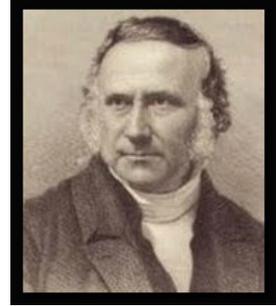


# *A Mother's Prayer*



As I was very much engaged at one time, in calling from house to house, among the people of my charge, I called upon a young woman to endeavor to direct her attention to the subject of her salvation. I attempted to draw her into conversation upon religion, but did not succeed. She would converse freely about anything else; but on this subject she was very mute, only deigning a brief answer to my questions; and sometimes, not even that. I knew that she was greatly partial to me,—a very warm personal friend; and I wondered at her obstinate silence. On visiting her again, a day or two afterwards, I found her in the same state. About religion she was wholly reserved. As days passed on, I made many attempts to persuade her to deny herself, and follow Christ; but my attempts were all in vain. Almost the whole of her youthful associates had become Christians, as they hoped, or were prayerfully seeking the Lord. She remained almost alone; and I became very solicitous about her. I tried with all my power, to affect her mind: I explained the character of God, the law, sin, the work of Christ, the prospects of sinners. I showed the vanity of the world. I employed the promises, and aimed to melt her heart. Time after time, with the Bible in my hand, I directed her own eyes to the passages, and got her to read them to me. I marked passages and desired her to read them alone, carefully, and with prayer. Polite, amiable and kind as she was, she appeared entirely unmoved by all that I could say to her. I understood also, if anything was said about religion in the family, she would retire to her room. She would leave the table as soon as she could without manifest rudeness, if the subject of religion became a

topic of conversation. Her mother told me she would not hear a word from her on that subject, when they were alone; but would leave the room, if she spoke of it at all. She had also abandoned all religious meetings, except on the Sabbath; and sometimes she was absent then.

Finally, one day, I called and said to her;—"I have called to see you once more, in order to speak to you again, about your salvation."

"I am always happy to see you," said she.

"And are you willing to talk with me on the subject of your own religious duty?"

"You can talk to me, if you please."

"That is not enough. I have talked to you many times, and you are silent. You force me to talk in the dark; because I cannot find out what you think or feel. You will not even answer the questions I put to you. And it seems to me, that you must deem me intrusive, impolite and unkind, to be so often speaking to you on a subject, which appears unwelcome to you."

"Oh no," says she, "not at all."

"Then, are you willing to talk freely with me, as you do on all other subjects?"

She gave me no answer. I told her, that at present I had no time for any other than religious conversation—that when I had, I should be happy to see her; but that now, there were many persons wishing to see me, and willing to converse with me freely, about the way of salvation; and if she did not wish to see me on that subject, I would excuse myself from calling

on her again. She made no reply, and I began to fear she was going to cast me off entirely. I asked her:—

“Do you wish me to come to see you again?”

She appeared to be affected, but gave me no answer.

“I hope you will allow me to call on you again.”

She made no reply. Said I:—

“My dear girl, I have tried to do you good: I wish still to try: I have loved you and respected you: I hope you will not cast me out in this way. I ask it as a favor, that you will allow me to call on you again, and aim to persuade you to attend to your salvation.”

She manifested much emotion, but remained silent. Said I:—

“It is for you to say, whether I shall call on you again, or not. I will not force myself upon you”

I rose to depart; and offering her my hand as she accompanied me to the door, I said to her:—

“May I come to see you once more? I do not like to be cast off so, by one that I love so much. What do you say? may I come? I ask it as a favor.” She wept, but she did not answer. I paused and repeated the question, “may I come?” but she made me no reply, and I bade her good-bye. The next day, as I passed the house, her mother saw me, and came after me in the street, through the deep snow, and begged me to call and see her daughter. She was greatly distressed about her. She feared nothing would induce her to seek God. I told her how she had refused to give me permission to come to see her again, even when I had begged it, as affectionately as I could; and therefore, I could do no more. I could not

intrude myself upon her. It would do no good and unless her daughter expressed a willingness at least, to see me; I never should trouble her any more. The mother wept like a child. "Oh," says she; "what will become of her! She refused to hear me say anything, long ago; and now, you, are going to give her up! What shall I do?"

"You can pray for her," said I, "God can reach her heart." She begged me not to forget her poor child, and turned back towards her home, with tears streaming from her eyes, one of the most heart-broken mothers, I have ever seen.

The next Sabbath evening, that girl was at the inquiry meeting. She was entirely overcome by her emotions. She bewailed herself, as an undone sinner. She said she had resisted God—she had broken her mother's heart—she had destroyed herself, and feared there was no mercy for her.

After some weeks she entertained a hope in Christ; but her mind soon became darkened and bewildered with doubts and fears; and for some years, she never made a public profession of religion. More than ten years after she came to that inquiry meeting, I took some pains to visit her. She still entertained her hope, and still lived a life of prayer.

The cause of her yielding, when she first came to the inquiry meeting seems to have been, that she was let alone. Her mother had ceased to say anything to her about her salvation; her minister was cast off; her companions had ceased to solicit her attention to her religious duties. She was left to herself. Nothing opposed her. And she found she was opposing God.

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The Holy Spirit leads to self-inspection. Such inspection is just the operation of a convicted sinner's mind. Sometimes, if he is just left to take his own course, nobody to oppose him, his own conscience will be

the more apt to do that office. Aside from a deep sense of accountability, there will be little or no conviction. But it was prayer—a mother’s prayer, that availed for her. That mother said to me; “I went to my room, after you told me you could do no more, and we could only pray; and I prayed as I never prayed before. I felt that God only could help me; and if he did not answer me, I could not think myself a Christian any longer.”