

With Christ in the School of Prayer by Andrew Murray, Lesson 1

FIRST LESSON.

'Lord, teach us to pray;'

Or, The Only Teacher.

'And it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, that when He ceased, one of His disciples said to

Him, Lord, teach us to pray.'—LUKE xi. 1.

HE disciples had been with Christ, and seen Him pray. They had learnt to understand

something of the connection between His wondrous life in public, and His secret life of

prayer. They had learnt to believe in Him as a Master in the art of prayer—none could

pray like Him. And so they came to Him with the request, 'Lord, teach us to pray.' And in after

years they would have told us that there were few things more wonderful or blessed than He

taught them than His lessons on prayer.

And now still it comes to pass, as He is praying in a certain place, that disciples who see

Him thus engaged feel the need of repeating the same request, 'Lord, teach us to pray.' As we

grow in the Christian life, the thought and the faith of the

Beloved Master in His never-failing

intercession becomes ever more precious, and the hope of being Like Christ in His intercession

gains an attractiveness before unknown. And as we see Him pray, and remember that there is

none who can pray like Him, and none who can teach like Him, we feel the petition of the

disciples, 'Lord, teach us to pray,' is just what we need. And as we think how all He is and has,

how He Himself is our very own, how He is Himself our life, we feel assured that we have but to

ask, and He will be delighted to take us up into closer fellowship with Himself, and teach us to

pray even as He prays.

Come, my brothers! Shall we not go to the Blessed Master and ask Him to enrol our

names too anew in that school which He always keeps open for those who long to continue their

studies in the Divine art of prayer and intercession? Yes, let us this very day say to the Master,

as they did of old, 'Lord, teach us to pray.' As we meditate, we shall find each word of the

petition we bring to be full of meaning.

'Lord, teach us to pray.' Yes, to pray. This is what we need to be taught. Though in its

beginnings prayer is so simple that the feeblest child can pray, yet it is at the same time the

highest and holiest work to which man can rise. It is fellowship with the Unseen and Most Holy

One. The powers of the eternal world have been placed at its disposal. It is the very essence of

true religion, the channel of all blessings, the secret of power and life. Not only for ourselves,

but for others, for the Church, for the world, it is to prayer that God has given the right to take

hold of Him and His strength. It is on prayer that the promises wait for their fulfilment, the

kingdom for its coming, the glory of Go

slothful and unfit we are. It is only the Spirit of God can enable us to do it aright. How speedily

we are deceived into a resting in the form, while the power is wanting. Our early training, the

teaching of the Church, the influence of habit, the stirring of the emotions—how easily these lead

to prayer which has no spiritual power, and

T

strength, that availeth much, to which the gates of heaven are really opened wide—who would

not cry, Oh for some one to teach me thus to pray?

Jesus has opened a school, in which He trains His redeemed ones, who specially desire it,

to have power in prayer. Shall we not enter it with the petition, Lord! it is just this we need to be

taught! O teach us to pray.

'Lord, teach us to pray.' Yes, us, Lord. We have read in Thy Word with what power Thy believing people of old used to pray, and what mighty wonders were done in answer to their prayers. And if this took place under the Old Covenant, in the time of preparation, how much more wilt Thou not now, in these days of fulfilment, give Thy people this sure sign of Thy presence in their midst. We have heard the promises given to Thine apostles of the power of prayer in Thy name, and have seen how gloriously they experienced their truth: we know for certain, they can become true to us too. We hear continually even in these days what glorious tokens of Thy power Thou dost still give to those who trust Thee fully. Lord! these all are men of like passions with ourselves; teach us gifts of the heavenly world are for us. O teach us to pray so that we may receive abundantly. To us too Thou hast entrusted Thy work, on our prayer too the coming of Thy kingdom depends, in our prayer too Thou canst glorify Thy name; 'Lord teach us to pray.' Yes, us, Lord; we offer ourselves as learners; we would indeed be taught of Thee. 'Lord, teach us to pray.'

'Lord, teach us to pray.' Yes, we feel the need now of being taught to pray. At first there

is no work appears so simple; later on, none that is more difficult; and the confession is forced from us: We know not how to pray as we ought. It is true we have God's Word, with its clear and sure promises; but sin has so darkened our mind, that we know not always how to apply the word. In spiritual things we do not according to the law of the sanctuary. In temporal things we are still less able to avail ourselves of the wonderful liberty our Father has given us to ask what we need. And even when we know what to ask, how much there is still needed to make prayer acceptable. It must be to the glory of God, in full surrender to His will, in full assurance of faith, in the name of Jesus, and with a must be learned. It can only be learned in the school of much prayer, for practice makes perfect. Amid the painful consciousness of ignorance and unworthiness, in the struggle between believing and doubting, the heavenly art of effectual prayer is learnt. Because, even when we do not remember it, there is One, the Beginner and Finisher of faith and prayer, who watches over our praying, and sees to it that in all who trust Him for it their education in the school of prayer shall be carried on to perfection. Let but the deep undertone of all our prayer be

the teachableness that comes from a

sense of ignorance, and from faith in Him as a perfect teacher, and we may be sure we shall be

taught, we shall learn to pray in power. Yes, we may depend upon it, He teaches to pray.

'Lord, teach us to pray.' None can teach like Jesus, none but Jesus; therefore we call on

Him, 'LORD, teach us to pray.' A pupil needs a teacher, who knows his work, who has the gift

of teaching, who in patience and love will descend to the pupil's needs. Blessed be God! Jesus

is all this and much more. He knows what prayer is. It is Jesus, praying Himself, who teaches to

pray. He knows what prayer is. He learned it amid the trials and tears of His earthly life. In

heaven it is still His beloved work: His life there is prayer. Nothing delights Him more than to

find those whom He can take with Him into the Father's presence, whom He can clothe with

power to pray down God's blessing on those around them, whom He can train to be His

fellow-workers in the intercession by which the kingdom is to be revealed on earth. He knows

how to teach. Now by the urgency of felt need, then by the confidence with which joy inspires.

Here by the teaching of the Word, there by the testimony of another believer who knows what it

is to have prayer heard. By His Holy Spirit, He has access to our heart, and teaches us to pray by

showing us the sin that hinders the prayer, or giving us the assurance that we please God. He

teaches, by giving not only thoughts of what to ask or how to ask, but by breathing within us the

very spirit of prayer, by living within us as the Great Intercessor. We may indeed and most

joyfully say, 'Who teacheth like Him?' Jesus never taught His disciples how to preach, only how

to pray. He did not speak much of what was needed to preach well, but much of praying well.

To know how to speak to God is more than knowing how to speak to man. Not power with men,

but power with God is the first thing. Jesus loves to teach us how to pray.

What think you, my beloved fellow-disciples! would it not be just what we need, to ask

the Master for a month to give us a course of special lessons on the art of prayer? As we

meditate on the words He spake on earth, let us yield ourselves to His teaching in the fullest

confidence that, with such a teacher, we shall make progress. Let us take time not only to

meditate, but to pray, to tarry at the foot of the throne, and be trained to the work of intercession.

Let us do so in the assurance that a

most beautifully. He will breathe His own life, which is all prayer, into us. As He makes us

partakers of His righteousness and His life, He will of His intercession. too. As the members of

His body, as a holy priesthood, we shall take part in His priestly work of pleading and prevailing

with God for men. Yes, let us most joyfully say, ignorant and feeble though we be, 'Lord, teach

us to pray.'

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

—0—

Blessed Lord! who ever livest to pray, Thou canst teach me too to pray, me too to live

ever to pray. In this Thou lovest to make me share Thy glory in heaven, that I should pray

without ceasing, and ever stand as a priest in the presence of my God.

Lord Jesus! I ask Thee this day to enrol my name among those who confess that they

know not how to pray as they ought, and specially ask Thee for a course of teaching in prayer.

Lord! teach me to tarry with Thee p

sense of my ignorance, of the wonderful privilege and power of prayer, of the need of the Holy

Spirit as the Spirit of prayer, lead me to cast away my thoughts of what I think I know, and make

rit.

And fill me, Lord, with the confidence that with such a teacher as Thou art I shall learn to

pray. In the assurance that I have as my teacher, Jesus who is ever praying to the Father, and by

I will not be afraid. As much as I

need to know of the mysteries of the prayer-world, Thou wilt unfold for me. And when I may

not know, Thou wilt teach me to be strong in faith, giving glory to God.

Blessed Lord! Thou wilt not put to shame Thy scholar who trusts Thee, nor, by Thy

grace, would he Thee either. Amen.

This book is in the public domain and can legally be reprinted.