our Lord said, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.” (Matt. 26:38.) “I have a baptism [death] to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!”—Luke 12:50.

It was about the Passover season that our Lord took the disciples and began to explain unto them that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of the chief priests and scribes and be put to death (Matt. 16:21); and then Peter was tempted to forget that he was the disciple, and took the Lord and began to rebuke him, saying, “Be it far from thee, Lord. This shall not be unto thee.” Thus also he tempted our Lord to repudiate his sacrifice, and brought upon himself the rebuke —“Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for

thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those things that be of men.”—Verses 22,23.

It was while met to eat the Passover that the twelve got into a dispute as to which of them should be greatest in the Kingdom. They thus brought upon themselves our Lord’s just rebuke, and induced the illustration of humility on his part by the washing of their feet.

It was when they had sung a hymn and gone out from the Passover that our Lord used to them the words at the head of this article, “Watch ye, and pray, lest ye enter into temptation;” while he himself was in an agonizing battle, and with bloody sweat submitting his will to the will of God; and, praying earnestly, was strengthened.—Luke 22:39-46.

It was but a little later that the emissaries of the High Priest came upon them and the eleven all forsook the Lord and fled (Mark 14:50): the temptation, the fear they could not resist.

It was but a little later that Peter and John, bolder than the others, went with the crowd into Pilate’s court to see what would befall the Master; and Peter, being recognized as one of Christ’s disciples, was tempted to **deny the Lord** with cursing.—Mark 14:68,70,71.

It was at the same time that our Lord was tempted before Pilate, but victoriously “witnessed a good confession.”—1 Tim. 6:13.

The temptations of our Lord followed rapidly. When his foes spat upon him, and crowned him with thorns, and reviled him, saying, “Let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God,” he could have smitten them with disease or death; but, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. He overcame, and prayed for those who spitefully used him.—Isa. 53:7; Luke 23:33-37.

He might even have concluded that he would not be the Redeemer of such thankless beings; but, while realizing that he could even then ask

of the Father and receive the assistance of twelve legions of angels and overcome his enemies, he resisted the temptation. He **gave** himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

The death of our Lord was a great trial of faith to all the disciples, who straightway were tempted to go again to their old fishing business, and neglect the fishing for men.—John 21:3-17.

Paul and the other apostles subsequently had special trials at this special season also. See Acts 20:16; 21:10,11,27-36.

In view of all this in the past, as well as in view of our own experience since the present harvest began in 1874, we feel specially solicitous for the Lord's sheep every Spring; and this Spring is no exception. What may be the character of the temptations, we may not clearly discern until

they are upon us; for if we knew all about them in advance they would be but slight temptations. Watch, therefore, and pray always; for the only safe way is to be prepared; because your adversary, the devil, is seeking whom he may devour. He knows your weak points, and is ready to take advantage of them. We will each need the graces of the spirit in our hearts, as well as the Lord's "grace to help in time of need" if we would overcome. "Watch ye, and pray, lest ye enter into temptation!"

"My soul, be on thy guard,  
Ten thousand foes arise;  
The hosts of sin are pressing hard  
To draw thee from the prize."

### **R2775 [col. 1 ¶3 to end]—Watch and Pray Lest Ye Enter Into Temptation.**

In the case of our Lord and the apostles we see illustrated the value of watchfulness and prayer in the dark hour of trouble. Our Lord followed the direction he gave to the disciples: he watched, he prayed, he got a blessing, he was strengthened, and came off victor. They did not watch and did not pray, failing to realize the necessities of the occasion, and as a result we find them scattered, bewildered;—and one of them, the very strongest of them all, who boastingly had said a little while before, "Tho all men forsake thee yet will not I," was so overpowered by his surroundings, and so weak through lack of the very strength he should have obtained through watching and prayer, that he denied the Lord with profanity.

Whenever we find the Lord's people attempting to live a life of holiness and consecration, yet ignoring the injunction of our Lord to watch and pray, we know that they are unwise; and that however much they may be virgins, pure ones, they are foolish: they cannot hope to gain the victory over self and sin and the Adversary, single-handed, alone. If the Master himself needed strengthening, surely we also need it; and if he received it in response to supplications with strong cryings and tears, it is an intimation to us of the way in which God is pleased to bestow the full assurance of faith which is able to strengthen us as good soldiers to endure any and everything in his name and service. Those who seek the

Lord earnestly and in prayer are as sure to receive a blessing as was the Lord Jesus himself; and altho there will not come to them the same kind of heavenly messenger to comfort and encourage them, nevertheless a heavenly messenger of another kind will surely be sent. It may be in the person of a fellow-disciple, able to enter into and sympathize with us in our trials as difficulties, as none of the apostles could sympathize with our Lord or assist him. Or it may be that the messenger sent will be one of the apostles themselves, through the many gracious words of inspiration which God has communicated to us through them in his Word. But however the strength may come, it must be the assurance, not of men nor of angels, but of God, that we are pleasing and acceptable to him,—and that we may claim and expect the exceeding great and precious things which he has in reservation for them that love him.

So to speak, we are now in the hour of trial which cometh upon the whole world to try them. The present is represented in the Scriptures to be "the hour of temptation" or testing at the close of this age. It is the Gethsemane hour, in this sense of the word, to all who are the Lord's true people, fully consecrated to him. It is the hour, therefore, in which we, like our Lord, should be seeking the Father's face to receive the full assurance that we are his, and that he is ours; and that we may rely confidently on his strength to carry us through

this time. It is the time in which we are to make sure, as we sometimes sing:

“O let no earthborn cloud arise  
To hide thee from thy servant’s eyes.”

It is a time in which those who neglect the Master’s words, “Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation,” will be sure to enter into temptation, and be tolerably sure to fall therein. And the fall will be severe,—and even tho, like Peter, they should afterward be recovered out of it, it will be with weeping.

Some make the mistake of praying without watching; others make the mistake of watching without praying; but the safe and only proper method is that which our Lord directed, to combine the two. We are to watch, and to be on our guard against the encroachments of the world, the flesh and the devil. We are to watch for all the encouragements of the Lord’s Word, the evidence of their fulfilment, the signs that betoken his presence and the great changes of dispensation just at hand. We are to watch for every-

thing that will strengthen us in faith and hope and loyalty and love; and while watching we are to pray without ceasing. We are to pray together as the Lord’s people; we are to pray in our homes, as families; we are to pray in secret, in private. We are to have the spirit of prayer in all that we say and do: that is to say, our hearts should be going out continually to the Lord for guidance in all of life’s affairs, that we may do with our might what our hands find to do, in a manner that will be acceptable to him, and that we may be shielded by him from temptation that would otherwise be beyond our endurance, and that we may be ultimately delivered from the Evil One and have a place in our Lord’s Kingdom. Brethren and sisters, let us more and more remember and put into practice, in every home in which the WATCH TOWER is a visitor, these words of our Lord, “Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.”

#### 48. What is meant by “the spirit of prayer”?

**R2775 [col. 2 ¶2, next to last sentence]:**

We are to have the spirit of prayer in all that we say and do: that is to say, our hearts should be going out continually to the Lord for guidance in all of life’s affairs, that we may do with our might what our hands find to do, in a manner that

will be acceptable to him, and that we may be shielded by him from temptation that would otherwise be beyond our endurance, and that we may be ultimately delivered from the Evil One and have a place in our Lord’s Kingdom.

#### 49. How do we understand that “the spirit maketh intercession for us.”

**Romans 8:26,27** Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself 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.

**E287 through E290 [¶3]—Groanings Which Cannot Be Uttered.** Reproduced at the end of this section, p. 312.

## 50. What has been suggested as a probably and special occasion for prayer in the *Millennial Age*?

### D640 [¶2] through D641:

The resurrection of the ancient worthies, together with frequent restorations of the sick to health in answer to the prayer of faith, will probably, when men have had time to think, and to recover from the ravages of the great time of trouble, suggest to them the possibility of the resurrection of others—their friends and kindred—from death and the grave, in fulfilment of the promise of Christ that **all** that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and shall come forth. And it is not an unreasonable suggestion that it may be in answer to the prayer of faith for the restoration of departed friends that this great work may begin and progress. We see a reasonableness in such a method which seems to commend it above others we might think of. For instance, it would recall the dead gradually, and in the reverse order from that in which they went down, and would thus provide homes and hearty welcomes, and the necessary comforts of life for the risen ones at once on their return to life; and such would thus be acquainted with the languages, manners and customs of those about them; while, if the order were reversed, the awakened ones would be quite unprepared in these respects for the new conditions, and would

### F701 [¶2]:

The Lord does not explain the particulars of how those who have gone into the prison precincts of the tomb shall be brought forth, so that they may hear the voice of the Son of Man, and by obeying they may live. (John 5:25) We may not, therefore, arbitrarily decide just what the nature of the procedure will be. Evidently it is not necessary for us to understand the particulars of this matter. Nevertheless, it is interesting for us to think of it, and we may assume that it will not be offensive to the Lord that we should imagine a little respecting the procedure. Our conjecture has already been briefly stated, that each one who is

be entire strangers and uncongenial to the generation in the midst of which their new lot would be cast. These objections, however, would not hold good with the prophets and other ancient worthies, who, having served their probation, will be raised perfect men, and who as perfect men will be the intellectual, moral and physical superiors of all other men.

That all prayers for the restoration of departed friends would be promptly answered, is not probable; for the Lord will have definite plans for their restitution with which some such requests might not be in harmony. His order will probably be, as clearly indicated in the resurrection of the Church and of the ancient worthies, the order of fitness—the fitness both of the subjects of resurrection and of the friends and conditions in the midst of which their new life shall begin. This would necessitate a measure of preparation on the part of those who would make such requests—a preparation of heart and life, and of conditions favorable to their advancement upon the highway of holiness. Thus such restorations would become rewards of faithfulness to the living, and would also secure favorable conditions for the awakened ones.

the recipient of favor, as he grows in knowledge and in love will be desirous of co-operating as much as possible in the blessing of others, especially those near to him of kin, and that the general channel of approach to the Lord on the subject would be by prayer and preparation, in response to which the awakenings will take place. We surmise that the world will then approach the “Royal Priesthood” for help in sickness, etc., even as the Jews typically applied to the Mosaic priesthood. Hence prayer will be the usual channel for blessings.

## Longer citations for some questions follow.

### R1865 [col. 1 ¶3 through col. 2 ¶7] (see question #13)

The Lord knew how necessary to our spiritual life would be this communion with himself. Tempest-tossed and tried, how much we need our Father's care and the comfort and consolation which his presence and sympathy realized imparts. And have not all the meek and contrite in heart the promise not only of the occasional attentive hearing, but of the abiding presence of both the Father and the Son, our Lord Jesus? Jesus said, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas—not Iscariot—saith unto him, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."—John 14:21-23.

The thought which this promise of the abiding presence of the Father and Son conveys to our minds is that their thought and care and interest will be constantly upon us, and that at any instant we may engage the special attention of either or both. The same idea is also conveyed by the words of the Apostle Peter (1 Pet. 3:12)—"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers." And we are urged to be "instant in prayer," to "pray always, and not to faint," to "pray without ceasing;" for "Like as a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust." "As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him," and "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." Yea, "the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children, to such as keep his covenant and to those that remember his commandments to do them."—Rom. 12:12; Luke 18:1; 1 Thes. 5:17; Psa. 103:13, 14, 11, 12, 17, 18.

We cannot come too often, then, to the throne of the heavenly grace, if we are of those who can claim the abiding presence of the Father and the Son—if we are of them that love him and keep his

commandments and who recognize the Lord Jesus as the only way of access to the Father. And even "if any man sin"—be overtaken in a fault—so that from his outward conduct he might be judged as not loving the Lord, yet, if he repent, let him remember that "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous," who "is the propitiation [satisfaction] for our sins," "who also maketh intercession for us." "Who," then, "shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."—1 John 2:1,2; Rom. 8:33,34.

Wherefore, the Apostle urges, "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession; for we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."—Heb. 4:14-16.

With such urgent and loving invitations let no child of God hesitate to come to him often or to tarry long in communion and fellowship with him. It is our privilege to enter into our closets and shut the doors and pray to our Father which seeth in secret, who will reward us openly. (Matt. 6:6.) And not only so, but he will go with us through all the business and hurry and commotion of the day; and at any instant in the midst of cares and perplexities we may turn our prayerful thoughts to him for wisdom, for strength and Christian fortitude, or for comfort and consolation for ourselves or others. And though we hear no responding voice, if we are attentive to the course of his providence we will shortly see the shaping of events and circumstances for our good and the good of others in answer to such prayers. Beloved, have we not many a time proved this true?—in perplexities, in tribulations, in afflictions, in persecutions, in bereavements, in temptations and trials?

In coming to God we need have no fear that he is too busy with other matters of greater importance, or that he is weary of our coming to him repeatedly with things of small importance. It was to assure us against this very thing that our Lord spoke the parable of the importunate widow, who was heard and answered on account of her importunity. In so doing we evince both the earnestness of our desires and our faith that our prayers will be answered, if we faint not from lack of faith or zeal when the answer is delayed, as often it must necessarily be, since time is an important element in all God's work.

All night, until the break of day, Jacob wrestled in prayer, saying, "I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me." Paul **thrice** besought the Lord until he was assured his grace would be sufficient for him. The Lord himself frequently spent **whole nights** in prayer, and he prayed earnestly and with many tears. (Luke 6:12; Matt. 14:23; Mark 6:46; 1:35; Luke 5:16; Heb. 5:7.) And the Apostle Paul says, "In everything, by prayer and supplication [earnest pleading] with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." —Phil 4:6.

The Apostle himself acted on this principle when he urged, in his letter to the Romans, that the saints "strive together [Greek, **agonize**] with me in prayers to God for me," that he might safely accomplish a certain work which seemed to be of the Spirit's leading. —Rom. 15:28-32.

"In every thing." —That signifies that our heavenly Father is deeply interested in everything that relates to us and ours. What thing is too small for his notice who numbers even the very hairs of our heads? In to-day's household or business cares, then, we may have his loving sympathy and helpfulness. Do a mother's counsel and a father's wisdom seem inadequate to restrain and guide aright the wayward course of impetuous and over-confident youth, they may bring their cares and fears to the Lord; and, as the children cross the threshold to meet the world's temptations, his wisdom and providence may be invoked to so shape their circumstances and surroundings as to show them eventually the sure safe way and the folly of pursuing any other.

Do business cares perplex and annoy? remember the Lord's caution, "Be not overcharged with the cares of this life," and the Apostle's warning, "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and utter ruin; for the love of money is the root of all evil, which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life." And, remembering these things, come to the throne of the heavenly grace for wisdom and direction as to how you may so adjust your temporal affairs as not to be **overcharged** with the cares of this life. It is right to be charged with them to the extent of diligence (Rom. 12:11) and the utilization of such diligence in the Lord's service; but it is the overplus, the corroding care, that interferes with peace of mind and communion with God, that is to be avoided.

Does poverty pinch and cause anxious thought? take that also to the Lord in prayer; and then, while diligently using the means at hand, to provide things decent and honest, patiently and confidently wait and watch the indications of providence, assured that he who feeds the fowl of the air, which neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and who clothes the grass of the field, which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, is both able and willing to clothe and feed you and yours.

And so through all the list of earth's trials and cares, its wants and its woes, its bereavements and disappointments and calamities and distresses, its failures and shortcomings and sins and mistakes, we may take them all to the Lord in prayer and receive that strength and sympathy and consolation and help we so much need. Let us live in the presence of the Father and the Son who have promised to abide with us. It will sweeten our days and comfort our nights and ease our burdens and lighten our cares and brighten our hopes, and, in a word, it will lift us up above the world into a higher and purer atmosphere. Such is the will of heaven concerning us: let us appreciate and avail ourselves of the privilege.

## E222 through E225—Praying for the Holy Spirit (see question #18)

Although “all things are by the Son,” yet here as everywhere he gives the glory and honor, as the fountain of blessing, to the Father. The entire work of redemption and reconciliation is the Father’s work—through the Son. And our Lord declares that it is the Father’s good pleasure that we should have more and more of his Spirit of holiness. He bids us seek for and ask for this, as the great supreme blessing. As for earthly blessings, our Redeemer tells us that our Heavenly Father knoweth what things we have need of—he knoweth better than we know what earthly blessings will be helpful, and which would be injurious to us. We need not, therefore, as do the unregenerate and the heathen, think of and pray for earthly blessings; but rather, as those who have come into the relationship of sons, and who have full confidence in the Father’s provision, we may expect that he will give what is best, and we may rest ourselves content in that promise and faith.

The Heavenly Father is pleased to have us desire and ask for more and more of the holy Spirit—a disposition more and more fully in harmony with his Spirit: and all who thus desire and ask and seek it shall obtain their good desires; the Father will be pleased to so order the affairs of such that hindrances to the Spirit, whether in them or in their environment, shall be overcome, that his loving Spirit may abound in them—that they may be filled with the Spirit. But in this there is no suggestion of necessity for fresh baptisms of the holy Spirit: the baptism came at the beginning, and now all there remains to do is to open the sluices in every direction, so as to let the holy Spirit of love and truth penetrate into and permeate every action, word and thought of our beings. We need divine aid, the operation of the Lord’s wisdom and providence, to show us what clogs the sluices and to help us to remove the obstructions.

The Spirit of holiness in abundance can only be received by those who earnestly desire it and seek it by prayer and effort. The mind or spirit of the world must be driven out of our hearts, in proportion as we would have them filled with the holy Spirit, mind, influence. Self-will must also give place. And because it is in proportion as we are emptied of all things else that we are ready to receive of his fulness, therefore the Lord would have us come into this condition of earnest desire

for filling with his Spirit of holiness, that we may be willing and anxious to displace and eradicate every other contrary influence and will.

This evidently is the thought of the Apostle, in his prayer for the Church at Ephesus, that “Christ [the Spirit of Christ] may dwell in your hearts by faith [that figuratively he may sit as king, ruler, director of every thought, word and deed]; that ye being rooted and grounded in love [the holy Spirit or disposition] may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth and height, and to appreciate the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with **all the fulness of God.**” (Eph. 3:19) He who is filled with the Spirit of Christ, and with a full appreciation of the love which he manifested, will have the Father’s Spirit in full measure.

Nothing in the scripture under examination can in any manner be construed to imply that the Heavenly Father would be pleased to have his children ask him for another God—a third person of a trinity of coequal Gods. Such a thought is repugnant to the passage and its connections: and those who entertain such an erroneous view must necessarily be blinded to that extent to the true beauty and force of this promise. It would be strange indeed if one member of a coequal trinity of Gods referred to another as able and willing to give the third **as** earthly parents give bread, fish and eggs to their children. (See preceding verses.) The entire passage is consistent only when the holy Spirit is properly understood to be the divine mind or influence bestowed variously for the comfort and spiritual upbuilding of God’s children.

Our text institutes a comparison between kind earthly parents giving natural food to their children, and our kind heavenly Parent giving his holy Spirit to them that ask him. But as the earthly parent sets the food within the reach of his family, but does not force it upon them, so our heavenly Parent has set within the reach of his spiritual family the good provisions of his grace, but he does not force them upon us. We must hunger and thirst for them, we must seek for them, not doubtfully, but with faith respecting his willingness to give us good gifts. When, therefore, we pray for the holy Spirit, and to be

filled with the Lord's Spirit, we are to look about us and find the provision which he has made for the answer to these prayers, which he has thus inspired and directed.

We find this provision in the Word of truth; but it is not enough to find **where** it is: if we desire to be filled we must eat; assuredly we must partake of the feast or we will not experience the satisfaction which the eating was designed to give. He who will not eat of a full table will be empty and starved, as truly as though there were no food. As the asking of a blessing upon the food will not fill us, but thereafter we must partake of it, so the possession of the Word of God, and the offering of our petition to be filled with the Spirit, will not suffice us; we

must eat the Word of God, if we would derive his Spirit from it.

Our Master declared, "The **words** that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life" (John 6:63); and of all who are filled with the Spirit it is true, as spoken by the prophet, "Thy words were found and **I did eat them.**" (Jer. 15:16; Rev. 10:9) It is absolutely useless for us to pray Lord, Lord, give us the Spirit, if we neglect the Word of truth which that Spirit has supplied for our fulfilling. If we merely pray for the Spirit and do not use the proper means to obtain the Spirit of truth, we will continue to be at most only "babes in Christ," seeking outward signs, in proof of relationship to the Lord, instead of the inward witness, through the Word of truth, which he has provided.

### **R1998 [col. 2 ¶6 subhead through next page]—“Ask What Ye Will” (see question #25)**

But, suggests another, even setting aside this spurious statement of Mark 16:17,18, and all claim to possessing the "gifts" of the early Church, did not our Lord's promises regarding the answering of our prayers cover the entire ground, and make possible the healing of the sick or even the moving of mountains during this entire age; and is it not because of lack of faith that these things have not been more common in the past? And is it not because of increased faith, rather than because of the dawning of the Millennium, that the healing of the sick is now becoming more frequent?

Our answer to both of the questions is, No: a great misunderstanding prevails concerning our privileges in prayer. And it is because of this misunderstanding concerning **what** we may ask for and **who** may ask, and not because of any unfaithfulness to his promise on our Lord's part, that so many thousands of prayers offered daily go **unanswered.**

The statement, "**Ye shall ask what ye will** and it shall be done unto you" is linked with certain **conditions and limitations**, found in the sentence preceding, which reads: "**If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you.**" These limitations are wonderfully comprehensive: they show who may ask, —**ye**, believers, who are **in me**, whose wills are buried or immersed into the will of Christ Jesus; and not only so, but **ye** are privileged to ask thus, only so long as ye "**abide** in me;" for if any man abide not in Christ, he is not

only "cast forth" (John 15:6), but he has no longer a share in the promise of having his petitions granted. These limitations evidently cut off from all share in this promise the vast majority of the prayers offered. And as we continue to scrutinize our Master's words we find still further limitations which cut off many other prayers, even of those offered by the class abiding in Christ. We refer to the second condition mentioned by our Lord, as describing who may ask what they will; viz., if "**my words abide in you.**"

Alas! that we must write it—There are few among God's professed children, very few even among those who profess to be entirely consecrated to and abiding in him, who have **his Word** abiding richly in them.

The significance of this last specification or limitation is this: In going to God to ask for anything we should realize his omniscience and wisdom, and that he is ordering and operating general affairs according to a perfect and orderly plan—his Plan of the Ages; and we should realize our own finiteness, our lack of such wisdom and appreciation of surroundings, etc., as would enable us to rule creation, if God were to give it over to our control. All true children of God who are not the merest "**babes**" realize this, and if God should say without limitation, Ask what you will, and your will shall be done, sensible ones would shrink from so grave a responsibility and cry, "Not so, O Lord,"

"I dare not touch things which involve so much."

As for the Lord's promise that if we had faith we might command a mountain to remove and it would obey us, we reason thus: This, like the other promises, was given only to such as abide in him and have his words abiding in them, and is given merely as an extreme illustration: If an emergency should occur so great as to **necessitate** the removal of a mountain, either literal or figurative, and we were sure it were the will of God, we might ask and receive.

But we need not speculate about how the mountains and lakes, seas and clouds, and rain and sunshine would move promiscuously about, and interfere with one another, if all the prayers offered heavenward in Christ's name were answered. God is not devoting himself to the answering of such prayers; but, ignoring them, he is working out gradually his **own grand plan**, pre-determined before the foundation of the world; and he assures us that notwithstanding the prayers of those who do not search his Word to know what his plan is, but who pray to him to carry out their plans and schemes, yet nevertheless, "**All his purposes shall be accomplished.**" And though few even of his children respect his Word or seek to learn from it his plan,—content rather to follow the plans and theories of men as laid down in creeds and confessions and voiced by councils and human standards, nevertheless, in the end, God's Word shall not return to him void, but shall accomplish that which he intended, and prosper in the thing whereunto it was sent.—Isa. 55:11.

No, thank God, he has not left his plan, even in spiritual matters, subject to the prayers of his prejudice-blinded and sectarian children, else each would want the whole world moulded to his own ideal whether that were Methodism, Lutheranism, Presbyterianism, Brahmanism, or what not; and all the various errors would flourish, while ZION'S WATCH TOWER and MILLENNIAL DAWN would have been financially swamped long ago. Yes, we may well thank God that he does not answer all prayers.

There was then, we see, a special and very particular reason for the close and searching limitations which our Redeemer placed about the promise that the Father would grant our requests.

The import of his words, as we study them and endeavor to grasp their meaning, appears to be this:—

If you abide in me, entirely subject to my will and plan, even as I abide in the Father's love, and seek not to do mine own will but the will of him that sent me,—if thus my will is your choice and your own wills are buried and ignored, then you will seek earnestly to know **what the Father's will is**, which you know I am seeking to accomplish, that you may use your time, talents, prayers and all in the same direction toward the same end. And if you have this heartfelt desire to know the will of God you will remember how I studied his plan as revealed in the Law, the Psalms and the Prophets, and how I endeavored to carry out that plan, and not plans of my own making or choosing.

Then you will remember how I pointed out to you how—"Thus it is written and thus it behooveth us to fulfill all that is written," and how I taught you to search the Scriptures. Following in this course, the holy Spirit will guide you, as it has guided me, into an understanding of more and more of the divine plan as it becomes due. And if this be your attitude, if your hearts and energies are thus absorbed in the Father's plan, you may ask all the desires of your hearts—"Ye may ask what ye will." I make you this liberal promise, not by way of intimating to you that the Father would change his plans to yours, and do **your** will, but as intimating to you that, in the course I have specified, you can come so fully into sympathy with the Father and the plan of the ages which he is working out, that you will never be dissatisfied, but always able to see **your wishes** being accomplished, because your will and wish, your pleasure and satisfaction, will be to see God's will and plan progressing in God's own way and time. Thus your every prayer and wish will be accomplished—the very reverse of the experience of those who seek to do their own wills and carry out human plans, and pray for their **own** desires; for they are ever meeting with disappointments.

Settle it therefore in your hearts and have no fear for the results. No matter how dark may be the storm, or how sharp the persecution, God's great and gracious plan will not miscarry, and thus your will and your plans (which are **his**)

cannot fail; and your prayers in that interest will always be heard and will be answered so far as they are correct or not in conflict with the Father's plan. And you, if perfectly in harmony with the Father, would desire to have it so. And in any case, where there is the slightest room to question his will in the matter, having my spirit or disposition, and not the spirit of the world, you will pray as I have done in your hearing, saying in connection with your petition,—"Nevertheless not my will, but thine, Father, be done." All such prayers are sure to be answered; and in proportion as you come closer and closer into harmony with the Father's plan, and understand it, you will be less likely to ask or desire anything which would be contrary to his good pleasure to grant.

As you come to see the bountifulness of the Father's provisions, and the wisdom and care exercised by him touching your earthly interests; as you come to realize that he who has clothed the lilies of the field with beauty, and who provides food for the sparrows, loves and cares much more for you than for them, and knoweth better than you do **what** things you have **need of**;—what would strengthen and benefit, and what might injure you, as runners in the race for the great prize he has offered through Christ—as you **realize** these things your prayers for temporal things must become very modest and moderate. Indeed, you will by and by, as you realize his wisdom and care, use prayer principally as the avenue for spiritual communion. Contenting yourself with laying the cares and burdens of life at the Master's feet, you will tell him of your confidence in his love and wisdom, saying, Thy will be done; and instead of your cares you will "bear a song away." More than ever your prayers will be for the spiritual gifts, graces, fruits and blessings, singing in your hearts—

"**Content** whatever lot I see,

Since 'tis my God that leadeth me."

Thus, properly instructed, all who abide in Christ and in whom his word abides, might be

relieved of all care (worry) concerning those earthly things which constitute the burden of so many prayers. Leaving those things to our Father's wisdom and love, our prayers would be more in the nature of thank-offerings, our hearts going out toward God in worship and adoration and in recounting the blessings and favors we already enjoy, rather than in asking those things for which the Gentiles seek.—Matt. 6:32.

True, earthly affairs sometimes perplex us, and we cannot help wondering and feeling a deep interest as to how they will result. But the soul that **abides** in Christ, and in which his words **abide**, would not dare take the helm into his own hands to steer his own course, even where he thinks he can see; but, laboring still at the oar, pulling as best he can, he leaves the **helm** in the Father's hands and **could not ask** to have the course changed in any degree.

But may we not in all our trials and perplexities take them to the Lord in prayer? Yes, yes; truly we can. And no comfort will be greater to the perplexed or sorrowing than the privilege of telling all to the Lord. His ear is ever open to the cry of his "little ones;" and the very telling of them to him and realization of his interest in all our affairs will refresh and cheer us. It will bring to remembrance his promises never to leave nor forsake us, and his wisdom and love and ability to cause all things, favorable and unfavorable, to work together for our good. Casting all our care upon him, and realizing that according to his promise, present trouble and all other things may be overruled for the good of all concerned, and to his praise, we may arise from our knees stronger, happier and more confident, as well as in closer fellowship and communion with the Lord, than if we had attempted to order our own affairs, and to get the great Jehovah to become our **servant** to execute our plans, which doubtless often are foolish in his sight, and would, if permitted, work injuriously to us or to others.

## R2023—“Are Public Prayers Authorized?” (see question #35)

A brother writes: “I have much enjoyed recent WATCH TOWERS. I see that the theme will be continued: Please say something in regard to Public Prayer. The brethren here are not one on that subject, some claiming that Christians should never pray in public.”

Our Lord, after reproving the custom of the Pharisees, of standing on the street corners to pray, to be seen of men and to be thought pious, said, “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet [private place], and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.” (Matt. 6:6.) From this, and from the fact that our Lord himself frequently retired for prayer to the mountain solitude, quite a few earnest souls have concluded that other than private prayers are disapproved if not sinful: and thus they have, we believe, done themselves injury.

Our Lord himself set us the example of offering prayer in public; not only in the presence of his disciples frequently, but also in the presence of unbelievers at least once—at the tomb of Lazarus. (John 11:41,42; See Luke 10:21.) That which is generally termed “The Lord’s Prayer” was not only uttered in the presence of the disciples, but is a sample of a **collective** prayer. It addresses “Our Father,” not My Father; it requests forgiveness of “**our** sins,” not my sins; as “**we** forgive” others, and not as I forgive others. It is a sample of a collective prayer, specially.

The prayer recorded in the 17th chapter of John was evidently a public prayer, before the disciples at least, else it could not have been recorded by one of them as it is stated.—John 18:1.

The apostles, guided by the same holy spirit, not only prayed to the Father in secret, but also prayed publicly before the Church and exhorted and instructed others respecting such public, congregational prayers.

Frequent mention is made of the gathering of the Church for prayers, when it is not stated that they prayed audibly, and where the fact is not proved by the narration of the petition, but it is not reasonable to suppose that they gathered for prayer and that each then prayed privately and secretly. Besides, in some instances the prayers are recorded.—See Acts 1:14,24; 12:5,12; 16:13; 20:36; 21:5.

The Apostle Paul, writing to the Church at Corinth, clearly teaches that prayer and giving of thanks before the Church is to be done in an audible voice and in a common tongue, in order that the hearers of the prayer may be edified.—See 1 Cor. 14:14-17.

However, we have no sympathy with the custom of some of pretending to pray to God, while really addressing the congregation. Although our prayers be distinct and intelligible to the audience, in order that the hearers may all be profited by being able to join sympathetically in a possibly more full and fluent petition than the majority could express, yet it should never be lost sight of that it is God, and not men, that is addressed.

Neither have we any sympathy with the custom of opening Political Conventions, and Legislative Assemblies and Schools and Lodges with prayer. Since these are not meetings of the Church they can (as meetings) have no recognition from God. If delegates to a Convention or Legislature or Congress, or attendants at college or school be Christians they as such always have access to God by prayer, and they should not be found in any place where they could not ask and expect God’s blessing with them. If a teacher be a Christian, he or she might without special impropriety offer an audible prayer, for wisdom and grace to instruct aright; and any of the pupils who are Christians might say, Amen. But school-children should not be taught to repeat the “Lord’s Prayer:” It was given for no such purpose. Nor should teachers be **required** to offer prayer; for many are not Christians. And the children? Although innocent of personal crimes, they are still under Adamic condemnation, and are permitted to approach God only through faith, on the terms of the New Covenant;—**except** the children of such as have entered into covenant relations to God.—See 1 Cor. 7:14.

The evil effect of promiscuous public praying is growingly manifest on every hand. Men who know that only as a great favor through influential friends could they gain an audience with the potentates of earth, and then only with great formality of dress, etc., have gotten the idea that anybody at any time and in any filthy rags of his own righteousness can rush into the august pres-

ence of the King of kings and have an audience with him. And Christians, ministers and educators, have sanctioned this hurtful folly. As a consequence, thousands do not truly come to God, but delude themselves that they are “all right” and “as good as the average Christian;” while really, not having come to God in his appointed way, they have neither part nor lot in his Church, nor in the exceeding great and precious promises made to it.

“God heareth not sinners.” (John 9:31; Job 27:9; Prov. 1:28,29; 28:9; Psa. 66:18; Isa. 1:15.) Christ is the way, the truth and the life, and no man cometh unto the Father but by him. (John 14:6.) While father Adam was created a son of God and then had access to his Father, yet this relationship and its privileges were cut off when he rebelled and was sentenced as a sinner to death;—all relationship was severed, all rights and privileges were forfeited. True, God has mercifully provided a great sacrifice for sin, and reconciliation through the precious blood of the Redeemer, and through him a return to all the privileges, communion and favors lost in Adam; but this provision is **restricted**: it is not for everybody; it is open only to those who, desiring to flee away from sin, come to a knowledge of the Savior and accept the favor of God on the conditions of the New Covenant.

Provision is made for these, that they may divest themselves of the filthy rags of their own righteousness and put on the robe of Christ’s righteousness through faith; and thus prepared they may be introduced to the Father as redeemed and restored sons—reconciled to God by the death of his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Then, and not until then, should we expect that their prayers would be anything else than an abomination before God. None will be heard and accepted by the Father, while rejecting the New Covenant and the only name given under

heaven or among men whereby we must be saved.

But to those who realize their sins and, repenting of them, accept the Redeemer and the New Covenant as the only way back to sonship and fellowship with the Father, the Apostle says,—

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” “For through him [Christ] we both have access by one spirit unto the Father.” —Eph. 2:18,19.

“Having **therefore**, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,...let **us draw near** with a true heart in full assurance of faith.” (Heb. 10:19-22.) “Let **us** therefore come boldly unto the throne of the heavenly grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” —Heb. 4:16.

Here, then, is what we hold to be the Scriptural line on this important subject. (1) Prayer is the privilege of “**believers**,” reconciled children of God, only. (2) It is appropriate for such children of God to pray collectively as well as individually and privately. (3) At a meeting of God’s children, the fact that unbelievers might be present would not make prayer improper, because it is a meeting of the Church and not a meeting of the unregenerate, nor under their control. (4) Prayer is wholly improper at Political, Legislative, Social, Educational, and other meetings which are not meetings of the Church of Christ. Even though some of the regenerated sons of God be present, the meetings are world-meetings, not directly amenable to the Word and Spirit of God. If Christians find it expedient to attend such meetings, let them attend as citizens and not as saints, and let their prayers be offered in secret.

“Unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth—seeing thou hatest instruction and castest my words behind thee?” —Psalm 50:16,17.

### F319 [¶1] through F322 (see question #37)

Growth in knowledge is very liable to detract from devotion—strange as it may appear that it should be so. We find our capacities so small, and our time for religious things so limited, that if attention be energetically directed in one channel it is apt to lead to dwarfing in other directions. The Christian is not to be all head and no heart, nor all heart and no head. The “spirit of a sound mind” directs us to cultivate all the fruits and graces which go to round out and complete a perfect character. The tendency of our day in all matters is in the opposite direction—to specialize. One workman does this part, another workman that part; so that now very few workmen understand a trade in full as in former times. The New Creature must resist this tendency, and must “make straight paths for his feet” accordingly; lest while cultivating one element of grace he falls into danger through the lack of the proper exercise of another God-given faculty or privilege.

The qualities of devotion are found in all mankind in a greater or less degree of development. These mental qualities are called veneration and spirituality, and they summon to their aid the organs of conscience, hope, tune, etc. If these be neglected, the result will be that interest in and love for the Truth will degenerate; so that instead of our hearts being led to the Lord with greater appreciation of his love, and with greater desire to please, honor and serve him, we will find the lower organs joining more in the controversy, taking the places of these higher ones, and the investigations will come to be more in the light of mental philosophies, into which will enter combativeness and destructiveness, ambition, strife and vainglory. The New Creation needs, therefore, not only to unite devotional services, prayer and praise, as a part of every meeting, but, we believe, needs in addition a special meeting of a devotional kind once a week, joined with which should be opportunities for testimony respecting Christian experiences—not according to the usual custom of going back from one to twenty years or more to tell about a first conversion, etc., but an up-to-date testimony, referring specifically to the condition of the heart at the moment, and during the week intervening since the last meeting of a similar kind. Such up-to-date testimonies prove helpful to those who hear; sometimes encouraging them by the re-

hearsal of favorable experiences, and sometimes comforting them by the narration of trials, difficulties, perplexities, etc., because they thus discern that they are not alone in having trying experiences, and sometimes failures.

Thus all may learn more fully the meaning of the words of the Apostle, “Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which shall try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.” (1 Pet. 4:12) They find that all who are the Lord’s people have trials and difficulties, and each learns thus to sympathize with the other; and as the bond of sympathy grows the spirit of helpfulness grows, and the spirit of love—the holy Spirit. Such midweek meetings could advantageously have a topic suggested at the previous Sunday gathering; and this topic being before the minds of the class should inspire each to mark the passing experiences of life, and to make note of them, especially along the line of the particular topic for the week. Undoubtedly every Christian has an abundance of opportunities for noting the lessons and experiences of life along various lines every week; but the majority, not thinking, not noticing, permit these valuable lessons to flow past them unrecognized, and learn chiefly from the larger and more bitter experiences of life what they might better have learned by taking heed to the Lord’s daily dealings with them through his providences.

To illustrate: Suppose that the topic for the week had been, “The peace of God,” from the text, “The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep [guard in] your hearts.” (Phil. 4:7) Each of the brotherhood should take notice during the week to what extent this scripture found fulfilment in his own case; and what things seemed to interrupt and prevent this ruling peace—bringing in disquiet, discontent. These experiences and the lessons drawn from them, told by those in the group more expert, and by those less expert (male and female) would not only bring to each other’s attention their own experiences during the forepart of the week, but in the after part would add to their own experiences the lessons and experiences of others, thus broadening their sympathies and leading them more and more to discern the beauties of peace in contrast with strife—the blessing

of the peace of God in the heart; and how it is possible to have this peace even when surrounded by turmoil and confusion or distressing conditions over which we have no control. The devotional feature of these meetings will add to their profit. He who realizes most keenly his own defects, and who is most earnestly striving to grow in the graces of the Spirit, will be the most earnest in his devotions to the Lord and in his desires to please him and to partake more and more of his holy Spirit.

In these meetings, as in all others, it is apparent that the greatest good can be accomplished by preserving order—not to the extent of destroying the life and liberty of the meeting, but to the proper extent of best preserving its liberty, without anarchy or disorder, under wise, loving, gentle restraint. For instance: The character of the meeting should be understood in advance; and it would be the duty of the leader to hold it, with reasonable, loving laxity, to its specified and agreed-upon purpose. It should be understood that these are not general question-meetings, nor meetings for discussion, nor for preaching; that other meetings are provided, and that those who wish are welcome to attend them; but that these meetings have a limited scope. To keep the meeting thus properly in line, and to avoid private discussions or replies of one individual to another,

### **E211 [¶1] through E216 (see question #38)**

The Apostle Peter, speaking under the inspiring influence of the holy Spirit, explained the matter, that it was **of** the Father and **by** the Son, saying, “Jesus—being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the holy Spirit, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.” (Acts 2:33) Accordingly, there can not be too much stress laid upon this baptism of the holy Spirit, seeing that it marks the acceptance of the Church, and that without it we would have no proof of the acceptance of our Lord’s sacrifice and of our justification.

However, we must most emphatically object to the common but erroneous and thoroughly unscriptural idea which prevails amongst many very earnest Christians, to the effect that frequent baptisms of the holy Spirit are to be expected and sought. Such an expectation not

the leader—being the one chosen to represent the whole—should be the only one to reply or to criticize others—and then only when **necessary**. It is his bounden duty to see that some testimonies are not so lengthy as to be tedious and hinder others from having opportunity, and that the meeting is not prolonged beyond its reasonable, agreed-upon, length. All these things devolving upon the leader, imply that he should be an Elder in the Church. A novice of insufficient experience would be apt, even with the best of intentions, to be either too lax or too rigid in applying principles to such an occasion; he might either spoil the meetings with too great leniency, or offend some worthy brother or sister by an unwisely expressed correction and application of proper rules. Moreover, the leader of such a meeting should be an Elder, or one competent to hold the position of an Elder in the Church, so that he might have a sufficiency of knowledge of the Word, and experience in grace and teaching ability to be able to give a word of encouragement or counsel or helpful advice **in response** to the various testimonies as presented. For “A word in due season, how good it is!”—how much more helpful, often, than a whole discourse under other conditions. Prov. 15:23

only is unwarranted by any promises given us in the Word of God, but is thoroughly at variance with the divine arrangement therein laid down. It should be noticed that the Scriptures mention only three baptisms of the holy Spirit; and the necessity for each of these, and for no more, is manifest—the three being parts or divisions of the one baptism. (1) The baptism of our Lord Jesus. (2) The baptism at Pentecost. (3) The baptism of Cornelius, the first Gentile convert accepted as a “son.” Let us examine these baptisms of the Spirit in this order.

(1) Not only was our Lord’s baptism of the holy Spirit necessary to himself, that he might be a partaker of the divine power; as the divine agent, and as the earnest of his inheritance, his begetting to the divine nature; but it was proper also that there should be such an outward manifestation or recognition of him as would permit others to know

him as God's Anointed. The manifestation was that of a dove descending and lighting upon him. Nor are we given to understand that the people in general witnessed this manifestation of divine favor; the understanding rather is that John the Baptist, who was at the time doing a reformatory work in Israel, and who was recognized as a prophet, a servant of the Lord, alone witnessed the descent of the Spirit upon our Lord, and he bore testimony to the fact. The statement is, "And John **bare record**, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven, like a dove, and it abode upon him; and I knew him not [knew not that he was the Messiah]: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shall see the Spirit descending and remaining upon him, the same is he which baptizeth with the holy Spirit. And I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God." John 1:33

(2) The baptism of the Church at Pentecost, as John here explains, was to be done by Christ, "he which baptizeth with the holy Spirit." Peter confirms this, as we have seen, declaring that Christ did shed forth his holy Spirit. He alone can so baptize, because he has redeemed the world, bought all with his precious blood; and because no man cometh unto the Father but by him, and because the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; and because the Son, highly exalted, acts as the Father's representative, to introduce into full fellowship with the Father those who come unto the Father by him. We have already seen that this baptism of the Church with the holy Spirit was necessary, as a testimony, as a witness, in the same manner that it was necessary that the baptism of the Spirit upon our Lord Jesus should be witnessed and testified.

The rushing wind filling the place, and the "cloven tongues of flame" which "sat on each of them" (probably the eleven apostles only—designating them as the Lord's special representatives and the holy Spirit's mouthpieces—see verse 14), were not the holy Spirit, but merely **manifestations** to their senses representing the invisible. Similarly the dove which John saw was not the Spirit but a manifestation to his senses. The dove, the emblem of peace and purity, fitly represented the fulness of Jehovah's spirit of love in Jesus; as the cloven tongues fitly represented the mission of the apostles to be, under the holy Spirit, to testify

as "**witnesses.**" Acts 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39,41; 13:31

(3) A special manifestation of the divine power in connection with the acceptance of Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, was necessary; because hitherto Gentiles had been outcasts, unacceptable to God even as servants; consequently it would not occur to the Jewish believers that the Gentiles would be accepted into the high position of **sons** of God, unless some pointed manifestation of divine favor to that effect were granted.

As already seen, it was not the divine program that any Gentiles should be accepted until the end of the "seventy weeks" of Jewish special favor, three and a half years after Pentecost; hence the fact that converts from among the Gentiles were to be fellow-heirs (on an equality) with converts from among the Jews, could not be indicated in the baptism of the Spirit at Pentecost. And in view of the deep-rooted prejudices of the apostles as well as other Jews, it was most appropriate that the acceptance of Cornelius should be **manifested** to the senses of the Apostle by the **same** evidences given at Pentecost. Nor is it necessary to suppose that the "cloven tongues of flame" sat on Cornelius: in common with the converts from Judaism, he probably received some of the "gifts" which came upon **all** at Pentecost.

How else could we have ever known that the Gentiles were accepted of the Lord? If the baptism of the Spirit and the Pentecostal blessings had come only upon the believers who were of the natural seed of Abraham, it might have left us in doubt all the way down through the Gospel age, as respects the standing of the Lord's people who by natural progeniture were Gentiles. But by the baptism of the holy Spirit coming upon Cornelius, the Lord made fully manifest the fact that there was no longer any difference between Jew and Gentile, bond and free, male and female, so far as acceptance with him in Christ was concerned. None are acceptable of themselves, in their own unrighteousness—hence only those who come unto the Father through the Beloved One are accepted in him. 1 Cor. 12:13

Aside from these three baptisms of the holy Spirit there is no other reference to the subject in the Scriptures: consequently the thought of many

of the Lord's people, that they must expect, labor for and pray for another or repeated baptisms of the holy Spirit is quite unwarranted. Such baptisms are wholly unnecessary, because the one baptism at Pentecost, supplemented by that upon Cornelius, fills every requirement. Those baptisms came not merely upon the individuals who enjoyed the blessing, but representatively were for and upon the Church, the Body of Christ, as a whole. The fact that this representative work for the Church was made in two parts—upon the first Jewish believers at Pentecost, and upon the first Gentile believers in the house of Cornelius, is only in harmony with our Lord's statement on the subject to Peter, before his crucifixion, saying, "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matt. 16:19) A key signifies power to unlock, to open; and keys, in the plural implies that more than one door was to be opened. As a matter of fact, there were just two doors, and just two keys; and the Apostle Peter used both keys—doing the opening work to both Jews and Gentiles, as the Lord had predicted. He used the first key at Pentecost, where he was the first, chief, principal speaker, who introduced the new dispensation of the Spirit to the three thousand who at once believed and entered the door. (Acts 2:37-41) Again, when the due time had come for the Gospel to be preached to the Gentiles, the Lord, in accordance with his choice, sent Peter to do this work, telling Cornelius to send for Peter, and telling Peter to go to Cornelius, and to speak the words of the Gospel to him and his household. On this occasion Peter used the second key, opening the Gospel door before the Gentiles, God witnessing to the fact by the miraculous manifestations of his holy Spirit upon Cornelius and the other consecrated believers from among the Gentiles with him.

The proper thought respecting the baptism of the holy Spirit is that of an outpouring, a shedding forth, an anointing, which, however, is so complete (**covering** every member of the body) as to be properly designated an **immersion**, or "baptism." And this same anointing or baptism continues upon the Church down through the age—covering, permeating, sanctifying, blessing, anointing, from then until now, each one who **comes into** the anointed "body." And this will

continue until the last member has been received and fully anointed. The Apostle John speaking also of this baptism, styling it an anointing, says, "The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you." (1 John 2:27; Psa. 133:2) He does not say, the numerous anointings which you have received, but **the** anointing, the one anointing, more being quite superfluous and out of harmony with the divine arrangement.

From the divine standpoint the entire Church is recognized as one—as a whole, for, "As the body is one, yet hath many members, so also is Christ ... Ye are members in particular of the body of Christ." (1 Cor. 12:12,27) In harmony with this thought the Scriptural presentation of the matter is that although the Lord considers us individually, and in many respects deals with us individually, yet our standing before the Father is not so much as units, but as members or parts of a unit, which unit is Christ, head and body. Hence we are informed that after we have believed our next step is to get into the body of Christ—to be baptized into his body.

We will not here discuss the subject of baptism in general, leaving that for future consideration, but we note the fact that believers are invited to be baptized into Christ, in order that they may come into or under his baptism of the holy Spirit. The holy Spirit not being a person, but a holy Spirit or power possessed by the Church, all who would have this blessing must come into relationship with **this Church**, Christ's body. It is not to be obtained otherwise. Nor do we mean by this a membership in an earthly Church—a Methodist body, a Presbyterian body, a Lutheran body, a Roman Catholic body, or any other body of human organization. We mean a membership in the **ecclesia**, whose members can be assuredly recognized only by their possession of the holy Spirit of love—attested by its various fruits and witnessed to as we have seen foregoing.

Whoever becomes truly united with Christ, and thus truly united with all the members of the body of Christ, needs not to pray for present or future Pentecostal blessings, but may look back with joy and confidence to the original Pentecostal blessing and the blessing upon Cornelius, as the evidences which the Father gave, through Christ, of his acceptance of the Church as a whole: and with the divine arrangement all should be fully content.

We do not say that our Lord is wroth with those who, with mistaken thoughts, ask, contrary to his will, for numerous Pentecosts: rather, we will suppose that he will have compassion upon their ignorance and misdirected prayers, and without altering his own plans and arrangements will pour them out a blessing—as much of a blessing as their erroneous expectations and neglect of his Word will permit—accepting the groanings of their spirits for heavenly communion.

It is strange that these dear friends who continually pray for baptisms of the Spirit have never

#### **F644 [¶1] through F654 (see question #39)**

Let us not forget to note that while all sickness and death in the world may, with more or less directness, be traceable and chargeable to the great Adversary, through whom sin entered into the mind of man to his defilement and undoing, yet in the case of the world, as well as with the New Creation, God is overruling for man's instruction and education the various elements of the curse that came upon the race because of sin. As for the world, in a general sense at least, the entire groaning creation is learning something respecting the exceeding sinfulness and undesirability of sin; and as for the Church, the New Creation, her permission to share in the sufferings of Christ includes and implies a share in those sufferings which are common to the remainder of mankind. In the case of our Lord, we are particularly informed that it was expedient that he, to be the great High-Priest for humanity, should be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and this must be true as respects each member of the body of that Priest, as well as of the Head, the Lord. There will surely not be an unsympathetic member of the entire body of Christ. All will have been touched with experiences, and know fully how to sympathize with the poor world when the time shall come for their restitution by judgments, by obedience under the trials and testings and corrections of the future age. Our Lord, who was perfect in the flesh, and who, therefore, could not have thus been touched had he not expended his vitality in healing the sick, experienced instead of vitality a sense of the weakness and suffering of those whom he relieved, as it is declared, "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." (Matt. 8:17) Those who are called to membership in the body of Christ have gener-

noticed that the apostles did not pray for future Pentecosts, neither did they instruct the Church so to pray. Do such friends think themselves wiser than the inspired apostles, or holier than they, or more anxious to be filled with the Spirit? We will trust that they have no such egotistical and presumptuous imaginations, and that their feelings are merely those of ignorant children, who thoughtlessly and sometimes peevishly tease indulgent parents for unnecessary and unpromised blessings and mercies, which cannot be granted them.

ally little vitality to give off in a miraculous manner; but in sharing the common experiences of the world, in connection with their own imperfect human organisms, these also are touched with a feeling of the infirmities of the race, which enables them to sympathize fully in the general distress.

It will be seen from this that we have no sympathy with the thought advanced by some that the body of Christ should expect to be exempted from the trials and difficulties of the world, physical, social and financial. True, such was the case with the typical Israelites. Their rewards for faithfulness to the Lord and his Law were to be along these lines of immunity from suffering, trials, etc.; but with the New Creation the matter is entirely the reverse, because they are not Israelites according to the flesh, but according to the spirit—they are of the spiritual seed of Abraham. The antitypes of Israel's blessings in the New Creation are spiritual. All things work together for their good spiritually. God's blessings are guaranteed to them so long as they abide in faith and obedience to Christ, so that nothing evil can come nigh their dwelling-place, where they are kept secret, shielded from all that could do injury. Yet their appreciation of this spiritual relationship is continually tested, to prove whether or not they appreciate the spiritual above the natural, that they may enjoy more abundantly the spiritual and ultimately be perfected as New Creatures when the earthly sacrifices shall have been fully completed.

When, therefore, the New Creatures in Christ Jesus find that they have numerous fiery trials, no matter along what lines these may come to

them, they are to recognize them as evidences of their faithfulness—as evidences that God regards them as sons, and that they are being tested according to their covenant relationship, that they may be fitted and prepared for perfecting in spirit and the glories to follow. If, therefore, the Lord permits calamities to come upon such, let them not be regarded in the same light as if they befell the world. The world, under the divine sentence of death, is subject to various accidents and mutations, with which the Lord has nothing whatever to do, as explained by our Lord when he referred to the eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and the others whose blood Pilate mingled with the sacrifices, and who our Lord declared were not, on account of these things, to be considered sinners above others and under divine reprobation. (Luke 13:1-5) God permits the wrath of men and of Satan, within certain limits, in connection with the world of mankind; but in respect to his elect Church it is different. Nothing that befalls them is of accident. “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.” Not even a hair of their heads can fall without his notice. (Psa. 116:15; Matt. 10:30) As our Lord declared to Pilate, when he asked, “Knowest thou not that I have power?”—“Thou couldst have no power at all, except it were given thee of my Father.” (John 19:10, 11) And this is equally true of every member of the body of Christ, from the moment of his begetting as a New Creature. Yea, we have every reason to believe that in some measure divine providence extends even beyond the New Creation to those whose lives and interests are closely linked to theirs. If, then, the New Creatures experience fiery trials they are not to think these peculiar, as though some strange thing happened unto them, but are to know that corresponding trials have happened to all the members of the body of Christ, from the Head downward, and will happen to all until the last members of the feet class have been tested, polished, accepted, glorified. If these, then, come in the nature of oppositions and persecutions in the home, or from former friends or neighbors, or from nominal church people, or if they come in the form of financial disaster and poverty, or if they come in the nature of sickness, pain, physical accident, etc., no matter how, the Lord’s peo-

ple are to be content, conscious of the Father’s love and providential care in respect to their every interest. To have full confidence in this is a part of the test of faith. To be assured of the Lord that we are children, and heirs, and to be told of God’s oversight, and at the same time to be permitted to suffer tribulations, is a severe test of faith in those who are required to walk by faith and not by sight if they would eventually be accepted as overcomers. Let us, then, receive with confidence, love and trust, whatever benefits or troubles the Lord’s providence may send us and let us profit by them, learning their lessons.

This realization of the divine care in all of life’s interests, earthly as well as heavenly, should not lead us to indifference in respect to our temporal affairs. On the contrary, we are to remember that we are stewards of privileges, opportunities and responsibilities, social, financial, and in respect to health. It, therefore, becomes our duty to do what we can to heal any social breaches which may occur. We are to be kind and considerate, to make explanations, and do all reasonably in our power to hinder misunderstanding of our motives and intentions. We are to seek wisely to avoid everything that might appear to be superstitious and fanatical, and are thus to commend our God, his character, his book and his Church to others. In this way we are to let our light shine. In financial matters we are to use prudence and economy and to be not slothful in business, just as though we had no God, just as though everything depended on our own exertions, yet, nevertheless, in our hearts and in our discussions of matters in the household of faith we are to realize and to express our confidence in the Lord, that because we are his, all of our interests are under his protecting care. If, then, in spite of our best exercise of wisdom, prudence, etc., poverty or financial loss shall result, we are to esteem that our heavenly Father has seen that such experiences would be better for us as New Creatures than would greater prosperity. We are to recognize his blessed supervision of our affairs, whatever may be his leadings and our experiences. Similarly in the matter of health: if disease come upon us, our proper stewardship of these mortal bodies would demand that we should use proper energy in applying remedies to the extent of our knowledge and judgment. If the efforts are successful, our acknowledgment of

heart should be to the Lord, and not merely in respect to the medicine. If they are unsuccessful, we are not to doubt his power, but instead to look for further blessing in connection with the trials being undergone. Indeed, for every distress or calamity the New Creatures, while using diligence in the correction of the difficulty, should lift their hearts to the Lord in confidence and trust, desiring to know what lesson they may learn from their experiences, and whether or not these lessons are in the nature of chastisement for wrongdoing or in the nature of the rod and staff designed to bring back the sheep from some course leading in the wrong direction, away from the Shepherd's footsteps. "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." The Lord's people are not dependent for their joy, peace and comfort merely upon having an average amount of health, financial and social prosperity, but may rejoice in the peace of God under all circumstances and conditions, and be enabled to rejoice heartily in both the rod and the staff of the Shepherd. With the Prophet of old many of the New Creation can say, "Before I was afflicted I went astray." Many of them have learned that there are great blessings connected with afflictions.

It is written prophetically of the Church, and of the Lord's care over it, "Who healeth all thy diseases." (Psa. 103:3) Any attempt to apply this to the Gospel Church as respects physical conditions must of necessity be lame and weak. Who does not know that from the Head of the Church down to the last members of the "feet" the Lord has not been pleased to heal all their physical diseases? Who does not know that many many of the saints have died of their physical disease? According to medical science our dear Redeemer, although physically perfect, was attacked with a disease not unknown to scientists, when he experienced the bloody sweat in Gethsemane. According to the same science, and in full accord with the facts, he who was perfect in the flesh died more speedily than the two malefactors crucified with him because of a disease—the bursting of his heart. Who does not know that the Apostle Paul carried with him to his dying day a "thorn in the flesh," and that the Lord refused to remove it, assuring him that his patient bearing of it would bring a more than compensating blessing of grace? Who does not know that many of the noblest of

God's saints throughout the age have suffered from disease, and that so far from having all their diseases healed, and instead of being made perfect, they died? An application of this scripture to physical diseases, then, would be inconsistent with the Scriptures, but its application as a prophecy to the spiritual condition of the New Creature is very appropriate indeed. The New Creation does contend with spiritual maladies, sicknesses, and this scripture warrants them in expecting that every disease may be so healed with the Balm of Gilead, so bound up with the exceeding great and precious promises of the Lord's Word, so offset by the peace and joy which man can neither give nor take away, that disease of heart, unrest, may intrude no longer, where the love and joy and peace of the holy Spirit abide and rule.

#### Mark 16:9-20 Is Spurious

These verses are admitted by all scholars to be an interpolation. They are not found in any of the early Greek MSS, and are certainly not genuine. It is not true that all believers in the Lord Jesus may drink poisonous things, and be in contact with poisonous serpents, contagious diseases, etc., with impunity; nor have all possessed the power of healing diseases and casting out devils. It will be noticed that the passage is omitted by the Revised Version, and by all modern versions of the Scriptures. Hence, to receive it or to quote it as Scripture, would be adding to the Word of God, and adding to the general confusion on an important subject.

The thought that the Lord's people may be specially favored of him in respect to physical health and other creature comforts (more than the world) is a delusion and a snare, and contrary to all proper expectations of the New Creation, as shown foregoing. The Lord and the apostles were the exemplars of the Church, and instead of expecting to be freed from the general difficulties which assail the groaning creation, their consecration was to a share in these afflictions, that they might be touched with the feeling of human infirmities. Our Lord repudiated as a temptation of the Adversary the suggestion to use divine power for the relief of his hunger during the forty days' fasting in the wilderness. (Matt. 4:3,4) When weary he rested by the well of Samaria, while his disciples went to purchase

food, whereas he might have called for and used divine power for the restoration of his strength. (John 4:6) In these instances food was the proper medicine for the pangs of hunger, and rest was the proper medicine for the weariness of the frame, and our Lord used these remedies. We are not informed that he had any chronic ailments, but we doubt not that he would have been free to use any roots or herbs or other remedies as freely as he used the food and the rest. The nervous ailment causing the bloody sweat, and his final malady of heart-rupture came at the close of his ministry. He knew that his hour was come. He who declined to ask the heavenly power for angelic protection (Matt. 26:53), and who declined to call upon the same power to satisfy his hunger, and to relieve his fatigue, was nevertheless perfectly at liberty to call upon these powers in the interests of his followers, as, for instance, in the feeding of the multitudes, and in the stilling of the tempest and in the providing of the taxes. Matt. 14:15-21; Mark 4:36-41; Matt. 17:24-27

Similarly, we find that the apostles used no special privileges and blessings which were theirs for the relief of temporal ailments and necessities. True, we have no account of the sickness of any of the twelve except Paul, whose weak eyes (Acts 9:8-18; Gal. 4:15; 6:11—R.V.) the Lord was not pleased to relieve, even upon solicitation, assuring the Apostle that this, which became a messenger of Satan in buffeting him, trying his patience, his humility, etc., would be more than offset by the Lord's "grace sufficient." (2 Cor. 12:7-9) The Apostle's faith and trust in the Lord have been a source of comfort to all in the narrow way from that time to the present, and yet he did not, like some of these, go to the Lord with requests for temporal good things, money, houses, lands, food, raiment, etc. We have his own word for it that he sometimes lacked, and that in such cases he labored, working with his hands at the ordinary trade of sail and tent making. Some far less holy than he, and far less in touch with the Lord, would not only have disdained so humble an occupation, but, spurning employment would have sought to do what they term "living by faith," that is, living without work, a matter which this same Apostle reproves very decidedly, saying, "If a man will not work

neither should he eat." "Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." (Eph. 4:28; 2 Thess. 3:10) Many who thus mistakenly think it the divine will that they should live by faith, while others live by work and support them, are often bold to pray for money, food, clothing, etc., which they will not work for. We do not wish to intimate that all such are wicked; it is our belief that some of the Lord's people are in this wrong attitude of mind because of false teachings and misunderstanding of the divine dealings and of the character of their calling. We are not disputing, either, that the Lord sometimes hears and answers prayers from such, even when those prayers are not in the fullest accord with the divine will. We believe that the proper course for the New Creatures—the one most pleasing to the Lord—is that which follows most directly and particularly the instructions and practices of our Lord and the apostles. Their being counted as New Creatures implies that they recognized the fact that earthly blessings belong properly to the natural man in harmony with his Creator, and therefore, imputedly belong to all vitally justified before God, through faith in Christ; and that these human rights they offered, consecrated, devoted, laid upon the altar, in exchange for the heavenly, spiritual, higher blessings and privileges of the New Creation, whereunto believers are called during this Gospel age. And if these earthly rights have been thus devoted to the Lord, exchanged for spiritual privileges, hopes, etc., by what process of reasoning could the New Creatures ask, not to say "demand," these earthly blessings, already consecrated, or laid down? It is another thing entirely to ask of the Lord such temporal blessings as his wisdom sees best for us, and another matter, also, to ask blessings upon others, including our dear ones according to the flesh, and not according to the Spirit. Nevertheless, in all of our requests the love and wisdom of the Lord should be recognized as superior to ours, and a full submission of our wills to his in every matter should be not only realized, but expressed to him in such petitions. The New Creature, rightly instructed through the Word of God, and appreciating its spirit, must value its spiritual interests far beyond any temporal welfare, and should surely desire such, and only such,

experiences in the flesh as would be most profitable to the new nature's development and preparation for the Kingdom. The New Testament deals more with the experiences of the Apostle chosen of the Lord to take the place of Judas than with all the others put together, and begins with the time of his acceptance of Christ on the way to Damascus. Looking through his varied experiences we perceive that in exercising the gift of miracles, then with the Church, he used it in many cases upon those coming into the Truth. But so far as the record shows, never once was this healing power used in his own relief, nor in the relief of any of those who are set before us as the saints, the fully consecrated. Nor was this because the saints of that time were free from disease: on the contrary, we know that Timothy had what we would now designate chronic dyspepsia, or indigestion, and Epaphroditus was not hindered from being sick, yea, "nigh unto death," not because of sin, but, as the Apostle explains, "because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death," hazarding his life. (Phil. 2:25-30) We know not what special foods or medicines the Lord was pleased to bless in the latter case; but in respect to the former one the Apostle neither prayed nor sent a handkerchief or napkin to cure the ailment, but wrote to Timothy, saying, "Use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities." (1 Tim. 5:23) The wine was recommended, not as a beverage nor as an intoxicant, but purely as a medicine. The point specially to be noticed is, that divine power, so far as we are informed, was neither invoked nor exercised on behalf of either of these two consecrated brethren. They bore their infirmities and afflictions and got blessings out of them, using meanwhile

the most suitable foods and remedies of which they had knowledge. And this we believe to be a proper illustration of the course which should be pursued by all of the consecrated, all New Creatures; they should not ask for physical healing, luxuries of life, etc. At very most, our Lord's sample petition warrants such in asking for what the Lord himself may see best for them in the way of daily food; and even while praying for the daily food they are to put forth the labors of their hands, and to expect that the Lord's blessing will be upon the same according to his wisdom as to what would be to their highest profit in character development through experiences, etc. If he shall see fit to grant them only the barest necessities of food and raiment, it will be to them a test of love and patience and faith in him. If he shall supply them with an abundance, it will be to them a test of the same faith and love and devotion, in an opposite direction—as demonstrating what proportion of these good gifts they are willing to sacrifice in the interests of his cause, in the service of his brethren. Likewise if divine wisdom sees best to give robust health and vigor, the test of faithfulness will be as to whether or not love and devotion will sacrifice and thoroughly use this vigor on behalf of the Lord's cause, or whether or not it will be absorbed in selfish pursuits; or, on the other hand, if the Lord in his providence grants but a limited amount of vitality and vigor, the test of faith and devotion will be from the opposite standpoint, to prove the love and obedience, submission and patience, and the zeal with which small opportunities will be sought and persistently used.

**R2006 [col. 2 ¶2] through R2007 [col. 1 ¶1]—The Prayers of Christ Unselfish (see question #39).**

Our Lord's prayers, like all his acts and teachings, are models of unselfishness. Therefore, before we ask anything of the Father, one question should be carefully considered; viz.—Why do I want this? If the petitioner is consecrated and desires the healing of any that are sick, it should not be for his own glory, nor for his own comfort, nor in any manner for himself; for such requests are selfish and out of harmony with his covenant of sacrifice—"even unto death." Remember the course of our Lord and the apostles. Our Lord used divine power in feeding the multitude because of **their**

necessity, and to glorify the Father; but when he himself was forty days without food he would not use the same power to feed himself, by commanding the stones to become bread, because this would have been contrary to his mission; for he came not to serve himself but others: not to preserve his own life, but to sacrifice it, to lay it down in the service of others. He created food for the multitudes, but not for himself or the disciples, though he referred to the miracle as an evidence that **if ever necessary** the same power would create bread for them. But it seems to

have been the Father's plan to provide for his people by natural means, for there is no record of necessity for such a miracle on their behalf. Doubtless the Lord and his disciples partook of the bread and fish after they were made, and probably of the remaining fragments, but note that the object of their creation was the relief of the multitude and not their own refreshment. (Matt. 15:32; 16:5-12.) He healed the lame and the palsied miraculously when it would glorify God, but when he himself was weary, he "sat on the well" to rest, or used other natural means. Though he prayed often to the Father, and knew that he was heard always, and although sometimes heavy and sorrowful, as in Gethsemane, yet his prayers were requests for grace and strength to do the Father's will, and to finish the work he had come to do. And though he tells us that by asking he could have had "twelve legions of angels" to protect his person and his life, yet he would not ask—preferring to have the Father's will accomplished, which he had come to perform; namely, to give himself a "ransom for all." So notable was this a characteristic of his, that even his enemies noticed it, and said, "He saved others [from sickness, etc.], himself he cannot save." They could not appreciate the self-sacrifice which he was performing. And so, too, we may reasonably expect that many nominal Christians to-day will not understand the same motives and conduct in those who prefer to share in Christ's sufferings, to join with him in sacrifice, in order that they may share also in his coming glorious work of blessing and restoring "that which was lost."

#### Apostolic Gifts Used Unselfishly.

Notice also the Apostles. They, too, had the gift of healing as well as privilege of prayer, but they did not use these selfishly. In all the records we find no instance of the exercise of the gift of healing on behalf of any of the apostles or any of the church; nor have we any record of prayer for health, or other earthly luxuries, being offered by any of them for themselves or each other, except in one case—that of Paul (2 Cor. 12:7-9), and his request was not granted; but he was told that

#### **F145 through F149 [¶2] (see question #40).**

While the Lord permits such diseases as we have just referred to to come to the New Creatures,

instead he should have a sufficiency of grace to compensate and enable him to bear it patiently. This should command the attention of all.

Although Paul's request for himself was refused—God seeing that his affliction of weak eyes could be made to work to divine glory and his own advantage—yet his gift to heal **others** was marvelous: "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul, so that from his body were brought unto the sick, handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them." (Acts 19:12.) Mark also the fact that though there is no account of the healing of the sick among the early disciples, it was not because they were never sick, for several instances of sickness are recorded. Paul writes to Timothy, "Trophimus have I left at Miletum **sick**;" and again he writes to Timothy, who was evidently often troubled with indigestion or dyspepsia, to use wine as a medicine; saying, "Use no longer water [exclusively], but take a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and for thine **often infirmities**." (1 Tim. 5:23.) In neither of these cases did Paul send handkerchiefs or aprons from his person, nor did he mention either praying for their recovery, or advise them so to pray. Evidently these cases should teach us that the gifts of healing, and prayer for the recovery of the sick were used, not upon the saints, but rather through them upon others, for the purpose of calling attention to the apostles and their gospel as being approved by God.

A special reason why the saints cannot properly ask for physical health and earthly luxuries, we have already intimated is, that they, like their Lord, have consecrated themselves, and pledged to God the exchange of all earthly favors and privileges for the heavenly favors and glories to come;—a foretaste of which they now enjoy through the exceeding great and heavenly promises which cheer and refresh and comfort and bless more than earthly blessings could. Who, that understands the matter, would renounce his heirship in the future heavenly glories, together with present hopes and spiritual joys or reexchange them, if he could, for future earthly restitution, and present occasional foretastes of it?

he stands prepared to heal them when they come into the proper attitude of heart. The throne of the

heavenly grace is to be approached for such soul disease—such leanness of the New Creature—that spiritual life and vitality and health may return in the light of divine favor. The Apostle's exhortation is that we "come boldly [courageously, confidently] unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4:16) All of the New Creatures have experiences along this line; and those who are rightly exercised by them grow stronger and stronger in the Lord and in the power of his might, so that even their stumblings and weaknesses—their necessity of calling for help and laying hold by faith upon the arm of the Lord—are means of spiritual blessing to them by which they grow in a manner that they could not do were they freed from trials and difficulties, and if the Lord did not withdraw his shining countenance from their hearts when they become cold or overcharged or neglectful of their spiritual privileges. Every time the New Creature finds it necessary to seek mercy and help, he has a fresh reminder of the necessity of the Redeemer's atoning work—realizing that Christ's sacrifice not only sufficed for the sins that are past—for Adam's sin and for our personal blemishes up to the time that we first came to the Father through the merit of the Son—but that, in addition, his righteousness by his one sacrifice for all, covers all our blemishes, mental, moral and physical, that are not willingly, wilfully ours. Thus the New Creature has a continual reminder throughout his sojourn in the narrow way that he was bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ; and his experiences, even in his failures, are continually drawing him nearer to the Lord in appreciation both of his past work as Redeemer and his present work as Helper and Deliverer.

Many New Creatures, however, have not learned how to deal with these soul sicknesses or diseases and are rather inclined to say to themselves—"I have failed again. I can not approach the throne of heavenly grace until I have demonstrated to the Lord my good intentions by gaining a victory." Thus they defer what should be their very first procedure. Seeking in their own strength to gain the victory, and with their minds harassed by their previous weakness, they are in no proper condition to "fight a good fight of faith" with either their own flesh or the Adversary, and defeat is tolerably sure to come; and with it will come a gradual cessation of appealing to the Lord, and a

growing submission to the intervening clouds which hide from them the sunshine of divine favor. These clouds they gradually come to esteem as in **their case** unavoidable.

The very opposite course should be pursued: As soon as the error of word or act or deed has been recognized and the injury to another made good as far as possible, the throne of grace should be promptly sought—sought in faith, nothing doubting. We are not to think of our Lord as wishing to find occasion against us, and as inclined to judge us harshly; but are, on the other hand, to remember that his goodness and mercy are such that he was prompted to provide for redemption **while we were yet sinners**. Surely, after we have become his children and have been begotten of the spirit, and are seeking, however stumbling may be our best efforts, to walk in his ways—after the spirit, not after the flesh—under such circumstances his love must abound to us yet more than when we were "children of wrath even as others." We are to remember that like as a proper earthly father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth those that reverence him. We are to consider our best earthly friends and their sympathy and love and compassion, and are to draw an analogy, and to consider that God would be much more kind and faithful than the very best of his creatures. He invites such faith, such confidence—and he rewards it. All who had faith enough to come to the Lord originally, have faith enough to come to him day by day with their trials, difficulties and shortcomings, if they will. If they suffer the clouds to come between, and decline the invitation of the Word to come to the throne of grace for peace and restored harmony, they will ultimately be counted unworthy a place amongst the special class whom the Lord is selecting: "The Father seeketh such to worship him"—such as both love and trust him. "Without faith it is impossible to please him." "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." John 4:23; Heb. 11:6; 1 John 5:4

There are, of course, difficulties in the way, but the helps and counsels necessary the Lord provides, both in his Word and in those brethren whom he "sets" in the body for this very purpose. (1 Cor. 12:18) It is a help, for instance, to see just wherein lies the error of the course alluded to—to see that in putting off our visit to the

throne of grace to obtain mercy, until we can bring something in our hands to justify ourselves, is to show that we do not fully appreciate the great lesson which for centuries God has been teaching; namely, that we are all imperfect, and that we cannot do the things we would; therefore, it was necessary that the Redeemer should come for the purpose of lifting us up. He who goes about to justify himself attempts the impossible, and the sooner he learns it the better. Our reckonings with the Lord should be day by day; and if the difficulty be considerable or only a light one, and the heart of the consecrated one is very tender and accustomed to continual communion and fellowship with the Lord, he will find a blessing in retiring to the throne of grace **promptly** as soon as any difficulty arises, waiting not even for the close of the day. But certainly nothing should be carried over night, when the throne of grace is open to us at all times; to neglect it would be to show a disposition contrary to that which the Lord's Word inculcates.

The difficulty which some experience is, that after they do come to the throne of grace they do not realize the blessing that they seek—the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with the Father. Their difficulty may be one of three: (1) They may lack the faith; and since the Lord's dealing in the present time is according to faith, nothing can be obtained without the faith. "According to thy faith be it unto thee." (2) Their difficulty may be that they have not undone the wrong which they did and are confessing; that they have not made amends for injury done to another; or that, if the transgression has been against the Lord, they are seeking peace without making confession to him and asking for his forgiveness. (3) In not a few cases of this kind under our observation, the difficulty has been that the suppliants never had made a proper **consecration** to the Lord; they were seeking divine peace and joy and the sunshine of favor —seeking the blessings represented in the light of the Golden Candlestick and in the Shewbread of the Tabernacle, while they were still in reality outside of these things, outside of consecration—outside, therefore, of the Royal Priesthood—merely Levites who thus far have received the special grace or privilege of the present time in vain.

The proper remedy for the lack of faith would be its cultivation through study of God's Word, thinking upon his goodness past and present, and striving to realize that he is gracious, "exceeding abundantly" more than we could have asked or thought. The remedy for the second difficulty would be a prompt, full, thorough apology, and, so far as possible, undoing of the wrong or compensation for the damages, and then a return to the throne of grace in full assurance of faith. The remedy for the third difficulty would be to make the full consecration which the Lord demands on the part of all who will enjoy the special privileges and arrangements of this Gospel age.

Another class of the consecrated, but spiritually diseased, needs consideration. These, apparently justified by faith and sincere in their consecration, seem to make little or no progress in controlling their flesh. Indeed, in some instances, it would appear that their faith in God's goodness and mercy, removing the brakes of fear, have left them rather more exposed to temptation through weaknesses of the flesh than they were at first—when they had less knowledge of the Lord. These have experiences which are very trying, not to themselves only, but to the entire household of faith with whom they come in contact; their lives seem to be a succession of failures and repentances, some along the lines of financial inconsistencies, others along the lines of moral and social delinquencies.

What is the remedy for this condition of things? We answer that they should be distinctly informed that the New Creation will not be composed of those who merely **covenant** self-denials and self-sacrifices in earthly things and to walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit; but of those who, because of faithfulness in the willing endeavor to **keep** this covenant, will be counted overcomers by him who readeth the heart. They should be instructed that the proper method of procedure for all the consecrated is that, being made free by the Son, they should be so anxious to attain all blessings incident to divine favor, that they would voluntarily become bond-servants—putting themselves under certain restrictions, limitations, bondage, as respects their words, their conduct, their thoughts—earnestly desiring of the Lord in prayer the aid he has promised them, expressed in his words to the Apostle, "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness." Each time they find that they have transgressed

they should not only make amends to those injured, but also make confession to the Lord, and by faith obtain his forgiveness—they should promise greater diligence for the future, and should **increase the limitations of their own liberties** along the lines of weakness ascertained by their latest failure.

Thus watching and praying, and setting guards upon the actions and words of life, and bringing “every thought into captivity” to the will of God in Christ (2 Cor. 10:5), it will surely not be long until they can assure themselves and the brethren also respecting the sincerity of their **hearts**, and walk in

life so circumspectly that all may be able to discern, not only that they have been with Jesus, but also that they have learned of him, and have sought and used his assistance in gaining victories over their weaknesses. The cases of such brethren or sisters would come under the head of what the Apostle terms “walking disorderly”—not after the example of the Lord and the apostles. In another chapter we will see the Lord’s direction respecting the manner in which those weak in the flesh and who bring dishonor and discredit upon the Lord’s cause should be treated by the brethren.

### **F638 [¶2] through F641 [¶1]—If Satan Cast Out Satan His Kingdom Wanes (Matt. 12:26) (see question #41).**

When at the first advent the Pharisees charged our Lord with casting out devils by Satanic power, his answer clearly implied that such action on Satan’s part was possible, but not to be considered probably; and that, should it occur, it would be a proof that his power was on the wane; that he was hard pressed, and that he had resorted to this as a last resort, rather than lose his hold upon his dupes. We advocate no general rejection of healings and miracles as being Satanic; but a careful scrutiny of every person or system seeking to establish itself by miracles. The New Creation should remember the inspired direction, “Try the spirits whether they be of God”—or of Satan. Test them and deal with them accordingly. 1 John 4:1

It is pertinent to this inquiry that we call to remembrance that miracles were used at the beginning of this age to establish the Church, but that no such object can be urged now—after the Church has been established for nearly nineteen centuries and is about completed. It is well, too, that we bear in mind that the inspired Apostle pointed down to our end of the age when indicating that Satan would transform himself into an angel of light (a messenger of peace and health and science, falsely so-called) with every deceivableness of error. The Apostle even implies that God wills to permit this course to have measurable success, so as to deceive all that dwell upon the earth whose names are not written in the Lamb’s book of life. He says: “For this cause he shall send them **strong delusion** [a working of error] that they should believe a lie: that they might all be condemned who believed not the

truth but had pleasure in error.” “Power and signs and lying [deceiving] wonders” are to be expected at this time, as tests in this “harvest” time of the age. (2 Thess. 2:9-12) Let us also not forget our Lord’s words: “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied [preached] **in thy name?** and **in thy name** cast out devils? and **in thy name** done many wonderful works [cures]? And then will I profess unto them, **I never knew you:** depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” Matt. 7:22,23

It is surely time that all—the eyes of whose understanding have been opened to a realization that we are now living in the end of the age, where all these predictions should be expected to reach fulfilment—should be on the lookout for them, and be able to identify them with the seductive teachings and miracle-workings prevalent on every hand throughout Christendom.

But how may we be sure that all of these are Satan’s delusions?—that none of them are of God? We answer in the inspired language: “If they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.” (Isa. 8:20) Their digressions from the Word are various—some in one direction, some in another. The great mass of them may speedily be seen to be spurious by noting that they are out of accord with the fundamental doctrine of the Gospel, viz., the **ransom**. They may not claim to deny the ransom; they may even claim to believe in the necessity and efficacy of the great sin-offering finished at Calvary, as the ransom for all and the basis of all forgiveness of sins and reconciliation to the

Father. However, the effort to deceive will not long confuse those who remember that the Greek word rendered ransom is *anti-lutron*, and signifies “**a corresponding price**.” This touchstone of divine truth will quickly show that evolution is the opposite of the truth, because evolution denies the fall and all need for redemption from it. It promptly condemns Christian Science as wholly unchristian, in that it denies sin and death and all evil, claiming that they are mental delusions. It condemns the theory that God was the instigator, the author, of sin and wickedness, by showing that he has always opposed sin, and has in process a plan for releasing man from its bondage through the **redemption**, whose fruitage will come by and by in the “times of restitution.”

But what shall we say of those who blaspheme God’s holy name by teaching doctrines of devils—to the effect that an eternity of torment awaits the great mass of the living of mankind, and already has control of the vast majority of the 50-billion whom the Scriptures, on the contrary, declare are “in their graves,” awaiting the promised blessing of all the families of the earth? If such people shall do cures “**in my name**,” shall we consider that the Lord is now indorsing their false doctrines? We must not so suppose, now that the Millennial dawn is appearing and with it all excuse for such gross darkness is disappearing. We cannot reckon such as amongst those to whom the Apostle wrote: “Ye brethren are **not in darkness** that that day should overtake you as a thief.” It matters not that with their “wonderful works” they proclaim faith in Christ as their coming King, near at hand. With such doctrines of devils in their mouths and hearts we must conclude that their faith-cures and wonderful works are as much works of the devil as are similar cures by Spiritism, Christian Science, Mormonism, etc.

Suppose, however, says one, that they display great zeal in sending out missionaries to the heathen? We reply that this must not alter our general view of the **movement** as a whole (we gladly admit, yea, earnestly hope, that some “caught,”

“ensnared,” by this movement are true children of God, whom we trust he will deliver out of this district of mystic Babylon). Let us call to mind our Lord’s estimate of the zealous missionary efforts of his day. He said to the Pharisees (the “holiness people” of that time and nation), “Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of *Gehenna* [the Second Death] than yourselves.” (Matt. 23:15) What advantage can accrue to the heathen from giving them the **false doctrines** of the Adversary? The few who may be reached will have the more to unlearn when the times of restitution begin. It is as true today as it was at the first advent that—“His servants ye are to whom ye render service.” Surely, then, Satan is doing a great business in the nominal churches of Christendom, and especially in their pulpits. No wonder the chief priests, scribes and doctors of divinity today hate the Truth—hate the light and combat it in every possible manner. “Come out of her [Babylon], **my people**, that ye be not partakers of her sins and receive not of her plagues.” Rev. 18:4

Satan is in just the extremity indicated by our Lord’s words above quoted. (Matt. 12:26) The lifting of the veil of ignorance—the general increase of knowledge on every subject—makes it impossible to use the old superstitions as formerly. New delusions must be introduced, else the people would get the Truth and escape from him. He is very busy “as an angel of light”—as a preacher of Evolution to some; as a missionary of eternal torment, bad-tidings, to the heathen; as an Elijah heralding himself as the Restorer of mankind; as a Scientist (?) persuading people to deny their aches and pains, and rewarding their lying by curing them of a physical ailment while the perversion of the truth makes them thereafter unable to discern truth from falsehood. Satan may believe that he is succeeding, but our Lord’s word for it, his house will soon fall—and this necessity for his playing reformer and good physician is an evidence that the fall is near. Thank God it will not be long until he shall be thoroughly “bound,” restrained, that he may “**deceive** the nations no more”! Rev. 20:3

**R2008 [col. 1 ¶7] through R2009 [col. 2 ¶1] (see question #42).**

“Is any among you suffering [afflicted], let him pray,” says the Apostle (James 5:13). This counsel will apply to all the trials and afflictions of

God’s people, mental and physical, especially such as are of the first class or the second class. Such sufferers may take all their troubles of every

kind to the Lord direct, and be assured of his sympathy and grace to help and sustain. Such need no elders to pray for the forgiveness of their sins, as in the following verses (14,15), where, evidently, the third class afflictions are referred to,—sicknesses the result of rebukes from God for sins, and not sicknesses of the class first described, in which we may rejoice. James says: “Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; **and though** he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him. **Therefore** confess your **sins** one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.” [Bold words from old Greek MSS.] The prayer, as we understand it, should be for the **forgiveness of the sins** of which the sickness is a punishment or rebuke, rather than for release from the deserved punishment. But if the sickness was a judgment or discipline for sin, we should expect that when the sin had been confessed and truly repented of, the Lord would remove the chastisement and raise up the penitent son from the affliction, either partially or wholly. —Compare Matt. 9:2-6; John 5:14; and 1 John 5:16.

But let us remember that this statement does not refer to the various small aches and annoyances to which we, in common with the world in general, are subject; and which serve us a good purpose in the development of patience and sympathy for others. We know this, first of all, by the calling in of the elders of the Church [the senior, or chief, or official members] to pray over and anoint the sick with oil: because such extreme measures would be quite improper for a slight ailment. We know it secondly by the Greek word used for **sick** in verse 14, which has the significance of **helpless** or impotent.

#### Our Present Standpoint.

We see, then, that promiscuous praying for health during the Gospel age would have been improper, and that only by means of the **gift** of healing were the early cures of the age performed; that it ceased with the death of the apostles after accomplishing its object; and that the proper prayers relating to sickness, on the part of the saints, have been those offered for the forgiveness of sins—as a result of which healing followed. But we see, too, that as

the Millennial age is dawning—lapping upon the Gospel age which is closing—we should expect that healing and general restitution would begin to be manifested, much as we do see it. And this leads us to inquire,—In the light of the foregoing examination of the Bible teachings and in the light of our present location in the dawn of the Millennium,

#### For Whom May We Now Pray?

We answer, the saints cannot properly pray for their own health now, any more than could their Master. They cannot properly ask the restitution privileges which they have consecrated, nor can they ask that their sacrifices be nullified by having all the cost of weariness, exhaustion, stripes or sickness miraculously removed. But when they realize their afflictions to be punishments for sins, they can still feel at liberty to confess their sins one to another, and pray to God for forgiveness, and thus they may, as a result, be healed.

The saints who abide in Christ, and in whom his Word abides, may pray for others than themselves, especially in view of the fact that we are now in the beginning of the Times of Restitution; namely, in cases where they are sure their object is not self-exaltation; where their desires for the recovery of the sick are not selfish; where they have reason to believe that the restored health would be consecrated to good works and the glory of God. In such cases we may upon request pray for the recovery of the afflicted or imbecile **not of** the consecrated little flock—the sacrificers, the Royal Priesthood. Yet even in such cases, though our faith must necessarily be strong, because confident of asking from right motives, and at a time when the Lord is pleased to grant a beginning of restitution blessings, we should always say, as the Master did in his prayers,—“Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.”

However, it is not time yet to expect general healing and full restitution work, as that evidently will not be due until the entire Priesthood shall have finished sacrificing and entered with their Head and Chief Priest Jesus, into the glories and perfections of the heavenly state or condition, typified by the Most Holy of the Temple and Tabernacle.

He Must Increase,  
But I Must Decrease.

At first sight it might appear that as the gifts at the beginning of the age were exercised **through** the consecrated, so the healings to be expected in the Millennial dawn would be manifested mostly in answer to the prayers of the consecrated. But not so, we believe, will it be found; this would bring the saints into too great prominence, whereas, like John the Baptist at the first advent, we must expect to decrease here, while the Church Triumphant, on the other side the veil, will be on the increase. Our present relationship to the glorified Church—pointing out the nearness of the reign of glory—answers closely in correspondence to the work of John the Baptizer at the first advent. John proclaimed, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, and added, “There standeth one among you whom ye know not. He must increase, but I must decrease.” So, much the same, is our message; and while the Church on the earthly plane will decrease, the glorified Church on the heavenly plane will be increasing in power and influence during the time of trouble coming, while the John class will doubtless be put under restraints, as John was cast into prison by Herod.

In harmony with what we should thus expect, various methods of healing meet with some success, and indeed we have heard of more than one case of healing where no cure was attempted, or even thought of, by either the sick or the friends. One case was that of a sick girl, at whose bedside her friends had gathered, waiting for her to die; she immediately recovered, got up and went about as ever. The only explanation she could give was that she had a dream in which a man laid his hand upon her head, and she felt a shock like electricity pass down her spine. And this young woman did not even profess to be a Christian.

By various means the Lord would gradually prepare the world for restitution, so that when it comes the new order of things will still leave room for the exercise of faith toward God; for the proud and scientific to explain from natural causes, while others will be led thereby to recognize such things as the beginning of restitution. And since the overcomers have a great work to do in opposing error and instilling truth, and

since, if they were much engaged in praying for the sick, it would detract from their real and important work of healing the spiritually sick and lame and blind, we see great reasons why we should expect these manifestations of restitution both **in** and **through** others than the saints.

#### Should The Consecrated Use Medicines?

This question naturally suggests itself. We are neither commanded nor forbidden to use medicines. In our consecration we gave up human advantages coming to us as to all believers through Christ in exchange for the spiritual advantages offered us. Hence all **restitution** blessings and privileges we are debarred from **asking**; although God, for his own wise ends, sometimes grants his “new creatures” special favors and manifestations of an earthly sort in their hours of need; even though they do not ask for them.—See Matt. 26:53, 54; Acts 12:6-11; 14:19,20; Phil. 2:27.

It should be noticed, however, that (aside from Christ’s work of redemption and restitution) condemned men are privileged to use such natural means as they can command, in food and medicines, for the relief of their ailments and the sustenance, as long as they may be able, of their condemned and dying bodies. And these privileges consequently the saints retain and possess, even after having exchanged the earthly advantages through Christ, for the heavenly advantages.

Nothing, then, in their covenant of full consecration, prevents the saints more than unbelievers from using natural means for their relief. We have the liberty to do so whenever our judgment indicates the expediency. And though we are not informed that our Lord used medicines, we should remember that he was perfect, and had only such pains and aches as he himself **took** from others. However, he certainly illustrated the principle of making use of natural means, not asking divine power for relief, by resting when weary instead of praying for supernatural restoration; and when hungry and thirsty he ate and drank instead of praying for strength and refreshment otherwise. So, too, it was with the apostles as far as we may know from the meagre scraps of history of their private affairs furnished us in Scripture. Paul tells us (2 Cor. 11:27,30) of his weariness and pains and hunger and thirst and cold and nakedness, and says he gloried in these marks of

his faithfulness, but mentions not one word about praying for the removal of these by divine power; nor does he record one answer of such a prayer as a mark of favor with God. On the contrary, in the single instance he mentions of having prayed for physical restitution (the restoration of his sight), he does tell us that the Lord refused his request, telling him it was best for him so—the grace sufficient being in spiritual and not earthly favors above those of natural men.—2 Cor. 12:9.

When Paul was thus needy at times, what did he do? Did he pray God to feed and clothe him? No; he well knew that God had promised that no good, needful thing should be withheld, so long as he was his servant. He did not ask God to create money in his pockets, nor to send some kind hearted person, not too lazy to work, with a basket of dainties for him to eat, while he studied or prayed? No! that was not Paul's sort, else he would not have been selected as "a chosen vessel"

to bear the Lord's truth. When he was hungry Paul neither went out and begged nor staid indoors to pray for the things needed, but went to work at his trade,—tent-making, teaching publicly and privately as opportunities offered; unwilling to ask aid even of the **believers** whom he served; though he well knew that they were negligently losing, both the privilege of giving to his support and the spread of the truth, and also losing the valuable instruction which he could have imparted during those hours necessarily devoted to secular labor.

We remember, too, Paul's advice to Timothy regarding medicine—to take a little wine (**as a medicine**, not as a beverage) for his indigestion and "often infirmities." And this we find in perfect harmony with Paul's own course and that of our Lord, and therefore certainly a safe guide to us respecting our Father's will.

#### **R2252 [from subhead to end of article—"After This Manner Pray Ye"] (see question #45).**

"Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name." This address of God as **our** Father, as we have just seen, does not imply the fatherhood of God to all mankind; for on the contrary we remember that our great Teacher declared to some, "Ye are of your father, the devil." And the Apostle declares that **we were** "children of wrath" even as others still are. We have "escaped the condemnation that is on the world," and have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of God's dear Son—out from amongst those who are children of wrath into the family of God; so that now, as sons of God, all who believe in Jesus may pray, "**Our Father**, which art in Heaven." This portion of the petition is an address of reverence, an acknowledgment of God's greatness, and implies our humility and littleness. It implies that the worshiper reverences God and is not undertaking to address him in a light or irreverent manner: even his very name is revered as holy by the true worshiper.

"Thy Kingdom come: thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." This petition is not in the nature of a demand, nor even an expression of impatience. Rather it is an acknowledgment on the part of the worshiper that he has **faith** in the divine promise that a Heavenly Kingdom shall in God's

due time be established in the earth. It is an acknowledgment that the worshiper not only believes God's promise but that he is in sympathy with it and desires the Lord's Kingdom—longs for it. It thus implies that he is not in sympathy with sin, nor with the kingdoms of this world and the present order and its imperfect social, financial, political and ecclesiastical arrangements. It is an acknowledgment, furthermore, that the worshiper is longing for the condition in which no sin will be possible;—in which God's will shall prevail on earth as well as in heaven. It thus implies that he is out of harmony with sin and in harmony with righteousness, truth, goodness. It is an acknowledgment, nevertheless that God's will is not done on earth, that his Kingdom has not come to earth as yet; for when his kingdom comes, when Christ, the appointed King, shall take unto himself his great power and reign, the result will speedily be as shown in the Scriptures, that Satan will be bound, evil in general restrained, and on the contrary knowledge, peace and blessing shall fill the whole earth. (Rev. 20:1-3; 21:1-5; 22:1-6.) There is no attempt here to tell the Lord, what must be done, and how and when his Kingdom must be established: the rightly instructed worshiper is

supposed to know that he who made all things is thoroughly competent to govern and direct and overrule all things, and that he is “working all things according to the council of his own will.” The worshiper, it is supposed, has gone to the divine Word for instruction and will continue to receive his instructions there respecting the divine purposes: in this petition he is merely expressing his full acquiescence to the divine arrangement and rejoicing therein.

“Give us this day our daily bread.” The words of Matthew here differ slightly from those of Luke. Literally translated Luke’s statement is, “be giving continually our daily bread.” Matthew says “this day,” while Luke says “day by day.” The thought is practically the same, however. It is not an appeal to God for superabundance and much goods laid up for many days; nor is it a request for luxuries: but merely asking, Lord, give us those things which are needful to us daily. Contentment is the very spirit of this petition. Whoever prays to the Lord after **this manner**, and from the heart, will surely be a very thankful and very contented person. And this petition is as broad as the divine promise respecting earthly things would warrant. “Thy bread and thy water shall be sure,” leaves no room for requests for luxuries. Moreover, while this petition is the only one in the prayer of an earthly character, the only one taking hold upon earthly affairs and interests, it also may be understood as relating to spiritual things; indeed, we believe it will be so applied by all God’s children, in proportion as growth is made in grace and knowledge and spirituality. The spiritually minded will be asking for the spiritual food, the spiritual necessities, day by day and will more and more realize that as the Heavenly Father clothes the lilies and feeds the ravens, so, much more, he will care for the temporal interests of all who are seeking first the Kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness,—the righteousness which it will enforce.

“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” What a thought! Who can offer a prayer “after **this manner**” and yet be under control of the evil spirit—filled with malice, anger, envy, hatred, strife, being unforgiving, unthankful, resentful, backbiters, slanderers? All these works of the flesh and the devil proceed from

evil conditions—not one of them is prompted by true love, such as the Lord inculcates and his spirit inspires. The very essence of Christian principle is love, sympathy, forgiveness of the faults of others, even as we realize we have faults ourselves and that God has graciously forgiven us these for Christ’s sake. Our Lord emphasizes the importance of this forgiving spirit before we can be children of our Father in Heaven, saying, in another place, “With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged;” and with what measure ye measure others, your own conduct shall be measured. (Matt. 7:2.) We remember, also, that he gave a parable illustrating the subject, representing his forgiven disciple as a servant who owed ten thousand talents, whose debt he had freely set aside, and did not press; but when that follower manifested so different a spirit that, finding a fellow servant who owed a few pence, he treated him unmercifully, then the Lord’s mercy and generosity were likewise withdrawn from him.—See Matt. 18:23-35.

Let every Christian in approaching the throne of the heavenly grace, daily inquire of his own heart, whether or not he has forgiven those who are indebted to him, as he desires that God should freely forgive him for Christ’s sake. This does not mean the forgiving of financial indebtedness and destruction of our account books, except that on the debtor willing but unable to pay, we should have mercy and patience, even as we hope for mercy of our Lord. Its special application is to moral obligations, transgressions and indebtedness. Nor does this imply that we should pay no attention to the transgressions of others against ourselves—that we should not recognize offences. True, we should not be swift to take offense, we should be slow to anger, we should never take offense unless offense is most evidently **intended**. And then, while we may not forgive in the absolute sense until our forgiveness is asked, according to divine pattern on this subject, yet we should be always in a forgiving attitude of mind: that is to say, we should harbor no vindictive or malicious feelings, we should have no feelings except those of love and sympathy, and a desire to forgive the wrong that has been done us, as soon as possible, and an anxiety to make the way of reconciliation as smooth and easy as possible for the wrongdoer; and we should be on the alert to discover

and prompt to rectify any missteps or wrong doings on our own parts.

And "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." The thought here is slightly obscure; for we all remember that "God tempteth no man." Amplifying the sentence so as to give us what we believe is the literal translation of it, and adding in brackets some suggestive words to make more plain our conception of the Lord's full thought here, as it was understood by those who heard him, this passage reads thus:—"And bring us not into temptation [merely], but [also] deliver us from the Evil One." It is a part of the divine arrangement to bring us or permit us to be put into positions of trial or testing. We are not to rebel against the divine wisdom in this matter, but quite to the contrary to acquiesce in it, and to realize that trials are essential to our development. Hence, instead of praying to be kept from temptations, our prayer rather is that when our Lord in his providences brings us into places of testing, he will also stay with us during the trial, and let his grace be sufficient for us, and not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear, but with the temptation provide also a way of escape—delivering us from the Evil One, Satan.

### **E287 through E290 [¶3]—Groanings Which Cannot Be Uttered (see question #49).**

"The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the heart, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit." Rom. 8:26,27

This expression, intended to convey to God's people an understanding of the heavenly Father's love and care toward them, has been sadly misunderstood by many. They tell us that the holy Spirit groans for them to the Father; and some attempt to give audible utterance to the groans themselves; and by some it is supposed that the amount of groaning which they do, somehow helps the holy Spirit in the matter, compensating for the groanings which it cannot utter—though they cannot see just how. It would indeed be strange, if the holy Spirit were a person, and, as the catechisms assert, "equal in power" with the Father and the Son, that he should find it necessary to address the Father and the Son on behalf of the Lord's people, with unutterable groans. Our Lord Jesus said that we might come direct to him and that we might come direct to the Father, assuring us, "The Father himself loveth you." Yet from this scripture under

"For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever. Amen." These words, altho found in our Common Version and in some of the Greek manuscripts, are not found in the **oldest** Greek MSS., the Sinaitic and the Vatican. These would therefore seem to have been human words added to the words of our Lord. So far as this earth is concerned, these words have not been true throughout the Gospel age; the dominion of the earth has not been the Lord's; the power of earth has not been the Lord's; and the glory of the earth has not been the Lord's. On the contrary, Satan has been "the prince of this world" and has worked in the hearts of the children of disobedience, and has blinded the minds of them that believe not the gospel. And the kingdoms and powers of this world have been Satan's, and God's people are waiting for God's Kingdom to come, as represented in verse ten, to overthrow the kingdoms of this world, and to establish the Kingdom of righteousness: to bind Satan and to destroy the works of the flesh and the devil.

consideration some have gotten the idea that we must needs go to the Father and to the Son through the holy Spirit as a mediator, who would groan for us, and intercede for us, that we might be accepted of the Father and of the Son. This is in harmony with the prevailing confusion of thought respecting the holy Spirit and its office.

The error of this interpretation is further noticeable when we consider that if the groans could not be uttered they would not be groans at all; for what is not uttered is not a groan. But this passage would appear equally strange and inconsistent, if we were to interpret it to mean that the holy Spirit, the influence or power of Almighty Jehovah, is unable to express itself intelligently. We know that in past ages God's mind, will, Spirit, found abundant expression through the words and deeds of the prophets,

and we cannot suppose that he has any less power or ability today. What, then, can this scripture signify—“The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered”?

The mistake is in supposing that it is God’s Spirit which supplicates. On the contrary, the Spirit which maketh intercession for us is **our own spirit**, the spirit of the saint, which supplicates God, and often fails to express itself properly. A glance at the text, with its connections, will make manifest the propriety of this interpretation. The Apostle had just been writing of the sin-burdened humanity groaning in its fetters. He assures us that it shall be granted liberty from the bondage, when the Church, the “sons of God,” under the Captain of their Salvation, shall have been glorified. (Verses 19-21) He then passes from the **groanings** of the world to the present condition of the Church, in which **we groan**: “Ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the deliverance of our body.” Verse 23

The renewed or transformed mind or spirit in the Church, once worldly, is now holy and spiritual: but our bodies are still human, and have the Adamic imperfections. Hence we, as new creatures, are burdened by the flesh, and **groan** for the promised deliverance into Christ’s likeness in the first resurrection. The Apostle explains that we may, by faith, reckon the earthly body dead, and think of ourselves as new creatures perfected, and thus realize ourselves **saved now—“saved by hope.”** (Verse 24) Then, having shown how we may reckon ourselves, he explains to us that from the divine standpoint we are reckoned as “new” and “holy” and “spiritual” beings: he shows that God, viewing us from this standpoint, recognizes not the flesh and its weaknesses and imperfections—but the spirit, the mind, the intentions, the will, the “new creature,” devoted to his service. God knows when our holy spirit (new mind) is willing and the flesh weak, and he judges us not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit.

It was our begetting of the Spirit, our adoption of a new will, fully consecrated to the Lord, that brought us into a new relationship to God, and into these new hopes wherein we rejoice: and so

“likewise the spirit [our new, holy mind] also helpeth [maketh up for] our [bodily] infirmities. For we know not [even] what we should pray for as we ought [much less are we always able to do as we would like]; but the spirit itself [our holy mind] maketh intercession [for us—omitted by oldest MSS] with groanings which cannot be uttered [in words]. And he that searcheth the hearts [God] knoweth what is the mind [Greek *phronema*—inclination] of [our] spirit, because he [or it—our spirit] maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

In other words, God is pleased to accept the heart desires of his people, both in prayer and in service, notwithstanding the imperfection of their flesh—their earthen vessels. And he does accept these heart desires. How fortunate for us, in our ignorance and weakness, that our heavenly Father accepts the intentions of our hearts instead of our words; for frequently his people have seriously asked amiss! We think of this whenever we hear God’s people pray that God would baptize them with the holy Spirit and with fire. The prayer is offered in a good conscience, and with a desire for a blessing only; but not understanding the passage of scripture which he quotes, the petitioner really asks for a blessing to be followed by a curse. The prediction that Christ would baptize with the holy Spirit and with fire was made by John the baptizer. The blessing portion of this came upon the waiting Church, at Pentecost, and subsequently upon all the faithful “remnant” of Israel, but its latter feature was fulfilled upon the rejected Jewish nation—in the baptism of fire, destruction, trouble, which wholly destroyed their polity in the year A.D. 70. But very graciously God does not answer his people’s prayers according to their asking, but according to the intentions of the petitioner—he granting them blessing only.

Some have had the experience of being overtaken in a fault, and trapped by the Adversary through some weakness of the fallen human nature: they felt almost disheartened as they approached the throne of the heavenly grace in prayer. They had no words for utterance, but merely groaned in spirit to God, “**being burdened.**” But the heavenly Father did not insist that they must formulate the petition in exactly proper language before he would hear them: instead he graciously answered their heart’s desires, the

unexpressed groans of their heart, which sought his forgiveness, his blessing and comfort. He answered the unuttered prayers, granted strength and blessing, with a blessed realization of forgiveness.

This is the Apostle's argument in this whole connection, and it will be observed that he sums up the argument by saying, "What shall we say then? [In view of the fact that God has made every arrangement on our behalf, ignoring our weaknesses and imperfections, which are contrary to

our wills, and not reckoning them as our deeds—and ignoring the lameness of our petitions, and our inability to express our desire, and on the contrary, making arrangements to bless us according to the spirit of our minds, as we are unable even to give utterance to our groans in our imperfect prayers, we will conclude—] If God be [thus] for us, who can be against us?"  
Verse 31