

which have done no hurt, but which are ready to soothe, to comfort, and support others ; hands ever active in the service of the Lord.

'(4) *The Lifting of the Heart*, i.e. the surrender of the affections ; and so the last, but most important thing of all, is to *love* God. This brings us closest to God. We look to God ; we think about Him ; we draw closer and speak to Him ; but we are closest of all when we love Him. Again the Holy Scriptures—1 Chron. xxii. 19 : "Set your heart . . . to seek the Lord your God" (David). 2 Chron. xvii. 6 : "His heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord" (Jehoshaphat). The heart that loves should direct the lips that speak. Is the heart right? should be the great question for us, whenever we desire to approach the God who is

Love, in prayer. He claims the whole of man—body, soul, and spirit. He claims our attention, our thoughts, our service, and our love. He would have us ever be lifting up the heart, He would have us fix our thoughts upon Him ; to depend upon Him, and to supplicate Him ; but beyond and above all, He claims our affections—the homage of the heart.

He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small ;
For the dear Lord, Who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

'The lifting up of the eyes is Concentration, of the thoughts Meditation, of the hands Supplication, of the heart Devotion.'

Prayer in War-time.

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'Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud : and he shall hear my voice.'—Ps 55¹⁷.

THE writer of the Psalm is not prescribing hours of prayer when he says this. In like manner, the writer of the 119th Psalm is not prescribing set times of praise when he says, 'Seven times a day do I praise thee.' But although they are not laying down a rule, they are affording an example. Prayer, as praise, is to be a habitual daily practice. It is to be practised when we lie down and when we rise up. And if we add to our morning prayer, prayer at noon, when we are 'bearing the burden and heat of the day,' we shall be adding another important aid to the life of personal religion.

This Psalm is remarkable for the variety of moods that find expression in it. When the writer says, 'Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee,' he seems to be addressing his own soul, and saying to it, 'Be still, my soul, the Lord is on thy side.' His soul is a troubled soul : it is disquieted and agitated in no ordinary degree. A friend with whom he used to have religious fellowship has turned false and treacherous. He is outspoken in his indignation and reprobation of the wrong. And observe that it is to God that he speaks out what he feels. This teaches us that not only the offering up of our desires unto God, but our speaking to Him in a direct and plain

manner of all that concerns us, is true prayer. 'Evening, and morning, and at noon,' says the Psalmist, 'will I pray, and cry aloud' ; or, as the words mean in Hebrew, 'will I complain and moan.' He goes with all his woes to the Fountain of Comfort.

I think there is a resemblance between the Psalmist's situation and ours. Germany and we were united by the common bonds of race and religion. There is a sense in which we 'walked unto the house of God in company' ; for in our Confessions of Faith we were in fundamental agreement. There are German hymns in our hymnaries : many of our Psalm tunes are German. As fellow-students of Scripture, we valued each other's help. But now we are completely estranged. This is Germany's doing. It is the outcome of ill intentions now revealed, but long cherished by her present rulers and statesmen. Consider what the Psalmist says about the man who had forsworn his friendship, and had turned to become his enemy and aggressor. 'He hath put forth his hands against such as were at peace with him ; he has broken his covenant. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart ; his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.' In their bearing upon what Germany's rulers have proved themselves to be,

and the situation we are now in, these words need no commentary. Perhaps we cannot, as Christians, make the whole of the Psalmist's prayer verbally our own; yet we feel that it is substantially a prayer which we can pray ourselves, and that not once, but often—trusting that we may be enabled to pray it in a spirit which Christ will not reprove.

I will now speak of some of the conditions of acceptable prayer—and with special reference to Prayer in War-time. That faith is an essential condition of success in prayer is taught us by all who have prayed, and by Christ's repeated calls to faith in connexion with prayer. He also teaches that submission is no less necessary. But there is, besides, a prophetic element in all true prayer—by which I mean a longing outlook for the coming of Christ's kingdom on earth.

First, our prayers at this time, and indeed our prayers at all times, imply that we believe that God has a purpose of love, a purpose of delivering men from evil, and that He is controlling all that now happens with a view to the fulfilment of that purpose. This is the end of the world's providential government by God. He has not revealed to us the particular manner in which the course of events will conduce to this end; for 'God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform.' But He gives us the gift of faith in His righteous but unseen working, and He shows us how this gift is to be practically exercised—namely, in earnest, persevering prayer. 'Evening, and morning, and at noon,' we are to 'pray, and cry aloud'—that is, our prayers are to 'rise like a fountain night and day.' The witness of experience confirms the witness of Scripture that God, in giving us prayer as a power to be used, takes us into practical fellowship with Himself; and we are now called to act, with a thorough belief in the reality of this fellowship, in bringing about a favourable issue to our present trials, through the instrumentality of prayer.

Secondly, while we hope and trust that our prayers will bring the blessings prayed for, we are at the same time to offer them up to God in a submissive spirit, believing that 'in his will is our peace.' 'This is the confidence that we have in him,' says St. John, 'that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us.' This is a great assurance: but observe that it is guarded by the

condition that what we ask is in accordance with God's will. We speak to God in a direct and plain manner, and use our own will in prayer, but always—this is what is required of us—always with submission to His wise and loving and holy will. As regards the present war, we have good grounds for believing that our cause is just, and that we are therefore praying in accordance with God's will when we are praying that He may grant us a decisive victory. Yes; but is not submission still necessary as well as faith? Think of the many wishes and longings which we entertain daily—wishes that the war may be over soon, wishes that our push forward may be rapid, eager wishes for the safety of those dear to us, fervent longings that there may be granted us such a rest from war that we shall live in time to come 'none making us afraid,' and that iniquity, in its present monstrous form, may not again lift up its head. It is permitted us to make such wishes and longings the subjects of prayer to God, and of repeated entreaty, while always leaving it to Him to determine the particular time and way in which He will bless us. 'We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.' From this clause we can learn the secret of filial submission in prayer.

Lastly, all true prayer has something prophetic in it: it is an outlook for a long-hoped-for return. 'Return, O Lord, how long? . . . O satisfy us in the morning with thy mercy.' In prayer, we stand upon our watch-tower like the prophet Habakkuk, and wait for the signs of the coming day. We look to Christ, who came to redeem the earth 'from deceit and violence,' and feel that its deliverance will never be complete until He be revealed from heaven. When in the midst of our present trial we 'pray, and cry aloud,' 'evening, and morning, and at noon,' there lies behind what we immediately pray for the unuttered longing for a greater blessing than that which any temporal deliverance can bring—for the presence and power of the Personal Head of the Kingdom of God. Thus our prayers for a righteous and settled peace resolve themselves at last into the Church's instant response to the promise of her Lord, 'Behold, I come quickly'—into the response and earnest cry, 'Amen, even so: Come, Lord Jesus.'