

“Prayers”

5 July–
6 Sept 1953

[5 July–6 September 1953]
Atlanta, Ga

King begins this collection of prayers with a radio announcement regarding services and ministrus at Ebenezer, indicating he prepared them for radio broadcast¹ Most of these handwritten prayers would serve the function of confession or repentance in a worship service

We are very happy to greet you again from the Eb baptist Church We are hoping that through this broadcast you are gaining something that is spiritually uplifting you are always invited to worship with us here at Ebenezer Our doors are opened to peoples of all races, all nationalities and all religious backgrounds Our morning worship begins at 11 00 A M and our evening worship begins at 7 30 PM Next Sunday I will fill the pulpit both morning and evening at the evening worship hour we will observe the Lord's Supper Always feel free to worship at Ebenezer

1 Bible School.

2 We have opened a council clinic at Ebenezer Church for the benefit of the members of Eb in particular and the people of the community in general The conselors are Mrs Phoely Burney Professor William Nix and the Pastor² The hour are from 5 00 to 8 00 on Mon Wed and Thurs at the A D Wh center³ Feel free to consul this competant staff concening your problem and difficulties

O thou Eternal God, out of whose absolute power and infinite intelligence the whole universe has come into being We humbly confess that we have not loved thee with our hearts, souls and minds and we have not loved our neighbors as Christ loved us.⁴ We have all too often lived by our own selfish impulses rather than by the life of sacrificial love as revealed by Christ We often give in order to receive, we love our friends and hate our enemies, we go the first mile but dare not travel the second, we forgive but dare not forget⁵ And so as we look within ourselves we are confronted with the appalling fact that the history of our lives is the history of an eternal revolt against thee But thou, O God, have mercy upon us Forgive us for what

1 King's radio broadcasts from Ebenezer began on 5 July and ended on 6 September 1953 ("Ebenezer Begins WERD Broadcast Sunday Morning" and "King Jr to End Summer Series of Sermons, Ebenezer," *Atlanta Daily World*, 4 July and 5 September 1953)

2 William M Nix was a professor and dean of men at Morehouse College at this time Phoebe Burney was dean of women at Atlanta's Clark College from 1943 until 1958 and served as a reference on King's behalf when he applied to Crozer (Phoebe Burney to Charles E Batten, 9 March 1948, in *Papers* 1 154)

3 King refers to the A D Williams Center, named for King's maternal grandfather and former Ebenezer pastor During Ebenezer's August 1953 publicity campaign, an announcement for this clinic appeared weekly in the *Atlanta Daily World*

4 Cf Matthew 22 37

5 Cf Matthew 5 41–43

5 July-
6 Sept 1953

we could have been but failed to be Give us the intelligence to know thy will Give us the courage to do thy will Give us the devotion to love thy will. In the name and spirit of Jesus we pray. Amen

O God our eternal Father, we praise thee for gifts of mind with which thou hast endowed us We are able to rise out of the half-realities of the sense world to a world of ideal beauty and eternal truth Teach us, we pray Thee, how to use this great gift of reason and imagination so that it shall not be a curse but a blessing Grant us visions that shall lift us [*strikeout illegible*] from worldiness and sin into the light of thine own holy presence Through Jesus Christ we pray Amen

Most Gracious and all wise God, Before whose face the generations rise and fall, Thou in whom we live, and move, and have our being ⁶ We thank thee [*for?*] all of thy good and gracious gifts, for life and for health, for food and for raiment, for the beauties of nature and the love of human nature We come before thee painfully aware of our inadaqucis and shortcomigs We realize that we stand surrounded with the mountains of love and we deliberately dwell in the valley of hate. We stand amid the forces of truth and deliberately lie, We are forever offered the high road and yet we choose ~~the~~ to travel the low road For these sins O God forgive Break the spell of that which blinds our minds Purify our hearts that we may see thee O God in these turbulent day when fear and doubt are mounting high give us broad visions, penetrating eyes, and power of endurance Help us to work with rewed vigor for a warless world, for a better distribution of wealth, and for a brotherhood that transcends race or color In the name and spirit of Jesus we pray Amen

O God, the Creator and Presever of all mankind, In whom to dwell is to find peace and security, toward whom to turn is to find life and life eternal, we humbly beseech Thee for all sorts and conditons of men, that thou wouldst be pleased to make thy ways known unto them, Thy saving health unto all nauons We also pray for Thy holy Church universal, that it may be so guided and governed by thy Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the [*land?*] of peace, and in righteousness of life Finally we commend to thy Fatherly goodness all those who are in any way afflicted or distressed in mind or body Give them patience under the suffering and power of endurance This we ask in the name of Jesus Amen

First

Our Holy Father, we confess the weakness and sinfulness of our lives We have often turned away from thee to seek our own desires And often when we have done no evil, we have undertaken nothing of good, and so have been guilty of uselessness and neglect From this sin of idleness and indifference set us free Lead us into fruit-

ful effort, and deliver us from profitless lives We ask ~~this~~ in the name of Jesus
Amen

26 July 1953

Second

Our loving Father, from Thy hand have come all the days of the past To Thee we look for whatever good the future holds We are not satisfied with the world as we have found it. It is too little the kingdom of God as yet Grant us the privilege of a part in its regeneration ~~We wish the joy of fellowship with those sons of God who are bringing in the new day~~ We are looking for a new earth in which dwells righteousness It is our prayer that we may be children of light, the kind of people for whose coming and ministry the world is waiting.—Amen