



"You will know them by their fruits." Mt. 7:16

Hunger and Groaning

"I now come to another branch of the subject. It might be asked, How does the Spirit help our infirmities? The answer is given to this question in the latter clause of the text, namely, "By making intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." There is often a mighty conception, if I may so speak, in the heart of the believer, too big for utterance. This may arise either from the pressure of those circumstances with which he is surrounded, or from that enlarged desire of his soul, awakened by a view of the infinite goodness of God, as manifested particularly in the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ --a desire so ardent, so extensive in respect to the objects which it embraces, that the tongue cannot well express it. In either, or in both these cases, "the Spirit maketh intercession for us," speaks in the heart, and carries the intense desire of the soul before the throne of God.

1. The soul is very often so overwhelmed with afflictions, arising from crosses and disappointments, from sharp mental conflicts, and from various other sources, that it is pressed down "like a cart beneath its sheaves." In the conflicts occasioned by these circumstances, despair would be added to the other evils under which we "groan the unutterable groan," were we not sustained by the intercession, the strong, supporting influence of the Holy Spirit. This gives energy to the soul, sustains it under its burden, and enables it to "count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ."

2. "The desire of the righteous shall be granted them." Though it is often the case with a heart penetrated with a just sense of the worth of immortal spirits, now fluttering between heaven and hell, to be unable to express itself in suitable language; yet in this respect, also, the Spirit maketh intercession, both by producing and making known that strong desire for their salvation by which the deeply experienced Christian is distinguished. Some may laugh at folly, make a mock at sin, and treat the perilous condition of the sinner with indifference; but the Christian entertains that lively and piercing sense of his danger, which makes him cry out, "Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach." And while his heart is thus penetrated with a piercing sense of the sinfulness and danger of the sinner, from a view of the unbounded love of God in Christ Jesus, he is led to make "Strong cries and tears to God," that he may obtain salvation. Here it is that, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, the devout Christian becomes an intercessor in behalf of a sinful and perishing world, and often feels to prostrate himself before God, while he can only express himself with groanings which cannot be uttered.

But this is more particularly the case in his silent meditations, in his musings on the condition of a lost world, the means of its recovery, and the unwillingness of Almighty God that any sinner should perish. And though the mind of man cannot fully conceive of the things which God hath done, and is still willing to do, to save mankind, yet we often

find ourselves at a loss to express even those little conceptions of our finite minds which we have. In this state of mind the believer stands in silent awe before God, only expressing his strong desires by those groanings which the tongue cannot utter.

3. This subject also applies to the penitent sinner who is groaning after redemption in the blood of the Lamb. He, in the midst of his perplexities, arising from a consciousness of his guilt and helplessness, finds himself at a loss how to express himself before God. Sickened with the world, tired of himself, and condemned for his past conduct, and hardly knowing either the cause of his distress or the way of deliverance from it, he inwardly sighs for a repose which he does not find, and for a peace to which he is a stranger. Every thing tends to humble him, to break down his spirit, and to bring him to the feet of the Redeemer. The frowns of God press upon his conscience, a sense of his guilt makes him afraid, while a knowledge of his own weakness causes him inwardly to tremble for his fate. He knows not, perhaps, that in the midst of these things the Spirit of God is at work with him, begetting within him desires after himself, after a deliverance from sin, and an adoption into the family of Jesus Christ.

In this sad plight, what does he do? He cries for mercy. But while the word mercy trembles upon his lips, or falters upon his tongue, he scarcely comprehends its meaning; he knows not that it includes that pardon and peace which he needs to set him free from his sins and bondage, and which can only be obtained by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Here the Spirit maketh intercession for him with unutterable groanings; and under this influence he breathes out his desires to God, until the Spirit itself beareth witness with his spirit that he is a child of God.

4. But more especially does the believer find himself inwardly groaning after an entire deliverance from the “bondage of corruption.” In the light of God he sees himself more and more vile. This sight of himself, which is also the work of God’s Spirit upon his heart, makes him ardently “pine for deliverance;” and under the pressure of this inward, this dire disease, he would soon sink into despondency, were it not for the aid of the Spirit’s influence, which pleads for him in a language more intelligible than he himself can express. Following the dictates of this Spirit, and borne along by His mighty hand, the believer is enabled so to cast all his care on God as to feel and know that He careth for him, until, finally, His perfect love is so shed abroad in his heart, that he can perfectly love God, and “worthily magnify His holy name.”

Thus does the Spirit help our infirmities, and make intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered. And from these considerations we may learn,

a. To be careful not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Is it so, that “nothing good, nothing strong, and nothing holy” can be effected without the aid of this divine and powerful agency? Then, surely, we ought to be extremely cautious how we “do despite to this Spirit of grace,” lest he take his departure from us, and leave us to the wretchedness of our own blindness and hardness.

One single consideration will show us how important it is for us, as Christians, “to walk in the Spirit.” Though it must be admitted that the Holy Scriptures are an infallible guide in all matters of faith and practice, yet it is equally certain, that as it respects individuals and individual cases, they speak only in general terms. We do not find any of us there called by name, with an express command that thus, and so, we must do in every particular circumstance. And there are, in the course of our pilgrimage, a thousand circumstances, often critical and perplexing, in which we find ourselves at a loss how to act. Here the influence of the Holy Spirit comes to our aid, reflects light upon our path, imparts consolation and strength to our hearts, and teaches us how to apply the commands and promises of God to our particular cases and circumstances. Should we not, therefore, welcome the visitations of this heavenly Comforter, and follow, scrupulously and

diligently, his sacred dictates? "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." We may learn,

b. How deceitful is the system of religion which excludes from it the conscious agency of the Holy Spirit. Take from Christianity this Spirit, and you strip it of one of its most striking peculiarities. It is "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which makes us free from the law of sin and death." As the tree without sap is dead, so that heart which is destitute of the "Spirit of God is dead--dead to God--destitute of all spiritual life--to all feeling of true, religious enjoyment--and, of course, can perform no acceptable service in the sight of God. So essential, indeed, is the possession of this Holy Spirit, that the apostle declares, "no man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost;" that is, as I conceive, no man can call Jesus his Lord, can claim him as his Saviour, who has saved him from his sins, but he who is enabled to do so by having received the "Spirit of adoption, crying," in his heart, "Abba, Father."

Away, then, with all idle notions about having a religion destitute of the Spirit of God! No! It is this Divine Agent which awakens the sinner, converts and sanctifies him; which guides, sustains, and comforts the believer, through the whole course of his pilgrimage. This subject affords,

c. Unspeakable comfort to the weak, the trembling, and oftentimes sorrowful, Christian. Under the unavoidable toils and burdens of life, such are frequently tempted to think that their afflictions are intolerable. Indeed they would be, were it not for the aid and the consolations afforded them by the eternal Spirit. Let all such know that "the battle is not to the strong, nor the race to the swift, but of God that showeth mercy." It is not by human might, nor human power that the battle is fought, or the victory won, "but by my Spirit," saith the Lord. If ye, therefore, "being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.

While the heart of the weak believer trembles under the unavoidable burdens of life, often fearing that he shall one day fall under the hands of his enemies, he hears the voice of his heavenly Shepherd, saying unto him, "Fear not;" "greater is he that is for you than he that is against you." To this consoling declaration, the Divine Spirit sets his seal, stamps it upon his heart, leaving the impress of God's own image, on which is written, "God is love." This revives his drooping Spirit, and he thanks God, and takes courage.

d. The subject affords great encouragement for perseverance in prayer to God. In what particular exercise does the Spirit help us? Though he enlightens the understanding, strengthens our faith, gives stability to our affections, and imparts vigor and activity to our souls, yet all this is done in answer to our prayers--to those groanings which are produced in the heart by the intercessions of the Holy Spirit. If, therefore, we would enjoy the full benefit of these intercessions, we must be faithful co-workers with the Spirit--where he leads we must be willing to go--what he dictates, we must be willing to speak and do--and the desires which he creates in the heart, we must pour forth, as we are able, in fervent prayer to Almighty God.

It is in this way, and in this way alone, that we may expect the fulfillment of the promise, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Yes! It is in answer to mighty prayer, that prayer which is inspired by the Spirit himself, that the soul is "filled with all the fulness of God." And who can doubt that God will answer such a prayer? Will he not grant that request which is of his own dictation? Surely he will. Let, then, the humble Christian continue "instant in prayer," "open his mouth wide," ask for much, even the constant "indwelling of the Holy Spirit," and God shall grant him the desire of his heart.

It is by this means that every thing "is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." And the

more abundantly this true Spirit of prayer prevails, the more abundantly shall our own souls prosper, and the more extensively shall the “word of God prevail,” and the kingdom of Christ be extended upon the face of the earth. When the hearts of professing Christians shall everywhere be imbued with this Divine Spirit, by whose holy dictates they shall be led forth in earnest and united prayer to God, though it may be only by “groanings which cannot be uttered,” then “shall the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ,” and God shall every where be worshipped “in spirit and in truth.” from: P. 12 “Bang’s Sketches” Dr. Nathan Bangs

The following appears to be Mr. Rankin’s own account of these wonderful things: -- “Sunday 30. I was comforted by the sight of my dear brother S. But I was weak in body through riding so far in extreme heat, and much exercised in mind and did not know how I should be able to go through the labor of the day. We went to the chapel at ten, where I had liberty of mind and strength of body beyond my expectation. After preaching I met the society, and was more relieved both in body and mind. At four in the afternoon I preached again, from ‘I set before thee an open door, and none can shut it.’ I had gone through about two-thirds of my discourse, and was bringing the words home to the present now, when such power descended that hundreds fell to the ground, and the house seemed to shake with the presence of God. The chapel was full of white and black, and many were without that could not get in. Look wherever we would, we saw nothing but streaming eyes, and faces bathed in tears; and heard nothing but groans and strong cries after God and the Lord Jesus Christ. My voice was drowned amid the groans and prayers of the congregation.

I then sat down in the pulpit; and both Mr. S. and I were so filled with the divine presence that we could only say, This is none other than the house of God! This is the gate of heaven! Husbands were inviting their wives to go to heaven, wives their husbands: parents their children, and children their parents; brothers their sisters, and sisters their brothers. In short, those who were happy in God themselves were for bringing all their friends to him in their arms. This mighty effusion of the Spirit continued for above an hour: in which time many were awakened, some found peace with God, and others his pure love. We attempted to speak or sing again and again: but no sooner we began than our voices were drowned. It was with much difficulty that we at last persuaded the people, as night drew on, to retire to their own homes. “History of the M.E. Church” vol. 1 P. 61

All people cry. Some just don’t show it. Others do but not much or frequently. Weeping is an indicator of fear, pain, anger, disappointment, frustration, pity, joy, pride, pleasure or excitement.

At times, we don’t know why we cry. Occasionally, just observing our wives, husbands, parents or children triggers involuntary and inexplicable tears. Seeing a friendly, courteous young man arise in the presence of an elderly person, or observing a pleasant, young lady move with unpretentious poise; watching an arthritic, white-haired grandmother painfully stoop to retrieve a carelessly discarded bit of trash, or a polite grandfather stand quietly in the midst of unmindful, milling crowds; viewing the anxious care of a mother as she watches sleeplessly over a sick child, or witnessing a small son’s tiny hand in his dad’s as they walk, each trying to match the other’s stride; receiving a wilted buttercup or a smudgy, crayoned “portrait” from a child with shining eyes and grimy hands; these sights and many others of similar nature evoke unbidden and unexplained tears.

Weeping can represent various emotions ranging from selfish, indignant peevishness to heart-broken self-sacrifice. It has the capacity to astronomically deceive or heroically prove. It can be highly meaningful and productive, building bridges and inciting action, or it may cause one to flounder and thrash in a sea of self-pity and futile indulgences. It can

compliment and excite faith to courageous new attempts or it will drum the march to the fickle fissures of failure. Tears can soften the spirit, soothe the mind, and strengthen the will, or they can harden the heart, confuse one's reason, and destroy purpose. They can release or imprison, uplift or depress, cleanse or defile, tenderize or harden, mellow or embitter, build or destroy. It is trite to think or state that weeping is weakness, or the converse, that not weeping is a strength. The fact is that a person's fortitude is not primarily determined by his emotional structure. The bravest of persons will run the full course of emotional traits and back again. The same can be said of the weakest. Courage is discovered to rise and get the job done regardless of how one feels. He who succeeds in any endeavor learns to use his emotional system as tools, rather than be enslaved and controlled by them. The decision making process especially must exert as dispassionate an influence as possible. Those choices made in the heat of emotion are usually unsound, premature, and injurious.

Emotion in general and weeping in particular have great value if they are harnessed and utilized.

The God-man wept, and it is highly significant that no explanation is given as to why He cried at Lazarus' grave. This means that He cried just because He felt sorrow. He empathized with the grief and loss of His friends, Mary and Martha. There need be no studied search for underlying, metaphorical, theological meanings. He was feeling the separation and pain that death visited upon the human family and was responding characteristically. Someone He loved had died and others He loved were suffering and grieving, so He wept. He didn't weep to prove that He was human, He wept because He was human, and that act forever vindicates the worthiness of weeping, if indeed it needs vindication.

Weeping rises to its fullest dimension and fulfills its ultimate purpose when it becomes the testimony of compassionate concern. As the Son of God looked upon a milling mass of people during His days here on earth, He was moved with compassion, for they appeared to Him as scattered, drifting, vulnerable, sheep having no shepherd. They were more to Him than just masses of humanity. They were eternity bound individuals who were ignorant of safety and inexorably lost.

They were unwarned and unprepared for the unseen imminent danger and certain destruction.

Hundreds of pairs of eyes witnessed the same multitude, but His eyes caught the full import of ten thousand lost souls moving seventy-two heartbeats a minute to incalculable disaster. It drew on the concern element of His nature and a selfless response was in the making. Immediately was set into motion determinations to effect corrections and assistance. It never occurred to Jesus that the people may not welcome His intervention; that they might resist any attempt to change the pattern of their living; that His interest in their well-being might be misunderstood and misinterpreted. His reaction was summoned from an authority that was as intuitive as it was irrepressible. That authority was compassion. It exceeded the boundaries of propriety and ignored the possibility of hostility or rejection. A need was in evidence and the ability to meet that need issued its own insistent authority.

Compassion moves where courage fears to go. It knows no limitations, needs no underwriting, requires no reserves, is unflaggingly indefatigable, does not know how to quit or retreat, and demands no reward or praise. It conspicuously springs from guileless motivation. Any benevolent act emanating from selfish intents did not find its source in compassion, for compassion and selfishness are mortal enemies. Compassion is divine while egotism is carnal. It, as one of love's many faces, "seeks not her own" (SEE 1 Corinthians 13:5).

God's Word incontrovertibly establishes "love one for another" as the foremost test of Christian identity (SEE John 13:35). It is not great preaching, profound teaching, astute administration, harmonious musical presentations, liberal financial contributions, powerful personal witnessing, or faithful church attendance that certifies Christian genuineness, but love one for the other. It is that kind of love that seeks the well-being of his peers and fellowlaborers over his own. It is love that feels, that reaches out, that searches for service, that quests for involvement, that lends and gives and dies.

Oh, for a reinstatement in the church of the "sacrificial altar" where lives are lost to the will of God and committed to redemptive expediency! The popular practice of apparently "giving all to Jesus" and still obviously living worldly lives is paralyzing the church. Self-indulgences have produced a spiritual sterility that necessarily limits, and at times entirely eliminates, redemptive productivity.

Pleasure seeking, with its lecherous impotency, that has been historically rejected by the church as debilitating, has gnawed fatal wounds into the vitals of commitment and dedication. Satan through Hollywood, has often succeeded in causing the church to think that she can be glamorous and glorious at the same time; that she can be popular and powerful too; that she can be rid of reproach and still remain redemptive; that she can indeed partake of carnal substance and still produce spiritual strength; that she can bring to birth effortlessly, painlessly, tearlessly, and without sacrifice or cost.

Alas, it is empty euphoria, and amazing anesthesia, and a damning dream! The law of life is forever established as product by pain, realization by rigor, subsistence by sacrifice, success by suffering, and winning by weeping. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy" (SEE Psalms 126:5).

A tearless people are powerless and without advocacy, for only those who importune and persevere are the recipients of divine intervention. "God shall avenge His elect who cry day and night unto him" (SEE Luke 18:7).

In Gethsemane, Jesus delivered. He carried through. This was no dress rehearsal or dramatized prelude to history in the making. In reality, the battle for mankind's redemption was won when Jesus Christ finally rose from His knees and simply stated to sleeping disciples, "... the hour is come ... rise up, let us go ..." (SEE Mark 14:41, 42). In a sense and in the Father's eyes, the crucifixion, though necessary to the finalizing of human atonement, was anti-climatic. The Calvary that followed Gethsemane was an act predetermined hours earlier. The earthly issue of what had to be done and that it would be done, was settled in the will and mind of the Son of God at a point in time and place known only to the Father and His Son. In the everlasting annals of infinite consciousness, it is recorded for creatures of all time to eventually witness and reverence.

It is of no small note that such a portentous determination was supported by Jesus' tears. The atmosphere of our eternal salvation was that of sweat, groans, and tears – the effectual embellishments of intercession. What a contrast to the modern concept of perfumed, propitious religious posture! We can sweat to play, but not to pray. We can cry over lost lovers, lost income, lost health, and lost possessions, but it is viewed by many as embarrassing emotionalism to weep over lost souls! Weeping and groaning is viewed by the contemporary church at large as emotional impropriety," unnecessary, and extreme. It is unique, to be sure, for there is little of it, but it is far from unnecessary and extreme. Jesus said that the hard cases could only be corrected by prayer and fasting (SEE Matthew 17:21). That illustrious army traditionally known as "prayer warriors" has been replaced largely by "devotion-time warriors," "prayer cell warriors," "prayer retreat warriors," and the like. More seems to be spoken and written about prayer than ever before, and that is good, but agonizing needs to fill the various forms of prayer with life and power and practice.

Paul draws out of the Gethsemane scene (SEE Hebrews 5:7) a definite reference to the soul cry of Jesus as He sought the Father's face in the universe's fiercest struggle. Listed is an interesting comparison of that experience from five different paraphrases and translations.

"Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared" (KING JAMES).

"In the days of His flesh, when He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to Him Who was able to save Him from death, and Who was heard because of His piety" (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD).

"Christ, in the days when He was a man on earth, appealed to the One Who could save Him from death in desperate prayer and the agony of tears" (J. B. PHILLIPS).

"Yet while Christ was here on earth He pleaded with God, praying with tears and agony of soul to the only One Who could save Him from death" (LIVING BIBLE).

"During the days of Jesus' life on earth, He offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the One Who could save Him from death" (NEW INTERNATIONAL).

Some would conclude that since Jesus is our intercessor in heaven, and since He has already paid the horrible price of soul agony in the garden, and since no one else could possibly suffer and endure the degree and burden and concern as He did, such weeping and travail by any other human is unnecessary, out of place, and, in fact, futile. If such reasoning is true, Paul must have been very misguided then, for tearful intercession was clearly evidenced in his life and ministry.

He said, "... from the first day that I came into Asia I have been ... serving the Lord with all humility of mind and with many tears" (SEE Acts 20:18, 19).

His ministry among the Ephesians was often accompanied by weeping. "Therefore watch and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears" (SEE Acts 20:31). Paul evidently was moved upon as he taught and preached. He punctuated his messages with tearful pleadings and passionate warnings.

His writing also was accompanied by weeping, as he says in 2 Corinthians 2:4, "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears ..." Anguish of heart! What words of description for concern! Paul, the prince of writers, his great heart breaking over the carnality, immaturity, and instability of the Corinthian Christians, was weeping as he wrote.

Again, in writing to the Philippian church, he refers to accompanying tears as he teaches, preaches, prays and warns. "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ" (SEE Philippians 3:18).

Clearly, in both the lives of our Lord and the Apostle Paul, concern and compassion surfaced as weeping. It was a positive, valuable force in the pursuit of accomplishing tasks of incalculable dimensions. When choices and enactments of universal proportions were encountered, the resolutions were effected by a powerful brokenness of spirit and in an agony of soul. Theirs was not the crying of confused consternation or distraught despair, but that of bleeding bravery that overcame solitary sieges and triumphed in the brutal battlefields of finite frailty.

A weeping will controlled by the Holy Spirit is a fearsome fighter. It does not blindly beat the air all the while rapidly depleting measured strength in futile fusillades of shadow boxing, but rather repeatedly and effectively assaults the damning legions of wicked

spirits. Such persons refuse to let friends and relatives go to Hell uncontested and make it their business to discover and disarm the demonic captors who bind the lost in their blindness. Intercessors cannot break the chains of sin that shackle their loved ones, only the Deliverer of captives can do that, but they can relentlessly rattle the chains with which they are bound. They cannot be denied admission to the death-row of lost souls where the prisoners await judgment and penalty. It is admittedly territory controlled by Satan, but creatively and provisionally reclaimable by Jesus Christ and His church. Hallelujah! At every point where the precious blood of Jesus has been exposed, there is a pleading place. Jerry McCauley, the redeemed alcoholic of New York's Water Street Mission, vowed that he would build a mission at the gates of Hell if it were possible. Physically that is an impossibility, but vicariously the saints can set up intercession stations all the way from Hell's gates to Heaven's, for there is a trail of efficacy in the blood of the Lamb spanning that entire distance. Until human destiny is settled by death or reprobation, there is reason for and value in intercession.

When such possibility of maximum loss or gain is starkly obvious, how can so few Christians be thus involved? How can the provisions of atonement and reconciliation fail to inspire consistent and passionate pleading in behalf of perishing people? There can only be one answer and that is disinterest by preoccupation. We are what we think and we do what we love.

It seems that God's eyes search out every generation, every nation, every congregation, and every family for some individual who will "stand in the gap" and "make up the hedge." The weepers are so few and the criers so rare. "Who will go for us?" is not a divine query limited in its presentation just to preachers and missionaries. The call to spend hours and days and nights and mealtimes in agonizing prayer is to every Christian. Who will go to his secret closet? Who will make it his life's calling? Who will spend and be spent without regard for reward or recognition? Who will love as Jesus loved? "Good Enough for The Preacher" P. 43 W. L. Boone



PRAYER

Consecration and faith are the conditions of obtaining sanctification; yet neither one will be born or continue to live without prayer. Through prayer we gather strength to consecrate, and through prayer faith is aroused and stimulated to take hold of the great blessing.

The disciples had been praying for ten days when the baptism of fire suddenly fell upon them. For three days the writer was living in supplication, every breath was a petition, when swiftly, graciously, overwhelmingly, the blessing sought after, consecrated for, believed in, and prayed for, came upon his soul.

Our advice to every seeker of sanctification is: Live upon your knees. Pray whether you feel like it or not. Pray with words and without words. Pray with groanings that cannot be uttered. Let your sighs be prayers. Sometimes we never pray more acceptably and prevailingly than when stretched on our faces, we groan for deliverance before God. Knock on and call at the door of mercy until the very noise will create remark in heaven. The kingdom suffereth violence, and the King is well pleased with importunity. The inevitable result of all this will be the descending baptism of fire, and the clear,

unmistakable witness of the Spirit to the sanctification of the soul.

When the witness comes we need not that any man should teach us what has happened. The soul is thrilled with the purifying work and the testifying Spirit. We know that inbred sin is gone and that the heart is pure.

“The Old Man” P. 79 B. Carradine: May I come to Christ now, just as I am?

Yes, precious soul, this very moment. May the Lord help you! You can make yourself no better.

We can not save ourselves in part before coming to Christ. Tears, groanings, resolutions, and lamentations will make us no better, nor more worthy. “Now is the day of salvation “ now is the time you should believe. It is wrong not to believe. Say, Here, Lord, I will, I do believe thou hast said now; now let it be. And now rest your soul on the all atoning merit of Jesus.

Oh, happy state! Who would not give up all to obtain it? What folly to be satisfied with the commencement of Christ’s work, when an experience so sweet, so rich and full is our privilege! Oh that with a longing heart you may exclaim, --

My soul breaks out in strong desire,
The perfect bliss to prove;
My longing heart is all on fire
To be dissolved in love.”

-- Charles Wesley --

from: “Perfect Love” by J. A. Wood

It is impossible to give more than a specimen of his common method of labor. The instances of his revival work, and pulpit labors are too numerous to be inserted in our limits. But the following, from the New York Evangelist, we can not withhold. We give only an extract. It was in 1842, after his great baptism of fire. The writer says of Mr. Hamline:

The noblest exhibition of his popular talent, I saw in the Wesley Chapel in Cincinnati one Sabbath evening after stationed preacher (Rev. J. L. Grover) had finished his discourse. Mr. Hamline, who was in the pulpit, immediately arose and began to exhort the impenitent part of the congregation to come to the altar to be prayed for. He had a cloak on, and as he began to “warm up” in his exhortation the cloak would slide first from one shoulder and then from the other to be drawn up with a jerk. At last, with a violent motion of one arm, it was thrown off entirely. Meanwhile his heavy features had kindled into a most animated expression, and his neat and perfectly appropriate words were flowing in a torrent. In this way he spoke several minutes, when he suddenly ran down from the pulpit to the altar, never intermitting his speech, and standing there he delivered one of the most thrilling appeals to sinners I have ever heard. An audience of some two thousand people was present, and the effect was soon visible in the scores who hurried up to the altar to be prayed for. The whole mass was in a state of excitement, as was plain from the vociferations, groanings, and prayers which went up in all parts of the house. It required more skepticism than I ever had to doubt the entire sincerity of the man, as I heard the prayer which he poured out in behalf of the mourners;’ it was so fervent yet so reverent, it pleaded the promises with such appropriateness, and seemed so full of an anguished spirit in behalf of the perishing, that to me it was the ‘effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous man.’

Evidently in Methodist tactics – if I may so name them without disrespect – the exhortation to mourners to come up to the altar, at least in former days, was one of the strongest agencies employed. In many cases more depended on ‘the exhortation’ than on the ‘sermon;’ and considering this, I must place that ‘exhortation’ of Bishop Hamline as the most thrilling I ever heard. In those days when he rode the circuit, and attended camp-meetings as a preacher, he probably had not many, if any, superiors in this difficult work of exhorting. Many men exhort as they would blow a blacksmith’s bellows; but to mingle up argument and incident, statement and inference, imagination and fact, in such an appeal as bears down all resistance, is a field for high gifts, and here Mr. Hamline was entirely at home. Ten years ago, when I heard him last, he was one of the most noble preachers of the word in Ohio, and he certainly was a prince among exhorters.” P. 46
Biography of M. E Bishop Leonidas Lent Hamline



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