THE TOUCH OF THE UNSEEN

ANSWERS TO PRAYER

JOHN DOUGALL AND CO.

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W. Boyd Carpenter and Theodore L. Cuyler and John Watson and Knox Little and William Quarrier

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In Answer to Prayer

By

THE RIGHT REV. THE BISHOP OF RIPON, THE REV. DR. CUYLER, THE REV. DR. JOHN WATSON ("IAN MACLAREN"), THE REV. CANON KNOX LITTLE, MR. WILLIAM QUARRIER, MR. L. K. SHAW, THE REV. DR. HORTON, THE REV. H. PRICE HUGHES, THE REV. DR. CLIFFORD, AND

THE DEAN OF SALISBURY

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PREFATORY NOTE

The following pages were originally written for the SUNDAY MAGAZINE. *In their present form it is hoped that they will reach another and not less appreciative public.*

Although Dr. Watson's contribution is of a character quite distinct from the other papers, it treats of a phase of religious experience so closely allied to that of answered prayer that it seems in the present collection to serve as a stage of transition from the sphere of the unseen and spiritual to that of the visible and tangible.

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I

By the Right Rev.
W. BOYD CARPENTER, D.D.
Lord Bishop of Ripon

I HAVE been asked to write some thoughts on answers to prayer. I am afraid that I cannot give from personal experience vivid and striking anecdotes such as others have chronicled. God does not deal with all alike, either in His gifts of faith or in those of experience. We differ also in the use we make of His gifts. But if I mistake not the object of these papers is not merely to gather together an array of startling experiences, but rather to unite in conference on the great subject of prayer and the answers to prayer.

No doubt every Christian spirit holds within his memory many cherished experiences of God's dealings with him, and these must touch the question of prayer. But the greater part of these experiences belong to that sanctuary life of the soul which, rightly or wrongly, we keep veiled from the world. There are some matters which would lose their charm if they were made public property. There is a reticence which is of faith, just as there may be a reticence which is of cowardice or unfaith. But like the little home treasures, which we only open to look upon when we are alone, so are some of the secret treasures of inward experiences. Nevertheless, none of us can have lived and thought without meeting with a sort of general confirmation or otherwise of the efficacy of prayer; and though I cannot chronicle positive and striking examples, I can say what I have known.

I have known men of a naturally timid and sensitive disposition who have grown at moments lion-like in courage, and they would tell you that courage came to them in prayer. I have known one man, who found himself face to face with a duty which was unexpected and from which he shrank with all his soul. I have known that such a one has prayed that the duty might not be pressed upon him, and yet that, if it were, he might be given strength to fulfil it. The duty still confronted him. In trembling and in much dismay he undertook it; and when the hour came, it found him calm and equable in spirit, neither dismayed nor demoralised by fears. Such a one might not tell of great outward answers to prayer; but inward answers are not less real. At any rate, the Psalmist chronicled an answer such as this when he wrote: "In the day when I cried Thou answeredst me and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul" (Psalm cxxxviii. 3).

There is, further, a paradox of Christian experience which may be noted. The soul which waits upon God finds out sooner or later that the prayers which seem to be unanswered are those which may be most truly answered. For what is the answer to prayer which the praying heart looks for? There is no true prayer without the proviso—Nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt. In other words, there is no true prayer without reliance upon the greater wisdom and greater love of Him to whom we pray. Thus it is that God's answer may not be the answer as we looked for it. We form our expectations: they take shape from our poor little limited surroundings; but the prayer in its spirit may be wider than we imagine. To answer it according to our expectations might be not to answer it truly. To answer it according to our real meaning —*i.e.*, according to our spiritual desire—must be the true answer to prayer.

One illustration will suffice. A man, pressed by difficulty and straitness, may pray that he may be moved to some place of greater freedom and ease. He thinks that he ought to move elsewhere. He prays for

guidance and the openings of God's providence. In a short time a vacant post presents itself: he applies for it, it is just the thing he wished for. He continues his prayers. The post is given to another. His prayers have not been answered: such is his conclusion; but is not the answer really—"Not yet—not yet—wait awhile. My grace is sufficient for thee"? He waits; he leaves his life in God's hands. After an interval another opening occurs, and almost without an effort he is moved to the vacant place. It is this time, perhaps, not the kind of place he thought of; it is less interesting, it is more onerous, it fills him with fear as he undertakes its duties. He has prayed, but the answer came not as he wished or thought or hoped. The years go by. He looks back from the vantage-ground of distance. He can measure his life in better proportions. He sees now that the movements of his life have a deep meaning. He perceives that to have gone where he wished to have gone, and even where he prayed to be placed, would have been to miss some of the best experiences and highest trainings of this life. He begins to realise that there is not a spot which he has visited, not a place where he has toiled, which has not brought to him lessons that have been most helpful, nay, even needful, in his later life. He sees that God has sent him here or there to fit him for work which, unknown and unexpected in his earlier days, the future was to bring.

The least-answered prayer may be the most-answered. It is the realisation that experiences fit us for the duties of later life which yields to us the assurance that in the deepest sense our seemingly disregarded prayers have been most abundantly remembered before God. Thus, indeed, we can enter into the spirit of familiar words and acknowledge concerning each prayer that it is

> "Goodness still,
> Which grants it or denies."

And so it may come to pass in later life that our specific petitions for this or that thing may grow fewer. We may realise more and more our own ignorance in asking. We may rely more and more on the divine wisdom in giving. Even in the case of others we may recognise the unwisdom of asking many things on their behalf. Our love would tenderly shield them from rough winds and bitter hours. We pray that the divine love would spare them dark days; and yet, are the prayers well prayed? Does God not lead souls through darkness into light? Is not the Valley of the Shadow the precursor of the table of love which God spreads? Can the head be anointed with God's kingly oil which has not been bowed down in the darkness? Ah! how little we know! how short-sighted we are! And how great and full and strong God's love is! And, this being so, may not experience bring us larger trust and lesser prayers—not less, indeed, in intensity, not less in the wrestling of spirit; not less in the striving to reach nearer to God's will, but less in the number and specific character of our petitions? To put it another way—the petitions are fewer because the prayer is deeper and truer.

> "Not my weak longings, Lord, fulfil,
> But rather do Thy perfect will,
> For I am blind and wish for things
> Which granted bring heart-festerings.
> Let me but know that I am blind,
> Let me but trust Thee wondrous kind."

II

By the Rev.
THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D.
of New York

ALL of God's mighty men and women have been mighty in prayer. When Martin Luther was in the mid-valley of his conflict with the man of sin he used to say that he could not get on without three hours a day in prayer. Charles G. Finney's grip on God gave him a tremendous grip on sinners' hearts. The greatest preacher of our times—Spurgeon—had pre-eminently the "gift of the knees;" the last prayer I ever heard him utter (at his own family worship) was one of the most wonderful that I ever listened to; it revealed the hiding of his power. Abraham Lincoln once said: "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go; my own wisdom and that of all around me seemed insufficient for the day."

But what is prayer? Has every prayer power with God? Let us endeavour to get some clear ideas on that point. Some people seem to regard prayer as the rehearsal of a set form of solemn words, learned largely from the Bible or a liturgy; and when uttered they are only from the throat outward. Genuine prayer is a believing soul's *direct converse with* God. Phillips Brooks has condensed it into four words—a "true wish sent Godward." By it, adoration, thanksgiving, confession of sin, and petition for mercies and gifts ascend to the throne, and by means of it infinite blessings are brought down from heaven. The pull of our prayer may not move the everlasting throne, but—like the pull on a line from the bow of a boat—it may draw us into closer fellowship with God, and fuller harmony with His wise and holy will.

1. This is the first characteristic of the prayer that has power: "Delight thyself in the Lord and He shall give thee the desires of thy heart." A great many prayers are born of selfishness and are too much like dictation or command. None of God's promises are unconditional; and we have no such assets to our credit that we have a right to draw our cheques and demand that God shall pay them. The indispensable quality of all right asking is a *right spirit toward our heavenly Father*. When a soul feels such an entire submissiveness towards God that it delights in seeing Him reign, and His glory advanced, it may fearlessly pour out its desires; for then the desires of God and the desires of that sincere submissive soul will *agree*. God loves to give to them who love to let Him have His way; they find their happiness in the chime of their own desires with the will of God.

James and John once came to Jesus and made to Him the amazing request that He would place one of them on His right hand and the other on His left hand when He set up His imperial government at Jerusalem! As long as these self-seeking disciples sought only their own glory, Christ could not give them the askings of their ambitious hearts. By-and-by, when their hearts had been renewed by the Holy Spirit, and they had become so consecrated to Christ that they were in complete chime with Him, they were not afraid to pour out their deepest desires. James declares that, if we do not "ask *amiss*," God will "give liberally." John declares that "whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." Just as soon as those two Christians found their supreme happiness in Christ and His cause they received the desires of their hearts.

2. The second trait of prevailing prayer is that it aims at a mark, and knows what it is after. When we enter a store or shop we ask the salesman to hand us the particular article we want. There is an enormous amount of pointless, prayerless praying done in our devotional meetings; it begins with nothing and ends nowhere. The model prayers mentioned in the Bible were short and right to the mark. "God be merciful to

me a sinner!" "Lord, save me!" cries sinking Peter. "Come down, ere my child die!" exclaims the heart-stricken nobleman. Old Rowland Hill used to say, "I like short, ejaculatory prayer; it reaches heaven before the devil can get a shot at it."

3. In the next place, the prayer that has power with God must be a *prepaid* prayer. If we expect a letter to reach its destination we put a stamp on it; otherwise it goes to the Dead-letter Office. There is what may be called a Dead-prayer Office, and thousands of well-worded petitions get buried up there. All of God's promises have their conditions; we must comply with those conditions, or we cannot expect the blessings coupled with the promises. No farmer is such an idiot as to look for a crop of wheat unless he has ploughed and sowed his fields. In prayer, we must first be sure that we are doing our part if we expect God to do His part. There is a legitimate sense in which every Christian should do his utmost for the answering of his own prayers. When a certain venerable minister was called on to pray in a missionary convention he first fumbled in his pocket, and when he had tossed the coin into the plate he said, "I cannot pray until I have given something." He prepaid his prayer. For the Churches in these days to pray, "Thy kingdom come," and then spend more money on jewellery and cigars than in the enterprise of Foreign Missions, looks almost like a solemn farce. God has no blessings for stingy pockets. When I hear requests for prayer for the conversion of a son or daughter, I say to myself, How much is that parent doing to win that child for Christ? The godly wife who makes her daily life attractive to her husband has a right to ask God for the conversion of that husband; she is co-operating with the Holy Spirit, and prepaying her heart's request. God never defaults; but He requires that we prove our faith by our works, and that we never ask for a blessing that we are not ready to labour for, and to make any sacrifice to secure the blessing which our souls desire.

4. Another essential of the prayer that has power with God is that it be the prayer of faith, and be offered in the name of Jesus Christ. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." The chief "wrestling" that we are to do is not with any reluctance on God's part; it is with the obstacles which sin and unbelief put in our pathway. What God orders we must submit to uncomplainingly; but we must never submit to what God can better. Never submit to be blocked in any pious purpose or holy undertaking if, with God's help, you can roll the blocks out of your pathway. The faith that works while it prays commonly conquers; for such faith creates such a condition of things that our heavenly Father can wisely hear and help us. Oh, what a magnificent epic the triumphs of striving, toiling, victorious faith make! The firmament of Bible story blazes with answers to prayer, from the days when Elijah unlocked the heavens on to the days when the petitions in the house of John Mark unlocked the dungeon, and brought liberated Peter into their presence. The whole field of providential history is covered with answered prayers as thickly as bright-eyed daisies cover our Western prairies. Find thy happiness in pleasing God, and sooner or later He will surely grant thee the desires of thy heart.

III

By the Rev.

JOHN WATSON, M.A., D.D.

("Ian Maclaren")

DURING the course of my ministry, and especially of recent years, I have been moved to certain actions for which there seemed no reason, and which I only performed under the influence of a sudden impulse. As often as I yielded to this inward guidance, and before the issue was determined, my mind had a sense of relief and satisfaction, and in all distinct and important cases my course was in the end most fully justified. With the afterlook one is most thankful that on certain occasions he was not disobedient to the touch of the unseen, and only bitterly regrets that on other occasions he was callous and wilful or was overcome by shame and timidity. What seem just and temperate inferences from such experiences will be indicated after they have been described, and it only remains for me to assure my readers that they are selected from carefully treasured memories, and will be given in as full and accurate detail as may be possible in circumstances which involve other people and one's own private life.

It was my privilege, before I came to Sefton Park Church, to serve as colleague with a venerable minister to whom I was sincerely attached and who showed me much kindness. We both felt the separation keenly and kept up a constant correspondence, while this good and affectionate man followed my work with spiritual interest and constant prayer. When news came one day that he was dangerously ill it was natural that his friend should be gravely concerned, and as the days of anxiety grew, that the matter should take firm hold of the mind. It was a great relief to learn, towards the end of a week, that the sickness had abated, and when, on Sunday morning, a letter came with strong and final assurance of recovery the strain was quite relaxed, and I did my duty at morning service with a light heart. During the afternoon my satisfaction began to fail, and I grew uneasy till, by evening service, the letter of the morning counted for nothing.

After returning home my mind was torn with anxiety and became most miserable, fearing that this good man was still in danger and, it might be, near unto death. Gradually the conviction deepened and took hold of me that he was dying and that I would never see him again, till at last it was laid on me that if I hoped to receive his blessing I must make haste, and by-and-by that I had better go at once. It did not seem as if I had now any choice, and I certainly had no longer any doubt; so, having written to break two engagements for Monday, I left at midnight for Glasgow. As I whirled through the darkness it certainly did occur to me that I had done an unusual thing, for here was a fairly busy man leaving his work and going a long night's journey to visit a sick friend, of whose well-being he had been assured on good authority. By every evidence which could tell on another person he was acting foolishly, and yet he was obeying an almost irresistible impulse.

The day broke as we climbed the ascent beyond Moffat, and I was now only concerned lest time should be lost on the way. On arrival I drove rapidly to the well-known house, and was in no way astonished that the servant who opened the door should be weeping bitterly, for the fact that word had come from that very house that all was going well did not now weigh one grain against my own inward knowledge.

"He had a relapse yesterday afternoon, and he is ... dying now." No one in the room seemed surprised that I should have come, although they had not sent for me, and I held my reverend father's hand till he fell asleep in about twenty minutes. He was beyond speech when I came, but, as we believed, recognised me and was content. My night's journey was a pious act, for which I thanked God, and my absolute conviction is that I was guided to its performance by spiritual influence.

Some years ago I was at work one forenoon in my study, and very busy, when my mind became distracted and I could not think out my sermon. It was as if a side stream had rushed into a river, confusing and discolouring the water; and at last, when the confusion was over and the water was clear, I was conscious

of a new subject. Some short time before, a brother minister, whom I knew well and greatly respected, had suffered from dissension in his congregation and had received our sincere sympathy. He had not, however, been in my mind that day, but now I found myself unable to think of anything else. My imagination began to work in the case till I seemed, in the midst of the circumstances, as if I were the sufferer. Very soon a suggestion arose and grew into a commandment, that I should offer to take a day's duty for my brother. At this point I pulled myself together and resisted what seemed a vagrant notion. "Was such a thing ever heard of,—that for no reason save a vague sympathy one should leave one's own pulpit and undertake the work of another, who had not asked him and might not want him?" So I turned to my manuscript to complete a broken sentence, but could only write "Dear A. B." Nothing remained but to submit to this mysterious dictation and compose a letter as best one could, till the question of date arose. There I paused and waited, when an exact day came up before my mind, and so I concluded the letter. It was, however, too absurd to send; and so, having rid myself of this irrelevancy, I threw the letter into the fire and set to work again; but all day I was haunted by the idea that my brother needed my help. In the evening a letter came from him, written that very forenoon, explaining that it would be a great service to him and his people if I could preach some Sunday soon in his church, and that, owing to certain circumstances, the service would be doubled if I could come on such and such a day; and it was my date! My course was perfectly plain, and I at once accepted his invitation under a distinct sense of a special call, and my only regret was that I had not posted my first letter.

One afternoon, to take my third instance, I made up my list of sick visits and started to overtake them. After completing the first, and while going along a main road, I felt a strong impulse to turn down a side street and call on a family living in it. The impulse grew so urgent that it could not be resisted, and I rang the bell, considering on the doorstep what reason I should give for an unexpected call. When the door opened it turned out that strangers now occupied the house, and that my family had gone to another address, which was in the same street but could not be given. This was enough, it might appear, to turn me from aimless visiting, but still the pressure continued as if a hand were drawing me, and I set out to discover their new house, till I had disturbed four families with vain inquiries. Then the remembrance of my unmade and imperative calls came upon me, and I abandoned my fruitless quest with some sense of shame. Had a busy clergyman not enough to do without such a wild-goose chase?—and one grudged the time one had lost.

Next morning the head of that household I had yesterday sought in vain came into my study with such evident sorrow on his face that one hastened to meet him with anxious inquiries. "Yes, we are in great trouble; yesterday our little one (a young baby) took very ill and died in the afternoon. My wife was utterly overcome by the shock and we would have sent for you at the time but had no messenger. I wish you had been there—if you had only known!"

"And the time?"

"About half-past three."

So I had known, but had been too impatient.

Many other cases have occurred when it has been laid on me to call at a certain house, where there seemed so little reason that I used to invent excuses, and where I found some one especially needing advice or comfort; or I called and had not courage to lead up to the matter, so that the call was of no avail, and afterwards some one has asked whether I knew, for she had waited for a word. Nor do I remember any case where, being inwardly moved to go after this fashion, it appeared in the end that I had been befooled. And so, having stated these facts out of many, I offer three inferences.

(1) That people may live in an atmosphere of sympathy which will be a communicating medium. When some one appears to read another's thoughts, as we have all seen done at public exhibitions, it was evidently by physical signs, and it served no good purpose. It was a mechanical gift and was used for an amusement. *This* is knowledge of another kind, whose conditions are spiritual and whose ends are ethical. Between you and the person there must be some common feeling; it rises to a height in the hour of trouble; and its call is for help. The correspondence here is between heart and heart, and the medium through which the message passes is love.

(2) That this love is but another name for Christ, who is the head of the body; and here one falls back on St. Paul's profound and illuminating illustration. It is Christ who unites the whole race, and especially all Christian folk, by His incarnation. Into Him are gathered all the fears, sorrows, pains, troubles of each member, so that He feels with all, and from him flows the same feeling to other members of the body. He is the common spring of sensitiveness and sympathy, who connects each man with his neighbour and makes of thousands a living organic spiritual unity.

(3) That in proportion as one abides in Christ he will be in touch with his brethren. If it seem to one marvellous and almost incredible that any person should be affected by another's sorrow whom he does not at the moment see, is it not marvellous, although quite credible, that we are so often indifferent to sorrow which we do see? Is it not the case that one of a delicate soul will detect secret trouble in the failure of a smile, in a sub-tone of voice, in a fleeting shadow on the face? "How did he know?" we duller people say. "By his fellowship with Christ" is the only answer. "Why did we not know?" On account of our hardness and selfishness. If one live self-centred—ever concerned about his own affairs, there is no callousness to which he may not yet descend; if one live the selfless life, there is no mysterious secret of sympathy which may not be his. Wherefore if any one desire to live in nervous touch with his fellows, so that their sorrows be his own and he be their quick helper, if he desire to share with Christ the world burden, let him open his heart to the Spirit of the Lord. In proportion as we live for ourselves are we separated from our families, our friends, our neighbours; in proportion as we enter into the life of the Cross we are one with them all, being one with Christ, who is one with God.

IV

By the Rev.
W. KNOX LITTLE, M. A.
Canon of Worcester

PRAYER is a comprehensive word and includes, in fact, all communion between the soul and God. It is, however, commonly used to mean the asking for benefits from God. Christians believe that prayer *is* a power, that it does act in the fulfilment of God's purposes, and that the results of prayer are real results, not only in the spiritual, but also in the physical world. This is no mere matter of opinion, it is part of the Christian faith. For better, for worse, however difficult the doctrine may appear, the Church is committed to it. As in the case of other difficult doctrines, such as the resurrection of the body for instance, she, so to speak, "stakes her reputation" on loyalty to this truth.

The power of prayer is, of course, a mystery, *i.e.*, a truth, but a truth partly concealed, partly plain. To deal with it, therefore, in a mathematical temper rather than a moral temper is absurd if not wrong. Mathematical demonstration cannot be given for moral truth, and is in fact out of court. The bent of mind formed by constant scientific research—good as it is in its own province—sometimes unfits men for moral and theological research. In this way the "difficulties of prayer" are often exaggerated. (1) It is said God knows already; why tell Him? The same objection would apply to many a request on earth. (2) It is said God fore-sees; why try to influence what He knows is sure to be? This objection applies to all our actions; to follow out this we should not only not pray, but also never do anything. We are in face of a mystery. A little humility and obedience to revelation helps us out. It has been truly said that when a practical and a speculative truth are in apparent collision, we must remember our ignorance of a good many things, and act with the knowledge which is given us, on the practical truth.

Prayer, we may remember, is not to change the holy counsels of the Eternal, but to accomplish those ends for which it is an appointed instrument. Anyhow, this is certain, the abundant promises to faithful and persevering prayer are kept, and—where God sees it to be good for us—they are kept to the letter. The following are examples which come within the knowledge of the writer of this paper.

A family, consisting of a number of children, had been brought up by parents who had very "free" ideas as to the divine revelation and the teaching of the Church. The children, varying in age from seven or eight, to one or two and twenty years, had, one way or another, been aroused to the teaching of Scripture and desired to be baptised. The father point-blank refused to permit it. The older members of the family consulted a clergyman. He felt strongly the force of the fifth commandment and advised them not to act in haste, to realise that difficulties do frequently arise from conflicting duties, and above all to pray. The clergyman asked a number of devout Christians to make the matter a subject of prayer. They did. In about three weeks the father called upon this very clergyman and asked him to baptise his children. The clergyman expressed his astonishment, believing that he was opposed to it. The father answered that that was true, but he had changed his mind. He could not say precisely why, but he thought his children ought to be baptised. They were; and he, by his own wish, was present and most devout at the administration of the sacrament of baptism.

A few years ago, a clergyman in London had been invited to visit a friend for one night in the country in order to meet an old friend whom he had not seen for long. It was bitter winter weather and he decided not to go. Walking his parish in the afternoon, he believed that a voice three times urged him to go. He hurriedly changed his arrangements and went. The snow was tremendously deep, and the house of his friend, some miles from the railway station, was reached with difficulty. In the course of the night the clergyman was roused from sleep by the butler, who begged him to go and visit a groom in the service of the family, who was ill and "like to die." Crossing a field path with difficulty, as the snow was very deep, they reached the poor man's house. He had been in agony of mind and longed to see a clergyman. When it was found impossible to fetch the nearest clergyman, owing to the impassable state of the roads, he had prayed earnestly that one might be sent to him. The poor fellow died in the clergyman's arms in the early morning, much comforted and in great peace.

A strangely similar case happened more recently. An American gentleman travelling in Europe was taken suddenly and seriously ill in one of our northern towns. The day before this happened, a clergyman, who was at a distance in the country, was seized with a sudden and unaccountable desire to visit this very town. He had no idea why, but prayed for guidance in the matter, and finally felt convinced that he must go. Having stayed the night there he was about to return home, rather inclined to think himself a very foolish person, when a waiter in the hotel brought him an American lady's card and said that the lady

wished to see him. He was the only English clergyman of whom she and her husband had any knowledge. They had happened to hear him preach in America. She had no idea where he lived, but when her husband was taken ill she and her daughter had prayed that *he* might be sent to them. On inquiry, strange to say, he was found to be in the hotel, and was able to render some assistance to the poor sufferer, who died in a few hours, and to his surviving and mourning relatives.

A still more striking instance, perhaps, is as follows: Some years ago in London a clergyman had succeeded, with the help of some friends, in opening a "home" in the suburbs to meet some special mission needs. It was necessary to support it by charity. For some time all went well. The home at last, however, became even more necessary and more filled with inmates, whilst subscriptions did not increase but rather slackened. The lady in charge wrote to the clergyman as to her needs, and especially drew his attention to the fact that £40 was required immediately to meet the pressing demand of a tradesman. The clergyman himself was excessively poor, and he knew not to whom to turn in the emergency. He at once went and spent an hour in prayer. He then left his house and walked slowly along the streets thinking with himself how he should act. Passing up Regent Street, a carriage drew up in front of Madame Élise's shop, just as he was passing. Out of the carriage stepped a handsomely dressed lady. "Mr. So-and-so, I think," she said when she saw him. "Yes, madam," he answered, raising his hat. She drew an envelope from her pocket and handed it to him, saying: "You have many calls upon your charity, you will know what to do with that." The envelope contained a Bank of England note for £50. The whole thing happened in a much shorter time than it can be related; he passed on up the street, she passed into the shop. Who she was he did not know, and never since has he learnt. The threatening creditor was paid. The "home" received further help and did its work well.

Another example is of a different kind. A person of real earnestness in religious questions, and one who gave time and strength for advancing the kingdom of God, some years ago became restless and unsatisfied in spiritual matters, failing to enjoy peaceful communion with God, and generally upset and uneasy. The advice of a clergyman was asked, and after many conversations on the subject, he urged steady earnest prayer for light, and agreed himself to make the matter a subject of prayer. Within a fortnight, after an earnest midday prayer, it was declared by this troubled soul that it had been clearly borne in upon the mind that the sacrament of baptism had never been received. Enquiry was made, and after much careful investigation it was found that, while every other member of a large family had been baptised, in this case the sacrament had been neglected owing to the death of the mother and the child being committed to the care of a somewhat prejudiced relative. The person in question was forthwith baptised, and immediately there was peace and calmness of mind and a sense of quiet communion with God.

Instances of this kind might be multiplied, but these are, perhaps, sufficient. "In everything," says the Apostle, "by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving (the Eucharist) let your requests be made known unto God." "Cast all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." The power of the "prayer of faith" is astonishing in its efficacy, if souls will only put forth that power. I am able to guarantee, from personal knowledge, the truth and accuracy of the above instances.

V

By Mr.

WILLIAM QUARRIER

FOR twenty-five years it has been with me a continual answer to prayer. The first seven of my service were spent in caring for the rough boys of the streets of Glasgow, but having made a vow, when I was very young, that if God prospered me I should build houses for orphans, I was not satisfied with that work among the bigger boys. Being in business, however, and having a family to maintain, the question of whether I could do more was a difficult one. I was giving eight hours a day to the work, and in the Shoe-black Brigade, the Parcels Brigade, and the Newspaper Brigade had probably about three hundred boys to care for.

While I considered what could be done, a lady from London—Miss Macpherson—called, and in the course of our talk about the little ones, she urged that I should attempt something more than I was doing. For three months I prayed to God for guidance, and in the end resolved that if He sent me £2000, I should embark in the greater work. Nobody knew of that resolution; it was a matter between God and myself. If God wanted me to do more work than I was doing, I felt that He would send me the £2000, not in portions, but in a solid sum. I was then before the public, and I wrote a letter to the newspapers pleading that something more should be done for street children, pointing out that the Poorhouse and the Reformatory were not the best means of helping child-life, and urging that something on the Home or Family system was desirable. There was a strong conviction that God would answer the prayer, and, the terms of the prayer being explicit, I believed the answer would be as unmistakable. After waiting thirteen days the answer came. Amongst my other letters was one from a Scotch friend in London, to the effect that the writer would, to the extent of £2000, provide me with money to buy or rent a house for orphan children. When I received that call I felt that my family interests and my business interests should be second, and that God's work among the children should be first.

To a business man, it was a call to surrender what you would call business tact. I had to rise up there and then, and proclaim in the midst of the commercial city of Glasgow, that from that moment I was to live by faith, and depend on God for money, wisdom and strength. From that time forward I would ask no man for money, but trust God for everything. That £2000 was the first direct answer to prayer for money. He gave me the utmost of my asking, and I felt that I would need to give Him the utmost of the power I pledged.

We rented a common workshop in Renfrew Lane—it was very difficult to get a suitable place—to lodge the children in, and that little place was the first National Home for Orphans in Scotland, and from it has sprung what the visitor may see to-day amongst the Renfrewshire hills. One day, I remember, two boys came in, and we had everything to clothe them with except a jacket for one of them. The matron, a very godly woman, said, "We must just pray that God will send what is needed," and we prayed that He would. That night a large parcel of clothing came from Dumbarton, and in it was a jacket that fitted the boy as if it had been made for him. That was a small thing, of course, but if you don't see God in the gift of a pair of stockings you won't see Him in a gift of £10,000.

We had thirty children in that Home, and we kept praying that the Lord would open a place for us somewhere in the country. A friend called on me and offered to sub-let Cessnock House, with three acres of ground about it. Cessnock Dock has now absorbed the place, and as it was just the very spot we wanted, we accepted. We had room for a hundred boys, and with the help of God we prospered. We had resolved formerly that we would send children to Canada, but it took £10 per head to send them, and we were determined not to get into debt. We had only a few pounds in hand when we took the house in Govan

Road, and it took £200 to alter it. But every night we prayed that the Lord would send money to pay for the alterations. Sums varying from 5s. to £5 came in, but when the bills came to be paid we were short £100. A friend not far from one of my places of business sent for me, and when I called, he said, "How are you getting on at Cessnock?" I said we were getting on nicely, and that we had got £100 towards the alterations. He gave me £100, to my astonishment, for I knew that he could not afford so much, but he said a relative who died in England had left him a fortune, and the money was to help me in the work God had given me to do. In that answer you see how God works mysteriously to accomplish His purpose and help those who put their trust in Him.

God gives us great help in dealing with the wayward, wilful boys of the Home. They are generally lads who have known no control; but we are able, with God's blessing on our efforts, to get them to do almost anything that is wanted, without strap or confinement or threat. To hear boys who used to curse and swear praying to God, and to see them helping other boys in the Home, is to me the most encouraging feature of the work God has given me to do. Whilst I sought to clothe and educate them, I left God to deal with them in their spirits; and to-day the result of the spiritual work amongst the boys and girls of Glasgow exceeds anything I ever expected.

I still thought of the emigration scheme, and in 1872 we had sixty children that were able to go to Canada. Of course it meant £600 to send them, and we had the necessary money except £70 in the end of June. We prayed on that God would send the balance before the day of sailing, 2nd July. A friend called at one of my places of business to see me, and subsequently I had an interview with him. He gave me £50, and said it was from one who did not wish the name mentioned. "What shall I put it to?" I asked. "Anything you like," he said. "We are short of £70 for the emigration of our first band of children to Canada, and if you like I shall put it to that." "Do so," he said; and as the man left I saw God's hand in the gift that had been made. When I went home that night I found amongst my letters one in which was enclosed £10 "to take a child to Canada," and the post on the following morning brought two five-pound notes from other friends, making up exactly at the moment it was needed the sum I had asked God to give.

In addition to the Homes, we carried on mission work amongst the lapsed masses, and, as in the case of the Homes, we were firmly resolved to do everything by prayer and supplication. I rented an old church at the head of the Little Dovehill, just where the Board school stands now, as a hall, but we did not have the whole of it. At the level of the gallery another floor had been introduced, and while we occupied the upper flat, a soap manufacturer occupied the lower. In a way it was a trial of faith to go up those stairs past the soap work into our hall. We wanted to open the place free of debt, and the money for the alterations came in gradually. I remember putting it to the Lord to send a suitable evangelist if He wished the work to go on. At that time—twenty-four years ago—we heard a lot of Joshua Poole and his wife, who were having great blessing in London, and I thought that they were just the people to reach the working classes. But as I had convictions about women preaching,—which, by the way, I have not now,—I asked the Lord to send £50 to cover the expense for a month if it were His will that these friends should come to Glasgow and preach nightly during that period. I left it to God to decide whether we should ask these friends or not, and I had the assurance—the assurance of faith,—that the money would come. When I went home that night I found that a friend had called at one of my places of business and left fifty one-pound notes without knowing my mind and without knowing I needed it.

After that I felt that God was going to work a great work amongst the lapsed masses of Glasgow, and He did so. For six months we rented the Scotia Music Hall on Sabbath evenings, and instead of a month the evangelists were six in the city conducting services every night. When they left, ten thousand people gathered on the Green to bid them farewell. Hundreds were led to the Saviour.

After a number of years' work in Glasgow with the Girls' Home, in Govan with the Boys' Home, and with the Mission premises, the need of a farm became great. I prayed for money to purchase a farm of about fifty acres, three miles or so from Glasgow. It was to have a burn running through it, good drainage, and everything necessary. I was anxious to get this burn for the children to paddle in and fish in; but I feel now that at the time I was rebellious against God in fixing the site so near Glasgow. We visited a dozen places, but the cost was so great that I was fairly beaten. God had shut up every door.

A friend met me on the street, and asked if I had seen the farm in Kilmalcolm Parish that was to be sold. I replied that I had not, and that I considered the place too far away. In talking over the matter, he persuaded me to go and see the farm, and when I did go, and, standing where our big central building is now, saw that it had everything I prayed for,—perfect drainage, and not only the burn, but a river and a large flat field for a recreation ground,—I said in my heart to the Lord: "This will do." Ever since I have blessed the Lord for that; my way was not God's way, and so He shut us in amongst these Renfrewshire hills, away from the ways of men.

After paying £3,560 for the farm, we had about £1,500 left, and in 1887 we began to build a church and school, to cost £5,000. I told the contractor that we should stop if the money did not come in; but it kept coming in, and the work went on. In 1888 I had resolved to go to Canada with the party of children going out that year, and I saw clearly that I would need to stop the contractors if I got no more money in the interval, for I was still £1400 short. Yet I believed the Lord would send the money before I left in the latter end of May, though the time I write of was as far on as the middle of the month. I kept praying, and the assurance was strong that the money would come. Just three days before the date on which I was to sail, a friend came to me, and said it had been laid upon his heart to build one of the cottages at Bridge-of-Weir, but the Lord, he thought, would accept the money for the central building just as much as though it were put into houses, and he handed me £1300.

All the money belonging to the Homes and all my own was in the City of Glasgow Bank when it failed, and hundreds of the givers were involved as well. On my way up from the Homes on the day of the disaster, a gentleman met me, and told me the sad news. At the moment I realised what the news meant for me—my own personal loss and the needs of the Homes—for that was in September, and our financial year closed in October. With all our money locked up, to clear the year without debt would be difficult, but then the promise of God came: "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my salvation."

There and then I prayed that God would help me through, and that during the course of the following year, which I saw would be one of financial distress all over Scotland, He would double the gifts to us. The result was that we were able to clear our financial accounts with ease at the end of October, and in the year following, when every church in Scotland, and every philanthropic work had less money than they needed, the Orphan Homes had double what they required. In that God honoured my trust.

Our first church at Bridge-of-Weir only held four hundred, and by-and-by it was too small for us. I prayed that the Lord would give us a new church to hold one thousand people, and to cost something like £5000. We felt that we would get that money, and that we would get it in one sum because we had asked God to lay it on the heart of somebody to build the church. After a year of waiting and praying, a friend came to me in the street one day, and said, "I'm going to build you that church you want. Do you know what it will cost?" "Yes," I replied. "£5000" "Well," said my friend, "you shall get the money when you want it."

It was a new song of praise to God that day, I can tell you, and we went on to build our church. Now, even it we find too small, and we are praying to the Lord for £2500 to enlarge the building, and enable us to accommodate five hundred more worshippers.

I thought that, having got the church, we might, as we were building a tower to hold the tank for our water supply, also get a clock and chimes to enliven the village. So we prayed that the Lord would send money for that purpose. I thought that about £500 or £600 would be sufficient. While the building was going on, we prayed for the money, and I was certain it would come. The architect was hurrying me and pointing out that if the clock and bells were really to go into the tower, the work must be done at once. I told him there was no fear that the money would not come. If the money had not come, and the tower was completed, the placing of the clock and bells at a later period would have mean practically taking down and rebuilding, because with our water tank in position, the work would have been impossible. My architect kept bothering me, but I was sure the money would come, and one night I went home and found a cheque for £200—£1500 to build a house, and £500 for the clock and bells. The clock and bells cost £800, and the lady who sent the money paid the additional £300.

A village like our Homes, with 1200 of a population, needed a good water supply for sanitary purposes. For a very long time we depended on a well, and stored the water in tanks, but frequently the supply fell short, and we felt that if we could get the proprietors in the upper district—none of the surrounding proprietors, by the way, had ever taken much interest in the work of the Homes—to give us the privilege of bringing water into the grounds, we should be able to do much to improve that state of matters. Sir Michael Shaw Stewart gave us the right to use our own burn higher up for the purpose, and gave us a piece of ground at a nominal rent of 12s. a year, for a reservoir and filter, but the money to carry out the work was not in hand, and we prayed to the Lord to send us from £1200 to £1400, which we anticipated would be the cost of the undertaking.

Some time later a lady called at James Morrison Street (Glasgow), and left word that an old woman who lived in Main Street, Gorbals, wished to see me. On the following day I called at the address given, and found the person who had sent for me. She was an old woman living in a single apartment, and she was very ill and weak. "Are you Mr. Quarrier?" she asked. I said I was. "Ye were once puir yersel'," she went on; "I was once a puir girl with naebody to care for me, and was in service when I was eleven years old. I have been thankful for a' the kindness that has been shown me in my life."

She went to a chest of drawers in the corner of the apartment, and after a little came and gave me two deposit receipts on the Savings Bank, each for £200 and on neither of which any interest had been drawn for twenty years. When I cashed them I received £627.

I said "Janet"—Janet Stewart was her name—"are you not giving me too much?" "Na, na, I've plenty mair, an' ye'll get it a' when I dee."

We did the best we could for Janet, but she did not live much longer. Within a week I received a telegram that Janet was dead, and she had died, I was told, singing "Just as I am without one plea."

In her will she left several sums to neighbours who had been kind to her in life, and to our Homes was bequeathed the balance. Altogether the Orphans' share was £1400. The money defrayed the cost of our water scheme, and I always think how appropriate the gift was, for nearly all her life Janet had been a washerwoman and had earned her bread over the wash-tub.

The direct answers to prayers of which I could tell you would fill a volume, and what I have mentioned are only those fixed in my memory. I have always asked God for a definite gift for a definite purpose, and

God has always given it to me. The value of the buildings at Bridge-of-Weir is £200,000, and since we started, the cost of their "upkeep" has been £150,000. And we are still building as busily as in the beginning.

VI

By Mr.

LEONARD K. SHAW

of Manchester

THE work for homeless children in Manchester was cradled in prayer. Every step in preparation was laid before God. But what I want specially to insist upon is the real connection there is between prayer and work. From the first my practice has been to lay our wants before God in prayer, and at the same time to use every means within our reach to obtain what we desired. I well remember in the early days of the work how anxiously we discussed whether it was to be conducted on the "faith" principle, as it is called, or on the "work" principle. Looking back on the way by which we have come, it seems to me now that faith and work necessarily go together. Earnest believing prayer is not less earnest and believing because you use the means God has put within your reach. Your dependence upon God is just the same. You send out an appeal, but it is God who disposes the hearts of the people to subscribe. So I say the connection between praying and working, though not always seen, is very real. Day by day the special needs of the work are laid before God, and day by day they are supplied.

Of direct answers to prayer I have had many sweet and encouraging assurances, particularly in connection with our orphan homes. In the first five years of the work, we only took in boys between the ages of ten and sixteen. At that time of life, boys who have been brought up on the street are not easy to manage, and a friend to whom I was telling some of our difficulties, suggested that we should take the boys in younger. To do so meant a new departure, and on going into the matter I found that a sum of about £600 would be needed to start such an orphan home as was suggested. I said to my wife, "Let us pray about this; if it is God's will that we should enter upon this new branch of work, He will send the money." We resolved that should be the test; if the money came we would start the home, otherwise we would not. Our annual meeting came round soon after, and in the report I made an appeal on behalf of the new scheme. The report was sent out with much prayer, but no individual person was asked to contribute. In a few days I received a letter from a gentleman residing in Southport, enclosing a cheque for £600. The house for the first of our orphan homes was bought for £500, and the balance of the cheque enabled us to furnish it.

At the end of the following year, the home was full of fatherless and motherless little ones, and others were seeking admission for whom there was no room. I sent out a second appeal, asking God to put it into the heart of someone to provide a second home. A few weeks afterwards a lady well known in Manchester paid us a visit at the home and two days later I received from her a cheque for £1000. In this way we got our second home. Another year and this second home was also full. Again I prayed God to dispose the heart of some one to help us, and I sent out another appeal. One day, perhaps two or three weeks later, a gentleman stopped me in the street and said he had been wanting to see me for some days,

as he had a cheque for £700 waiting for me at his office. At the moment the orphan home was not in my mind, and I asked what the cheque was for. Why, he said, I understand your two orphan homes are full and that you want another. And so we got our third home. Another year and it too was full. Again after earnest prayer I received a cheque for £1000 from another Manchester gentleman, who in some way had come to know that a fourth home was needed.

In these four cases you have, I think, remarkable instances of direct answer to prayer. So, at any rate, I must always regard them. I need not say how encouraged we were, year after year, to go on with the work, though each additional home meant a large increase in our annual expenditure.

The money with which the fifth orphanage house was bought was not given in one sum nor specially for the purpose, and the circumstances would not warrant me in saying that it came in direct answer to prayer. When a sixth home became necessary an appeal was made to the schoolgirls of Lancashire and Cheshire, and they found the £500 for the purchase money. This house is called "The School Girls' Home." The inscription on the memorial stone, "His children shall have a place of refuge," was suggested by the late Bishop of Manchester.

In smaller, but perhaps not less important matters, we have had unmistakable proofs that God answers prayer. One case which occurred in the early days of the work greatly impressed me. A letter came one morning from Stalybridge asking us to take in five little children who had been left destitute and without a friend in the world. I went over to make inquiries, and found the children in the same room with the dead body of their mother, which had little more to cover it than an old sack. Our means at that time were very small, and I thought we could hardly venture to take in all the children. The clergyman of the parish pleaded with me to take at least two or three. I asked what was to become of the others, and the answer was that there was nothing for them but the workhouse. What to do I did not know. I made it a matter of prayer, but all that night it lay upon my heart a great burden. Next morning I came downstairs still wondering what to do. Amongst the letters on my table was one from a gentleman at Bowdon, enclosing, unasked, a cheque for £50. In those days £50 was an exceptionally large sum for us to receive, and I took the letter as a direct word from God that we should accept the care of the children. We did so, and I am glad to say every one of them turned out well.

But direct answers to prayer are not confined to mere gifts of money. Over and over again during these twenty-seven years of rescue work I have put individual cases before God and asked Him to deal with them, and it is just wonderful how He has subdued stubborn wills and changed hearts and lives.

Years ago there came to the Refuges the son of a man known to the Manchester police as "Mike the devil." Tom was as rough a customer as ever I saw, and for a time we had some trouble with him. But a great change came over him, and I have myself no doubt it was the result of personal pleading with God on his behalf. Tom is now an ordained minister of the Gospel in America. There is no end to the cases I could give of that kind. They all point to the same conclusion, that God does answer definite prayer. And to-day, after twenty-seven years of work, I praise Him for it.

VII

BY THE REV.

R. F. HORTON, M.A., D.D.

IT has sometimes seemed to me that God does not intend the faith in prayer to rest upon an induction of instances. The answers, however explicit, are not of the kind to bear down an aggressive criticism. Your Christian lives a life which is an unbroken chain of prayers offered and prayers answered; from his inward view the demonstration is overwhelming. But do you ask for the evidences, and do you propose to begin to pray if the facts are convincing, and to refuse the practice if they are not? Then you may find the evidences evanescent as an evening cloud, and the facts all susceptible of a simple rationalistic explanation. "Prayer," says an old Jewish mystic, "is the moment when heaven and earth kiss each other." It is futile as well as indelicate to disturb that rapturous meeting; and nothing can be brought away from such an intrusion, nothing of any value except the resolve to make trial for oneself of the "mystic sweet communion."

I confess, therefore, that I read examples of answers to prayer without any great interest, and refer to those I have experienced myself with the utmost diffidence. Nay, I say frankly beforehand, "If you are concerned to disprove my statement, and to show that what I take for the hand of God is merely the cold operation of natural law, I shall only smile. My own conviction will be unchanged. I do not make that great distinction between the hand of God and natural law, and I have no wish to induce you to pray by an accumulation of facts—to commend to you the mighty secret by showing that it would be profitable to you, a kind of Aladdin's lamp for fulfilling wayward desires. Natural law, the hand of God! Yes! I unquestioningly admit that the answers to prayer come generally along lines which we recognise as natural law, and would perhaps always be found along those lines if our knowledge of natural law were complete. Prayer is to me the quick and instant recognition that all law is God's will, and all nature is in God's hand, and that all our welfare lies in linking ourselves with His will and placing ourselves in His hand through all the operations of the world and life and time."

Yet I will mention a few "answers to prayer," striking enough to me. One Sunday morning a message came to me before the service from an agonised mother: "Pray for my child: the doctor has been and gives no hope." We prayed, the church prayed, with the mother's agony, and with the faith in a present Christ, mighty to save. Next day, I learned that the doctor who had given the message of despair in the morning had returned, after the service, and said at once, "A remarkable change has taken place." The child recovered and still lives.

On another occasion, I was summoned from my study to see a girl who was dying of acute peritonitis. I hurried away to the chamber of death. The doctor said that he could do nothing more. The mother stood there weeping. The girl had passed beyond the point of recognition. But as I entered the room, a conviction seized me that the sentence of death had not gone out against her. I proposed that we should kneel down and pray. I asked definitely that she should be restored. I left the home, and learned afterwards that she began to amend almost, at once, and entirely recovered; she is now quite strong and well, and doing her share of service for our Lord.

And on yet another occasion I was hastily called from my study to see an elderly man, who had always been delicate since I knew him; now he was prostrated with bronchitis, and the doctor did not think that he could live. It chanced that I had just been studying the passage which contains the prayer of Hezekiah and the promise made to him of fourteen additional years of life. I went to the sick man and told him that I had just been reading this, and asked if it might not be a ground for definite prayer. He assented, and we

entreated our God for His mercy in the matter. The man was restored and is living still.

These are only typical instances of what I have frequently seen. Many times, no doubt, I have prayed for the recovery of the sick and the prayer has not been answered. And you, dear and skeptical reader, may say if you will that this is proof positive that the instances of answered prayers are mere coincidences. You may say it and, if you will, prove it, but you will not in the least alter my quiet conviction; for the answers were given to *me*. I do not know that even the subjects of these recoveries recognise the agency which was at work. To me all this is immaterial. The subjective evidence is all that was designed, and that is sufficient, and to the writer conclusive.

With reference to money for Christian work, I have laboured to induce my own church to adopt the simple view that we should ask not men, but in the first instance God, the owner of it all, for what we want. I am thankful to say that some of them now believe this, and bring our needs to Him very simply and trustfully. I could name many instances of the following kind: there is a threatened deficit in the funds of the mission, or an extension is needed and we have not the money. The sound of misgiving is heard; we have not the givers; the givers have given all they can. "Why not trust God?" I have urged. "Why not pray openly and unitedly—and believe?" The black cloud of debt has been dissipated, or the necessary extension has been made.

Oddly enough, some people have said to me, "Ah, yours is a rich church," as if to imply one can very safely ask God for money when one has the people at hand who can give it. But surely this is a question of degree. My church is not rich enough to give one-tenth of what it gives, *if we did not first ask God for it*. And there are churches which could give ten times what they do give, if only the plan were adopted of first asking God instead of going to the few wealthy people and trusting to them.

But this is a matter of statistics and a little wearisome. I confess I am unsatisfied with answers to prayer when the prayer is only for these carnal and visible things, which are often, in boundless love and pity, *withheld*. The constant and proper things to pray for are precisely those the advent of which cannot be observed or tabulated; that the kingdom may come, that they who have sinned, not unto death, may be forgiven, that the eyes of Christian men may be enlightened, and their hearts expanded to the measure of the love of Christ. Such prayers are answered, but the answers are not unveiled. I remember a strange instance of this. I was staying with a gentleman in a great town, where the town council, of which he was a member, had just decided to close a music-hall which was exercising a pernicious influence. The decision was most unexpected, because a strong party in the council were directly interested in the hall. But to my friend's amazement the men who had threatened opposition came in and quietly voted for withdrawing the licence. Next day we were speaking about modern miracles; he, the best of men, expressed the opinion that miracles were confined to Bible times. His wife then happened to mention how, on the day of that council meeting, she and some other good women of the city had met and continued in prayer that the licence might be withdrawn. I ventured to ask my friend whether this was not the explanation of what he had confessed to be an amazing change of front on the part of the opposition. And, strange to say, it had not occurred to him—though an avowed believer in prayer—to connect the praying women and that beneficent vote.

The truth is, all the threads of good which run across our chequered society, all the impulses upward and onward, all the invisible growths in goodness and grace, are answered prayers. For our prayers for the kingdom are not uttered on the housetops; and the kingdom itself cometh not with observation.

But if it were not too delicate a subject I could recite instances, to me the most remarkable answers to prayer in my experience, of changed character and enlarged Christian life, resulting from definite intercession. It is an experiment which any loving and humble soul can easily make. Take your friends, or better still the members of the church to which you belong, and set yourself systematically to pray for them. Leave alone those futile and often misguided petitions for temporal blessings, or even for success in their work, and plead with your God in the terms of that prayer with which Saint Paul bowed his knees for the Ephesians. Ask that this person, or these persons, known to you, may have the enlightenment and expansion of the Spirit, the quickened love and zeal, the vision of God, the profound sympathy with Christ, which form the true Christian life. Pray and watch, and as you watch, still pray. And you will see a miracle, marvellous as the springing of the flowers in April, or the far-off regular rise and setting of the planets,—a miracle proceeding before your eyes, a plain answer to your prayer, and yet without any intervention of your voice or hand. You will see the mysterious power of God at work upon these souls for which you pray. And by the subtle movements of the Spirit it is as likely as not that they will come to tell you of the divine blessings which have come to them in reply to your unknown prayers.

But there are some whose eyes are not yet open to these invisible things of the Spirit, which are indeed the real things. The measure of faith is not yet given them, and they do not recognise that web,—the only web which will last when the loom of the world is broken,—the web of which the warp is the will of God, and the woof the prayers of men. For these, to speak of the whole as answered prayer is as good as to say that no prayer is answered at all. If they are to recognise an answer it must be some tiny pattern, a sprig of flower, or an ammonite figure on the fabric. Let me close, therefore, by recounting a very simple answer to prayer,—simple, and yet, I think I can show, significant.

Last summer I was in Norway, and one of the party was a lady who was too delicate to attempt great mountain excursions, but found an infinite compensation in rowing along those fringed shores of the fjord, and exploring those interminable brakes, which escape the notice of the passengers on board the steamer. One day we had followed a narrow fjord, which winds into the folds of the mountains, to its head. There we had landed and pushed our way through the brush of birch and alder, lost in the mimic glades, emerging to climb miniature mountains, and fording innumerable small rivers, which rushed down from the perpetual snows. Moving slowly over the ground—veritable explorers of a virgin forest—plucking the ruby bunches of wild raspberry, or the bilberries and whortleberries, delicate in bloom, we made a devious track which it was hard or impossible to retrace. Suddenly my companion found that her golosh was gone. That might seem a slight loss and easily replaced; not at all. It was as vital to her as his snowshoes were to Nansen on the Polar drift; for it could not be replaced until we were back in Bergen at the end of our tour. And to be without it meant an end of all the delightful rambles in the spongy mosses and across the lilliputian streams, which for one at least meant half the charm and the benefit of the holiday. With the utmost diligence, therefore, we searched the brake, retraced our steps, recalled each precipitous descent of heather-covered rock, and every sapling of silver birch by which we had steadied our steps. We plunged deep into all the apparently bottomless crannies, and beat the brushwood along all our course. But neither the owner's eyes, which are keen as needles, nor mine, which are not, could discover any sign of the missing shoe. With woeful countenances we had to give it up and start on our three miles' row along the fjord to the hotel. But in the afternoon the idea came to me, "And why not ask our gracious Father for guidance in this trifle as well as for all the weightier things which we are

constantly committing to His care? If the hairs of our head are all numbered, why not also the shoes of our feet?" I therefore asked Him that we might recover this lost golosh. And then I proposed that we should row back to the place. How magnificent the precipitous mountains and the far snow-fields looked that afternoon! How insignificant our shallop, and our own imperceptible selves in that majestic amphitheatre, and how trifling the whole episode might seem to God! But the place was one where we had enjoyed many singular proofs of the divine love which shaped the mountains but has also a particular care for the emmets which nestle at their feet. And I was ashamed of myself for ever doubting the particular care of an infinite love. When we reached the end of the fjord and had lashed the boat to the shore, I sprang on the rocks and went, I know not how or why, to one spot, not far from the water, a spot which I should have said we had searched again and again in the morning, and there lay the shoe before my eyes, obvious, as if it had fallen from heaven!

I think I hear the cold laugh of prayerless men: "And that is the kind of thing on which you rest your belief in prayer; a happy accident. Well, if you are superstitious enough to attach any importance to that, you would swallow anything!" And with a smile, not, I trust, scornful or impatient, but full of quiet joy, I would reply: "Yes, if you will, that is the kind of thing; a trifle rising to the surface from the depths of a Father's love and compassion—those depths of God which you will not sound contain marvels greater it is true; they are, however, ineffable, for the things of the Spirit will only be known to men of the Spirit. These trifles are all that can be uttered to those who will not search and see; trifles indeed, for no sign shall be given to this generation; which, if it will not prove the power of prayer by praying, shall not be convinced by marshalled instances of the answers of prayer."

VIII

By the Rev.

HUGH PRICE HUGHES, M.A.

YOU ask me to give my experience of answers to prayer. I have never had any doubt that Dean Milman was right when he said that personal religion becomes impossible if prayer is not answered. Neither have I ever been able to appreciate the so-called scientific objection to prayer, as we have ample experience in the activity of our own will to illustrate the fact that invariable laws may be so manipulated and utilised as to produce results totally different from those which would have taken place if some free will had not intervened to use them.

We must assume that God, who is the Author of all natural laws, can with infinite ease manipulate them so as to produce any desired result, without in the least degree altering their character or interfering with the universal reign of Law.

However, what you want is not theory but actual experience. I will not refer, therefore, to the stupendous proofs that God does answer prayer, presented by Mr. Müller of Bristol in his immense orphanages, or to similar unmistakable results in the various philanthropic institutions of Dr. Cullis of Boston. I will go at once to my own personal experiences, and mention one or two facts that have come under my own

observation. There are a great many, but I will simply give a few typical cases.

A good many years ago I was conducting a special mission in the neighbourhood of Chelsea. It is my custom on these occasions to invite members of the congregation to send me in writing special requests for the conversion of unsaved relatives or friends. On the Tuesday night, among many other requests for prayer, was one from a daughter for the conversion of her father. It was presented in due course with the rest, but no one at that moment knew the special circumstances of the case, except the writer. On the following Friday I received another request from the same woman; but now it was a request for praise, describing the circumstances under which the prayer had been answered, and I read the wonderful story to the congregation.

It appeared that this girl's father was an avowed infidel who had not been to any place of worship for many years, and he disliked the subject of religion so intensely that he ultimately forbade his Christian daughter in London to write to him, as she was continually bringing in references to Christ. On the particular Tuesday evening in question, that infidel father was on his way to a theatre in some provincial town, more than a hundred miles from London. As he was walking to the theatre, there was a sudden shower of rain which drove him for shelter into the vestibule of a chapel where a week-night service was being held. The preacher in the pulpit was a Boanerges, whose loud voice penetrated into the lobby, and there was something in what he said that attracted the attention of the infidel and induced him to enter the chapel. He became more and more interested as the sermon proceeded, and before its close he was deeply convinced of sin, and in true penitence sought mercy from Jesus Christ. I need scarcely say to any one who knows anything of the love of God, that this prayer was speedily answered, and he went home rejoicing in divine forgiveness. The next day he wrote to his daughter in London telling her that he had set out on the previous evening intending to visit the theatre, but had actually found his way into a chapel, where his sins had been forgiven and his heart changed. He wrote at once to tell her the good news, and he assured her that he would now be only too glad to hear from her as often as she could write to him. These facts were communicated through me to the congregation, and we all gave thanks to God.

Of course it may be said that the conversion of this man, who had not been into a place of worship for more than a dozen years, was a mere accident, and that its coming at the very time we were praying for him was a mere coincidence. But we need not quarrel about words. All we need to establish is, that such delightful accidents and such blessed coincidences are continually occurring in the experience of all real Christians. I may add generally, that it is our custom to present written requests for prayer and written requests for praise at the devotional meetings of the West London Mission every Friday night. This has now gone on without interruption for more than nine years, and I scarcely remember a prayer-meeting at which we have not had some request for praise on account of prayer answered.

It may be argued, however, that all such cases are purely subjective, and that they take place in the mysterious darkness and silence of the human heart Let my next illustration, then, be of a much more tangible character. Let it refer to pounds, shillings, and pence.

Not long ago the West London Mission was greatly in want of money, as has generally been its experience since it began. It would seem as though God could not trust us with any margin. Perhaps if we had a considerable balance in the bank we should put our trust in that, instead of realising every moment our absolute dependence on God. Like the Children of Israel in the Wilderness, we have had supplies of manna just sufficient for immediate need. Always in want, always tempted to be anxious, it has always happened at the last moment, when the case seemed absolutely desperate, that help has been forthcoming, sometimes from the most unexpected quarter. But a short time ago the situation appeared to be unusually alarming, and I invited my principal colleague to meet me near midnight—the only time when we could

secure freedom from interruption and rest from our own incessant work.

We spent some time, in the quietness of that late hour, imploring God to send us one thousand pounds for His work by a particular day. In the course of the meeting one of our number burst forth into rapturous expressions of gratitude, as he was irresistibly convinced that our prayer was heard and would be answered. I confess I did not share his absolute confidence, and the absolute confidence of my wife and some others. I believed with trembling. I am afraid I could say nothing more than "Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief." The appointed day came. I went to the meeting at which the sum total would be announced. It appeared that in a very short time and in very extraordinary ways nine hundred and ninety pounds had been sent to the West London Mission. I confess that, as a theologian I was perplexed. We had asked for a thousand pounds—there was a deficiency of ten. I could not understand it. I went home, trying to explain the discrepancy. As I entered my house and was engaged in taking off my hat and coat, I noticed a letter on the table in the hall. I remembered that it had been lying there when I went out, but I was in a great hurry and did not stop to open it. I took it up, opened it, and discovered that it contained a cheque for ten pounds for the West London Mission, bringing up the amount needed for that day to the exact sum which we had named in our midnight prayer-meeting. Of course this also may be described as a mere coincidence, but all we want is coincidences of this sort. The name is nothing, the fact is everything, and there have been many such facts.

Let me give one other in reference to money, as this kind of illustration will perhaps, more than any other, impress those who are disposed to be cynical and to scoff. I was engaged in an effort to build Sunday schools in the south of London. A benevolent friend promised a hundred pounds if I could get nine hundred pounds more, within a week. I did my utmost, and by desperate efforts, with the assistance of friends, did get eight hundred pounds, but not one penny more. We reached Saturday, and the terms of all the promises were that unless we obtained a thousand pounds that week we could not proceed with the building scheme, and the entire enterprise might have been postponed for years, and, indeed, never accomplished on the large scale we desired. On the Saturday morning one of my principal church officers called, and said he had come upon an extraordinary business: that a Christian woman in that neighbourhood whom I did not know, of whom I had never heard, who had no connection whatever with my church, had that morning been lying awake in bed, and an extraordinary impression had come in to her that she was at once to give me one hundred pounds! She naturally resisted so extraordinary an impression as a caprice or a delusion. But it refused to leave her; it became stronger and stronger, until at last she was deeply convinced that it was the will of God. What made it more extraordinary was the fact that she had never before had, and would, in all probability, never again have one hundred pounds at her disposal for any such purpose. But that morning she sent me the money through my friend, who produced it in the form of crisp Bank of England notes. From that day to this I have no idea whatever who she was, as she wished to conceal her name from me. Whether she is alive or in heaven I cannot say; but what I do know is that this extraordinary answer to our prayers secured the rest of the money, and led to the erection of one of the finest schools in London, in which there are more than a thousand scholars to-day.

Let me give one other illustration in a different sphere. God has answered our prayers again and again by saving those in whom we are interested, and by sending us money. He has also answered prayer for suitable agents to do His work.

Twelve months ago I was sitting in my study at a very late hour; the rest of the household had gone to bed. I was particularly conscious at that time that I greatly needed a lay agent, who could help me in work among the thousands of young men from business houses who throng St. James's Hall. Several of our staff who could render efficient service in that direction were fully occupied in other parts of the Mission. I

prayed very earnestly to God, in my loneliness and helplessness; and whilst I was praying, an assurance was given me that God had heard my prayer. By the first post on the next morning I received a letter from a man whom I had never met, requesting an interview. I saw him. It turned out that he was a staff officer in the Salvation Army, and formerly a Methodist; and that for two years he had been longing for a sphere of work among young men. He had been himself in a Manchester business house, and he was extremely anxious for work among young fellows in the great business establishments. For various reasons a development of work in that direction, although it commanded the sympathy of the heads of the Salvation Army, could not be undertaken just then; and while he was praying upon the subject, it seemed to him as though a definite voice said, "Offer yourself to Mr. Hugh Price Hughes." In obedience to that voice he came, and he is with us now. He has already gathered round him a large number of young men; and at our last Public Reception of new members I received into the mission church forty-two young men of this class, who had been brought to Christ, or to active association with His Church, through the agency of the man whom God so promptly sent me in the hour of my need.

Nothing that I have said will in the least degree surprise earnest Christians and Christian ministers. Such experiences as these are the commonplace of real and active Christianity.

IX

BY THE REV.

J. CLIFFORD, M.A., D.D.

IMMEDIATELY after my acceptance of the pastorate of the church to which I still minister, I arranged to continue and broaden my training by attending Science Classes at University College, London. It was in the year 1858. The day of science was in its brilliant and arresting dawn. Professor Huxley had been lecturing on biology at the Royal School of Mines for nearly four years, and his bold and masterly descriptions of "Man's Place in Nature," given to working men, had stirred many minds. Darwin's "Origin of Species" appeared in the following year. The young scientific spirit was daring and aggressive; and scientific methods, though feared in most quarters, were demanding and winning confidence. I was sure science was one of the formative forces of the future, and therefore it seemed to me the teachers of Christianity of the next half-century would do well to make themselves practically acquainted with the methods pursued by scientific men, as well as conversant with the results of scientific work.

One of Huxley's maxims was "The man of science has learnt to believe in justification by verification." Certainly! and why not? The Christian is bidden by the teacher who ranks next to Jesus Christ, our one and only Master, to "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good." Human experience is always verifying truth and exposing falsehood. New forces are set to work in the lives of men, and offer us their effects for examination. New acts repeated lead to new habits, and new habits make a new character. If the gardener inserts a "bud" in the branch of a growing brier, and after a while beholds the beauty and inhales the fragrance of the "Gloire de Dijon" rose; if the surgeon "operates" one day, and a little while afterwards sees that the forces he has freed from the disabilities of disease are moving forward on their healing mission; so the Christian pastor may suggest a truth, inspire a new habit, direct to a new attitude of

spirit, secure an uplift of soul, and afterwards trace the effect of these acts on the growth and development of character, and on the quantity and quality of the service given to the kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. "Experiments" in the field of human nature yield as really verifiable results as those that are given in the nursery of the gardener or the laboratory of the chemist.

But contact with scientific methods not only suggested that the pastorate would afford abundant opportunities for verifying the features and characteristics of the spirit of life in Jesus Christ, by a direct appeal to facts in the manifold experiences of Christian men; it also changed the point of view, so that, instead of giving the first place amongst "answers to prayer" to detached and easily reported incidents, that rank was assigned to experiences showing that prayer is one of the chief of the unseen forces in character-building, in deepening humility, in broadening sympathy, in preserving the heart tender and sensitive to human suffering, in quickening aspiration, and giving the note of *soul* to a man's work and influence.

The materials sustaining that conclusion were abundant in the early years of my ministry; notably in one case I can never forget. On the first Sabbath evening of my ministry I was preaching on the words "Be ye reconciled to God." Amongst the listeners was one who had entered the house of prayer without any sense of alienation from God or hunger for His revelation, and, as she afterwards confessed, merely to please her sister. But "the Lord opened her heart to give heed to the things that were spoken," so that she forthwith sought and found peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Nor did she only obtain peace. With Wordsworth she could say:

> "I bent before Thy gracious throne
> And asked for peace with suppliant knee,
> And peace was given, nor peace alone,
> But faith and hope and ecstasy."

Faith and hope, ecstasy and prayer, were the outstanding features of her new life. She had little time for special acts of Christian service, and scant means wherewith to enrich the Church; but, according to the witness of those who had known her longest, her character was clad in entirely new charms, and her spirit was fired and filled with new energies. She grew in experience of the grace and love of God, and became at home with God in the deepest sense, and seemed rarely, if ever, absent from her chosen dwelling-place. Her strongest feeling was for God, all investing, all encircling; and with reverent freedom and sweet security she lived and moved and had her being in communion with the eternal Father. Prayer was not a task for specific occasions; it was the breath of her life. It was not a wrestle or a struggle; it was an uplifting of her being into a fellowship with God. It did not shrivel into a litany of petitions; it was sustained aspiration; and aspiration is a large part of achievement; it was deepest satisfaction with God, and His will and His work: and such satisfaction is itself a source of patient strength and a preparation for victory.

Nor was the effect limited. Her nature received a refinement, an elevation, a beauty that triumphed over the physical features, and shone out with a glory that is not seen on sea or shore. The expression of her face seemed to be from God. A transfiguring radiance came from within as she thought on the wonders and delighted in the treasures of the gospel of God. Hers was a noble life. Like Martha, she was engaged in "much serving;" but yet was never cumbered and worn with it, because, like Mary, she sat daily at the Master's feet, and listened to His words, and received His sustaining strength. She was as sweetly unselfish as the flowers, and gave herself and her "all" to Christ, like the widow of the gospels. Meekness and humility clothed her with their loveliest robes. I never knew a purer spirit. She always breathed the

softness and gentleness of the Saviour, and yet I have seen her weak body quiver and throb with its anguish of desire for the salvation of the lost. Faithful unto death, she realised the support and joy of the Christian's hope, and gently as leaves are shed by the flower that has finished its course, she fell into the arms of Jesus; and as Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, was buried under the "oak of weeping" amid affectionate regrets and sweet memories, so this Christian servant was laid in the grave with tears of real sorrow from those whom she had served so faithfully and long, as well as from friends who had been gladdened and fortified in the faith of Christ by her sweet, earnest, and beautiful Christian life. That day is now far off, but the influence of her prayer-filled life still feeds faith in God as the Hearer and the Answerer of Prayer.

About the same time and in the same spiritual laboratory I was called to observe the following processes. A woman, the wife of a blacksmith, was led by the gospel of Christ into the joy of salvation. Her experience of the grace of God in Christ was vivid and full. She knew little of doubt concerning herself, but she was full of solicitude for her husband and children; for she had a very heavy burden to carry, and her heart was sore stricken. Her husband was a drunkard. When sober he was true, devoted, and loving; but when he fell into intemperance he became hard, harsh, and even violent. But never did the brave and trustful wife cease to hope or cease to pray. In the darkest hours she begged for the conversion of her husband, and felt sure that God would respond to her supplications. That was her habitual mood, her supreme desire, her living prayer; and I could see that this very disposition developed her saintliness, deepened her affection for her husband, and gave increased beauty to her family life, as well as added to her usefulness in the Church.

One day, in the course of my pastoral visits, I called at the blacksmith's home. Scarcely was the threshold crossed when the husband rushed in, wild, angry, and violent, the prey of intoxicants. But before he had proceeded far the wife approached him, flung her arms around him, called him by name, and said: "Ah, God will give you to me yet." Saint Ambrose told Monica, when she went to him, sad and desponding about her son, "God would not forget the prayers of such a mother," and Augustine came, though late in his young manhood, into the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. So I felt the earnest pleadings of this true wife and mother would not be forgotten of God, but that, according to her own beautiful saying, God would "give her husband to her;" for she did not think he was completely hers whilst he was under the dominion of intoxicants,—give him to her freed from that depraving and desolating slavery. And it was so. For he, too, became a Christian, and they together effectively served their generation according to the will of God, "turning men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God."

There recurs to me the image of a visitor who called one Sunday evening in 1862, and who wished to know what he was to do in order to control and suppress an ungovernable temper. For years it had tortured him past all bearing, and, what was worse, for years it had been a source of pain and discomfort in his home. When his anger was kindled he was by his own confession a terror to wife and children, and, seeing that he had recently become a Christian, he felt acutely the stain such actions fixed on garments that should have been unspotted by the world. "What must I do? I can't go on in this way, and yet though I feel it is wrong I can't help myself."

The first suggestion I ventured was based on the regard he had expressed for his pastor. "What would be the effect," said I, "on you, if I were to appear at the moment the storm was about to burst? Think!"

He thought, and then said, "It wouldn't burst I should stop it."

"Well, then, try this plan. Force yourself at the moment of peril into the conscious presence of God, and say, as you feel the uprising passion, 'O God, make me master of myself.' Pray that prayer; and pray, morning by morning, that you may so pray in your time of need; and in due season you will obtain the

perfect mastery of yourself you seek." He promised. I watched. He prayed. He conquered; once, twice, thrice, and then failed; but he renewed the attempt, and triumphed again, and years afterwards I knew him as one of the most serene of men; and when he died, no phase of his character stood out more distinctively than his perfect self-control, and no fact in his life was remembered with deeper gratitude by his bereaved wife than that memorable victory won by prayer in the early days of his discipleship to the Lord Jesus.

From the beginning of my ministry I have made it my business to offer advice and aid to young men and maidens assailed with doubts and fears concerning the revelation of God in Christ, hindered at the outset by misconceptions of the "way of salvation," and perplexed by confused and contradictory teaching. Hundreds of young men (and within the last ten years especially, many young women) have described to me their difficulties as they have reached the stage described by Roscoe in the words, "There are times when faith is weak and the heart yearns for knowledge."

Here is a "case" chosen from a large number of similar facts. A young man came to tell me the somewhat familiar story, that the first fervours of his religious life had cooled down, his early raptures were gone, and the sense of peace and bounding freedom, and of all-sufficing strength in God, had departed with them. The certainties of the opening months or years of the Christian pilgrimage had given place to torturing questions, such as, "Am I not deceived? After all, is Christianity true? What are its real contents? What is inspiration? Did miracles happen?" etc., etc. Week after week we reasoned and argued, and months passed in a struggle whose usefulness no one could register, and whose issue no one could forecast.

But it "happened," as these conversations were going on, that he was "drawn" into what I may call a "prayer circle," privately carried on by a small group of young men who were not unacquainted with such conflicts as those which then engaged his powers. He joined it, and by-and-by felt its influence. He was lifted into another atmosphere, and breathed a clearer, sunnier air. His misgivings were slowly displaced by missionary enthusiasm, and his fears by a stronger faith; and yet he had not solved the problems suggested by the person of Christ, or found the secret of the Incarnation, or explained the mystery of the Atonement. But he had been led to set the full force of his nature on communion with God; and prayer had quickened the sense for spiritual realities, for the recognition of the infinite value of the human soul, and for the wonder and splendour of God's salvation. In that realm of prayer, character was altered, the aim of life was altered, the will had a new goal, and so the questions of the intellect fell into their true place in reference to the whole of the questions of life. Emerson writes, "When all is said and done, the rapt saint is found the only logician." It is he who thinks the most sanely and dwells nearest the central truths of life and being. It is he who becomes serenely acquiescent in the agnosticism of the Bible, and realises that revelation must contain many things past finding out, whilst the Spirit, who is the revealer, gives us the best assurances of the certitude and clearness of what it is most important for us to know.

So often have I seen this rest-giving effect on the intellect, of the lifting of the life into communion with God, that I cannot hesitate to regard it as a law of the life of man, and yet I must add that I do not think it wise to meet those who ask our aid in the treatment of their mental perplexities merely, or at *first*, with the counsel to pray. Most likely they will misunderstand it, and it will become to them a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence. We had better, if we are able, meet them first on their own ground, that of the intellect, and meet them with frankness and sympathy, with knowledge and tact; and yet seek by the spirit we breathe, and the associations into which we introduce them, to raise them where the Saviour's beatitude shall become an experience: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Prayer has often proved itself an infallible recipe for dejection. A man of culture and wealth was for a long time pursued by what seemed to him an intolerable and invariable melancholy. He sought relief near

and far, and sought in vain. He became a source of anxiety to his friends. He went away to Bellagio, goaded by the same restlessness, but its lovely surroundings did not heal, its soft airs did not soothe. No! All was dark and repellent. Even prayer seemed of no use. God had forgotten him. He was cast off as reprobate. His soul was disquieted within him. The burden of his misery was more than he could carry. He threatened to take away his life. But in his despair he still clung to his God; and at last, as in this desperate, and yet not altogether hopeless or prayerless mood, he read a sermon on "Elijah as a brave prophet tired of life;" hope was reborn and joy restored, and as Bunyan's pilgrim lost his burden at the cross, so this Elijah escaped from his tormentors, and came forth and dwelt in the light of God's countenance. It was the prayer of a weak and struggling faith; but God did not turn it away, nor reject the voice of his supplication.

What abundant witness that

> "More things are wrought by prayer
> Than this world dreams of"

could be supplied by pastors and elders who have visited the widow and the fatherless, the sick and suffering in their afflictions. One picture comes to me from the crowded past, of a strong and victorious, though much enduring saint. Crippled by disease, she did not rise from her bed unaided for more than seven years. She was always in pain, sometimes heavy and dull, but not infrequently keen and sharp. Yet through all these years, she not only did not complain, but she had such an overflow of quiet cheerfulness and of deep interest in life that she distributed her gladness to others and made them partakers of her serenity. You could not detain her in talk about herself, her ailments, her broken plans, her manifold disappointments. No! she would compel you to talk of the Church, its schools, its missions, its various activities; of societies and movements for getting rid of social evils, such as intemperance and impurity. Sometimes the theme was last Sunday's sermons, or those in preparation for the next; but rarely herself. There she lay with a patience that was never ruffled, a serenity rarely if ever disturbed, a forgetfulness of self bright and fresh, a solicitude for others deep and full, and a fellowship with God not only unbroken, but so inspiring as to make the sick-room a sanctuary radiant with His presence. Prayer led her to the fountains of divine joy, daily she drank and was refreshed.

So I set down a few tested, verified facts from the early part of a ministry of over thirty-eight years; facts chosen from amongst many, and in substance repeated again and again during recent, but not yet reportable years.

X

By the Very Rev.
G. D. BOYLE, M.A.
Dean of Salisbury

"WHAT was it that struck you most in that sermon on the character of St. Paul?" said Bishop Patteson to a friend at Oxford, who had been with him listening to a sermon preached before the

University by a very remarkable man, who has now passed away. "Those two sentences," said his friend, "in which he said there were two great powers in the world, the power of personal religion, and the power of prayer." When I told this many years afterwards to one of the best parish priests I have ever known, he gave me, from his own experience, some instances of answers to prayer which are certainly worth reading.

Shortly after he had entered Holy Orders, he joined a clerical society. He was greatly pleased with three of the younger members, but thought from their conversation after the meeting that they were too fond of amusements. As he walked home he spoke of this to an elderly clergyman, who said, "Let you and me make for them special prayer, that they may take a more serious view of their calling." Some time afterwards my friend happened to see one of these three brother clergymen at a time of great sorrow. He told him that he had resolved to give up certain amusements, which he thought at one time harmless. Some time afterwards the other two openly declared that they had taken a similar course, and my friend did not scruple to avow his belief that the after lives of these three men, all of high family, and all remarkable for their zeal as clergymen, was a direct answer to special intercession.

He told me of a still more striking instance. Two men, who had been friends at college, met after many years abroad. The one said to the other, "When you were at Oxford, you told me you were very indifferent as to religion, so I suppose you will not go with me this morning to the English service." "But I certainly will," said his friend. "I have given up all that sort of thing; I left off praying for years, in the belief that as God knows everything it was needless to pray, but an impulse came upon me after hearing Baron Parke's account of a sermon he heard Shergold Boone preach, and I am now a communicant." "Then, dear——," said his friend, "I think my prayer is answered, for I have never ceased since Oxford days to ask that you might have the happiness I enjoy."

These two are surely remarkable instances of answers to special prayer for spiritual benefit.

What shall be said of the faithful man who, through his own effort, maintained a small but efficient orphanage? From no fault of his own his supplies ceased. There came into his mind some words of Edward Irving's about the Fatherhood of God. He made a special petition for the relief of his poor children. On his return home he found a letter containing a request that the future welfare of his home should be ensured by a permanent endowment.

"How could you keep your temper through all the vexatious dispute of to-night's debate?" was the question asked of Lord Althorpe by his most intimate friend, after a fierce discussion on the Reform Bill. "I always ask for strength before going to the House," was the answer; "and to-day I asked for special strength, for I knew that party spirit ran high."

Many years ago I worked as a curate in the district which had seen the first labours of the excellent Bishop of Wakefield, whose sudden removal from active work will long be deeply mourned by the Church of England. When he left Kidderminster for a country parish, he gave a New Testament to a young man who had at one time promised well, but who fell into bad company. "I shall make you the subject of special prayer," said the Bishop, on wishing him good-bye. Some years afterwards I told the Bishop that his advice had not been thrown away, and his words were, "I humbly hope my prayer was heard."

Bishop Mackenzie told a friend of mine that he had asked for some change in the life of two favourite pupils at Cambridge. They were not in the habit of going to University sermons, but they went to hear one of Bishop Selwyn's famous series in 1854. One of them became an eminent clergyman, and the other died a missionary in India.

One more instance will suffice. An attack upon the divinity of Christ was published some years ago by one who had been trained in a very different way. His former tutor, who had a very great love for him, asked a few friends not to forget him. As the tutor was dying, he had the satisfaction of hearing that the man he had known and loved from childhood had returned to the faith of a child.

I believe that all who have had considerable experience in parochial work could give many instances of special answers to prayer. In recent years many have come forward to offer themselves for labor at home and abroad. The present occupation of many minds with the difficulties of belief, the revelations made by earnest thinkers like Romanes, the questions raised in such lives as the late Master of Balliol's, the earnest longings for some reconciliation between the men of science and the men of faith, may all surely be accepted as in some degree answers to the prayers and aspirations of all who hope that in the Church of the future there may be found a simple faith, an enduring charity, and a belief in the unchangeable strength of an unchangeable Saviour.

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Obvious typographical errors have been corrected as follows:

Page 86: *liliputian* changed to *lilliputian*

Errors in punctuation have been corrected without note.

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