

Christ is Victor

JUL/AUG 2001

Great Men of Prayer

The principal cause of my leanness and unfruitfulness is owing to an unaccountable backwardness to pray. I can write or read or converse or hear with a ready heart; but prayer is more spiritual and inward than any of these, and the more spiritual any duty is the more my carnal heart is apt to start from it. Prayer and patience and faith are never disappointed. I have long since learned that if ever I was to be a minister faith and prayer must make me one. When I can find my heart in frame and liberty for prayer, everything else is comparatively easy. — Richard Newton

It may be put down as a spiritual axiom that in every truly successful ministry prayer is an evident and controlling force — evident and controlling in the life of the preacher, evident and controlling in the deep spirituality of his work. A ministry may be a very thoughtful ministry without prayer; the preacher may secure fame and popularity without prayer; the whole machinery of the preacher's life and work may be run without the oil of prayer or with scarcely enough to grease one cog; but no ministry can be a spiritual one, securing holiness in the preacher and in his people, without prayer being made an evident and controlling force.

The preacher that prays indeed puts God into the work. God does not come into the preacher's work as a matter of course or on general principles, but he comes by prayer and special urgency. That God will be found of us in the day that we seek him with the whole

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Laying New Foundations

"When Jesus had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it." (St. Mark 8:34 & 35)

Here is a great secret. If a man learns this secret and applies it, he multiplies his usefulness very much. But this principle is very contrary to our carnal nature. Who likes to lose himself? Who likes to lose his pleasures? Who likes to lose his rest? Nobody likes to lose anything. But here is Jesus telling us that when we lose ourselves for the Gospel, then we save ourselves. We not only save ourselves, the Lord Jesus tells us, *"He shall receive a hundred fold."*

Now this is a matter of increasing ourselves 10,000 times. Let us look at Matthew 19:29. *"Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life."* Is it easy to give up any one of these things? When a man has a house does he want to lose it? Does he want to give it up? Does a man want to go far away from his brothers and sisters or a father or a mother or a wife or children? None of these things is easy. But there is a call upon our hearts to love our Master more than all these things. The world says, *"He has lost his chances; he has lost his houses; he has lost his friends; he has lost his parents."* But God will multiply those things. Learn to lose yourself for the Gospel. Sometimes you feel very tired in the body. Sometimes it is pure laziness. You look at the other fellow at ease, so you feel like lying down. Some people think, *"Well, I am very tired; let me sleep early today without prayer."* What

happens? Your sleep is terribly disturbed. You will see this in your practical life. Instead of gaining your sleep you lose that sleep. You can see it in the lives of people. People think, *"I must get this, I must get that. I will give up my prayer life. I will give up my prayer time."* But they lose everything.

The Bible says, *"He gave them meat for their lust but He gave leanness in their spirit."* What is the use of bringing on leanness in your spirit? Be very careful. Today there is a very dangerous atmosphere around us. Ours is a world which is demanding. "I must have this, I must have that." And we blame everybody- the Government and all around for what we do not have. But we Christians are completely different. If God denies us something, we feel it is a great blessing. We are willing to give up a hundred times for our neighbour. We love our neighbour. We do not covet any part of our neighbour's land. But we think, *"What shall we give?"* Now this lesson has to be learnt step by step. Otherwise we cannot give our lives for Jesus. We must begin with small sacrifices. Then when it comes to offering big things we will be able. Are we prepared to lose some sleep, and endure hardness for the Gospel? If not, we can never build God's work. Those who try to save themselves will destroy themselves. Their lives will be ruined. Those who learn to lose themselves will see great multiplication. This is a basic principle we must learn. Without learning this principle, the Kingdom of God cannot be built.

The first four Bishops who went to India were brilliant men. They had great compassion. Within nine years all four of them died because of severe hardships. We sing the song of Bishop Heber "From Greenland's Icy Mountains." Bishop Heber died in Trichy. He spent a long time dwell-

... "FOUNDATIONS" CON'T ON PAGE 4

heart is as true of the preacher as of the penitent. A prayerful ministry is the only ministry that brings the preacher into sympathy with the people. Prayer as essentially unites to the human as it does to the divine. A prayerful ministry is the only ministry qualified for the high offices and responsibilities of the preacher. Colleges, learning, books, theology, preaching cannot make a preacher, but praying does. The apostles' commission to preach was a blank till filled up by the Pentecost which praying brought. A prayerful minister has passed beyond the regions of the popular, beyond the man of mere affairs, of secularities, of pulpit attractiveness; passed beyond the ecclesiastical organizer or general into a sublimer and mightier region, the region of the spiritual. Holiness is the product of his work; transfigured hearts and lives emblazon the reality of his work, its trueness and substantial nature. God is with him. His ministry is not projected on worldly or surface principles. He is deeply stored with and deeply schooled in the things of God. His long, deep communings with God about his people and the agony of his wrestling spirit have crowned him as a prince in the things of God. The iciness of the mere professional has long since melted under the intensity of his praying.

The superficial results of many a ministry, the deadness of others, are to be found in the lack of praying. No ministry can succeed without much praying, and this praying must be fundamental, ever-abiding, ever-increasing. The text, the sermon, should be the result of prayer. The study should be bathed in prayer, all its duties so impregnated with prayer, its whole spirit the spirit of prayer. "I am sorry that I have prayed so little," was the deathbed regret of one of God's chosen ones, a sad and remorseful regret for a preacher. "I want a life of greater, deeper, truer

prayer," said the late Archbishop Tait. So may we all say, and this may we all secure.

God's true preachers have been distinguished by one great feature: they were men of prayer. Differing often in many things, they have always had a common center. They may have started from different points, and traveled by different roads, but they converged to one point: they were one in prayer. God to them was the center of attraction, and prayer was the path that led to God. These men prayed not occasionally, not a little at regular or at odd times; but they so prayed that their prayers entered into and shaped their characters; they so prayed as to affect their own lives and the lives of others; they so prayed as to make the history of the Church and influence the current of the times. They spent much time in prayer, not because they marked the shadow on the dial or the hands on the clock, but because it was to them so momentous and engaging a business that they could scarcely give over.

Prayer was to them what it was to Paul, a striving with earnest effort of soul; what it was to Jacob, a wrestling and prevailing; what it was to Christ, "strong crying and tears." They "prayed always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance." "The effectual, fervent prayer" has been the mightiest weapon of God's mightiest soldiers. The statement in regard to Elijah — that he "was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" — comprehends all prophets and preachers who have moved their generation for God, and shows the instrument by which they worked their wonders.

While many private prayers, in the nature of things, must be short; while public

prayers, as a rule, ought to be short and condensed; while there is ample room for and value put on ejaculatory prayer — yet in our private communions with God time is a feature essential to its value. Much time spent with God is the secret of all successful praying. Prayer which is felt as a mighty force is the mediate or immediate product of much time spent with God. Our short prayers owe their point and efficiency to the long ones that have preceded them. The short prevailing prayer cannot be prayed by one who has not prevailed with God in a mightier struggle of long continuance. Jacob's victory of faith could not have been gained without that all-night wrestling. God's acquaintance is not made by pop calls. God does not bestow his gifts on the casual or hasty comers and goers. Much with God alone is the secret of knowing him and of influence with him. He yields to the persistency of a faith that knows him. He bestows his richest gifts upon those who declare their desire for and appreciation of those gifts by the constancy as well as earnestness of their importunity. Christ, who in this as well as other things is our Example, spent many whole nights in prayer. His custom was to pray much. He had his habitual place to pray. Many long seasons of praying make up his history and character. Paul prayed day and night. It took time from very important interests for Daniel to pray three times a day. David's morning, noon, and night praying were doubtless on many occasions very protracted. While we have no specific account of the time these Bible saints spent in prayer, yet the indications are that they consumed much time in prayer, and on some occasions long seasons of praying was their custom.

We would not have any think that the value of their prayers is to be measured by the clock, but our purpose is to impress on our minds the necessity of being much alone with God; and that if this feature has not been

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produced by our faith, then our faith is of a feeble and surface type.

The men who have most fully illustrated Christ in their character, and have most powerfully affected the world for him, have been men who spent so much time with God as to make it a notable feature of their lives. Charles Simeon devoted the hours from four till eight in the morning to God. Mr. Wesley spent two hours daily in prayer. He began at four in the morning. Of him, one who knew him well wrote: "He thought prayer to be more his business than anything else, and I have seen him come out of his closet with a serenity of face next to shining." John Fletcher stained the walls of his room by the breath of his prayers. Sometimes he would pray all night; always, frequently, and with great earnestness. His whole life was a life of prayer. "I would not rise from my seat," he said, "without lifting my heart to God." His greeting to a friend was always: "Do I meet you praying?" Luther said: "If I fail to spend two hours in prayer each morning, the devil gets the victory through the day. I have so much business I cannot get on without spending three hours daily in prayer." He had a motto: "He that has prayed well has studied well."

Archbishop Leighton was so much alone with God that he seemed to be in a perpetual meditation. "Prayer and praise were his business and his pleasure," says his biographer. Bishop Ken was so much with God that his soul was said to be God-enamored. He was with God before the clock struck three every morning. Bishop Asbury said: "I propose to rise at four o'clock as often as I can and spend two hours in prayer and meditation." Samuel Rutherford, the fragrance of whose piety is still rich, rose at three in the morning to meet God in prayer. Joseph Alleine arose at four o'clock for his business of praying till eight. If he heard other tradesmen plying their business before he was up, he would

exclaim: "O how this shames me! Doth not my Master deserve more than theirs?" He who has learned this trade well draws at will, on sight, and with acceptance of heaven's unflinching bank.

One of the holiest and among the most gifted of Scotch preachers says: "I ought to spend the best hours in communion with God. It is my noblest and most fruitful employment, and is not to be thrust into a corner. The morning hours, from six to eight, are the most uninterrupted and should be thus employed. After tea is my best hour, and that should be solemnly dedicated to God. I ought not to give up the good old habit of prayer before going to bed; but guard must be kept against sleep. When I awake in the night, I ought to rise and pray. A little time after breakfast might be given to intercession." This was the praying plan of Robert McCheyne. The memorable Methodist band in their praying shame us. "From four to five in the morning, private prayer; from five to six in the evening, private prayer."

John Welch, the holy and wonderful Scotch preacher, thought the day ill spent if he did not spend eight or ten hours in prayer. He kept a plaid that he might wrap himself when he arose to pray at night. His wife would complain when she found him lying on the ground weeping. He would reply: "O woman, I have the souls of three thousand to answer for, and I know not how it is with many of them!"

Bishop Wilson says: "In H. Martyn's journal the spirit of prayer, the time he devoted to the duty, and his fervor in it are the first things which strike me."

Payson wore the hard-wood boards into grooves where his knees pressed so often and so long. His biographer says: "His continuing instant in prayer, be his circumstances what they might, is the most noticeable fact in his history, and points out the duty of all who

would rival his eminency. To his ardent and persevering prayers must no doubt be ascribed in a great measure his distinguished and almost uninterrupted success."

The Marquis DeRenty, to whom Christ was most precious, ordered his servant to call him from his devotions at the end of half an hour. The servant at the time saw his face through an aperture. It was marked with such holiness that he hated to arouse him. His lips were moving, but he was perfectly silent. He waited until three half hours had passed; then he called to him, when he arose from his knees, saying that the half hour was so short when he was communing with Christ.

Brainerd said: "I love to be alone in my cottage, where I can spend much time in prayer."

William Bramwell is famous in Methodist annals for personal holiness and for his wonderful success in preaching and for the marvelous answers to his prayers. For hours at a time he would pray. He almost lived on his knees. He went over his circuits like a flame of fire. The fire was kindled by the time he spent in prayer. He often spent as much as four hours in a single season of prayer in retirement.

Bishop Andrewes spent the greatest part of five hours every day in prayer and devotion.

Sir Henry Havelock always spent the first two hours of each day alone with God. If the encampment was struck at 6 A.M., he

**REALITY
CHECK !**

**"AND WHEN HE WAS
COME INTO THE HOUSE, THE
BLIND MEN CAME TO HIM: AND
JESUS SAITH UNTO THEM,
BELIEVE YE THAT I AM ABLE
TO DO THIS? THEY SAID UNTO
HIM, YEA, LORD. THEN
TOUCHED HE THEIR EYES,
SAYING, ACCORDING TO YOUR
FAITH BE IT UNTO YOU."**

MATTHEW 9: 28,29

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The LEFI is hosting a summer retreat in Sebring,
Ohio

August 14 - 19, 2001

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would rise at four.

Earl Cairns rose daily at six o'clock to secure an hour and a half for the study of the Bible and for prayer, before conducting family worship at a quarter to eight.

Dr. Judson's success in prayer is attributable to the fact that he gave much time to prayer. He says on this point: "Arrange thy affairs, if possible, so that thou canst leisurely devote two or three hours every day not merely to devotional exercises but to the very act of secret prayer and communion with God. Endeavor seven times a day to withdraw from business and company and lift up thy soul to God in private retirement. Begin the day by rising after midnight and devoting some time amid the silence and darkness of the night to this sacred work. Let the hour of opening dawn find thee at the same work. Let the hours of nine, twelve, three, six, and nine at night witness the same. Be resolute in his cause. Make all practicable sacrifices to maintain it. Consider that thy time is short, and that business and company must not be allowed to rob thee of thy God."

Impossible, say we, fanatical directions! Dr. Judson impressed an empire for Christ and laid the foundations of God's kingdom with imperishable granite in the heart of Burmah. He was successful, one of the few men who mightily impressed the world for Christ. Many men of greater gifts and genius and learning than he have made no such impression; their religious work is like footsteps in the sands, but he has engraven his work on the adamant. The secret of its profundity and endurance is found in the fact that he gave time to prayer. He kept the iron red-hot with prayer, and God's skill fashioned it with enduring power. No man can do a great and enduring work for God who is not a man of prayer, and no man can be a man of prayer who does not give much time to praying.

Is it true that prayer is simply the compli-
ance with habit, dull and mechanical? A petty
performance into which we are trained till tame-
ness, shortness, superficiality are its chief ele-

ments? "Is it true that
prayer is, as is as-
sumed, little else than
the half-passive play
of sentiment which
flows languidly on
through the minutes or
hours of easy rever-
erie?" Canon Liddon
continues: "Let those
who have really

prayed give the answer." They sometimes de-
scribe prayer with the patriarch Jacob as a wres-
tling together with an Unseen Power which may
last, not unfrequently in an earnest life, late into
the night hours, or even to the break of day.
Sometimes they refer to common intercession
with St. Paul as a concerted struggle. They have,
when praying, their eyes fixed on the Great In-
tercessor in Gethsemane, upon the drops of
blood which fall to the ground in that agony of
resignation and sacrifice. Importunity is of the
essence of successful prayer. Importunity means
not dreaminess but sustained work. It is through
prayer especially that the kingdom of heaven
suffereth violence and the violent take it by
force. It was a saying of the late Bishop
Hamilton that "No man is likely to do much
good in prayer who does not begin by looking
upon it in the light of a work to be prepared for
and persevered in with all the earnestness
which we bring to bear upon subjects which
are in our opinion at once most interesting and
most necessary."

— E.M. Bounds

Growth Through Pain

Diamonds do not dazzle with beauty
unless they are cut. When cut, the rays of the
sun fall on them and make them shine with
wonderful colours. So when we are cut into
shape by the cross we shall shine as jewels in
the Kingdom of God.

In Switzerland a shepherd broke the leg
of a sheep. When asked why he had done so,
he said that she had the bad habit of leading
other sheep astray and taking them to dan-
gerous heights and precipices. The sheep was
so angry that when the shepherd came to feed
her she sometimes tried to bite him. But af-
ter a time she became friendly and would lick
his hands. Just so, through sorrow and suf-
fering, God leads those who have been dis-
obedient and rebellious to the path of safety
and eternal life.

Sadhu Sundar Singh

... "FOUNDATIONS" FROM PAGE 1

ing with the people trying to help them. He fought
against the caste system. He died early. When the
next Bishop was called, some of those big pastors
in London were afraid to accept it. But one Bishop
came forward. When he came to his house, there
was hardly any proper furniture. He asked the of-
ficer in charge, "Why did you not take the trouble
of furnishing this place?" The man said, "I felt
this furniture is enough for six months." It meant
he expected this new bishop to expire within six
months. But God spared him for 22 years. It is not
possible for us to imagine the sacrifices those men
made. It really is not possible. Those conditions
were different- their toil, hardship and sacrifice.
Our sacrifices are nothing compared to theirs. They
literally learnt to lose themselves for the Gospel.
Brilliant men! They laid good foundations.

Now we have to lay new foundations. Our
newspapers do not speak of pleasant times. They
are full of advertisements of material things. But
we must not allow these things to move us. "What
more shall I do for my Lord?" How shall I lose
myself for the Gospel? — that is the only way to
build God's work. We must produce men who will
lose themselves for the Gospel.

— Joshua Daniel

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