





THE
LORD'S 
 PRAYER



REV. E. O. FRIERSON.





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—BY—

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THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Our Father, which art in Heaven.

Hallowed be thy name.

Thy Kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;

For thine is the Kingdom, and the the power and the glory forever.

AMEN.

PREFACE.

In this little volume the attempt is made to draw out and set before plain christians and Sabbath school scholars, some of the rich, varied and important instruction contained in the Lord's Prayer. Thousands "repeat" this celebrated prayer without pausing to reflect upon its meaning. They have been familiar with it all their lives, but seldom, if ever, has it occurred to them how rich is its import, how numerous the topics it embraces, and how controlling the influence it was designed to have, not only upon our prayers, but upon our lives and conduct. By calling attention to these points the author hopes he may exalt their appreciation of this wondrous prayer, and contribute to a more profitable use of it on the part of those who have not deeply studied its import. In his discussion of it he has received many valuable suggestions from Fisher's Catechism and the Catechisms of the Presbyterian Church.

E. O. F.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

CHAPTER I.

OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN.

PLATO said there were three things for which he blessed God. 1. That he had been made a man and not a beast. 2. That he had been born a Greek and not a barbarian. 3. That he had been permitted to live in the age of Socrates.

There are three things for which every believer will bless God to all eternity. 1. That God did not leave mankind to perish in that state of sin and misery into which the fall brought us. 2. That the way of recovery from that state is plainly revealed in the gospel. 3. That the Holy Ghost effectually applied to him the benefits of Christ's redemption.

The first evidence man gives that the Holy Ghost has begun to apply to him the benefits of redemption is prayer. "Behold he prayeth."

In the plan of salvation a place is provided for prayer, and though the work is one of divine power and grace, God does not carry it forward to complete and final accomplishment without the agency of this important duty. If a person does not pray, whatever other good deeds he may do and whatever other good qualities he

may possess, he gives conclusive evidence that the work of salvation has not been begun in him. *Pray or perish* is the sharp and solemn alternative that is laid before every one and from which God never deviates in a single instance.

Seeing therefore the imperative need of prayer in carrying forward the plan of man's redemption, our Saviour Jesus Christ, has kindly furnished us an inspired model after which we may form our prayers.

This prayer, which is called the "Lord's Prayer," because uttered by him, is not intended to be a *fixed formula* from which we are never to depart or which is to exclude all other prayers of human composition. It is rather intended to be a synopsis of the elements and principles of all true and proper prayer, and to afford an *inspired ideal* of the spirit, tone and character of all prayers that would be acceptable to God.

"*After this manner, pray ye,*" said Christ:—in this spirit, after this style, with such principles in your minds and such feelings in your hearts—with such truths as this prayer contains and such sentiments as these truths are suited to inspire—so pray ye. It is an inspired guide to devotion—a *normal* petition which we are to observe in all our prayers if we would have them accepted of God.

This normal petition, or series of petitions, opens with the words, "*Our Father which art in Heaven.*" These words, constituting the preface to the Lord's Prayer, point out to us the great Being to whom all prayers are to be addressed and also inform us where is the place of his abode. The title, "Father," by which we are here taught to address God, presupposes sons and daughters, and is doubtless used in conformity to the *covenant* relation in which he stands to his children. It

corresponds to the name, Jehovah, in the Old Testament which denotes, not simply the eternal self-existent God, the Creator, Ruler and Judge of all, but the Eternal One in his relations to man as the great Benefactor and Giver of all grace and mercy. It does not serve to describe God to us as the Creator or the God of Providence, upholding and governing all things by his power, but as a tender loving parent, who sustains a different relation to some of his creatures from that general providential relation, which he sustains to all. True, he made all and sustains all, but he is not a father to all in the same sense. As regards life, and motion, and being, he is indeed the Father of us all. He gives to all life and health and all things. But as regards eternal life and salvation he is the Father only of them that believe.

This term is thoroughly evangelical. It belongs to the gospel age. To the patriarchs and saints under the Old Testament dispensation it was scarcely known. The character in which God made himself known to them was that of Lord and Master and they stood to him in the relation of servants. The saints of old took their position under the law, stood off, as it were, at a distance, waited their Master's commands, were not received into close communion but kept under the tutelage of ordinances till the time appointed. Under the Gospel, however, God now manifests himself in the character of Father in Christ, and man advances from the position of servant to that of son. The new and living way being fully opened through Christ, we have access, with boldness, to his presence and can address him by the endearing name of Father. "Our fellowship is with the Father and with Jesus Christ his Son."

There is a special fitness and propriety in presenting

to us the covenant relation of God when we approach him in prayer. That phase of the divine character suggests at once the *all-sufficiency* of God in which we can find abundant supply for all our wants. We are impelled to prayer by a sense of need. We feel that we are weak, guilty and helpless, and in our wretchedness we cry for help. That cry our Saviour teaches us to direct to our Father in whom all fulness dwells.

We can feel no want which his infinite resources cannot supply, we can be exposed to no dangers against which his power cannot protect, and suffer no affliction which he cannot cause to work for our good. The thirsty traveler is not mocked by being directed to a broken cistern that can hold no water, nor is the terrified fugitive pointed to a refuge than can afford him no security. A sinful man, with heart crushed and bleeding under the piercings of a guilty conscience and the terrors of a broken law, is not bidden to repair to some imaginary deity and pour his appeals into ears that are deaf, or seek relief in the rites and ceremonies of some man-made ritual that prescribes tortues for the body to heal the sorrows of the soul. The good Saviour would not so mock his disciples or trifle with their spiritual necessities. He directs them to the all-sufficient Father whose resources are inexhaustible and who pities his children as an earthly parent pities his. He would have us ever remember that God is a Father, that his great heart throbs with the tender feelings of paternity, and that he who feeds the young ravens when they cry will not suffer his own children to cry to him in vain. Shall an unjust judge avenge a widow, simply to escape her importunities and avoid being wearied by

her continual coming, and a just and good God not avenge his elect who cry day and night unto him? No indeed, "I tell you," says Christ, "he will avenge them speedily."

Moreover it should not be overlooked that under the title "Father," it is implied that God is *bound by his covenant engagement* to do for his children whatever they may need. He placed himself under this bond when he stipulated with his Son in the covenant of redemption to be a God to the people whom he should afterwards redeem. "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their minds and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people." His promise to be to them a God affords them a guarantee that all things shall be done for them that their spiritual necessities require. Not only his love and his paternal affection for them, which of itself indeed is ample security, but his own gracious promise and his covenant engagement with his Son bind him to hear the humble believing supplications of his children.

This all sufficiency of God which is seen to be wrapped up in the title, Father, is also in the light of the eternal covenant further discovered to be made over to his children and secured to them in the stipulations of a federal compact. If God should deny to them the help and the grace, which they seek to obtain from him by prayer, he must not only suppress his paternal feelings for them but violate his covenant engagement with his Son. Neither of these can he possibly do, therefore his children have a double claim upon his mercy and his grace—a twofold basis on which to rest the success of their appeals—his love for them and his covenant en-

agements with his Son that he would be a God to those whom he should redeem.

What better arguments could they desire? What stronger appeals could they make than those drawn from God's paternal love and his own immutable covenant promise? Under the title, Father, is presented the allsufficiency of God made over and secured to his children in the bonds of an eternal covenant well ordered and sure.

Well might the Saviour therefore say to them, "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him," for he knows what he promised to bestow and exactly how far the covenant binds him.

When a child of God, therefore comes to him in prayer to ask such things as his spiritual necessities require, he asks for those things which God bound himself long ages ago to grant for his Son's sake—things which he knew his children would need and which he therefore stored up for them in his allsufficient grace and love. When, for example, the believer asks that God's name be hallowed, that his Kingdom may come, and that his will be done on earth, he is simply asking that God would do what, in his determinate counsel and foreknowledge, he has already purposed to do. "All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and *shall glorify thy name.*" "The kingdoms of the earth are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and *he shall reign forever and ever.*" "My counsel shall stand and *I will do all my pleasure.*"

Here are antecedent pledges resting upon God's determinate counsel that prayers addressed to the eternal Father, for things agreeable to his will shall be heard and answered. Why then do we ask for them to be done?

Not because we doubt their accomplishment or suppose God needs to be prompted or reminded of his own promises but to evince our own interest in them and to express our belief that our eternal welfare is involved in their fulfilment and because prayer is an ordained law of God's moral government. When God's name is hallowed, when his Kingdom comes and his will is done on earth, his children are the greatest gainers thereby, their highest welfare is promoted and their grandest hopes are realized. God is glorified and man is blest.

This almighty and allsufficient Father who in the eternal covenant has made himself over to his children, is therefore with the utmost propriety addressed as "*our*" Father. This possessive plural pronoun suggests the fraternity of believers in Christ rather than the universal brotherhood of mankind. This prayer was delivered to Christ's *disciples* in compliance with a request from them. It was designed for *their* use inasmuch as it contains petitions which only a disciple would be disposed to utter. It is adapted to all mankind and embodies petitions which all men may and should employ but it becomes effectual and profitable only to those who employ it in the faith of a disciple.

Nor does this view expose the prayer to the charge of a narrow sectarian, or partizan spirit, as excluding from the Father's wide embrace any of those intelligent creatures whom his hand has fashioned. It does not seek to monopolize his goodness or represent it as the restricted heritage of a favored few. God's goodness is over all his works. He stretches out his hand and satisfies the wants of every living thing. Beneath the broad canopy of his superintending providence, every man, whether saint or sinner, disciple or not, can look up and say: "our Father,"

since in him all live and move and have their being. But within the wide circle of his providence there is a narrower circle enclosing the subjects of his grace who have made a covenant with him by sacrifice. These can employ the words in a higher and nobler sense, and with a deeper appreciation of their true import, than any who acknowledge God simply as Creator and Providential Ruler. With these Jesus identifies himself and on his *own* behalf, as well as on theirs teaches them to say *our* Father, for God was his Father also as well as the Father of his disciples. No. Limiting the term, "our," to the fraternity of believers does not narrow the prayer or exclude any from its use who do not exclude themselves.

Neither does the distribution of Christ's disciples into different communions entitle any one of them to its exclusive use. The saints on earth, into however many branches they may be divided, still compose one brotherhood in Christ whose pastoral care and oversight they enjoy. His covenant love embraces them all and no one of them can say, in a spirit of sectarian or selfish exclusiveness, *my* Father, or *your* Father, since high above all denominational distinctions floats God's banner of love to all them who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

The words, "which art in Heaven," with which the preface to the Lord's Prayer closes, do not simply describe the place of God's abode and the home of the brotherhood of believers. They are not intended to localize God, or to circumscribe the bounds of his habitation, but, on the contrary, they serve rather to describe his omnipresence. "The heaven of heavens cannot contain him" for immensity is his dwelling-place and eternity is his home. They constitute a grand appella-

tive denoting the High and Lofty One whose preeminence lifts him far above all other beings in heaven or upon earth. He is to be addressed as in Heaven because Heaven is his throne. "The Lord hath established his throne in the heavens and his kingdom ruleth over all." From his glorious high throne, on which he sits as Monarch of the Universe, he issues his commands to all creatures and all worlds. He is the fountain of life and of law, the eternal and almighty Sovereign who "doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand or say unto him, what doest thou?"

While there is the closest and tenderest relationship between God and his children yet they must never forget that he is infinitely above them and justly entitled to their deepest reverence as well as their warmest love. His parental relation will not justify any familiarity on their part or warrant them in taking any liberties with his ordinances, word or works or anything whereby he makes himself known. While they rejoice before him they must "rejoice with trembling." While they love him as a Father, and delight themselves in him as their all-sufficient portion, they must honor him as their Creator and adore him as their Lord and their God.

From this imperfect analysis of the preface to the Lord's Prayer how significant and how appropriate is it as an introduction to the wondrous words that are to follow? The character of that great Being whom we address in each of the petitions to come after is now before us. We have been, as it were, introduced to him. We know his name. His name is "Father," and not simply Father, but "our" Father, and not simply our

Father but our Father "which art in Heaven." With this introduction let us pass on to the study of the several petitions we are taught to present to him in prayer.

CHAPTER II.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME.

BEFORE we come directly to develop the instruction embodied in this petition, a few remarks of an exegetical character must be made respecting the name of God and the import of the word "hallowed." Let no one be surprised that God should have a name. His name is one of the methods which he has chosen by which to reveal himself. The name of God is not an arbitrary designation like the names of men which are used simply to distinguish one person from another. It signifies his *nature* or *essence* and is therefore as sacred and venerable as his person. We have no more right to trifle with the name of God than we have to trifle with his person. His name and himself are one and inseparable. This is evident from the fact that one of the commands of the Decalogue is delivered to defend his name—"thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain"; and another is given in the same divine code to defend his person—"thou shalt have no other gods before Me." Now since both commands are of equal authority the duties they inculcate are of equal importance. The same divine law requires that equal respect be paid to both the name and the person of God.

There are two words in the Hebrew language, and two corresponding ones in the Greek, which are employed as the predominant names of God—*Elohim* and *Jehovah* in

Hebrew, corresponding to *Theos* and *Kurios* in Greek. Dr. Thornwell, in his lecture on the names of God, says that Elohim is the name that prevails throughout the book of Genesis down to the seventh chapter of Exodus, but from that point onward the name Jehovah is predominant. The difference between these two names is very important. The name Elohim denotes God as Creator and Providential Ruler, while Jehovah denotes his self-existence and covenant relation to his people.

In the sixth chapter of Exodus God said to Moses, "I appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob by the name of God Almighty, but by my name, Jehovah, was I not known unto them." By this he did not mean that the patriarchs were wholly ignorant of that title but only that they did not fully comprehend its import. They used it occasionally but were not in a position to fully apprehend its significance. But when the time came for the people of Israel to be delivered from Egyptian bondage, and become an organized nation as the Lord's chosen people and enter into covenant with him the name significant of that fact begins to be the one chiefly used. Elohim, the mighty Creator and Ruler, gives place to Jehovah, the everliving Covenant-Keeper, and henceforth the latter name is chiefly used because it expresses God's covenant relationship to his people.

The Jews of modern times have a superstition in regard to the name, Jehovah, and will not pronounce it. They call it the *Tetragrammaton* or four lettered name. They say the very angels in heaven dare not speak it and they have ceased to use it since the exile as being too holy to be spoken by mortal tongues. But in this they do not follow the example of the patriarchs. Abraham built an altar and called on the name of Jehovah. Eve

used it at the birth of Cain saying "I have gotten a man from Jehovah," and in the days of Enos men began generally to call on the name of Jehovah. This title is equivalent to the New Testament expression used in the book of Revelations 1, 8, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

The word, "Hallowed," is the verb corresponding to the adjective "holy," and the noun "holiness." The simple meaning of the petition, "hallowed be thy name," is *make thy name holy*. But as the name of God is already essentially holy and cannot be made more so the meaning of the word is synonymous with *glorify—glorify thy name*. Cause us and all men to know, acknowledge and reverence thy name; briefly, it is a petition for the universal diffusion of true religion.

This petition implies that mankind are naturally indisposed to hallow God's name. This is assumed as a universal truth which no proof is necessary to establish. Experience and observation abundantly attest it. Man is a religious animal it is true. Wherever he is found, whether Jew or Greek, barbarian or civilized, he is found to be a worshipper at some altar, be it venerable, superstitious or bloodstained. There are within him concreated religious instincts and constitutional appetencies that urge him to seek after God if haply he may find him. But coexistent with these there are depraved appetites and passions which predominate in his nature overpowering the religious emotions, corrupting them and rendering him averse to God. Evil affections alienate him from the true God and make him unwilling to retain his knowledge and, under their malign influence,

he changes the glory of the uncorruptible God, or rather exchanges it, for an image made like to corruptible man, to birds, fourfooted beasts and creeping things. This is the psychological explanation of idolatry which Paul gives in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans.

The Psalmist also says, "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand and seek God," and the result of the divine scrutiny was, "They are *all* gone aside, they are altogether become filthy." None are naturally disposed to hallow God's name, but, on the contrary, there is a universal disposition to ignore and profane it.

This petition therefore strikes a blow against natural atheism and seeks to eradicate the very germs of evil from man's heart. It aims to counteract this original aversion to God and to implant an opposite disposition which will turn men's minds back to God and incline them to honor his name. This indisposition to hallow God's name, each one finds to be not only in himself but in all other men, and in this petition he expresses the desire that it may be counteracted in them as well as in himself.

It is also assumed in this petition that mankind are *unable* to hallow God's name in a suitable and becoming manner even when they have the disposition so to do. They need instruction and guidance as to the ceremonies and ordinances by which the duty is to be performed. Man is not only depraved but weak. He is powerless to eradicate these atheistical dispositions from his heart. His weakness, it is true, is a *moral* weakness, a weakness of will which is superinduced by his indisposition. He cannot because he *will* not, and therefore his want of ability is as inexcusable as his want of disposition. But

still his weakness, from whatever cause it may arise, is as true a hindrance in the discharge of the duty as his indisposition. He cannot change his heart or dispose himself to hallow God's name. Neither can he beget the disposition in others. He cannot emancipate himself or others from the bondage of evil affections. He cannot burst open the doors of the prison in which he finds himself as well as others confined and the offering of this petition is an explicit acknowledgment of the fact. Every time a man offers this petition he thereby admits that he is naturally both indisposed and unable to hallow God's name. He confesses that it is right, that it ought to be done, but that in himself he cannot do it.

Thus we see rising up out of this petition the fundamental doctrine of man's total depravity and entire dependence on God's grace. This great truth is assumed as underlying the petition, imparting to it energy and propriety and showing it to be eminently suited to man in his present fallen condition. It stamps it with the seal of *orthodoxy* and evinces the caution which Jesus employed to maintain the great doctrines of the gospel in delivering to his disciples a model after which to compose their prayers. He will not authorize them to *pray* heresy any more than he would have them to preach or to sing heresy.

Prayer indeed should be orthodox as well as earnest and devout. It must be the utterance of *truth* as well as the expression of pious feelings or of religious emotions. The importance of orthodoxy in prayer is not always felt or remembered. Pious rhapsody or noisy importunity or vehement explosions of religious feeling make no atonement for offering to God the unclean sac-

rifice of a lie. Whether prayed or sung, groaned or chanted, whispered or vociferated, falsehood can never rise with acceptance before his throne. Hence we find in this great Normal Prayer, embodied in its first petition, that grand fundamental truth that man is a depraved, helpless sinner, dependent upon God's grace. This together with God's sovereignty is laid at the very basis and exerts a controlling influence in the construction of each petition to the end. It is never lost sight of, as indeed it could not be since it is involved in the very notion of prayer itself.

Under the name of God are to be included all those methods whereby God has chosen to reveal himself to man, such as his titles, attributes, words and works. All these are to be hallowed because they are means whereby he makes himself known. Whatever means God employs to reveal himself become *ipso facto* sacred. They partake of the holiness of his nature, are to be acknowledged by us as divine and to be received and treated with respect and veneration. His Word and Works are the two principal methods by which he makes himself known. In these he has unbosomed himself, so to speak, and manifested forth his attributes and his glory. His Word is holy. It is inspired in every sentence and every line. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." "Holy men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." It should be received therefore in faith and love, laid up in our hearts and practised in our lives.

We are naturally indisposed to honor God's word because we are indisposed to honor God himself. No one will honor the words of a speaker whom he does not honor. Every speaker must secure respect for *himself*

before he can secure respect for his utterances. This petition aims, first of all, to engender in man's heart a profound reverence for God's person or Name and through that means to secure respect and reverence for his words.

When we honor God's words we are disposed to honor all the appointments, ordinances and sacraments which his words authorize and enjoin. God reveals himself by Preaching, by the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, by the Sabbath Day and by the works of benevolence and charity which the Scriptures enjoin, and therefore all these are to be held in due reverence as the appointments of his holy Word and as means whereby he makes himself known.

Even the works of God are holy. Nature is holy. "The heavens declare the glory of God, the firmament showeth his handiwork." An apostle has taught us that we are to call nothing "common or unclean." Another assures us that "all things indeed are pure," and He who is higher authority than an apostle has told us that it is "not that which goeth into the mouth that defileth a man." Matter is holy. Away with the old Manichean notion that matter is the seat of evil. The Creator, in the person of the Son of God, wrapped himself in a mantle made of it, wore it thirty-three years, nor did he then cast it off as an old worn-out garment but took it up to heaven with him and glorified it by seating it on the right hand of the throne.

God's Works are consecrated to the high and holy purpose of manifesting forth his attributes and his glory, and that, too, not by a temporary ceremonial law which is to expire by a statute of limitation, but by the eternal decree of the Creator. "The Lord hath made

all things for himself"; "for thy pleasure they are and were created." "All things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Inasmuch, therefore, as any means which God may employ for so noble an end as that of manifesting forth his glory must be holy, his works, which he created for that purpose, must themselves partake of the sanctity of that end. "The works of God are great"—great not only in their construction, operation and uses, but great in the ultimate purpose which they were intended to subserve. They are to be studied with reverence, used with thankfulness, enjoyed with moderation. We should aim to see in them not only the "footprints" but the handmarks of the creator and cherish the instinctive reverence such discoveries are designed to awaken.

When men walk through the mighty temple of nature and survey its high arched ceilings, its lofty dome, its fluted columns, its grand architraves, its massive entablatures and its carved lily work—when they look around and see the evidences of a skill that surpasses the highest attainments of human genius and dwarfs man's proudest monuments into mere mole-hills, all wearing the impress of an antiquity that defies more centuries than time can count years; let them not suppose that they are exploring the chambers of some old palace, built long ago merely for ostentation and now abandoned by its occupant. Let them not feel at liberty to abuse or mar the building, deface its walls, abrade its carvings or chisel off its ornaments. Rather let them take off the shoes from their feet, bare their heads and speak with bated breath, for the ground whereon they stand is holy. They are in the outer court of the temple of the Great King, the Lord of Hosts,

who is ever in his temple demanding that the earth keep silence before him.

It is also implied in this petition that we desire and ask God to overrule and dispose *all evil* so as to make it ultimately conducive to his glory. The effect of evil is to obscure God's glory, to hide him from man's view and cause man to forget God. This is especially true of all the sinful actions of men. Sin throws reproach upon God's name, his authority and his laws, and when we offer this petition we ask him, since he sees fit to permit it, to overrule it and cause it to promote his glory—to let his majesty and his excellency shine through it and in spite of it.

This is his prerogative alone. He alone can bring light out of darkness, good out of evil, order out of confusion, and we call upon him to do it, to make the wrath of man to praise him and the remainder thereof to restrain. We call upon him to assert himself, to shine forth and display his excellent attributes over and above the clouds and darkness with which sin has enveloped this world, and let the nations see that he is "God over all, blessed for evermore." "O, thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth."

This is what the world needs—a complete and glorious revelation of God. He has revealed himself already, it is true. He has shown himself in his word and in his works, but men do not see him, do not acknowledge him. The God of this world hath blinded their eyes so that they continue in darkness and under the power of the Evil One. Therefore, we call on God to *increase* the light, to make the revelation brighter, manifest himself still more conspicuously, sound out his voice more distinctly in his providence, and in the consciences

of men, until they will be constrained to acknowledge that he alone is God and worthy of all veneration and the homage of all hearts. We do not impeach the sufficiency of the revelation already given. We make no complaint against either the word or the works of God as being deficient in the clearness or the power with which they reveal him. "Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world ;" but sin has interposed a dark cloud which prevents us from seeing the one, and raised such horrible discords that we cannot hear the other. The condition of a large proportion of mankind is still such as the Prophet described ancient Israel's to be : "Hear ye indeed, but understand not ; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and convert and be healed." The revelation made goes largely by default because of the closed eyes and perverted understandings of those to whom it has been addressed. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Spiritual illumination is wanting, that men may know the things that are freely given to us of God. And if the Church would unite in this petition, and in an agony of fervent supplication thunder unceasingly in the ear of God the importunate cry, "Hallowed be thy name," he would rend the heavens and come down, the mountains would flow down at his presence, then would his name be known to his adversaries and the nations would tremble at his presence.

This petition suggests the true and only method of

bringing about a universal diffusion of true religion. Man cannot accomplish it. His prayers, his efforts and his gifts cannot arrest the tide of iniquity that sweeps over this world like a flood. He cannot eradicate atheism, ignorance, idolatry, superstition and profaneness from the earth. There is only One who can do this—God. By this petition we engage *Him* to do it. We take hold of that arm that can move the world, invoke that Omnipotent Energy that can create ten thousand worlds, that can bring down the lofty looks of man, humble his haughtiness, smite the earth with the rod of his mouth and with his breath alone slay the wicked. By prayer, which in itself is weak, we put Omnipotence to work. This is the true secret of the power of prayer. Its power is not in mere words, however fitly chosen, or in mere thoughts and feelings, however devoutly and earnestly expressed, but in this: *It calls Omnipotence into action.* As regards the grand consummation so devoutly wished for by all saints—the restitution of all things and the complete establishment of Messiah's Kingdom among men—God's omnipotence is comparatively quiescent and inoperative until called into exercise by the prayers of his church. “Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this *be inquired of* by the house of Israel to do it for them.” If you wish me to act call on me. Ask, seek, knock. My power is by my promise suspended on the petitions of my people. I am ready. I only await their earnest call. Let them call on me to do this, and almighty power will leap forth at once to its accomplishment. O, the responsibility of the church! Omnipotence stands waiting on our prayers! God's name is not hallowed from the rising to the setting of the sun because we do not ask him to hallow it!

In taking leave of this first petition let the reader note the *order* in which the several petitions are arranged. The first three have exclusive reference to God, his Name, his Kingdom and his Will, while the last three refer to man, his necessities, his dangers and his temptations. God comes first. He is before all things—*Primus, Maximus, Optimus*. His Glory, his Kingdom, his Will must occupy the first place in our thoughts, take precedence and be made the chief end of all our efforts. Man is inferior and secondary and must come last. He must sit at God's feet as a servant and a subject. The Master must first be served, the servant can come after. "Order is heaven's first law." The *structure* of this prayer, therefore, no less than the subject matter of it, bears the impress of divinity and prepares us for the later words of Christ, "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

Let this brief, but deeply significant, petition continue to sound in our ears, and let the reverential spirit which it inculcates permeate all our thoughts as we pass on now to the study of the important one that follows.

CHAPTER III.

THY KINGDOM COME.

THIS second petition is like the first, at least in one respect. Its brevity is in inverse proportion to its import and comprehensiveness. Volumes have been written upon it but its meaning is not yet all told. It sweeps the whole field of religious truth and spans the entire arch of time. To understand it fully

and trace out all the manifold lines of thought it suggests, one must traverse the whole domain of christian theology, go back to the beginning of time and follow the channel of human history down to the present, and then call to his aid the gift of prophecy to enable him to watch its developments through the future, on to the final consummation. The entire record of human history is only a voluminous commentary upon this brief but pregnant petition, and the great revolutions that have occurred among the nations in past ages were only the development of new and different phases which this Kingdom assumed in its mighty onward march.

When Christ was demanded of the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God should come, he answered them by saying: "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation," or outward show. But still the pharisaic idea of this Kingdom was not without at least an element of truth in it. Their view and that which was held by the Jews generally, that Messiah's Kingdom was to be one of pomp and power that would overthrow and absorb all world Kingdoms, was rather *premature* than false. For one of the great Messianic prophecies is that "Shiloh shall come, and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be," and the New Testament response to this is that "the Kingdoms of this world *shall* become the Kingdoms of our Lord." So that though in one sense the Kingdom of God cometh not with observation, yet the time will be when it will come with all possible observation, and no other Kingdom but that will at all be seen, for it will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

It is obvious that the stress of every attempt to expound this petition must be laid upon the phrase "Kingdom of God," for as long as our ideas on that

subject are vague, we can have no distinct conceptions of what is meant by its coming.

The Kingdom of God may be regarded as two-fold—*general* and *special*—or, in other words, as two *dispensations* of His one Kingdom. The general Kingdom of God is his absolute sovereignty and dominion over all things in heaven, earth and hell. He is Lord over all creatures and all worlds, and governs all by His universal providence. By his special Kingdom is meant his care and government over his church. If it is asked to which of these two does the petition refer? The answer is to *both*, for the two are administered by one Supreme Will, and are but two different modes of dispensing one absolute government.

This petition asks, in the first place, that the *general* Kingdom of God may come. This does not imply that it has not already been *established*, or that it has not already begun. On the contrary that is assumed. We acknowledge that this general supremacy has already been inaugurated, and has existed from eternity, and what we now ask is that it may *come*, *i. e.* that it may be more and more fully demonstrated, that men may see it, feel it, acknowledge it, that that which is a fact *in itself* may also become a fact *in man's experience*. The general Kingdom of God has always existed. He long ages ago established his throne in the heavens, and his dominion has always ruled over all; but men are so blind they cannot see it, so perverse they will not own it. They are so absorbed in earthly pursuits and controlled by sensual appetites, so in love with sin, and so indisposed to seek God's glory, that his general Kingdom is almost universally ignored. In view of this fact, our Saviour teaches us to pray that it may come, that the invisible things of

God, even his "eternal power and godhead," may be "clearly seen" from the things which he has made. The light of nature though sufficient to leave men without excuse for worshipping idols, is not sufficient to renew the heart or lead man to a saving knowledge of God. The heavens do indeed declare the "glory" of God but they do not declare his *grace* to man's heart with such convincing power as to draw him in repentance and faith to the cross of Christ.

But the chief reference in this petition is doubtless to God's *special* kingdom, or that particular method of administering his general kingdom by which he takes care of and governs his Church. This has been committed to the hands of Jesus Christ, the Mediator, according to his own testimony, "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth." He has been appointed "Heir of all things" and invested with supreme authority to administer the general kingdom of God in the interest of the church "which is his body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." This supreme power was conferred on him as a reward for his obedience; "for though being in the form of God, and thinking it no robbery to be equal with God, he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, * * * *wherefore* God hath highly exalted him, &c." This special kingdom, therefore, may be called the Mediatorial Kingdom of Messiah. He is in an especial manner the administrator of it, and controls all things with a view to advancing the welfare of the church. He is seated at God's right hand, where he will continue to sit until his enemies are made his footstool. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father, when

he shall have put down all rule and all authority and all power."

By these words it is not supposed that Paul meant to teach that Christ's Mediatorial Kingdom will cease, or that the time will ever come when he will no longer act as Mediator. For the kingdom of Christ is often described as an *eternal* kingdom—"thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." Christ will forever remain king of saints and head over all things to his church. The meaning of this mysterious passage seems rather to be this: When the end comes, when all opposing powers are subdued, there will then be no longer a necessity for the Mediator to wield the universal government of God for the protection of the church against her foes. The exercise of this almighty power for that purpose may be suspended. There being no longer any opposition, there will be a proportionate reduction in the manifestation of power. The enemy being defeated, the troops will be recalled. The conqueror, however, will resign none of his authority, but will continue to all eternity the mediatorial king of the redeemed hosts. This seems to be the force of the words "delivered up," as applied to the kingdom of Christ.

Dr. Charles Hodge, in his commentary on I. Corinthians, in discussing this passage, has the following remarks: "In what sense is Christ to deliver up the kingdom to the Father? What does this mean? The Scriptures constantly teach that Christ's kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and of his dominion there is no end. In what sense, then, can he be said to deliver up this kingdom to the Father?

"It must be remembered," he continues, "that the Scriptures speak of a three-fold kingdom as belonging

to Christ. 1. That which necessarily belongs to him as a divine person, extending over all creatures, and of which he can never divest himself. 2. That which belongs to him as the incarnate Son of God, extending over his own people. This also is everlasting. He will forever remain the head and sovereign of the redeemed. 3. That dominion to which he was exalted after his resurrection, when all power in heaven and earth was committed to his hands. This kingdom which he exercises as the Theanthropos, and which extends over all principalities and powers, he is to deliver up when the work of redemption is accomplished. He was invested with this dominion in his mediatorial character for the purpose of carrying on his work to its consummation. When that is done, *i. e.*, when he has subdued all his enemies, then he will no longer reign over the universe as mediator, but only as God; while his headship over his people is to continue forever."—Hodge on I. Corinthians, page 330.

We may view this kingdom under two aspects, as *external* and *internal*. It is external in the preaching of the Gospel, the administration of the sacraments, and in the visible organization of the church. In these respects it is an outward, visible institution, having its laws, ordinances and forms of worship in a manner similar to the civil and political institutions of men. But its chief glory consists in its internal dispensation. Here its power is seen in purifying the heart by faith, transforming the character, controlling the conduct and conforming men to the image of Jesus Christ. It is sometimes called the *kingdom of grace*, because those who are its subjects become such by grace. No one intrudes himself into this kingdom. No one becomes a

subject of it by his merit, words or works. He who is found in it was *called* into it, justified by faith and adopted into it by grace alone. "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." Grace reigns in this kingdom by Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

It is also called the kingdom of *glory*. This is only a higher development of the kingdom of grace, for grace is glory begun below, and glory is grace complete. Such briefly is the nature of God's kingdom, which in this second petition of the Lord's Prayer we are taught to ask that it may come.

As in reference to the general Kingdom of God, so here, it is not implied that this special kingdom has not already in a certain degree come, *i. e.* been inaugurated and established on earth. It has. The asking that it may come presupposes its establishment. The Mediator's Kingdom has always had an existence, even from the ages of eternity. It existed first in the eternal purpose of God, and then among men, as soon as they brought themselves into a condition by the fall to need its gracious provisions. God has never been without a church on earth. As soon as Adam fell, God's promise of grace was announced, declaring that the seed of the Woman should bruise the Serpent's head. With the order for the expulsion of man from the Garden of Eden, there went the promise of restoration through a Redeemer. In the family of Abraham, with whom the ecclesiastical covenant was made, the church did not *begin*, but rather then made its first appearance as a visible organization. The purpose of God which had been formed in eternity then for the first time, became actualized in definite, tangible form. We do not, therefore, ask now that this

Kingdom be set up or originated. That has been done already, long ages ago. We ask that it may extend and increase. We ask that the gospel, the great instrumentality for extending this kingdom, may be preached everywhere, that sinners who are yet in their sins may be converted by it and that those who are converted may be edified and comforted; that churches may be planted where there are none; that the ordinances of the church may be administered in their purity, and that the triumphs of the cross may everywhere be multiplied. We ask that the Jews, God's ancient people, may be brought into this gracious kingdom, and that the fullness of the Gentiles may also come in; that Kings of all countries may become nursing fathers, and Queens nursing mothers to the church. We ask that our officers may be peace and our exactors righteousness, and that the people everywhere, in all lands, may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty.

These are a few of the great things we ask for when we say, "Thy Kingdom Come." O what a grand petition is this! How brief, yet how comprehensive—how simple yet how profound! Did we not speak truly when we said it sweeps the field of revealed theology and spans the arch of time? Was ever so much meaning crowded into three words before? Like the mighty angel which John, in apocalyptic vision, saw come down from heaven clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow upon his head, having one foot upon the sea and the other upon the earth, and his voice as the sound of seven thunders, so this grand petition, expressed only in three words, stands like some mighty colossus, with one foot at the beginning of time and one at its end, while all the events of human history pass underneath.

The very fact that this petition is incorporated in the great Normal Prayer of the church, after which all acceptable prayer is to be modeled and whose importance calls for at least a daily repetition, would lead us, antecedently, to the supposition that there is *opposition* to the coming of this kingdom. This is, indeed, the case. There *is* opposition—malicious, persistent, organized, desperate opposition. What is that opposition, and whence is it? It comes from the *Kingdom of Satan*. This great rival kingdom throws itself squarely across the path of Christ's Kingdom, saying it shall *not* come.

We must remember that Satan has a kingdom as well as Christ. His kingdom is the power of evil which he exerts over the minds and hearts of men. The kingdom of Satan is not a loose, disjointed, heterogeneous affair. It is not a spasmodic or extemporaneous effusion of malice and spite against the kingdom and glory of God. It is a compact, organized, skillfully arranged *system*, composed of thrones, dominions, principalities and powers. Each emissary or agent is under his master's authority and has his work assigned him, which he performs with a ready obedience and an unquestioning loyalty worthy of a better cause. Each one is supplied with weapons, trained in their use, well informed as to the time, place and mode of attack, all under the skillful leadership of a master mind. Satan keeps his forces well in hand and wields them with a sagacity such as no military commander on earth has ever known. He sees that Christ's kingdom is organized, and, catching the hint from his adversary, he meets combination with combination, system with system, plan with plan. "The consolidated empire of Paganism," says Dr. Thornwell, "the persecuting edicts of imperial Rome,

the rise and brilliant success of Mohammedanism, the corruptions of the Papacy and the widespread desolations of modern Infidelity, can never be adequately understood without contemplating them as parts of an organized system of evil, of which the gigantic intellect of the Devil is the author, while men have been the guilty and unwitting instruments." The obstinate continuance of evil in the world for so many ages in spite of all that has been done to suppress it, the ingenious and plausible teachings of infidels, the colossal systems of error and superstition among the heathen, their temples, their gods and their worship, the multitudinous schemes men employ to extinguish God's glory and shut him out from their minds—all these are but parts of one comprehensive system concocted by the superhuman intelligence of Satan. It is all his work, and men are his guilty dupes and employees. They think they are doing as they please, and what their own minds prompt, but they are in fact obeying the Devil's orders and working out his policy.

This evil kingdom must be moved out of the way before the kingdom of Christ will come. But how is that to be accomplished? There is only one sure and successful method of effecting it—by *preaching the glorious Gospel of the blessed God*. With this alone need we assail the kingdom of Satan. This is the power of God, and with this alone can the strongholds of Satan be demolished. He is not to be dethroned by human wisdom, science, civilization or earthborn philosophies. He is like Job's Leviathan. "The arrow cannot make *him* flee; sling stones are turned with him into stubble. He esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood." The wisdom of men turned against him he despises. He is

himself the prince of philosophers and an adept in all the inventions and devices of the world. The Gospel of Christ is the only weapon with which the scales of the old Dragon can be pierced or his power over men can be broken. In this petition we ask that the Gospel may be preached under the deep conviction that in no other way and by no other instrumentality can Satan's kingdom be destroyed and the kingdom of Christ be made to advance.

It is also implied in this petition that we desire *ourselves* to be brought into the kingdom of God. It would indeed be a strange inconsistency were we to desire others to be brought into it without desiring also that we ourselves might be made partakers of its blessings. This would be disinterestedness indeed! to ask for life and salvation to be bestowed upon others and not upon ourselves. The very petition that others may be saved is an evidence that the petitioner has already experienced to some degree the benefits of that salvation, that he has himself been made a subject of God's kingdom and tasted something of its peace and joy. His prayer is not so much therefore that he *may* come into this kingdom as it is an evidence that he *is already* in it. The prayer is in fact the outgrowth of the kingdom in him, its expression and inherent struggle after development and expansion. As Martin Luther says, "the believer prays an everlasting Lord's Prayer." The desire for the salvation of others is one of the *products* of the kingdom of God within him. It is the prayer of a *believer*, for no one can offer this petition aright until he has himself "tasted and seen that the Lord is good," and for *that reason* he is anxious that others may become

sharers with him in what he himself knows from experience to be the loving kindness of the Lord.

Of course it is not meant to deny that many "repeat" the Lord's Prayer and ask for the coming of his kingdom in a perfunctory and formal manner who have no experience of its power in their hearts. But no one can utter this petition in sincerity and truth in whom the germs, at least, of this kingdom have not been planted.

The offering of this petition implies also that, being in this kingdom we desire to be *kept* in it. It would be another and even greater inconsistency if one who was in this kingdom should *not* desire to be kept in it. For the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy, and can it be supposed that one who was made righteous would ever desire to become unrighteous? Or that one who has felt peace with God would not desire to have that peace maintained? Or that one who has experienced the joy of forgiveness would not strive to preserve it? A believer prays to be kept in the kingdom of God because he desires to preserve and perpetuate those blessed experiences within him which caused him to rejoice with joy unspeakable and because he is deeply conscious of his inability to maintain them without the aid of divine grace.

All these great blessings summarized in this brief petition are to be obtained by *prayer*. What a mighty agency then is prayer! In the eloquent language of Jeremy Taylor: "Prayer can obtain everything. It can open the windows of heaven and shut the gates of hell. It can put a constraint upon God and detain an angel till he leave a blessing behind him. It can open the treasures of rain and soften the iron ribs of rocks till they melt in tears and a flowing river. Prayer can un-

clasp the girdles of the North, saying to a mountain of ice, 'Be thou removed hence and cast into the bottom of the sea.' It can arrest the sun in the midst of his course and send the swift-winged wind upon an errand. And all those strange things and secret decrees and unrevealed transactions, which are above the clouds and far beyond the region of the stars, shall combine in ministry and advantages for the praying man."

CHAPTER IV.

THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

MANY use the Lord's Prayer without observing the intimate connection between this petition and that which immediately precedes it. The connection between them is that of means and end. In the second petition we pray that God's Kingdom may come, "that ourselves and others may be brought into it and kept in it, the Kingdom of Satan be destroyed and that the Kingdom of Glory be hastened." These are the ends sought to be accomplished. In the third petition the *means* are suggested whereby these ends are to be secured, viz: by doing God's Will on earth, and the *standard* of obedience that is required in order to the complete coming of God's Kingdom—"as it is done in heaven." The complete coming of God's Kingdom or the establishment of his absolute and universal reign is dependent upon universal obedience to his will as its fundamental condition precedent. When men on earth yield to God the same cordial and ready submission that the holy angels in heaven do, and obey his commands with equal alacrity and delight, then it can be said that

the kingdom of God is fully come. The prayer for the coming of God's kingdom is therefore naturally and logically succeeded by another, intimating the means to be employed with which to cause it to come, and the nature of its fulfillment when it shall have come.

When we come to speak of the will of God we approach a very profound subject. There are many mysteries connected with it, and we are liable at every step to impinge against some impenetrable granite wall that will effectually arrest our further progress, or to plunge into abysmal depths which our measuring line cannot fathom.

The lofty mountain that conceals its towering summit amid the thick clouds and looks down upon us from such rugged and precipitous steeps as to preclude all hope of ever climbing to its top, may yet have a broad base resting upon the earth, around which we may walk and survey its extent and form some idea of its vastness. On its sides beautiful flowers may bloom which we may pluck, and from its foot purling streams may gush, from which we may quench our thirst. The ocean has depths which have never been fathomed, and an illimitable expanse which no surveyor's chain can measure. It is sometimes wrought up to such a tumultuous rage that no barque can survive its fury, yet it has shores and shallows where a child may bathe its little feet and amuse itself picking up shells. So the mysterious will of God, while it rises up far above all our thoughts, and exerts its irresistible power over all worlds, meeting with none who can dispute or comprehend it, yet, in the Scriptures, it often lets itself down to our feeble minds and presents to us phases which we can easily comprehend and fully appreciate. Let us, in the spirit of docile

children, sit at God's feet and learn from his revealed word what we may concerning this profound and awful subject.

We must distinguish between the *providential* and the *preceptive* will of God. The providential will is that eternal and unchangeable decree formed in the beginning whereby he brings to pass all the events of providence constituting the network of human history and personal experience. This will is, in an absolute sense, already done, inasmuch as all its objects are fixed and determined upon and will therefore infallibly occur in due time. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." This petition has reference to this unchangeable purpose, and asks that it may be accomplished; not as though there were any *uncertainty* attending it, but because many of its determinations are yet *future*, and we ask that we may be made willing to submit to it when it is done. We pray for a meek spirit that we may cheerfully acquiesce in it and not murmur against it, whatever it may be and however it may affect us. The providential will of God often crosses *our* wills and defeats our plans. It often brings upon us distress and affliction. Against these we are disposed to rebel, but this petition expresses the desire that we may be so prepared for these things that we will cheerfully submit to all adverse providences and afflictive dispensations which God's holy will may send upon us in the spirit of meekness and resignation. Being fortified with the antecedent assurance that the "Judge of all the earth will do right," we desire to be ready to accept his decisions in whatever form they may come.

Our Saviour, in putting this petition into our mouths, doubtless meant to intimate to us beforehand that such

events *are to be expected* under the providential government of God, and he would forewarn us to seek to be prepared for them. So that we ought not to think that some "strange thing" had happened when "fiery trials" befall us. They are not strange at all when we consider our circumstances in this world, the wickedness of our hearts, the strength and number of the temptations that assail us and the power of the Evil One. The wonder is, not that we have fiery trials, but that we do not have many more. It is due to God's amazing goodness that we have so few. We are, therefore, to prepare ourselves for adversities by faith and prayer, so that when they come we shall not be confounded with fear or amazement.

But it is to God's *preceptive* will that this petition chiefly refers. This differs from the providential will in that it is *revealed* to us in his word, while his providential will is kept concealed, for the most part, until it is discovered by the events which occur. God does not advise us beforehand what he is going to do in his providence, but commands us to *trust* him ; to wait and see ; assuring us in the meantime that whatever he may do will be right.

His preceptive will is revealed in the Scriptures, and constitutes the rule of duty ; and it is *this* will of God that the petition asks may be done on earth as it is in heaven.

The Scriptures are not *all* of God's thoughts and purposes. They do not claim to be a complete and exhaustive revelation of all that was in his mind. We do not know the whole mind of the Spirit. God did not, so to speak, empty his mind into his word. It contains only *so much* of his will as was necessary to inform man of

his duty, and constitute a sufficient guide to direct him how he might glorify and enjoy God forever. This much, and no more, of his thoughts and purposes he saw fit to make known. "These necessary things," he has laid upon us because they were demanded by the exigencies of our condition as fundamental prerequisites to the attainment of our highest good, and to enable us to promote his glory. These he inspired holy men to write out in the Scriptures, and calls them, by way of emphasis, his will. The word of God is his will, and is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify him and advance the coming of his kingdom among men.

This petition implies that man is naturally *averse* to doing the revealed will of God. Indeed, he is as prone to disobey God's revealed will as he is to rebel against his providential dispensations. It is the same recusant spirit in either case. He does not like God's precepts any more than he does his acts. His opposition is to the will of God *however* made known, whether in words or deeds, and he sins as truly in disobeying the written word of God as in rebelling against his providence. For God's word is as holy and as authoritative as his providence, and disobedience to *it* stamps us with the odious mark of rebellion as truly as repining under his dispensations. Indeed, the rejection of God's word is *more* criminal than rebellion against his providence. Unbelief is more heinous in his sight and a more aggravated offence than repining under afflictions. God's providential dispensations often fall upon us suddenly, without warning, startling us, and, as it were, throwing us off our balance by the unexpectedness of the blow. Calamities burst sometimes upon us like a clap of thunder from a cloudless sky, or like a beast of prey

springing from his ambush upon his unsuspecting victim. Ere we are aware of it we find ourselves involved in difficulties and trials which we can neither escape nor sustain.

It is not surprising, therefore, if under such circumstances, we should be confounded and need some time to collect our thoughts, recall affrighted reason back to its seat before we are able to adjust ourselves to our altered condition. God's ancient saints were thus sometimes startled out of their propriety by some unexpected development of providence which led them to speak "unadvisedly with their lips." Job "cursed the day of his birth" under the effects of sudden and repeated strokes of divine providence. Elijah prayed for death when he discovered that the providence of God did not advance the reformation in Israel as rapidly as he had hoped, and even the pious David "was envious at the foolish when he saw the prosperity of the wicked."

A sudden blow will throw any one off his balance and *stun* him so that time must elapse before he can recover himself and be able to say in the spirit of meek submission, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." But the revealed will of God does not burst upon us in sudden and terrifying explosions like the shout of an archangel or a blast from Gabriel's trumpet. It makes known our duty beforehand in clear, kind and gentle words, and to refuse compliance evinces a deliberate, wilful, intentional purpose to disobey. No excuse can be made for it, no palliating circumstances mitigate its heinousness. It is not a case of surprise or sudden temptation, not a weakness of the flesh or a Satanic assault, but a cool, premeditated, intentional rebellion against God's will after it is fully known to be his will.

This aversion to God's will is innate. It is the prolific source, the primordial root of all actual transgressions. Man is not willing to do God's will, however made known. Hence, Christ says, "If any man will [is willing to] do my will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself." This petition leads up to the fountain head of iniquity and discloses before our eyes the very origin of evil. From it we learn that evil entrenches itself in a perverted will—a created will rebelling against the divine will. Adam obeyed and enjoyed communion with God until the divine will, embodied in a positive precept, impinged against his will, and when will met will then came the tug of war. This conflict of wills caused that strange and disastrous anomaly to emerge denominated in Scripture *sin*. And in consequence of Adam's federal headship it has propagated itself throughout all his descendants and tainted all their blood. "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." Therefore, when we pray that God's will may be done we aim a blow at the very root of all unrighteousness and seek to overthrow the foundations of that kingdom of darkness which prevents the coming of the kingdom of God.

Man is not only averse to doing the will of God, but he is wholly inclined to do the will of the *flesh* and the will of Satan. Doing the will of the flesh does not necessarily involve gross immorality or flagrant acts of transgression. A person may, and many, in fact, do, obey the will of the flesh and still lead very decent and upright lives. Man's unsanctified nature is not necessarily bestial. It is often adorned with many beautiful virtues and sparkles with many a gem of real value. We can find in nature's wild forest many a beautiful, shapely

and faultless tree, and on the neglected heath flowers bloom that rival in beauty the choicest denizens of the cultured garden, and in her rude quarries are hid ores that rule in royal style the markets of the world. So we may find in human nature, though fallen and depraved, many relics of that former beauty which once made it a fit habitation wherein God himself might dwell. While obeying the will of the flesh, man may yet be following a guide that will lead him to do many things that are pure, lovely and of good report. But still it remains forever true that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God;" because the flesh is by nature corrupt, and a corrupt tree can never bring forth good fruit. The will of the flesh must ever be opposed to the will of God, and to obey it, even when its dictates are not positively evil, is at least "want of conformity" to the law of God and must result in coming short of his glory.

This proclivity in man to obey his own will in matters religious is one of the strongest passions of the human heart. This Paul describes as being "carnally minded," which he says is death—spiritual death or alienation from the life of God. Persistency in obeying our own wills is evidence, clear and positive, that we are yet unconverted and in our sins. We may have the "form of godliness," but this will show that we are destitute of its "power." No one can truthfully claim to be a child of God until he has learned in all things to subordinate his own will to the will of God.

Now, our Saviour, knowing that we are obstinately inclined to obey our own wills, and knowing, also, that so long as we do this the love of God is not in us, that until the divine will becomes dominant and we be willing to say from the heart, "Thy will, O God, not mine,

be done," we are exposed to divine wrath,—teaches us evermore to pray "Thy will be done on earth."

It is a great disgrace to man that he is so averse to doing God's will that he has to be *made* willing to do it. It is not only a great sin, but a great shame. For the will of God is the ultimate ground of all things. That will called all nature into being; garnished the heavens, and spread out the earth beneath our feet. It is at once the *raison d'être*, the life, the beauty and the glory of the universe. It is from that will, as manifested in his providence, and in his word, that we derive all that makes this life worth living, or that holds out to us any comfort or hope in that which is to come. And yet so ungrateful, so stupid and perverse is man that he is opposed to that will being done! He will not accept it as the rule of his conduct, bow to its commands, and strive to conform to its requisitions until he is made willing in the day of God's gracious power. Truly, man is the meanest, as well as the greatest, of God's creatures.

This petition also lays down the standard, or *measure* of obedience to God's will which is required in the words, "as it is in heaven." The obedience rendered by the holy angels is set before us as the model of what we should desire to see prevail on earth. In this respect they are our exemplars. That the holy angels do the will of God perfectly is evident both from the express testimony of Scripture and from the facts of the case. "Bless the Lord, ye his angels that excel in strength, that *do his commandments*, hearkening to the voice of his word." "Bless the Lord, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his that *do his pleasure*." "Thousand thousands ministered to him and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him." Our Saviour expressly calls them "holy".

angels, which could not be true of them if they were not perfectly obedient to and in harmony with the divine will. Besides, their dwelling "in heaven" attests their entire conformity to that will; for that pure and holy place, the place of God's immediate presence, must exclude everything that is in the least degree out of harmony with his will.

Moreover, man is to do God's will "as" they do it. This conjunctive particle cannot be understood as denoting *equality*, but only *resemblance*, for it is impossible for any "mere man since the fall in this life perfectly to keep the commands of God." We can only imitate the angels and aspire continually after their perfect and faultless obedience. Heaven is the type after which earth is to be modeled, the ideal which man must ever pray and strive to see realized on earth. Earth was indeed once a paradise, as pure and stainless as heaven now is, but sin entered, and it became a wilderness—cursed with thorns and briars, sorrow, suffering and sin. But God's word assures us that it shall be restored to its pristine order and beauty, transformed into a new heaven and a *new* earth wherein shall dwell righteousness. This grand consummation shall be attained when the will of God is done on earth as it is in heaven. "Then shall the wilderness and the solitary place be glad and the desert shall blossom as the rose."

It is also very evident that this petition—"thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"—pre-supposes and makes necessary the proclamation and *publication* of God's revealed will over all the earth. In order to be done it must first be known, for, as Paul says, "how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not

heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" Those who have not the will of God made known to them cannot be expected to do it. Their first requirement is to become acquainted with it, and in order to do that some one must be sent to carry it to those who have it not. This great duty the Saviour has devolved upon his church, saying, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," thus making it her duty while she prays, "thy will be done," not to sit idly down and wait for the world to become acquainted with God's will in some miraculous manner or expect men to do that will before they know what it is. She must take the blessed gospel, translate it into all the languages of earth, and carry it to all tribes and nations, saying to them, "This is God's will. This is the rule he has given to direct us how we may serve and obey him, and you must know what his will is before you can obey it. Receive it as the word of God and acquaint yourselves with it and do it, so thereby good shall come unto you and you shall find the way of everlasting life." This petition binds the church to preach the gospel and circulate the scriptures, and every time she utters it she commits herself to active missionary evangelistic effort.

Thus it will be seen that this petition points directly back to the coming of the kingdom of God, and when it shall have been answered it will constitute its glorious fulfillment. Thus the kingdom of God and the will of God interpenetrate and mutually contribute to each other's accomplishment. The coming of the kingdom of God will usher in the complete doing of his will and the complete doing of his will will be the complete triumph of his kingdom. The two are inseparable, going hand in hand as twin agencies, each vying with the other to

show forth the glory of God. And when that glory shall bathe the earth in the splendors of its noontide effulgence the kingdom of God and the will of God will shine forth as the grand agents in its accomplishment.

CHAPTER V.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

WE pass now into a new hemisphere. We cross the equator and come down from those high latitudes where our attention has been given exclusively to things heavenly and divine to the lower plane of human desire and personal necessity. We now begin to realize that the Lord's Prayer was designed for man, that while it is divine in its origin and authorship, it is intensely human in its application and use. Hitherto we have stood upon the mountain tops from which we could look out in all directions and view the kingdom and providence of God as they unfolded themselves in their mighty march down the ages. We have contemplated the Father which is in heaven. We have seen the name of God inscribed in letters of glory upon the banners of the universe. We have seen the kingdom of God rolling onward like Ezekiel's four wheels which were attended by living creatures who watched them as they revolved underneath a firmament, colored like the "terrible crystal." We have studied the will of God and we saw that it was the great impelling power in that kingdom, like the "spirit" of the living creatures in the wheels that directed and guided them in their onward movement. In brief, we have followed the three first petitions in their manifold ramifications and we have observed how

they expanded themselves out over the wide field of revelation and bound together the beginning and the end of time, as it were, with the strength of a three-fold cord. Now, in this fourth petition we recall our thoughts from their lofty flight, fold the wings of our imagination and come down by an apparently abrupt descent to contemplate the commonest object of everyday life—bread. "Give us this day our daily bread."

Let no irreverent tongue pronounce this a "descent from the sublime to the ridiculous," for bread is by no means a ridiculous thing. It is one of the great things of God as well as one of the prime necessities of man, and our Saviour does not lower the dignity or mar the spirituality of his prayer by associating bread with the high and solemn themes of God's Name, his Kingdom and his Will.

We beg, in the first place, to enter our protest against the too common habit of *spiritualizing* this bread and making it only a type under which are shadowed forth the gifts and graces of the Gospel as the food of the soul. Bread here, on the contrary, means *bread*, bodily sustenance and all forms of earthly and temporal good needed for man's support and comfort in this life. Bread is used as the *representative* of all temporal blessings and is therefore called the "staff of life." The other petitions in the Lord's Prayer sufficiently emphasize spiritual things, and since temporal things are too important to be omitted altogether they must be referred to under the term "bread," or else they are left out entirely. Indispensable, however, as bread is, the Saviour intimates to us by the subordinate place which this petition occupies that we must postpone seeking it until we have sought the kingdom and glory of God. "Seek ye *first* the king-

dom of God and his righteousness." The Name of God must be hallowed, the Kingdom of God sought, and the Will of God done before we are permitted to ask for bread.

It is assumed in this petition that man has *no right to bread*. It is the gift of God. Man has forfeited his right to it by sin. Indeed, he never had any right to it even in the state of innocence. For Adam and Eve, before they fell, could not claim as of personal right the bounties of Providence necessary to sustain their bodily life. These were God's bounties—the products of his creative hand. They were his then; they are his now, and ever will be his. God granted to man the *privilege* of using the productions of the ground and the flesh of animals for food, but he did not dispossess himself of his propriety in them, or confer upon man authority to claim them as his in fee simple. The grant conferred upon man in the state of innocence only gave him the right to *use*, not the right to possess, and when he disobeyed he forfeited even this imperfect right. Aye, his fall brought upon him a far more fearful disability even than this. By it he forfeited not only the right to use the bounties of nature but the right to *life* itself. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die." By that fatal act he divested himself of every privilege previously conferred, lost his birthright and turned himself out to wander over the earth an impoverished, disfranchised, ruined wretch, without the liberty to call even his life his own. The only right that he has left himself is the right to be damned and sent to hell.

The Psalmist clearly apprehended the extent and nature of man's rights before God, when he exclaimed, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy

sight shall no man living be justified." "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O, Lord, who shall stand?"

Men of the world talk exceeding proudly of human rights, the right to life, to liberty, to property. But what are human rights? They are simply the co-relatives of *duties*. Every right presupposes a corresponding duty. Man has rights as he stands related to his fellow men, but those rights are based upon his duties to his fellows, and when he fails in his duties his rights are forfeited. No one can claim a right unless he discharges the duty which corresponds to it. Man having failed in his duties to God has forfeited even those *privileges* (not rights) which God in goodness had granted him. The idle "tramp" and the discontented socialist who cry out against the distributions of God's providence say the world "owes" them a living and they intend to have it, peaceably if they can, forcibly if they must. But how so? How have they managed to bring the world in debt to them? What benefits have they conferred on society that entitle them to this heavy compensation? The world is God's providence, and can anyone confer benefits on providence? "Who hath first given to him and it shall be recompensed unto him again?" "Can a man be profitable unto God?" The claim of the socialist is contradictory and absurd. The reverse is true. The world owes him nothing. He owes the world to lead a virtuous and honest life, and earn his bread by the sweat of his face. He owes it to society to "study to be quiet, to do his own business and to work with his own hands, that he may provide things honest in the sight of all men."

It is a humiliating truth that man has now no right to even the common daily bread which is required to

nourish and sustain his animal life, and he is in this petition taught to ask God to bestow it upon him, as a special boon to which he can lay no claim whatever.

It is true, man works for his bread and it comes to him through the skill and effort he puts forth, but its coming to him through these instrumentalities does not make it any less God's gift. God does not feed man now as he fed the Israelites of old, with manna rained from heaven, or as he fed Elijah, by means of ravens. Man must use means appointed for obtaining bread; he must plow, sow, reap, and gather into barns, but still it is God who feeds him, nevertheless. He provides the soil, sends the early and latter rain, causes the seed to germinate and keeps in operation those chemical and agricultural laws without which all labor were fruitless. It is he who giveth man strength to labor and then crowns that labor with success. So that when bread comes to us through toil it is still as truly God's gift as if he were to bestow it upon us by a hand visibly outstretched from heaven. The instrumentality of intermediate agencies should not cause us to lose sight of the divine agency, and attribute our bread to our own efforts. This petition calls us away from that presumption and falsehood and bids us accept our bread from the hand of God.

Let it be carefully observed that in asking for our bread we are limited to "this day," "give us *this day* our daily bread." This prohibits *hoarding* and *storing* the good things of this life. We are not authorized to ask even for to-morrow's bread. "Take no thought for the morrow." We are not to imitate the conduct of the rich fool who filled his barns with fruits and goods laid up for many years; not because these goods are perishable and

will not admit of being stored, for many of them *will* keep. Many of them will keep even longer than life itself will last. The precious metals which are esteemed among the most desirable "goods" are well nigh imperishable and may be handed down from generation to generation. The prohibition refers to the hoarding and storing in themselves, because such accumulations prevent a proper feeling of dependence on God. Constituted as we are, it is well nigh impossible to have large stores of goods laid away and still cherish a due sense of dependence. With these stores constantly in the mind's eye, assuring us that our bread is already secured, what motive is left for offering this prayer for daily bread? Why ask for it when we have it already in abundance, laid up for many months, or perhaps years? The petition seems obsolete and the offering it a useless ceremony.

But the question will be asked what is a person to do when, in the exercise of due diligence, prudence and economy, the good things of this life accumulate on his hands? Shall he destroy them or give them away and confine himself strictly to a day's supply in order to render the petition always appropriate? Must we keep ourselves in poverty, and live from hand to mouth in order to save the Lord's Prayer? God often, in answer to the prayer for daily bread, gives *more* than daily bread. What is to be done with the surplus?

In answer to this question, let it be observed that this petition prescribes what we are to *ask*, not what God is to give. He makes it our duty to ask for daily bread, but does not limit himself to giving us precisely that amount. This is the rule by which we are to *pray*, and not the rule by which God binds himself to act. He always gives us more abundantly than we can ask or think, and

that which is over and above our daily necessities we are to hold as subject to his order, as not being strictly ours, but his. It is not to be hoarded to consume on our lusts, but kept by us as God's *stewards*. It is delivered to us *in trust*, to be distributed as he directs in works of charity and mercy. It is daily bread alone that we are permitted to call *ours* : all over that is God's. May he not store his goods in my barn? and does he not honor me in making me their custodian and his almoner? The earth is his and the fullness thereof, and surely if he sees fit to entrust me with the keeping of a portion of his goods, that gives me no right to claim them as my own or use them for my pleasure, especially since he has given me sufficient for my daily need. "Will a man rob God" by squandering goods which he has given him to keep for him?

In limiting man to a daily supply, and reserving all over that to himself, God does not deal with him illiberally or grudgingly, but precisely in accordance with the laws of his nature. A daily supply is all that he needs or can possibly use. He lives only in the present. He could not eat to-morrow's bread if it were given to him. He can use only a certain quantity in a given time, and if that quantity is furnished within that given time the demands of his nature are fully met. He does not feel to-morrow's hunger to-day, or realise next year's necessities this year. God has promised to supply our wants *when they arise* and not before they come, and if when they come the bread is always ready at hand to supply them, what more can we ask? When the Israelities gathered manna for each day it was sweet and good, but when they gathered more than a day's supply it bred worms and stank. God will supply us with *daily* bread

because he would not have us eat that which is stale, but that which is fresh ; so that the restriction instead of being illiberal or stinted is merciful and generous ; and instead of discouraging frugality and foresight it fosters both. For since we have but a day's supply common sense would dictate the duty and the necessity of taking care of it, using economy, wasting nothing. He who has but little cannot afford to be extravagant, and thus the necessities of man's condition harmonise beautifully with the meaning of this petition, and both combine to inculcate upon him piety towards God and virtue in the conduct of his affairs.

This petition, in the next place, teaches not only the duty of pious dependence on God, but it inculcates the true principle of *Christian stewardship*. From it we may learn in what light we are to regard our estates and on what principles we are to administer them. The Saviour, in teaching us to ask only for daily bread, doubtless meant to intimate that in all cases where *more* than that is given the receiver is thereby constituted a steward. He is entrusted with more than he needs, and the surplussage is not his but another's, and is to be employed in any way he may direct. Inasmuch as we are not authorised to ask for more than daily bread we should not consider ourselves authorized to *claim* more if it should be given. The necessary amount is ours, the surplussage is God's. Why is this surplussage given? What does God intend us to do with it? Does he mean to pamper his children? to nourish their vanity by furnishing the means for self-indulgence or ostentation? Will he thus put temptation before them, and, as it were, solicit them to evil? Has he not warned them against the deceitfulness of riches, the lusts of the eye, the lusts of the flesh and the pride of

life? Surely he cannot mean to ensnare them by giving them often so much more than their daily necessities require. What then can be his design in giving them this large surplussage? The design can be no other than this; he means to constitute them his stewards here on earth, and the gift of more than their necessities demand carries with it the implication that they are to use it for his glory. "Occupy till I come" is written on all over and above daily necessity,

Now, the actual surplussage of many of God's people is very large. Many have their barns filled and their presses burst out with new wine. Comparatively few are found who have only their daily bread. And when we contemplate the necessities of God's kingdom on earth we find them also to be large. The kingdom of God is a vast and costly enterprise, requiring immense expenditures of labor, time and capital for its support and propagation. It is to be diffused over all the earth until it encompasses all lands and subdues all nations to the obedience of faith. Large investments of capital are therefore necessary. Where are the means to come from? They are amply provided for in the large surplussage which God has entrusted to his people whom He has constituted his stewards. Did they but realise that their daily bread is all they can claim and all they dare to use, that all over that is a sacred trust committed to their hands to be disbursed in promoting his kingdom and glory on earth, the Church's coffers would be full, the needy supplied, the ignorant instructed, the gospel preached over all the earth, and the "end" would speedily come. But instead of using their surplussage for these purposes they employ it in adding house to house and field to field, in gratifying the appetites or

storing it away, to be wrangled over or squandered by those who are to come after them. They seem to forget that when calls are made upon them for means to aid the kingdom of God the demand is upon their surplussage and not upon those things which their daily necessities require. The natural covetousness of the heart prompts them to look upon *all* they have as needful for their daily support, and thus they convert God's surplussage, entrusted to their keeping, into daily bread. O, shame! "Will a man rob God? And yet ye say wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings."

Moreover, when we ask for our daily bread, it is implied that we desire God's *blessing* with it, "for man lives not by bread alone, but by every word of God." The blessing of God "maketh rich and addeth no sorrow therewith." This is necessary to impart virtue and efficacy to our bread to make it truly wholesome and nutritious. Without this, bread would have no nourishing value, as indeed none of the good things of his providence could prove helpful and serviceable to us without it. Everything would be stale, flat and unprofitable. With it the plainest and simplest fare becomes sweet, invigorating and nutritious. Daniel and his three friends lived on pulse and water, while the other courtiers of king Nebuchadnezzar feasted on the king's dainty meat, and yet, upon comparison, the former were fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children that did eat the king's meat. The blessing of God rested on that pulse and on that water and made them wonderfully nutrituous.

The christian custom of "asking a blessing," when we sit down to our tables to eat our daily food, is not an idle ceremony or a mere conventionality. It is based

upon an important religious truth and is a proper acknowledgment of our dependence upon God's blessing on the food, to make it safe, nutritious and healthful. He who ungratefully and unceremoniously seizes upon his food and devours it without "grace," need not be surprised if he becomes the victim of "dyspepsia," and for *this* cause as well as for an unworthy partaking of the Lord's Supper "many are weak and sickly and many sleep."

Indeed, a christian who receives his daily bread with thankful heart, as God's gift in answer to this petition, may see in it a *pledge of the fulfilment of God's gracious covenant*. In that covenant God binds himself to be a God to his people. This includes all they need or can desire. Among their necessities is daily bread. This is therefore included within the ample provisions of that covenant whose crowning gifts are glory, honor, immortality and eternal life. If God gives them the greater blessings, will he not much more give them the less? "He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

Therefore the believer may look upon his daily bread as an oft repeated, partial fulfilment to him of the covenant of grace and an earnest that all that is contained in that covenant shall in due time be his. It becomes a daily prophecy of future blessings and strengthens his hope that he shall hereafter eat bread in the Kingdom of God on high. The unbeliever, however, has no such promise connected with his bread. It is to him bread and nothing more. It has no federal character, contains no prophecy of living bread; is not an instalment of

covenant blessings, for being a man of this world he has his portion in life.

See the solemnity and importance with which this petition invests our daily bread. It sets it among the royal themes of God's name, his kingdom and his will, and makes it an integral element of that great Normal Prayer which has moulded the prayers of the church for eighteen hundred years. From this princely elevation it speaks to man of his forfeitures by the fall, of his dependence upon God, of his duties as a steward of God, of frugality and economy, of the value of the divine blessing accompanying its bestowal and of the certain fulfilment of the eternal covenant which God made with man in Christ. Truly then is bread, one of God's great gifts to man, and it is no unimportant prayer we utter when we say "*Give us this day our daily bread.*"

CHAPTER VI.

AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS.

IT deserves to be specially noticed that this is the only petition in the Lord's Prayer that our Saviour saw fit to deliver any comment upon. When he had finished the prayer he returned to it and, selecting this petition, said: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you."

For this two reasons may be given. (1.) He knew what was in man and how *difficult* it was for him to practice this duty. Our natural inclination is to harbor hatred and malice and to revenge injuries. This is illustrated in Esau, who, under the impulse of angry

feeling, determined to slay his brother Jacob for depriving him of his birthright. Indeed, all men feel the same desire, and it is an exceedingly difficult thing to suppress such feelings. Therefore, the Saviour would call special attention to this petition, and enforce its importance by reminding us that the neglect or refusal to discharge this duty would bring upon us our heavenly Father's condemnation. (2.) Another reason is that he would call attention to the fact that, *relatively to us*, this is the most important petition of all, inasmuch as the spirit of forgiveness must be in us before we can offer any of the others in an acceptable manner. We must ourselves be forgiven, and therefore willing to forgive others, before we can pray aright, because it is a well known truth that God *heareth not sinners*. The prayer of the wicked is an abomination to him, "for though he spread forth his hands he will hide his eyes from him, and though he make many prayers he will not hear." Therefore our own forgiveness and the proof of it evinced in our forgiving others, are fundamental prerequisites to the offering of acceptable prayer. The whole Lord's Prayer is rendered useless to us by the indulgence of an unforgiving spirit. These two facts make this petition one of prime importance to us. Let us study it, therefore, very carefully.

By "debts" are evidently meant *sins*, and they are so called because they bring us in debt to God's law. We owe to God the suffering of the penalty which his law denounces upon sin. That penalty is eternal death. This we owe to God. We are due him that much for having broken his law.

Our Saviour, in his comment on this petition, explains the word "debt" by the word "trespass." The two words are not precisely synonymous. A "trespass" is

that which brings us *into* debt, a debt is that exposure to punishment which is due to the trespass. A trespass is the evil *act* by which the debt is incurred, the debt the guilty *state* or condition which makes punishment necessary.

This is a debt which we can never pay. We cannot pay the least farthing of it. No creature can make satisfaction for sin. The lost in hell will go on paying this debt to all eternity, and never succeed in paying it all off.

The only way possible for us to get rid of it is to have it *forgiven*. Forgiveness to a sinner is a matter of indispensable necessity. The unfallen angels alone need no forgiveness. Man, being a sinner, must be forgiven, or perish forever. What, then, is forgiveness? It is simply remitting the penalty due to us for sin—taking it off and not compelling us to suffer it. How can this be done? Only through Christ or for his sake. He suffered for us in the flesh, bore the penalty due to our sins, and when we believe in him his sufferings are reckoned as having been borne by us, and we are discharged. The penalty is remitted to us and exacted of him. By faith the believer becomes united to Christ, and is one with him; so that, as there is no condemnation to Christ, there can be none to him, for the two are one. In Christ Jesus the believer is a “new creature;” old things are passed away, and he comes out from under the law, and passes under grace, in which there is no condemnation.

This is primary or original justification. This is what a *sinner* asks for when he prays for forgiveness. But, as it will be shown at a later stage of this discussion, this is not what a *believer* means or prays for when he uses

this petition. The person who is yet in his sins, under sentence of condemnation, asks that the penalty due to his sins may be remitted, and that the sufferings of Christ may be accepted as a sufficient atonement for them. This belongs to the very essence of salvation. Forgiveness admits of no substitute. We must have *that*; nothing less, nothing different, but that precisely. And it comes to us through the shedding of Christ's blood, for "without the shedding of blood there is no remission."

Now as regards the *extent* of this forgiveness, we must hold steadfastly to the belief that it is universal, covering the whole of a sinner's necessities, and blotting out all his sins, past, present and to come. This is the only forgiveness that will meet the exigencies of our case, and the only kind becoming the nature of God to bestow. A partial forgiveness is really no forgiveness at all; for if one sin, even the least, be left unforgiven, that will bring upon us the condemnation of the whole law, for he who "offends in one point is guilty of all." One leak will sink a ship; one unpardoned sin will destroy a soul. It is an unworthy conception of God to suppose he would do anything by halves. He is the Lord. His work is perfect. When he forgives he forgives completely, because the only ground on which he can forgive one sin is the same ground on which he forgives all sin. The forgiveness of one sin demands the whole merit of Christ's sacrifice, and the forgiveness of all sin could demand no more. When God takes it in hand to pardon a sinner at all, he does it completely; he justifies him freely from *all* his sins, and blots them all out, so that there are left no charges against him at all.

But while this doctrine may be clear in reference to

past and present sins, it does not seem so clear in reference to *future* sins. How can future sins be forgiven? Can they be blotted out before they are committed? and if they are, why is the believer required to pray daily for forgiveness! Paul explains this apparent incongruity for us when he teaches that the believer is no longer under *law*, but under grace. The one act of forgiveness puts him in a state of grace and salvation in which sin is not *imputed*. "Where no law is there is no transgression, and sin is not imputed where there is no law." What then? Does Paul teach the doctrine of human perfection, or that a believer by being under grace *cannot* sin? No. For he testifies that there is still a "law in his members warring against the law of his mind, bringing him into captivity to the law of sin." Sin remains in even the ripest believer, but the glorious privilege of a gracious state is, not that a person does not sin who is in that state, but that sin is "not imputed" to one who is under grace. It is not reckoned against him. He is not charged with it. It is regarded as having been already atoned for in the sufferings of Christ, his substitute. The sins which believers commit shall not be suffered to nullify the act of pardon already passed, or provoke God to recall it. Their pardon is ratified and settled forever, so that they shall never come into condemnation any more. Hence, we say, when a *believer* offers this petition daily for the forgiveness of sin it is not implied that the primary act of justification is forfeited or withdrawn. He is not asking for a renewal of his original justification, but that God would renew to him daily the *evidence* of his original justification and help him to cherish a lively constant realization of it. Daily sins bedim the evidence of our acceptance with God, shut out from us

the comfortable view of his reconciled countenance and throw us into darkness and doubt. We ask him to remove this darkness, to lift upon us again the light of his face, and cause the evidence of our acceptance to shine in our hearts and not suffer our daily sins to deprive us of the joys of his salvation or cause him to withhold from us the comfortable presence of his Holy Spirit. Far be the thought that the daily use of this petition implies the forfeiture of the original grant of pardon bestowed when we first believed, so as to require any renewal, much less a daily one.

What a believer needs and what he prays for in this petition is that God would keep the evidence of his forgiveness clear in his mind, and not permit his daily sins to provoke him to withdraw from him the shining of his reconciled face, so that he would not be able to read daily his title clear to mansions above. Hence David prays in the fifty-first Psalm, "Restore unto me"—what?—his original justification, now supposed to be forfeited by his great sins? No. But "Restore unto me the *joys* of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit." David had not lost his original pardon, but only the *evidence* of it, the "joys" of it, and it is this he prays may be restored to him.

This prayer is, therefore, when used by a believer, a prayer for *assurance* of pardon and not for a repetition of the original formal act of justification. Justification takes place when a person first believes, and cannot be repeated. It was full and complete the moment it was granted and what we want now is the daily evidence of that fact. We deprecate the misery of our daily sins being permitted to deprive us of the *comfort* and the *strength* arising from the conscious assurance of our

forgiveness, and, therefore, we pray that God would give us an *abiding sense* of it, that we may be daily filled with peace and joy.

That this is the true meaning of the petition appears from the *argument* by which our Saviour teaches us to enforce it—"as we forgive our debtors." The comparative particle, "as," does not imply the *measure* of the forgiveness we desire, or assign a *reason* why God should forgive us. We do not ask him to forgive us *in the same way*, or to the same extent that we forgive others, nor do we ask him to forgive us *because* we forgive others. Human forgiveness is no rule by which God can be governed, nor do we wish to be forgiven in the imperfect and often unwilling manner in which we forgive others. The true meaning of the word, "as," is *since*. Forgive us our debts *since* we forgive others. We have forgiven others, or do forgive them, therefore *assure us* of our forgiveness. Forgiving others is indeed an evidence that we are ourselves forgiven, but we ask the Lord to give us more and more evidence, make it clearer and brighter. Leave us not to rest upon this evidence alone, but send the Holy Spirit to bear witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.

If the Saviour here were teaching us to ask for a renewal of our forgiveness, or a repetition of the formal act of justification, the forgiveness of others would not be a proper argument whereby to enforce the appeal. The only plea that would be pertinent in that case would be the free grace of God or the blood and righteousness of Christ. This is the only ground on which justification is in any case bestowed, and, therefore, it would have to be the argument here employed. But as that is not the argument here used, but one entirely different—viz,

that we forgive others, it cannot be original justification that is here asked for.

Besides, this is the prayer of a believer, and every believer is *already* justified, since there is "no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." Original justification is not what he wants, for he has it. It is the *evidence* of it that he asks for, since that is all that his daily sins can deprive him of.

Our Saviour teaches us that God will not afford us evidence that we are forgiven until we furnish our fellow men evidence that we have forgiven them. We must not expect to receive what we are unwilling to give, and the best evidence we can give others that we forgive them is to lay aside all feelings of resentment and show them the same kindness as though they had not injured us at all. This will prove to them that they are forgiven, and when we have proved that to them, then we may hope God will manifest our forgiveness to us. The importance of a forgiving spirit cannot be overestimated. It is an indispensable condition of God's forgiving us. It is the test of true discipleship and the evidence of conversion. "*By this shall men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*" "My little children, *love one another*, for love is of God. He that loveth not is not of God, for God is love." It is highly important also to observe that if we offer this petition while cherishing an unforgiving disposition towards others, we really imprecate divine vengeance upon ourselves! We ask God to forgive us *as* we forgive others, while in reality we do not forgive them at all, and therefore we ask that he would *not* forgive us! How terrible this prayer becomes to us if we are unforgiving!

Our Saviour says, "if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him, and *if he repent*, forgive him." From this it has been inferred that the duty of forgiving injuries is suspended upon the condition that one repents and asks forgiveness. But this is easily shown to be a false inference, because it would authorize us to sit in judgment upon the sincerity of another man's repentance, and justify us in withholding forgiveness until we were satisfied that his repentance was genuine. But where does any one obtain such authority, and how can any one determine such a question? We cannot read the sentiments of the heart, and we are forbidden to judge. If we refuse to forgive, we are guilty of judging and condemning also. We usurp a divine prerogative and become "judges of evil thoughts." The Saviour has also said in another place, "When ye stand praying *forgive*, if ye have aught against any," making the duty imperative and unconditional.

Again he says: "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Now if a duty is even once made imperative and unconditional, it cannot afterwards be made conditional, especially if the condition is one so easily misunderstood and so likely to be abused. Therefore, it cannot be true that our Saviour meant when he said, "if thy brother repent, forgive him," to make the duty of forgiving injuries depend upon the fact of professed repentance.

He, no doubt, referred in these words, not to *personal* injuries, but meant to inculcate the duty of the *church* toward an erring brother. The church should require of an offending brother evidence of repentance before she

receives him back to her fellowship. By virtue of the authority conferred on her by her Lord for the edification of her members, she has the right to "rebuke" an offender, and if he refuse to heed her admonition, she may exclude him from her fold and regard him as "an heathen man and a publican." She may, in the language of Paul, "deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." But if this exercise of salutary discipline be sanctified to him, and he return again unto her, saying "I repent," she shall forgive him and restore him to fellowship.

Individuals, however, must not suppose that because the church has the right to require repentance as a condition of reconciliation and restoration to her fellowship, *they* also may demand of an offending brother repentance before they will forgive.

Forgiveness of injuries, as a personal duty, is imperative and no unworthiness in the person who may have inflicted the injury can at all justify us in withholding it. To refuse to forgive is virtually to judge and condemn; but this is God's prerogative, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord."

Nor can it ever be regarded *dishonorable* to forgive a personal injury. The wisest of men has said, "The discretion of a man defereth his anger, and it is his *glory* to pass over a transgression."

The so called "code of honor," which demands the resentment of injuries, is a relic of barbarism, an outrage upon morality, a disgrace to civilization and an absurdity in its very nature. How can anyone maintain his honor by committing murder? and how can anyone escape the charge of murder who deliberately endeavors

to destroy the life of another? His exposing his life to be taken by his adversary is no defence against the charge, for the deliberate destruction of human life under any circumstances, except in self-defense, lawful war, or in the administration of public justice, is murder. And if my *honor* is offended how can the exposing of my *life* to destruction be accepted as its proper defense? If my life is lost what becomes of my honor? Of what use can it be to me then? I cannot leave it as a *legacy* to my friends, for if they have none of their own they would shine but poorly in the imputed honors of another. Honor is a personal quality inherent in the soul and it must attend the person wherever he goes, as an inseparable adjunct of his individual identity. Posthumous fame or the aroma of a virtuous and useful life, which lingers behind a man after he has left the world is indeed a priceless thing. For "a good name is to be chosen rather than great riches;" but the memory of an otherwise upright life cannot survive long in company with the dark and repulsive associations of blood and slaughter. A name associated with these things must soon sink into the same grave with its possessor, and honor purchased at such a cost is not worth the price paid to secure it.

Duelling is, in every aspect in which it can be viewed, not only a heinous crime, but a transparent absurdity, and it could never have become fashionable among civilized men but for the deep depravity of the human heart, instigated and misled by the delusions of the devil. Instead of being an evidence of courage it is a proof of cowardice, and of the want of that lofty self-control which subdues angry feelings and subordinates a perverted public sentiment to the priceless principles of

truth, justice and philanthropy. Morality and religion are too precious to be sacrificed at the demand of injured pride. God has said, "thou shalt not kill," and no "code of honor," or fear of public odium, or pride of wounded feelings, no injury or insult can justify the transgressions of that eternal law.

Nor can the forgiveness of an injury by any means imply *approbation* of the act. We may forgive a person who has injured us and yet charge his offence close home upon his conscience, as Joseph did to his brethren. "And Joseph said unto his brethren, come near to me I pray you. And he said I am Joseph, your brother, *whom ye sold into Egypt*. Now, therefore, be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that *ye sold me* hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life. As for you *ye thought evil against me*, but God meant it unto good."

And the protomartyr, Stephen, while being stoned to death by his cruel enemies "kneeled down and prayed, saying with a loud voice, Lord, lay not *this sin* to their charge." In these cases a clear distinction is drawn between the *injury* itself and the *persons* perpetrating it, and while it is repudiated and condemned as an evil and a sin, only kind and charitable feelings are expressed towards those committing it. Do you say this is a distinction hard to draw? So it is. And it can only be drawn by those whose minds have been enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, whose wills have been renewed and whose hearts have become a temple for the Holy Ghost. It is the very distinction which God makes in regard to all whom he justifies and saves. He condemns their sins and charges them close home upon their consciences, but delivers their souls from the penalty due to them through the mediation of Christ. He hates and

punishes the offence but pardons and saves the offender.

We need grace in our hearts to qualify us for the discharge of a duty so difficult and yet so important, and that grace is to be obtained from God in answer to prayer. Therefore let prayer be ever associated with forgiveness, for Christ has joined the two together, and what he has joinder together let us never put asunder.

CHAPTER VII.

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION; BUT DELIVER US
FROM EVIL.

THIS petition is related to the one preceeding it very much in the same way that the doctrine of sanctification is related to that of justification. In justification the spiritual life of the soul is begun, but it encounters in its very inception hostile influences that set to work immediately to effect its destruction. The life of God in the human soul is like an exotic transplanted from a distant climate into an uncongenial soil, where the surroundings are all adverse to its continued life and growth. These hostile influences must be counteracted and sanctification is the powerful operation of God's Holy Spirit applying the fruits of the death and resurrection of Christ to the soul, whereby they are prevented from hindering its growth. In the preceding petition we have the beginning of the soul's new life presented in connection with the doctrine of forgiveness, but this petition advances a degree beyond that and brings to our notice this new life in its growth and development. It points out two great obstructions which impede that growth, temptation and evil, and suggests the means

to be employed to counteract them—prayer. For a justified man, though he be secured against final condemnation, is nevertheless still exposed to many evils and enemies, which require him to exercise the utmost vigilance in order to make his calling and election sure.

The special hindrance to sanctification and growth in grace indicated in this petition is *Temptation*.

Temptations are of two kinds. (1) *Trials* which God suffers to fall upon us to discipline and strengthen our graces, and (2) *Solicitations* to evil, which come from Satan, the world and our hearts. The former we should not deprecate, but rejoice in. "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience." "Glory in tribulations also knowing that tribulation worketh patience and patience experience." It is not to these that the Saviour refers when he teaches us to pray "Lead us not in temptation." He would not have us desire to avoid those corrective measures, and those disciplinary agencies which are appointed to train our powers and harden them into the vigor of spiritual manhood. The Grecian athlete kept his body under and brought it into subjection by strict temperance, rigid self-denial and painful mortifications, testing his strength daily, before he could gain that "mastery" in the Olympic games, which was the goal of his ambition. He did not shrink from this painful discipline, but, on the contrary, he sought it and cheerfully practised it, complied with all its rules, and submitted to all its exactions, as the only means of developing his manhood up to the highest vigor and efficiency.

So God has ordered for the Christian adversities and fiery trials which constitute a training school in which

his faith and all his graces shall be *tested* in order that they may grow and become strong. These, though not joyous but grievous, are not to be deprecated, but borne with manly fortitude on account of Him who imposes them, and for the sake of the beneficial results they produce. Our Saviour does not refer to these, but to those solicitations to evil which assail us from Satan, the world and our sinful hearts.

By this interpretation, however, we encounter a difficulty which will readily suggest itself to a thoughtful mind. How can God, who is holy, just and good, be said to lead his people into temptations of this kind? And if *he* leads us into them, how can it be proper for us to pray against them? God is not the author of evil, it is true, but still under the orderings of his providence events occur and circumstances arise which become the *occasions* of sin to us. The events and the circumstances are in themselves considered simply as events and circumstances, holy, just and wise. They are the orderings of God's providence, but by reason of the sinfulness of our hearts and our extreme susceptibility to evil, we pervert them and make them occasions to sin. God leads us into these circumstances, causes them to arise around us as we pass along through this life, but he does not incite us to pervert them, or lead us to make an evil use of them. The events and circumstances are God's, parts of his providential administration, the abuse of them is ours.

David was "envious when he saw the prosperity of the wicked. But the prosperity of the wicked was an event of God's providence, and surely he has the right to prosper the wicked if he sees fit to do so; but that did not authorize David to become envious. God

caused him to *see* their prosperity, and his *own heart* led him to envy it. In this way God may be said to lead us into temptation when in his providence we are surrounded by such circumstances as our evil hearts are disposed to make the occasions to sin. He is not implicated at all. His holiness is untarnished, and the guilt is wholly our own.

He may be said to lead us into temptation, again, when he suffers us to be assaulted by the tempter and yet withholds from us the aids of his grace, whereby our compliance with the temptation might be prevented. God is sovereign in the bestowal of his grace, as well as in the dispensations of his providence; and if at any time when we are tempted to evil he should not bestow upon us grace and strength sufficient to resist it, he is only doing as he pleases with his own.

It is, indeed, true that God is faithful and will not suffer his children to be tempted above that they are able, but will, with the temptation, make a way to escape. But this promise does not guarantee complete immunity from temptation altogether. The promise is that they shall *escape*, not from the temptation itself in every instance, but from the fatal effects of any temptation into which he may permit them to fall. If under the temptations of the Evil One they fall into grievous sins, he will not abandon them and leave them to perish, but will make a way for them to escape.

The question before us, however, is not how we may escape *out* of temptations when once in, but how it is that God leads us into it? In the Scriptures God is often said to do what he only *permits* to be done. He is said to have "hardened" Pharaoh's heart and to have done "evil in the city;" but such language can only be un-

derstood negatively or permissively, that he permits these things or does not prevent them. So when he is said to "lead us into temptation," the meaning must be he permits us to be tempted or does not prevent us from being tempted. He suffers the enemy to assail us, and withholds for the time his gracious aid, so that we fall. We were not vigilant, and did not call on him for assistance, and he suffered us to yield.

He will indeed strengthen us to resist Satan, but we must not neglect to ask Him to do it. He will be "inquired of" to do this thing for us.

Peter's case is an illustration, both of how God leads us into temptation and of the way he brings us out and enables us to escape. Peter became self-confident and relaxed his vigilance. Satan, who is ever on the alert for opportunities to entangle the Christian in the meshes of evil, seized the occasion and tempted him to deny his Master. He yielded and fell. Christ, however, was watching His erring disciple, and, seeing his danger, prayed for him, and through His merciful intercession Peter received grace to enable him to escape the fatal effects of his fall by a timely repentance. His faith did not "fail" utterly, but only grew cold, and sank into a temporary state of suspended animation, from which it afterwards was restored when he was able to strengthen his brethren.

How much are Christians indebted to the watchfulness and love of their exalted Redeemer! They become lukewarm and negligent, cease to watch and pray against temptation, but their wily and malignant adversary who "as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour" sees that they are off their guard and assails them and causes them to sin. But he who

keepeth Israel and never slumbers nor sleeps is watching also. His eye is upon the prowling adversary and when he sees one of his children taken unawares by the tempter and assaulted with a strong temptation under which he is about to fall, He rushes to the rescue, and by his prevalent intercessions affords him aid and defeats the machinations of the enemy.

How many such deliverances Christ affords his people in their earthly pilgrimage no one but Himself can know. How many snares he breaks, how many skilfully contrived plots and cunning devices laid by Satan for their destruction which he counteracts and saves them from, eternity alone will reveal. When from the shining mansions in heaven the redeemed saint can look back over earth's pilgrimage and see the strange path by which he was led, how many hairbreadth escapes he made, how often his foot had well nigh slipped and he was almost gone, in how many places he trod as it were on the very edge of some fearful precipice over which he would have stumbled and fallen, but for the aid of some friendly unseen hand that held him back--when he looks back and sees all these things with what boundless gratitude and raptures of delight will he throw himself at the feet of his great Deliverer and exclaim: "Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever."

In view of the manifold dangers which lurk along our pathway, the susceptibility of our hearts to evil and the plottings of our great adversary, how appropriate and how needful becomes the petition "Lead us not into temptation?" We ask in this that God would not suffer us to pervert or abuse the events of his providence

which arise around us so as to make them occasions to sin. Or if under the powerful assaults of the great adversary we should abuse them and fall into sin, we entreat God not to abandon us in the hour of temptation, but make a way for hour escape. Leave us not to struggle alone and unaided with this powerful foe, for he is too strong for us. Without the help of God we shall be led captive by him at his will.

We are not authorized to ask God to exempt us from trials altogether for these things must "needs be." These are fatherly chastisements which our waywardness renders necessary. "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons, for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us and we gave them reverence, shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of Spirits and live? For they, for a few days chastened us as seemed good to them; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness."

Temptation in the form of solicitation to evil arises from three sources; Satan, our hearts, and the world. Satan is called by way of preeminence, "the Tempter." He is called also Apollyon, the Destroyer. Ever since the fall of Adam he has made it his chief occupation to tempt men to sin. To accomplish his designs he employs all manner of devices and subtleties to seduce man from the service of God. He tempts the fool to say in his heart "there is no God." And when he fails to suppress the innate conviction of the being of God, he caricatures him and misrepresents him as a "hard master," who imposes useless restraints and burdensome

duties, too grievous to be borne and too irksome to be discharged. He insinuates that it is a vain thing to serve God, and that it is more becoming in man to give free license to his appetites, to follow the desires of his heart, to eat, drink and be merry, regardless of the future. And if these plausible subtleties should be resisted by some remaining dregs of conscience, he has recourse to furious assaults by which he would overwhelm man and drive him into infidelity and atheism. He sometimes injects blasphemous thoughts into the mind of a christian, by which he would induce him to deny the Lord that bought him and renounce the gospel as a collection of crude vagaries or "old wives' fables." With these "fiery darts," he would inflame the soul and "set it on fire of hell." To attempt to think down these horrible suggestions or reason them away is madness. The soul is overwhelmed by them, the brain staggers and reason is for the time carried, as it were, by storm. Man feels himself to be a helpless captive in the hands of an irresistible foe. The only weapon that can be successfully employed against them is *faith*; that impenetrable shield wherewith an apostle tells us we may quench the fiery darts of the wicked one.

Another device equally dangerous, though less shocking to the soul, is his gilding over the foulest sins with fair names. With bewitching sorcery he infuses a fatal imposture into the force and significance of words. Indifference to divine things is decked with the fair name of candor or impartiality; unbelief is only another name for manly independence; extravagance is only generosity to one's self; covetousness is frugality; intemperance is but a freak of sociability, and sensuality only a form of gallantry. Thus with meretricious ornaments

vice is clothed in the garb of virtue, and unwary thousands are lured to ruin.

But who can fathom all the *depths* of Satan? His superhuman sagacity has been so sharpened by over six thousand years of experience, his malice so intensified by the curse of God which ever rests upon him, and his diligence so stimulated by the knowledge of the fact that his "time is short;" that we may regard him now as complete master of all the devices whereby the souls of men may be ruined.

Many temptations also proceed from our hearts. Being deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, many solicitations to evil *originate* in the heart and, coinciding with the will of the tempter, he encourages them by his approval and incites us to carry into action what we have ourselves conceived. His agency oftentimes consists only in urging us on in the evil course upon which we had already entered, and fastening more securely upon our minds the impression that our purposes are pure and right. Christ teaches that "*out of the heart* proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." These are not always Satan's suggestions, but originate with ourselves, and when once conceived the disposition is strong to bring them forth into overt acts. "When lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Unless there is a counteracting agency restraining these evil desires born within us, and stifling them in their inception, they will precipitate us into actual transgression. "Keep thy heart, therefore, with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." Temptations origi-

nate there, and daily prayer should be offered to God that he would not suffer our hearts to lead us into temptation.

The *world* also furnishes many temptations for us. Its good things and its evil ones alike become temptations. Prosperity is a snare to many and leads to pride, while adversity causes murmur and repining. Constituted as we are *anything* may prove a temptation, and when we look out upon the world and contemplate the constitution of society, its customs, its amusements, its joys and its sorrows we see them all beset with temptations. Behind and before, all around on every hand temptations bristle, like ten thousand spears, ready to pierce us wherever we turn. We are beset with them. Every class and condition of men is exposed to their assaults. The old and the young, the rich and the poor, the wise and the ignorant, the weak and the strong, the happy and the miserable, the men of high degree and the men of low degree, all, all, need daily to pray, "Lead us not into temptation."

To this prayer, our Saviour adds another, "but deliver us from evil." Some regard this as a separate petition and would number it as the *seventh* of the Lord's prayer. But, from a very early period the Christian Church has agreed to look upon it as only a part of the sixth and to consider the Lord's Prayer as containing only six petitions. Whether we regard these words as a separate petition or not, does not appear to be important. Perhaps it may be sufficient to consider the words "deliver us from evil," as only *another form* of expressing the meaning contained in the words "lead us not into temptation," the one a negative and the other a positive form of expressing the same thought. This was a com-

mon idiom among the Jews, in Hebrew writings, as is abundantly exemplified in the numerous parrallelisims to be met with in Scripture, used to express the same idea in different words. In both forms of expression we ask for substantially the same thing. The "evil" from which we ask to be delivered, is the evil of temptation or evil temptation or temptation *to* evil. For all temptation is not evil. God sometimes tempts us to try us, as he did Abraham. Such temptations are for our good. They work patience. From these we are not to pray to be delivered, but from evil temptations or temptations to evil, such as Satan, our hearts and the world bring upon us.

With the petition, "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," the Lord's Prayer closes. What follows in the words, "For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever, Amen," is probably not a part of it, but was added subsequently by the Church for liturgical purposes. The reasons for this opinion are, (1) it is omitted by Luke, (2) it is not found in many of the most ancient versions of the New Testament, (3) all the most eminent critics from Erasmus down, reject it, (4) it is not found in the Vulgate or Latin versions of Jerome, and for that reason is omitted in many cases in the Episcopal Prayer Book. It is entirely scriptural however, being almost a literal quotation from I. Chronicles 29:11. It assigns reasons why we may hope to be heard in all the foregoing petitions. We may expect God to hear us because the Kingdom is his. He has infinite resources. All power is his and all the glory shall be his. All the honor that accrues from his name being hallowed by men, his kingdom coming, his will being done, his people being supplied with daily bread,

and their being kept from temptation—all the honor and the glory resulting from all these will be God's. To which we devoutly append our solemn "Amen," or wish that all may be done. "Amen is the bow which shoots the arrow of prayer."

Now, if we cast our eye back over the Lord's Prayer, and view it as a whole, we cannot fail to be astonished at the number, variety and importance of the topics which it embraces. In the brief and very imperfect survey we have taken of its teachings, we have seen that many of the most vital doctrines in theology as well as the most solemn practical duties of Christian life and experience have passed under consideration. It is indeed a compendium of truth in which the germs only are expressed of what might be expanded out into volumes. It contains all we can ask from God. The fulfilment of these several petitions will bring to man all he can desire on earth or hope to enjoy in heaven.

Let us guard against mere *repetitions* of the Lord's Prayer. It is too significant and too solemn to be trifled with by being used as a charm, or converted into an instrument of superstition. It brings us face to face with God, and should move our souls to their profoundest depths whenever it finds expression from our lips.

