

## Prayer

by Walter Lanyon

In an amusing article which appeared in the London Express, George Bernard Shaw says: *"Lots of people pray for me; and I have never been any worse for it. The only valid argument against the practice is the Glassite one that God knows his own business without any prompting."*

Is prayer, then, a futile thing? Certainly anyone who acknowledges the fact that there is a God will likewise grant Him the intelligence to run His universe without any prompting, and also will allow that it is reasonable to believe that no amount of begging or beseeching is going to make him alter His plans.

Yet we are admonished to *"pray without ceasing,"* but we are also told how to pray and how not to pray. *"Be not like the heathen with vain repetitions."* Words will not accomplish anything. Prayer must be something deeper and finer than telling God what He is and what He should do. Prayer is a conscious recognition of the eternity of good, here and now.

Any prayer that beseeches and begs God to do a thing is an open acknowledgment that the Creator has forgotten or overlooked something that is very necessary of accomplishment. The more we beg God to be good, the more we show forth our ignorance of His eternal nature.

Jesus prayed the unceasing prayer of the isness of the kingdom when He said, *"It is done,"* before the sense-man could see that any change had taken place. Again He said, *"Thank You, Father,"* indicating that He knew the finished works already existed.

We are told to *"enter the closet and close the door."* Turn from the appearances of things and close the door of the senses. When we close the door of the senses, we shut off the testimony of the senses. We do not do this by effort, but by the contemplation of the isness of God and His universe, and so completely fix our attention on Him that the door to the senses is closed without effort or struggle.

*"Whatsoever things you desire when you pray, believe [be firm] that you receive [present tense] them and you shall have them."* *"Desire is not something to be worked for, but is the thing in its incipiency pressing towards us for expression."* Again we see the acknowledgment of the finished thing which is given to us before we ask, and while we are yet speaking. This would all be impossible if the thing or desire did not already exist in the kingdom of the Real. How could you believe that you receive a thing if it did not already exist?

No man who prays the prayer of acknowledgment will look for a sign. Remember that the *"signs follow,"* not precede. Looking for results only indicates a state of doubt and fear, and has nothing to do with the real consciousness, which is yours for the acceptance.

*"Arise and shine"* indicates that you can do both of these things and that you can glorify God for ever and ever, when you realize that glorifying Him is simply acknowledging His perfect universe here and now. *"Stand fast,"* then, girt about with the armour of right-mindedness with the two-edged sword turning in all directions, upon which is inscribed, *"It is done."* *"It is done."* What matter though the whole circumstance world offer testimony to the contrary? The storm may sweep over your house and rage without the portals of your universe, but you are founded on the rock and shall not be moved and the storm will soon spend its fury. Its fury will only last so long as it finds anything in you which accepts fury without.

Praying without ceasing is a present possibility. It is an open acknowledgment that "all is well" because God can and does run His universe without help or aid, or even suggestion. The great use of prayer is that it brings us into line with the facts of Being. We get into the universal rhythm and are carried on into our expression of peace and joy. The song of freedom is on our lips, the song of the Giver. The Giver gives without thought of return. He pours out His joy on all mankind. He does not seek to change anything, but His coming brings out hidden beauties, as the sunlight shows forth the glories of a new day -- and lo! all is changed.

When man comes to recognize in prayer an opportunity of allying himself with God, he understands how "*all things are possible with God,*" and if possible with God, possible also to the expression of God.

Not the words uttered but the motive back of them will determine the result. He who prays constantly for self will have few, if any, of his prayers answered. Self-seeking is unnecessary when man takes his place in the universe of all good. He becomes a steward, a distributor of the gifts to all mankind.

"*Why do you seek the living among the dead?*" the Master asked. Why waste more time trying to piece together past conditions and failures? "*Come out from among them and be separate.*" Why fondle the cocoon which has given up its butterfly or the shell which has been left behind the flown bird. "Come out from among them." Go forth into your new universe, resplendent and joyous, for you are the son of a King.

"Let us pray," used to be a very somber and doleful thing, despite the fact that we read, "The people of God are a people of joy." Even Jesus came "*that your joy might be full.*" This all seems to indicate that prayer should be a joyful acknowledgment of good and not a mournful beseeching and begging.

"*Arise and shine.*" Approach the Throne of Grace with the smile of freedom; the acknowledgment that God runs His universe perfectly and that you, the son, are merely taking up your place in the "body of Christ Jesus."

If you are praying for things, remember the admonition, "*Consider the lilies and the ravens.*" All the effort to make God see how poor you are and how needy your case is will not alter the fact that you have a lesson to learn from the lilies and the ravens who "let" things come into expression and do not constantly worry and storm about the lack of them. How effortlessly the lilies grow and reach perfection and come season after season in all their glory, in all their freshness and beauty.

"*He gives His beloved rest*" — rest from the hard struggle you have made to get things. A glorious light suddenly surrounds you and shuts out everything. You are wrapped in adoration in the presence of the all good, and you are ready to hear and to understand: "My grace is sufficient for you." Sufficient is enough. Why worry about signs? Why worry about things? Why worry about circumstances? "*My grace is sufficient for you.*" That is enough. Claim your "sufficiency in all things" and rest, and you shall see that though heaven and earth shall pass away the Word shall remain. You are that word, which was "let" into expression.

In a recent play the question was asked, "Who made the devil?" The answer was "God," bringing out the natural deduction that if God made the devil, then God must be using him for His own ends.

*"Awake thou that sleepeth."* Reclaim your lost Garden of Eden and dwell there in peace.  
*"Ye shall be in league with the stones of the field,"* even as Job has said -- one in all and all in one -- God in everything and everything in God and the blessed rest that comes from knowing consciously: "My grace is sufficient for thee."

*"He giveth his beloved rest."* You are the Beloved of God.