

A Call to Prayer.

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A Call to Prayer.

(GAL. iv. 19; ACTS xx. 19-21; 2 COR. v. 11;
ROM. ix. 2, 3.)



ALL the mighty men of war in the service of God, since the foundation of the world, who have shaken hell to any amount, have been sons of the closet. *Moses* pleaded until he had power to turn aside Heaven's red-hot thunderbolt of wrath, although God said, "Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven." He threw his strong arms of faith round six hundred thousand wicked reprobates.

Elijah, after long and powerful

pleading, shut and opened heaven. But I will not speak of what prophets, apostles, and other *inspired* men have done through faith and prayer, lest Satan should take advantage, and tell you that it would be impious to expect the power with God which such holy men had. Look, then, at a *Baxter*, who stained his study walls with praying breath; and after he got anointed with the power of the Holy Ghost, sent a river of living water over Kidderminster, and was the means of converting hundreds.

Again, *Luther* and his coadjutors were men of such mighty pleadings with God that they broke the spell of ages, and laid nations subdued at the foot of the cross. *John Knox* grasped in his strong arms of faith all Scot-

land; his prayers terrified tyrants. *Whitfield*, after much holy, faithful closet pleading, went to the devil's fair, and took more than one thousand souls out of the paw of the lion in one day. See a praying *Wesley*, a pleading *Bramwell*, *Stoner*, *Smith*, and *Carvosso*, each of whom led thousands to Jesus; *Anne Cutler* and *Mrs Fletcher*, whose breath was prayer, and who won souls wherever they went.

In 1820-21 a few plain, holy, praying Christians were instrumental in leading seventeen thousand souls from Satan unto the glorious Redeemer. *John Oxtoby*, with his one talent, sighed, wept, fasted, groaned, and prayed for sinners: threw them on the atonement, and bound them there for hours by faith's strong arms—

entered the pulpit and spoke words of flame, so that hundreds were saved by his means.

“Thou must be true thyself,
 ‘If thou the truth wouldst teach ;
 Thy soul must overflow, if thou
 Another’s soul wouldst reach :
 It needs the overflow of heart
 To give the lips full speech.”

Intensity should mark the preaching of the day. . . . Intense : not in its diction—grandiloquent, or sensational, or dramatic, or eccentric, or stentorian—for God was not seen in the fire, or in the earthquake, but was audible in the still, small voice. Intense in what, then ? Intense in holy lovingness, inspired by the Spirit of God. Some preachers do not seem quite to know what spirit they are of.

It is not sarcasm, or scoldings ; it is not scathing denunciations of vice ; it is not high orthodoxy, or powerful polemics ; it is not the most masterly sermons ; it is not the most eloquent appeals : it is a certain sublime tenderness, it is fervent love, in the preacher, before which a congregation is bowed like a cornfield before the wind. It is the unction of the Holy One, the savour of a devout earnestness that yearns passionately for souls, "dying a'most," as a Scotchwoman said of M'Cheyne, "to have ye converted" ; the glow of a holy ardour in the preacher's heart, kindled from the altar before the throne ; the sympathy that casts itself upon the hearer's sympathy ; the simple eloquence of a strong sincerity that pleads with men

for Christ—"with tears in its voice," as the French say—from knowing and feeling what it means for them if they make full surrender to Him; the importunate longing for men's souls that would give up anything to make men yield to Christ, and will not let them go even if they refuse: that would cry with Chrysostom, "If ye reject my words, I will not shake off the dust of my feet against you: not that herein I would disobey my Master, but because the love He has put into my heart for you forbids my doing so."

• • • •

"O let Thy Spirit all my powers inspire
To preach salvation—present, full and
free:
Open my lips—bestow a tongue of fire,
A heart of love, in fellowship with Thee

Give me to see with Faith's clear, eagle
eye,

The unseen worlds, with all their weal
and woe ;

With Thee—eternity of bliss on high ;

Without Thee — night, eternal night,
below.

I want to learn the value of ONE soul :

One soul that's saved, one soul for ever
lost,

By pondering well its everlasting goal,

And more than all, what Thee its ransom
cost.

O let Thy cross be e'er before my sight ;

Teach me its endless wonders more to
know,

Sin's righteous wage, Love's all-surpassing
might,

That I may far and wide Thy praises
show."

.

I am sure you must see, if the
Bible be true, that multitudes are on

the road to hell. Many are fighting for wealth, as if they had an eternal lease of life. Many are as proud as if they were not heirs of wrath. Multitudes flock to Satan's encampment on the racecourse, and are there murdered for eternity. Multitudes press into theatres, where devils cry louder than men, "Again! again!" Multitudes crowd into the tippling-houses, which are the devil's shambles—the open mouths of hell! Young men and young women, think of it! Tippling-house keepers, think of it, and give back your license; or, if you still are resolved to retail for the devil, oh, write for the sake of miserable souls above your doors, "A short road to the pit."

Look at your evening streets! How

many sally forth to glut their eyes with sin? How many stagger along to the pit? Satan is quick to strike so good a bargain! He buys souls cheap in this busy market; and never more than on the Lord's Day, when multitudes flee out of town by land and water, as if the plague were in it, and travel with *tenfold* railway speed to hell. Alas! sinners seem now to ride post to perdition, as if they were afraid of being too late to get in. It seems as if there would be a stir in hell to find room for the shoals that are rushing down to it. Sinners! is this state of things to continue? It cannot. Mercy or judgment must end it. Every soul is ripe for Christ's atoning BLOOD, or for God's DEVOURING WRATH. Sinners! you must re-

pent and be saved, or go on and be damned. There is no middle ground to stand upon. The blood of Jesus and the power of the Holy Ghost are the only refuge! To these turn, while God waiteth and putteth a drag to the wheels of vengeance.

.

Look at them—look at them—look at them! Do you see them? Then you see them on a slippery hill, and all around is hell! Think how they dishonour God—think how they pierce the Saviour—think how they grieve the Holy Spirit—think how they damn the rising race—think how they people the wide burning pit! See how they push one another off the stage of life into perdition! See

thousands of them have taken all but the last step; so that, if you do not pluck them thence at once, the next step will be hell's fire, hell's devils, hell's brimstone, hell's wails, hell's deep death-groaning, hell's blackness, hell's darkness; hell's hurricane, hell's howling, bleating, blasting, fiery tempest; and that for ever, and *for ever*, and FOR EVER, and FOR EVER! Oh, brother! all this is true; and will you not use the weapon which God has Himself placed in your hands? Think of the origin, value, and destiny of men's souls! Think of the bleeding, pleading love they are slighting! Think of the eternal damnation they are going to! Think of the heaven of increasing glory they are losing! Think of the influence

they have in drawing millions with and after them to hell!

Think what glory it would bring to God the Father, Son, and Spirit, if you could bless them! Think deeply, think long, and think properly, between their living in sin, and drawing multitudes after them to hell, and being converted by God's Spirit, given in answer to your prayers, and becoming themselves the instrument of conversion of others. Think of Gethsemane, Calvary, Olivet, and the blood-besprinkled mercy-seat! Think what Jesus has done, is doing, and is willing to do for them. Think of what He has done for millions as bad as they. Think of what He did for bloody *Manasseh*, the murderer; *David*, the wicked adulterer; mad

Saul, wicked *Magdalen*, swearing *Bunyan*, the infidel *Rochester*, and millions of other drunkards, thieves, harlots, and the very worst of sinners, on this side of the pit. Nay, think until your soul harrows up within you, and melts into pity, or flames into burning charity.

“The Spirit, then, will speak
Through lips of feeble clay ;
And hearts of adamant will break,
And rebels will obey.”

.

Then with your full love-stricken heart, *enter your closet*, and bewail the sins of the people before the Lord. Yoke yourself in with them, like Moses, Daniel, Jeremiah, Nehemiah, Paul, and other holy ones: confess them again and again. While you

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are mourning over them, keep casting their souls and their sins on the atonement; recognise the more than infinite willingness of the great Redeemer to save them; and plead with Heaven to save them. Do not plead to make God willing to save them, for He is already infinitely willing. But plead because it is your duty; plead because God does, and always will, answer the pleadings of bold, holy faith.

Never mind spending your time in studying the philosophy of the thing—*it is so*. The Book of God and every page of Church history says—it is so. The success which has always attended such *closet prayers* sets it *beyond all doubt*. As you are pleading, imitate Moses. When God was

about to cut off guilty Israel, he pleaded His promise, His oath, His stretched-out arm; he pleaded again and again, even after God said, "Let me alone:" he pleaded in faith. Go thou and do likewise. Plead the power of God; plead the love of God; plead the mercy of God; plead the "yea" and "amen" promises of God. Plead the life of Jesus. Plead His death, resurrection, ascension, and prevailing intercession. Span your strong-nerved arms of faith around sinners, and bind them to the blood-stained tree. Plead heaven with its everlasting glory; hell with its darkness, fire, and adamant chains. Plead the shortness of time; plead the length of endless *eternity*. Enter deeply and fully into their awful

state. And if you plead in this way in faith for hours, you will soon learn the grand secret of shaking any town, and sending a wave of living water over the land. Christ says, "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow *rivers of living water.*" Believe then, and *flood your district*, no matter what stands in the way.

"Filled—filled to overflowing!
Say, my soul, can it be so?
Filled to overflow for others—
Filled from God's own overflow.
Oh! if filled from Him I be,
His outflow must flow from me."

ANON.

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