

# The PRAYERS *of* OBADIAH POORDEVIL

---

---



By W. S. MORGAN,  
Editor of the National Rip-Saw.

---

---

A U T H O R O F  
"THE AMERICAN CIRCUS"

Deaf fame  
11850  
F  
1911

**Copyright, 1911**  
**by**  
**W. S. MORGAN**  
**Springfield, Mo.**



44

# OBADIAH POORDEVIL'S PRAYER

---

## Number One.

Obadiah Poordevil was one of those easy-going good people who attended to his own business and had but little to say to any one. His education was acquired by jerks in one of the little old-fashioned old school houses, a sample of which we find yet in some of the new settlements of the Southwestern States. He seldom attended church, but when he did he wore such a solemn look that it excited the suspicion that he possessed religion. Acting upon this suspicion, one day old Deacon Twentypercent invited him to pray. Obadiah said he didn't have words enough to pray and they must excuse him. But old Deacon Twentypercent and Deacon Skinflint told him he didn't have to have words—the Lord furnished them; all he had to do was to get down on his knees and open his heart and the Lord would put words in his mouth to express his feelings, "for of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," said Twentypercent.

Obadiah said he'd try it a lick anyhow, and having placed himself in the proper attitude he poured out his heart in the following manner:

O, Lord, they tell me that you will give me words to express the feelin's of my heart, O, Lord, send 'em down right now, for I've got a whole lot to say. O, Lord, I'll tell you who I am and mebbe you won't want to listen to me, for I'm poor and hain't got much education. I'm just plain Obadiah Poordevil. I hain't been a very bad sinner nor a very good Christian. O, Lord, mebbe I'm wrong, but it seems to me that this world is wrong. Nearly everybody is going to the devil or else I am. Mebbe I haven't got the right kind of a Bible, but it's just like the old Deacon Twentypercent's.

O, Lord, I want to know about a whole lot of things. I want to know who you made this earth for, anyhow? My Bible says the "earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof"; but old Twentypercent claims to own half of this township and us poor devils that do the werk have to pay him the "fullness ther-of." O, Lord, I want to know if he pays it over to you? I don't think he does, for I seen him sell it and put the money in his bank, where he loans it out for a per cent.

O, Lord, I want to know if you didn't make a mistake when you commanded the people not to collect usury from their brethren. Somebody is mistaken, and if you meant what you said some people who stand mighty high in this community are going to hell sure and this church will lose some of its mighty pillars.

O, Lord, I want to know if you made

some people to work and some to play; some to wear fine clothes and some to go nearly naked; some to drive in fine carriages and some to work in the hot sun every day? I want to know if you done this on purpose, or if these fellers are running a bluff on us?

And, O, Lord, I want to know why we have to divide up with the fellers that don't work. I want to know why old Deacon Twentypercent lives in a fine house which he didn't make, and I have to live in a little old shanty which I had to make. I want to know why his gals can go off on an excursion with a lot of fine-haired dudes and not be talked about, while if mine happens to speak to a young man they are bad medicine. I want to know, O, Lord, if you meant what you said when you declared that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven?" If you did, I'll tell Sallie when I get home; it'll do her lots of good. If it is so there'll be some mightily disappointed people in this neighborhood. And, O, Lord, I want to know if you have got the same opinion of lawyers you had when you was down here. I don't think they are any better than they was then—worse if anything.

And, O, Lord, will you please tell me if you made me on purpose to work for old Twentypercent and others who don't work. I want to know if you intended for old

Brother Skinflint's girls to be better than mine. If you didn't, why does the world treat them better? And if the world is wrong, why don't you jerk it baldheaded?

Now, O Lord, I haven't got anything ag'in old Twentypercent; but he's got a ncte ag'in me. I don't want you to kill him, but if you can make him read his Bible like I do he'll knock off some of that per cent, and I can get my wife a new dress next fall. O, Lord, I wish you would enlighten me. Is it right for people to go to church to show their fine clothes? Is it right to talk scandal about your neighbors? O, Lord, did you give people tongues to tell lies or to tell the truth?

And now, O, Lord, I want to know something about making this earth like the kingdom of heaven. Old Twentypercent and Skinflint both pray that "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," and then they make us poor fellows that owe them work till nine o'clock at night to pay what we owe them. O, Lord, is this the way they do in heaven? If it is, can't you put me somewhere about half way between heaven and hell?

And O, Lord, last but not least, I'd like to know if old Twentypercent is going to heaven? If he is, can't you put me on the other side from him? Hain't it enough for me to neighbor with him and slave for him here on earth? O, Lord, if him and his family go there, will his girls turn up their noses and snub my girls when they

meet? Will they all have the same kind of a harp, or will the deacon's girls have finer ones?

O, Lord, it's awfully hard to serve you and the deacon both, for your minds don't seem to run in the same channel, but I'm going to try to do it if it busts a gallus.

And now, O, Lord, that hain't near all, but I can see the deacon is gettin' restless, and I hain't much on prayin' anyhow; but if they want me to do it ag'in next month I'll try. I wish you would send plenty of rain, so as to help me a little on that note I owe the deacon, for I want to get it paid before we both go to heaven, so there'll be no hard feelin's about it, and his gals can't throw it up to mine.

O, Lord, I don't know how this is for a prayer, but they said you would give me words to say what was in my heart, and I have just said what I thought, and hope I hain't hurt nobody's feelin's. Amen.

---

## Number 2.

**GOES TO CHURCH AGAIN, BUT THEY  
DON'T ASK HIM TO PRAY.**

---

**But the Spirit Moves Him and He Pours  
Out His Soul "In Meetin'."**

Obadiah Poordevil was on hand at church again last Sunday, but neither Deacon Skinflint nor Twentypercent invited

him to lead in prayer. But Obadiah, having once began, now felt it his duty to keep it up. Taking advantage of a temporary lull in the exercises, he said, "Let us pray." Of course, there was no way to shut him off, so they all knelt, and Obadiah made the following prayer:

O, Lord, I know old Skinflint and Twentypersent don't want me to pray any more, but I can't help it. They told me last month that you would put words in my mouth, and, O, Lord, when you do it, I can't hold 'em. O, Lord, I want to know what I was made for? Why did you make me the same shape as old Deacon Skinflint, and he don't work and I do? O, Lord, did you intend for us all to work, or not? If you didn't, why did you give us all hands? If you didn't intend for us all to work, why didn't you make them that you didn't intend to work without any mouths and with hair on, so they wouldn't eat up and wear out what us workers produced? If you intended us all to work, why do you let them dodge it?

O, Lord, it may be because I'm ignorant, but I can't understand. You made the earth for the people, but I can't get any of it, while old Twentypersent has got enough for a dozen families. Did you intend for him to gobble up more than his share? If you didn't why don't you snatch him bald-headed? And O, Lord, there's old Skinflint's son seduced one of his renter's daughters, and the girl is disgraced for-

ever, but Skinflint goes right along in good company. O, Lord, is that right? Hain't the man as mean as the woman or meaner? And why can't the world forgive the woman? Didn't you forgive Mary Magdalene. And wasn't she respectable afterwards? O, Lord, it seems to me the world is turned upside down, anyway.

And now, O, Lord, if I have to keep on slaving for old Twentypercent I want you to send me down a wagon load of grace, for I can't hardly stand it. I want you to help me to understand everything on this earth, and if it is right help me to bear my share of the burdens and as much of old Twentypercent's share as he makes me bear.

Now, O, Lord, you know what there is to do here that I can't do. I hain't askin' you to do anything I can do, but just give me a whole lot of grace to help me put in my best licks. If you put words in my mouth that hurt old Skinflint and Twentypercent's feelin's, I can't help it. If you want me to wipe up the ground with them all you've go to do is to just say the word, like you did to Joshua about all of them different kind of "ites" that were up at Jericho and Gilgal and other towns where I think old Twentypercent's ancestors came from.

O, Lord, this is enough for to-day; I'll hit 'em again some other time. Amen.

### Number 3.

## EMBRACES ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO PRAY.

---

### Still Insists That the Bible Ought to Be Changed and Gives His Reason Why.

---

Brother Poordevil went to church again last Sunday. In fact, he has got to going pretty regular and never fails to insist on making one of his prayers when he does go. Here is the one he made last Sunday:

O, Lord, I want a new Bible. I can't stand it to see old Twentypercent and old Skinflint and a whole lot of others goin' right along sinnin' all the time, which they are doin', accordin' to the Bible we have got. It seems to me a few changes might be made and a good many more souls saved than will be. It would be easier to change the Bible than it would to change old Twentypercent and old Skinflint, to say nothing about all the others. Old Aunt 'Tilda Twentypercent made her old man turn off Sally Goodwin from picking cotton because people talked about her and said she wasn't a good girl. She said she could pray for Sally's soul, but she wasn't going to give the young hussy work so she could save her body. O, Lord, if this is the kind of religion there is in the Bible I haint found it and I've looked

everywhere. And, O, Lord, there's them poor Grimes' across the crick. They just had a little baby at their house and are awful poor, but old Skinflint took the last cow they had. He had a mortgage on it for money borrowed to pay for little Charley Grimes' coffin, who died of fever last winter. O, Lord, how can anybody's soul be happy when his body is suffering? When Jesus was here on earth he fed the hungry—and he didn't feed 'em soup, either. He visited and healed the sick and lame and blind, and went about doin' good, and didn't loan anybody any money and take cows on a mortgage. And O, Lord, there's old Aunt 'Cinda Limbertongue; she prays louder and longer than Deacon Grabblefast, but she just talks awfully about her neighbors and keeps the whole country st'rrred up in strife and everybody always mad at everybody else. O, Lord, I want to know what you are going to do with her. She says she believes Jesus is the Son of God and has power to save sinners. Says she has a powerful sight of faith and all that, but she just keeps on talkin' and makin' trouble between folks, and, O, Lord, if she goes to heaven I wish you would put her in another country from me. O, Lord, there's a whole lot of other things here demandin' your immediate attention, but I see old Twentypercent and Skinflint is gittin' oneasy and want to go home, so I'll put off namin' of 'em until next time I pray. Amen.

## Number 4.

### MAKES ANOTHER ONE OF HIS REMARKABLE PRAYERS.

---

Asks the Lord Some Questions About the  
"Earth and the Fullness Thereof."

---

O, Lord, I hain't got no education and I guess not much sense, but I've got eyes to see with and feelin's to feel with, and it seems to me there is a mighty sight of things as are wrong in this world. Here's me workin' days and nights and giving to old Skinflint half what I raise, and payin' old Twentypercent a part of the balance. You see, I rent land of old Skinflint and I had to borrer money of Twentypercent to buy a team and it jist seems like it takes all I kin make to keep body and soul together. O, Lord, how is this? I read in my Bible that "the earth with the fullness thereof" is the Lord's. That was a long time ago, but what I want to know is how did old Skinflint get hold of so much of it and how long is he going to keep it. O, Lord, did you give it to him? If so, why didn't you give me some, too? If I didn't work this ground and nobody else didn't old Skinflint couldnt' do it, and it wouldn't bring h'm a cent. O, Lord, why do I have to give old Skinflint half what I make? Did you make me to be his slave? If you

gave him this land, what did you give him so much for and me none? If somebody else gave it to him, what right had they to do it? O, Lord, these things are bothering me mightily. I want to know when you sold the land, and who to, and what you got for it? And if you jist gave it to the people, why ain't it lotted out like it was when the children of Israel went over into the Promised Land, giving to each man what he needs? And, O, Lord, I want to know why old Twentypercent has money to loan. He dont' work any and always has plenty of money and everything, and his girls ride in fine buggies and cut up awful, and nobody says anything about it because they are rich. If my girls did that they would get a bad name, and would be talked about by everybody. And, O Lord, there's so many things out of gear it makes me dizzy to think about them. It seems to me that the devil is git-tin' in more work down here than you are, and if you don't do something purty soon he'll have the biggest interest in the whole business. O, Lord, if you kin tell me why I have such a hard time, while others have a good time and more of this world's goods than they kin use, I'll be mightily obliged to you, and keep right on workin' for a golden harp and the blessed privilege of walkin' on the streets of gold and singing Thy praises. But I wish you would tech up old Skinflint and Twenty-percent in their tender places and make them treat me a little better. Amen.

## Number 5.

### **MAKES ANOTHER ONE OF HIS CHARACTERISTIC PRAYERS.**

---

#### **Wants Another Bible That the Rich People Can Understand.**

---

They never ask Obadiah Poordevil to pray in public any more. He don't go to church very often, but when he does go it is a cold day if he don't pray, invitation or no invitation. Last Sunday he went over and the spirit moved him to the following utterances:

O, Lord! I hain't got much learning, but I've got as much feelin' as anybody. I don't want to tell tales out of school, but things is going mighty crooked down here. If you don't watch old Twentypersent the devil will get him sure. I thought I would tell you, for he is one of the pillars in the church and mebbe you don't want to spare him. He closed the mortgage on Widder Perkins, took the last chicken and pig she had, and the next day bought his dauter a new pianner. It seems to me like the Bible says not to take the widder's pledge. But old Twentypersent not only took her pledge, but her pigs and chickens, too. Then there's old Skinflint. He prays for everybody and everything but hisself, and it seems to me he needs it worse than any-

body. He makes me work all day for 40 cents and take it in meat at 15 cents a pound, when I kin git it for 10 cents in town. He owns part of a bank and they discount notes at 20 to 50 per cent. Is this right? O, Lord! I wish you would do something with the Bible so the rich people could understand. It seems to me they don't understand it as I do. It says, "it is harder for a rich man to go to heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle." Old Skinflint and Twentypercent says it is easy to be a Christian and to go to heaven, and they hain't tryin' very hard, and both of 'em say they are goins there. O, Lord, if you take them, why can't you take everybody? O, Lord, I'm gittin' tired and discouraged. What I want to know is, if I'll have to work for Twentypercent and Skinflint when I get to heaven? If I do I don't want to go very bad. Old Skinflint prays this "earth shall be as the kingdom of heaven." O, Lord, if heaven hain't any better than here, what's the use to make the change? It's just tearin' up and movin' for nothin'. O, Lord, if me and old Skinflint both goes to heaven, can't you put a creek between us that hain't got any bridge over it, and clip one of Skinflint's wings so he can't fly over to my plantation? O, Lord, I don't want to be wicked, and I love old Skinflint and Twentypercent, but I'd love 'em a heap better if they wasn't so close to me. O, Lord, as long as I have to live close to 'em

and work for 'em, give me lots of grace and I'll try and hold out to the end. Amen.

---

### Number 6.

## THE SPIRIT MOVES HIM TO ATTEND CHURCH AGAIN.

---

### Did His Best to Choke Down the Inclination to Pray, but Couldn't Do It.

---

Last Sunday Obadiah went to church and listened to the text, "Of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." As soon as the sermon was over he rose up and said: "Let us pray." Of course, the members who heard him before knew what was coming, but there was no way to stop it. When people are in church, the motion to pray is a privileged motion and not subjected to debate. So there was nothing to do but to listen, and Obadiah prayed as follows:

Oh, Lord, I've got to pray or bust. I know the people here dont' want to hear me pray, but I can't help it. The preacher's text has taken the muzzle off my mouth. Oh, Lord, I'm gittin' mighty on-easy about this here airth of yours. Oh, Lord, I hain't right sartin it's yours. That's what's botherin' of me. I want to know if you still own any property here,

and, if so, where is it? I want to know if you ever come round any more and when. They told me you was round here and helped run the protracted meetin' last winter, and did such grand and glorious work. But, oh, Lord, that work has all gone to pieces, and I'm afraid it wasn't yours. What I want to know is, do you guarantee your work to not "rip, ravel or run down at the heel." If so, I know you wasn't here last winter. Sallie Perkins has done raveled, Bill Jones is runnin' down at the heel, and a whole lots of others is rippin'. Oh, Lord, I just want to tell you this because I know they are imposin' on you in these here diggins. It makes me mad to see it. If there is any real, old-fashioned, blue jeans Christianity here, they don't put it out where a feller can see it. Oh, Lord, isn't that kind of Christianity gittin' mighty scarce, and what are you going to do about it? Oh, Lord, there's old Deacon Skinflint, he prays for a penacostal outpouring of the Holy Ghost, and if it would come every mother's son of 'em would hunt a cyclone cellar. And there's old Deacon Skinflint's wimmin and the Perkins wimmin and others what just talk awful about other folks' girls. Oh, Lord, I don't believe this is right. If they have got religion it's got so many flounces and ruffles and ribbons, and tucks and gores that you wouldn't know it yourself if you'd meet it in the road. Oh, Lord, one thing more and then I'll

quit. I want to know which is Christian-like, to talk about a poor girl that has been talked about by forked-tongued wimmin, to drive her out of society and turn a cold shoulder on her, or to assist her to make an honest living? And, Oh, Lord, is it right to mistreat and ignore people who other people talk about? Which is right, to go with public sentiment or be on the Lord's side? Oh, Lord, you needn't answer this publicly here in church, it might break up the meetin', but if you feel like answering it some way I wish you would do it. Amen.

---

### Number 7.

. Obadiah Poordevil had a dream the other night, and dreamed that the Lord told him to go to church the next Sunday and pray. Now Obadiah don't believe very much in dreams but this one had such an impression on him that he concluded to go, notwithstanding his other prayers had almost broken up the meetings. It happened that a new preacher was in the pulpit that didn't know about Obadiah's inclination to pray, and in opening the services he said, "Let us pray." As it had been a long time since Obadiah had received anything like an invitation to pray—not since he made the first one—he concluded that it was the voice of the Lord through the preacher

and he lost no time in falling to his knees and going at it. He prayed in this manner:

Oh, Lord, I dreamed you told me to come here and pray and now I am here. Oh, Lord, I sometimes think I say things in my prayer I oughtn't to and I want you to put the words in my mouth, just what you want me to say, and I'll say 'em if old Deacon Twentypercent closes the mortgage on my cow. Oh, Lord, it seems to me a whole heap of things is wrong down here but I don't blame you for it, for you've got so many worlds to look after and the devil is so busy all the time I know it must keep you hustling to keep him from carryin' this one off. But, oh, Lord, I do wish you could pay a little more attention to this world, especially this part of it, or if you hain't got time to turn it over to me. Oh, Lord, if I had it now I'd snatch old Skinflint baldheaded for closin' the mortgage on the Widder Jenkin's farm and takin' of her last cow. Oh Lord, it seems to me that old Skinflint is poor material for a church deacon, and old Twentypercent hain't any better. It seems to me that they are doin' just what I'd want them to do if I was the devil, and what I wouldn't want them to do if I was you. Oh, Lord, hain't it wrong to oppress the poor? Hain't it wrong to cheat? Hain't it wrong to lie? Hain't it wrong to talk bad about your neighbors who are poor? Oh, Lord, they do all this, and come to church in their fine buggies and clothes and set in the best seats, and then don't want me

to pray because I say just what's in my heart. Oh, Lord, you know I hain't got any education and can't use words to say what I don't mean, like some of the preachers, but have to say just what I think and the way I think it. And, oh, Lord, what did you make poor people for anyway? Why didn't you make us all rich like old Deacon Twentypercent so my girls could have nice clothes and a peanner like his and none of us would have to work? But, oh, Lord, how would we live if somebody didn't work? Did you make some of us to work and some of us not to work? If you did, oh, Lord, why didn't you make the mean ones to work and the good ones not to work? Oh, Lord, it seems to me everything is crossways, anyhow. Why don't they want me to pray? Oh, Lord, I wish you would pull old Skinflint's hair a little and have him talk to his girls who are so stuck up they won't speak to my girls and always snub them in company. Oh, Lord, my girls are as nice as his'n and nicer, for they help their mother work and don't say naughty things, nor use any slang, but they are poor. Oh, Lord, who made them poor? Did you? Did I? Or is it old Twentypercent who I'm working for? I work harder than him and he's rich and I'm poor. Oh, Lord, I don't understand it. How is it that some people have more than they need and others don't have enough? Hain't this an awful poor arrangement, and if you didn't do it who did? Oh, Lord, help us all to be as good as we can under

the circumstances. I wish, oh, Lord, you'd cause old Deacons Skinflint and Twenty-per cent to have a dream that if they tried to take their money with them when they died that it would melt. And I wish you would tell them to pray just what's in their heart like I do—I can stand it if they can and it might help things along a little. Oh, Lord, I hain't half done yet, but I see the preacher's gittin' restless and I'll quit. Help the preacher to tell the truth, that is I mean the truth the people ought to hear. Now I'll quit. Amen.

---

### Prayer Number 8.

Oh, Lord, what does all this war talk mean? Don't it mean to kill somebody? If it does, hain't that murder? Is it accordin' to the Bible to fight? Don't it cost money to have war? and don't us poor devils have to pay for it? We hain't got done payin' for the last one we had. I fit for four years. I got thirteen 40-cent dollars a month. The government borrowed the money of the rich patriot and gave him bonds. Oh, Lord, what did they give me this money for if they are going to make me pay it back? This is the same as makin' me fight four years for nothin' and payin' the money-lending patriot interest on his money and not taxin' his bonds. Oh, Lord, if this is Christianity I can't understand it. But the preacher says we have a Christian

government. Oh, Lord, I would rather be a rich patriot than a poor one. The poor patriots do all the fightin' and then come home and do all the workin' to pay the war debt, or to pay themselves. But the rich man stays at home, gets interest on his money, don't pay any taxes, don't do any fightin', don't do any workin', but rubs his hands and says, "Aha, what a great financier I am!" O, Lord, I want to be good and would do anything you tell me to do, but it would do me a whole lot of good to see you snatch such old sinners baldheaded. O, Lord, you know I'm tellin' you just what I think, for you know what is in my heart. It is awful hard for me to be good and have to work to support a lot of red-headed sinners and see my own children go in rags. O, Lord, you never intended it to be this way, did you? I know you didn't. Something is out of joint somewhere and I believe that the devil is at the bottom of it. It seems to me, O, Lord, that the devil is just about running this government and has got a mortgage on most of the politicians. O, Lord, I wish he would close his mortgages and take his property. And, O, Lord, if the church don't look out, he'll get it too. Old Deacon Twentypercent is gettin worse all the time. The other day he took Widder Maloney's only cow for a debt of ten dollars he loaned her to buy a coffin and clothes when her little girl died last summer. The cow was worth \$20, but he wouldn't allow her but \$12. And

the deacon goes to church and prays that "this earth may be as the kingdom of heaven." O, Lord, do they take cows from widder women in heaven, on debts like that? If they do I don't want to go there, I'd rather be like a dog, just die and that's the end of it. If they don't then the deacon hain't readin' his bible right, or he's a mighty weak sister for a deacon. Now, O, Lord, I hope I hain't said anything to hurt your feelin's, but I just had to talk or bust, and when I pray like this at church it makes so many of the brothers and sisters mad that it nearly breaks up the meetin'. They don't ask me to pray any more in public, but I get so worked up that I just can't help it and have to do it. O, Lord, if I've said anything I oughtn't to I hope you'll forgive me for I want to do right, but sich goings on as we have down here upsets me sometimes and spills my religion. O, Lord, I wish you would help me a little to be good, and help old Deacon Twentypercent a whole lot—he needs it. O, Lord, please don't let it rain any more until I get my corn planted, help the old speckled hen to hatch all her eggs, and I'll do my level best to pay the interest on that note that old Deacon Twentypercent holds against me. Amen.

## Prayer Number 9.

The other day Obadiah was out in the cornfield plowing with a little old yellow mule.

The corn was small, the ground dry and weedy, the mule lazy, the weather hot, and all together set Obadiah to thinking as he never thought before. He got to the end of the row and as his mule grazed in the fence corner he fell into a deep brown study. An hour passed and still the mule grazed and Obadiah thought. Then of a sudden he got on his knees and with clasped hands and earnest voice prayed as follows:

O, Lord, have mercy on a lot of fools who haven't sense enough to have mercy on themselves. O, Blessed Father, I'm prayin' for nearly everybody, now.

O, Lord, we are nearly all prodigals. Thou gavest us plenty, "the earth and the fullness thereof," and we have appointed task-masters and given it to them. Lord, there was a time when thy people gave thee one-tenth of all the increase, increase of the flock, grain of the field, and fruit of the vine. Now, O, Lord, we give half we make to the devil, and then howl at him while he devours it. Father in Heaven, was there ever a bigger set of fools? We read in thy Holy Writ where once thy people erected a golden calf and set it in the valley.

We have established one in every town and on every hill-top. We read, O, Lord,

that David did eat the shew bread, because he was hungry; but we take the bread of the church, and out of the mouths of babes and feed it to the devil.

Thy servants did cast out devils; we shovel them in with a scoop shovel.

Thy Son, our Blessed Saviour, and His disciples, healed the sick, visited and helped the poor and cured the blind; we poison humanity, rob the poor, and throw sand in the eyes of those that would see.

O, Lord, I'm afraid if things don't change you'll abandon us to the devil, even as we have abandoned ourselves to him. The earth was yours; you gave it to us in trust; we have turned it over to the landlord and sit down and howl about it 364 days in the year and vote to sustain it the 365th day. We rob our children to feed the trusts, and then curse the other fellows who do just as we do. We rise up early in the morning and say great swear words against the trusts, and then vote for the men who made them and own them. Almighty God, Christ prayed for the men who crucified him, for he said "they know not what they do." Now, O, Lord, what I want to know is there any hope, any chance, for several million fools who know what they do. Is there any chance for a man who robs humanity and enriches the devil? O, Lord, God of Israel, let thy Spirit stir among the hearts of thy creatures so that the man with the hoe may belt the devil over the head, and be persuaded to husband and care for thy sac-

red gifts, and vote for Mollie and the babies. O, Lord, look at me, one of thy miserable creatures; I'm paying interest on the note for this yellow mule; I'm paying rent on the land I cultivate; I'm paying profits on all I buy, and when I get through this year there will be nothing left for us but husks and howls. O, Lord, I've prayed for everything but sense, and now I pray and will pray continually for that, for it is what we need most, and I want enough for myself and twelve million more fools in this country. Don't be afraid of sendin' too much. Amen.

---

### Prayer Number 10.

Soon after making his last prayer at the church in his own neighborhood, Obadiah Poordevil and his wife went over into another county to visit his wife's relatives. Now it happened that they were holding a camp meeting over there, and when Obadiah heard this he was in great raptures, for he had fallen into the habit of praying, and when a good opportunity offered he would rather pray than eat, although he was the happy possessor of a "full dinner pail" appetite. As our readers have already seen that he had grown able, eloquent and fervent in prayer, and his supplications were very satisfactory to a ma-

majority of the people who heard them, Obadiah's wife proudly told her kinfolk her husband was powerful in prayer. The first night he stayed with them he gave them a sample of one of his home-made prayers, and it stirred the family from center to circumference. The next day they attended the camp-meeting and it soon became known, through Obadiah's wife's kinfolk who were proud of him, that the church had within her gates a stranger who was unusually powerful in prayer. The pillars of the church sought dilligently for Obadiah and when they found him they gave him a seat under the drippings of the sanctuary. As soon as an opportunity offered Obadiah was invited to lead in prayer. He was on the stand that had been erected for a pulpit and amen corner combined. It was in the midst of a beautiful little grove large enough to hold the people, horses and wagons. The wealthiest people in the neighborhood, who constituted the pillars of the church, were all comfortably seated on the stand. There was a vast concourse of people gathered around them. When Obadiah was invited to lead in prayer a strange feeling came over him for a moment and then came an inspiration that he never felt before. At first his words were almost drowned with "Amens" and "God grant it." Then these became less seldom on the more frequent and among the audience. Then the amen crowd began to groan, and shouts of glory were frequently heard in the audience

about the stand. Obadiah prayed with a fervency he had never felt before.

“Our father who art in heaven,” he began, and there were a hundred amens to it, “hallowed be thy name (more amens), thy kingdom come (amens and Lord grant it), thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven ( few amens, mostly from the audience on the seats around the stand), give us this day our daily bread (amen from nearly everybody), forgive us our sins (amens) and trespasses (amens) as we forgive those who trespass against us (a few amens), lead us not into temptation by permitting us to believe the promises of old party politicians and high-salaried, chicken-fed preachers, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. If you have rich men there who oppress the poor and hold from them the most of what they earn, then let their tribe increase here. But, O, Lord, we would like to know how they got there, for you said it was harder for a camel to go through a needle’s eye than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, and there ain’t no camel gone through a needle’s eye, yet that we’ve heard of and we’d have heard of it if there had, for the old party papers search earth and hell for anything that is of that much importance to the rich. And, O, Lord, if you let everybody that comes to heaven everything they can get their hands on and then let somebody use it for half what they make, I want to go to heaven right now and get a plenty while I’m gettin’,

and before it's all gone, for I got here on this earth too late and everything was gobbled up, and now I have to work for old Deacon Skinflint on the shares, and borrow money of old Twentypersent and pay him what the Bible calls usury for the use of it. But, O, Lord, I don't believe you have got any such heaven, but we've got them on earth, and we've got lots more things that the Bible says we ought not to have and things are getting worse every day, and the preachers and the church members are afraid to tackle the job at the right end, and remove the cause; so if you haven't the time to come down at once and straighten out things just give me the power of thy spirit and me and the Socialists will clean things out and make this earth look decent enough for a man to live on what little time you want him to stay here. But, O, Lord, the way it is now it ain't no fit place for a man to get ready to go to heaven. O, Lord, what we need is a few chunks of thy wrath about as big as the moon to hit us a jolt and wake us up, but if you ain't got that much war materials to spare, then send us, we beseech thee, two or three million of them fiery serpents what bit the children of Israel when they were in the Wilderness yelling till their throats were so sore that they couldn't eat soup to go back to Egypt and be slaves again. O, Lord, let us have a shower of them serpents now, right now. O, Father, let them come and fight the wicked; and O, Lord, send some

more big' ones to fight the measley hypocrites in the church who believe they have a copyright on their religion and a passport to heaven not subject to cancellation. And, now, O, Lord, don't forget them serpents; let the air be filled with them and let the stiffnecks and the haughty and the proud be bitten until they are made to know there is a God in Isreal."

Just as Obadiah had got t..is far in his prayer old Deacon Doubleprofit jumped to his feet and yelled: "I'm bitten; I'm bitten; O, Lord, I'm bitten by one of them fiery serpents; O. Lord, what shall I do?" In a moment nearly everybody on the stand were shouting out that tney had been bitten and were calling on the Lord to help them. The preacher had been bitten in several places. Obadiah paused in his prayer, opened his eyes and saw the turmoil about him. Just then an old farmer who was sitting on one of the front seats jumped up and yelled: "O, Lord, there's hell-fire in my breeches and one of them air snakes has bit me on the head." By this time a score or more of persons declared they had been bitten. Obadiah was stunned; he knew he had never made such a powerful prayer before; but he could see by the faces of those about him they didn't thank him for it. They would perhaps have mobbed him if he had kept on. As it was he picked up his hat and hurried away. He got with his wife's folks and they all went home. That night he didn't pray for any fiery ser-

pents. The next day they heard what caused all the commotion. Some mischievous boys had attacked a hornet's nest behind the stand, and while doing it had also stirred up a yellow jackets nest. One of the yellow jackets had struck the ground and crawled up the pants leg of the old farmer who yelled that he had "hell-fire in his breeches." A hornet had at the same time stung him on the head. Obadiah's prayer was so powerful in description and supplication that it carried everything with it but the pain, and the hornets and yellow jackets furnished that. What he prayed for was not the real thing, but it had a good effect on the people.

---

---

This is reprinted from the National Rip-Saw, a monthly Socialist Journal, always full of bright and able articles by America's keenest Socialist writers. W. S. Morgan is Editor.

Subscription price 50c per year; in clubs of four or more, 25c per year. Send for free sample copy.

This is our pamphlet No. P 1.

2 copies, 10c, 30 copies, \$1.00.

The National Rip-Saw. St. Louis, Mo.

10M-P1-11-1-11.

