

N. the Wise Sayings of George Müller

by A.T. Pierson

A.T. Pierson discusses the profound wisdom of George Müller, focusing on the care of the body, the importance of children's upbringing, and the necessity of spiritual integrity in Christian life.

Scripture: Psalm 119:105, Proverbs 28:13, 1 Corinthians 3:11, 1 Corinthians 9:24, Philippians 4:6, Hebrews 11:6, James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:7

Topics: "Faith And Prayer", "Holy Spirit"

Description

A.T. Pierson preaches about the importance of faith, prayer, and the Word of God in the Christian life, emphasizing the need for continual dependence on God and the power of earnest, believing prayer. He highlights the significance of seeking God's will, making restitution, and the connection between the believer's life on earth and the rewards in the world to come. Pierson also addresses the dangers of snares of Satan in prayer, the importance of humility, and the necessity of understanding the work of the Holy Spirit in the church.

Transcript

FEW who have not carefully read the Narrative of Mr. Müller and the subsequent Reports issued year by year, have any idea of the large amount of wisdom which there finds expression. We give here a few examples of the sagacious and spiritual counsels and utterances with which these pages abound.

THE BODY.

CARE OF THE BODY.

I find it a difficult thing, whilst caring for the body, not to neglect the soul. It seems to me much easier to go on altogether regardless of the body, in the service of the Lord, than to take care of the body, in the time of sickness, and not to neglect the soul, especially in an affliction like my present one, when the head allows but little reading or thinking.-- What a blessed prospect to be delivered from this wretched evil!

HABITS OF SLEEP.

My own experience has been, almost invariably, that if I have not the needful sleep, my spiritual enjoyment and strength is greatly affected by it. I judge it of great moment that the believer, in travelling, should seek as much as possible to refrain from travelling by night, or from travelling in such a way as that he is deprived of the needful night's rest; for if he does not, he will be unable with renewed bodily and mental

strength to give himself to prayer and meditation, and the reading of the Holy Scriptures, and he will surely feel the pernicious effects of this all the day long. There may occur cases when travelling by night cannot be avoided; but, if it can, though we should seem to lose time by it, and though it should cost more money, I would most affectionately and solemnly recommend refraining from night-travelling; for, in addition to drawing beyond measure upon our bodily strength, must be losers spiritually. The next thing I would advise with reference to travelling is, with all one's might seek morning by morning, before setting out, to take time for meditation and prayer, and reading the word of God; for although we are always exposed to temptation, yet are so especially in travelling. Travelling is one of devil's especial opportunities for tempting us. Think of that, dear fellow believers. Seek always to ascertain carefully the mind of God, before you begin anything; but so in particular before you go on a journey, so that you may be quite sure that it is the will of God that you should undertake that journey, lest you should needlessly expose yourself to one of the special opportunities of the devil ensnare you. So far from envying those who have a carriage and horses at their command, or an abundance of means, so that they are not hindered from travelling for want of means, let us who are not thus situated rather thank God that in this particular we are not exposed to the temptation of needing to be less careful in ascertaining the will of God before we set out on a journey.

CHILDREN.

CONVERSION OF CHILDREN.

As far as my experience goes, it appears to me that believers generally have expected far too little of present fruit upon their labours among children. There has been a hoping that the Lord some day or other would own the instruction which they give to children, and would answer at some time or other, though after many years only, the prayers which they offer up on their behalf. Now, while such passages as Proverbs xxii.6, Ecclesiastes xi.1, Galatians vi.9, 1 Cor. xv.58, give unto us assurance not merely respecting everything which we do for the Lord, in general, but also respecting bringing up children in the fear of the Lord, in particular, that our labour is not in vain in the Lord; yet we have to guard against abusing such passages, by thinking it a matter of little moment whether we see present fruit or not; but, on the contrary, we should give the Lord no rest till we see present fruit, and therefore, in persevering, yet submissive, prayer, we should make known our requests unto God. I add, as an encouragement to believers who labour among children, that during the last two years seventeen other young persons or children, have been received into fellowship, among us, and that I am looking out now for many more to be converted, and that not merely of the orphans, but of the Sunday and day-school children.

NEGLECT OF CHILDREN.

The power for good or evil that resides in a little child is great beyond all human calculation. A child rightly trained may be a world-wide blessing, with an influence reaching onward to eternal years. But a neglected or misdirected child may live to blight and blast mankind, and leave influences of evil which shall roll on in increasing volume till they plunge into the gulf of eternal perdition.

"A remarkable instance was related by Dr. Harris, of New York, at a recent meeting of the State Charities Aid Association. In a small village in a county on the upper Hudson, some seventy years ago, a young girl named 'Margaret' was sent adrift on the casual charity of the inhabitants. She became the mother of a long race of criminals and paupers, and her progeny has cursed the county ever since. The county records show two hundred of her descendants who have been criminals. In one single generation of her

unhappy line there were twenty children; of these, three died in infancy, and seventeen survived maturity. Of the seventeen, nine served in the State prison for high crimes an aggregate term of fifty years, while others were frequent inmates of jails and penitentiaries and almshouses. Of the nine hundred descendants, through six generations, from this unhappy girl who was left on the village streets and abandoned in her childhood, a great number have been idiots, imbeciles, drunk lunatics, paupers, and prostitutes: but two hundred of the more vigorous are on record as criminals. This neglected little child has thus cost the county authorities, in the effects she has transmitted, hundreds of thousands of dollars, in the expense and care of criminals and paupers, besides the untold damage she has inflicted on property and public morals."

TRAINING OF CHILDREN.

Seek to cherish in your children early the habit of being interested about the work of God, and about cases of need and distress, and use them too at suitable times, and under suitable circumstances, as your almoners, and you will reap fruit from doing so.

CHRISTIAN LIFE.

BEGINNING OF LIFE, ETC.

God alone can give spiritual life at the first, and keep it up in the soul afterwards.

CROSS-BEARING.

The Christian, like the bee, might suck honey out of every flower. I saw upon a snuffer-stand in bas-relief, "A heart, a cross under it, and roses under both."

The meaning obviously is this, that the heart which bears the cross for a time meets with roses afterwards.

KEEPING PROMISES.

It has been often mentioned to me, in various places, that brethren in business do not sufficiently attend to the keeping of promises, and I cannot therefore but entreat all who love our Lord Jesus, and who are engaged in a trade or business, to seek for His sake not to make any promises, except they have every reason to believe they shall be able to fulfil them, and therefore carefully to weigh all the circumstances, before making any engagement, lest they should fail in its accomplishment. It is even in these little ordinary affairs of life that may either bring much honour or dishonour to the Lord; and these are the things which every unbeliever can take notice of. Why should it be so often said, and sometimes with a measure of ground, or even much ground:

"Believers are bad servants, bad tradesmen, bad masters."

Surely it ought not to be true that we, who have power with God to obtain by prayer and faith all needful grace, wisdom, and skill, should be bad servants, bad tradesmen. bad masters.

THE LOT AND THE LOTTERY.

It is altogether wrong that I, a child of God, should have anything to do with so worldly a system as that of the lottery. But it was also unscriptural to go to the lot at all for the sake of ascertaining the Lord's mind,

and this I ground on the following reasons. We have neither a commandment of God for it, nor the example of Lord, nor that of the apostles, after the Holy Spirit had been given on the day of Pentecost.

1. We have many exhortations in the word of God to seek to know His mind by prayer and searching the Holy Scriptures, but no passage which exhorts us to use the lot.

2. The example of the apostles (Acts i.) in using the lot, in the choice of an apostle in the room of Judas Iscariot, is the only passage which can be brought in favour of the lot from the New Testament (and to the Old we have not to go, under dispensation, for the sake of ascertaining how we ought to live as disciples of Christ). Now concerning this circumstance we have to remember that the Spirit was not yet given (John vii.39; ch. xiv.16,17; ch. xvi.7,13) by whose teaching especially it is that we may know the mind of the Lord; and hence we find that, after the day of Pentecost, the lot was no more used, but the apostles gave themselves to prayer and fasting to ascertain how they ought to act.

NEW TASTES.

What a difference grace makes! There were few people perhaps, more passionately fond of travelling, and seeing fresh places, and new scenes, than myself; but now, since, by the grace of God, I have seen beauty in the Lord Jesus, I have lost my taste for these things... What a different thing, also, to travel in the service of the Lord Jesus, from what it is to travel in the service of the flesh!

OBEDIENCE.

Every instance of obedience, from right motives, strengthens us spiritually, whilst every act of disobedience weakens us.

SEPARATION UNTO GOD.

May the Lord grant that the eyes of many of His children may be opened, so that they may seek, in all spiritual things, to be separated from unbelievers (2 Cor. vi.14-18), and to do God's work according to God's mind!

SERVICE TO ONE'S GENERATION.

My business is, with all my might to serve my own generation; in doing so I shall best serve the next generation, should the Lord Jesus tarry... The longer I live, the more I am enabled to realize that I have but one life to live on earth, and that this one life is but a brief life, for sowing, in comparison with eternity, for reaping.

SURETY FOR DEBT.

How precious it is, even for this life, to act according to the word of God! This perfect revelation of His mind gives us directions for everything, even the most minute affairs of this life. It commands us,

"Be thou not one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts."

(Prov. xxii.26.)

The way in which Satan ensnares persons, to bring them into the net, and to bring trouble upon them by becoming sureties, is, that he seeks to represent the matter as if there were no danger connected with that

particular case, and that one might be sure one should never be called upon to pay the money; but the Lord, the faithful Friend, tells us in His own word that the only way in such a matter "to be sure" is "to hate suretyship." (Prov. xi.15.) The following points seem to me of solemn moment for consideration, if I were called upon to become surety for another:

1. What obliges the person, who wishes me to become surety for him, to need a surety? Is it really a good cause in which I am called upon to become surety? I do not remember ever to have met with a case in which in a plain, and godly, and in all respects scriptural matter such a thing occurred. There was generally some sin or other connected with it.
2. If I become surety, notwithstanding what the Lord has said to me in His word, am I in such a position that no one will be injured by my being called upon to fulfil the engagements of the person for whom I am going to be surety? In most instances this alone ought to keep one from it.
3. If still I become surety, the amount of money for which I become responsible must be so in my power that I am able to produce it whenever it is called for in order that the name of the Lord may not be dishonoured.
4. But if there be the possibility of having to fulfil the engagements of the person in whose stead I have to stand, is it the will of the Lord that I should spend my means in that way? Is it not rather His will that my means should be spent in another way?
5. How can I get over the plain word of the Lord, which is to the contrary, if the first four points could be satisfactorily settled?

CHURCH LIFE.

ASSEMBLY OF BELIEVERS.

It has been my own happy lot, during the last thirty-seven years, to become acquainted with hundreds of individuals, who were not inferior to apostolic Christians.

That the disciples of Jesus should meet together on the first day of the week for the breaking of bread, and that that should be their principal meeting, and that those, whether one or several, who are truly gifted by the Holy Spirit for service, be it for exhortation, or teaching, or rule, etc., are responsible to the Lord for the exercise of their gifts-- these are to me no matters of uncertainty, but points on which my soul, by grace, is established, through the revealed will of God.

FORMALISM.

I have often remarked the injurious effects of doing things because others did them, or because it was the custom, or because they were persuaded into acts of outward self-denial, or giving up things whilst the heart did not go along with it, and whilst the outward act was NOT the result of the inward powerful working of the Holy Ghost, and the happy entering into our fellowship with the Father and with the Son.

Everything that is a mere form, a mere habit and custom in divine things, is to be dreaded exceedingly: life, power, reality, this is what we have to aim after. Things should not result from without, but from within. The sort of clothes I wear, the kind of house I live in, the quality of the furniture I use, all such like things should not result from other persons doing so and so, or because it is customary among those brethren

with whom I associate to live in such and such a simple, inexpensive self-denying way; but whatever be done in these things, in the way of giving up, or self-denial, or deadness to the world, should result from the joy we have in God, from the knowledge of our being the children of God, from the entering into the preciousness of our future inheritance, etc. Far better that for the time being we stand still, and do not take the steps which we see others take, than that it is merely the force of example that leads us to do a thing, and afterwards it be regretted. Not that I mean in the least this to imply we should continue to live in luxury, self-indulgence, and the like, whilst others are in great need; but we should begin the thing in a right way, i.e., aim after the right state of heart; begin inwardly instead of outwardly. If otherwise, it will not last. We shall look back, or even get into a worse state than we were before. But oh, how different if joy in God leads us to any little act of self-denial. How gladly do we do it then! How great an honour then do we esteem it to be! How much does the heart then long to be able to do more for Him who has done so much for us! We are far then from looking down in proud self-complacency upon those who do not go as far as we do, but rather pray to the Lord that He would be pleased to help our dear brethren and sisters forward who may seem to us weak in any particular point; and we also are conscious to ourselves that if we have a little more light or strength with reference to one point, other brethren may have more light or grace in other respects.

HELPING ONE ANOTHER.

As to the importance of the children of God opening their hearts to each other, especially when they are getting in a cold state, or are under the power of a certain sin, or are in especial difficulty; I know from my own experience how often the snare of the devil has been broken when under the power of sin; how often the heart has been comforted when nigh to be overwhelmed; how often advice, and great perplexity, has been obtained,-- by opening my heart to a brother in whom I had confidence. We are children of the same family, and ought therefore to be helpers one of another.

INQUIRY MEETINGS.

1. Many persons, on account of timidity, would prefer coming at an appointed time to the vestry to converse with us, to calling on us in our own house.
2. The very fact of appointing a time for seeing people, to converse with them in private concerning the things of eternity, has brought some who, humanly speaking, never would have called on us under other circumstances; yea, it has brought even those who, though they thought they were concerned about the things of God, yet were completely ignorant; and thus we have had an opportunity of speaking to them.
3. These meetings have also been a great encouragement to ourselves in the work; for often, when we thought that such and such expositions of the Word had done no good at all, it was, through these meetings, found to be the reverse; and likewise, when our hands were hanging down, we have been afresh encouraged to go forward in the work of the Lord, and to continue sowing the seed in hope, by seeing at these meetings fresh cases in which the Lord had condescended to use us as instruments, particularly as in this way instances have sometimes occurred in which individuals have spoken to us about the benefit which they derived from our ministry, not only a few months before, but even as long as two, three, and four years before.

For the above reasons I would particularly recommend to other servants of Christ, especially to those who live in large towns, if they have not already introduced a similar plan, to consider whether it may not be well for them also to set apart such times for seeing inquirers. Those meetings, however, require much

prayer, to be enabled to speak aright, to all those who come, according to their different need; and one is led continually to feel that one is not sufficient of one's self for these things, but that our sufficiency can be alone of God. These meetings also have been by far the most wearing-out part of all our work, though at the same time the most refreshing.

PASTORAL VISITATION.

An unvisited church will sooner or later become an unhealthy church.

PEW-RENTS.

1. Pew-rents are, according to James ii.1-6, against the mind of the Lord, as, in general, the poor brother cannot have so good a seat as the rich.
2. A brother may gladly do something towards my support if left to his own time; but when the quarter is up, he has perhaps other expenses, and I do not know whether he pays his money grudgingly, and of necessity, or cheerfully; but God loveth a cheerful giver. Nay, I knew it to be a fact that sometimes it had not been convenient to individuals to pay the money, when it had been asked for by the brethren who collected it.
3. Though the Lord had been pleased to give me grace to be faithful, so that I had been enabled not to keep back the truth, when He had shown it to me; still I felt that the pew-rents were a snare to the servant of Christ. It was a temptation to me, at least for a few minutes, at the time when the Lord had stirred me up to pray and search the Word respecting the ordinance of baptism, because £30 of my salary was at stake if I should be baptized.

STATE CHURCHES.

All establishments, even because they are establishments, i.e., the world and the church mixed up together, not only contain in them the principles which necessarily must lead to departure from the word of God; but also, as long as they remain establishments, entirely preclude the acting throughout according to the Holy Scriptures.

FAITH.

ANXIETY.

Where Faith begins, anxiety ends;

Where anxiety begins, Faith ends.

Ponder these words of the Lord Jesus,

"Only believe."

As long as we are able to trust in God, holding fast in heart, that he is able and willing to help those who rest on the Lord Jesus for salvation, in all matters which are for His glory and their good, the heart remains calm and peaceful. It is only when we practically let go faith in His power or His love, that we lose our peace and become troubled. This very day I am in great trial in connection with the work in which I am engaged; yet my soul was calmed and quieted by the remembrance of God's power and love; and I said to

myself this morning:

"As David encouraged himself in Jehovah his God, when he returned to Ziklag, so will I encourage myself in God;"

and the result was peace of soul... It is the very time for faith to work, when sight ceases. The greater the difficulties, the easier for faith. As long as there remain certain natural prospects, faith does not get on even as easily (if I may say so), as when all natural prospects fail.

DEPENDENCE ON GOD.

Observe two things! We acted for God in delaying the public meetings and the publishing of the Report; but God's way leads always into trial, so far as sight and sense are concerned. Nature always will be tried in God's ways. The Lord was saying by this poverty,

"I will now see whether you truly lean upon me, and whether you truly look to me."

Of all the seasons that I had ever passed through since I had been living in this way, up to that time, I never knew any period in which my faith was tried so sharply, as during the four months from Dec. 12, 1841, to April 1, 1842. But observe further:

We might even now have altered our minds with respect to the public meetings and publishing the Report; for no one knew our determination, at this time, concerning the point. Nay, on the contrary, we knew with what delight very many children of God were looking forward to receive further accounts. But the Lord kept us steadfast to the conclusion, at which we had arrived under His guidance.

GIFT AND GRACE OF FAITH.

It pleased the Lord, I think, to give me in some cases something like the gift (not grace) of faith, so that unconditionally I could ask and look for an answer. The difference between the gift and the grace of faith seems to me this. According to the gift of faith I am able to do a thing, or believe that a thing will come to pass, the not doing of which, or the not believing of which would not be sin; according to the grace of faith I am able to do a thing, or believe that a thing will come to pass, respecting which I have the word of God as the ground to rest upon, and, therefore, the not doing it, or the not believing it would be sin. For instance, the gift of faith would be needed, to believe that a sick person should be restored again, though there is no human probability: for there is no promise to that effect; the grace of faith is needed to believe that the Lord will give me the necessities of life, if I first seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness: for there is a promise to that effect. (Matt. vi.33.)

SELF-WILL.

The natural mind is ever prone to reason, when we ought to believe; to be at work, when we ought to be quiet; to go our own way, when we ought steadily to walk on in God's ways, however trying to nature.

TRIALS OF FAITH.

The Lord gives faith, for the very purpose of trying it for the glory of His own name, and for the good of him who has it; and, by the very trial of our faith, we not only obtain blessing to our own souls, by becoming the better acquainted with God, if we hold fast our confidence in Him, but our faith is also, by the exercise, strengthened: and so it comes, that, if we walk with God in any measure of uprightness of heart, the trials

of faith will be greater and greater.

It is for the church's benefit that we are put in these straits; and if, therefore, in the hour of need, we were to take goods on credit, the first and primary object of the work would be completely frustrated, and no heart would be further strengthened to trust in God, nor would there be any longer that manifestation of the special and particular providence of God, which has hitherto been so abundantly shown through this work, even in the eyes of unbelievers, whereby they have been led to see that there is, after all, reality in the things of God, and many, through these printed accounts, have been truly converted.

For these reasons, then, we consider it our precious privilege, as heretofore, to continue to wait upon the Lord only, instead of taking goods on credit, or borrowing money from some kind friends, when we are in need. Nay, we purpose, as God shall give grace, to look to Him only, though morning after morning we should have nothing in hand for the work-- yea, though from meal to meal we should have to look to Him; being fully assured that He who is now (1845) in the tenth year feeding these many orphans, and who has never suffered them to want, and that He who is now (1845) in the twelfth year carrying on the other parts of the work, without any branch of it having had to be stopped for want of means, will do so for the future also.

And here I do desire in the deep consciousness of my natural helplessness and dependence upon the Lord to confess that through the grace of God my soul has been in peace, though day after day we have had to wait for our daily provisions upon the Lord; yea, though even from meal to meal we have been required to do this.

GIVING.

ASKING GIFTS, ETC.

It is not enough to obtain means for the work of God, but that these means should be obtained in God's way. To ask unbelievers for means is not God's way; to press even believers to give, is not God's way; but the duty and the privilege of being allowed to contribute to the work of God should be pointed out, and this should be followed up with earnest prayer, believing prayer, and will result in the desired end.

CLAIMS OF GOD.

It is true, the Gospel demands our All; but I fear that, in the general claim on All, we have shortened the claim on everything. We are not under law. True; but that is not to make our obedience less complete, or our giving less bountiful: rather, is it not, that after all claims of law are settled, the new nature finds its joy in doing more than the law requires? Let us abound in the work of the Lord more and more.

GIVING IN ADVERSITY.

At the end of the last century a very godly and liberal merchant in London was one day called on by a gentleman, to ask him for some money for a charitable object. The gentleman expected very little, having just heard that the merchant had sustained heavy loss from the wreck of some of his ships. Contrary, however, to expectation, he received about ten times as much as he had expected for his object. He was unable to refrain from expressing his surprise to the merchant, told him what he had heard, how he feared he should scarcely have received anything, and asked whether after all there was not a mistake about the shipwreck of the vessels. The merchant replied,

"It is quite true, I have sustained heavy loss, by these vessels being wrecked, but that is the very reason, why I give you so much; for I must make better use than ever of my stewardship, lest it should be entirely taken from me."

How have we to act if prosperity in our business, our trade, our profession, etc., should suddenly cease, notwithstanding our having given a considerable proportion of our means for the Lord's work? My reply is this:

"In the day of adversity consider."

It is the will of God that we should ponder our ways; that we should see whether there is any particular reason, why God has allowed this to befall us. In doing so, we may find, that we have too much looked on our prosperity as a matter of course, and have not sufficiently owned and recognized practically the hand of God in our success. Or it may be, while the Lord has been pleased to prosper us, we have spent too much on ourselves, and may have thus, though unintentionally, abused the blessing of God. I do not mean by this remark to bring any children of God into bondage, so that, with a scrupulous conscience, they should look at every penny, which they spend on themselves; this is not the will of God concerning us; and yet, on the other hand, there is verily such a thing as propriety or impropriety in our dress, our furniture, our table, our house, our establishment, and in the yearly amount we spend on ourselves and family.

GIVING AND HOARDING.

I have every reason to believe, that, had I begun to lay up, the Lord would have stopped the supplies, and thus, the ability of doing so was only apparent. Let no one profess to trust in God, and yet lay up for future wants, otherwise the Lord will first send him to the hoard he has amassed, before He can answer the prayer for more.

"There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth;

and there is that withholdeth more than is meet,

but it tendeth to poverty."

(Prov. xi.24.)

Notice here the word "more than is meet;" it is not said, withholdeth all; but "more than is meet," viz..., while he gives, it is so little, in comparison with what it might be, and ought to be, that it tendeth to poverty.

MOTIVES TO GIVING.

Believers should seek more and more to enter into the grace and love of God, in giving His only-begotten Son, and into the grace and love of the Lord Jesus, in giving Himself in our room, in order that, constrained by love and gratitude, they may be increasingly led, to surrender their bodily and mental strength, their time, gifts, talents, property, position in life, rank, and all they have and are to the Lord.

By this I do not mean, that they should give up their business, trade, or profession, and become preachers to the Lord; nor do I mean that they should take all their money and give it to the first beggar who asks for it; but that they should hold all they have and are, for the Lord, not as owners, but as stewards, and be willing, at His bidding, to use for Him, part or all, they have. However short the believer may fall, nothing less than this should be his aim.

STEWARDSHIP.

It is the Lord's order, that, in whatever way He is pleased to make us His stewards, whether as to temporal or spiritual things, if we are indeed acting as stewards and not as owners, He will make us stewards over more.

Even in this life, and as to temporal things, the Lord is pleased to repay those, who act for Him as stewards, and who contribute to His work or to the poor, as He may be pleased to prosper them. But how much greater is the spiritual blessing we receive, both in this life and in the world to come, if constrained by the love of Christ, we act as God's stewards, respecting that, with which He is pleased to intrust us!

SYSTEMATIC GIVING.

Only fix even the smallest amount you purpose to give of your income, and give this regularly; and as God is pleased to increase your light and grace, and is pleased to prosper you more, so give more. If you neglect an habitual giving, a regular giving, a giving from principle and upon scriptural ground, and leave it only to feeling and impulse, or particular arousing circumstances, you will certainly be a loser.

"A merchant in the United States said in answer to inquiries relative to his mode of giving,

'In consecrating my life anew to God, aware of the ensnaring influence of riches and the necessity of deciding on a plan of charity, before wealth should bias my judgment, I adopted the following system:

I decided to balance my accounts as nearly as I could every month, reserving such portion of profits as might appear adequate to cover probable losses, and to lay aside, by entry on a benevolent account, one tenth of the remaining profits, great or small, as a fund for benevolent expenditure, supporting myself and family on the remaining nine tenths. I further determined, that, if at any time my net profits, that is profits from which clerk-hire and store expenses had been deducted, should exceed five hundred dollars in a month, I would give 12 1/2 per cent.; if over seven hundred dollars, 15 per cent.; if over nine hundred dollars, 17 1/2 per cent.; if over thirteen hundred dollars, 22 1/2 per cent.-- thus increasing the proportion of the whole as God should prosper me, until at fifteen hundred dollars I should give 25 per cent, or 375 dollars a month. As capital was of the utmost importance to my success in business, I decided not to increase the foregoing scale until I had acquired a certain capital, after which I would give one quarter of all net profits, great or small, and, on the acquisition of another certain amount of capital, I decided to give half, and, on acquiring what I determined would be a full sufficiency of capital, then to give the whole of my net profits.

It is now several years since I adopted this plan, and under it I have acquired a handsome capital, and have been prospered beyond my most sanguine expectations. Although constantly giving, I have never yet touched the bottom of my fund, and have repeatedly been surprised to find what large drafts it would bear. True, during some months, I have encountered a salutary trial of faith, when this rule has led me to lay by the tenth while the remainder proved inadequate to my support; but the tide has soon turned, and with gratitude I have recognized a heavenly hand more than making good all past deficiencies."

The following deeply interesting particulars are recorded in the memoir of Mr. Cobb, a Boston merchant. At the age of twenty-three, Mr. Cobb drew up and subscribed the following remarkable document:

"By the grace of God I will never be worth more than 50,000 dollars. By the grace of God I will give one fourth of the net profits of my business to charitable and religious uses. If I am ever worth 20,000 dollars I

will give one half of my net profits; and if ever I am worth 30,000 dollars, I will give three fourths; and the whole after 50,000 dollars. So help me God, or give to a more faithful steward, and set me aside."

"To this covenant," says his memoir, "he adhered with conscientious fidelity."

He distributed the profits of his business with an increasing ratio, from year to year, till he reached the point which he had fixed as a limit to his property, and then gave to the cause of God all the money which he earned. At one time, finding that his property had increased beyond 50,000 dollars, he at once devoted the surplus 7,500 dollars.

"On his death-bed he said,

'by the grace of God-- nothing else-- by the grace of God I have been enabled, under the influence of these resolutions to give away more than 40,000 dollars. How good the Lord has been to me!'"

Mr. Cobb was also an active, humble, and devoted Christian, seeking the prosperity of feeble churches; labouring to promote the benevolent institutions of the day; punctual in his attendance at prayer meetings, and anxious to aid the inquiring sinner; watchful for the eternal interests of those under his charge; mild and amiable in his deportment; and, in the general tenor of his life and character an example of consistent piety.

His last sickness and death were peaceful, yea triumphant.

"It is a glorious thing," said he, "to die. I have been active and busy in the world-- I have enjoyed life as much as anyone-- God has prospered me-- I have everything to bind me here-- I am happy in my family-- I have property enough-- but how small and mean does this world appear on a sick-bed! Nothing can equal my enjoyment in the near view of heaven. My hope in Christ is worth infinitely more than all other things. The blood of Christ-- the blood of Christ-- none but Christ! Oh! how thankful I feel that God has provided a way that I may look forward with joy to another world, through His dear Son."

GOD.

APPROVAL OF GOD.

In the whole work we desire to stand with God, and not to depend upon the favourable or unfavourable judgment of the multitude.

CHASTISEMENTS OF GOD.

Our Heavenly Father never takes any earthly thing from His children except He means to give them something better instead.

The Lord, in His very love and faithfulness, will not, and cannot, let us go on in backsliding but He will visit us with stripes, to bring us back to Himself!

The Lord never lays more on us, in the way of chastisement, than our state of heart makes needful; so that whilst He smites with the one hand, He supports with the other.

If, as believers in the Lord. Jesus, we see that our Heavenly Father, on account of wrong steps, or a wrong state of heart, is dealing with us in the way of discipline or correction, we have to be grateful for it; for He is

acting thus towards us according to that selfsame love, which led Him not to spare His only begotten Son, but to deliver Him up for us; and our gratitude to Him is to be expressed in words, and even by deeds. We have to guard against practically despising the chastening of the Lord, though we may not do so in word, and against fainting under chastisement: since all is intended for blessing to us.

FAITHFULNESS OF GOD.

Perhaps you have said in your heart:

"How would it be; suppose the funds of the orphans were reduced to nothing, and those who are engaged in the work had nothing of their own to give, and a meal-time were to come, and you had no food for the children."

Thus indeed it may be, for our hearts are desperately wicked. If ever we should be so left to ourselves, as that either we depend no more upon the living God, or that "we regard iniquity in our hearts,"

then such a state of things, we have reason to believe, would occur. But so long as we shall be enabled to trust in the Living God, and so long as, though falling short in every way of what we might be, and ought to be, we are at least kept from living in sin, such a state of things cannot occur.

The Lord, to show His continued care over us, raises up new helpers. They that trust in the Lord shall never be confounded! Some who helped for a while may fall asleep in Jesus; others may grow cold in the service of the Lord; others may be as desirous as ever to help, but have no longer the means; others may have both a willing heart to help, and have also the means, but may see it the Lord's will to lay them out in another way;-- and thus, from one cause or another, were we to lean upon man, we should surely be confounded; but, in leaning upon the living God alone, we are BEYOND disappointment, and BEYOND being forsaken because of death, or want of means, or want of love, or because of the claims of other work. How precious to have learned in any measure to stand with God alone in the world, and yet to be happy, and to know that surely no good thing shall be withheld from us whilst we walk uprightly!

PARTNERSHIP WITH GOD.

A brother, who is in about the same state in which he was eight years ago, has very little enjoyment, and makes no progress in the things of God. The reason is, that, against his conscience, he remains in a calling, which is opposed to the profession of a believer. We are exhorted in Scripture to abide in our calling; but only if we can abide in it "with God." (1 Cor. vii.24.)

POWER OF GOD.

There is a worldly proverb, dear Christian reader, with which we are all familiar, it is this,

"Where there is a will there is a way."

If this is the proverb of those who know not God, how much more should believers in the Lord Jesus, who have power with God, say:

"Where there is a will there is a way."

TRUST IN GOD

Only let it be trust in God, not in man, not in circumstances, not in any of your own exertions, but real trust in God, and you will be helped in your various necessities... Not in circumstances, not in natural prospects, not in former donors, but solely in God. This is just that which brings the blessing. If we say we trust in Him, but in reality do not, then God, taking us at our word, lets us see that we do not really confide in Him; and hence failure arises. On the other hand, if our trust in the Lord is real, help will surely come.

"According unto thy faith be it unto thee."

It is a source of deep sorrow to me, that, notwithstanding my having so many times before referred to this point, thereby to encourage believers in the Lord Jesus, to roll all their cares upon God, and to trust in Him at all times, it is yet, by so many, put down to mere natural causes, that I am helped; as if the Living God were no more the Living God, and as if in former ages answers to prayer might have been expected, but that in the nineteenth century they must not be looked for.

THE WILL OF GOD.

How important it is to ascertain the will of God, before we undertake anything, because we are then not only blessed in our own souls, but also the work of our hands will prosper.

Just in as many points as we are acting according to the mind of God, in so many are we blessed and made a blessing. Our manner of living is according to the mind of the Lord, for He delights in seeing His children thus come to Him (Matt. vi); and therefore, though I am weak and erring in many points, yet He blesses me in this particular.

First of all, to see well to it, that the work in which he desires to be engaged is God's work;

secondly, that he is the person to be engaged in this work;

thirdly, that God's time is come, when he should do this work;

and then to be assured, that, if he seeks God's help in His own appointed way, He will not fail him.

We have ever found it thus, and expect to find it thus, on the ground of the promises of God, to the end of our course.

1. Be slow to take new steps in the Lord's service, or in your business, or in your families. Weigh everything well; weigh all in the light of the Holy Scriptures, and in the fear of God.
2. Seek to have no will of your own, in order to ascertain the mind of God, regarding any steps you propose to take, so that you can honestly say, you are willing to do the will of God, if He will only please to instruct you.
3. But when you have found out what the will of God is, seek for His help, and seek it earnestly, perseveringly, patiently, believingly, and expectingly: and you will surely, in His own time and way, obtain it.

We have not to rush forward in self-will and say, I will do the work, and I will trust the Lord for means, this cannot be real trust, it is the counterfeit of faith, it is presumption; and though God, in great pity and mercy, may even help us finally out of debt; yet does this, on no account, prove that we were right in going forward before His time was come. We ought, rather, under such circumstances to say to ourselves:

"Am I indeed doing the work of God?"

And if so, I may not be the person to do it; or if I am the person, His time may not yet be come for me to go forward; it may be His good pleasure to exercise my faith and patience. I ought, therefore, quietly to wait His time; for when it is come, God will help. Acting on this principle brings blessing.

To ascertain the Lord's will we ought to use scriptural means. Prayer, the word of God, and His Spirit should be united together. We should go to the Lord repeatedly in prayer, and ask Him to teach us by His Spirit through His word. I say by His Spirit through His word. For if we should think that His Spirit led us to do so and so, because certain facts are so and so, and yet His word is opposed to the step which we are going to take, we should be deceiving ourselves. No situation, no business will be given to me by God, in which I have not time enough to care about my soul. Therefore, however outward circumstances may appear, it can only be considered as permitted of God, to prove the genuineness of my love, faith, and obedience, but by no means as the leading of His providence to induce me to act contrary to His revealed will.

MARRIAGE.

To enter upon the marriage union is one of the most deeply important events of life. It cannot be too prayerfully treated. Our happiness, our usefulness, our living for God or for ourselves afterwards, are often most intimately connected with our choice. Therefore, in the most prayerful manner, this choice should be made. Neither beauty, nor age, nor money, nor mental powers, should be that which prompts the decision; but

1st, Much waiting upon God for guidance should be used;

2nd, A hearty purpose to be willing to be guided by Him should be aimed after;

3rd, True godliness without a shadow of doubt, should be the first and absolutely needful qualification, to a Christian, with regard to a companion for life.

In addition to this, however, it ought to be, at the same time, calmly and patiently weighed, whether, in other respects, there is a suitableness. For instance, for an educated man to choose an entirely uneducated woman, is unwise; for however much on his part love might be willing to cover the defect, it will work very unhappily with regard to the children.

PRAYER.

ANSWERS TO PRAYER.

I myself have for twenty-nine years been waiting for an answer to prayer concerning a certain spiritual blessing. Day by day have I been enabled to continue in prayer for this blessing. At home and abroad, in this country and in foreign lands, in health and in sickness, however much occupied, I have been enabled, day by day, by God's help, to bring this matter before Him; and still I have not the full answer yet. Nevertheless, I look for it. I expect it confidently. The very fact that day after day, and year after year, for twenty-nine years, the Lord has enabled me to continue, patiently, believingly, to wait on Him for the blessing, still further encourages me to wait on; and so fully am I assured that God hears me about this matter, that I have often been enabled to praise Him beforehand for the full answer, which I shall ultimately receive to my prayers on this subject. Thus, you see, dear reader, that while I have hundreds, yes,

thousands of answers, year by year, I have also, like yourself and other believers, the trial of faith concerning certain matters.

ANXIETY AVOIDED BY PRAYER.

Though all believers in the Lord Jesus are not called upon to establish orphan houses, schools for poor children, etc., and trust in God for means; yet all believers, according to the will of God concerning them in Christ Jesus, may cast, and ought to cast, all their care upon Him who careth for them, and need not be anxiously concerned about anything, as is plainly to be seen from 1 Peter v.7; Philippians iv.6; Matthew vi.25-34.

My Lord is not limited; He can again supply; He knows that this present case has been sent to me; and thus, this way of living, so far from leading to anxiety, as it regards possible future want, is rather the means of keeping from it... This way of living has often been the means of reviving the work of grace in my heart, when I have been getting cold; and it also has been the means of bringing me back again to the Lord, after I have been backsliding. For it will not do,-- it is not possible, to live in sin, and at the same time, by communion with God, to draw down from heaven everything one needs for the life that now is... Answer to prayer, obtained in this way, has been the means of quickening my soul, and filling me with much joy.

I met at a brother's house with several believers, when a sister said that she had often thought about the care and burden I must have on my mind, as it regards obtaining the necessary supplies for so many persons. As this may not be a solitary instance, I would state that, by the grace of God, this is no cause of anxiety to me. The children I have years ago cast upon the Lord. The whole work is His, and it becomes me to be without carefulness. In whatever points I am lacking, in this point I am able by the grace of God, to roll the burden upon my heavenly Father. Though now (July 1845) for about seven years our funds have been so exhausted, that it has been comparatively a rare case that there have been means in hand to meet the necessities of the orphans for three days together; yet have I been only once tried in spirit, and that was on Sept. 18, 1838, when for the first time the Lord seemed not to regard our prayer. But when He did send help at that time, and I saw that it was only for the trial of our faith, and not because He had forsaken the work that we were brought so low, my soul was so strengthened and encouraged, that I have not only not been allowed to distrust the Lord since that time, but I have not even been cast down when in the deepest poverty. Nevertheless, in this respect also am I now, as much as ever, dependent on the Lord; and I earnestly beseech for myself and my fellow-labourers the prayers of all those, to whom the glory of God is dear. How great would be the dishonour to the name of God, if we, who have so publicly made our boast in Him, should so fall as to act in these very points as the world does! Help us, then, brethren, with your prayers, that we may trust in God to the end. We can expect nothing but that our faith will yet be tried, and it may be more than ever; and we shall fall, if the Lord does not uphold us.

BORROWING AND PRAYING.

As regards borrowing money, I have considered that there is no ground to go away from the door of the Lord to that of a believer, so long as He is willing to supply our need.

COMMUNION WITH GOD IN PRAYER.

How truly precious it is that every one who rests alone upon the Lord Jesus for salvation, has in the living God a father, to whom he may fully unbosom himself concerning the most minute affairs of his life, and concerning everything that lies upon his heart! Dear reader, do you know the living God? Is He, in Jesus,

your Father? Be assured that Christianity is something more than forms and creeds and ceremonies: there is life, and power, and reality, in our holy faith. If you never yet have known this, then come and taste for yourself. I beseech you affectionately to meditate and pray over the following verses: John iii.16; Rom. x.9,10; acts x.43; 1 John v.1.

CONDITIONS OF PRAYER.

Go for yourself, with all your temporal and spiritual wants, to the Lord. Bring also the necessities of your friends and relatives to the Lord. Only make the trial, and you will perceive how able and willing He is to help you. Should you, however, not at once obtain answers to your prayers, be not discouraged; but continue patiently, believingly, perseveringly to wait upon God: and as assuredly as that which you ask would be for your real good, and therefore for the honour of the Lord; and as assuredly as you ask it solely on the ground of the worthiness of our Lord Jesus, so assuredly you will at last obtain the blessing. I myself have had to wait upon God concerning certain matters for years, before I obtained answers to my prayers; but at last they came. At this very time, I have still to renew my requests daily before God, respecting a certain blessing for which I have besought Him for eleven years and a half, and which I have as yet obtained only in part, but concerning which I have no doubt that the full blessing will be granted in the end...

The great point is, that we ask only for that which it would be for the glory of God to give to us; for that, and that alone, can be for our real good. But it is not enough that the thing for which we ask God be for His honour and glory, but we must

secondly ask it in the name of the Lord Jesus, viz., expect it only on the ground of His merits and worthiness.

Thirdly, we should believe that God is able and willing to give us what we ask Him for.

Fourthly, we should continue in prayer till the blessing is granted; without fixing to God a time when, or the circumstances under which, He should give the answer. Patience should be in exercise, in connection with our prayer.

Fifthly, we should, at the same time, look out for and expect an answer till it comes. If we pray in this way, we shall not only have answers, thousands of answers to our prayers; but our own souls will be greatly refreshed and invigorated in connection with these answers.

If the obtaining of your requests were not for your real good, or were not tending to the honour of God, you might pray for a long time, without obtaining what you desire. The glory of God should be always before the children of God, in what they desire at His hands; and their own spiritual profit, being so intimately connected with the honour of God, should never be lost sight of, in their petitions.

But now, suppose we are believers in the Lord Jesus, and make our requests unto God, depending alone on the Lord Jesus as the ground of having them granted; suppose, also, that, so far as we are able honestly and uprightly to judge, the obtaining of our requests would be for our real spiritual good and for the honour of God; we yet need, lastly, to continue in prayer, until the blessing is granted unto us. It is not enough to begin to pray, nor to pray aright; nor is it enough to continue for a time to pray; but we must patiently, believingly continue in prayer, until we obtain an answer; and further, we have not only to continue in prayer unto the end, but we have also to believe that God does hear us, and will answer our

prayers. Most frequently we fail in not continuing in prayer until the blessing is obtained and in not expecting the blessing.

FAITH, PRAYER, AND THE WORD OF GOD.

Prayer and faith, the universal remedies against every want and every difficulty; and the nourishment of prayer and faith, God's holy word, helped me over all the difficulties.--

I never remember, in all my Christian course, a period now (in March 1895) of sixty-nine years and four months, that I ever SINCERELY and PATIENTLY sought to know the will of God by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, through the instrumentality of the word of God, but I have been ALWAYS directed rightly. But if honesty of heart and uprightness before God were lacking, or if I did not patiently wait upon God for instruction, or if I preferred the counsel of my fellow men to the declarations of the word of the living God, I made great mistakes.

SECRET PRAYER.

Let none expect to have the mastery over his inward corruption in any degree, without going in his weakness again and again to the Lord for strength. Nor will prayer with others, or conversing with the brethren, make up for secret prayer.

SNARES OF SATAN AS TO PRAYER.

It is a common temptation of Satan to make us give up the reading of the Word and prayer when our enjoyment is gone; as if it were of no use to read the Scriptures when we do not enjoy them, and as if it were of no use to pray when we have no spirit of prayer; whilst the truth is, in order to enjoy the Word, we ought to continue to read it, and the way to obtain a spirit of prayer is to continue praying; for the less we read the word of God, the less we desire to read it, and the less we pray, the less we desire to pray.

WORK AND PRAYER.

Often the work of the Lord itself may be a temptation to keep us from that communion with Him which is so essential to the benefit of our own souls... Let none think that public prayer will make up for close communion.

Here is the great secret of success. Work with all your might; but trust not in the least in your work. Pray with all your might for the blessing of God; but work, at the same time, with all diligence, with all patience, with all perseverance. Pray then, and work. Work and pray. And still again pray, and then work. And so on all the days of your life. The result will surely be, abundant blessing. Whether you see much fruit or little fruit, such kind of service will be blessed... Speak also for the Lord, as if everything depended on your exertions; yet trust not the least in your exertions, but in the Lord, who alone can cause your efforts to be made effectual, to the benefit of your fellow men or fellow believers. Remember, also, that God delights to bestow blessing, but, generally, as the result of earnest, believing prayer.

PREACHING.

It came immediately to my mind that such sort of preaching might do for illiterate country people, but that it would never do before a well-educated assembly in town. I thought, the truth ought to be preached at all hazards, but it ought to be given in a different form, suited to the hearers. Thus I remained unsettled in my

mind as it regards the mode of preaching; and it is not surprising that I did not then see the truth concerning this matter, for I did not understand the work of the Spirit, and therefore saw not the powerlessness of human eloquence. Further, I did not keep in mind that if the most illiterate persons in the congregation can comprehend the discourse, the most educated will understand it too; but that the reverse does not hold true.

RESTITUTION.

Restitution is the revealed will of God. If it is omitted, while we have it in our power to make it, guilt remains the conscience, and spiritual progress is hindered. Even though it should be connected with difficulty, self-denial, and great loss, it is to be attended to. Should the persons who have been defrauded be dead, their heirs are to be found out, if this can be done, and restitution is to be made to them. But there may be cases when this cannot be done, and then only the money should be given to the Lord for His work or His poor. One word more. About fifty years ago, I knew a man under concern about his soul, who had defrauded his master of two sacks of flour, and who was urged by me to confess this sin to his late employer, and to make restitution. He would not do it, however, and the result was that for twenty years he never obtained real peace of soul till the thing was done.

REWARDS.

Christians do not practically remember that while we are saved by grace, altogether by grace, so that in the matter of salvation works are altogether excluded; yet that so far as the rewards of grace are concerned, in the world to come, there is an intimate connection between the life of the Christian here and the enjoyment and the glory in the day of Christ's appearing.

SIN AND SALVATION.

Humblings last our whole life. Jesus came not to save painted but real sinners; but He has saved us, and will surely make it manifest.

SPIRIT OF GOD.

At Stuttgart, the dear brethren had been entirely uninstructed about the truths relating to the power and presence of the Holy Ghost in the church of God, and to our ministering one to another as fellow members in the body of Christ; and I had known enough of painful consequences when brethren began to meet professedly in dependence upon the Holy Spirit without knowing what was meant by it, and thus meetings had become opportunities for unprofitable talking rather than for godly edifying... All these matters ought to be left to the ordering of the Holy Ghost, and that if it had been truly good for them, the Lord would have not only led me to speak at that time, but also on the very subject on which they desired that I should speak to them.

TRUTH-- PROPORTION OF FAITH.

Whatever parts of truth are made too much of, though they were even the most precious truths connected with our being risen in Christ, or our heavenly calling, or prophecy, sooner or later those who lay an undue stress upon these parts of truth, and thus make them too prominent, will be losers in their own souls, and, if they be teachers, they will injure those whom they teach.

UNIVERSALISM.

In reference to universal salvation, I found that they had been led into this error because

(1) They did not see the difference between the earthly calling of the Jews and the heavenly calling of the believers in the Lord Jesus in the present dispensation, and therefore they said that, because the words "everlasting," etc., are applied to "the the possession of the land of Canaan" and the "priesthood of Aaron," therefore, the punishment of the wicked cannot be without end, seeing that the possession of Canaan and the priesthood of Aaron are not without end. My endeavour, therefore, was to show the brethren the difference between the earthly calling of Israel and our heavenly one, and to prove from Scripture that, whenever the word "everlasting" is used with reference to things purely not of the earth, but beyond time, it denotes a period without end.

(2) They had laid exceeding great stress upon a few passages where, in Luther's translation of the German Bible, the word hell occurs, and where it ought to have been translated either "hades" in some passages, or "grave" in others, and where they saw a deliverance out of hell, and a being brought up out of hell, instead of "out of the grave."

WORD OF GOD.

The word of God is our only standard, and the Holy Spirit our only teacher.

Besides the Holy Scriptures, which should be always THE book, THE CHIEF book to us, not merely in theory, but also in practice, such like books seem to me the most useful for the growth of the inner man. Yet one has to be cautious in the choice, and to guard against reading too much.

SACRIFICE FOR SIN.

When He orders something to be done for the glory of His name, He is both able and willing to find the needed individuals for the work and the means required. Thus, when the Tabernacle in the Wilderness was to be erected, He not only fitted men for the work, but He also touched the hearts of the Israelites to bring the necessary materials and gold, silver, and precious stones; and all these things were not only brought, but in such abundance that a proclamation had to be made in the camp, that no more articles should be brought, because there were more than enough. And again, when God for the praise of His name would have the Temple to be built by Solomon, He provided such an amount of gold, silver, precious stones, brass, iron, etc., for it, that all the palaces or temples which have been built since, have been most insignificant in comparison.

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