

rise from the depths of the heart. Prayers which fully harmonize with our own desires and inclinations. Prayers in which not merely a passing thought, but the whole person expresses himself. Prayers in which the soul truly pours itself out before the Holy One.

God allows us time for this. It can not be at once. If he interfered at once no prayer-life could be developed in us, and no single prayer could be sanctified in us. Weeds that grow between our prayers must first be rooted out. Every infectuous insect that crept in must be destroyed. Prayer must refine itself and sanctify itself and in a heavenly sense through faith must be able to mature. And therefore he leaves us to ourselves for a time that through the fiery trial gold may proceed from the ore.

And when at length our prayers are sufficiently purified to be laid upon the Altar of the Almighty, then he will regard them again. And we will thank our Father in heaven that he has brought us to the holy school of prayer.

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“HEARKEN UNTO ME, MY PEOPLE.”

“GIVE HEED TO ME, O LORD.”

At one time it was thought that sound came from the throat, that its power was limited, and that it could only make our word intelligible at short distances. No one could hear us, nor we him, from a greater distance than our voice could carry. When there was anything to say, messengers were sent to carry it. When writing was

invented, communications were carried by letters.

All this, however, is changed. By this time it is understood that the throat has no sound of its own, but merely enables us to occasion vibrations in the air. And that these vibrations find an artistic instrument in the listening ear to receive them. When we speak we transmit our thoughts in these vibrations. They glide along air-waves to the ear of him who listens. And through the ear they wake the self-same thoughts in him.

Such is our speech. But this was not enough. It was discovered that apart from voice and ear, communication could be established at far greater distances through electricity. This was first done by means of visible signs, and thus the telegraph originated. But later it was found that a similar contact of throat upon the ear could be obtained by means of an extended metal thread. This discovery gave us the telephone. And at length we have advanced still further and intelligible communication is achieved independently by itself through the air, and at distances of two or three thousand miles without telegraph or telephone wires, thoughts have been exchanged.

In this wise things have become realities which at one time were entirely unthinkable. And he who considers how quickly these ever-more wonderful inventions have succeeded one another conjectures that still more can be expected and that playing with and listening to each other at incredible distances will sooner or later be the common good.

This is an aid to faith. That the Lord is simultaneously "a God at hand" and "a God afar off" (Jer. 23:23) expresses in the language of prophecy

that there are no distances with God; and that he can speak to us and can listen to our voice, even though heaven is his throne and we kneel here on earth. Yea, even when we whisper our prayer under breath, so that he who stands by our side can not hear it. And faith had no other explanation for this than the question: "Shall he who planted the ear not hear? Shall he who formed the voice not speak?" The confession was accepted that God is everywhere present. And this consisted in the fact that he is the All-Knowing One. But there was nothing in this to support and to carry the imagination.

All this has changed. Now that it is possible for us with all our human limitations to extend our voice from city to city and to make ourselves intelligible to one another; now that we can exchange thought at a distance of many thousands of miles without wires or any such thing; now that the impression is general that this is but the beginning of an inter-communication which shall be developed still more, we can imagine how communication can extend itself at length without limit, and how the Lord our God who is the creator of all these means, and has them at his disposal, can from the Throne of his glory look down upon us and can whisper to us in the soul. And how, on the other hand also, when our voice, however weak, goes out to him in supplication, it can be heard by him. As regards the life of glory among the saints in light it is ever more clear that communion shall not only be possible from time to time with a few, but that when once the limitations of this life shall fall away and glory shall begin, intimate communion shall be possible at

one and the same time among and with all the redeemed of the Lord.

But even then it will all be the expression and the working out of the fact of our creation after the Divine image. It will not be just in the same way in which God communes with us, but it will be communion in a *similar* way.

That we ourselves can speak with our fellow men at such incredible distances, brings us nearer to God in our prayer, and brings God nearer to us when he speaks to us. And the "Hearken unto me, my people," followed by the prayer: "Give heed to me, O Lord," is more real to us than before.

There is still another phase in our secret walk with God, which we may call the phase of holy rapture. It springs from the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in us. As often as this indwelling operates there is no distance. Then the Lord speaks to us in the inner-chamber of the heart. Then we perceive his sacred presence not afar off but at hand. And our speaking to God is the confidential whisper as in the ear. Such is the case at the cool of the day when the peace "which passeth human knowing" takes possession of the heart and the sweet joy of being God's child transports us into holy ecstasy.

But we can not deal with this now. We have in mind the man who believes, but who through sin and trial has lost in part the sense of being a child of God, and finds himself distant from God. Such spiritual conditions occur frequently with those who are most saintly. Then it seems that at first God does not hear us, and as though we

must entreat the Lord to listen again to the voice of our supplications.

"Give heed to me, O Lord," is the cry of him who feels that God has paid no attention to his prayer. In the same way when by Isaiah God says: "Hearken unto me, my people," it implies that at first the people gave no heed to the speaking of the Lord. Hence both belong to the phase of temporary estrangement, when communion between the soul and God has been broken by sorrow or by sin. Then the means of communication must be connected again. Then in the parlance of the telephone God rings us up, and we ring up God, and thus the broken connection is restored. Union with God, fellowship with the Eternal, is the great sanctifying and protecting power which holds us up in the midst of all sorrow and trials. Not that we are apart here on earth below and that in our thoughts God is confined to heaven above, so that we can remember him on our knees but a few moments every day, but constant, unbroken fellowship with Our Father who is in heaven is the secret of the power of childlike faith.

This was easier in earlier times when life was less hurried and less busy. At present life is a great strain on the nerves. It continually overwhelms us with new impressions and sensations, so that the quiet collecting of the soul before God is ever less frequent. And it is chiefly because of this that in these, our days, the secret walk with God suffers loss.

But for this very reason the new inventions of communication and interchange of thought provide a counterpoise. For they come to the help

of our imagination and impart more reality than before to our effort to restore the broken connection. And thus the finds of science become supports to our piety. They help us to hearken unto God, and our prayer, "O Lord, give heed to me and hear the voice of my supplication," borrows strength from them in our approach to the throne of grace.

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"THAT WHICH I SEE NOT, TEACH
THOU ME."

The knowledge that we have of ourselves differs according to its source. We have acquired a part of it ourselves, another part we have received from God. When it is asked in what particular these two parts of self-knowledge differ, call to mind that as a rule we faithfully record the good there is in us, while for the most part we must have the evil that is in us pointed out to us and brought to our remembrance by God.

A child can understand this. When praise is offered, it is readily accepted. But a child resists blame. He is not conscious of wrong and lightly passes it by. And he continues in this course until the conscience is awakened and God teaches him to become humble.

In later life this goes on more covertly. In reality, however, conditions remain the same. The heart is not carried on the sleeve as in childhood years. Some people succeed in hiding their inner life from the eyes of others. No sooner, however, is the personal life disclosed to the ear of a friend but the same result follows. A part of our self-knowledge we have acquired ourselves. The other