

PRAYER CHANGES THINGS

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I met in England, a lady who told this bit of a story. In a book that came into her hand the statement was made that one might here in London, for example, for someone two thousand miles away, and that something would happen at the other end, and is changing because of the prayer. This lady had a brother in India, a long distance away, who was not a Christian, and she at once thought, "Now, if I pray especially for him, will something happen? Is this statement of the book true?" She felt led to prayer especially for that brother, that he might come to Christ. She went on praying, day by day, saying to herself, half wondering as she said it, "Is something happening at the other end?" and, in her heart, saying, "Something *is* happening; but I wish I knew!"

By-and-by, in the course of the usual family correspondence, she put this sentence in the letter to her brother: "Has anything unusual happened to you lately?" That was the only reference she made to her special praying. Back, in the course of the mails from India, came a letter from him, saying this: "Yes, something has happened. Two months ago my thought was turned to God; I do not know why. It was not any book that I was reading; it was not any sermon I heard; I did not go where I would hear sermons; but I do know that my thought was turned to think about God." He had been trained in a Christian home, he knew the whole Gospel story, and he now said, "I was led to give my heart to the Lord Jesus Christ, and as I write to you I am a Christian man." She ran her mind quickly back over the calendar. The letter said, "Two months ago," and she found that two months carried the story back to the time when she began her special praying for her brother. That is, something happened at the other end.

And, I have no doubt, that as one prays and centers all the power of one's thought upon, say, South Africa, upon those whom you may name here and there, upon this station and that, for my part, I am very clear about this: something is happening in

South Africa. And, if it be true that you and I can join in prayer, or can go aside singly, or in twos, or threes, and pray that something may happen, something be changed through our prayer, then surely we will get more time alone with the Master to change things. And if things are not changed that ought to be, it will be a bit of reproach upon us that it is not so.

One's personal service must always seem very great. It is great. *Wherever the Spirit of the Lord Jesus sways the heart, there is a passion to serve.* You speak a word here, you do a kindly deed there, you conduct a meeting in this place, you teach a class yonder. There is a passion to serve, wherever the Master's plan sways the heart. You must spend and be spent out. And yet, I think, the more we come in touch with our Lord Jesus Christ, and the more time we spend alone with His Word, the more we realize this: that we are doing most for man when we go away from man into the secret place with God.

When we are serving—I mean by that word “serving,” direct personal service—it touches just the one place where we are, of course. There is always a limitation in service. But prayer is peculiar in this: the limitations are gone. I may touch, in my spirit, by my prayer, different nations. When I go alone to pray, all the limitations of voice and bodily presence are gone. And I can loosen out the power of God that will touch a continent, and then a second continent, and more. If we realize that be true, as without question it is true, we surely will get more time alone; time when the mind is fresh and clear, and the spirit is unhurried, time often, alone with the Master over His Word; and then we will ask, and then He will do. Although this will always remain true, there will be far more done that we know about. If we gauge our praying by what we *know* of the results, we will not do as praying as we should. But if we gauge our praying by what the Master says is happening—and we walk in the dark, as far as seeing is concerned, though not in the dark when we have the light of His face—if we go wholly by His Word, we will keep on asking and asking for bigger and bigger things.

If there be any regrets in heaven,—heaven is not supposed to have any regrets, we think of heaven as having all the regrets turned out and kept out,—and yet, if there could creep in regrets, I think there would be at least two, as we look back to the earth-life from the hills of God. One regret would be this: that we did not do more quiet praying, more claiming. I do not mean more simple repetition of religious language on our knees, but more insistent claiming, that the power of the Lord Jesus Christ shall apply here, and there, over the earth. That will be one regret, if there be regrets,—that we did not ask enough, and did not ask big enough. We will say to ourselves, “What beggarly askers we were down on the earth!”

The second regret, I think, if there be regrets, will be this: that we did not trust enough, that we did not trust God enough. We did not step out, when we could not

see where to put the foot down, when he said, "Step out." And if we might rule our lives here by what we shall think of them when we get yonder, then, I believe, we shall surely wear down the door-sills into our prayer-rooms.

I suggest that we make a very careful examination of the door-sills going into our prayer-rooms. Some folks' door-sills into their prayer-rooms are very nicely rounded, as the carpenter made the sill. And that is a very good sill for the carpenter to make, but not a good door-sill for a good Christian to retain. The only decent door-sill into the prayer-room of the Christian man is one that has been flattened down, very very flat, worn through. I suggest that we make a rather careful examination of that door-sill, and if it is too big, just proceed to wear it down quietly, faithfully, day by day; and if we wear it down we will find a great wearing up in the lives of men, wherever our prayers may be turned in and out.

I have thought of a word or two from the Master's lips about prayer. It is very striking that, as the opposition to our Lord Jesus increased, the intensity of His teaching about prayer increased. As it became more plain to Him that He was to suffer death, as the opposition to Himself by the Jerusalem leaders grew more acute and pronounced than before, He taught more about prayer to His inner circle, and He said the keenest and the most intense things about its power.

There are, in the last six months of His life, six statements about prayer. I think I may take the time to speak just a bit, in grouping up those six things, because if we could get them afresh in our minds, and live by them, there would be a new South Africa, there would be a new Japan, new, in spite of opposition; not the opposition wholly gone, but the victory rising up through the opposition. Because we would find that prayer gives victory *through* opposition.

Wherever God goes, Satan goes. Satan always travels on God's roads; he never makes roads; Satan is not a road-builder; he is always a thief; he always steals God's pathways. Where the missionary goes with the message of the Cross, you will always find the Evil One stealing along behind him, hard on his heels, using the road he made. There will be opposition, and oftentimes there more we pray, the keener the opposition; but in spite of it the brighter the shining of the sun through the darkening and gathering clouds, and the greater the victory in the midst of the opposition.

The first of these six promises is in Matt. xviii. 19. It is a word spoken about six months before the end came. The Master said: "Again I say unto you,"—notice the words as we go along—"that if *two* of you." There is peculiar power in corporate prayer. There is marvellous power in individual prayer: but there is an intensified power when a group of people come together to pray.

Two here means at least two, any number above one. The Divine unit is three; the human unit is two. The unit of humanity is not a man nor a woman, but a man and a woman. We can understand the Trinity better if we think of our humanity. Just as it takes two to make the perfect human unit, it takes three to make the perfect divine unit. Now the Master says there is peculiar power when at least two or more—the number is indefinitely above one—gather to pray. There is peculiar power in that corporate prayer.

“If two of you shall *agree*.” “Agree” is a music word. If you symphonise, if the wish of *your* heart, and of the heart by your side joining with you—if these two perfectly harmonise—no jar, but perfect music in the two—if two of you make music in the longing of your heart.

“If two of you agree on *earth*.” “On earth”: that is the place of prayer, because it is the place of conflict. There is peculiar power in being on earth. Have you sometimes wished that the earth-journey was over, and you were in the Master’s presence? Have you said, “How glad I will be when all this fighting and conflict is past, and I am up around the throne with the redeemed!” Well, it will be wonderful there with the Master. But, remember this: that when we are on the earth, we are in the place of peculiar power, because in the place of conflict. It is not the easiest place to live, it is not the most enjoyable place to live. There will be far more joy yonder, when we see His face, and a wondrous peace; but this is the place of conflict, and therefore the place of power. We are on the battlefield here, and every prayer uttered on the battlefield has peculiar power, because it directly interferes with and hinders the power of the Evil One. Let us rejoice that we are on the earth, and stay here by His grace just as long as we can, for this is the place of power in prayer, because it is the place of conflict.

“If two of you make music in your praying down on the battlefield as touching *anything* that they shall ask.” “Anything!” That does not quite mean *anything*, does it? You put a fence on *this* side and say, “Of course, *these* things are left out on that side.” Somebody else puts a fence on *this* side and says, “Of course certain things are excluded here.” We are very fond of putting a fence around that word and shutting something out. “It means a great many things, but not exactly *anything*,” we say; and thus we contradict the Master, and under-cut the power of His Word by the limitation of our faith. He *said*, “anything,” and He *meant* anything. “If two of you agree on earth as touching anything.”

Mark you this: The Master’s meaning was just this—that where two make music with their prayer, and their music makes music with His heart, there is perfect agreement upward and crossward, there is music with His heart, and within our hearts in the perfect agreement of our thought and purpose in prayer; that the Master says this: “There is no limit to the things that you may ask for.” That is what He is saying here.

“As touching *anything* that they shall ask” — *money-things, men-things*. The changing of a man’s will is the most difficult thing of all. The loosing out of gold is the most difficult of all, I sometimes think, because it involves the human will. The last thing a man gives is his pocket-book, or his cheque-book; that is the last bondage to be freed. He is a wonderfully freed man who gets freedom from that, and yet even that is included. There is no slavery like the slavery of gold. “As touching anything that ye shall ask, it shall” — listen! Use your pencil, please, under the word “shall,” underscore “*shall*” till all your sense of doubt goes. “It *shall* be done for them of My Father who is in heaven.”

Then the reason is given. Why? Because we pray earnestly? because we believe? because we have faith? Those things all count, but they are not *the* thing. For where two or three, that is, any number above one, are gathered together, drawn together, drawn together by the Holy Spirit moving in their hearts—“Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am *I* in the midst of them.” If you want to know how much the word “anything” means, find out how much that word “*I*” means. “There am *I*.” If there be any limitation on the “*I*,” that is a limitation on the “anything.” “There am *I* in the midst.” That is to say, if there are two, there are three; if three people meet to pray, there are four there. There is at least One more than you and I can see, and He is taking our prayer and making it His. That is the first of these six statements on prayer.

The second is in the Gospel of Mark. Chapter xi, verse 22. It is a word spoken within the last ten days. It is in connection with the story of the fig-tree. The Master spoke to it, and it withered away at His word, and they marveled. Of course, there is a meaning in that fig-tree incident, quite apart from the prayer teaching. We do not get the real meaning of why He should smite the fig-tree with death, except as we understand that the fig-tree stood for the Israel nation. Their rejection of the Life brought them to death. It is a parable in action. The disciples marvelled at the quickness of the result. The tree withers away — spoken to in the morning, gone in the evening — as quickly as that. And as they marvel, the Master says, “Have faith in God.”

And, please, remember that the chief factor in prayer is not *faith*, though that is so essential. The chief thing is *God*. The thing to look at is not your faith, but God. Have faith in Him. Of course, you can have faith in *Him!* Have faith in God. “Verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain” — picking out the most difficult thing in all the world, that a mountain should move off into the sea! — “Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea.” If you live in a mountain country, you cannot *think* of a mountain moving off, of its own accord, into the sea, can you? I can’t. I can’t conceive of Mount Washington, or Mount Blanc moving off. I can imagine men trying to spade and shovel them down. But to see the thing *move off!* — that is His illustration.

You say it is impossible for that man to be changed, for that opposition to be turned back, for this thing to change, and that thing to change.

Well, the Master knew how we would be tempted in just that way, and so He gave this illustration: "Shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea." Will you notice rather keenly, please, that the prayer influences the mountain. The mountain is the difficulty, it is the hindrance. The whole purpose of the prayer is to move the obstacle. The prayer does not work upward, it works from upward outward; it works from God downward into a human heart, and outward against the difficulty.

"And shall not doubt in his heart." That is the best definition of faith in the English language. That is the Master's own definition of faith—shall not doubt in his underneath thinking. As he kneels to pray and talks very earnestly, he won't find a sneaking, creeping-in question: "*Will this thing come? It is really too much to expect to come the way I am asking; I hope it will.*" "Shall not doubt in his heart," means shall not laugh behind the flap of the tent, like the woman of old.* God said, "I will return to this woman of ninety years, and the order of nature shall be changed, and a son will gladden this tent." And somebody laughed. Sarah said, "I know that *cannot* come!" The Master says—shall not laugh behind the flap of the tent, shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what He saith cometh to pass, he shall have it. "Therefore I say unto you, all things." Notice how sweeping that is. All the fencing is gone. "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

Then I think we should always read the next verse. It speaks about forgiveness, but it speaks about more. "Whosoever ye stand praying forgive, if ye have aught against anyone, that your Father may forgive you." That is to say, as you are bowed in prayer and you are conscious of *anything* in your life that is not God-like, it goes out. Prayer is a great searcher. There is no looking-glass like the knees to reveal the inner heart. Most folks do not like that looking-glass, they see too much in it. But the Master says, "If you find, as you quietly bow in prayer, that thing there which is not pleasing to Him, it has to go out. If, as you quietly bow in prayer, the soft Spirit-voice says, "I want you to make this change in your life," it is made; it is not discussed; you do not argue the matter, but you make the change.

If that quiet Voice says to you, for example, "There is that bit of property you have, it yields you a very nice income; I want you to put that on the market and let Me have it, please. I will take care of you, I will see about your income. Just now the thing I am concerned about," the Voice says, "is not the income, but the outcome. If you will attend to the outcome, I will attend to the income." If that quiet Voice says, "You take that bit that you control, and change it into gold, and use it yonder," you will say,

“Yes, Master, guide me in the best way to get the most for it.” You will do as the Voice says. That is what the Master means here, there is the full touch with Him. It is far more than forgiveness, if we quietly follow Him here. That is the secret of the “all-things,” and the “anythings,” and of the “it-shall-be-done.”

The other four statements are in the last long quiet talk the Master had with those eleven men, after Judas had gone out. That talk is preserved for us in Chapters xiii.-xvii. of John. It begins in John xiii., near the end of the chapter, verse 31. Mark that. The Master does not open His heart, He does not say the most intimate things, He does not give the freest power for prayer, until Judas has gone out. And there is a lesson of great force for us there. The Master cannot open His heart fully, He cannot open His power freely to us, until any remnant of the Judas has been put forcibly out, and the door is shut against him. And oftentimes if you find that the answer to prayer is not coming, you would better just light a lantern, clean the glass of the lantern, and light it, and go hunting around for bits of Judas, at the time when he may be hanging around the table of the Master’s prayer plan. After Judas had gone out, then the Master seems free, and He gives those wonderful words that run from Chapter xiii., 31, to the close of Chapter xvi.

In the midst of that talk, those marvellous words preserved for us by John, there are just two things that stand out as the objective, as the driving point of all. The first is this: “You shall do greater things than I have done.” The second is this: *how* we will do them; we will do them through praying. The rest of those chapters lead up to these, that is, I mean, they are the underlying basis of these. He says: “If ye abide.” He says there must be the most perfect union; He says there must be obedience, and these words all mean simply this: there must be the most perfect touch of purpose between Him and me. I abide in Him. That means, I obey Him, I obey that quiet inner Voice which may touch and call for the thing I prize most. I will obey. That is the underneath current of the whole talk—abide, obey, live in Him, do what He asks. Now then, as the result of this, we are to ask and He is to do.

I will simply repeat those four great promises. But remember, as I do, that these four are the peaks of this long talk that runs through chapters xiii. to xvii, including the prayer, and that all the rest leads up to this. In John xiv., 13, 14—“Whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, that will I do.” Chapter xv., 7: “If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will and it shall be done unto you.” Chapter xv., 16. Notice keenly. “Ye did not choose Me.” He is not talking about salvation here, that is settled. It is not a salvation verse, it is a service verse. He has chosen us for a certain important service. That is what He is talking about. “Ye did not choose Me. I chose you” for a certain great purpose of service, and “appointed you that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My Name, He may give it to you.”

The fourth of these four is found in Chapter xvi., "In that day ye shall ask Me no question." They were asking many questions. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if ye shall ask anything of the Father, He will give it you in My Name. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name." They *had* asked, they were praying men; but they had not been given the privilege of asking in that great Name. This is a new step up. "He will give it to you in My Name." "Hitherto have ye asking nothing in My Name. Now ask in that Name and ye shall receive, and your *joy*"—how would you feel if all the things you are asking for, the biggest things, were all to be done? Would there be singing?

If everything that your heart is asking for—for some loved one, for certain difficulties, in certain problems personal to you at which you have been working a long time—if the whole answer came in a flash now, do you think the roof could hold the volume of your singing? That is just what the Master is saying here—that your joy may not simply be full, but bubbling-over full. The emphasis of that verse is found in the 26th verse: "In that day ye shall ask in My Name; and I do not say unto you that I would need to ask the Father to listen to you, because the Father *Himself* loveth you, because ye have loved Me." He now is especially loving you—"and ye have believed that I come forth from Him." That is, the Master asks *for* us, but the *Father* listens; He says, "What will you have?" and He gives it because of the Son's sake.

THE NEW SPELLING OF THE WORD ASK*

*(footnote) The thought of this Talk is given more fully, with full references, in "Quiet Talks About the Tempter."

I want to bring to you a new spelling of the word *ask*. The old spelling is A-S-K, ask, but there is a new spelling of that word that is given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ. If you will notice in the long talk the Master had with His disciples, on the night in which He was betrayed, He used that word *ask*, if I recall it, five times: and those five times that single word becomes the pivot of all that talk in John xiii. to xvii.

In John xiv., 13, He says" "Whatsoever ye shall *ask* in My Name, that I will do"; xiv., 14, "If ye shall *ask* anything"; xv., 17, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, *ask*"; xv., 16, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and appointed you that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide; that whatsoever ye shall *ask*"; and again in xvi., 23 and 26, the word is "Ask."

I want to couple that with the other "ask," regarding the Son, in Psalm ii: 8, which perfectly fits in with these "asks" of John's Gospel—"Ask of Me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." If we can get the better spelling of that word *ask*, I think we may quicken the results in all these foreign fields, in South Africa, in North Africa, and all the rest of the world, including Britain and London.

The new spelling is T-A-K-E. The Master's spelling and our spelling of the word *ask* is T-A-K-E; that is the spelling of Calvary and of the Third Morning. Shall I tell you how to reach that spelling? Three or four or five simple things will make it, I think, quite clear.

When God made man in His image, He gave him the mastery of the earth, did He not? Man was the under-master of the earth and all its forces; Genesis i. and Psalm viii. will make that quite clear. Man is a master, made in the image of God, to be master over all this earth; that is the Father's plan in His marvellous love. But the title to what God gives can be held only through obedience; that is the one law of title-holding in God's Kingdom. Disobedience demits the title; obedience holds the title.

The second bit to note is that man lost his mastery through disobedience. The tempter's whole thought was this: to get man to disobey. He knows about the title standing in obedience; and so the temptation was simply this: to disobey the Father's will. Man disobeyed and he lost the dominion; and practically instead of being a master over the earth, he has been a slave on the earth. Third thing: He lost the dominion *to* the one whom he obeyed, who is called by our Lord Jesus Christ, "the

prince of this world.” He is not the rightful master, he is not the rightful prince of the world, because he has been a traitor to God. He is a traitor-prince, he has stolen the mastery, he is a thief, he is prince of this world, usurping the power that belongs to us.

Fact number four; The Lord Jesus Christ came, or as I love to put it, God came down Himself in the person of His Son; because that Man who walked round on the old Palestine soil, was God Himself treading in man’s shoes, without a doubt. He was given the mastery of the earth, all afresh by the Father. God gave all things into His hands. “All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father,” the Master plainly says. And that same fact is repeated four times over in John’s Gospel. All things were given into the Lord Jesus Christ’s hands. He was the new Master. Yet He could hold His mastery only by obedience. And the one touch-stone of His life was this: He *obeyed*; even unto death, aye, the death of the Cross. And I think the great thing the pretender-prince, the cunning traitor-prince, was aiming to do those thirty-three and a half years, was to make obedience by our Lord Jesus just as hard as he could. But Jesus remained true. He held His title by obedience; first in His life, then in His death; and so through His resurrection. And when He went back home – if you run through Ephesians and Colossians and other epistles, you will find that the title to the earth was confirmed to Him when He returned to His Father’s presence. It was *given* to Him by the Father; it was *held* by Him through His obedience. And now *He gives us the right of His victory – to take what rightly belongs to us.*

You know we love to talk of our Lord Jesus Christ as our Substitute. We say, and rightly, that when He climbed the hill of the Cross and poured out His life even unto death, He was acting in our place. He was our Saviour and bore the brunt of our sins. He acted as our Substitute, He was standing in our place, and through Him and His precious blood we are free. But we do not use that word *Substitute* as much as we should.

He was a three-fold Substitute. First, in His life, by His perfect obedience in Nazareth, in His narrow white-washed cottage, in the daily round in the carpenter’s shop, making chairs and yokes and tables, pushing a plane, driving nails, for customers hard to suit, obedient to His Father’s will in the common humdrum Nazareth life – our Substitute there. We failed in obedience; He obeyed perfectly in our place as our Substitute.

And then on the Cross He was our Substitute, obeying perfectly, perfectly satisfying God’s righteousness in view of the awfulness of our sin. And then on the resurrection morning He rose up because He was obedient; He held the title by His obedience in the place of the man who had failed, and in His obedience to death, aye, the shameful, the painful death of the Cross; not shrinking, even at that, though it meant far more to Him than any human heart has ever taken in. When he had gotten the victory, He held the title to this earth.

I used to wonder, in my simplicity of ignorance, why the Master, when He got the victory over sin, over Satan, over death, why He didn't clean the whole thing up, why the old devil should be free these two thousand years. If Christ were the Victor, why not make the victory instantaneous everywhere? Well, there is a very simple reason. I said He was our Substitute. We were given the mastery of the earth, we lost our mastery, He came down to win back what we had lost. We had lost our life; He gave it back through His own life. We lost our mastery of ourselves; it comes back through Him and His marvellous Holy Spirit: for in the fruit of the Spirit, you remember, the ninth item is self-mastery; He came down to win back for us our mastery of the earth, where we were made under-masters for God. He is our Substitute. He has won the dominion of the earth back. "All authority has been given unto Me in Heaven *and over the earth.*" "Now," He says, "*take what I have won for you.*"

When our missionary friends go back to South Africa, into a village, as we have heard, where a man sits possessed by a demon, remember this—and it serves as an illustration for every other place of this sort, in varying degrees—remember this: that bit of ground belongs to man, for God, to be held for Him. It was lost through disobedience, it was stolen away by the traitor-prince. But the Lord Jesus Christ is Victor; and anyone going in Christ's Name has the right to step over on that ground and say, "I *take*, in the Name of Jesus Christ, my Substitute, my Saviour and my Master, I take this bit of the earth, by authority given unto me over all the earth; I take this bit of the earth, that my Master has won back, in His Name; and I take the lives of these precious men and women and children, whom my Master has given His own life's blood for."

But the taking must be as deep as your life; it must be as intense as the opposition. Satan is a stiff fighter; he doesn't give except what he must, the taking must be *definite*. Prayer must always be definite. He does not give *until* he must. He is a mighty stiff fighter. Prayer must be *persistent*. The taking must be as insistent as the enemy is persistent, and just a bit more; and there's where the fight comes. The man whom you are trying to win for God, may be in London, maybe your loved one, maybe in North Africa, in South Africa, wherever he is—that man whom you would have come to Jesus Christ, he belongs to Him through His victory. You *take* him in Jesus Christ the Victor's Name, and insist on taking, and the rest will always come. The new spelling, the Calvary spelling of *ask*, is T-A-K-E, take, in Jesus Christ the Victor's Name.

Do you remember, that in the Lord's prayer, the Master taught us to say "Deliver us from evil"—this is the old "King James" version. The better reading makes that personal—not "from evil," but, as in the revisions, "from the evil one." And that word "deliver"—the word underneath our English word "deliver" is a picture word. The word "rescue" would be a perfectly accurate translation. "Rescue us from the evil one." That is what we are to do in Christ's Name.

And, if you will mark it, the marvel of that long talk, that Thursday night talk, in John xiii., xiv., xv., xvi., is that the Master gave us the right to use His Name. That is, stepping out as He. To use His Name is to be as Himself, going where he goes! But there are two things that run through that long talk in John. Everybody cannot use the Master's name. Some of the men in the 19th Chapter of Acts, in Ephesus tried to use that name. They reckoned without their host. The evil spirits knew full well just who had a right to use that Name; and the evil spirits jumped upon them and tore them and left them bleeding. They hadn't the right to use that Name. The demon world knows full well who may use that Name.

If you run through that long talk again, you will find these words—"Abide," "Obey." "If ye love ye will obey"; "if ye obey ye are abiding." "The Father in Me, and I in the Father, you in Me, and I in you." That is simply this: obedience is the one touchstone of using the Lord Jesus' Name. He held His mastery through obedience; He won our salvation on the Cross by His perfect obedience. Now He says "Follow Me." Obey, simply, quietly, sanely, as a child obeys. Abide--obey means abide; abide means obey. Hold the whole life quietly, simply, fully, subject to His touch; and then you can ask what you will, you may take what you choose, and the evil one must go.

And mark you this--with obedience always goes the word "faith." But I think it helps us to remember that faith is this: it is knowing that Jesus *is* the Victor. Have you any doubt about that? It is not thinking about what he *will* do, so much as what He *has* done. Now I have no doubt in my mind that the Lord Jesus Christ is Victor in His life, in His death, on the Third Morning, over all the powers of evil. Faith means that. It is not working my feelings up and saying "I must believe." It is just thinking of Jesus. There He is, on the throne—the scars on His face tell the perfectness of His obedience. That scarred Jesus, that crowned Jesus, I have no doubt about Him.

As I step quietly on where He leads, I may take what I will, in His Name, life after life, purse after purse, gold after gold for the need, mules for the wagon for that missionary in South Africa, anything and everything, I *take* in Jesus the Victor's Name. And, because He is Victor, every hindrance must go, before the man that presses forward in His Name.

Recently I was in Sweden. Sitting across the table from me was a missionary from Tunis. One day she told us this story. She had a friend, a sister missionary in Algiers. And this sister missionary told her of an Arab woman whom she had been used to win to Christ. The Arab woman was a Mohammedan, with all the fanaticism, ignorance and superstition that marks that strange Mohammedan belief or superstition. This woman was won for Christ, and her family did their best to sway her from her new faith. They coaxed, pleaded, argued, threatened, made her life

miserable, but she showed the quality of her faith by her firm, quiet stand. She could not be moved, she knew she was right.

Then they did what is characteristic of that people. They concocted a poison, very simple, very deadly, and put it into her food – of course, secretly. When she had eaten the meal into which the poison had been introduced, she knew very quickly what had taken place; she felt the poison. She knew full well about the poison, she knew the habit of her people, and how deadly it was. As she felt the thing in her blood she knew instantly what had happened. And she knew this: that through the poison she was doomed to death. She knew it. You can fancy just how she felt as the poison worked. It would, first, make one very irritable and mean in spirit, then very dull, then it would affect the mind still more, and then the body, until death would come. That was the course it usually ran.

And she was greatly startled and greatly distressed, and didn't know what to do. As she sat at the table, I think without planning it, she commenced to repeat the Name, the great Name. She could not repeat it aloud, for that would mean persecution by those around her in the house, in the family. And so to herself, with all the intensity of one who felt the sentence of death in her body, she commenced to repeat that marvellous Name, above every name, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus."

And for two days or three – my friend was not sure which – that went on. And the poison gradually receded from the woman's body, from her blood; and the family watched her, with strange eyes. This was something new, the poison had never failed before. But it was failing. As she herself told the story to the missionary, she said, "I felt as though each time I said that Name, there was like a wave of life, and in between like a wave of death." And the conflict went on between life and death for those days, but the death becoming less and the life more, until at the end of the second day, or the third, she was free, to their utter astonishment, and to her own great joy.

That was a victory in the body, a possible thing as the Holy Spirit guides, but only a bit of the larger possibility. We have the right, as we are simply obedient, to use that Name. As we do use it under the marvellous Holy Spirit's guidance, going step by step as He leads, we may take out of the hand of the evil one, men, and women, and property, and gold, and all that we need, because the Lord Jesus has said, "All authority has been given unto Me *over all the earth*." Shall we *take*, in Jesus' Name, what belongs to us by the right of His death and resurrection?

PITCHING TENT ON OLIVET

Do you remember the last time that the Master was with His disciples? I don't know what time of the day it was. It may have been in the early morning when the dew was fresh on all the flowers and the grass. It may have been in the evening time in the twilight. They have been down in the city together. The Master said, "Let us take a walk," and they walk down the narrow city street, and out the gate, and up the hill, and now they are on Olivet's top. There the Master says the last word that He spoke; and there I want you, for a moment, to take your stand with the Master on Olivet's top.

A man should live with his tent pitched on Olivet, the place with the ringing cry of "All-power." You cannot stand on Olivet without seeing, down yonder, a bunch of trees in a depression of the ground; and you know that is Gethsemane, where the touch of sin, in anticipation, came so strong as almost to bear the Master down; where the strain of spirit was so great, as He thought of coming into touch with sin—aye, of becoming sin for us—that the thread of life almost snapped, and special prayer had to be made that the life might be held till the great service was done. Olivet always includes in its perspective yonder Gethsemane, the place of the lone soul struggle, because of the sin of the world.

Then beyond is the old grey wall of the city, you can see it a bit, and there just outside Calvary, where *the* Man of the race, who was more than man, climbed the hill of the Cross, and took our place, acted as our Substitute, in our stead, and with the keenest pain of body, and yet keener pain of spirit, until His heart broke, poured out His life-blood for all men, and for us and for our sin.

And over on the other side is Bethany, the place that had the prophetic glimpse of the marvellous resurrection power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We want to step, just a moment, to Olivet and hear the Master's last word. But remember this: you cannot stand on Olivet without seeing Gethsemane, and seeing Calvary,—suffering spelled out twice to the deepest degree; and seeing Bethany,—power spelled out prophetically beyond what mere man has ever known. It is the last time they are together. He's going away—coming back pretty soon, they understand. They don't know just how soon; but they are to be as He, they are to take His place. And so they stand, eagerly looking into His face, and listening for His words, and wondering what the last word will be.

There's Peter, the man of rock, who slipped so badly, but who came back and was forgiven. There are John and James, the sons of thunder and of fire, who are to burn their lives out now for their Master. Here is the guileless man, and the others, grouped around the Master. But you hardly notice them, if you notice them at all. Your face quickly turns to His—the Man in the midst, with a face torn by the thorns and cut by the thorns, scarred and marred by suffering for sin—other men's sins, but with a wondrous glory-light shining out of eyes and face.

And, as they listen, the Master says this—it is His last word, it contains the whole pent-up passion of His heart, it should be the first word with every follower of His. Simply it is, "Go ye." "All power hath been given unto Me, therefore go ye, and make disciples of all the nations." While that word is ringing in their ears, they are startled to notice that His feet are off the ground, and He keeps moving up, and up, and up, by a new law of gravitation upward, until by and by a cloud—not a rain cloud—a *glory* cloud, sweeps down out of the blue and conceals His form. And, as He goes

away, the one word that rings and burns in ear and heart is this, "Go ye. All of you go. Go to all. Go with all you have. Go all the time there is. Because I have the power, you go, in My power, out to the farthest reach of the earth."

A friend in my country has supposed the scene that he thinks might have taken place when the Master went back. The last you and I see is the glory cloud that sweeps down out of the blue and conceals His form. And the old earth has not seen Him since, though the Book does say this: that some day He's coming back in just the same way He went. Some of us are very strongly inclined to believe it will be exactly as the Master said, in that regard, and the time may be not so far off as some think. But have you thought of what took place on the other, the upper side, the glory side of the cloud? He's been down there a long time, over thirty years away from home; and they're fairly hungry for a look at the blessed face of the Master again. Talking in human language, I have imagined them coming down to where they might catch the first glimpse of face and form.

The friend I speak of has imagined this: that after the first flush of feeling has spent itself, this is the way we would talk—earth-sort of talk—about such things,—the Master is walking down the golden street, with Gabriel, talking earnestly, quietly. And Gabriel says, "Master, you died for the whole world, did you not?" "Yes," "You must have suffered very much." "Aye, Gabriel, I cannot talk about that even to you; it goes too deep." "And do they all know about it down there?" "Oh, no; just a little handful in Syria know about it thus far." "Well, Master, what is your plan? What plan have you made to tell the world that you have died for them? What arrangements have you made?" And the Master is supposed to reply, "Well, I asked Peter, and James, and John, and some more of them down there, just to go and make it the business of their lives to tell the others. And the others are to tell others, and the others yet others, and still others beyond, till the last man in the farthest reach has heard the story, and has been caught, thrilled and thrilled by the power of it."

And you know, Gabriel knows us folks pretty well. We are no strangers to him. He has made more than one journey to the earth, and knows the kind of stuff that is in us folk down here. His brow knits a bit, and he looks a bit troubled, as if he could see difficulty in the Master's plan. And he says, "Yes, but, Master, suppose, after a while, Peter forgets. Suppose John, after a bit, loses his enthusiasm, and simply doesn't tell the others. Suppose their successors away down there in the twentieth century, get so busy about things, some of them good things—church things maybe—some of them may not be quite so proper things, suppose they get so busy that they do *not* tell the others, what then?" And his eyes are big with their eagerness, for he is thinking of the suffering; and he is thinking, too, of the difference to the man who doesn't know about the suffering and the dying. "What then?"

And back comes that quiet voice of the Lord Jesus. Nobody ever talked so quietly as He. He says, "Gabriel, I haven't made any other plans. I am counting on them." That is a bit of this friend's imagination, it is quite true; but it is the Gospel story, page after page. The Master *has* made that plan; He has *not* made any other plan; He's *counting* on us. I think if I could emphasize one sentence more than another, it would be that sentence, He's counting on us, each in his own sphere, in his own place, as comes best to you. Simply that, but all of that. And as you listen with your hearts—if you fail Him, if someone fails the Lord Jesus, in making the one dominant purpose of his life telling the others, if you fail—just that far, you make the Lord Jesus Christ's dying a failure *practically*, so far as concerns those whom you touch, or whom you can touch. Yes, I know that sounds serious. I'd rather not be saying it. But I am sure, by the Book, it is true; and I know only what I find in the Book. And so the Master is counting on us.

He has given to us three things, at least, to use in carrying out His plan. He has given us, first, the life—what we are. The greatest thing any man has is his life. And, even though you stay *here*, your life is the greatest thing you have in reaching both the world you touch directly, and the whole world you cannot touch directly. First, the life; what we are, simply, in a pure, clean, sweet, unselfish Christ-controlled life.

He has given us a second thing—gold, what we possess, and the power to earn. It is a marvellous trust. Gold has a strange power of transmutation. By golden-finger a man can reach around the whole world. It is a strange power; and I think the Church of Christ has never begun to realise the power there is in gold. It is omnipotent almost to-day. When you get beyond the line of this life, it is utterly worthless—simply to be cast out like the saltless salt, and no more. But now it is almost omnipotent.

He has given us a third thing, and that is *prayer*, which I want to define anew in this way,—the power to take, in the Lord Jesus' Name, what He has won. And the Master is counting on us to use the life, and the gold committed to our trust, and the power of prayer, to go out and take, to the very end of the earth.

I remember my heart catching fire, one time, as a friend told me a very simple tale of one of our Southern American cities. It was during a time before our civil war, when the sanitary conditions in the south were very poor. A plague came to a city, a plague of disease, and wrought great havoc. The city's death-cart was rolling in the streets almost all the time; and hardly a home but had the tear, and the sorrow, and the vacant room and the empty chair. Into one very poor home the disease came and did very rapid work. They were all carried out, one after another, until there remained a mother—the mother and her baby boy, of five years, it may be, or so.

The story says that he crept up on his mother's knee, with his baby face very close to hers, and he said, "Mother, father's dead, and brothers and sister are dead. Suppose

you die! what will I do?" What could she say, with the face so close to hers? She must keep brave. Her heart had thought of it. What could she say? She was a Christian woman, and as she swallowed hard, she said, as quietly as she could, "My boy, if I should die, the Lord Jesus will come for you." And that was quite satisfactory to him. He had been trained from the earliest months, to know about this Saviour, how good He was. The boy went about his playing on the floor, thinking, "It is all fixed. If mother should die, Jesus will come, and that will be all right."

And his question proved all too prophetic. The disease did quick work; they were carrying her away; he followed and saw where she was laid. He came back to the house, and in the excitement of the time he was forgotten, and was left alone in the poor humble home. He tried to sleep that night, but couldn't so rose and dressed himself as best he could. He found his way down the street and out upon the road to where they had laid her. Finding the spot, he threw himself down upon the freshly thrown-up earth, and wept until nature kindly stole away his consciousness in sleep.

Early the next morning, just at the break of day, a Christian gentleman was coming down the road from some errand of mercy that had kept him out all the night. As he came along the road, past the graveyard, he saw the boy and quickly guessed some story of a heart-breaking kind. He called to him and said, "My boy, what are you doing here?" The boy raised himself, rubbed his eyes, and said, "Well, father's dead, and brothers and sister dead, and now *mother's* dead! and she said that if she did die, Jesus would come for me. And He hasn't come, and I'm tired of waiting." And the man swallowed something hard; and then said very quietly, as he tried to control his voice, "Well, my boy, I've come for you." And the boy looked up with his baby eyes big, and said, "You've been a long time coming!"

When I listen to my missionary friends there comes before my eyes a vision that keeps coming all the while, and I cannot get rid of it, day and night—I don't want to—a great sea of faces from South Africa, and North Africa, from Japan, and China, and India, and the Levant, and South American, and the Isles of the Sea; a great crowd of brothers, with their eyes big, and their faces gaunt, from the hunger of their lives, and their hands outstretched. And they say, "You are a long time coming!" Over against that vision, there is the other of the Man with the scarred face, on Olivet. And the two are answering each other: "Go ye" — "You are a long time coming!"

I wish we might quietly bow in prayer and say, "Master, all anew we will give ourselves to Thee, to send, to give, to obey, as Thou shalt lead, that this cry of hungering nations may be stopped, and they may have the wondrous Jesus Christ."

As we quietly pray shall we just continue those two visions before our face—the Master, who is our Master, with His ringing cry, "Go ye"; and then the other cry

coming up from our blood-brothers of the far-away lands, "You are a long time coming."

And I suggest that we might make this prayer just in secret, "Lord Jesus, I will obey Thy voice with my life. Teach me what 'obey' means. I'll obey with life, and gold, and all the power Thou dost give. Lord Jesus, I will plan to put prayer first, and to take what Thou has won, as Thy Spirit guides, day by day. First, to obey; and, second, to pray. I will hold everything I am, and everything I have, subject to Thy call, as Thy Spirit shall guide."

"Near, my God to Thee,--
Nearer to The:
E'en though it be a cross,--
That raiseth me."

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"What Then?"
By Bessie Porter Head.

(pages 5-6, *Prayer Changes Things* by S. D. Gordon)

*Suggested by a sentence or two used by Mr. S. D. Gordon
in an Address delivered at King's Hall, London.*

"He is counting on you."
He has need of your life
In the thick of the strife:
For that weak one may fall
If you fail at His call.
He is counting on you,
If you fail Him—
What then?

"He is counting on you."
On your silver and gold,
On that treasure you hold;
On that treasure still kept,
Though the doubt o'er you swept.
"Is this gold not *all* mine?
(Lord, I knew it was *Thine*.)"
He is counting on you,
If you fail Him—

What then?

“He is counting on you.”
 On a love that will share
 In His burden of prayer,
 For the souls He has bought
 With His life-blood: and sought
 Through His sorrow and pain
 To win “Home” yet again.
 He is counting on you,
 If you fail Him –
 What then?

“He is counting on you.”
 On life, money and prayer;
 And “the day shall declare”
 If you let Him have *all*
 In response to His call;
 Or if He in that day
 To your sorrow must say
 “I had counted on you,
 But you failed Me” –
 What then?

“He is counting on you.”
 Oh! The wonder and grace,
 To look Christ in the face
 And not be ashamed,
 For you gave what He claimed,
 And you laid down your *all*
 For His sake – At His call.
 He had counted on you,
 And you failed not.
 What then?

