

"PRAY ALWAYS"

"Pray without ceasing." – 1 Thess. 5:17.

ALITTLE QUOTATION from somebody's brain seems wonderfully fitting in the consideration of our text – "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed." It is a complete definition, for sometimes we pray with groanings that cannot be uttered.

There is one form of prayer, one feature of prayer, which is very appropriate to us, namely, thanksgiving. Yet the Scriptures discriminate between prayer, praise and thanksgiving, and use these words in the same connection, as representing various features of worship, communion with God. In the sense of petition our definition also applies when we include thanksgiving in our prayers. Expressed or unexpressed, prayer is the soul's sincere desire. Prayer that would not be the soul's sincere desire would not be acceptable. We may not always know how to render our thanks to God, but it is comforting to remember that the Lord knows our thoughts and is willing to accept our feeble expressions.

All those who have come to the Lord must first have recognized their need of coming and His readiness, willingness and ability to supply all necessary things. We need rest and peace and life everlasting. These we do not find in the world around us. There is no real peace outside of the Lord's provision: "My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14:27.) The things which the Lord has promised to His people are things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man.

Whoever, therefore, has received the earnest of the Spirit has something to desire, something to look forward to, something to pray

for. Therefore we pray, Thy Kingdom come, that the blessings which the Lord has promised shall be fulfilled, not only those for the world, but also those for the Church.

SHOULD PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS EVEN AS WE FORGIVE

As the Christian goes through the world he finds various things to distract his heart. But since he finds that the Lord has *promised* that peace he should *look for* that peace, should expect it. We should pray to God for the things that we think we ought to have. But we are to take His superior wisdom as expressed in His Word as our guide; and we are to ask according to His Word. If we have a measure of peace and of blessing, we should pray all the more for the *fulness* of joy. While we have been cleansed from original sin by the precious blood of Christ, we must remember that we have daily trespasses; and we should pray daily, "Forgive us our trespasses." This request the Lord answers on condition that we ask for forgiveness of our trespasses *as* we forgive those who trespass against us. So the Christian will find a great deal to pray for in all of life's affairs.

The Christian, however, should not be so absorbed in meditation that he cannot do his work. But the spirit of prayer should be with him, so that in every affair of life, in every perplexity, he would be ever ready to turn his mind toward the Lord for His blessings and to look to the Lord regarding all daily interests; for we are the Lord's. This course would be a life of prayer without ceasing. We do not cease to ask for the coming of the [R4883 : page 365] Kingdom simply because we have asked for it once. We do not cease to pray for our daily food. We acknowledge that all good things come from Him. We recognize that "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17); and that He who gave His Son for us is ever ready to give to those who seek to serve Him.

This attitude of heart is praying without ceasing. Sometimes the thought may only flash through the mind, but, nevertheless, it brings a blessing to us. All of God's dealings with the Elect class are for their development; and one feature of this development is to learn to know whence our blessings come and to appreciate the fact that God is the Giver, and that "no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly."

