

## Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*

Also in this He shewed me a little thing, the quantity of an hazel-nut, in the palm of my hand; and it was as round as a ball. I looked thereupon with eye of my understanding, and thought: *What may this be?* And it was answered generally thus: *It is all that is made.* I marvelled how it might last, for methought it might suddenly have fallen to naught for little[ness]. And I was answered in my understanding: *It lasteth, and ever shall [last] for that God loveth it.* And so All-thing hath the Being by the love of God.

This Shewing was made to learn our soul wisely to cleave to the Goodness of God. And in that time the custom of our praying was brought to mind: how we use for lack of understanding and knowing of Love, to take many means [whereby to beseech Him]. Then saw I truly that it is more worship to God, and more very delight, that we faithfully pray to Himself of His Goodness and cleave thereunto by His Grace, with true understanding, and steadfast by love, than if we took all the means that heart can think. . . . For the Goodness of God is the highest prayer, and it cometh down to the lowest part of our need

After this our Lord shewed concerning Prayer. In which Shewing I see two conditions in our Lord's signifying: one is rightfulness, another is sure trust. But yet oftentimes our trust is not full: for we are not sure that God heareth us, as we think because of our unworthiness, and because we feel right nought, (for we are as barren and dry oftentimes after our prayers as we were afore); and this, in our feeling our folly, is cause of our weakness. For thus have I felt in myself. And all this brought our Lord suddenly to my mind, and shewed these words, and said: *I am Ground of thy beseeching: first it is my will that thou have it; and after, I make thee to will it; and after, I make thee to beseech it and thou beseechest it. How should it then be that thou shouldst not have thy beseeching?*

For it is most impossible that we should beseech mercy and grace, and not have it. For everything that our good Lord maketh us to beseech, Himself hath ordained it to us from without beginning. Here may we see that our beseeching is not cause of God's goodness; and that shewed He soothfastly in all these sweet words when He saith: *I am [the] Ground.*—And our good Lord willeth that this be known of His lovers in earth; and the more that we know [it] the more should we beseech, if it be wisely taken; and so is our Lord's meaning.

Beseeching is a true, gracious, lasting will of the soul, oned and fastened into the will of our Lord by the sweet inward work of the Holy Ghost. Our Lord Himself, He is the first receiver of our prayer, as to my sight, and taketh it full thankfully and highly enjoying; and He sendeth it up above and setteth it in the Treasure, where it shall never perish.

Full glad and merry is our Lord of our prayer; and He looketh thereafter and He willeth to have it because with His grace He maketh us like to Himself in condition as we are in kind: and so is His blissful will. Therefore He saith thus: *Pray inwardly, though thee thinketh it savour thee not: for it is profitable, though thou feel not, though thou see nought; yea, though thou think thou canst not. For in dryness and in barrenness, in sickness and in feebleness, then is thy prayer well-pleasant to me, though thee thinketh it savour thee nought but little. And so is all thy believing*

*prayer in my sight.* For the meed and the endless thanks that He will give us, *therefor* He is covetous to have us pray continually in His sight.

And also to prayer belongeth thanking. Thanking is a true inward knowing, with great reverence and lovely dread turning ourselves with all our mights unto the working that our good Lord stirreth us to, enjoying and thanking inwardly. And sometimes, for plenteousness it breaketh out with voice, and saith: *Good Lord, I thank Thee!*

Our Lord God willeth that we have true understanding, and specially in three things that belong to our prayer. The first is: *by whom and how that our prayer springeth.* *By whom,* He sheweth when He saith: *I am [the] Ground;* and *how,* by His Goodness: for He saith first: *It is my will.* The second is: *in what manner and how we should use our prayer;* and that is that our will be turned unto the will of our Lord, enjoying: and so meaneth He when He saith: *I make thee to will it.* The third is that we should know *the fruit and the end of our prayers:* that is, that we be oned and like to our Lord in all things; and to this intent and for this end was all this lovely lesson shewed. And He will help us, and we shall make it so as He saith Himself;—Blessed may He be!

Then signifieth He thus: that we [should] see that He doeth it, and that we [should] pray therefor. For the one is not enough. For if we pray and see not that He doeth it, it maketh us heavy and doubtful; and that is not His worship. And if we see that He doeth, and we pray not, we do not our debt, and so may it not be: that is to say, so is it not [the thing that is] in His beholding.

For prayer is a right understanding of that fulness of joy that is to come, with well-longing and sure trust. Failing of our bliss that we be kindly ordained to, maketh us to long; true understanding and love, with sweet mind in our Saviour, graciously maketh us to trust. And in these two workings our Lord beholdeth us continually: for it is our due part, and His Goodness may no less assign to us.

Prayer oneth the soul to God. For though the soul be ever like to God in kind and substance, restored by grace, it is often unlike in condition, by sin on man's part. Then is prayer a witness that the soul willeth as God willeth; and it comforteth the conscience and enableth man to grace. And thus He teacheth us to pray, and mightily to trust that we shall have it. For He beholdeth us in love and would make us partners of His good deed, and therefore He stirreth us to pray for that which it pleaseth him to do. . . . And thus the soul by prayer accordeth to God.

But when our courteous Lord of His grace sheweth Himself to our soul, we have that [which] we desire. And then we see not, for the time, what we should more pray, but all our intent with all our might is set wholly to the beholding of Him. And this is an high unperceivable prayer, as to my sight: for all the cause wherefor we pray it, it is oned into the sight and beholding of Him to whom we pray; marvellously enjoying with reverent dread, and with so great sweetness and delight in Him that we can pray right nought but as He stirreth us, for the time. And well I wot, the more the soul seeth of God, the more it desireth Him by His grace.

But when we see Him not so, then feel we need and cause to pray, because of failing, for enabling of our self, to Jesus. For when the soul is tempested, troubled, and left to itself by unrest, then it is time to pray, for to make itself pliable and obedient to God. (But the soul by no manner of prayer maketh God pliant to it: for He is ever alike in love.)