

but his trouble was spoken of. As far as I know, the healing has been permanent. In one, perhaps two, cases there has been a slight relapse, but that merely temporary. In no case has the individual asked for help more than three times in all. Where the sickness has been due to sin, or the patient has not asked for the removal of the sin, sometimes the fight has been protracted. But the sin must go if the work is continued, as the result is due to the action of God. When the sin goes it will be found that the sickness has gone. "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them" (John 20:23). "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (I John 3:8).

"Greater Works."¹—To change the thoughts of the mass of mankind from dwelling upon evil, and even from a fatal contemplation of a material world, with its false laws of imagined necessities, to the true thoughts of the allness of good as the law of all cause and effect, the living Principle of existence, is the greatest of all work to be done to-day.

THE EVOLUTION OF PRAYER

*"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast"* (James Montgomery).

As with everything else in this self-destructive material world, there has, fortunately, been a steady continual evolution in prayer. Archdeacon Wilberforce, in *There is no Death*, quotes the following:—

"God is God from the creation,
Truth alone is man's salvation,
But the God that now you worship,
Soon shall be your God no more;
For the soul in its unfolding,
Ever more its thought remoulding,
Learns more truly in its progress
How to love and to adore."

The attenuated answers to prayer have been as a rule merely the result of human "picturing," and there are many statements in the Bible showing the result of this so-called thinking. Jesus made this perfectly clear, and his enunciation of the so-called law is repeated at least five times: Luke 17, verse 6; Matthew 17, verse 20; Matthew 21, verses 21, 22; Mark 9, verse 23; and 11, verse 23.

Material Gods.—In olden times man worshipped a multiplicity of gods—constellations, fire, earth, air, or water, animals, even so-called inanimate objects, such as trees and plants, which ultimately evolved into the worship of relics, pictures, etc. These ancient gods had usually the ordinary characteristics of the human race, and were both so-called good and evil. The same gods are still believed to have power over man, as is testified to, every time anyone says, "The fire burns me," "the earth can bury out of sight," "the air stifles," "water drowns," "the trees crush,"

¹ See John 14, verse 12.

“the plant poisons,” “the relics heal,” “the pictures delight me.” Whether man’s prayers were answered, simply depended upon the belief of the suppliant in the result of his prayer. This is still the case with mistaken prayers.

- 5 This worship was classified under three heads: (1) mere adoration or prostration in token of submission; (2) asking, sometimes as a favour, sometimes as a right; (3) definite action, sometimes involving gifts, sometimes merely sacrifice of time or position with the object of currying favour. The material forms of bowing down to these false gods can now be finally,
10 because scientifically, destroyed.

Semi-human Gods.—Semi-human gods were merely a kind of human being with supposed divine powers, for instance Jehovah, a jealous god of hate and of love, who revenged himself on his enemies; the heathen gods of mythology, such as Moloch, Jupiter, and their counterparts in
15 Eastern countries.

Their worship was usually in two forms: (1) asking as a favour or in return for some act of homage; (2) acts which usually took the form of sacrifice, sometimes of human beings, sometimes of animals, and sometimes merely the laying of gifts on the altar with the object of propitiating
20 the deity and preventing it harming the suppliant. These gifts were usually taken for the priests’ use.

When official Christianity took the place of paganism, the so-called Christians worshipped saints and other human beings, some dead, some
25 alive. They even went back to their inanimate gods, and worshipped bones, relics, pictures, etc. The belief in such gods led to the tyranny, intolerance, and bloodshed that disgraced the Christian religion in the Middle Ages.

Anthropomorphic God.—This, the god of the nineteenth century, had not lost the human qualities which tainted the ideas of the early
30 barbarians, and was very little better than the idea of the god that appreciated the prayers ground out in a praying-machine in the East. According to our forefathers, God was a revengeful god, and not only slew Saul and many others, but required a human sacrifice in the shape of His “dearly beloved Son, Christ Jesus.” In addition, He did not always hear the suppliants, and used evil as a method of making people good, even if
35 He did not use it as a means of punishing the beings He was believed to have so inefficiently created that they were capable of, and in fact could not help, sinning. He is even said to have foretold that people were going to sin, and then eternally punished them for what they could not help doing. Many, indeed, believed that He created evil, taking literally Isaiah’s words
40 in chapter 45, verse 7, “I . . . create evil,” not discerning its spiritual or scientific interpretation. They failed to see that when the action of God leads to an understanding of what constitutes sin, often that which seemed good to the unenlightened thought, is recognised as evil and thus becomes wilful sin.

45 So, in the period of systematic destruction of the material misconception, the human ideal, always rising and continually reaching out to this higher standard, eventually ultimates in total elimination, not only of sin, but of every false belief, and, finally, of every belief in limitation.

The One God.—“*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*” (James 5:16).

The worship of the one God, although closely allied to the anthropomorphic god, is of a higher order:—

(1) Asking, the prayer being answered if the human belief in the response was sufficient. This form of prayer is dangerous, and to my personal knowledge has led to many serious troubles, physical, so-called “mental,” and moral, due to the suppliant forming his own concept of the material results to ensue. Without irreverence, we may call this teaching God His business. “We know not what we should pray for as we ought” (Rom. 8:26). “For who knoweth what is good for man in this life?” (Eccles. 6:12). “Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him” (Matt. 6:8).

When a man says: “Please God take away my headache,” if he thinks of God his headache is very slightly diminished. When he says, “take away my headache,” it is made worse by his thinking that he has a headache, and so intensifying the thought. When, however, he thought of God, he was permanently a little less liable to headaches, whereas the intensification was only temporary and did no permanent harm. If he thinks strongly enough that the headache is going, there is a hypnotic effect reducing the headache. This is of no permanent value.

A well-known leader in the religious world told me that numerous men of the highest possible moral character, having given up their lives to religious teaching, had absolutely “gone to the devil” through the belief that they were being led by God in response to their prayers, by which they had ignorantly brought about their own personal desires. How can a method of prayer that leads to such results possibly be right? It was easy to explain the essential difference of realising that the real or spiritual man is always led by God, and that the material counterfeit man cannot be, as it is always “of the devil,” however good it may appear to be.

(2) Asking and believing that the prayer would only be answered if it were good for the individual or institution prayed for. This, the way in which a great many orthodox Christians of the earnest thinking type pray, is a great step in advance, and if a man could eliminate the preliminary recognition of the evil it would be a safe though limited method. It, however, “brings the seeker into closer proximity with divine Love,”¹ and is one of the foundation stones upon which our loved English Church has been built, and by means of which it has weathered the storms with which evil has endeavoured to wreck it. The steadily advancing tide of enlightened thought is now leading the Church out of its early stages into the infinite unfoldment of an ever-present God.

(3) Contemplation of God. This contemplation of higher ideals marked again a great step and has led to many beautiful results. “The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us” (Rom. 8:26). Many evidences of the value of

¹ Mary Baker Eddy.

this form of prayer are found in the lives of the mystics and such men as Brother Lawrence and St. Francis of Assisi. "Let all our employment be to know God. . . . He is with us; seek Him not elsewhere" (Brother Lawrence, Fifteenth Letter).

5 "When a man turns toward God the thick cloud of error which deprived him of vision is quickly withdrawn from before him . . . truth uses the word as a goad, and smites the slumberers and awakens them, and when they are awake they look at the truth and also understand it; they hear and distinguish *that which is, from that which is not* . . . let not that which is
10 only made be put in by thee in the place of him who is not made, but let him, the everliving God, *be constantly present to thy mind* . . . why the body exists, and why it falls to decay, and why it continues, thou canst not know until thou hast raised thy head from this sleep in which thou hast sunk, and hast opened thine eyes and seen that God is one. . . . Therefore
15 (it is that) thou dost wallow on the ground before demons *and shadows*, and asketh vain petitions from that which has not anything to give" (Melito to Antonius Cæsar, about A.D. 150). The italics are not in the original.

The One True God.—"As soon as we are with God in faith and love,
20 we are in prayer" (Fénélon).

Lastly we come to the worship of the one true God, the God of whom to think is a revelation of celestial bliss, when we begin to understand Him. Even here we must differentiate our prayers, because at the present time there are three different degrees of this method of prayer, all good and
25 effective, but differing very appreciably in results.

(1) Meditation on God. We have learnt that contemplation, "looking attentively," is not sufficient; we have to meditate or "consider thoroughly" and let our understanding of God lead to the knowledge of God that is eternal life. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee
30 the only true God" (John 17:3). Millions of earnest men and women of differing religious beliefs are now striving daily to obtain the highest knowledge of God that they know is necessary, and thereby daily obtaining answers to their prayers.

(2) Affirmation of truth. Hundreds of thousands of these have advanced
35 beyond meditation to affirmation; that is, knowing that they are spiritual beings in heaven now, and claiming their God-given birthright, their freedom from sin, sickness, worries, and troubles of every kind, their spiritual at-one-ment or unity with God that Jesus persistently taught. This, whilst benefiting the individual, is a comparatively selfish form of
40 prayer, and the evolution of sufficient purity was necessary to fit man to receive the revelation that came to the world forty-four years ago. Jesus said, nearly two thousand years ago: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16:12).

(3) The denial and affirmation. Man now wields the two-edged sword
45 of Truth, and so becomes a clearer channel through which God acts instantly a channel for—the denial, symbolised in the Bible as the Angel Michael,

which is the destruction of evil, and the affirmation or realisation, as the Angel Gabriel, which results in the purification of the human consciousness, whereby it becomes a still clearer channel for the denial of evil, or action of God in bringing the so-called material world to an end.

When we know how thus to pray, we have to "watch and pray," and "pray without ceasing." That is, the thoughts have to be watched with the alertness of a faithful watch-dog guarding a house. Every wrong thought has to be pounced upon and reversed. Every time we do this it becomes easier. "And many strokes, though with a little axe, Hew down and fell the hardest-timbered oak" (Shakespeare).

We must not do this from a material standpoint. We have to live in the presence of God, to be continually thinking of the perfect world that is here around us. Continually think of the perfect God and His perfect action; dwell with reverential thought on God as Mind and all things as being good and spiritual. Lose all sense of material self in the realisation of the spiritual selfhood of God, and thus become a channel through which God works. Our progress depends upon the number of seconds during the twenty-four hours in which we are so realising Truth, and in this way, and this way only, by deep, holy, systematic thinking, do we reach an ever fuller realisation of the kingdom of heaven.

"Ye are not yet out of gunshot, . . . set your faces like a flint, for you have all powers in heaven and on earth on your side" (John Bunyan). An ecclesiastical leader, in a letter to me, writes: "The night of materialism is far spent, and the dawn of the new heaven and the new earth is breaking; but we may hasten the coming of the day of God, if, amid the delusions of the present, we live in, and affirm, the eternal and divine." "He that believeth on me [the Christ], the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12), and yet as Mr. Edward Kimball has said: "Our race appears to be one long monotone of petition to God and everything else, in order that it may be delivered." Can it be pretended that in the past we have understood the teachings of Jesus the Christ?

FAITH-HEALING

"Paracelsus made a broader discovery than that [of mental effect] three hundred years before Braid was born; for he distinctly intimated that a false belief, however induced, is just as efficacious for therapeutic purposes as a true one—'Faith' being the sole condition precedent; and Pomponazzi, in the sixteenth century, gave utterance to an expression of identical import"¹ (T. J. Hudson).

Sir Clifford Allbutt, K.C.B., M.D., F.R.S., Regius Professor of Physic, University of Cambridge, writes: "It is true, no doubt, that the solitary and disconsolate heart, closed to common circumstance, may be more susceptible to other appeals, may offer less resistance; so that, as we have

¹ *The Law of Mental Medicine.*