

from God, and we imagine that God's part in our prayer only begins when he hears and answers it, then indeed we face an insoluble riddle.

But if we take it in the other, truer way, and make it clear to our mind that God has quickened our prayer-life and that he directs and carries it, the matter gleams with light. The farmer sows the seed in the newly-ploughed furrows and leaves it alone to do its work, and only returns to the field when the dew of heaven and sunshine have caused the seed to sprout and to send the blade upward, and the corn to ripen in the ear, that he might gather the harvest.

And such is the case in our prayer-life. Our Father who is in heaven begins it by sowing the seed of prayer in our hearts. And then follows a slow process. The prayer-life must develop in us. Prayer must ripen in the soul. And only when this result has been obtained, and our prayer has unfolded itself in that higher form, does the heavenly Husbandman regard the prayer-life in us and enrich it with abounding answers.

Such is the case with our prayer-life taken as a whole. Through foolish petitions we arrive at purified prayers. Through earthly prayers we come to those holier petitions which have been watered with the dew of heaven, and which scintillate with light from higher spheres than ours. But such is the case also with our individual prayers. These, too, are not unfolded and ripened at once. They also undergo a process in the soul. They also spring from a root and only by degrees develop themselves into prayers such as the Father in heaven expects from his children. Prayers which are not merely sounds in the lips but which