

Paul's Epistle to the Colossians (23): Watch and Pray

We have been working through this third chapter of Colossians for some weeks. We have found that this portion of God's Word contains instruction that is very practical for Christians. The Lord has given us directives through the writing hand of the apostle, instruction on how we are to order our relationships, whether they are family relationships or relationships in the workplace. These commands reveal a difficulty that we all have as fallen human beings: we struggle in our relationship with those who have authority over us. And the Lord has placed every one of us under human authorities. But because of sin, we resist submitting. We want, even insist, rather, that they submit to us. And if we happen to be placed in a position of authority over another or others, we do not exercise authority rightly. We fail to lead them by serving them, for we sinfully desire that they are to serve us. We may insist that it is our right that they do so. But the grace of God in Jesus Christ teaches us otherwise. The way of the Lord is to submit to authority over us, and if we are in authority, we are to be the servant of others.

In whatever relationship we ourselves, we are to seek the well-being of others; in other words, to love others as you love yourself. As our Lord taught us, "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matt. 7:12). Very few order their lives in this way, but it is essential for the Christian. It is interesting that our Lord's words that immediately follow His statement of The Golden Rule are these:

¹³"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. (Matt. 7:13-14)

The outline that we have used to help us understand and digest this section of the epistle is as follows:

- IV. The Christian Life in Christ (3:5-4:6)
 - 1. "Put off" (3:5-11)
 - 2. "Put on" (3:12-17)
 - 3. "Be subject" (3:18-4:1)
 - 4. "Watch and Pray" (4:2-6)

Today we begin to address the last subject of our outline, which is instruction to "watch and pray" in verses 2 through 4.

²Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. ³At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison-- ⁴that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. (Col. 4:2-4)

The apostle gave the command to these Christians to "*continue steadfastly in prayer.*" It would seem that Paul assumed that they were Christians who were already praying people. His command to them was that they continue steadfastly in prayer. Christians are praying people. They may not always be steadfast in prayer, but they should be so--"continue steadfast in prayer."

Jonathan Edwards, the well-respected, early 18th century, reformed, congregational pastor of Northampton, argued that prayer is such a vital part of the Christian life, that a test of true Christianity is if a person is faithful in prayer. He wrote a sermon entitled, "*Hypocrites Deficient in the Duty of Prayer.*" He argued that all Christians pray. But he said that false Christians, that is, hypocrites, pray also. But they are deficient in their practice of prayer. Here are a few of his words from that sermon:

Hypocrites never had the spirit of prayer given them. They may have been stirred up to the external performance of this duty, and that with a great deal of earnestness and affection, and yet always have been destitute of the true spirit of prayer. The spirit of prayer is an holy spirit, a gracious spirit. We read of the spirit of grace and supplication. "I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications" (Zech. iii. 10). Wherever there is a true spirit of supplication, there is the spirit of grace. The true spirit of prayer is no other than God's own Spirit dwelling in the hearts of the saints. And as this spirit comes from God, so doth it naturally tend to God in holy breathings and pantings. It naturally leads to God, to converse with him by prayer. Therefore the Spirit is said to make intercession for the saints with groanings which cannot be uttered (Rom. viii. 26).

But it is far otherwise with the true convert. His work is not done; but he finds still a great work to do, and great wants to be supplied. He sees himself still to be a poor, empty, helpless creature, and that he still stands in great and continual need of God's help. He is sensible that without God he can do nothing. A false conversion makes a man in his own eyes self-sufficient. He saith he is rich, and increased with goods, and hath need of nothing; and knoweth not that he is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. But after a true conversion, the soul remains sensible of its own impotence and emptiness, as it is in itself, and its sense of it is rather increased than diminished. It is still sensible of its universal dependence on God for every thing. A true convert is sensible that his grace is very imperfect; and he is very far from having all that he desires. Instead of that, by conversion are begotten in him new desires which he never had before. He now finds in him holy appetites, an hungering and thirsting after righteousness, a longing after more acquaintance and communion with God. So that he hath business enough still at the throne of grace; yea, his business there, instead of being diminished, is, since his conversion, rather increased.

Edwards makes a good case. A true Christian may be known by his praying to His God. Nevertheless, most Christians feel themselves deficient in their practice of prayer. Prayer is labor. Prayer is difficult. Praying fervently and faithfully takes grace that is bestowed by the Lord.

Our Lord Jesus encouraged His disciples to pray, teaching them that God the Father desires and delights to grant the petitions they offer to Him. In our Lord's Sermon on the Mount He taught these words to His disciples:

⁷Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ⁹Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? ¹¹If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! (Matthew 7:7-11)

Our Lord has promised us that the Father will work on our behalf, accomplishing His purposes through us, if we are faithful in prayer toward Him. Let us now consider in detail our Lord's words.

First, in **verse 7** we read that our Lord's disciples have God's promise that **He will answer our persistent prayers**. Three verbs are given: ask, seek, and knock. These are all present active imperative verbs. What this means is that our Lord was telling His disciples to be in the practice of **always** asking, **always** seeking, and **always** knocking.

Furthermore, the promise conveyed implies a conditional idea.¹ It could be translated, "**If** you keep asking, it will be given to you; **if** you keep on seeking, you will find; **if** you keep on knocking, it will be opened to you." And so our Lord is promising that God the Father will answer the prayers of His disciples, if they make it their practice to be asking, seeking, and knocking.

When the Lord Jesus commanded us to be asking, we are to be stating our specific requests to Him. When He commanded us to be seeking, He is assuring us that God Himself and the answers we seek will be

¹ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Beyond Basics* (Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), p. 490.

granted us. When He commanded us to be knocking, He is assuring us that God will allow us into His presence so that we may gain a hearing before Him.

These are commands. These are commands to be praying continuously. There is never a thought of idleness and presumption in the Bible, in which you can live without prayer and just presume upon God to care for everything as it arises. The tenor of all Scripture is that His people are to come continually to Him in prayer, requesting from Him those things they need, relying upon Him to provide them, but always seeking His face-- a hearing with Him--so that we might receive the things that only He can give.

Second, our Lord promises us our prayers will be granted (7:8). “For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.” Everyone one of His disciples is promised access to God the Father, a hearing before Him, and they may be assured of His favorable response to his/her petitions.

Our God encourages you to come at any time day or night, and you may gain an immediate hearing with Him before whom you may lay your requests. You may be assured that He will receive you into His presence for you are not only His subject requesting entrance to your Sovereign King, but you are his child coming to ask for something from your “dad”, and I say that with the utmost reverence.

The fact is that the Bible speaks of *the priesthood of all believers*. Here we have our Lord reinforcing this truth. Each of us who are true believers in Jesus Christ has equal and full access to our heavenly Father. We are each very privileged to have these blessed promises.

But let us also realize these promises bring upon us great responsibility and accountability. How will we fare when we stand before our Lord one day to render an account for how we made use of these great privileges and responsibilities in prayer?

Third, our Lord reasons with His disciples respecting the willingness of God to answer our prayers. (7:9-11)

⁹Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? ¹¹If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! (Matthew 7:7-11)

A human father would not be so cruel so as *to deceive* or harm his children by supposing to give them what they asked, but giving them something else in its place that was harmful to them. The heavenly Father is contrasted with “evil” fathers, that is, sinful fathers. You should not think God is anything but more willing to give everything good and needful to His children who ask Him.

Our Lord speaks of the Father giving “good things” to His children. In the parallel account in Luke’s gospel the good things that the Father gives His children is the gift of the Holy Spirit. Luke 11:13 reads,

“If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.” (Luke 11:13)

And with the Spirit come all the graces of God that He imparts to His children--faith, love, hope, patience, endurance, mercy, and goodness. All of these things, in fact, all good things that come to us do so through the operation of the Spirit of God.

If we were honest with ourselves, I suspect many of us do not experience the reality of what our Lord promised us in these verses. We do not seem to receive, even though we have asked. For example, we have often prayed for the salvation of loved ones, but they continue in their sins. We have prayed for the physical healing of some, but they did not appear to improve due to our praying, in fact, it would seem their condition worsened. How then do we relate the promises of Matthew 7:7-11 with the practical experience of our praying? The answer is that here in Matthew 7 our Lord Jesus is teaching us *the willingness* of God to hear and answer prayer, but He does not speak about other matters that His Word tells us that also affect the outcome of our praying. If our prayers remain unanswered, the reason must lie in something other than the

fact that God is reluctant or unwilling, for God is a gracious and generous Father to His children, who are disciples of Jesus Christ. It is right, therefore, to ask what else do the Scriptures say about prayer?

1. God promises to answer our prayers if we ask things that are *in accordance to His will*. In 1 John 5:14 and 15 we read,

¹⁴And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. ¹⁵And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

God has not promised to answer our prayers if we ask for things that are contrary to His will.

Now some wrongly assume from this verse that they should not pray for something until they know if it is “God’s will”, in the sense of what God *has intended* to do. In other words, they place upon themselves the impossible task to discover *God’s will of decree*, what He determined to bring to pass according to His eternal plan, before they pray for a matter. I would suggest that we would never pray for anything if that were the work of preparation for our praying. We cannot know the details of God’s decree, for they are hidden from us, but we may know *God’s will of precept*—what He has taught and commanded in His Word. No, we may pray to God knowing that He would be able to answer our prayer, but leave to Him whether or not He is willing to do so in a particular matter. We should be as the leper who came to Jesus praying to be healed. We read in Matthew 8:

And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, *if You are willing, You can make me clean.*” Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. (Matt. 8:2f)

I would suggest that this leper prayed according to the will of God, as he could have known it. He was confident in Jesus Christ’s ability to heal him. He was not confident that it was in God’s purpose that the Lord Jesus heal him at this time, and so he questioned the Lord’s willingness to heal him at that time. This is why we should always acknowledge in our praying, “If You will, then we ask that you will grant our request.”

2. God tells us that we are *to ask in faith* we would receive from God that which we ask of Him.

⁵If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. ⁶*But let him ask in faith, with no doubting*, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.” (James 1:5f)

When the Holy Spirit moved James to write, “*But let him ask in faith, with no doubting*”, I do not believe that He was telling us not to doubt that we were going to receive the precise thing for which we were asking. For we do not know many times if it is God’s will to grant a specific petition. What I believe is being taught here is this: When we pray we should pray in faith, in confidence that *our God is One “who who gives generously to all without reproach.”* To doubt this is to dishonor God. God will not grant the requests of those who dishonor His name.

And then again, I would argue that to ask in faith is to ask with confidence in God’s ability to grant our request, but to ask in faith that He may grant a specific matter, unless it is clearly promised in God’s Word, would be presumption, not faith.

3. God tells us that *if we are living sinfully*, that our prayer life will suffer; He will not answer our prayers. The Psalmist taught us this principle in Psalm 66.

¹⁶Come and hear, all you who fear God,

and I will tell what He has done for my soul.

¹⁷I cried to Him with my mouth,
and high praise was on my tongue.

¹⁸***If I had cherished iniquity in my heart,
...the Lord would not have listened.***

¹⁹But truly God has listened;
He has attended to the voice of my prayer.

²⁰Blessed be God,
because He has not rejected my prayer
or removed His steadfast love from me! (Psalm 66:16-20)

Now, I prefaced this reading with the idea that “***if we are living sinfully***”, then God will not hear us. One might respond, “But I am never without sin! My sin is ever before me! Does this mean that God will not hear me when I pray?” Our response would be, “Who could possibly claim to be otherwise, but one who sins all the time?” For all we all sin and do so all day long. But this is not what our Lord is telling us here. What he is saying is that if we live in known, unrepentant sin for which we are not humble and from which we desire God’s deliverance, He will not hear us.

4. God tells us that our prayers may go unanswered if we are not right in our marriage relationships. “Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, ***so that your prayers may not be hindered***” (1 Peter 3:7). Our Lord has told us elsewhere,

5. But the major reason most Christians do not have their prayers answered, is because they do not pray frequently. “You do not have, because you do not ask.” (Jam 4:2)

6. James went on to say when many do pray, they pray for **selfish reasons**. People do not have their prayers answered because they are not praying with view to God’s purposes and God’s glory. James wrote, “You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures” (Jam. 4:3). Not all prayers are pleasing to God. We read of those Jews in Isaiah’s day whose prayers aggravated their condemnation:

When you spread out your hands,
I will hide my eyes from you;
even though you make many prayers,
I will not listen;
your hands are full of blood. (Isa. 1:15)

7. God sometimes answers our prayer only ***after praying with great endurance***, waiting upon Him to answer us in His own timing and His own way. Our Lord taught this in **Luke 18:8ff.**

¹Then He (Jesus) spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, ²saying: “There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. ³Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, ‘Avenge me of my adversary.’ ⁴And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, ‘Though I do not fear God nor regard man, ⁵yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.’” ⁶Then the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge said. ⁷And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? ⁸I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”

Our Lord had been teaching His disciples about the kingdom of God. He spoke of a period of time after his death and departure that they would miss Him greatly (cf. Luke 17:22). But He was returning, doing so suddenly, therefore His disciples were to be always watching and ready (Luke 17:24). Our Lord gave this parable of 18:1-8 on the same occasion; in fact, this parable concludes this present discourse on the kingdom of God. Here, the Lord describes a widow who harassed an unjust judge until she finally received justice.

The parable stresses several points: (1) the elect --God's chosen ones-- are to be persistent in their prayer to God as the widow was persistent in her pleading with the judge. (2) The elect should view their God in contrast to the judge. Whereas the judge was unwilling to grant the widow what she needed, God is very willing. Moreover, although the judge finally acted out of his own interests, God acts out of concern for His chosen ones.

There have been many helpful books written on the subject of prayer. One produced by a 17th century puritan, **Thomas Brooks**, is still available today.² It is entitled, *The Secret Key to Heaven; The Vital Importance of Prayer*. In this book Brooks set forth 20 arguments for private prayer, that is, for Christians to be faithful in their private prayer life. He then gave biblical examples of each of his reasons for secret prayer.

1. The most eminent saints engaged in private prayer. Boston wrote,

The first argument is that the most eminent saints both the Old Testament and the New applied themselves to private prayer. Moses was alone in the mount with God forty days and forty nights (Exo. 34:28). Similarly, Abraham fills his mouth with arguments, and reasons the case out alone with God in prayer, to prevent Sodom's desolation and destruction, and never leaves off pleading and praying till he had brought God down from fifty to ten (Gen. 18:22-32).³

Boston said further of Abraham,

“and in Genesis 21:33, you have Abraham again in his private prayers: ‘And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God.’ Why did Abraham plant a grove, but that he might have a most private place to pray and pour out his soul before the Lord in?”⁴

Boston went on to cite biblical characters throughout both testaments, showing that they were men and women who were faithful in prayer. Since these most eminent saints engaged in continual, private prayer, should not all Christians follow their example?

2. Christ engaged in secret prayer. “Consider, next, that *when Christ was on earth, he did much exercise himself in secret prayer*; he was often with God alone, as you may see in many well-known Scriptures: *Matt. 14:23*, ‘And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray; and when the evening was come, he was there alone.’ Christ's choosing solitudes for private prayer, does not only hint to us the danger of distraction and deviation of thoughts in prayer, but how necessary it is for us to choose the most convenient places we can for private prayers. Our own fickleness and satan's restlessness call upon us to get into such corners, where we may most freely pour out our souls into the bosom of God.”

Boston answered a question regarding the prayer life of our Lord Jesus:

Question: But why was our Lord Jesus so much in private prayer? Why was he so often with God alone?

² Thomas Brooks *The Secret Key to Heaven; The Vital Importance of Prayer* (The Banner of Truth Trust, 2006), pp. 288.

³ *Ibid*, p. 7.

⁴ *Ibid*.

Answer 1: *First, it was to put a very high honour and value upon private prayer; it was to enhance and raise the price of this duty.*

Answer 2: *Secondly, he was much in private prayer, he was often with God alone, that he might not be seen of men, and that he might avoid all shows and appearances of ostentation and popular applause.*

Answer 3: *Thirdly, to avoid interruptions in the duty.*

Answer 4: *Fourthly to set us such a blessed pattern and gracious example that we should never please nor content ourselves with public prayers only, nor with family prayers only, but that we should also apply ourselves to secret prayer, to closet prayer.*

Answer 5: *Fifthly, that he might approve himself in our understandings and consciences to be most just and faithful High Priest (Heb. 2:17; John 17).*

Answer 6: *Sixthly, Christ was much in private prayer to convince us that his Father hears and observes our private prayers, and bottles up all our secret tears, and that he is not a stranger to our closet desires, wrestlings, breathings, hungerings, and thirstings.*

3. Secret prayer distinguishes sincerity from hypocrisy.

Here Boston argued similarly to Jonathan Edwards a century later. The secret prayer of the Christian distinguishes him from the hypocrite who only prays in public to be seen and heard of men.

4. Secret prayer lets us unbosom ourselves before God. We may be more free and open before God in private than in the presence of others.

“Hence the husband is to mourn apart, and the wife apart (Zech. 12:12-14), not only to show the soundness of their sorrow, but also to show their sincerity by their secrecy. They must mourn apart, that their sins may not be disclosed or discovered one to another. Here they are severed to show that they wept not for company’s sake, but for their own particular sins, by which they had pierced and crucified the Lord of glory.”⁵

“In secret, a Christian may descend into such particulars, as in public or before others he will not, he may not, he ought not, to mention. Ah! How many Christians are there who would blush and be ashamed to walk in the streets, and to converse with sinners or saints, should but those infirmities, enormities, and wickednesses be written in their foreheads, or known to others, which they freely and fully lay open to God in secret.”⁶

5. Secret duties shall have open rewards. Our Lord Jesus said, “And thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly” (Matt. 6:6).

6. God most manifests Himself in secret. “Oh, the sweet melting’s, the heavenly warming’s, the blessed cheerings, the glorious manifestations, and the choice communion with God, that Christians have found when they have been alone with God in a corner, in a closet, behind the door!”⁷

⁵ Ibid, pp 20f.

⁶ Ibid, p. 21.

⁷ Ibid, p. 24.

7. This life is the only time for private prayer. “There will be no secret prayer in heaven. In heaven there will be no secret sins to trouble us, no secret needs to pinch us, no secret temptations to betray us, no secret snares to entangle us, no secret enemies to supplant us.”⁸

8. Private prayer’s prevailing power. “Oh the great things that private prayer has done with God! (Psa. 31:22). Oh, the great mercies that have been obtained by private prayer! (Psa. 38:8, 9). And oh, the great threatenings that have been diverted by private prayer! And oh, the great judgments that have been removed by private prayer! And oh, the great judgments that have been prevented by private prayer!”⁹

9. Private prayer is the most soul-enriching of duties. “Consider that, as secret meals make fat bodies, so secret duties make fat souls; as secret trades bring in great earthly riches, so secret prayers make many rich in spiritual blessings, and in heavenly riches.”¹⁰

10. Secret prayer and secret sins. “All Christians have their secret sins. Psalm 19:12, ‘Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults.’ Secret not only to other men, but himself; even such secret sins grew from errors which he did not understand. It naturally belongs to every man to err, and then to be ignorant of his errors. Many sins I see myself, he says, and more there are which I cannot see, which I cannot find out; no, I think, he says, that every man’s sins go beyond his reckoning. There is not the best, the wisest, nor the holiest man in the world, that can give a full and entire list of his sins.”

“Now as secret diseases are not to be laid open to every one, but only to the prudent physician, so our secret sins, which are the secret plagues, the secret diseases of our souls, are not to be laid open to every one, but only to the physician of souls, who alone is able not only to cure them but to pardon them.”¹¹

11. Secret prayer delights Christ. “The great delight that parents take in the secret lisplings and whisperings of their children, cannot be compared to the delight which Christ takes in the secret prayers of his people. And therefore, as you would be friends and promoters of Christ’s delight, be much in secret prayer.”¹²

12. Only believers share God’s secrets. “Consider you (Christians) are the only persons in all the world that God has made choice of to reveal his secrets to.”¹³

13. Private prayer is the Christians refuge in trouble. “Consider that in times of great straits and trials, in times of great afflictions and persecutions, private prayer is the Christian’s meat and drink; it is his city of refuge; it is his shelter and hiding-place in a stormy day.”¹⁴

14. God is omniscient. “The Lord seeth in secret.”

15. If we neglect private prayer, God will not hear our public prayers. “He that willingly neglects private prayer shall certainly be neglected in his public prayer; he that will not call upon God in secret shall find by sad experience that God will neither hear him nor regard him in public. The absence of private duties is the great reason why the hearts of many are so dead and dull, so formal and carnal, so barren and unfruitful under public ordinances.”¹⁵

⁸ Ibid, p. 31.

⁹ Ibid, pp. 31f. In this section Boston gives 6 observations of Jacob’s wrestling with God in prayer.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 44.

¹¹ Ibid, pp. 46f.

¹² Ibid, p. 48.

¹³ Ibid. Here he sets forth three kinds of divine “secrets” that He reveals to His people.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 48.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 64.

16. The times call for private prayer. “The times in which we live call aloud for secret prayer. Hell seems to have broken loose, and men turned into incarnate devils...”¹⁶

17. Those near to the Lord should engage in secret prayer. “You are his friends. Now, a true friend loves to visit his friend when he may find him alone, and find privacy with him. A true friend loves to pour out his heart into the heart of his friend when he has him in a corner, or in the field, or under a hedge.”¹⁷

18. Special marks of God’s favour. “A Christian can never get into a hole, a corner, a closet, to pour out his soul before the Lord, but the Lord makes an honourable observation of him, and sets a secret mark of favour upon him (Ezek. 9:4-6). And how should this provoke all Christians to be much with God alone.”¹⁸

19. Satan’s enmity to secret prayer. “Consider that satan is a very great enemy to secret prayer. Secret prayer is a scourge, a hell to satan. Every secret prayer adds to the devil’s torment, and every secret sigh adds to his torment, and every secret groan adds to his torment, and every secret tear adds to his torment.”¹⁹

20. The Lord’s secret ones should engage in secret prayer. “But in the twentieth and last place, consider that you only are the Lord’s secret ones, his hidden ones; and therefore if you do not apply yourselves to private prayer, and to secret retirements, that you may enjoy God in a corner, none will.”²⁰

“But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. And above all things have fervent love for one another, for ‘love will cover a multitude of sins.’” (1 Pet. 4:7f)

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 66.

¹⁷ Ibid, pp. 68f.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 71.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 72.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 75.