

MY OWN PERSONAL HOLDFAST

NO. 2069

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*“My God will hear me.”
Micah 7:7.*

OBSERVE that the Prophet has no sort of doubt. He insinuates no “if” or “an” or “but” or “perhaps,” but he says it straight out as a fact of which he is infallibly convinced—“My God will hear me.” What a blessed thing it is that the child of God knows and feels that this is true! Wherever he may fail, he will succeed at the Throne! If all other friendly ears are closed, his Friend of friends will hear him. Lose your confidence in the power of prayer and I know not what remains for you. If you are obliged to say, “My God will *not* hear me”—if that is the language of your unbelieving spirit—your Achilles tendon is cut and you cannot stand with confidence, much less run with delight.

With faith in prayer you have Heaven's infinite treasures at your disposal. But if you ask waveringly, you find that warning true, “He that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.” You must know with absolute certainty that God is and that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, or you will not be among those whom the Father seeks to worship Him. To be “strong in the Lord and in the power of His might” you must be strong upon your knees. “My God will hear me” is a sentence which you must know by heart.

It is a very wide question, that of God's hearing the prayers of men, and I should need a considerable time to describe particularly whose prayers the Lord will hear and what prayers He will hear and how it is true that He always hears, whatever His answer may be. But it will be a far better thing if, without debate, you can personally say for yourself, “Let others say what they will and judge what they please in this matter, I am persuaded by the Spirit of all Grace that my God will hear me.” If, so far as you yourself are concerned, you have this assurance, your own feet are upon a rock and you need not trouble about the sand and the mire.

This assurance, “My God will hear me,” is better than all the aid of mortal men and a greater wealth than the mines of India could afford you. I desire to preach, not only from these few words but also from their connection. The position of the text in the Sacred Book is highly instructive. May the Author of the Book make it so at this time!

I. I shall try to speak, in the first place, UPON THE RESULTS OF CONFIDENCE IN PRAYER IN BELIEVERS. When they can truly say, “My God will hear me,” the best consequences will come of it. Think of what will happen to them.

To begin with, in the worst of times God is their resort. In reading the chapter we saw that the times were desperate. The nation had become rotten throughout. “The good man is perished out of the earth: and there is none upright among men.” Justice was openly sold. Bribes were unblushingly taken and even openly demanded. In business all were dishonest. “The best of them is as a briar: the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge.” In domestic life there was no trusting friend, or husband, or wife, or son, or daughter.

The whole land had become corrupt. And as the Prophet surveyed it with tears in his eyes, he could see nothing worth the looking upon, and he cried, “Therefore I will look unto the Lord. I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.” His conviction that God would hear his prayer was his last comfort and it led him to close his eyes upon the spectacle of universal crime and look heavenward and heavenward only. When you have faith in prayer you will, in the cloudy and dark day, find consolation in looking to God who is the blessed sun from whom a brighter day will come.

Instead of being overcome by doubt you will gather up your faith, which otherwise might have been scattered among men, and you will place the whole of it upon God, who still remains true and faithful and holy. Men who have confidence in prayer have perpetual errands at the Throne, for they have abundant trials in the wickedness of men and they look for

more abundant mercies from the Lord. If they are in straitened circumstances they run to their Father in Heaven to ask that their daily bread may be given them. And if they enjoy plenty, with equal earnestness they pray that their abundance may be sanctified.

In any case, the Believer has abundant reasons for praying without ceasing. If a man had no confidence in prayer, would he thus resort to God in the worst of times and in the best of times? Would he seek deliverance from evil things and the consecration of good things? I think not. We resort to God because He bids us do so. We accept His method of granting blessings and prayer because we conceive prayer to be a part of the Divine Decree. The same God that ordains to give a certain blessing has also ordained that we shall pray for it. We do not expect to change the will of God but we believe our prayer to be a part of His will. It is not contrary to predestination for us to pray—it is itself a part of it.

As coming events cast their shadows, so does a coming mercy cast upon our heart a desire to pray. That I should pray is as much the Divine purpose as that the asked-for blessing should come to me. The Word of the Lord concerning the Believer is, “He shall call upon Me and I will answer Him.” God’s Providence is thus like a two-leaved gate. Our prayer, and God’s act, work upon the one hinge of the eternal purpose.

Now, if a man had no confidence in prayer, he would not look to God in dark times. He would be searching everywhere else for some lower light which might be available. If the Lord’s ear is too high, or He Himself is too great, or too remote for our requests to be of any avail, let us go to the *creature*. We must draw from the cistern if we cannot get at the fountain. What else remains? If an appeal to the highest and the best is absurd, does not common sense direct us to abandon it and trust in those who will hear us? I know that Scripture says, “Cursed is he that trusts in man and makes flesh his arm.” And this makes me feel that there must be a power in trusting in God.

Brethren, we are in an evil case, if, indeed, prayer is a mere form. But we need not fall into despair for we are not in such a condition. We need not run to saints, or angels, or friends, for verily, there *is* a God that hears prayer. Saints in all ages have turned their eyes to the Lord, their God, and I cannot conceive of them as fools. And yet, what more foolish than to look to a God who cannot see the glance of faith, nor hear the voice of supplication, nor in any way practically sympathize with the trust of His worshippers? Beloved, we look to the Lord at all times, because He that made the eye, can certainly see—and He that made the ear, can assuredly hear—and He that has commanded us to pray, will not fail to regard us. I, for one, for this reason, solemnly declare, “Therefore will I look unto the Lord.”

Another blessing which we derive from the certainty that God hears our prayer is that our eyes are led to look to God with hope. Not only do we turn to the Lord because we have no other resort but because we look to Him with joyful expectation. The Prophet says, “Therefore will I look unto the Lord. I will wait for the God of my salvation.” We view our God, not as a forlorn hope, but as the sure source of salvation to us. Many things are taken from us, but hope remains forever in the box which is not that of Pandora but of Jehovah. It is one of the best of our blessings that we, “through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope.” Our God is called “the God of hope.” We have hope that God will hear because He is Jehovah, the I AM. We know that He is and that He is equal to all emergencies, be they what they may. Even in death we say, “Now, Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in You.”

When we cannot see any other grounds for hope, we find good anchor-hold in the promise of the Lord, so that we cry, “My soul, wait only upon God. For my expectation is from Him.” It is He that has so often wrought deliverances for His praying people—we look for His mercy as men that watch for the morning. It is no small thing to keep hope alive in the human bosom—it is the direst of calamities when it dies out. From where does the suicide plunge into the dark wave, or the crimson gash that lets out a soul? Are not those gates of grim death opened as hope flies away? From where is that listlessness, that lethargy, that want of energy, that letting things drift to ruin? It is because hope has quit the helm and the ship is drawn upon the rocks. Kill hope in a man, and you have killed the man’s best self. The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity. But “a wounded spirit who can bear?”

Now, a firm conviction that God will hear prayer is a buoy to a sinking hope. He will not give all up who believes that his God will hear him. He cannot be driven to desperation while the Mercy Seat continues a source of hope and he remains in possession of his reason. You will hear him argue with himself, “Why are you cast down, O my Soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God—for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.” Surely, these are two choice blessings—to be enabled to look always to God and to look towards Him evermore with hope.

But we go further. A full conviction of the certainty that God will hear our prayers helps us to wait with patience. “I will wait for the God of my salvation.” He may not answer me today but He will hear me. Tomorrow may not bring me the expected deliverance but it will come. Though the vision tarry, I will wait for it. For it shall come and according to the reckoning of infinite wisdom it really will not tarry. Great is the punctuality of the living God. He never is before His time but He never is behind.

He is not only present when we need Him but we find Him, “a very present help in trouble.” We find it good to wait because we have no fear of being disappointed. A full conviction that prayer shall be heard makes us sit even with Job on the dunghill and bless the Lord who has taken away what before He gave. It makes us strengthen ourselves on the bed of languishing and sing with Jacob, “I have waited for Your salvation, O Lord.” It enables us with David to encourage ourselves in the Lord amid the ashes of our Ziklag. It helps us to go with Jeremiah into the low dungeon and yet to say, “The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeks Him.”

It enables us to hope with Jonah, when all hopes seem gone, till we at length bear witness, “Out of the belly of Hell cried I and You heard my voice.” In all difficulties and under all opposition, we shall be able to endure with patience the will of the Lord if we remain firm in the assurance that prayer is heard of the Lord. I often repeat Ralph Erskine’s ditty—

*“I’m heard when answered, soon or late,
Yes, heard when I no answer get;
I’m kindly answered when refused,
And treated well when harshly used.”*

It is so. No good thing will the Lord withhold from them that walk uprightly. And therefore, if an answer to prayer is withheld, it is because what we sought was not for our real good. A flat denial in form may be a full grant in essence since all our prayers are comprehended in, “Your will be done.” And this is the standing corrective for all that we ask amiss. If, then, in prayer we do not have our will of God in one way, yet we shall have it in another. For we evermore, in the inmost depths of our soul, are praying, “Nevertheless, not as I will but as You will.”

The Lord will either give us what we ask, or do some better thing for us. Believe in prayer with a tenacity that nothing can remove. Stand to it that He does hear you and be not staggered. Hope against hope and wait to the uttermost. Do not have a pretended and false faith in it but let the solid, solemn, immovable conviction of your inmost soul be, “My God will hear me.”

If you now pass on to the verse that follows the text, you will get another series of thoughts, showing the result of an assured conviction that God hears prayer. Observe that it gives us an answer to our enemies. “Rejoice not against me, O my enemy: my God will hear me.” The foe has seen me fall and he has hastened to set his foot upon me. But I do not lie there in despair, surrendering myself to be destroyed by him, for “My God will hear me.” How bravely can we deride derision and pour scorning upon the scorers, even when they are in their glory, when we firmly believe that the Lord hears prayer!

They reckon that we are defeated, that we have no one to plead our cause, that we shall never be heard of again and they have very ingenious ways of telling us these cruel persuasions of theirs. We answer them by declaring boldly that our heavenly Father has heard our cries and that, before long, He will make this clear even to our foes. “Then my enemy shall see it and shame shall cover her which said unto me, ‘Where is the Lord your God?’ ”

We fight a waiting battle. Fabius saved Rome by waiting and we, also, are saved by the hope which waits upon the Lord and bides the time of the faithful promise. The saint is no Caesar, who boastfully writes, “Veni, vidi, vici.” His dispatches are written with the pen of patience and here is one of them, “I wait for the Lord, my soul does wait and in His Word do I hope.” We are of the tribe of Gad, of whom it is written, “A troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last.” Cheering is that promise—“Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholds him with His hand.”

Our adversaries had better not laugh till the affair is over. We have yet a weapon in reserve which we have not done with yet. That weapon is prayer. We answer their shouts of victory with this one sentence, “My God will hear me.” The tables will yet be turned, the trampler shall be trampled on and captivity itself led captive. We may have to wait long before the Lord takes up the quarrel of His Covenant, but He will avenge His own elect which cry day and night unto

Him, though He bear long with them. As for me, my heart is quiet beneath the contumely which comes of defending the Lord's Truth, for He will justify me before long.

And if He should not do so speedily, yet He will do it ultimately—yes, I am happy to wait even till after death, for I know that my Justifier lives and that, though after my skin worms devour this body, yet shall my Lord vindicate me and all others who have been faithful to His Truth. But where would be our patience under defeat? Where our answer to the adversary, if we were not sure that, beyond all doubt, God will hear prayer? We have left our case in His hands and now we are unmoved by sarcasm and ridicule, for our cause is safe in the keeping of the Eternal. Sneer still, you philosophic doubter, “My God will hear me.”

Again, our confidence in a prayer-hearing God sustains us with the bright prospect of rising when we are down. What says the Prophet? “Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise.” What if I have slipped? What if, through pressure of pain and sorrow, my spirits have sunk within me? What if I am a broken and crushed man? Yet I can pray and I do pray and my God will hear me. Therefore I shall arise again. Oh, blessed thought! The Christian may fall very low but underneath him are the everlasting arms. Since those arms are underneath, they will stay the fall and lift us up from it. We shall arise.

How high that rising who can tell? Even though we fall into the grave, blessed be God, we can fall no lower. And then comes the rising from among the dead, the rising to the Throne. It makes my spirit leap within me to think how this conviction that God hears prayer begets in us the joyful certainty that we cannot be left in the dust but we must arise and shake ourselves and put on our beautiful array. The God that has promised to hear us shall bring us again from Bathan—yes, He shall bring us up again from the depths of the sea. Our downcastings are temporary. Our uprisings are eternal. We shall return with singing and everlasting joy shall be upon our heads. Faith sets us praying and praying sets all Heaven at work to draw us out of the pit and set us on high.

A firm conviction that the Lord hears prayer gives the soul confidence that light will come to it. The Prophet says, “When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.” This delightful expectation springs out of that little word, “My God will hear me.” If I am plunged in darkness I shall still pray. And as the Lord will hear me, He will give me light. Prayer lights candles where there are none. The moaning of oppressed Israel, though they were scarcely prayers, yet ended the long darkness of their Egyptian bondage. Peter lies in the dark, bound with chains. But the Church is praying for him in Mrs. Mark's house and suddenly a light shines in the dungeon!

An angel awakens him with a touch on the side and leads him out into the street to his own company. My God—my Light. It cannot be that a Christian should be in the dark and not have his God with him. For if his God is with him it must be light round about him. Joy and comfort must spring up in the most barren misery if we know how to pray—the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose, if the feet of supplication touch it. They said that where the Tartar's foot fell the grass was withered. But we may say that where the Believer's knee touches all is made fruitful. God keep us in this conviction.

I say again, if this goes, all goes—if there is no more power in prayer, religion is either null and void, or a mere piece of fanaticism, or a juggle of priest craft. If God's answering prayer is but an idle daydream, where are we? Poor lone children crying in the dark to a Father who cannot hear us? Poor children apt to be entangled in the terrible machinery of events and to be whirled round and crushed by it, since no fatherly hand will be stretched out to rescue us? Mungo Park, in the desert, was refreshed by the sight of a bit of moss because it told him that God was near.

But all this is an error according to the modern theory that God either may not, cannot, or will not interpose in answer to His children's cry. The reign of Law is proclaimed but the Law-giver is pushed back beyond our reach. We call but He does not hear—none but old-fashioned bigots can imagine that He does. Or if perhaps He hears, it is a still greater chance that He will not answer—so they say. If prayer seems to be answered it is a mere coincidence, a happy accident which pleases the pious mind. I am sick of repeating such cruel talk. Brothers and Sisters, we know better. We are as sure of the Law that our God hears prayer—we are each one personally as sure that “my God will hear me,” as we are sure that the law of gravitation binds matter in its place.

We have a personal Providence, a personal God and a personal God listening to our prayers. And we are persuaded, therefore, that all things must work together for good and we must come out of the darkness—but even in the darkness the Lord shall be a light about us. This supports our spirits under the greatest pressure and gives us songs in the night.

All those benefits I have spoken of are the results of holding firmly to the doctrine of effectual prayer. And to us most excellent results they are.

II. And from this I pass on, secondly, to notice THE REASON FOR THE GREAT CONFIDENCE WHICH BELIEVERS EXHIBIT IN THE MATTER OF PRAYER. They speak not without reason when they say, “My God will hear me.” Why do we believe thus?

We believe it first and mainly, because of the faithful Promiser. The character of the Lord God, who has promised to answer prayer, the truthfulness of the Lord Jesus, who has said, “If you shall ask anything in My name I will do it,” and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit who incites the prayer—in a word, the Character of God Himself constrains us to rely upon His word without a doubt. It is declared, over and over, in the inspired Scriptures of Truth, that “He that seeks finds. And to him that knocks it shall be opened.”

We have the command, “Ask and it shall be given you.” We are told that, “Men ought always to pray and not to faint.” We are assured that, “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” Yes, not only are we told this, but we have it set before us in actual instances, such as Elijah, Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel and multitudes of others. It is a matter of Covenant with God that He will hear His children’s prayers. “He shall call upon Me and I will answer him!” Is the Lord faithful? Is He true? Only let us get a reply to those two questions and the matter is settled.

Is He the same God as in former ages? Can He, will He, still keep His word as before? We have but one form of answer to these queries—He is Jehovah and He changes not. I had rather have one little promise in the corner of the Bible to support my faith than I would have all the philosophies of scientific men to sustain my opinion. The history of philosophy is in brief the history of fools. All the sets of philosophers that have yet lived have been more successful in contradicting those that came before them than in anything else. It is well when the children of Ammon and Moab stand up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir utterly to slay and destroy them. The enemies of God are good at the business of destroying each other.

Within a few years the evolutionists will be cut in pieces by some new dreamers. The reigning philosophers of the present period have in them so much of the vitality of madness that they will be a perpetual subject of contempt. And I venture to prophesy that before my head shall lie in the grave there will hardly be a notable man left who will not have washed his hands of the present theory. That which is taught today for a certainty by savants will soon have been so disproved as to be trod down as the mire in the streets.

The Lord’s Truth lives and reigns but man’s inventions are but for an hour. I am no prophet, nor the son of a prophet. But as I have lived to see marvelous changes in the dogmas of philosophy—I expect to see still more. See how they have shifted. They used to tell us that the natural depravity of our race was a myth—they scouted the idea that we were born in sin and declared with mimic sentiment that every dear babe was perfect. Now what do they tell us? Why, that if we do not inherit the original sin of Adam, or any other foregoing man, we have upon us the hereditary results of the transgressions of the primeval oysters, or other creatures, from which we have ascended or descended. We bear in our bodies, if not in our souls, the effects of all the tricks of the monkeys whose future was entailed upon us by evolution.

This nonsense is to be received by learned societies with patience and accepted by us with reverence, while the simple statements of Holy Writ are regarded as mythical or incredible. I only mention this folly for the sake of showing that the opponents of the Word of God constantly shift their positions, like quicksand at a river’s mouth. But they are equally dangerous, whatever position they occupy. In the announcement of heredity, philosophical thought has deprived itself of all power to object to the Biblical doctrine of original sin. This is of no consequence to us, who care nothing for their objections.

But it ought to be some sort of hint to them. According to modern thinkers, what is true on Monday may be false on Tuesday. And what is certain on Wednesday may be our duty to doubt on a Thursday and so on, world without end. Every change of the moon sees a change in the teaching of the new theology. A good stout hypothesis in the old times served a man for a hobbyhorse for twenty years. But nowadays their sorry jades hardly last twenty months. Said I not well that the smallest promise of God is worth more than all that ever has been taught, or ever shall be taught, by skeptical philosophers and speculative theologians?

Let God be true but every man a liar. Whatever may be the truth in science, God is true and on His promise we build our confidence. We will distrust the witness of all men and angels but we cannot, we dare not, distrust the Lord. I feel

ashamed to add anything to the first overwhelming reason for faith, for that is enough and more than enough. Yet since faith is so often weak, we may place beneath it another prop. We believe in the power of prayer because of our past experience. Certain of us could not say less than, "My God will hear me," for if we did we should be traitors to the witness of our lives.

I shall not turn this into an experience-meeting but, if I did, what testimonies we could produce to answered prayer! I will not even quote a selection from the many great and special answers which I have personally received. But all the saints of God are one in their testimony upon this point. I take leave to say that praying people are as a rule as honest and truth-speaking a people as those gentlemen who deny the virtue of prayer. Well, these men, myself among them, solemnly declare that God has heard and answered our prayers. And we do not say this in moments of fanaticism when we are worked up into a delirium of devotion but we assert it soberly, as a plain matter of fact.

If we were about to die we should assert this all the more earnestly. It is true to us as before God. Upon this statement, that God has heard and answered our prayers, we are prepared to speak as positively, solemnly and deliberately, as if we thought it right to call God to witness by an oath. We are not, therefore, prepared to have our witness summarily dismissed as of no value. We claim as men the right to be believed. At any rate, we shall hold to facts which we have ourselves experienced and to the truth which they prove. And if we are ridiculed for so doing, we shall bear it with equanimity. When the philosopher said that there was no such thing as matter, he who hurt his head against a post was convinced of the contrary.

And when another great theorist said that there was no such thing as mind, he who had been heart-broken with sorrow could not be converted to the opinion. It is hard to argue against our experience and consciousness. We are case-hardened. The Creole Proverb says, "When the mosquito tried to sting the alligator, he wasted his time." And the case is much the same when infidels deal with us. It would be needful to convince us that facts are not facts, that deliverances from trouble were not deliverances, that supplies of necessities were not supplies.

I am ready to disbelieve my eyes, for they have often deceived me. I am ready to discredit my ears, for they have misled me. But I cannot disbelieve my personal experience, especially when it does not consist of a few scattered incidents but of a chain of facts. The Lord has listened to my voice when I have cried to Him and this I know as certainly as I know that I have lived upon this earth. Therefore I believe that "my God will hear me" in the present and in the future.

Beloved, we are sure that God will hear us because we have towards God a sense of sonship. He is our Father and we know it. Hence we argue that if we, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto our children, He also will give to us what we need at His hands if we cry to Him. Concerning this I need not argue. Granted the fatherhood of God, He must hear prayer. Deny that He is your Father and I do not say that He will hear *you*.

Moreover, we believe in the power of believing prayer, because of the prevalence of our Intercessor. Jesus Christ Himself is pleading for us in the Presence of God. He has gone into Heaven on purpose that He might represent His people at the Throne of Grace and plead their cause. And we can never imagine that as our great High Priest, accepted of the Father, He pleads in vain. When we ask in His name and set His seal to our petitions, we must win our suit. We are bound to be as certain of this as of the continued life and boundless merit of our Lord. Our prayer is backed and endorsed by His adorable name and this makes it quite another thing than if it were the mere request of a sinful man. It must be heard. Jesus, when You take up my case, "my God will hear me."

Moreover, we have guidance in prayer, for the Holy Spirit teaches us how to pray. God Himself puts acceptable desires into our hearts and makes us to know what we should pray for as we ought. And surely such prayers cannot go unanswered. We pray to be helped to overcome sin. And this desire was implanted in us by the good Spirit—will it not be granted? We ask to be made holy and to be enabled to glorify God. Surely, God did not implant such desires in us to mock us by giving us aspirations which He never intended to fulfill! To make us hunger and thirst after blessings which He could not or would not give—would be to torment us before our time—and this we cannot impute to God.

The leading of the Spirit which induces us to pray is no dancing will-o'-the-wisp, uprising from the swamp of superstition conducting us to fanaticism. But it is a clear and sure light which has never been followed by any man without guiding him to peace and safety. Have any of you ever suffered injury by prayer? Did you ever rise from your knees a worse man for pleading with God? Did you ever go away from a company of faithful, pleading men, and feel that you were morally lowered by joining in their devotions? I am sure that you never did.

If anything has helped you to fight against sin and to bear the burdens of life, it has been this drawing near to God. Therefore, I urge you, by the holy effect of prayer, to believe it to be among the things honest and true. Such a holy thing, implanted in you by God Himself cannot be a weed which He will pluck up and fling over the garden wall in contempt. God has never taught us prayer that it might be an imposition upon our credulity and a sport for His supreme intelligence. Such a suggestion is plain blasphemy and we mention it with abhorrence. That blessed exercise in which I have a hallowing and elevating fellowship with the Eternal cannot be a failure. Assuredly—"My God will hear me."

III. I close with a third head. Let us now CONSIDER THE EXERCISE OF THIS CONFIDENCE IN PRAYER. I have shown you the results of this confidence and some few of the reasons for it. Now let us see where the exercise of this confidence leads us. What are we doing when we carry this assurance into action?

Our confidence that the Lord hears prayer is seen in our looking to Him first and foremost at all times. For our eternal salvation we look to God alone, accepting that Divine system in which, by water and by blood, we are saved from sin, through faith. Our confidence does not lie in our own resolves, or moral virtue, or spiritual attainments, but in Him to whom we cry in prayer, "Hold You me up and I shall be safe." We are glad of the aid of friends in smaller concerns. But even there our first resort is to our God in Heaven, for we each one feel this to be his chief defense—"My God will hear me."

This leads us also to make sure that God is ours. We live by appropriating our God to ourselves. We may, without terror, see our property lessen and our friends desert us and our dearest relatives pass away. But it would be horror, indeed, if we lost our God and could no longer say, "My God." Others may choose what they please as the object of their heart's chief choice but we will pay no homage of the soul to any but Jehovah. "this God is our God forever and ever." As another man's God I cannot rest in Him but as, "My God," I am assured that He will hear me. Thus, we are driven, by our confidence in prayer to grapple Him to our soul with hooks of steel. To say, "My God" is our Heaven below.

This also impels us really to pray. Since God will hear us, we will pray to Him and we do. Alas, we have many sins in reference to prayer. Our slackness in prayer and our unbelief as to prayer are crimes for which we ought to cover our faces with shame. But when we walk with God aright, when we keep His Commandments and abide in His love, then He gives us life, joy and power in prayer and then we become conscious of success at the Throne. That power being bestowed upon us, we come to pray as naturally as a child cries. We ought to have set times for private prayer. It is most healthful that we should. But I question whether our best prayers are not those which are quite irrespective of time and season.

When a man does not pray because it is seven o'clock in the morning but because he has a pressing need—when he does not pray because it is time to go to bed but because he feels drawn to speak with God, then he prays, indeed. When a man has a constant confidence in the prevalence of prayer he slips away from a trying business to seek guidance and support. The confident pleader, when he walks the street groaning in spirit, makes known his desire to the Most High. Perhaps Cheapside has been a Bethel to some of you and your shop has been a temple. The most living prayer bursts naturally from the swollen heart and does not come because of time.

I have heard of a minister who put in the margin of his manuscript sermons, "Cry here." And in another place, "Here lift up your eyes." It must be very dreadful preaching when the emotion is made to order. And the same is true of praying. The fear is that you should not really pray when the clock says, "Now pray." I do not think we can always keep the watch of the soul in exact time with the clock on the mantelpiece. Therefore I think that the most living prayer is that which comes by the movement of the Spirit of God just at that time when it is most of all required.

"Let us pray" is, however, a voice which is never unseasonable. When would it be unfit for such an exhortation to be given? When would it not be profitable to pray? The Lord is always willing. Therefore let us be always praying in one form or another. Let us pray no matter what may be the trial, no matter what the joy, no matter what the company. Pray without ceasing, because it is always true—"My God will hear me."

You know how it was said of a holy man as he walked the streets, "There goes the man that can have anything of God that he pleases to ask." This is the secret of a great life. Fail here and you fail everywhere. Prosper on the mount with your uplifted hands and Amalek in the valley is of no consequence. But how can we have this power if we have not the unquestioning confidence that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us? Brethren, to be strong and happy think about these words—"My God will hear me," till you can say them with your whole soul.

As for you, poor Souls, who cannot say, “My God,” shall I tell you that you may not pray? Far from it. If you have a desire to pray, encourage that desire. But mind that it is prayer and not a mere form. Let your heart go up to Him who says to you, “Seek you the Lord while He may be found.” Instead of telling you not to pray, I would direct you how to pray. You have need, first, to have a God to pray to, for till then you cannot say, “My God will hear me.”

God can only be yours in the saving sense by Christ’s being yours. Jesus says, “No man comes unto the Father but by Me.” God becomes our God by faith which appropriates Him as He is revealed in His Son Jesus Christ. Look to Jesus, for He is the Mercy Seat and so the way to God in prayer. The Gospel that we have preached to you is not, “Pray,” but, “Believe.” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.”

Then, being saved, you will be able to pray with assurance of prevailing. Come to God by the blood of Jesus and so shall a sinner’s prayer be heard. Prayer is the vital breath of every saved man even as faith is the life-blood of his soul. At this moment come to God by Jesus Christ. You are a sinner condemned by sin—Christ came into the world to save sinners—accept the Savior—trust your soul with Him and ask that, for His sake, you may have the free gift of eternal life. You are an empty, poor, naked and miserable sinner—take the Lord Jesus, in all His fullness and blessedness, to be yours forever and then the great God will bow His ear to you, even to you and you, too, shall be numbered with those who have power with God.

Here on this spot I charge you cry, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” Let that request be silently offered, even though you dare not lift your eye to Heaven. Come, Brethren, let us all offer it and then there shall come to each of us a justification far sweeter and larger than if we should stand aloof from sinners and say, “God, I thank You, that I am not as other men.” O my Lord, hear this, my prayer, that those who hear or read this sermon may be able to say, even as Your unworthy servant most boldly says, “My God will hear me.” Grant it, I pray You, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON

DEAR FRIENDS—Forgive once again the intrusion of personal matters. If I do not insert a short notice as to my health, many friends are lovingly anxious and much correspondence is brought upon me. Let me, therefore, say briefly, “All is well.” My only ailment is in the injured knee and this improves daily. It is very slow work but yet very encouraging. I can now walk a few yards.

I hoped to be in my pulpit on February 17th but I resolved also to let the healing of the knee be my guide. For it would almost break my heart if I were to reach home lame and be near my Tabernacle and in the cold and yet unable to get to my pulpit. Pressed by many anxious friends, both here and at home, I think I am only acting reasonably when I postpone my coming home for one more week. I hope to preach at the Tabernacle on February 24th, if the Lord wills.

I deeply feel the great kindness of my Brethren at the Tabernacle and elsewhere, who have been fearful that I might bring on mischief to myself by beginning too soon. There is common sense, also, in their advice. I have balanced this, as in the sight of God, with my own ardent desire to use every moment for the Lord. And in the end, asking Divine guidance, I have given the verdict as above.

May some up to now unreceived blessing come upon my Hearers and Readers through the sermons which are preached upon my return!

Yours, in Christian love,

C. H. SPURGEON.

MENTONE, January 31, 1889

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