

sight? By the prayer, 'Jesus, Master, have compassion on us,' are not the 10 lepers healed? 'Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.' 'Lord only say the word, and my servant shall be healed.' No sooner are these prayers made, than the leper is cleansed of his leprosy and the centurion's servant healed of his palsy. Does not the prayer, 'O God, be merciful to me a sinner,' at once justify the poor publican; whilst the prayer of the dying thief, 'Lord, remember me when Thou shalt have entered into Thy kingdom,' immediately assures him both pardon and Paradise? Because the faithful united in prayer, sent up fervent supplications to the throne of God, in behalf of their Spiritual Head, St. Peter is freed from prison. Saul is changed into an apostle of election—Magdalen, from a public sinner becomes a fervent penitent—thanks to the power of prayer. Whilst the Hebrews were battling against the Amalekites, Moses went to the top of a mountain, and there, on bended knees, his eyes and his arms stretched out towards heaven, he prayed to the God of armies. Their success increases or diminishes as Moses raises or lowers his arms. It was not the warriors' weapons, but the prayer of Moses that won the victory (Exod. iii., 17). On another occasion Core, Dathan, and Abiron rose up against their divinely appointed leaders. The Almighty was angry with them for their ingratitude and that of the people whom they dragged with them in their revolt. The earth opened and a miraculous fire came forth, and swallowed in its devouring flames 14,000 of the unhappy Israelites. Seeing this, Moses bade the High Priest, Aaron, 'Take the golden censor and stand between the dying and the dead.' No sooner had the voice of prayer and the smoke of incense ascended the everlasting hills than the vengeful flames were extinguished, and the plague ceased. Speaking of this wondrous event, 'Thy wrath did not long continue, says the wise man' (Wisd. xviii., 20-22), 'for a blameless man made haste to pray for the people, bringing forth the shield of his ministry. Prayer and by incense, making supplications, withstood the wrath and put an end to the calamity; and he overcame, not by strength of body nor by force of arms, but with a word he subdued Him that punished them.'

The sins of Jerusalem cried to heaven for vengeance. God's wrath is enkindled against the wicked city. To chastise it He pronounces its doom. Its inhabitants shall all pass beneath the point of the sword of the Chaldeans. The fate of the wretched criminals is frightful to think of. But listen to the inspired penman—'Go about through the streets of Jerusalem, says the Almighty to the prophet' (Jer. v., 1) 'and see and consider and seek in the broad places thereof, if you can find a man that executeth judgment and seeketh faith and I will be merciful unto it.' When again a pestilence ravaged the land, David prayed, offering holocausts and peace offerings and the Lord became merciful to the land and the plague was stayed from Israel' (2 K. 24). The prayer of the prophet Jeremiah with that of the High Priest Onias again frees Jerusalem from its enemies (2 Mac. xv). The Jewish nation is threatened with a general massacre from which they are freed by the prayers of Esther and Mardocheus. In a word, all spiritual favors, all earthly advantages, are due to the power of prayer.

If of old, under the law of fear, prayer was so powerful, what must now be its might that it is consecrated by

The Blood of Christ Jesus.

We have said that prayer conquers the unconquerable and overcomes the Almighty. Would you have proof of this startling assertion? Turn to the opening pages of the Bible, and you will there read how the Israelites offer incense to the golden calf, which they fall down and adore. God is about to destroy his idolatrous people, when Moses beseeches the Almighty on their behalf. 'Let Me alone, that I may destroy them,' was God's answer. 'No, Lord,' Moses replied, 'I will not let Thee alone. Let not Thy indignation be enkindled against Thy people lest the Egyptians say, He brought them out that He might kill them.' The Eternal is armed with the thunderbolts of heaven, but Moses is armed with the weapon of prayer. 'And the Lord was appeased by the prayer of His servant' (Exod. xxxii).

Have we not the solemn promise of Jesus Christ as to the power of prayer made with due dispositions? Does He not emphatically declare (Matt. xxi., 22) 'All things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.' And again, 'Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you.'

To the examples recorded in Holy Writ let us add one taken from the passages of ancient history. The Emperor Marcus Aurelius having crossed the Danube, suffered himself and his troops to be entangled in narrow defiles amidst the mountains of Bohemia. There, surrounded by the enemy on all sides, they were on the point of perishing from heat and hunger and thirst. The Emperor knew not how to save his army, and was on the point of yielding to despair. Happily, among his idolatrous troops there was a legion of Christian soldiers. The danger did but rekindle their faith. In the grave emergency they cried out, 'Our only hope is in the power of prayer. Let us pray.' Falling to the ground, they laid aside their arms, to lift up their hearts and hands to Him who rules the elements, and to whom they poured out fervent supplications. God heard and answered their prayer. The sky, which till then gave forth an unbearable heat, became covered with clouds, an abundant rain fell, refreshing the Romans, whereas hail and

thunder and lightning spread confusion among the barbarians, who thought not of praying; and, thanks to the prayers of the Christians, Marcus Aurelius gained a complete victory. In his gratitude he proclaimed it due to the piety of the band, which was henceforth known in history as the 'Thundering Legion.'

Our Life is a Constant Warfare,

beginning with the cradle and ending only with the grave. We must be ever armed against our vitiated flesh, against a deceitful corrupt world, against the powers of the prince of darkness ever seeking slaves to fill up the frightful dungeons of hell. We are far more exposed in the moral order than the soldiers of Aurelius in the physical order. Let us imitate the faith and fervor of these Christian warriors. Let us always have recourse to prayer and the dew of heaven will descend upon us to stifle the fire of our passions. The enemies of our salvation will be routed and we shall gain a glorious victory in this world and a crown of immortality in the next.

Dear beloved brethren and children in Jesus Christ, you will surely be glad to hear of the progress that is being made in the work of our Cathedral.

Its beautiful white walls are rising rapidly. The huge concrete floors of the galleries, which are to surround the whole of the sacred edifice—thus forming a unique feature unlike that of any other building in the Colony—are long since in position. Hence, if we except the dome and two flanking towers, we may safely say that not only have the Cathedral walls reached more than half their full height, but that more than half the entire work is now complete.

Up to the present we have received and practically expended about £19,000, whilst the promised donations yet unpaid bring the total amount to the munificent sum of well-nigh £28,000.

Surely no true friend of the great undertaking would advise us to stop at this critical stage, when to stop would entail an expenditure of several thousand pounds, besides gravely compromising our actual excellent contract, and inevitably damaging no little of the work already done.

On the contrary, would you not counsel us to make a supreme effort to carry on what will, we may reasonably suppose, become one of the chief monuments of the Greater Christchurch and a standing memorial of the faith and piety and noble generosity of our devoted clergy and people, well-wishers and friends.

This effort might be—

1. To implore those who have made promises to be good enough to fulfil them at once.

2. To urge those who have not yet given or promised to give, to give, and even those who have already given to be generous enough to give again.

3. To take up earnestly and preserve in keeping up the Sixpenny Weekly Collection, which we entreat our priests to carry out at once in every parish of the diocese.

We trust that you will do all in your power to help us in some of the foregoing ways in this grave juncture, and so avert what, even if only temporarily, would be an awful disaster.

Though it is the earnest wish of the Holy Father, the illustrious Leo the 13th, that the work of the new Cathedral should be viewed by all, by bishop and priest and people as of paramount importance, though we and the devoted priest who so generously gives himself up to this great undertaking are untiring in our efforts in behalf of the same, far from us the thought to let other and important works be forgotten or omitted. Gladly do we bless and encourage whatever is calculated to promote the greater glory of God and the good of souls throughout the diocese. Since we gave ourselves most ungrudgingly to the task of collecting for this edifice, which should be as dear to all as to us, we have authorised the building of churches and schools and presbyteries.

Since our advent amongst you the number of priests has almost been doubled; 12 presbyteries have either been erected, enlarged, or secured. Nearly 30 churches, 14 schools, 17 residences for our devoted teaching Orders have been built or secured during the same period. Six new parishes have been created, and several sites secured for churches to be erected in the near future.

Hence, we are not conscious of having neglected any means of furthering the interests of religion in our midst. Amongst those means our future Cathedral should hold a prominent place. All should take a practical interest in its progress. One of the simplest and most effectual means of helping us in this great work is to take up and carry out the weekly collection of sixpence per head throughout the diocese. Who will not cheerfully make the sacrifice of this trifling amount every week for the sake of the noble cause? Only the other day a poor widow, who gains her livelihood by the labor of her hands, came and offered us the savings of a lifetime, which she wished us to devote to the expense of the new building. A farmer brought a fresh contribution as a thank offering to the Almighty for the blessings of the past and the present year. Who amongst us have not reason to be grateful to the Most High for favors received in the past? Who are not eager for favors, blessings to come? Let us then co-operate, and cheerfully, in this noble work, being assured that God will never allow Himself to be outdone in generosity.

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