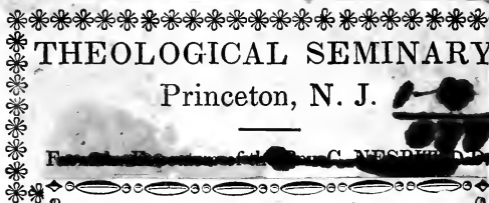


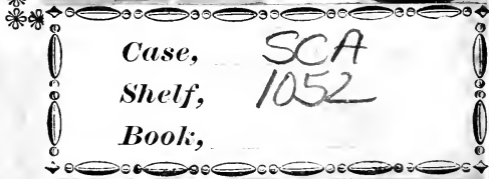
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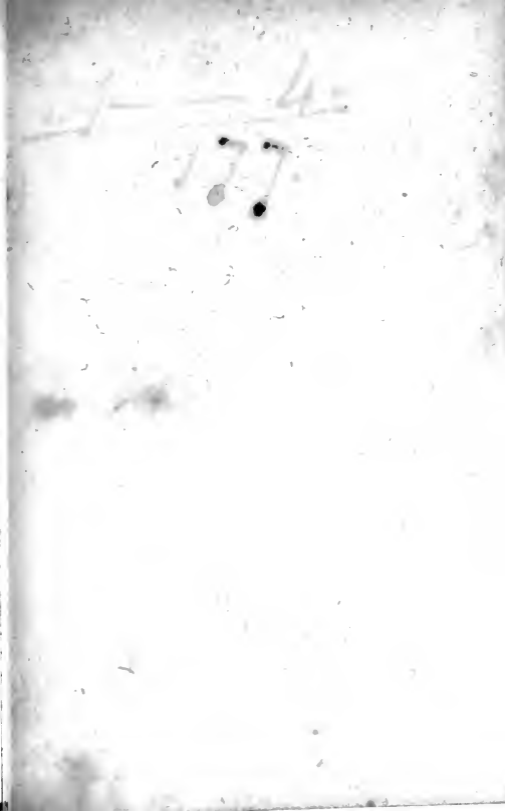
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OUR FATHER

OR

CONSIDERATIONS RELATING

TO

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

PHILADELPHIA:

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THE LORD'S PRAYER.

CHAPTER I.

The Lord's Prayer a Model, not a Form.

You were taught to repeat the Lord's Prayer before you were able to understand it. You used to kneel down by your mother's side and repeat it, when you could scarcely utter a word of it distinctly. As you grew older your parents tried to explain to you the nature of prayer, and to teach you to make known your desires unto God in your own language. And they tried to explain to you more and more the meaning of the Lord's Prayer, which you still continued to use. You are now old enough to study

it and to understand it fully. To aid you in so doing I have written the following pages.

The Lord's Prayer is recorded in the sixth chapter of Matthew, and the eleventh chapter of Luke. It is given in Luke in a condensed form.

Luke gives us an account of the occasion on which it was given by our Lord to his disciples. It appears that at a certain time and place he was praying in the presence of his disciples. When he ceased, one of his disciples said, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." It is not known who the disciple was that made this request. Perhaps he was one of the twelve—perhaps he was one who had recently become a disciple, and felt the need of instruction in relation to prayer. It is not certain whether he intended to ask for a form of

prayer, or simply for instruction on the subject of prayer. Our uncertainty in relation to this is a matter of no consequence. We have the prayer before us, and what chiefly concerns us, is the instruction it was designed to convey.

It was not the intention of our Lord when he gave this prayer, to teach the doctrine that written forms are necessary to acceptable prayer. No such doctrine is taught in the Bible, nor does the Bible afford any example of the use of written forms.

The advocates of prelacy contend that none but written forms of prayer should be used in the public worship of God; that we should never pray without a book. They read over the same prayers, Sabbath after Sabbath, and no prayer can be offered unless it be found in the book. If any extraordinary calamity

visit the people, there can be no public prayer for its removal, till the authorities of the sect have proposed or approved a form. The pestilence may be sweeping men away, but the minister on the Sabbath must not pray that it be staid, till his diocesan* sends him a prayer. Is this reasonable? Does God require me to abstain from prayer till it is convenient for a fellow sinner to compose a form for me to read?

You have been educated, thus far, in a church where there are no such shackles in the way of approaching unto God. You are descended from ancestors who would not be tied to a book, when they wished to pour out their hearts in prayer. One of the causes which led them to this western world, was the desire to be

* An Episcopal or Romish bishop.

free from the burdens of forms and ceremonies, for which they found no authority in Scripture.

That our Lord did not intend to give a form to be adhered to on all occasions; that he did not intend to teach the necessity of forms, appears from a variety of considerations.

If the Lord had intended to teach that written forms were necessary, he would have left an example of the use of them himself. Mention is often made of his praying, yet never of his using the Lord's Prayer, or any other form. On one occasion it is said that he went up into a mountain, and continued all night in prayer to God. No further account is given of his supplications at that time, but is it probable that he spent the whole night in repeating the Lord's Prayer, or any other form of words?

When he offered the prayer for his disciples, which is recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John, it is plain that he had no book before him. He prayed for those things of which his disciples, in their peculiar circumstances, had need.

The prayer which he offered at the grave of Lazarus, was not a precomposed form. It was suggested by the circumstances of the occasion.

There was no prayer-book in the garden of Gethsemane. He there poured out before his Father the feelings which oppressed his soul. True, he thrice repeated the same words, but they were not words which were then written in a book.

So far then as the Saviour's example goes, it is wholly in favour of extempore prayer. His prayers were always suited to the circumstances of the occasion on which they were offered. This could not

have been the case had he made use of previously composed forms. If we follow the example of the Saviour, our prayers will be adapted to the various circumstances of our condition, and hence must be extempore; for it is impossible to prepare a book having prayers adapted to all the circumstances in which we may be placed.

You may in the course of your life become acquainted with those who are very zealous for the use of prayer-books; and they may bring forward much in their favour, from the Fathers, about whom, you as well as they, may know very little. Be content with the knowledge of the fact, that the church to which you belong follows the example of Christ in this matter.

There is no proof that the Lord's Prayer was ever used in the public worship

of God by the apostles and early Christians. No mention is made of its use by them on any occasion. In every instance in which prayer is mentioned, the connexion plainly shows that it was not after any written form.

The first notice of prayer by the apostles after the ascension of Christ, is found in the first chapter of Acts. They were proceeding to ordain an apostle in the place of Judas. Having appointed two persons, they prayed, saying, "Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place."

The prayer here offered was adapted to, and suggested by the occasion. It was not precomposed and read out of a

book. And so in every case in which prayer is mentioned in connexion with the apostles, there is no notice whatever of a written form; so far from this, in every instance the circumstances related render it certain that the prayers offered were extempore.

There is no proof whatever, that the Lord's Prayer was used as a form, so much as once by any church in the first century. There is no proof whatever that any thing like a prayer-book was then in existence. In the early persecutions suffered by the Christians, their books were collected and burnt: mention is made of the Scriptures, but none whatever of prayer-books. They were not known till after the church began to become corrupt.

In the third century the Lord's Prayer was used in the public worship of Chris-

tians, and as corruption increased in the church, it began to be regarded as possessed of peculiar sanctity, and its frequent repetition to be considered as peculiarly meritorious.

CHAPTER II.

Our Father, which art in Heaven.

THE design of the Lord's Prayer is thus expressed by Chrysostom, a distinguished minister who lived in the fourth century. "He gives us a form of prayer, not that we may confine ourselves to this alone, but that as a fountain we may draw from it the thoughts of which our prayers should be composed."

Entertaining this view of its design, I shall proceed to consider the different parts of the prayer.

Our Father.

We are taught to address the "Creator of all things," the "great and dreadful God," by the endearing name of Father. When men address the kings of the earth, they are required to make use of the loftiest titles. "His Majesty," "The Sovereign of the world," are among the titles by which it is customary to address some who are clothed with a little brief authority. Even in our republican land, "*His Excellency*" is a title often applied to the President of the United States, and to the Governors of the several States.

But Jehovah, the King of kings, allows us—yea, requires us to address Him by the tender name of Father. What amazing condescension! I wish you to consider it. You have used the expression so often that you do not comprehend the fulness of meaning it contains; you

do not feel the wonderful kindness and condescension which it brings to view.

Suppose a poor ragged boy had been picked up in the street by Gen. Washington, and clothed and fed by him, and told to come to him for all that he wanted, and to call him father. Would that not have been wonderful condescension on the part of Washington?

But all that would be nothing compared with what God has done for you; with what He is now doing for you. He takes a poor, blind, naked, starving sinner, and supplies his necessities, invites him to come to him for every thing which he needs, and tells him always to call him Father. O, the amazing kindness and condescension of God!

God is our Father. This is a doctrine which is taught by the Bible. Were it not for the Bible we should never learn

it. The existence of God can be learned from his works. We survey the earth, and the sun, and the stars, and we infer that they must have had a cause, that there is in existence a Creator; and when we examine the wonderful manifestations of contrivance every where apparent, we conclude that he is possessed of power and wisdom, that he is very powerful and wise. But is he good? Does he care for us? Will he be our Protector and Friend? Will he be our Father? These are questions which reason can ask, but cannot answer. That he is good, that he will be our Friend and Father, that like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him, these glorious truths are made known to us by the Bible alone.

When we pray, we are to say, "Our Father," but we are not to use these

words as a mere form. There are certain feelings without which we cannot address those words to God without sin. We must have towards God those feelings of respect and affection and confidence which a child has towards a kind and noble parent.

As God is more excellent than any parent, these feelings should be of a deeper and stronger character than those which are felt towards any parent. With the profoundest reverence, with the warmest gratitude and love, with the most entire confidence, we should come into the presence of God and say, "Our Father."

This is a great and difficult lesson to learn, but it is a blessed one. There is no joy on earth like that which a sinner experiences, when with proper feelings of heart, he can look up to heaven and say, "My Father."

I knew a boy who was early taught the way of life, who early felt that he had a soul to be saved. He used to go often into a grove to pray. Once his companions found him there and ridiculed him. He declared that while he had a soul he would never be ashamed to pray. A revival came and his spirit was deeply moved. He retired more frequently for prayer. One day he came into the house and said to his mother, to the unutterable joy of her heart, "Mother, I can say, Our Father;" meaning that he was now conscious of possessing those feelings which rendered it proper for him thus to address the Lord. That boy became a preacher of the everlasting gospel.

Reader, can you say, "Our Father?"

Do you answer, "Not with the feelings which I ought to have!" Why not? Is

he not willing that you should call him Father? Certainly he is. But you do not feel right. Why do you not? Is there any reason why you should not reverence, and love, and confide in God? Are there not abundant reasons why you should do so? You love your parents because they are your parents, because of the care they have taken of you, and the affection which they have shown you. But your parents did not create your body. They did not give you a mind to think, or a heart to feel. The relation that you sustain to God is far more intimate than that which you sustain to your parents. All that you receive from your parents you receive from Him, for he gave you your parents. If you owe them affection for what you received from them, much more do you owe it to God.

I once asked a boy, Who took care of

him, and gave him the good things which he enjoyed? and he said, His father, meaning his earthly father. I asked him where the water came from, that gushed up in the fountain near us. He said that it came out from under the rock. I asked him what made it come out from under the rock? He said that it came from a higher place. He could see this, but he could not see that his blessings, received through his father, came from a higher place.

A father gives his boy a basket of apples, and the boy is thankful for them; the same father plants a tree for his boy, and it bears him a great many apples. Are not these a gift of the father as much as the former ones were? Is not the son under just as much obligation to be thankful for them?

Every thing which you enjoy comes

from God, and calls for gratitude and love. The character of God is such that he is worthy of our deepest reverence, and love, and confidence. We are formed to love the beautiful and sublime in nature, and the beautiful and lofty in character. Now all conceivable moral excellence centres in God. We may fail to see this, and we may fail to love him, but there can be no excuse for us.

If we approach God and call him our Father, not only must our feelings at the time be in accordance with the expression of our lips, but our daily conduct must be in accordance with it. If God be our Father, then must we be zealous for his honour and for his interests.

You are very zealous for the honour of your earthly father. It gives you pain, perhaps makes you angry, to hear any one speak unkindly or disrespectfully of

him. You are ready to resist every effort to injure his interest in any way.

If God is your Father, you ought to be very zealous for his honour. When you hear him lightly spoken of, when you hear his holy name profaned, it ought to grieve you sorely.

You ought to be very careful of his interest—to be ready to do every thing to promote the interests of his cause on the earth. You should never injure his cause yourself, nor suffer it to receive injury from others if you can prevent it. All this you engage to do when you kneel down and say, “Our Father.”

If God is your Father, then are you his son, and your conduct must be in keeping with that fact. The son of a Governor must not be seen in low company, nor engaged in mean pursuits, for he would thereby disgrace his father. Much

more should a son of God so conduct himself as not to bring dishonour on his august Father. By addressing God as your Father you engage to act worthily of the high relationship involved.

Perhaps you will say, "I did not know there was so much meaning in those words; it requires a great deal to be able to say, 'Our Father.'"

I know it does, but then there is nothing required but what is reasonable; nothing but what conduces to your highest happiness.

How delightful to have a Father who has the riches of the universe at his command, in whose hand are all the energies of nature, the lightning and the pestilence; and who can thus shield us from all harm, who knows all our wants, temporal and spiritual, and who has declared that he will withhold no good thing from

those who walk uprightly! Such a Father God offers to be to you.

Notice the expression "*Our* Father." You are not told to say, "My Father," but "*Our* Father." This expression reminds us of the relation which each Christian bears towards all other Christians. Each Christian is a member, a part of the one body, of which Christ is the Head. Christians are members one of another. A very intimate relation exists between them. When we address God as our Father, we recognize this relation, and pledge ourselves to the performance of the duties arising from it. Those duties are a brotherly love to all who belong to Christ, and a brotherly interest in their welfare.

God looks upon the performance of these duties, upon sympathy and succour given to his people, with great favour.

He says that whoever does to one of them so small a favour, as giving him a cup of cold water because he belongs to Him, shall in no case lose his reward. And further he says, that he looks upon every favour shown to the meanest Christian as shown to himself.

If Christ were on earth you would love to do things for him, to minister to his wants, and to comfort him. You can do this for him just as well as if he were upon the earth in person. By relieving the wants and contributing to the comforts of his people, you are doing what he regards as done to himself.

I once knew a physician who was very careful to attend on all poor Christians who wished for his services. He seldom received any thing from them in return but their gratitude and prayers. He regarded them as the most profitable

patients he had. He remembered the words of the Saviour, "For as much as ye have done it to the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." If he was not paid in this world, he was sure he should be in the next.

Which art in Heaven.

When our translation was made, it was according to custom to use the relative pronoun *which* in referring to persons. It is in accordance with the present usage of language to say, Our Father, *who* art in heaven.

Why was the phrase "who art in heaven," added? "In order that we might connect nothing earthly with God's heavenly majesty." We are to call him Father, but we are to remember how infinitely he differs from an earthly father.

This expression, "who art in heaven," seems to remind us of this.

It may also properly remind us that this world is not our home—that our Father's house in which there are many mansions, is in heaven.

We are told by the Saviour that he has gone to prepare places for his people, and by and by he will come and conduct them to the mansions which they are to occupy for ever. Has he gone to prepare a place for you? Do you expect to have a place in your Father's house above? It is a great thing to have a father's house to dwell in on earth; but what is that, compared with having a home not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; a Father's house in heaven, to which you may repair when you have passed as an hireling your day! O, if one has a good home in heaven, it mat-

ters little whether he has or has not one on earth. Many a houseless wanderer on earth has a mansion ready, a glorious home prepared for him in heaven.

CHAPTER III.

Hallowed be thy name.

THE first petition which we are instructed to offer is not for worldly prosperity, nor even for the salvation of our souls. It has reference to God. We are told to pray first of all that God may be revered, that his name may be honoured; for this is the meaning of the phrase, "*Hallowed be thy name.*" It is to be the first and supreme desire of our souls, that God may be honoured; this is to be the first subject of prayer.

If we have this desire we shall ap-

proach unto God in prayer with great reverence. Holy men in all ages have been remarkable for the reverence and awe with which they have come into the presence of God. The angels are represented as veiling their faces in His presence, and crying "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts." If the angels come into his presence with fear and trembling because of his awful holiness, much more should sinners such as we are.

If we have any just views of our own sinfulness, and the purity of the Divine character, we shall come into his presence with self abasement and godly fear.

When you see men affect great familiarity with Jehovah, you have reason to fear that they have a very imperfect knowledge of his character and of their own. I am always afraid for those who mistake familiarity for fervour in prayer;

who use the name of God as they would that of a mortal. Some true Christians, I doubt not, being led astray for a time by a zeal which is not according to knowledge, may be guilty of this sin. But in general, true piety is connected with, I had almost said, consists in, reverence for God. This is what is commonly meant by "fear of the Lord," which occurs so frequently in the Bible.

In order that you may hallow the name of God in prayer, you should never engage in that duty without preparation.

If you were going to ask a favour of the President of the United States, you would not rush into his presence in a careless or boisterous manner. You would prepare yourself to come before him, and set in order what you intended to say. You would show him all the signs of the most profound respect. And all

this would be proper and right. But should you come into the presence of God more carelessly than you would come into the presence of the President?

See to it that you make preparation when you come before God in prayer. Be deliberate; consider his holiness and greatness; the guilt of mocking him by drawing near with the lips while the heart is far from him. Thus will you be aided in hallowing the name of the Lord, in coming into his presence "with reverence and godly fear."

Again, you must always treat the name of God with great reverence when you use it. It should never be used except when necessary, and then with great seriousness and fear. Some persons form the habit of repeating that holy name too frequently in prayer, and thus fail to hallow it. Newton, the great astronomer,

never used the name of God, without making a reverential pause. Imitate his illustrious example.

Again, you must not only avoid profanity, but use your influence to prevent it in others. If it is painful for you to hear it, and you do not conceal your feelings, many will be restrained from profanity in your presence. But this silent disapprobation is not all that you are to show. You are to rebuke those who sin thus openly. I do not say that you are to rebuke every person that you hear swear. You must consider whether it is proper in the circumstances of the case, and whether it will be likely to do more good than harm.

It is always proper for you to reprove your companions for swearing, and if they do not cease from it, they must not

be your companions. You must not willingly associate with those who wantonly insult your Father who is in heaven.

Sometimes it is proper for a young person to reprove this vice in one that is older than himself. But this can commonly be done to the best advantage indirectly. I will give you an example of what I mean. There was a boy who was travelling with his parents, and became acquainted at a hotel at which they stopped, with a stranger. He was a polished man, but he swore dreadfully. The stranger took a liking to little Robert, and offered to take him to see the water-works in the vicinity. Robert wished very much to go, but declined the invitation. "Don't you wish to go?" said the stranger.

"Yes, sir, very much," said Robert.

“I have asked your father, and he says you may go. What is the difficulty then?”

Robert hesitated for a moment, and said, “I don't like to go with a man who swears so.”

The stranger blushed, and said, “You are right, my boy; go with me, and I will not swear a word while we are gone.”

Robert then went with him, and had a very pleasant excursion, much more so than if he had not preferred to forego it, rather than hear God's name dishonoured.

There is a class of expressions which many use without much thought, which ought to be avoided because they savour of irreverence for God. I mean such expressions as “good gracious,” “mercy on us,” and the like. All such expres-

sions are wicked, and should be wholly avoided.

Again, you must hallow God's name in the sanctuary. When you behave with levity and indecorum in God's house, you are guilty of insulting God. A great many fail in this respect. I have seen a great many young persons who, one would think, had been brought up to know better, whispering and smiling in God's house, and looking about with an air of idle curiosity, instead of seriously joining in the worship of God. Sometimes I have seen them asleep. Now would they behave thus if they were in the Governor's house? Would they go to sleep in his presence, while some one was delivering a message from him to them? Certainly not. They would have too much respect for the Governor to do so. Where is their respect for God?

There is another way in which the guilt of irreverence is contracted. It is by quoting Scripture in a light and trifling manner. Some attempt to show their wit by making ludicrous applications of texts of Scripture. I have known some good men who indulged in this sinful habit. I presume they did not see it in its true light. Never make a quotation from Scripture except in seriousness or for some good purpose. Never laugh or in any way express approbation, when you hear the Scriptures used with levity or profaneness. The Bible is God's word. Trifling with it, is insulting God.

I have thus pointed out several ways in which men fail to hallow the name of God. All these, and all other ways of doing the same thing, you promise to avoid when you offer the petition, "hallowed be thy name."

CHAPTER IV.

Thy Kingdom come.

THIS is the second petition of the prayer under consideration. It relates to the kingdom of God, and not to ourselves and our own interests, except so far as they are blended with the kingdom of God. We are not to ask blessings for ourselves, in the first, in the second, nor in the third place. We are to pray for God's honour, for the advancement of his cause, and the doing of his will, before we pray for any private blessings.

This is reasonable. It is reasonable that God and his cause should be served before ourselves and our petty interests.

This direction is in accordance with the promptings of true Christian affection. It is natural for the heart to pray first

for that which it loves most. The true Christian loves God with all his heart, and soul, and strength, that is, with his highest affection, and hence he is led to pray for his honour and his cause, in preference to his own wants and interests.

It was not designed to teach that in every prayer, we should preserve the order here laid down. It is often proper to confine our prayers at a given time, to a particular topic. Examples of this have been brought to notice on a former page. It is proper when prayer is offered in the public assembly, to offer petitions, in an order differing from the one above considered, even as circumstances and the feelings of the heart shall suggest. But the objects which should be first in our estimation, and which we should desire above all others, are those which relate to the honour and glory of God. If

a man cannot pray for these objects, he cannot pray at all.

Perhaps when this prayer was first given, the phrase, "thy kingdom come," had especial reference to the introduction of the Christian dispensation. However this may be, we may now properly understand it as having reference to the spread of the gospel throughout the earth. That God's kingdom may come in this sense, that the gospel may be preached to all men, and that they may receive it and obey it, is to be most fervently desired by every follower of Christ.

Do you thus fervently desire the coming of God's kingdom? Does your heart rejoice when you hear of the progress of this kingdom; when you hear of revivals, and of increased efforts to publish the glad tidings?

Are these not strong reasons why you

should desire this? Consider that the world belongs to Christ. He has bought it with his own blood. Ought he not to have that which he purchased at so great a price? Ought he to be kept out of his possession by the great enemy of righteousness?

Suppose your father had worked very hard, and had purchased a piece of land, and a wicked man refused to give it up to him. You would feel indignant, and would earnestly desire that your father should have that which he had purchased at the expense of so much toil. You would be willing to employ any lawful means to put him in possession of his own.

Now this world belongs to Christ, and was purchased by toil and blood. If you love him as you ought, you will earnestly desire that he should have that which

he has purchased, and you will use all lawful means to put him in possession of his own.

One of the divinely appointed means of doing this is prayer. This is a means which you cannot use too much. By prayer you may help to put the Saviour in possession of his own.

Again; consider the condition of the world—the miseries of the heathen—the sighing of the oppressed—the bondage of sinners. Consider that the roll of this world's history is written within and without, with mourning, and lamentation and woe. Consider that this cruelty, and degradation and misery would be at once removed by the universal prevalence of the gospel. Is not this motive strong enough to move a feeling heart to pray “thy kingdom come?”

But there are other means of promo-

ting the coming of Christ's kingdom besides prayer. One is the giving of money to send the missionary and the Bible, to the heathen and destitute. If we care for God's cause as we ought, we shall cheerfully give as the Lord has prospered us. There is no one who cannot give something, though it be but a single penny. The poor widow whom Christ saw casting her two mites into the treasury, might have said she had nothing to give, with far more propriety than any one who reads this book can. Yet she practised self-denial and gave a farthing. Christ commended her, and caused her example to be recorded for the imitation of all coming time.

Sometimes young persons say, "I can give so little that it wont do any good. I have but a few cents, they wont buy a Bible or anything else. I will therefore

spend them for something that I want myself."

Suppose the poor widow had reasoned in that way, and had bought a dinner with her two mites, instead of casting them into the treasury of the Lord, would she have gained the approbation of Christ? Would she have been happier? I think not.

Again, you have no right to say that the small offering you may make will not do any good. That rests with God, and you know not his plans and the extent of his power. He often uses the weakest instruments for the accomplishment of the greatest effects. He may so order it, that the few pennies of the poor, self-denying, praying Christian, may do more good than hundreds of dollars, given in ostentation by a rich Pharisee. Our Lord said that this poor widow had cast

in more than they all. That was God's estimate of the value of her gift, and he had power to make it accomplish more good than all the other gifts which were cast into the treasury.

The duty of giving does not depend upon the greater or less amount of good which will be done. It rests on the command of God, and the question should be, what does God wish me to give? To be sure, the probable amount of good may be considered, in order to determine God's will. But we should feel the obligation to give, whether the prospect be dark or bright, for God has commanded it.

He has also fixed a reward to it. The Lord "loveth a cheerful giver." Men do a great many things to make people love them. It were wiser to do that which will make God love them.

God hath said, "it is more blessed to

give than to receive;”—and again, “give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give unto you.”

The way to be happy is to form the habit of generous benevolence. The way to provide against future want, is to lend freely unto the Lord, for it will surely be repaid, and just in the way which infinite wisdom sees fit and best for the individual concerned.

To pray, thy kingdom come, and not *give*, is as absurd as to say to a poor person, “depart in peace, and be warmed and filled,” and yet not give him the things needful to those ends.

There are other means besides prayer and alms-giving, for the spread of the gospel and the upbuilding of Christ's cause. Every time you strive to do good

on right principles you promote the coming of Christ's kingdom. Every day furnishes some opportunity of doing good. Now you can show kindness to that weary traveller for Christ's sake; now you can set an example of Christian forbearance before that ungodly man; now you may give a word of reproof and warning to that bold transgressor; now you may, by acts of kindness, win on that Sabbath breaker, so that you can induce him to come to the house of God. Every day furnishes opportunities of doing good to those who will rightly employ them.

But perhaps you may say, "I am young and feeble. I cannot do any good if I were to try. I have tried, but never saw that any good followed my efforts."

To this I answer, that when God or-

ders us to do a thing, it makes no difference whether we can see any good to come from it or not. We are under obligation to obey. But then God in great kindness has so ordered it, that our labour in doing good is never lost. "Inasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Labour in the Lord, that is, labour to do good, performed in obedience to God's will, is never in vain. It will accomplish just what God wills it shall accomplish, and what pious heart desires more? If God causes my labours to accomplish just what he wills they should accomplish, I ought to be content.

It is a great privilege and source of happiness to labour for Christ's cause. It causes one to feel that there is something worth living for. All Christians are labourers together with God, in car-

rying out his glorious plans and purposes respecting the redemption of this fallen world. It is a noble work, it is one in which we have a glorious master and co-worker, and one in which we are sure of glorious results.

Remember, that when you pray, "thy kingdom come," you engage to give and to labour for the object for which you pray. Every morning you should ask, "What can I do for the cause of Christ to-day?"



CHAPTER V.

Thy Will be done.

SOME think they have made great progress in religion if they can submit to God's will when their own will cannot be

gratified. Submission, true submission, is not acquiescence with what cannot be helped; it is a cordial desire that God's will should be done in preference to our own.

It is reasonable that we should have this desire, and say, "Thy will be done." God knows the end from the beginning. He worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will. He has declared, that he will cause all things to work together for good to those who love him. His will must therefore be better for us than our own; therefore we should desire that it should be done instead of our own.

A good child submits to the better judgment of his earthly father, and shall we not cheerfully submit to the better judgment of our heavenly Father!

I have shown that it is reasonable for

us to prefer the will of God to our own, but I do not mean that I have given the chief reason why we should do so. The chief reason is not because it will benefit us to do so. The obligation would be the same, even if it were not true that He will cause all things to work together for our good. We ought to desire that God's will should be done because it is holy, because he is God. Our love to him should be so strong, that our will should be lost in his. You know that we prefer the feelings of those we love to our own. This is the nature of pure and strong affection. If we love God supremely, our affection will lead us to "know no will but his."

There is a great deal of false submission, or rather there is a great deal that does not rest on the true foundation. The Psalmist understood it, when he said,

“I was dumb because thou didst it.” If God has done a thing, that is reason enough for our cheerfully submitting to it. A widow once lost her only son, the stay of her declining years. Her friends gathered around her, and strove to comfort her. Various topics of consolation were offered, various reasons were set forth, why she should be submissive. She listened to them for a time, and then said, “There may be reason in what you say, but I can’t feel it. If it were not for one thought, I could not bear my trouble. *God has done it*, and I am content.”

O the blessedness of the man who can say in regard to every thing that takes place, “God has done it, and I am content!”

When we pray, “Thy will be done,” we engage to do that will ourselves, and to do all in power to induce others to do

it. We cannot pray aright unless it is our purpose to render obedience to God in all things—unless to do his will is our meat and drink, that is, the great and most interesting object of our lives.

To do and to suffer the will of God is our great business here below. In order to do his will we must know what it is; and in order to pray in the right spirit, we must earnestly desire to know what is the will of God, what the Lord would have us to do. A great point is gained when it becomes a matter of inquiry every day, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" When this is the case, then the Bible will be studied, and the leadings of Providence carefully observed, that we may determine what duty is. Then shall we attain to the true idea of a religious life.

Some suppose that religion consists in

certain acts of devotion, and praise, and occasional efforts to do good. They do not know that every act of our lives is, or ought to be, a religious act; that every act performed in obedience to the will of God is a religious act. We are bound to have reference to the will of God in every act. "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." When a man is doing at a particular time what God would have him to do, he is performing a religious duty. At one hour God would have a man engaged in prayer. If he prays then, he is performing a religious duty. At another hour God would have a man labour diligently in his calling. If he labour thus then, he is performing a religious duty. The great thing to be aimed at, is always to be employed just as God would have us employed. Then we are always safe and

no evil can surprise us. Some hope that death when it must come, will find them praying. There is no reason why they should desire to be found praying, rather than performing some other duty.

Chief Justice Hale was once holding a court, and a terrible thunder-storm came up. The heavens grew so dark, and the lightnings were so vivid, and the thunder rolled so loudly, that the lawyers and all who were in the court-room, except the judge, fled in terror. After the storm had passed, they returned and found the judge had been busily engaged in matters pertaining to the cause. One expressed his surprise, and said, that he verily thought the day of judgment had come.

The judge replied, that he did not think the day of judgment was come, for there remained prophecies yet to be ful-

filled, but if it had been so, he was just where he would wish to be found, *engaged in the performance of duty.*

We are to pray that the will of God may be done on earth as it is done in heaven. Now his will is done perfectly in heaven—and thus we pray that it may be done perfectly on earth.

What a change would be effected in the condition of this world if the will of God were perfectly obeyed. We have a beautiful earth; the materials of happiness to a race of holy beings are most abundant. It is sin that has caused this world's history to be written in tears and blood—it is sin that has made the earth one vast charnel-house. If God's will were done on earth as it is done in heaven, earth would be almost transformed to heaven. Remember that every time you exert an influence, tending to lead

men to render obedience to the will of God, you are doing that which tends to transform this earth to heaven.

Of all the ways that you can promote the happiness of others, there is none so effective and lasting as inducing them to do the will of God. You put into their hands a key that unlocks the treasures of the universe.



CHAPTER VI.

Give us this day our daily Bread.

HAVING prayed for things connected with the glory of God, and the interests of his kingdom, we are next allowed to pray for ourselves. We are taught to pray for such things as are necessary to

the continuance of our existence. By the term *bread*, is meant all those things which are necessary to our subsistence and comfort. For all such things we are authorized to pray—not for superfluities and luxuries.

And we are to ask for them only as we have need of them; we are to pray for our *daily* bread.

We must therefore feel our dependence upon God for our daily bread. Some feel this when they have no visible means of support, but not when they have property at their command. But they are in truth just as much dependent at one time as another. Suppose one has his barns and his store-houses full; unless he has health so that he can partake of his daily food, those stores will be of no use to him. For that health he is dependent upon God. So that after all he is just as

much dependent upon God for the continuance and comforts of his life, as is the beggar who gathers his food from door to door.

When we feel our entire dependence upon God for any thing, then shall we pray for it. Hence in order to cherish the spirit of prayer, we must meditate upon our condition, so that we clearly perceive and feel our dependence.

As God furnishes the means of preserving our lives, as he gives us our bread, it is as easy for him to give it to us day by day as in any other way. He has directed us to ask for it in this way, that we may be kept in remembrance of our dependence, and may enjoy the pleasure of recognizing daily the tokens of his affection.

You love to receive presents from your parents. You value them not only

for their worth, but as tokens of parental love. Now you should look upon every thing you enjoy as a token of your heavenly Father's love. Would not this habit add greatly to your joy?

While we thus feel our dependence upon God, and pray to him for our daily bread, we must not neglect the proper means of procuring it. To ask God for it, and not use the means for obtaining it, is tempting God; a sin severely rebuked in the sacred volume.

When we have prayed in the right spirit, and put forth the exertions in our power, then we are to trust to God and lay aside all anxiety in regard to the means of our support. Our bread shall be given us, our water shall be sure, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it. It is sinful to indulge fears with respect to our future wants during our pilgrimage.

We have a rich Father whose tenderness towards us the tongue of an angel could not describe. We have his promise that he will take care of us. We have therefore nothing to do but trust in Him. Many have done so, and there never was one disappointed.

We are unwilling to rest on God's word alone. We feel more secure if we can see where our support is to come from. We would aid faith a little by sight. But it is safest to trust in God. We may not be able to see how he will take care of us. *As thy day is, so shall thy strength be*, is his word, and we all ought to trust it with a firmness that the removal of the foundations of the earth could not shake.

We are authorized to ask for that degree of spiritual nourishment which we need for the day, and we are not author-

ized to ask for more. Many do not understand this. They contemplate some Christian grace and are conscious that they do not possess it. They find that some have shown themselves ready to embrace the stake, and they know that the test of discipleship is to be willing to give up all for Christ, property and life. They pray for the state of mind evinced by the martyr; and their prayers are not answered. In other words they pray for the grace of martyrdom, and it is not given. They then perhaps are in distress, through fear that they do not come up to the terms of discipleship, for, say they, unless a man is willing to give up all that he hath, he cannot be Christ's disciple.

Now the error here lies in misapprehension of the true test of discipleship. A man must be willing to give up his

property or his life, if God requires it, or he cannot be a disciple. But he need not be willing to give up what God does not require, or when he does not require it. The question is, are you willing to give up all that God now requires you to give up? If you are, you meet the conditions of salvation.

In regard to a martyr's grace, rest upon the promise "As thy day is so shall thy strength be." If God shall call upon you to breast the flood, or embrace the flame, rely on him for strength to do so.



CHAPTER VII.

Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our debtors.

We now come to a very solemn part of the prayer under consideration. Forgive

us our debts, our sins. We are all sinners, and therefore all need forgiveness. There is no way by which we may atone for our sins. We can give nothing to God which is not already his. We can do no good thing which it is not already our duty to do. We must therefore have mercy shown towards us, or must suffer the punishment of our sins.

The law requires perfect obedience, perfect holiness on the part of man. It declares that any and every act of disobedience shall be followed by punishment. The strictness of the law can never be relaxed. The law is holy, just and good, and to change it, were an act of injustice. God himself cannot change the moral law, or fail to execute its penalty.

It may be said, that those who make the laws can change them,—why cannot

God change the laws that he has made? He can change some laws, such as those pertaining to forms and ceremonies, but he cannot change right to wrong, and wrong to right; he cannot command men to sin, and forbid them to be holy, because his holy nature is a law to himself; in other words, because He is holy. The Bible says, it is impossible for God to lie; the reason is, He is holy. For the same reason he cannot change the holy law, nor omit the penalty in case of violation.

Sin is the abominable thing which Jehovah hates. If no suffering or disorder were to take place in consequence of sin, still his holiness would lead him to be its avenger. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne." He can never show mercy, till justice is satisfied.

Sinners have often very inaccurate ideas of the character of God. They

think, that because he is said to be merciful, he can show mercy without regard to justice; that he can violate his solemn declaration, "the soul that sinneth it shall die." They thus make him an imperfect being, "altogether such an one as themselves."

Do you believe that your father, when he has solemnly promised to do something, which he is fully able to do, will do it? Is there more reliance to be placed on a parent's word, than on the word of God?

There are scarcely any who deny that they have need of mercy, but some think they can induce God to pardon them, by doing better in time to come. They think they can merit pardon by future obedience. But they forget that the law requires perfect obedience at all times. Suppose you are required every day to pick

up just as many apples as is possible. But to-day you are idle. To-morrow you will pick up as many as you possibly can. But you will then only do what is required of you that day, and can, therefore, do nothing towards the neglected work of to-day. So if the sinner should render perfect obedience to the law in future, it would not make amends for his past transgressions.

He can do nothing to merit forgiveness, and yet he must receive it, or be lost forever. If he receive it, since he cannot do the least thing to merit it, it must be of grace, a free, unmerited favour. But how can a just God show mercy when he has declared that every transgression shall receive a just recompense?

You know the way in which God can be just and yet justify the sinner. Christ has died to make atonement for sin, and

when the sinner exercises repentance and faith in him, his sufferings are accepted by divine justice in the sinner's stead, and his righteousness is imputed to the sinner.

Now in order that one may pray for forgiveness, he must know and feel that he is a sinner. He must not only know that he is exposed to punishment, but he must feel conscious of guilt: Do you know what it is to feel conscious of guilt; to feel that you are guilty? Remember it is one thing to know we have sinned, and to be afraid of punishment, and another to feel a sense of guilt. Without this sense of guilt, there is no such thing as true repentance—no such thing as acceptable prayer. In order to repentance, there must be a sense of guilt, and sorrow for sin for its own sake. Many mistake here. They know that they are sinners.

They see their danger, and are alarmed, and are sorry they have sinned, but not with a godly sorrow. They are sorry, because of the consequences to which sin exposes them, not because it is the abominable thing which Jehovah hates.

I can illustrate the two kinds of repentance in the following manner:—A boy disobeys his father. He is afraid of punishment, and, therefore, is sorry that he disobeyed. If he were sure that his father would never find it out, or if he were sure he should escape punishment, he would care nothing about it, and would readily disobey again under like circumstances.

Another boy disobeys his father.—When he thinks of what he has done he is sorry. He is sorry because he has displeased his father, because he has treated him unkindly in not obeying his

commands. Perhaps he has no fear that his father will punish him, still he is not the less sorry that he has repaid that father's kindness with disobedience. He resolves, at all events, that he will not disobey again. This is of the nature of true repentance which must be exercised towards God, before we are authorized to ask, or expect to receive pardon of our sins.

What a fearful thing to live, with the record of unforgiven sins standing against us in the book of God's remembrance!

But there is another thing which is too frequently overlooked. Many seem to suppose that repentance is all that is necessary. Yet the teachings of God's book are very different. We are authorized to ask forgiveness only so far as we forgive those who have injured us. "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our

debtors." Again it is said: "For if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive you." There are, I doubt not, many self-deceived souls—many who think they are forgiven when they are not. They have been very sorry for their sins. They have prayed very earnestly for pardon; they have pleaded the promises, and they hope they are forgiven. At the same time they cherish remembrances of injuries received; they have not exercised forgiveness towards those who have injured them. Now the word of God in relation to such standeth sure. There is no evading it. There is no explaining it away. "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses."

If you cherish feelings of revenge and hatred toward any human being, your

prayers have not been heard, and your sins all stand recorded against you, in the book of God's remembrance.

There was a boy on his way to school, on a bright clear day in February. The snow melted to a degree that it was easily made into balls. As he went along a large boy, who did not belong to the school, threw a snow-ball which struck him in the face. It did not hurt him much, and he was not sure but that it was accidental, but when his nose began to bleed, he was frightened and began to cry. His assailant, not satisfied with what he had done, now began to laugh at, and to ridicule him, before several other boys who were near. Ridicule is harder to bear than snow-balls, so John became very angry, and the consequence was a battle, in which he was worsted.

He declared that he would have ven-

geance, let it cost what it would. He went to school, but his thoughts were not on his studies. When he went home and sat by the fire-side, he was brooding over his wrongs, and thinking how he should punish his enemy. When he went to his chamber for the night, and kneeled down to pray, he got along pretty well till he came to the phrase "forgive us our debts *as we forgive our debtors.*" He stopped and considered, *as we forgive our debtors.* He saw that he was praying to God *not* to forgive him. He was afraid to offer such a prayer. What a fearful prayer indeed for a sinner to offer! to pray that his sins may not be forgiven, that he may be punished for them in hell to all eternity!

How many offer this impious prayer! The fact that they do not think of it, does not render it less impious. Many swear

without thinking of it, but they are not the less guilty of swearing.

Impious prayers of this kind are sometimes answered. In the county of Hereford in England, a man came before a magistrate, and accused a young man of good character in the place of having robbed him on the high-way. The young man was arrested, and brought before the magistrate, where he was confronted with his accuser. Certain circumstances led the judge to suspect that the charge was false, and he solemnly warned the accuser not to incur the guilt of perjury. He persisted in his statement, and made oath to his truth. The young man brought abundant evidence to prove that he was in another place at the time of the alleged robbery. In consequence he was discharged. The accuser meeting one of his neighbours insisted that he

was not guilty of perjury, wishing that if he had not spoken the truth his jaws might be locked, and his flesh rot from his bones. In an instant his jaws were locked, and after lingering speechless for a fortnight, he died in great agony, his flesh literally falling in some places from his bones.

Other authentic instances are on record in which wicked men have been taken at their word, when they have prayed that God would strike them with blindness, palsy, or death. Impious prayers are therefore sometimes answered—and may be in the case under consideration—forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Before we approach the mercy-seat, we must consider whether we have feelings of hostility or unkindness toward any fellow being; whe-

ther there are any whom we have not forgiven.

Perhaps you will say, "I have been injured without giving any provocation, yet if those who have injured me would confess, I could forgive them. But they will not confess. How can I forgive them if they will not confess?"

You can forgive them for Christ's sake, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you, if you are a Christian. A forgiving spirit is the peculiar spirit of Christianity. The Bible commands us to forgive those who have injured us, to love those that are hostile to us, to do good to those who hate us. These precepts differ from the precepts of every other religion. This difference indicates that it had its origin in a different source.

I know it is hard for our corrupt hearts to obey these precepts, but through the aid of Divine grace it can be done, and the happiness which is thus secured, more than repays the trouble which the obedience costs. The joy of forgiveness is greater than the joy of revenge. Look for a moment at one who has gratified, by some injurious act, his passion of revenge; and then at one who for Christ's sake has forgiven those who have deeply injured him: and say which is the happier of the two? Rely upon it, God's rules, however difficult they may seem, are the only rules which can secure the highest measure of happiness to the soul.

CHAPTER VIII.

Lead us not into Temptation.

I REMEMBER an incident told me by a soldier of the Revolution. When our army lay at White Plains, a party was detached to secure some stores which were at some distance from the camp, in the direction of the enemy's line. While they stood waiting for the officer who was to command them, they expressed to one another very earnest desires that they might not be ordered to march by the lower road, as it was called, as it would take them through a thick forest in which the enemy might be concealed, and fire on them as they passed. They were ordered to take that road, and were attacked by the enemy in ambush. They had

to fight at disadvantage, and lost several men before they put their foes to flight.

Now in the moral warfare in which we are engaged, we have numerous and powerful enemies, and there are some paths in which we are more exposed than others. It is proper that we should desire to be led in those paths in which we shall not be likely to find foes lying in ambush; in which we shall not have to fight at a disadvantage. We are taught therefore to pray, "Lead us not into temptation." By this is meant that we may not be placed in those circumstances which would be likely to be the occasion of our falling into sin.

Men often lead others into temptation. A boy leads another boy to an orchard where the ripe fruit hangs from the boughs in an inviting manner—he sets the example of taking some. His com-

panion, thus led by him into temptation, yields and incurs the guilt of stealing.

There is no danger that God will lead us into temptation in this way, but we need deliverance from those who will, and deliverance from them is implied in the prayer, "Lead us not into temptation."

Some employments render those engaged in them less exposed to temptation than others. An employment which leads one to associate with those who fear not God, renders it much harder for him to keep his heart with diligence, than one which gives him retirement and solitude. It is proper to pray that our lot may be so ordered, that we may not be exposed unduly to temptation by which we shall be overcome.

There are varieties of callings, and it is some men's duty to abide in callings which are more open to temptation than

others. In that case they are to be content and to rely on the promise, "As thy day is, so shall thy strength be."

By offering this prayer we promise to avoid temptation by all the lawful means in our power. If we pray, "Lead us not into temptation," and then rush heedlessly into circumstances of exposure, we only insult God—we do not pray to him. This heinous sin is very often committed. Men offer this prayer and yet rush wilfully into scenes and circumstances, which expose them to temptations, which it is almost certain they will not resist.

A parent was accustomed to pray for his son, and carefully taught him to pray for himself. He taught him the Lord's prayer—and he prayed for him that he might be kept from the evil that was in the world. When the son was about fourteen years of age, the father endea-

voured to find a situation for him, in some business that might enable him to make his way in life. A pious man in a small business offered to take him. He would be carefully looked after and kindly treated if there, but then the prospects of his becoming rich would not be very flattering. Another place was offered. It was with a merchant of enterprise and capital. With him the son would acquire large experience, and would be in the road to wealth. But this merchant was a Universalist. He had in his employment a set of young men who disregarded the Sabbath and ridiculed religion.

The praying father, allured by the prospect of temporal advantage held out to his son, placed him with the merchant, praying that God would keep him from the evil to which he was exposed.

By degrees that son began to neglect

the perusal of the Bible, for it led the older clerks to bestow upon him the epithet of *deacon*. He occupied the same chamber with one of them, and hence could not often bend the knee in prayer. For a time he repeated his prayers after he was in bed, but by degrees, he abandoned prayer. The Sabbath gradually lost its sanctity in his eyes. In short, in the course of a few months he could join in the ridicule of that religion for which he formerly felt an awful veneration, and he became at last a rich infidel.

Let parents and children, while they pray, "Lead us not into temptation," beware how they wilfully or thoughtlessly run into it. God will be provoked to withdraw his aid, and leave them to fall into sin and ruin.

By offering this prayer you in effect pledge yourself to avoid all unnecessary

temptation. Every one ought to know his weak points—the sins that most easily beset him—those into which he is most apt to fall. All occasions to these sins—all circumstances leading to temptation to these sins, ought to be carefully shunned. Many who know that certain temptations are apt to beset them, yet have so much confidence in themselves that they shall not be overcome, that they will not be prudent in season. They rush on, fall and are punished. “He that trusteth to his own heart is a fool.”

I once knew a boy who was accustomed to pass daily a fine cherry tree that was loaded with fruit. It was on his way to school. It was concealed from the view of the house by the barn, and was so near the fence that by getting upon it, the fruit could be plucked. The children were accustomed to “take some,” as

they called it, every day; but John said it was stealing. He, however, earnestly desired the red cherries, and in order that he might not be tempted and overcome, he went to and returned from school another way, till the fruit was gathered from the tree. That boy acted consistently with the prayer, "Lead us not into temptation."



CHAPTER IX.

But deliver us from Evil.

THIS phrase may mean, deliver us from the Evil One—for our "adversary, the devil, like a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour." If there were a great giant in your neighbour-

hood, that was constantly on the watch to seize you, and lead you captive, you would be greatly afraid of him, and would be sure to secure the aid, if possible, of some one who was able to defend you from his power.

Now Satan is an enemy far more to be feared than such a giant would be. The giant, at the worst, could only take captive and destroy the body; he could not lead captive and destroy the soul. This is what Satan seeks to do; this is what he is able to do, and this he will do, unless the soul is kept by the grace and power of God.

In former days, there were many who entertained superstitious fears in respect to Satan. They were afraid he would appear in a visible form, to seize and carry away the body. Such fears are now entertained by few in enlightened

lands. With these foolish fears have also departed, in many cases, that fear of Satan as a spiritual foe, which the Scriptures recognize as rational. Many scarce believe in the existence of the devil, and would ridicule the idea of being afraid of him. Others never think of him with seriousness as a potent enemy, whose assaults may be attended with the greatest danger. But the Bible doctrine on this subject is clear and explicit. It represents Satan as a subtle and powerful enemy, against whom we are always to be on our guard, and in resisting whom it is necessary to be completely armed.

Give heed to the teaching of the Bible on this subject, that you may offer prayer to God who alone has power to deliver you from the Evil One.

While you pray for deliverance, you

must act with reference to it also. We must resist the devil, that he may flee from us; we must give no place to him in our hearts; we must not listen to his reasonings; we must not parley with his temptations. All this we engage to do when we pray, "deliver us from evil."

But we may understand the petition under consideration, as having reference to every kind of evil, temporal and spiritual; for from all these it is desirable to be delivered. The loss of gospel privileges, spiritual desertions, and severe temptations are evils which we are to guard against by watchfulness and prayer.—Sickness, adversity, loss of friends, are evils, for deliverance from which we may pray. All these things are under the divine control. Affliction cometh not from the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground. If we have health, it

is because it is given us of God. If we enjoy prosperity, it is because God has so ordered it. If our friends are continued to us, it is because of the Lord's tender mercies. We are surrounded by dangers, and we are feeble and defenceless. All our help comes from God, and hence it is peculiarly proper that we should pray, "deliver us from evil."

In regard to this petition, as well as others, our prayer must be accompanied with suitable efforts. When we pray for health, we engage to use the means for the attainment and preservation of health, so far as they may be in our power. We engage to avoid, for example, all intemperance in eating or drinking, and all unnecessary exposure of the body to disease.

When we pray for deliverance from want, we engage to exercise the industry

and frugality which are adapted to secure that result. If by these means we obtain our daily bread, it should be ascribed to God, and not to our own wisdom and skill. In the circumstances in which we are placed, it is the gift of God, as much as it would be, had it been bestowed without exertion on our part; as much as the manna was the gift of God.

There are few who feel as they ought, their dependence on God, for deliverance from the evils to which they are exposed. Where this sense of dependence is not felt, there is, of course, no real prayer. We may use a form of asking, but the heart does not ask for that of which it does not feel the need. All men ought to feel that they are completely dependent upon God for all things, and for all things alike. Some think they are

more dependent for some things than for others. This is not so. All are alike dependent for all things.

Perhaps you will say, "Is the rich man as much dependent upon God for his daily bread as the beggar who has not a penny? The rich man has money with which he can purchase bread, and the poor man has not." That is true, but God can sweep away all the wealth of the rich man in an hour, or he can cause his stomach to reject every article of food. I recollect reading about a man who crossed the ocean, and who was so sick that it was next to impossible to keep food enough on his stomach to keep him alive. He said he never before felt his dependence on God for daily bread, as when he was in danger of famishing amid the abundance which surrounded him.

By cherishing this sense of dependence, we shall be led to pray aright, and also to render unto God, thanksgiving and praise.

CHAPTER X.

For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, forever.

THIS is not a petition, but a statement of the reasons why we should pray for those things above considered, and an expression of our complete submission to the Divine government. The government of the universe belongs to God. Nothing escapes the notice of the great Governor. He numbers the hairs of our head, and notices the sparrow's fall. It is there-

fore proper that in every thing that concerns us, we should have recourse to him.

He is also infinite in power. None can stay his hand, or ask, "What doest thou?" All that he sees fit to ordain, he has power to execute. The energies of his nature are but the instruments of his will. The hearts of all men are in his hand. It is therefore proper that the feeble should apply to Him for protection, and ask him to do what is needful for them.

The glory of the universe is his. The glory of the material universe is his. He created it, he gave to the ocean its majesty, to the earth its covering, and to the heavens the glory-beaming stars. The glory of the moral universe is his. All that is glorious in the angelic character is his workmanship, all that is glorious in human character is his work, in fash-

ioning it anew in Christ Jesus. From every piece of his handiwork, from every holy being in the universe, there goes up an everlasting chorus, "Thine is the glory forever and ever."

We have thus gone over the different portions of the Lord's Prayer. We have interpreted it in the light of a dispensation, which was not fully ushered in, when the prayer was given. Viewed in this light, we have regarded it as a comprehensive summary of the object of prayer.

When the Christian dispensation was fully ushered in, additional instructions were given in relation to prayer. Christians were instructed to ask in the name of Christ. This is the peculiar characteristic of Christian prayer, and to this we must give heed when we use the Lord's Prayer. Though nothing is said

about it in the Lord's Prayer, and nothing recorded as said in relation to it, in connexion with the giving of the prayer, yet all prayer ought now *to be offered in the name of Christ*; and it is only to prayer thus offered, that the promises appertain. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father **IN MY NAME**, He will give it you."

I shall close by quoting a few passages of Scripture that enjoin the duty of prayer. "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit. The Lord is nigh to all that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. Ask and ye shall receive. If ye abide in me and my word abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. And this is the confidence which we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will,

he heareth us. I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath or doubting."

"Now unto Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

THE END.





