**THE FUNDAMENTALS: A TESTIMONY TO THE TRUTH**

**VOLUME 4; CHAPTER 16. DIVINE EFFICACY OF PRAYER**

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All the greatest needs, both of the Church and of the world, may be included in one: the need of a higher standard of godliness; and the all-embracing secret of a truly godly life is close and constant contact with the unseen God; that contact is learned and practised, as nowhere else, in the secret place of supplication and intercession.

Our Lord's first lesson in the school of prayer was, and still is: "ENTER INTO THY CLOSET" (Matt. 6:6). The "closet" is the closed place, where we are shut in alone with God, where the human spirit waits upon an unseen Presence, learns to recognize Him who is a Spirit, and cultivates His acquaintance, fellowship, and friendship.

Everything else, therefore, depends upon prayer.

* To the praying soul there becomes possible the faith which is the grasp of the human spirit upon the realities and verities of the unseen world.
* To the praying soul there becomes possible and natural the obedience which is the daily walk of the disciple with the unseen God.
* To the praying soul there becomes possible the patience, which is the habit of waiting for results yet unseen and hopes yet unrealized.
* To the praying soul there becomes possible the love that, like a celestial flood, drowns out evil tempers and hateful dispositions, and introduces us to a new world of gentle and generous frames.
* To the praying soul there becomes possible and increasingly real the holiness which is personal conformity to an unseen Divine image and ideal, and the innermost secret of a heavenly bliss.

Those who yearn for revivals naturally lay much stress on preaching. But what is preaching without praying! Sermons are but pulpit performances, learned essays, rhetorical orations, popular lectures, or it may be political harangues, until God gives, in answer to earnest prayer, the preparation of the heart, and the answer of the tongue. It is only he who prays that can truly preach. Many a sermon that has shown no intellectual genius and has violated all homiletic rules and standards has had dynamic spiritual force. Somehow it has moved men, melted them, moulded them. The man whose lips are touched by God's living coal from off the altar may even stammer, but his hearers soon find out that he is on fire with one consuming passion to save souls.

We need saints in the pew as well as in the pulpit, and saintship everywhere is fed and nourished on prayer. The man of business who prays, learns to abide in his calling with God; his secular affairs and transactions become sacred by being brought into the searchlight of God's presence. His own business becomes his Father's business. He does not trample on God's commands in order to make money, nor does he drive his trade and traffic through the sacred limits of the Lord's day, or defraud his customers, "breaking God's law for a dividend."

Praying souls become prevailing saints. Those who get farthest on in the school of prayer and learn most of its hidden secrets often develop a sort of prescience which comes nearest to the prophetic spirit, the Holy Spirit showing them "things to come." They seem, like Savonarola, to know something of the purpose of God, to anticipate His plans, and to forecast the history of their own times. The great supplicators have been also the seers.

There is no higher virtue in a church than that it should be a praying church, for it is prayer that makes eternal realities both prominent and dominant. A church and a pastor may have any one of the current, popular types of "religious" life, and souls may not be saved; but, as the late Dr. Skinner, of New York, used to say: "If the peculiar type of piety is that which is inspired by a sense of the powers of the world to come, sinners will be saved and saints edified." Even the world that now is will feel the power of such piety.

Praying feeds missions at home and abroad. It promotes giving. Parsimony is stifled in the atmosphere of God's presence. Gifts are multiplied and magnified when the giver is consecrated. When disciples begin to pray for souls they begin to yearn over them and to be willing to make sacrifices for their salvation. The key that can unlock the treasury of God's promises has marvelous power also to unlock the treasures of hoarded wealth, and makes even the abundance of deep poverty to abound into the riches of liberality till the widow's mites drop into the Lord's hands even more frequently than the millions of merchant princes. No man can breathe freely in the atmosphere of prayer while he stifles benevolent impulses. The giving of money prepares for the giving of self, and thus prayer makes missionary workers as well as missionary givers and supporters.

Few, even amongst the most devout, have ever fully felt how far workers in "the mine of heathendom" depend on those who "hold the ropes." James Gilmour, whose rare and radiant spirit so impressed the rude Mongolians, said that, unprayed for, he would feel like a diver in the river bottom with no air to breathe, or like a fireman on a blazing building with no water in his empty hose.

Prayer is not to be thought the less of because we are so often driven to the throne of grace as a last resort. It is part of the philosophy of prayer that it shall reveal its full efficacy only when and where all beside fails us. Here, as in all else, it is only at the end of self with all its inventions. that we find the beginning of God with all His interpositions.

A praying heart is the one thing that the devil cannot easily counterfeit. It is easy enough to imitate praying lips, so that hypocrites and Pharisees feign devoutness. But only God can open in the heart's depths those springs of supplication that often find no channel in language, but flow out in groanings which cannot be uttered.

It is not worthwhile to waste much time in defending or advocating prayer. Experiment makes argument needless. This is not so much a science to be mastered by study as an art to be learned by practice. Like the Bible, prayer is self-evidencing. It is a mysterious union of Divine and human elements not easy of explanation; but to him who prays and puts God to the test along the lines of His own precepts and promises, God proves how real a force prayer is in His moral universe. The best way to prop up prayer is to practice it.

The pivot of piety, therefore, is prayer. A pivot is of double use, it acts as a fastener and as a center; it holds other parts in place, and it is the axis of revolution. Prayer likewise, keeps one steadfast in faith and helps to all holy activity. Hence, as surely as God is lifting His people to a higher level of spirituality, and moving them to a more unselfish and self-denying service, there will be new emphasis laid by them upon supplication, and especially upon intercession.

The revival of the praying-spirit is not only first in order of development, but it is first in order of importance, for without it there is no advance. Generally, if not uniformly prayer is both starting-point and goal to every movement in which are the elements of permanent progress. Whenever the Church's sluggishness is aroused and the world's wickedness arrested, somebody has been praying. If the secret history of all true spiritual advance could be written and read, there would be found some intercessors who, like Job, Samuel, Daniel, Elijah, Paul and James; like Jonathan Edwards, William Carey, George Muller, and Hudson Taylor, have been led to shut themselves in the secret place with God, and have labored fervently in prayer. And as the starting-point is thus found in supplication and intercession, so the final outcome must be that God's people shall have learned to pray; otherwise there will be rapid reaction and disastrous relapse from the better conditions secured.

**PRAYER PUTS MEN IN TOUCH WITH GOD**

There is a Divine philosophy behind this fact. The greatest need is to keep in close touch with God; the greatest risk is the loss of the sense of the Divine. In a world where every appeal is to the physical senses and through them, reality is in direct proportion to the power and freedom of contact. What we see, hear, taste, touch or smell - what is material and sensible - we cannot doubt. The present and material absorbs attention and appears real, solid, substantial; but the future, the immaterial, the invisible, the spiritual, seem vague, distant, illusive, imaginary. Practically the unseen has little or no reality and influence with the vast majority of mankind. Even the unseen God Himself is to most men less a verity than the commonest object of vision; to many He, the highest verity, is really vanity, while the world's vanities are practically the highest verities.

God's great corrective for this most disastrous inversion and perversion of the true relation of things is prayer. "Enter into thy closet." There all is silence, secrecy, solitude, seclusion. Within that holy of holies the disciple is left alone - all others shut out, that the suppliant may be shut in - with God. The silence is in order to the hearing of the still, small voice that is drowned in worldly clamor, and which even a human voice may cause to be unheard or indistinct. The secrecy is in order to a meeting with Him who seeth in secret and is best seen in secret. The solitude is for the purpose of being alone with One who can fully impress with His presence only when there is no other presence to divert thought. The place of seclusion with God is the one school where we learn that He is, and is the rewarder of those that diligently seek Him. The closet is "not only the oratory, it is the observatory," not for prayer only, but for prospect - the wide-reaching, clear-seeing, outlook upon the eternal! The decline of prayer is therefore the decay of piety; and, for prayer to cease altogether, would be spiritual death, for it is to every child of God the breath of life.

We cannot too strongly emphasize this fact, that to keep in close touch with God in the secret chamber of His presence is the great fundamental underlying purpose of prayer. To speak with God is a priceless privilege; but what shall be said of having and hearing Him speak with us! We can tell Him nothing He does not know; but He can tell us what we do not know, no imagination has ever conceived, no research ever unveiled. The highest of all possible attainments is the knowledge of God, and this is the practical mode of His revelation of Himself. Even His holy Word needs to be read in the light of His own presence if it is to be understood. The praying soul hears God speak. "And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with Him, then he heard the voice of One speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony - from between the two cherubim, and He spake unto him" (Num. 7:89).

Where there is this close touch with God, and this clear insight into His name which is His nature, and into His Word which is His will made known, there will be a new power to walk with Him in holiness, and work with Him in service. "He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel." The mass of the people stood afar off and saw His deeds, such as the overthrowing of Pharaoh's hosts in the Red Sea; but Moses drew near into the thick darkness where God was, and in that thick darkness he found a light such as never shone elsewhere, and in that light he read God's secret plans and purposes and interpreted His wondrous ways of working.

All practical power over sin and over men depends on maintaining this secret communion. Elijah was bidden, first, "go, hide thyself," and then, "go shew thyself." Those who abide in the secret place with God come forth to show themselves mighty to conquer evil, and strong to work and to wait for God. They are permitted to read the secrets of His covenant; they know His will; they are the meek whom He guides in judgment and teaches His way. They are His prophets, who speak for Him to others; because they watch the signs of the times, discern His tokens, and read His signals. We sometimes count as mystics those who, like Savonarola and Catherine of Siena, claim to have communications from God; to have revelations of a definite plan of God for His Church, or for themselves as individuals, like the reformer of Erfurt, the founder of the Bristol Orphanages, oi the leader of the China Inland Mission. But may it not be that if we stumble at these experiences it is because we do not have them ourselves? Have not many of these men and women afterward proved by their lives that they were not mistaken, and that God has led them by a way that no other eye could trace?

**PRAYER IMPARTS GOD'S POWER**

In favor of close contact with the living God in prayer, there is another reason that rises perhaps to a still higher level. Prayer not only puts us in touch with God, and gives knowledge of Him and His ways, but it imparts to us His power. It is the touch which brings virtue out of Him. It is the hand upon the pole of a celestial battery, which charges us with His secret life, energy, efficiency. Things which are impossible with man are possible with God, and with a man in whom God is. Prayer is the secret of imparted power from God, and nothing else can take its place. Absolute weakness follows the neglect of secret communion with God - and the weakness is the more deplorable, because it is often unconscious and unsuspected, especially when one has never yet known what true power is.

We see men of prayer quietly achieving results of the most surprising character. They have the calm of God, no hurry, or worry, or flurry; no anxiety, or care, no excitement or hustle or bustle - they do great things for God, and, like John the Baptist, are great in His eyes, yet they are little in their own eyes; they carry great loads, and yet are not weary nor faint; they face great crises, and yet are not troubled. And those who know not what treasures of wisdom and strength and courage and power are hidden in God's pavilion wonder how it is. They try to account for all this by something in the man - his talent, or tact, original methods, or favoring circumstances. Perhaps they try to imitate such a career by securing the patronage of the rich and mighty, or by dependence on organization, or fleshly energy - or what men call "determination to succeed" - they bustle about, labor incessantly, appeal for money and co-operation, and work out an apparent success, but there is none of that power of God in it which cannot be imitated. They compass themselves about with sparks, but there is no fire of God; they build up a great structure, but it is wood, hay, stubble; they make a great noise, but God is not in the clamor.

Nothing is at once so undisputable and so over-awing as the way in which a few men of God have lived in Him and He in them. The fact is, that in the disciple's life the fundamental law is, "Not I, but Christ in me." In a grandly true sense there is but one Worker, one Agent, and He Divine; and all other so-called "workers" are instruments, and instruments only, in His hands. The first quality of a true instrument is passivity. An active instrument would defeat its own purpose; all its activity must be dependent upon the man who uses it. Sometimes a machine becomes uncontrollable, and then it not only becomes useless, but it becomes dangerous, and works damage and disaster. What would a man do with a plane, a knife, an axe, a saw, a bow, that had any will of its own and moved of itself? Does it mean nothing when, in the Word of God, we meet so frequently the symbols of passive service - the rod, the staff, the saw, the hammer, the sword, the spear, the threshing instrument, the flail; and, in the New Testament, the vessel? Does it mean that in proportion as a man is wilful God cannot use him; that the first condition of service is that the human will is to be lost in God's so that it presents no resistance to His, no persistence beyond or apart from His, and even ventures to offer no assistance to His? George Muller well taught that we are to wait to know whether a certain work is God's; then whether it is ours, as being committed to us; but, even then, we need to wait for God's way and God's time to do His own work, otherwise we rush precipitately into that which He means us to do, but only at His signal; or else, perhaps, we go on doing when He calls a halt. Many a true servant of God has, like Moses, begun before his Master was ready, or kept on working when his Master's time was past.

**INTERCESSION**

There is one aspect of prayer to which particular attention needs to be called, because it is strongly emphasized in the Word, and because it is least used in our daily life, namely, intercession.

This word, with what underlies it, has a very unique use and meaning in Scripture. It differs from supplication, first in this, that supplication has mainly reference to the suppliant and his own supply; and again, because intercession not only concerns others, but largely implies the need of direct Divine interposition. There are many prayers that, in their answer, allow our co-operation and imply our activity. When we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," we go to work to earn the bread for which we pray. That is God's law. When we ask God to deliver us from the evil one, we expect to be sober and vigilant, and resist the adversary. This is right; but our activity in many other matters hinders the full display of God's power, and hence also our impression of His working. The deepest convictions of God's prayer answering are therefore wrought in cases where, in the nature of things, we are precluded from all activity in promoting the result.

The Word of God teaches us that intercession with God is most necessary in cases where man is most powerless. Elijah is held before us as a great intercessor, and the one example given is his prayer for rain. Yet in this case he could only pray; there was nothing else he could do to unlock the heavens after three years and a half of drought. And is there not a touch of Divine poetry in the form in which the answer came? The rising cloud took the shape of "a man's hand," as though to assure the prophet how God saw and heeded the suppliant hand raised to Him in prayer! Daniel was powerless to move the king or reverse his decree; all he could do was to "desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret;" and it was because he could do nothing else, could not even guess at the interpretation, inasmuch as he knew not even the dream - that it became absolutely sure, when both the dream and its meaning were made known, that God had interposed, and so even the heathen king himself saw, felt and confessed.

All through history certain crises have arisen when the help of man was utterly vain. To the formal Christian, the Carnal disciple, the unbelieving soul, this fact, that there is nothing that man could do, makes prayer seem almost a folly, perhaps a farce, a waste of breath. But to those who best know God, man's extremity is God's opportunity, and human helplessness becomes not a reason for the silence of despair, but the argument for praying in faith. Invariably those whose faith in prayer is supernaturally strong are those who have most proved that God has wrought, by their conscious compulsory cessation of all their own efforts as vain and hopeless.

George Muller set out to prove to a half-believing Church and an unbelieving world that God does directly answer prayer; and to do this he purposely abstained from all the ordinary and otherwise legitimate methods of appeal, or of active effort to secure the housing, clothing and feeding of thousands of orphans. Hudson Taylor undertook to put missionaries into Inland China by dependence solely upon God, asking no collections and even refusing them in connection with public meetings, lest such meetings should be construed as appeals for help. He and his co-workers accustomed themselves to lay all wants before the Lord, and to expect the answer, and answer always came and still comes. The study of missionary history reveals the fact that, at the very times when, in utter despair of any help but God's there has been believing prayer, the interposition of God has been most conspicuously seen - how could it be most conspicuous except amid such conditions?

Every church ought to be a prayer circle; but this will not be so long as we wait for the whole Church, as a body, to move together. The mass of professing Christians have too little hold on God to enter heartily into such holy agreement. To all who yearn for a revival of the prayer-spirit we suggest that in every congregation a prayer circle be formed, without regard to numbers. Let any pastor unite with himself any man or woman in whom he discerns marks of peculiar spiritual life and power, and without publicity or any direct effort to enlarge the little company, begin with such to lay before God any matter demanding special Divine guidance and help. Without any public invitation which might draw unprepared people into a formal association - it will be found that the Holy Spirit will enlarge the circle as He fits others, or finds others fit, to enter it - and thus, quietly and without observation, the little company of praying souls will grow as fast as God means it shall. Let a record be kept of every definite petition laid before God - for such a prayer circle should be only with reference to very definite matters - and as God interposes and answers follow let the record of His interposition be carefully kept, that it may become a new inspiration both to praise and to believing prayer. Such a resort to united intercession we have ourselves known to transform a whole church, remove dissensions, rectify errors, secure harmony and unity, and promote Holy Spirit administration and spiritual life and growth beyond all other possible devices. If in any church the pastor is unhappily not a man who could or would lead in such a movement, let two or three disciples who feel the need and have the faith meet and begin, perhaps, by praying for him. In this matter there should be no waiting for anybody else; if there be but one believer who has power with God let such a one begin intercessory prayer. God will bring to the side of such an intercessor, in His own time and way, others whom He has made ready to act as supplicators.

Not long since, in a church in Scotland, a minister suddenly began to preach with unprecedented power. The whole congregation was aroused and sinners marvelously saved. He himself did not understand the new enduement. In a dream of the night it was strangely suggested to him that the whole blessing was traceable to one poor old woman who was stone deaf, but who came regularly to church, and being unable to hear a word, spent all the time in prayer for the preacher and individual hearers. In the biography of Charles G. Finney similar facts are recorded of "Father Nash," Abel Cleary, and others.

Examples might be multiplied indefinitely. But the one thing we would make prominent is this: God is summoning His people to prayer. He wills that "men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting"; that, first of all, supplication, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men. (1 Tim. 2:8.) If this be done first of all, every other most blessed result will follow. God waits to be asked. In Him are the fountains of blessing and He puts at the disposal of His praying saints all their abundance; they are, however, sealed fountains to the ungodly and the unbelieving. There is one key that always unlocks even heaven's gates; one secret that puts connecting channels between those eternal fountains and ourselves. That key, that secret, is prevailing prayer.

God has no greater controversy with His people today than this, that with boundless promises to believing prayer there are so few who actually give themselves unto intercession. This is represented as being a matter even of Divine wonderment:

"And there is none that calleth upon Thy name,

That stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee" (Isa. 64:7).

The very fact that so many disciples, and in so many parts of the world, are forming prayer circles or unions is itself a great incentive to increased and united prayer.

**TRUE PRAYER**

Our Lord taught a great lesson in Matthew 18:19. He said: "If two of you shall agree [symphonize] on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven." The agreement referred to is not that of a mere human covenant, nor even sympathy; it is symphony. Symphony is agreement of sounds in a musical chord, and depends upon fixed laws of harmony. It cannot be secured by any arbitrary arrangement. One cannot lay his fingers accidentally or carelessly upon the keys of a musical instrument and produce symphony of sounds. Such touch may evoke only intolerable discord, unless regulated by a knowledge of the principles of harmony. Nay, there is even a deeper necessity, namely, that the keys touched shall themselves be in tune with the whole instrument. Two conditions, then, are needful; first, that a skilful hand shall put the whole instrument in tune; and then that an equally skilful hand shall touch keys which are capable of producing together what is called "a true chord."

This language evinces Divine design. He is teaching a great lesson on the mystery of prayer, which likewise demands two great conditions; first, that the praying soul shall be in harmony with God Himself; and then that those who unite in prayer shall, because of such unity with Him, be in harmony with each other. There must be, therefore, back of all prevailing supplication and intercession One who, with infinite skill, tunes the keys into accord with His own ear; and then touches them, like a master musician, so that they respond together to His will and give forth the chord which is in His mind.

No true philosophy of prayer can ever be framed which does not include these conditions. Many have false conception of what prayer is. To them it is merely asking for what one wants. But this may be so far from God's standard as to lack the first essentials of prayer. It may be asking something to consume it upon our own lusts. We are to ask "in the name" of Christ. But that is not simply using His name in prayer. The name is the nature; it expresses the character, and is equivalent to the person. To ask in Christ's name is to come to God, as identified with the very person of Christ. A wife makes a purchase in her husband's name. Literally, she uses his name, not her own. She says, "I am Mrs. A ," which means, "I am his wife,identified with his personality, character, wealth, commercial credit, and business standing." To go to God in Christ's name is to claim identity with Christ as a member of His body, one with Him before the Father, and having in Him a right to the Father's gifts, a right to draw on the Father's infinite resources.

Again, we are told that, if we ask anything "according to His will," He heareth us. But what is asking according to His will but ceasing to ask according to our own self-will? Here the impulse is not human, but essentially Divine. It implies a knowledge of His will, an insight into His own mind, and a sympathy with His purpose. Now is this possible unless by the Holy Spirit we are brought into such fellowship with God as that He can guide us in judgment and yearning, and teach us His way? He is indeed "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," but it is "according to His power which worketh in us." If that power work not in us first, how can it work for us, in answered prayer?

In order to gain higher results, wrought for the Church or the world, in answer to supplication, there must first be deeper results wrought in the believer by the Holy Spirit. In other words, there must be a higher type of personal holiness if there is to be a higher measure of power in prayer. The carnal mind does not fall into harmony with God, does not even see and perceive His mind, and hence the carnally minded disciple cannot discern the will of God in prayer, but is continually hindered and hampered by mistaking self-impelled petitions for divinely inspired prayers, confounding what self-will craves with what is spiritually needful and Scripturally warranted.

God is calling His people to a revival of faith in the Divine efficacy of prayer.

Our Lord teaches us that the prayer of faith has the power of a fiat or a Divine decree. God said sublimely, "Let light be!" and light was. The Lord Jesus Christ says: "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed" - in which, however small, is the possibility and potency of life - "ye shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed; or to this sycamore tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and it shall obey you." This is the language not of petition, but of decree. It is, in some sort, a laying hold on Omnipotence, so that nothing is impossible to the praying soul.

When we reach such heights of teaching and compare them with the low level of our life we are struck dumb with amazement, first at the astounding possibilities of faith, as put before us, and then at the equally astounding impossibilities which unbelief substitutes for the offered omnipotence of supplication. When we think of the possible heights of intercession we seem again to hear the saintly McCheyne crying out: "Do everything in earnest! If it is worth doing, then do it with all your might. Above all, keep much in the presence of God; never see the face of man till you have seen His face." That is the preparation of prayer, prevailing first with God to enable us to prevail with man. Jacobi must have been thinking along these lines when he said: "My watchword, and that of my reason, is not I, but One who is more and better than I; One who is entirely different from what I am - I mean God. I neither am, nor care to be, If He is not!" It is prayer that makes God real - the highest reality and verity; and that sends us back into the world with the conviction and consciousness that He is, and is in us, mighty to work in us, and through us, as instruments, so that nothing shall be Impossible to the instrument, because of the Workman, back of it, who holds and wields the weapon.

The power of such prayer defies all competition or imitation by the most perfect forms of liturgy. Who can copy or canvass the imprisoned flame of a priceless gem with mere brush and pigments! Or counterfeit the photosphere of the sun with yellow chalk! There is a flame of God which prayer lights within; there is a glow and light and heat in the life which can be kindled only by a coal from the golden altar which is before the throne. It is only the few who find their way thither and know the enkindling power; but to those few the Church and the world owe mighty upheavals and outpourings. (Rev. 8.)

Chemical galvanism possesses this peculiarity, that an increase of its powers cannot be gained by increasing the dimensions of the cells of the battery, but can be by increasing their number. We need more intercessors if we are to have greatly increased power. The number of cells must be increased. More of God's people must learn to pray. The foes are too many for a few to cope with them, however empowered of God. The variety of human want and woe, the scattered millions of the unsaved, the wide territory to be covered with intercession - all these and other like considerations demand multiplied forces. Each human being has only a very limited knowledge of human need. Our individual circle of acquaintance is so comparatively narrow that even the most prayerful spirit cannot survey the whole field. But when in all parts of the destitute territory supplicators multiply, even these narrow circles, placed side by side and largely overlapping, cover the whole broad field of need. Our own personal and limited knowledge and range of intelligent sympathy meet and touch similar and sympathetic souls, so that what we do not see or feel or pray for, appeals to others of our fellow disciples; and so, in proportion as the intercessors multiply, every interest of mankind finds its representatives in the secret place and at the throne.

We cannot make up for lack of praying by excess of working. In fact working without praying is a sort of practical atheism, for it leaves out God. It is the prayer that prepares for work, that arms us for the warfare, that furnishes us for the activity. It behooves us, studying intently the promises to prayer, to say unto the Lord: "This being Thy word, I will henceforth live as a man of prayer and claim my privilege and use my power as an intercessor."

Here is the highest identification with the Son of God, It is almost being admitted to a sort of fellowship in His mediatorial work! During this dispensation His work is mainly intercession. He calls us to take a subordinate pan in the holy office, standing, like Phinehas, between the living and the dead to stay the plague; like Elijah, between heaven and earth to unlock heaven's flood-gates of blessing and command the fire and flood of God! Is this true? Then what can be more awful and august than such dignity and majesty of privilege! Ignatius welcomes the Numidian lion in the arena, saying: "I am grain of God; I must be ground between the teeth of lions to make bread for God's people." He felt in the hour of martyrdom the privilege of joining his dying Lord in a sacrifice that Bushnell would call "vicarious."

Who will join the risen Lord in a service of intercession? The greatest difficulty in the way of practical conversion of men may not be in God's eyes so much a barrier of ungodliness among the heathen as a barrier of unbelief among His own disciples!

The sixteenth century was great in painters, the seventeenth in philosophers, the eighteenth in writers, the nineteenth in preachers and inventors; God grant that the twentieth may be forever historically memorable as the century of intercessors.