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The Perfect Prayer

By

Taylor G. Bunch

*Author of *The Beatitudes**

Letting the Light shine

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Contents

The Model Prayer.....	4
The Prayer of Sons	11
The Prayer of Reverence	18
The Prayer of Citizens	25
The Prayer of Submission.....	34
The Prayer for Bread	43
The Prayer for Pardon	50
The Prayer for Guidance.....	58
The Prayer for Deliverance.....	66
The Prayer's Doxology	73

PRAYER is the power that moves the arm that moves the world."

"Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray, when prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence?"-*Ellen G. White.*

"Satan dreads nothing but prayer.... The church that lost its Christ was full of good works. Activities are multiplied that meditation may be ousted, and organizations are increased that prayer may have no chance. Souls may be lost in good works, as surely as in evil ways. The one concern of the devil is to keep the saints from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless works, prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray."-*Chadwick.*

The Perfect Prayer

Our Father which art in heaven,
 Hallowed be Thy name.
 Thy kingdom come.
 Thy will be done in 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 power,
 And the glory,
 Forever. Amen.

Matt. 6:9-13.

The Model Prayer

"After this manner therefore pray ye"

JESUS was not only the Master Teacher, but also the Supreme Suppliant. After listening attentively to one of His earnest prayers, one of His disciples, as spokesman for the group, said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray."

What inspired this request? Doubtless the disciples had heard Jesus pray many times. But as they listened on this occasion, they were convinced that "never man spake like this Man;" that in Him prayer had found its perfect expression. They knew that there was a definite connection between His prayer life and His matchless character, His miracle-working power, His soul-gripping sermons.

In one of the prophetic psalms of the Messiah, David says, "I give myself unto prayer." *Ps. 109:4*. This prophecy was completely fulfilled in the life of Jesus. He knew that as the Son of man He was helpless in Himself, and that without divine assistance He could "do nothing." In taking man's place, Jesus also took his infirmities, with no help that is not available to man. If in any sense our conflict with sin were more trying than His, He would be unable to help us. When Jesus took our flesh, He assumed all of its liabilities, with the possibility of yielding to temptation. Because He partook of our human nature, we have nothing to bear that He did not endure. Otherwise it would have been unnecessary for Jesus to pray, and He could not therefore have been our example in all things.

Of the prayer life of Jesus, John R. Mott wrote: "If the hill back of Nazareth could give back its secret, if the lake of Galilee could tell what it witnessed, if the desert places round about Jerusalem could tell their story, if the Mount of Olives could speak out and tell us what happened there, they would tell us, more than anything else, of the prayer life of our Lord. They would reveal its intensity, its unselfishness, its constancy, its godly fear, that made it irresistible." Who could better teach men to pray, and how to pray, and for what to pray, than Jesus, the master suppliant?

The Desire to Pray

Those who have excelled in any line of endeavor always inspire others to search for the secret of their success. A profound student gives us the desire to learn how to study, a master musician makes us want to know the art of music, and a great painter fills us with the desire to know how to skillfully ply the brush. The disciples of Jesus recognized the fact that He excelled all other teachers, and they were convinced that it was due to His life of prayer. Hence they asked Him to teach them to pray. Dr. Adam Clarke declared that the request, "Lord, teach us to pray," "is a prayer necessary to prayer." The greatest service any teacher can render is to teach others to pray; to lead them into a life of devotion and spiritual communion. The purpose of prayer is to unite man with God. If it fails here, it has missed its mission.

Since a prayer life cannot be transferred to another, Jesus did the only thing possible-He gave His disciples the form of a model prayer. They must learn by experience, just as the student learns by studying, the musician by practicing, and the artist by painting. There is no other way.

To be a perfect teacher of prayer, two things are necessary: First, a knowledge of the character and purposes of God; and, second, a knowledge of the condition and needs of man. Christ alone possessed this knowledge in perfection, and He only could teach man how to approach the Father in prayer. He was well acquainted with both God and man. As the God-man, Jesus knew what petitions are acceptable to God. We who have inherited sinful flesh "know not what we should pray for as we ought," and should therefore rejoice in the fact that we have a divine teacher in Immanuel, the great Mediator between God and man.

In answer to the request of the disciples, Jesus gave the model prayer commonly known as the Lord's prayer. This is recorded in its most complete form in *Matthew 6:9-13*. Jesus prefaced the prayer with the statement, "After this manner therefore pray ye." "Therefore" refers to what He had previously said on the subject of prayer. It shows that the model, or sample, prayer was in contrast to the "vain repetitions" of the heathen and the long and hypocritical prayers of the Pharisees. Jesus did not command His followers to repeat the prayer word for word, but rather to pray "after this manner." This indicates clearly that He intended it only as a model, or pattern, to guide them in making their requests to God, and not as a stereotyped form, a meaningless repetition of set words and phrases. It was to avoid this very danger that Jesus warned against the use of "vain repetitions" which defeat the very purpose of genuine prayer. Forms of

prayer were customary among the Jews, for every great rabbi composed one for his disciples. The request, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples," indicates that John the Baptist had given his followers a form of prayer, which for some good purpose has not been preserved.

The Perfect Prayer

Christ's sample prayer contains seven separate petitions; and seven, as we all know, is the Biblical number symbolizing completeness and perfection. It is a perfect prayer because its requests embrace all the needs of mankind in every age and clime. There is nothing essential omitted, and it contains no repetitions or superfluities. Anthony C. Deane declares that "it suits the twentieth century no less well than it suited the first. There is not a word in it to tie it down to any one land or time. It is beloved alike by Christians who differ on a score of important points. It seems as much in place in some distant mission station-where, probably, it is the first written word to be translated-as in St. Paul's in London, or in St. Peter's at Rome. It can be lisped with understanding by a young child. It astonishes the wisest by its profundity.... What is there that we can desire to ask, what need is there of human life, which these astoundingly few sentences fail to express? Yes, the more we ponder and use these words, the surer we grow concerning Him who spake them." -"*Our Father*," p. 157.

Of our Lord's prayer, Adolph Saphir appropriately says: "It is beautiful and symmetrical, like the most finished work of art. The words are plain and unadorned, yet majestic; and so transparent and appropriate that, once fixed in the memory, no other expressions ever mix themselves up with them.... The prayer is short, that it may be quickly learned, easily remembered, and frequently used; but it contains all things pertaining to life and godliness." -"*The Lord's Prayer*," pp. 38, 39.

A beautiful tribute has also been given by Henry Ward Beecher: "One knows not which most to admire in this form-its loftiness of spirit, its comprehensiveness, its brevity, its simplicity, or its union of human and divine elements. All prayer may be said to have crystallized in this prayer. The church has worn it for hundreds of years upon her bosom, as the brightest gem of devotion."

A traveler in the Orient had pitched his camp near an Arab village. Soon he was surrounded by an angry and fanatical mob, who cursed him as an infidel. Addressing their leader, the traveler said: "How can you say that I

do not believe in God? Listen to my daily prayer, and then judge." He then repeated the Lord's prayer before them. The Arabs listened in amazement. At length their leader exclaimed: "Never will I speak against the followers of such a faith: your prayer shall be mine till my hour of departure comes. Repeat it, I beg of you, O Nazarene, that we may learn it and write it in golden letters."

The Synopsis of Man's Hopes

The Lord's prayer is new only in form, for it is the condensed substance of all previous prayers. Jesus lived in the Old Testament Scriptures. All of the teachings of the living Word were based upon the written word. In this prayer Jesus simply summarized the petitions of patriarchs, prophets, and saints in all previous ages, back to the very gates of Paradise. He selected the most brilliant gems from all the petitions of the past and reset them in the prayer that climaxes and crowns all prayer. This prayer contains in substance all that may properly enter into our praying. It will continue as the synopsis of man's hopes and desires till Paradise is restored and man can again worship his Creator face to face just as the decalogue is the summary of all laws, and the sermon on the mount is the whole gospel in miniature, so the Lord's prayer is the sum and perfection of all prayer. Everything needed by alienated mankind is included in this brief petition.

True prayer does not depend upon its length as measured by words, or its eloquence as measured by language. "God does not need to be informed as though He were ignorant, or persuaded as though He were reluctant to help." But He does want to know that we really want that for which we ask. It is fervency and sincerity that count with Him. Praying is coming to God as to a friend and asking for what we actually need and are unable to provide without divine aid. We are not heard for our much speaking or our many words, but because of our sincerity of purpose. In its brevity, completeness, and simplicity, this model prayer was a severe condemnation of the noisy and weird incantations of the heathen, and the long and formal prayers of the hypocrites, whose purpose in praying was to be seen and heard of men. In it Jesus sets forth the needs of man which will be supplied according to the will of God to those who ask in faith.

The prayer under consideration is divided into two parts. Like the decalogue with its two tables defining man's duties to God and to his fellow men, the model prayer in its first group of three petitions has to do with God and things divine, and in the second group of four petitions with human beings

and their needs. These petitions are in their proper order, for God's glory should always be placed above the needs of man. In fact, on this basis only have we been promised that our temporal necessities will be supplied. Jesus said: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." *Matt. 6:33*.

Divisions of Prayer

In the first division of the Lord's prayer the thought is centered on the object of worship. These three requests give utterance to the desires which fulfill God's eternal purpose for His children. They have to do with God's name, God's kingdom, and God's will. They are a revelation of God in His person, in His kingdom, and in the submission of His citizens to His sovereign will. In these petitions the word "*Thy*" is emphasized. It is *Thy* name, *Thy* kingdom, and *Thy* will. These petitions are inseparable, for God's name must be recognized and hallowed before His kingdom can come, and His kingdom must be established before His will can be done "in earth, as it is in heaven."

The second division with its four petitions has to do with ourselves and our temporal and spiritual needs. In these petitions the pronouns *our* and *us* are used. We need bread for our bodies; we need forgiveness for our sins; we need divine guidance for our lives; we need deliverance from all evil. We need *daily* bread, *daily* forgiveness, *daily* leadership, and *daily* deliverance. Bread, pardon, guidance, and deliverance are the summary of all our needs. Six of the seven petitions of the Lord's prayer are for spiritual blessings. Only one deals with our temporal needs. This is about the proper relation between the importance of our spiritual and physical necessities. This is doubtless because of the promise that when our spiritual needs are fully supplied, the temporal blessings of life will be added.

The first division of this prayer is the introduction to the second. The two are inseparable, because our own spiritual condition has everything to do with our attitude toward God's name, His kingdom, and His will. Therefore on the answer to the second group of petitions depends the answer to the first. We have no right to address God as "Father" and request that His name be hallowed, His kingdom established, and His will accomplished in us, unless we are willing to permit Him to have His way in all the affairs of life. What a safeguard against selfishness is this prayer! It exalts God to His proper sphere, and places man where he belongs as a humble suppliant. To

those who have a deep-seated longing to glorify God, this prayer expresses the desires of the heart and answers the needs of the soul.

Primarily a Public Prayer

This is primarily a public prayer, as is indicated by the frequent use of "our" and "us." In the prayer of our Lord recorded in John 17, Jesus used the personal pronouns, "I," "my," and "me," which indicate a private prayer. In a public prayer one person speaks for the entire congregation. He is the spokesman and mouthpiece of all. But private desires and needs should be remembered in the secret chamber, when one is alone with God. Of course the Lord's prayer contains the essentials of our private needs; for a congregation, after all, is only a collection of individuals, and the needs of all are the needs of each. This prayer embraces the general needs of all mankind and should therefore be a model for all our praying, both private and public.

A public prayer should deal with the general needs of the congregation without one word or sentence of a personal or private nature, unless prayer for an individual is specifically requested. Only those things should be asked for in public that are desired or needed by all who hear the prayer. One is chosen to be the spokesman for the many in order to avoid confusion. For God is a God of order. The offering of many audible prayers simultaneously by certain modern religionists must be very displeasing to God. This custom has no sanction in the model public prayer given by Christ. Of course it is proper for a congregation to repeat the Lord's prayer in unison, for in this case it is one prayer uttered by "the voice of a multitude." However, there is always danger that such a repetition may become formal and therefore useless.

"Our" and "us" also indicate that public prayers should be offered only in behalf of those who are present. One writer said: "We should not come to the house of God to pray for our families.... The proper place to pray for our families is at the family altar. When the subjects of our prayers are at a distance, the closet is the proper place to plead with God for them. When in the house of God, we should pray for a present blessing." Many who pray in public are in the habit of covering the whole wide world in their petitions and almost entirely forgetting the very ones for whom they have been chosen as the spokesmen. While we have been admonished to pray for one another, the mention of the difficulties and problems of others should be confined to the secret closet or to meetings called for that special purpose.

"Give us this day," confines public petitions to our present needs. There is no time in a public prayer to go back into the past or forward into the future. The congregation has assembled for a present blessing to meet present needs. There are plenty of things in both the past and the future that are proper subjects for prayer, but not in public. There is an abundance of time for such petitions in our private devotions, where God is the only auditor. He never becomes weary with long private prayers, provided they come from a sincere heart. Jesus Himself spent whole nights in secret prayer.

Since the one who offers the public prayer is the spokesman for all present, it is essential that all present shall be able to hear what is said. The Scriptures often use the expression, "He lifted up his voice," in referring to one who spoke or prayed in public. The voice of the mouthpiece for the many must be lifted up, or raised to a tone loud enough to be distinctly heard and understood by all. This makes necessary also the lifting up of the head. It is perfectly proper in private prayer to fall with our faces to the ground or bury them in our hands, but it is never proper in public prayer. God can hear the faintest whisper, and can even read the unuttered intents of the heart that is too full to speak, but in public praying the congregation must hear, as well as God.

The model public prayer is also very short. Repeating it slowly requires less than a minute. Most public prayers are entirely too long. Generally the person who prays the least in private offers the longest and most tedious prayers in public. The reverse is also true. All public prayers should be short and to the point. It is no time to preach a sermon to either God or man, or to encompass the whole round of subjects that do not touch the necessities of the occasion or the wants of the congregation. Those who pattern their public praying after the divinely given sample will cover all the needs of those present in one or two minutes and will weary neither celestial nor human beings.

It must be evident to even the most casual observer that the modern disciples of Jesus are as slow to learn as were the twelve. We need to repeat the request, "Lord, teach us to pray," and then follow the instructions given by the Master Teacher, to learn the secret of prayer after the manner of the most complete and perfect petition ever offered to the Father above.

The Prayer of Sons

"Our Father which art in heaven"

THE opening sentence of the Lord's prayer is known as the *salutation* or *invocation*. It identifies the One to whom we should direct our petitions. Just as the fourth commandment of the decalogue makes the entire law authoritative by identifying the Lawgiver as the Creator of the heavens and the earth, so the invocation of the Lord's prayer gives efficacy to all of its petitions by identifying the heavenly Father as the object of true worship. Effectual prayer must be addressed to "our Father who art in heaven." R.V.

The invocation at once eliminates all other gods as undeserving of worship. There is no room here for creature worship, which is declared to be idolatry. In this rebel world there are "gods many, and lords many" (*1 Cor. 8:5*); but the Creator alone is the true God, and He only should be worshiped by all created beings. It is on the basis of His power to create that the Eternal Father receives the adoration and worship of the heavenly universe. In the vision of the Apocalypse, John thus describes one of the convocations before the throne of God: "The four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." *Rev. 4:10, 11*. The psalmist said: "For Thou, Lord, art high above all the earth: Thou art exalted far above all gods." *Ps. 97:9*. All prayers should therefore be directed to "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity." *Isa. 57:15*.

The opening sentence of this model prayer also safeguards us from the dangerous belief that God is identified with His creation as being in and a part of that which He has created. We are reminded that heaven is the dwelling place of God and that it is just as real a place as is the earth on which we live. Prayer is more than "a posture of the soul," a state of mind, an attitude, or an emotion. It is a petition to an intelligent being in a distinct habitation. We can obtain no help from the earth; we must look to heaven as the source of all the blessings of life. Jesus said, "A man can receive

nothing, except it be given him from heaven." *John 3:27*. The apostle declared that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." *James 1:17*.

"Our Father who art in heaven" expresses both God's nearness to us and His distance from us; His nearness in spirit and family relationship, and His distance in person. In praying we should ever remember the counsel of the wise man: "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth." *Eccl. 5:2*. The Lord also reminds us of this fact in the statement: "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool." *Isa. 66:1*. We should never forget that the God we worship is as high above us as the heavens are above the earth. We must therefore never be guilty of thinking of Him or addressing Him as an equal. This was the cause of the fall of Lucifer, and the same spirit has ever been manifested in fallen humanity. The Lord rebukes such an attitude in the statement: "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself." *Ps. 50:21*.

The Proper Approach

The invocation is the foundation of the entire prayer, as well as the prelude to each of its seven petitions. It expresses God's tender regard for us, and our feelings toward Him. This is the first essential of true prayer. The very nature and efficacy of our prayers depend upon our knowledge and conception of God. In a prayer worthy of the name, God must first be given His proper place. "Our Father" expresses a loving nearness that gives us boldness to approach Him, while "who art in heaven" contrasts Him with our earthly fathers and raises our thoughts to His dwelling place where He reigns in glory and majesty. We are thus inspired with that spirit of godly fear and reverence that prevents feelings of too great familiarity because of the family relationship that gives us the privilege of addressing Him as "Father." Thus at the very beginning of the prayer the petitioner is ushered into the proper attitude and atmosphere, so that the entire prayer is enveloped in a glow of warmth and glory.

The Lord's prayer is summed up in the first sentence. When we can truly address God as "our Father who art in heaven," we have already hallowed His name, recognized His sovereign authority, and submitted to His will. The same is true of the second group of petitions, which have to do with man and his needs. God's glory and our good are so closely related that they

cannot be separated. When we place God where He belongs in our thoughts and reckonings, the things of secondary importance will be taken care of. The first utterance of this model prayer therefore brings the worshiper to "the house of God" and "the gate of heaven," where all his temporal and spiritual needs can be supplied.

Our Prayers Made Acceptable

The Father is the source of all the blessings of life, and our requests should be made to Him in the name of His Son. Jesus is our Mediator who intercedes for us, and His name gives efficacy to our petitions and makes them acceptable to the Father. He is the connecting link between God and man. He places the virtues of His own righteousness to the account of the suppliant, so that merit and fragrance are given to our supplications.

As we approach the Father through the merits of Christ, He encircles us with His human arm, while with His divine arm He grasps the throne of the Infinite. With the merits of Christ as sweet incense in our faith censers, we may approach the Father with boldness and confidence, knowing that our prayers are acceptable through the intercessions of our Mediator. "Our Father" should therefore bring to mind the incarnation, death, and priestly ministry of Christ.

Since all three members of the Godhead work together in perfect unison in both creation and redemption, all three should be recognized in our prayers. Effectual prayer can be offered only "in the Spirit." "Praying in the Holy Ghost" is declared to be the secret of being built up "in the most holy faith." *Jude 20*. When we are filled with and controlled by the Holy Spirit, He really does the praying for or through us. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." *Rom. 8:26, 27*. True prayer is offered in the Spirit to the Father in the name of Christ.

The Privilege of Sons

The parental relationship between God and man is not by any means confined to the New Testament, although it is there made most prominent. David never used the expression "my Father," and it is said that the term "Father" is used but seven times in all the Old Testament, and then from the viewpoint of His being our Creator or Benefactor. While men often speak of the Fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man, such a relationship can be true only in the light of creation and a common and universal Adamic ancestry. The prophet asks, "Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?" *Mal. 2:10*. It is evident that the Lord's prayer was intended as

the prayer of sons through the new birth or new creation. Jesus did not give it to the *world*. He gave it to His disciples in answer to their request to be taught how to pray. Not until Christ became our Brother could God truly be called "our Father." The Son of God became the Son of man that "we might receive the adoption of sons;" and with "the Spirit of His Son" in our hearts we have the right to say, "Abba, Father." (See *Gal. 4:4-6.*) Paul also declared that "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God," and "have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." *Rom. 8:14-16.*

In the most real sense, therefore, only genuine Christians have the right to call God "Father." It is the privilege of sons. On the morning of His resurrection, Jesus told Mary to give to His disciples the message, "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." *John 20:17.* The spirit of the gospel is the spirit of sonship through the spiritual birth. Before we can approach God as our King and Master, we must draw near as sons. This is the most approachable basis possible. John declared of Christ that "as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." *John 1:12.* "The right, or privilege," is the marginal reading for "power." There is no way to enter the family of God except through the new birth, and this alone gives us the right to call God "our Father." This prayer is the petition of the sons of God, the prayer of twice-born men and women.

The original family tie was broken by sin, and man was disowned as son and disinherited by the Creator. This separation forfeited the right of man to call the Creator his Father. Rebel humanity became members of an alien family, with the great adversary as its head and father. To the Pharisees, who boasted of their sonship with God through Abraham, Jesus said, "Ye are of your father the devil." *John 8:44.* Sinners are called "the children of the wicked one," and "the children of disobedience." *Matt. 13:38; Eph. 2:2.*

Only through a death to sin can sinners get out of the old Adam family, and only through a new birth can they enter the new Adam family, with the right to call God their Father and Jesus their Brother. This new family relationship was made possible through the death of Christ. "But Jesus-who was made a little inferior to the angels in order that through God's grace He might taste death for every human being-we already see wearing a crown of glory and honor because of His having suffered death. For it was fitting that He for whom and through whom all things exist, after He had brought many

sons to glory, should perfect by suffering the Prince Leader who had saved them. For both He who sanctified and those whom He is sanctifying have all one Father; and for this reason He is not ashamed to speak of them as His brothers." *Heb. 2:9-11*, Weymouth. This text declares that only those who are sanctified or are being sanctified have the right to say "Father" and "Brother" to the first and second members of the Trinity.

The privilege of being sons of God is so great, and the height and depth and breadth of the love of God are so immeasurable, that the apostle John could find no words with which to describe his adoration and joy. He therefore called upon the church to see for themselves: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God." *1 John 3:1, 2*. It is the hope of the final reunion of the family of God at the second coming of Christ that prepares them for entrance into the kingdom of heaven. The apostle continues: "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." *1 John 3:2, 3*.

This new relationship with God also creates a new relationship with all others who have been born again. They are our brothers, with the same rights and privileges that are ours. Together, or on their behalf as well as our own, we say, "Our Father who art in heaven." There was a belief among the ancient Jews that no man should pray for himself alone. He should use the plural and include all of God's children in his prayers. This is the spirit of the Lord's prayer. It is an unselfish and brotherly prayer requesting for others what we desire for ourselves. This places us under a most sacred and solemn obligation to one another-to all the members of the family of God. Our Christian neighbors become brothers whom we should love as we love ourselves. This is the fulfilling of the golden rule.

We Are Not Orphans

Often an only child in a family becomes selfish and forgets the rights and privileges of others. Too many of us act as if we were the only child in the family of God. We are also in danger of going to the other extreme and acting as if we were orphans. D.L. Moody quoted Mark Guy Pearce as saying: "There is one thing most pitiable, almost worse than even cold, black, miserable atheism: to kneel down and say, 'Our Father,' and then get up and live an orphaned life." Just before Jesus departed, He said to His

sorrowing disciples: "I will not leave you orphans: I will come to you."
John 14:18, margin.

The privilege of sonship can never be fully realized and appreciated by Christians till they reach the Promised Land, where they will enter into the joys of their Lord in the Paradise restored from the curse and dominion of sin. Likewise sinners can never know what they have missed by rejecting the gospel, till the privilege of becoming sons of God is forever withdrawn. The eternal loss of sonship with God will produce weeping and "wailing and gnashing of teeth."

The value of sonship in God's family can be estimated only on the basis of the price paid for man's redemption. When man, through transgression, lost his sonship with God, the Son of God ran the risk of losing His, in order that we might be reinstated in the heavenly family. "Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His." - *"The Desire of Ages,"* p. 24. He became the Son of man, that we might become the sons of God. It is through Him that we have the privilege of sonship, and to Him should be given the praise and glory, both now and forever. Amen.

The Prayer of Reverence

"Hallowed be Thy name"

HALLOWED be Thy name" is the first of the seven petitions of the Lord's prayer. It comes first because reverence is the very gateway to the divine presence. The first step in approaching God is to place ourselves in the proper attitude toward Him. One has said that "the familiarity of love must not forget the reverence due to holiness." That which is hallowed or sanctified is set apart for a sacred use or a holy office. In this petition we place God where He rightly belongs by exalting Him above all earthly things which claim our homage. We approach Him "with reverence and godly fear."

It is the person who makes a reverent approach who finds God. One cannot find his way into the audience chamber of the Most High with a flippant spirit or an irreverent attitude. The angels who minister before Him approach His presence with holy awe, veiling their faces. But reverence for God depends upon a knowledge of God. The clearer our vision of Him, the greater will be our reverence for Him. Maurice declared that "upon our thoughts of God, it will depend, in one time or another, whether we rise higher or sink lower as societies and as individuals." God's name should mean to us all that God is in nature and character as revealed through His word. It sums up the conception that He would have us cherish of Him. Those whose vision of God is restricted to the limitations of humanity cannot show proper respect to His name. The prayer for a deeper sense of reverence is also a prayer for a greater knowledge of the character of God.

Regarding the relation between this petition and our conception of God, Marcus Dods says: "And not less for life than for worship do we need that the name of God be hallowed; for by man's thoughts of God is his whole character formed. Let him think of a god who delights in blood, and he will delight in the same; let him worship a god imperfect in holiness, and his efforts after holy living will not be many or severe; let him think of a god that is pleased with ceremonies, and he will become a formalist; let him think of a god who can be paid by service, and he will become a hypocrite;

let him think of a hard master, reaping where he has not sown, and gathering where he strawed not, and he will shirk every duty he dare, and tremble through a life of slavery to a death of confusion and dismay. But let him know God as his Father in Christ, and every influence for good that can be brought to bear upon the human character is enjoyed by that man. This knowledge will be the little leaven leavening the whole mass; the new center in the heart round which each regenerated principle within us will take its place. It is an influence all for good, unlike that of the character of man, which mingles harm with its healing. It is the character which from the first has sustained, and to the last will sustain, all good that is found in man.

"It is because God is what He is, that there has been any holiness on earth; because He loveth righteousness, therefore has He created men capable of righteous deeds; because He has been demanding perfect holiness, therefore have those who hallowed His name bitterly mourned over their shortcomings, and have still persevered and hoped, because He is their Father. By His name, by the real and holy and abiding personality which that name keeps within our ken, is the inevitable and stimulating idea of duty cherished within us." - *"The Prayer That Teaches to Pray,"* pp. 43, 44.

The approach of reverence is also the approach of humility. Only the meek and humble can enter the secret chamber of the high and holy God. "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the spirit of the contrite ones." *Isa. 57:15.*

The first of the beatitudes spoken by Jesus is the first step toward the kingdom of heaven: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." *Matt. 5:3.* This is virtually a quotation from *Isaiah 66:2*: "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word." When Mary realized that she had been chosen to be the mother of the Saviour of the world, she exclaimed: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is His name." *Luke 1:46-49.*

We cannot properly approach God in prayer without recognizing His holiness; and His holiness is in His name. In the Bible, name and character are virtually synonymous. The wise man said, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." *Prov. 22:1.* When we say that a person has a good

name, we mean that he has a good character or reputation. The record states that when Moses made the request of Jehovah, "Show me Thy glory," "the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord." The Lord then gave Moses a revelation of His character. (See *Ex. 33:18, 19; 34:5-7.*) This vision of the name, or character, of God put Moses in the proper attitude of humility and reverence for worship. "And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped." *Ex. 34:8.* A vision of the holy character of our heavenly Father will cause us to bow our heads, if not our knees, when we pray.

What does the name of God mean to us? Names are used among men to distinguish one person or object from another. The mention of the name always brings to our minds the character or nature of that which is named. The mention of a certain name causes a certain character to be registered in our thoughts. We usually come to dislike the names of those whose characters become distasteful to us. Likewise a noble character always glorifies in our estimation the name of the person who bears it. Our attitude toward the name depends on our knowledge of the character to which it is attached. God's name is the revelation of Himself, the manifestation of what He really is. It stands for His matchless character. To make this revelation to man is the purpose of the Scriptures. The revealing was completed by the incarnation of God in human flesh through Christ. Since God's name includes all the features of His character, is it any wonder that when the Son of God came into the world to reveal that name to man, prophecy said of Him, "His name shall be called Wonderful"? *Isa. 9:6.*

Someone has said that from the very beginning of sin, which alienated man from God, His purpose has been "to spell out His name to us, sometimes by one perfection, and sometimes by another." From time to time the Lord made Himself known by new names. To Moses He said: "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by My name Jehovah was I not known to them." *Ex. 6:3.* This indicates that a new revelation of the character of God was about to be made through a new name. The name "Jehovah" was so hallowed among the Jews that they refused to pronounce it. To them it was a revelation of God Himself. It indicated the source of all power and authority, the exclusive right to rule. It was revered above every other name. To hallow this sacred name was a guaranty against all forms of idolatry with their deity names which were unworthy of respect.

While the revelations of the prophets down through the ages unfolded more and more the character of God, their disclosures were only partial till the Son of God came in the likeness of sinful flesh to "show us the Father." The sending of His Son in "the express image of His person," was the very climax of God's plan to reveal His name to man. To doubting Thomas Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me. If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also.... He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." *John 14:6-9*. The advent of Christ made the name of God complete. Is it any wonder that it requires more than two hundred and fifty names, titles, and emblems to describe the character and work of Him who came to reveal God to man? "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name." *Phil. 2:9*.

The first petition of the Lord's prayer is inseparably connected with the invocation. We cannot hallow God's name unless we are His sons and He is our Father. Holiness in man can be attained only through the union of humanity with divinity. All the names of God are included in the one to whom we address our prayers. As the result of the final revelation of the character of God through the Son, God can be addressed by a name that every child can understand, "Our Father." The unfathomable love of God in making us sons through the death of His only Son, fills us with the spirit of devotion and reverence. Only when we can cry, "Abba, Father," because of the new birth, can we hallow His name in our lives.

The chief delight of a true son is to honor and magnify his father's name which he also bears. The hallowing of the name of God must include the holiness of our own characters. Since we are members of His family, and bear His name, our first desire is to protect it by conduct becoming to a son. The family name should never be polluted by sin and folly. Just as the delight of an earthly father centers in the character development of his children, so God is glorified in His children only when they reflect His image. When Jesus faced the crisis of Gethsemane and Calvary, He prayed, "Father, glorify Thy name." Then came the answer from heaven, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." *John 12:28*. It was the conduct of the Son of God that hallowed and glorified the name of His Father, who said of Him, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." *Matt. 3:17*.

Titles Reserved for Deity

The titles "holy," "divine," and "reverend" should be associated only with the name of God. "Holy and reverend is His name," declared the psalmist. *Ps. 111:9*. Human beings have no right to titles that belong alone to God. The elders or bishops of the apostolic church were never addressed as "Reverend." It was a title used by the pagan priests, as has been revealed by the discoveries of archaeologists in the ruins of Ephesus. The priests of the temple of Diana were called "divines" and were addressed as "Reverend." When the church was paganized during the early centuries, these titles began to be applied to the ministers of the gospel. Later, the title of "Reverend" was extended to "Right Reverend" and "Right, Right Reverend."

The warning of Christ against the use of "vain repetitions" when we pray includes not only the oft repeating of set and formal prayers, but also the frequent repeating of the name of God in prayer. In this model prayer the name of God is used but once, and then it is "our Father." In the prayer of Christ recorded in *John 17*, He used the name of His Father six times, saying, "Father," "Holy Father," and "righteous Father." He used none of the terms of endearment so often heard in modern prayers. Jesus evidently felt that the word "Father" had a richer and deeper meaning without any qualifying adjectives. Chappell has said, "To try to add to that is as futile as spraying a honeysuckle with cheap perfume, or undertaking to enhance the beauty of a landscape of snow by sprinkling it with talcum powder."

It is not unusual for the name of God to be used from fifteen to thirty times in a single prayer. This practice has a tendency to bring the name of God down to the level of human names, and should therefore be discarded. The Jews refused even to repeat the name "Jehovah" because they considered it too sacred to be uttered by mortal lips. The third commandment of the decalogue not only forbids false oaths and common swearing, but it also forbids our using the name of God in a light and careless manner, without regard to its profound significance. By the thoughtless and irreverent mention of God in common conversation, and by the frequent repetition of His name as if He were "altogether such a one" as ourselves, we dishonor Him. All who meditate upon His majesty, His purity, and His holiness will have their hearts impressed with a sense of His exalted character; and His holy name will be uttered with reverence and godly fear. We need to pray for a deeper sense of reverence. The first petition of the Lord's prayer is

prayed the least of all the seven. It is the most neglected, and the most unpopular of them all.

"We Are Called by Thy Name"

By virtue of their birth, children have the right to the name of their father; so the sons of God not only have the right to call Him "Father," but it is also their privilege to bear His name. In taking the name "Christian," we are bearing the name of Christ. This exalted privilege comes to us through the new birth. In the time of Israel's distress Jeremiah prayed: "Thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by Thy name; leave us not." *Jer. 14:9*. All respectable families are proud of their family name, and they make every possible effort to defend and protect it. A family name that stands for character and a good reputation is taken in vain by one who brings a disgrace upon it by unbecoming conduct. Likewise, a professed Christian who is unlike Christ, and whose conduct is ungodly, takes God's name in vain and is guilty of violating the third commandment.

To ancient Israel came the commandment, "Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy." *Lev. 19:2*. Then follows the instruction to deal honestly with both God and man, and thus exhibit a Godlike character. The golden rule of conduct is summed up in the command: "Ye shall not swear by My name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord." Verse 12. In Proverbs it is said: "Two things have I required of Thee; deny me them not before I die: Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full, and deny Thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." *Prov. 30:7-9*.

Of the rich who despise and oppress the poor, the apostle James said: "Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?" *James 2:7*. The person whose character and conduct are unholy, profanes and pollutes the name of the Lord and takes it in vain, especially when he makes a profession of Christianity.

On the other hand, we hallow God's name, or character, by living holy lives. The mere repetition of the sentence, "Hallowed be Thy name," is useless and meaningless if it is applied only to God's personal character. God's name is holy, and nothing we can do or say will add to or take from its sacredness. The petition has significance only when applied to God's name as assumed by His followers. The request is that divine power bring our

characters into harmony with that of our heavenly Father. To hallow His name means that the person who prays the prayer should be a revelation of God's character, a reflection of His image. Only those who reach this character standard will receive the seal of God: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." *2 Tim. 2:19*.

The Lord declared that His name was in the sanctuary. We are told that both the sanctuary and the temple were built that His name might be there, or "for the name of the Lord God of Israel." *2 Chron. 6:7*. He had reference, of course, to His holy law, which was in the ark of the covenant in the most holy place. This law is a transcript of His character, and therefore is a manifestation of His name, a revelation of His nature. The same words that are used in the Scriptures to describe God's law are used to describe His character. The new covenant writes the law of God upon the "fleshy tables of the heart," so that we may "do by nature the things contained in the law." *2 Cor. 3:3; Rom. 2:14*. Those who have this experience will have the "Father's name written in their foreheads" (*Rev. 14:1*), and they delight to do His will.

It is evident, therefore, that only Christians can truly offer this petition. Unhallowed and unconsecrated people have no right to pray it, for it is the prayer of the sons of God. We must join the family of God through a spiritual birth before it becomes our privilege to pray this prayer.

The significance of this first petition of the Lord's prayer is beautifully summed up by the author of "*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*," page 158: "When you pray, 'Hallowed be Thy name,' you ask that it may be hallowed in this world, hallowed in you. God has acknowledged you before men and angels as His child; pray that you may do no dishonor to the 'worthy name by the which ye are called.' God sends you into the world as His representative. In every act of life you are to make manifest the name of God. This petition calls upon you to possess His character. You cannot hallow His name, you cannot represent Him to the world, unless in life and character you represent the very life and character of God. This you can do only through the acceptance of the grace and righteousness of Christ."

The Prayer of Citizens

"Thy kingdom come"

THE second petition of the Lord's prayer is, "Thy kingdom come." It logically follows the first, "Hallowed be Thy name," for the kingdom of God cannot come to us as individuals unless God's name is hallowed in our lives.

The kingdom of heaven comes only to holy people who recognize the holiness of the name, or character, of the King. Lightfoot quotes an axiom from the schools of the rabbis: "That prayer wherein there is not mention of the kingdom of God is not a prayer." Surely requests regarding the coming of the kingdom of God should find a prominent place in the petitions of Christians, for Christ and His kingdom are inseparable.

The whole purpose of the gospel is to restore the kingdom that was lost through sin. It is therefore called "The gospel of the kingdom." This is because the gospel centers in a person who is the King of the kingdom of heaven. In the beginning, the kingdom, or dominion, of the earth was given to Adam. Through transgression he forfeited his right to the earthly throne and dominion. He surrendered them to Satan, who became "the prince of this world" in his place. The purpose of the gospel is to regain and restore that which was lost. That was why the Son of God came into the world. Jesus said, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." *Luke 19:10*. Therefore we pray, "Thy kingdom come."

Prayer Not to Be Pointless

The gospel is the good news, or glad tidings, of the kingdom, and the burden of our preaching should also be the burden of our praying. Though our needs are manifold, Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." *Matt. 6:33*. This statement indicates where we should focus our praying as well as our preaching. The message of John the Baptist was summed up in the proclamation, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." *Matt. 3:2*.

This was also the message of Jesus. He began His ministry with the announcement, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Then follows the statement, "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom." *Matt. 4:17, 23*. This was also the commission which Jesus gave to His disciples as they were sent "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Jesus said to them, "As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." *Matt. 10:6, 7*. This should also be the dominant theme of those who carry out the great commission in proclaiming the everlasting gospel to "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

In answer to His own question, "Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?" (*Mark 4:30*) Jesus gave a series of parables which are known as "the parables of the kingdom." They were given to illustrate how sinners can enter the kingdom of God, and can have the kingdom enter them. They set forth those fundamental spiritual truths, the acceptance of which gives evidence of heavenly citizenship. The silent influence and progress of the kingdom of heaven in the individual life and in the world, is illustrated by the grain of mustard seed that grows into a great tree, or the leaven that permeates and transforms all that it touches, or the seed that produces a harvest after its kind. The value of the kingdom, Christ set forth in the parables of the treasure hid in the field, and the pearl of great price. To find the kingdom of heaven is like the discovery of untold wealth. It is like the thrilling experience of passing from abject poverty to fabulous riches and luxury. Because the kingdom of God is of such priceless value to us, it should be given the first place in our affections and in our seeking. Jesus declared, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." *Matt. 6:21*. When the kingdom of heaven becomes our chief treasure, then our interest and prayers will center there.

In the primary sense the King of the kingdom of heaven is the Father, for it is to Him that the prayer, "Thy kingdom come," is addressed. But because the Son of God became the Son of man, or the second Adam, and also the Son of David, the Father has appointed Him as the head of the earthly kingdom. Christ is therefore the "Prince of the kings of the earth," the "King of kings, and Lord of lords." *Rev. 1:5; 19:16*. Christ redeemed Adam's failure and took Adam's place. Since Calvary He is therefore the true "Prince of this world." Christ and the kingdom of God are inseparable. The coming of the kingdom in any of its phases involves the coming of the King.

Dean Trench appropriately says: "The Lord is King, not borrowing this title from the kings of the earth, but having lent His own title to them; and not the name only, but having so ordered, that all true rule and government upon earth, with its righteous laws, its stable ordinances, its punishment and its grace, its majesty and its terror, should tell of Him and of His kingdom which ruleth over all-so that 'kingdom of God' is not, in fact, a figurative expression, but most literal: it is rather the earthly kingdoms and the earthly kings that are figures and shadows of the true." - "*Notes on the Parables*," p. 14.

Seeking a Better Order

The very petition, "Thy kingdom come," is an acknowledgment that we cannot of ourselves *go to* the kingdom; it must *come to us*. We can only *seek* or *pray* for its coming. It also indicates that we are by nature outside the kingdom, without citizenship in it. In offering this petition, we remind ourselves of the fall and subsequent alienation from God. By virtue of the fall of Adam we are by nature members of a lost race. We are rebels in a revolted world, of which a usurper is the prince and ruler. Our prayer is therefore offered to the King of a kingdom foreign to this sinful world. It expresses the longing of our hearts that God would visit and redeem us from the dominion of sin and Satan.

There are two phases, or manifestations, of the kingdom of God-that of grace, and that of glory. During the reign of sin, the gospel of the kingdom ministers grace, or unmerited favor, to repentant sinners. They are therefore under the dominion of grace. During this time, Christ, as our High Priest and Mediator, is seated upon "the throne of grace." When the gospel of grace has completed its mission, the dominion of glory will be established. The church militant will then become the church triumphant. This takes place at the second advent of Christ. "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory." Then follows a description of the separation of the righteous from among the wicked, which reaches its climax in the statement: "Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." *Matt. 25:31, 34*.

The kingdom of grace is set up in this rebel world to win subjects for the kingdom of glory that will bear rule over the redeemed world. The first is a gradual process that reaches its climax in the latter. Both phases of God's

kingdom are called "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." *2 Peter 1:11*. The kingdom of heaven is therefore both present and future-present in its spiritual aspects, and future in its manifestations of power and glory.

The kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory are really the same kingdom under two different conditions. The petition of the Lord's prayer includes them both—the kingdom that is brought to us by the preaching of the gospel, and the kingdom that will be ushered in with the coming of the King "with power and great glory." The first is incomplete without the latter, and the latter impossible without the first. The kingdom that comes as the result of the revelation and hallowing of God's name, must include its final form and manifestation. While the kingdom of grace operates quietly in the hearts of individuals and among the nations of earth, the kingdom of glory will overthrow and supplant all earthly kingdoms, and it will continue forever. (See *Dan. 2:44; 7: 13, 14, 27; Isa. 9:7*.)

The Jews did not understand that there were two phases of God's kingdom. The teaching that the kingdom of God is first established by the enthronement of the King in the individual heart was entirely contrary to their ideas and teachings concerning the Messianic kingdom. It therefore confused and baffled them. To them God was too awful in majesty and too remote in person to dwell with man or in man. Righteousness, in their estimation, was mechanical and legalistic observance of rites and ceremonies. Many professed Christians are likewise confused because they fail to distinguish between the two phases of the same kingdom.

The Pharisees came to Jesus one day and demanded of Him "when the kingdom of God should come." Jesus surprised them by saying that "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation," or "with outward show," as is the marginal reading. He then added to their astonishment by saying, "The kingdom of God is within you," or "among you," according to the marginal reading. *Luke 17:20, 21*. The kingdom would first manifest itself in inward holiness rather than in outward show. It meant a transformed heart rather than a reformed nation. The basis of heavenly citizenship is a change of character and not a reorganization of the governments and institutions of men. The kingdom within must precede the kingdom without. The kingdom of heaven was among the Jews, and they did not recognize it because of their false ideas of its nature and of the advent of the King.

Anthony C. Deane has beautifully summed up the meaning of the kingdom of God in its present phase: "To open the gateway of the soul that the glory

of God might pour through it, to let the inward rush of power dominate the life until every thought and act became its outcome, to merge human will joyously in the divine will until a single motive co-ordinated all existence-that, it seems, was the life which Jesus lived, such the life He described to others under the figure of entering the kingdom of God." - *"Our Father,"* p. 63.

A Present Translation

The kingdom within is the work of the gospel of transforming grace in our individual hearts. In the request that God's kingdom come, We are asking, first of all, that heaven, with its dominion of grace, peace, joy, and righteousness, come to us here on earth *now*. It is a plea that the principles of the kingdom of heaven shall rule in our hearts while we live in this present evil world. It is a petition that we may now experience a translation from the kingdom of darkness "into the kingdom of His dear Son," and thus become "partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." *Col. 1:13, 12*. We can never be translated physically into the kingdom of glory at the second advent of Christ unless we have been translated spiritually into His kingdom of grace before He returns. In this prayer we ask that all of the inheritance of the saints that we can enjoy while in this rebel world, be given us.

The results of this translation through character transformation have been beautifully stated by Ellen G. White: "By the life we live through the grace of Christ, the character is formed. The original loveliness begins to be restored to the soul. The attributes of the character of Christ are imparted, and the image of the Divine begins to shine forth. The faces of men and women who walk and work with God, express the peace of heaven. They are surrounded with the atmosphere of heaven. For these souls the kingdom of heaven has begun." "As through Jesus we enter into rest, heaven begins here. We respond to His invitation, Come, learn of Me, and in thus coming we begin the life eternal. Heaven is a ceaseless approaching to God through Christ. The longer we are in the heaven of bliss, the more and still more of glory will be opened to us; and the more we know of God, the more intense will be our happiness." "All that human nature can bear, we may receive here." - *"The Desire of Ages,"* pp. 312, 331.

The complete answer to the petition under consideration brings all other blessings in its train. It includes an answer to all else for which we pray. It involves the hallowing of His name and the doing of His will, not alone in

the future, but "in earth" now. It also includes the supplying of all our temporal needs, pardon for our transgressions, guidance for our footsteps, and deliverance from all evil.

"Christendom" is a contraction of "Christ's kingdom." There can be no kingdom without a king, a throne, a territory or dominion, and subjects over whom to rule. The kingdom within involves the enthroning of King Jesus in the heart, to have complete dominion over the kingdom of the individual life. "Christ in you, the hope of glory," is the gospel in miniature. There is no other way for Christ's kingdom to come, and for the, final restoration of the kingdom given to Adam. The grace of Christ must first enter our hearts and have complete dominion over our souls. In Revelation 3:20 Jesus the King is pictured at the door of the throne room of the heart, pleading and knocking for entrance. The modern church is keeping the King of the kingdom of heaven outside the door-the kingdom cannot come into our hearts without the King. Is it any wonder that the church is described as being "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," spiritually, and that her affection is "lukewarm" and halfhearted? (See *Rev. 3: 17, 16.*)

To some the coming of the kingdom is merely the progress and prosperity of the church, as first taught by Augustine. To others it has no further meaning than the transformation of character, the overcoming of evil. To still others it is the second advent of Christ to reign as "the King of glory." But none of these is sufficient in itself. The kingdom of heaven must include them all. The kingdom of God is much more comprehensive than is the church. It must include the results of the first as well as the second advent of Christ. The spirit and scope of the Lord's prayer is exceeding broad and limitless.

We do not become citizens of the kingdom of God by natural birth, as in earthly kingdoms, but by spiritual birth and a voluntary surrender to the sovereignty of its King. This experience is called birth because it is the beginning of a new life with new relationships. Birth is never of our own originating, nor is it brought about by our own power. We cannot give birth to ourselves, either physically or spiritually. The subjects of God's kingdom will demonstrate their citizenship by their conduct. The laws of the kingdom expressing the will of the King will govern their lives.

Citizenship is a gift obtained on the basis of grace rather than works, but the citizen demonstrates his citizenship by what he does. If he is a member of the kingdom of God he will eat, and drink, and talk, and act according to its

ruling principles. The inward character and the outward evidence of the kingdom of heaven cannot be separated.

The King of heaven came to earth to establish His kingdom at the time when the Roman Empire ruled the world. Its laws governed all the peoples of so-called civilization. To be a Roman citizen was considered the greatest of earthly privileges. Into this atmosphere of pomp and power and earthly glory, Jesus came unheralded by blast of trumpet or marching armies. His kingdom, in contrast with all that had preceded it, was set up without bloodshed or violence. His weapons were faith and righteousness. His conquests of human hearts were accomplished by the power of love. It was thus diverse from all earthly kingdoms.

Of the kingdom of Christ Napoleon is reported to have said: "Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I founded great empires. But upon what did the creations of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus Christ alone founded His empire upon love, and millions would die for Him today."

Christ raises the citizens of His kingdom to sonship and rulership. His promise is: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne." *Rev. 3:21*.

The citizens of the kingdom of God are made up of all classes, races, and nationalities. They are bound together in love and unity by ties that are closer and stronger than blood kinship. All efforts of earthly kingdoms to amalgamate various races and nations into a single unit have always ended in failure. But in God's kingdom "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all." *Col. 3:11*. His kingdom is perfect and eternal because it is founded on perfect and eternal principles. "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom." *Heb. 1:8*.

It must be evident to all genuine Christians that their greatest need is the answer to this petition of the Lord's prayer. Of this need Marcus Dods aptly says: "What we daily find our need of is a ruler, and a ruler loving enough to give us all confidence in Him; firm enough to support us when we weary, and compel us to the right path when we waver; powerful enough to do what man cannot do, to change our hearts and deliver us from evil. Such a ruler God offers to us, and such a ruler we choose when we pray, 'Thy kingdom come.' " - *The Prayer That Teaches to Pray*, pp. 70, 71.

"Even So, Come"

The final and complete answer to the prayer for the coming of the kingdom of God will be the consummation of redemption, when the earth is restored to its Edenic beauty and glory and returned to the redeemed sons and daughters of Adam. The second advent of Christ is the climax of the ages and the fruition of the Christian's hope. It will bring the full answer to all our prayers.

Of the great event that climaxes the work of the gospel and brings an end to the reign of sin, Adolph Saphir truthfully says: "No doctrine, not even the fundamental doctrine of justification by faith, has assigned to it in the inspired word so large a place as the doctrine of the second coming of Christ and His kingdom. It is not confined to a few isolated passages, it is not the subject of one or two books of Scripture, but it pervades the whole Bible.... In the apostolic churches the hope of Christ's coming was the joy and strength of Christians. They realized that they belonged not to this world or age; they waited for their absent Lord; and the martyrs were able to suffer and die with joy unspeakable and full of glory, because they held fast the promise given to all that overcome, and they looked forward to the glory of Christ in His kingdom. Primitive Christians were unworldly, because they were otherworldly, citizens of the age to come." - *"The Lord's Prayer,"* pp. 174-176.

The second petition of the Lord's prayer must include a fervent appeal for Christ to return in power and great glory. As this great event draws nearer, His waiting disciples should the more earnestly pray, "Thy kingdom come," and then join wholeheartedly in the response of the early church, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

THY KINGDOM COME!

THY kingdom come. Thus day by day
We lift our hands to God and pray;
But who has ever duly weighed
The meaning of the words He said?
Thy kingdom come. O day of joy,
When praise shall every tongue employ;
When hate and strife and war shall cease,
And man with man shall be at peace.
Jesus shall reign on Zion's hill,
And all the earth with glory fill;
His word shall Paradise restore,
And sin and death afflict no more.
God's holy will shall then be done
By all who live beneath the sun;
For saints shall then as angels be,
All changed to immortality.

-Selected.

The Prayer of Submission

"Thy will be done"

THE third petition of the Lord's prayer is, "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth." *Luke 11:2*. This is the climax of the first division, that which looks away toward God and heaven and has to do with things divine. Each petition follows in its proper order. After the salutation, in which the God of heaven is recognized as our Father, we ask that His name, or character, be hallowed in us. This is accomplished when His kingdom is established in our hearts and He is made the King of our lives. The evidence of God's rulership over the dominion of our souls is complete submission to His will.

This petition is inseparable from the one that immediately precedes it. Praying for the coming of the kingdom of God implies a willingness to submit to the will of the King. Before we can enter the kingdom of heaven in its final and glorious phase, the principles of the kingdom must enter our hearts and have dominion over our souls. In this experience every provision is made for the fulfillment of the divine will.

The evidence of citizenship in a kingdom is obedience to the will of the king and the laws that govern the kingdom. The coming of the kingdom of grace into our hearts transfers our citizenship to heaven. Since we are still in a revolted world where God's will is almost universally disregarded, we need earnestly to pray for complete submission to the sovereignty of the King, as an evidence of our heavenly citizenship. No petition needs to be more frequently repeated than this. In the heavenly kingdom the will of God is absolutely supreme, and to learn the lesson of complete surrender to that will is the severe discipline of heavenly citizenship in this rebel world. It is the hardest of all lessons to learn.

The purpose of the gospel is to give us victory over the spirit of rebellion that rules the human race. Rebels cannot enter the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of God cannot enter them. The kingdom and dominion were lost through disobedience, and only the obedient will be permitted to enter the Paradise restored. The person who presumes on God's mercy while knowingly transgressing His law is trifling with his eternal destiny.

Regardless of his profession or good works he is without a passport to heaven. In no uncertain language Jesus made this plain when He said: "Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? Arid then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." *Matt. 7:21-23*. Jesus then drove His statement home by the parable of the two builders.

What Christ was in this rebel world, His disciples are to be. He spent more than thirty years in human flesh, and "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." His submission to the will of His heavenly Father was so complete that His heavenly citizenship was never canceled, or even interfered with in the slightest degree. He fulfilled the divine will while on earth just as He had in heaven before He came to earth. The change of environment did not alter His relations to the law or the government of God. The character and conduct of Christ remained unchanged during His earthly pilgrimage.

In speaking of the purpose of His advent, Jesus said: "I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." *John 6:38*. This was His chief ambition, the first object of His seeking. He said, "I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me." *John 5:30*. He said that obedience to His Father's will was His very meat. It was His life, the thing for which He lived. He had no other reason for being in this world. In fulfilling this purpose Jesus was preeminently successful. At the close of His ministry He told the Father that He had completed the mission for which He came to earth. All of the efforts of Satan to turn Him from His purpose had been thwarted. "It is finished," was the triumphant cry of a conqueror.

Christ is our example. He came into this world to show us the way from death to life; from darkness to light; from the dominion of evil to the sovereignty of righteousness. Because of the completeness of the provision made for us, no earthly circumstances can excuse us from the same kind of submission to the will of our heavenly Father. For such obedience Jesus asks us to pray, knowing that we cannot render it of ourselves. He never asks us to do the impossible. All of His commands and promises are enablings. Provision has been fully made, so that what Jesus told us to request of the Father may be ours by experience.

A Reign of Law

The sovereignty of God is that of law and order. His will is defined by law. The will of any king or government is established by law and is made known to the citizens by the laws enacted to govern the kingdom. Since there can be no kingdom without law, the kingdom of grace must be a rule of law. The gospel does not alter or abolish the decalogue or lessen its authority in the least particular. Jesus made this clear in His statement recorded in *Matthew 5:17-19*. He emphatically denied that His advent had any effect on the binding claims of the law of God. Not even the dot over an "i" or the cross of a "t" would pass from the eternal and unchangeable rule of man's conduct and the standard of God's righteousness. He further declared that those who transgressed the least part of this moral code would be reckoned as little by all the inhabitants of heaven, and that those who faithfully practiced it would be called great.

The modern teaching that grace supplants law, that faith is a substitute for practice, is a fallacy. Paul asked the question, "Do we then make void the law through faith?" His answer to his own question is, "God forbid: yea, we establish the law." *Rom. 3:31*. This is a most emphatic denial that the exercise of faith makes void the demands and authority of the law. Further than that, he affirms that it is through faith that the binding claims of the law are established. It is the purpose of the gospel to set up the kingdom of heaven in us, and with it the law of the kingdom expressing the will of the King.

Sin is divinely defined as the transgression, or violation, of God's law (*1 John 3:4*), and the mission of the gospel is to take away sin, so that we may be under the grace, or unmerited favor, of God. Paul also drives this fact home with a question: "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" He answers: "God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" *Rom. 6:1, 2*. In the light of this clear statement, how can anyone say that the gift of grace takes away the necessity of law?

The very work of the kingdom of grace is to establish the law of the kingdom of heaven in the heart, so that God's will is done in us as it is done in heaven. When through the new birth we are brought into the new-covenant relationship with the Father, the Holy Spirit writes the divine precepts upon the "fleshy tables of the heart," so that we "do by nature the things contained in the law." C. M. Gordon beautifully describes this change, together with the relation between law and grace: "The moral law,

written on perishable tables of stone and confirmed by the thunders of Sinai, is now written on the imperishable tables of the heart and confirmed by the thunders of Calvary.... Therefore, no subject of the government of Christ dare continue in sin that grace may abound. Grace thunders against sin as loudly, or even more loudly, than does law.... Let it never be forgotten that, while we cannot be saved by law without grace, no more can we be saved by grace without law; while we cannot be saved by morality without Christianity, no more can we be saved by Christianity without morality. In Christianity a wonderful thing has taken place: justice and mercy have celebrated their nuptials; law and grace have kissed each other; Sinai and Calvary have embraced each other."

In this petition we ask that our obedience shall measure up to that of inhabitants of the unfallen universe. "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth." This applies, of course, to all three petitions of the first division of the prayer. It is in this earth under the environment of sin that we ask that God's name be hallowed, His kingdom established, and His will accomplished. In the same sense "daily" applies to all of the four petitions of the second division. The entire prayer is to be prayed and answered in us every day as long as we are on earth.

We are inclined to excuse ourselves from perfect obedience because we live "in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation" "in this present world," instead of in heaven. But it is in just such a place that we are to do God's will after the manner of those in heaven, where sin does not abound. "As" calls for the same cheerful and willing spirit, as well as for the same fullness, constancy, and perfection. It indicates that when the prayer is fully answered, obedience and loyalty will be as universal on this earth as in heaven; that heaven will again set up its dominion in this rebel world. When the gospel has completed its mission and God's eternal purpose has been fully carried out, the entire world will be in complete submission to His will. The earth will again be a part of heaven, and God's moral law will be as perfectly obeyed by animate beings as are His natural laws by the inanimate universe. The stellar heavens move in perfect obedience to the divine laws that govern them. Astronomers tell us that the earth, in making its yearly journey around the sun, comes back to its appointed starting place without the loss of one ten thousandth of a second of time. The precision with which the heavenly bodies follow their trackless course through illimitable space is almost uncanny. But the strictness of their obedience is no greater than is that of the celestial beings who dwell on the unnumbered millions of unfallen worlds.

But this is the very standard of obedience that we ask for ourselves when we pray the petition now under consideration. Fortunately we are given a description of the measure of obedience to the divine will as practiced by the unfallen beings in heaven: "The Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens; and His kingdom ruleth over all. Bless the Lord, ye His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye His hosts; ye ministers of His, that do His pleasure." *Ps. 103:19-21*. To do the will of God is the greatest pleasure of the angelic host as well as the highest service that can engage their powers. But this service is never rendered in the spirit of legality. Their union with the Creator is perfect, and to them obedience is a pleasure rather than a drudgery. Their love for God makes their allegiance a joy. Jesus asked His disciples to pray that their obedience may be of the same high order.

True Motive of Obedience

The only obedience that God accepts or even recognizes is that impelled by the motive of love. The love of Christ will always constrain us to do His will, and restrain us from doing evil. Jesus said, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." *John 14:15*. "If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments," is another translation. This indicates that those who do not love Him will not, and in fact, cannot, be obedient to His will. Obedience therefore is not only the test of discipleship and citizenship, but also the evidence of love. Continuing, Jesus said: "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." *John 14:21, 23*. It is never the greatness of the work we do, but the love with which it is done, the motive that underlies the action, that determines its value. It is the service of love that God highly esteems, and when this is lacking, the form of godliness, with its rites and ceremonies, is an offense to Him.

The disciple whom Jesus especially loved thus defines love to both God and man: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous." *1 John 5:2, 3*. Love service is always a delight. It is never a burden or a sacrifice to serve those we love. "Love is the fulfilling of the law" is written on both

tables of the decalogue, which regulates man's duties to God and His relations with his fellow men. When the law of love is written in the heart, it is a pleasure to obey God, and we naturally treat our neighbors as we would wish them to treat us. This was the sort of obedience that characterized the earthly sojourn of Christ. Through the prophet He said: "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." *Ps. 40:8.*

That delightful obedience to a law written in the heart is the very essence of righteousness by faith is evident from *Isaiah 51:7*: "Hearken unto Me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is My law." This is the new-covenant experience that brings salvation from sin. Love completely fulfills all the requirements of the law that is written in the heart. In contrast to this experience, salvation by works is the attempt to meet the demands of the law written only on stone. It is the same law, expressing the same sovereign will. It is the basis of both the old and the new covenant. The difference between the old and the new covenant is the difference between seeking justification by works and seeking justification by faith. All depends upon whether the law is written on the tables of stone or on the tables of the heart; whether it is our obedience or the obedience of Christ. Through imputed righteousness, or justification, the law transgressions of the past are forgiven and covered, and through imparted righteousness, or sanctification, we are given the divine nature, so that Christ, the Living Law, lives out His own life of perfect obedience in and through us. (See *Rom. 8:1-4.*) This is the "good news" or "glad tidings" which we call the gospel.

"Thy will be done," like the gospel itself, has, as well as a negative meaning, a positive meaning, which is the more important of the two. It not only calls for passive resignation under the pressure of temptation, or of fortitude in meeting affliction and persecution. It is also a call to action; a prayer for active service in fulfillment of the divine will. In this petition we pray that we may fulfill God's purpose in our daily lives; that we may do the work He has given us to do. It is not enough to *submit* to His discipline; we must also *commit* our talents to Him for service. Submission to His will must include obedience to the commission to finish His work. Jesus had both of these meanings in mind when in the Garden of Gethsemane He prayed that the will of His Father rather than His own will be done. It was more than a prayer for grace to bear the tortures of the sinner's death; it included a plea for help to finish the plan of redemption.

We Are Free to Choose

The place of the greatest struggle in the Christian warfare is the surrender of the will. By nature man is self-willed and stubborn. The prophet describes him as being "obstinate," with a brow like brass and a neck like an iron sinew. It seems almost impossible to change his mind or turn him from his course. He obstinately and stubbornly carries out his own will and does as he pleases, regardless of the consequences. Saphir declared that "the will of man is invariably opposed to his own salvation, and to God."

It is the human will that shuts or opens the gate to the kingdom of God. It might be called the hinge on which the gate of destiny swings. We are free moral agents with the power of choice. The Lord will never force our wills. We must make our own decisions.

The hope of many professed Christians that God will somehow work out His will for them without their cooperation is a futile hope. The doctrine of predestination and foreordination is an excuse for human indifference and indolence. Our wills must be brought into harmony with God's will and our lives into conformity with His character. In this work we have an important part to act.

"Whosoever will" is an essential part of the gospel invitation. The benefits of the gospel and the issue of the conflict with sin depend wholly upon the action of the will. Kant declared that nothing is wrong in the world but wrong will, and nothing is right but right will. "To will aright is to will what God wills. Christianity is, therefore, not a thing of the emotions. It is a thing of the will."-*Chappell*.

It was over the surrender of the will that Christ fought His greatest battle in the Garden of Gethsemane. This is what produced the bloody sweat. But in it all Jesus was able to say, "Not My will, but Thine, be done." The prayer He taught His disciples was fulfilled in His own behalf. The divine will was done in Him while He was on earth, after the similitude of celestial obedience. Likewise the greatest battle that will ever have to be fought by man is the surrender of self to the will of God, the yielding of the heart to the sovereignty of His love. For the person who loves God enough to live wholly within the dominion of His will, "God is able to change his losses into gains, and his crosses into crowns."

It is therefore evident that our greatest need is to understand the true force of the will. The power of decision is the power that governs our lives. Everything depends upon the right action of our wills. Through the power

of choice rightly exercised, the character may be completely transformed. By fully yielding the will to Christ, we ally ourselves with the power that is omnipotent. It is above all principalities and powers. By request, strength will come from above to hold us steadfast, and through constant surrender to God we will be enabled to live the new life. God grant that the prayer, Thy will be done in us, as it is in heaven, may be fully answered in us now in this evil world, and finally for the world itself, when it is rescued from the thralldom of sin.

"Thy will be done," though I may not know
The way it is best my feet should go;
I walk in the valley, and cannot see
The things that before in my pathway be.
But God from the mountaintop looketh o'er
The valley, and knoweth what lies before.
He leadeth me, and I follow on,
Ever repeating, "Thy will be done."

ANSWERED PRAYER

I ASKED for bread; God gave a stone instead;
 Yet while I pillowed there my aching head,
 The angels made a ladder of my dreams
 Which upward to celestial mountains led.
 And when I woke before the morning's beams,
 Around my resting place the manna lay;
 And, praising God, I went upon my way,
 For I was fed.

I asked for strength; for with the noontide heat
 I fainted, while the reapers, singing sweet,
 Went forward with rich sheaves I could not bear.
 Then came the Master, with His bloodstained feet,
 And lifted me with sympathetic care;
 And on His arm I leaned till all was done,
 And I stood with the rest at set of sun,
 My task complete.

I asked for light; around me closed the night,
 Nor guiding star met my bewildered sight,
 For storm clouds gathered in a tempest near;
 Yet in the lightning's blazing, roaring flight
 I saw the way before me straight and clear.
 What though His leading pillar was on fire,
 And not the sunbeam of my heart's desire?
 My path was bright.

God answers prayer; sometimes when hearts are weak,
 He gives the very gifts believers seek.
 But often faith must learn a deeper rest,
 And trust God's silence when He does not speak;
 For He whose name is Love will send the best.
 Stars may burn out, nor mountain walls endure,
 But God is true, His promises are sure
 To those who seek.

-Selected.

The Prayer for Bread

"Give us this day our daily bread"

IN our study of the Lord's prayer we now begin the consideration of the second section, which has to do with *us* and *our* daily needs. The first section of the model prayer deals with the name and kingdom and will of God—His name should be honored, His kingdom established, and His will performed. When we thus make God's service our first interest, we may ask with confidence that our own needs may be supplied. Those who renounce self and surrender all to the will of God become members of the family of heaven, and everything in the Father's house belongs to them. All the vast treasures of heaven are open to the sons of God. The promise is that if "ye are Christ's," "all things are yours." *1 Cor. 3:23, 21*. The sons of God are "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." *Rom. 8:17*.

And so, with faith and confidence we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." Bread to sustain physical health is a *daily* need. Other necessities may be supplied once for all, or on occasions far apart, but food to sustain the body must be supplied every day. The Greek word translated "daily" in the Lord's prayer, occurs nowhere else in the Bible. It means necessary or essential bread. "Give us this day our needful bread," is the marginal reading of the American Revised Version. This is virtually a quotation from *Proverbs 30:8*: "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me." The margin indicates that asking for the food that is convenient for us is a request for our allowance. A noted Greek scholar declares that the petition is for "bread sufficient for our sustenance and support."

We virtually ask that we be supplied each day with the food that the day's necessities require. We ask our great Benefactor for the quantity and quality of food needed to maintain the maximum of health and strength by which we can best glorify God and serve our fellow men. The prayer is that our daily *needs* be supplied, and not our daily *wants*. There is often a vast difference between what we need and what we desire. God has asked us to

pray for, and has promised to supply, only "our needful bread," and that only for "this day."

The request is for a moderate supply restricted to actual needs. God promises neither luxuries nor a superabundance. This is forcefully illustrated by the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, and of the rich fool. Life does not consist in the abundance of a man's earthly possessions, We are admonished to be content with what we have, because "godliness with contentment is great gain." Too much is even more dangerous than too little. Clement of Alexandria compares a man's possessions to his shoes. They must exactly fit his feet, since they are uncomfortable and cumbersome when too large, and painful and unbearable when too small. What God gives should be used to His glory and not wasted. Perverted appetites should never be pampered, and extravagance is never justified in a Christian.

"Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost" applies to Christian housewives at the close of each meal as verily as to the disciples after the feeding of the multitude beside the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Wastefulness is an evidence of failure to recognize God as the giver. The realization that nothing given us is deserved, will produce thankfulness for everything received and will lead to a careful conservation of all resources.

There is no promise that tomorrow's needs will be supplied today, for food supplies only a present need. Many of the necessities of life are more or less permanently taken care of for the future as well as for the present. Our homes and their furnishings do not need to be replenished daily. The same clothes, books, and cars that we use today will also be used tomorrow. The knowledge gained today will continue to serve us in the future. But food provides for a very temporary need, and the same kind and amount of food eaten today must be eaten again tomorrow and day by day through life. We cannot get the benefit of tomorrow's food today; therefore, we do not need it until tomorrow comes. In limiting the request to the needs of the day there is engendered a childlike trust and dependence. Just as a child depends upon his parents for his daily food, with no thought of tomorrow and its needs and no fear that the supply will fail, so the Christian by this petition shows the same loving trust in his heavenly Father and dependence on His continued bounties.

The best illustration of the plan of God to supply food as it is needed daily, was given in the daily falling of the manna. One of the instincts of human nature is to hoard for the future, and some of the Israelites attempted to

gather more manna than was needed for the day. The hoarded manna intended for tomorrow's needs spoiled before tomorrow arrived. Only on the sixth day, or the day of preparation, was the food for the morrow's needs to be gathered, because on the Sabbath "the corn of heaven" did not fall. However, it had to be eaten on the Sabbath as on other days. Those who work diligently during the six working days of the week will be able to gather sufficient food to supply the needs of the body for the entire week. There is no legitimate excuse for common labor on the Sabbath.

Nature is filled with examples of God's daily care for His creatures. With the exception of man, no living creature seems to worry about the needs of tomorrow. In the animal and vegetable kingdoms there is the utmost confidence that tomorrow's needs will be supplied when tomorrow comes. In the natural world there is no fretting and fuming for fear that the future will bring famine or starvation. Jesus made use of illustrations from nature to enforce His lessons of trust and confidence in our heavenly Father's love and care for His children. He told His disciples to "behold the fowls of the air," and then not to worry over what they should eat or drink or wear, since "your heavenly Father feedeth them." He asked, "Are ye not much better than they?" Jesus told them to "consider the lilies of the field, how they grow," and then added, "Shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" (See *Matt. 6:26-30*.)

But animals and birds do not wait for God to place the food in their mouths. They cheerfully and energetically do their part—that of gathering the food He has so bountifully provided. Sparrows are not lazy. They are busy all day long gathering their daily food, but they are happy and trustful while they gather. The sluggard can find no excuse in nature for his indolence. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise," said Solomon. *Prov. 6:6*. Most birds migrate during the various seasons to places where the necessary food is supplied daily. Many animals gather and store in summer the food that will be needed during the winter. The Creator provides more than is needed during the harvest season for that very purpose, so that the daily needs of men and animals that cannot conveniently migrate may be supplied.

The Lord expects man to have at least as much good sense as the birds and the beasts, and to provide during the time of harvest enough food for the winter months. This kind of provision for the future is not contrary to the fourth petition of the Lord's prayer. Indeed, it is God's only way of providing our daily bread. The person who daily seeks God for strength to

earn his daily bread in the sweat of his face, will make a better use of what he thus earns. "We lift our empty hands to heaven, and God lays work upon them," is a proverbial saying. The prayer for daily bread is therefore not inconsistent with the storing up of food in time of plenty for a time of scarcity. Joseph was divinely directed to gather grain during the plentiful years in Egypt to supply the physical needs of the nation during the seven years of famine. That the prayer indicates that the daily bread is to be supplied through fruitful labor is evident from the fact that what we receive without labor is not ours. We ask that we may be given "*our* daily bread."

The Great Provider

This petition recognizes God as the great provider of all our needs. "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." *Phil. 4:19*. Our heavenly Father is immensely rich, and He is abundantly able to care for His children. His message to us is: "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." *Ps. 37:3*. To the person who walks in the paths of righteousness the promise is made: "Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." *Isa. 33:16*. God assures His people that "they shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied." *Ps. 37:19*. David said: "I have been young, and now I am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." Verse 25.

In this petition we ask the Lord to give us that which, above everything else, we are inclined to feel we can obtain by our own efforts and which most of our time is used in acquiring. But the fact that we must labor to gather the daily bread for which we ask, is no evidence that the Lord does not provide it. The psalmist said: "The eyes of all wait upon Thee; and Thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest Thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." "That Thou givest them they gather: Thou openest Thine hand, they are filled with good." *Ps. 145:15, 16; 104: 28*. The Lord has promised that seedtime and harvest will not fail. We must cooperate with God in the answering of our own prayers for our daily sustenance. When we realize that there are almost two billion people in the world who are daily supplied with the various kinds of food that their physical needs require, we must be impressed with the faithfulness of our God in supplying the needful bread to both the just and the unjust. This is especially true when we realize how easily something could happen to cut off the food supply and depopulate the earth.

Man cannot make his food. Food must be given life before it can impart life. Since God is the life-giver and the only source of life, food is a gift from God. When we ask for "our daily bread," we do not ask for what belongs to another, but only for our portion of what has been provided for all living creatures. We ask only for the food that is for the good of our bodies, that we may eat "for strength, and not for drunkenness." The granting of this petition cannot include food that is injurious to our bodies. "Our" also indicates a dependence on one another for the necessities of life. Especially in this age, with its complicated economic system, our daily bread is produced by the labors of many. We ask that their needs may also be supplied. The prayer, like everything Christian, is wholly unselfish.

Includes Spiritual Food

Many of the best Bible students of ancient and modern times believe that the "daily bread" of this petition refers wholly to spiritual food for the sustenance of the soul. Hence it would harmonize with the other six requests which deal only with spiritual things.

But whether this is true or not, it is evident that it must include the bread of life by which we live spiritually. "The bread that perisheth" is a type, and is therefore a constant reminder of "that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." Godet declared that "in order to serve God it is first of all necessary that we live." Nature is filled with parables of spiritual things, and the Lord intends that the necessity of daily bread to sustain the physical being should be a constant reminder of the daily needs of the soul.

On the banks of the Jordan, Moses reminded the Israelites of the lessons of the wilderness journey. He said regarding God's dealings with them: "He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." *Deut. 8:3*. Christ quoted this text to Satan when he tempted Him to end His fast by turning a stone into bread. (See *Matt. 4:4*.) It is evident that there is a close relation between physical and spiritual food, just as there is between material and spiritual prosperity. (See *3 John 2*.) The health of the body and the health of the soul are closely related.

Jesus told the Jews that He is "the living bread which came down from heaven" and that "if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever." He

explained this statement by saying that "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." *John 6:51, 63*. Jesus is the heavenly manna. He is our daily bread, our daily portion. The living Word is the living bread by which man lives the life that is more abundant. This bread of life must include the word of God in its written form—the Scriptures. We should partake of His word daily, just as we partake daily of the bread that sustains our physical bodies. The prophet said: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy name, O Lord God of hosts." *Jer. 15:16*.

The petition must therefore include the cry of the soul for "the needful bread" by which it is sustained and by which it grows. This spiritual food is so essential that its neglect means weakness and death. How much more important and necessary is the food that sustains the soul and ministers to our eternal welfare! Job said: "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food." *Job 23:12*.

Is it not strange that we should be so neglectful of our daily spiritual food when it is so much more important than physical food? Is it any wonder that so many professed Christians are spiritual weaklings and dwarfs? We can no more prosper spiritually on a starvation diet than we can prosper physically on such a diet.

The prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," is a plea for a fresh supply of spiritual food every day. The physical food we ate yesterday will not suffice for today; we need a fresh supply daily. The same is true of spiritual food. The supply of the bread of life is inexhaustible, and every day we should draw from the treasure house of eternal truth something new and fresh to vitalize our souls. This is the only means by which "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." *Prov. 4:18*. But while God provides our spiritual food, we must gather it and appropriate it to our soul's needs. This gathering requires diligence. As in the physical realm, the indolent are in want. The gathering of food to sustain the spiritual life requires labor. Jesus said, "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." *John 6:27*. He also said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." *John 4:34*.

That which is the most important should always be placed first in our life's program. We are promised that if we seek first that which is eternal, the necessary material things of life will be added. A divine blessing is pronounced upon those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they

shall be filled." *Matt. 5:6*. Complete satisfaction is promised only to those who hunger and thirst for spiritual things. Food and drink are wonderfully satisfying to those who are hungry and thirsty. Hungry people do not hesitate to ask for bread, and by them food is greatly appreciated. Our greatest need today is a recognition of our spiritual necessities, and a hunger for the bread of heaven that will not rest satisfied until the soul is fully supplied by the great Benefactor of mankind, who hears and answers the daily petitions of His children.

FORGIVE

THINK gently of the erring one,
And let us not forget
However darkly stained by sin,
He is thy brother yet.

Heir of the same inheritance,
Child of the selfsame God;
He hath but stumbled in the path
We have in weakness trod.

Forget not thou hast often sinned,
And sinful yet must be;
Deal gently with the erring one,
As God has dealt with thee.

-Mrs. Fletcher.

The Prayer for Pardon

"Forgive us our debts"

THE fourth petition of the Lord's prayer reminds us that we are dependent creatures in need of daily food; the fifth gives evidence of repentance and contrition because we are sinners in need of daily forgiveness. In one we ask God to *give*, and in the other we ask Him to forgive-to "forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." Our Father in heaven is not only the *giver* of bread; He is also the *forgiver* of sin. The needy child cries, "Give," and the sinful child cries, "Forgive." Bread represents our temporal needs, and pardon our spiritual needs, and God supplies them both. For this reason the two petitions are closely related.

Asking not only reminds us of what we have already received, but it is an evidence of our dependence. It also reminds us of our unworthy conduct toward the One on whom we are dependent. It is unthinkable that we should seek help of one we have wronged without at least some form of apology in which we demonstrate our humility and shame. The question of sin and our relation to God must be adjusted before we can make the proper use of the strength derived from our daily bread. The maintaining of the spiritual life without pardon is as impossible as is the maintaining of physical life without bread. Those who take it for granted that the daily bread will come without asking, are in danger of assuming that God's forgiving love will be manifested without a request. In order that we may render acceptable daily service, forgiveness is as much a daily necessity as bread. Just as bread completely satisfies the appetite created by the activities of the past, and also gives strength for the duties of the future, so pardon not only clears the docket of past transgressions, but also gives hope and courage to face the future. Forgiveness is the greatest of all the gifts of God because it is the least deserved on our part and is the hardest for us to give to others.

Man's Relation to God

Man's relation to God is that of a debtor, sinner, or transgressor. Sin contracts a debt that must be paid in suffering or punishment. The proper

view of sin is that it is an offense against God, an act of rebellion against His government. Since He is both our Father and our King, sin indicates ingratitude of the worst type. Various terms are used in Scripture to describe the full meaning of iniquity, each of which reveals a different aspect of the question of our relation to the Creator and Ruler of the universe. A transgression or trespass indicates an act of departure from the commandments of God. It is a treasonable and rebellious act that is as deliberate as if it were premeditated and pleasurable.

"Debts" as used in the model prayer applies more especially to "faults of omission," to neglected duties. A debt is an obligation which we have failed to meet. In a special sense it describes the position of the sinner before God. We are more than miserable sinners condemned to die because of what we have done. We are in debt and therefore have an obligation that must be either met or canceled. We are more than sinners against God; we are His servants and sons who have grieved and injured Him as well as ourselves. Debts embrace that large catalogue of the sins of omission which we are the most liable to forget in asking for pardon. Neglected duties are not so manifest as overt acts of sin, and are therefore in danger of being overlooked.

These are all summed up in the lack of love. Love is declared to be the greatest of all debts we owe to God and to our fellow men. Paul said: "Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." *Rom. 13:8, 10*. In *Revelation 2:4, 5*, a lack of love is reckoned as a sin to be repented of. The debt we owe to Christ for the "unspeakable gift" of His love to us is beyond our ability to repay, and our ingratitude and indifference constitute the greatest of all sins of omission. To both the Father and the Son we owe our undying love and unending loyalty, and if we fail to render them, we need to ask forgiveness.

Debts also include our obligations to serve others. Paul declared that he was "a debtor to all men," not because he had injured them by wrongdoing, but because he had injured them by neglect. He was under obligation to give them the gospel, and the debt could not be canceled until he had performed his full duty. All Christians are in debt to the whole world until the gospel commission has been carried out to the full and "every creature" has been given the opportunity of salvation. Every possible effort should be made to meet this obligation. A lack of righteousness is also reckoned as a debt to God. What men failed to do, seemed to grieve Jesus even more than what

they did. He made the gospel more positive than negative. The failures of men to take advantage of their opportunities for doing good were condemned equally with their offenses. This is illustrated by a number of the parables of Jesus, including that of the talents and that of the barren fig tree. In *Matthew 25:31-46* we are told that at His second advent Jesus will condemn the wicked to the "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," because they failed to do right, rather than for the doing of evil.

Many professed Christians entertain feelings of self-satisfaction because they have been kept from the more serious sins, of which they have few or none to confess. But this self-complacency would soon disappear if they could realize that forgiveness is also necessary for their omissions of right doing. When we count up our neglected opportunities for doing good, our unpaid debts are innumerable. On this basis the greatest of saints is in need of daily pardon. We must be willing to forgive our neighbors not only for the wrongs and trespasses actually committed against us, but also for their failure to do for us what we have a right to expect of good neighbors. These are often harder to forgive than actual offenses.

No fault in children grieves parents more deeply than ingratitude which manifests itself in neglect rather than in wrongdoing. This sin of neglect is a transgression of the fifth commandment, and is often committed against parents in their old age when they most need the love and protection of their children. How often the sons of God must grieve their heavenly Father by neglected duty and base ingratitude for what He has done for them. Love is the supreme motive of service, and no person can properly love and serve one to whom he is hopelessly in debt. Therefore all debts must be either paid or canceled before we can discharge our love obligations to either God or man.

In olden times a debtor was turned over to the creditor to be tormented. He became a virtual slave till the debt was paid. His property and even his wife and children were sometimes sold to satisfy the claim. Our sins likewise put us wholly at the mercy of God. But how does God treat His debtors? What payment does He require? What punishment satisfies His claims against the transgressors? His only requirement is an acknowledgment of the claim and a heartfelt confession of guilt. We cannot evade the debts or escape the creditor. There is no place where the workers of iniquity can hide themselves. Our debts are not imaginary. They are real. They are recorded in the books of heaven. Forgetfulness does not erase them or change the attitude of God toward them or the sinner. If these transgressions are not

canceled by divine pardon, the penalty of the law must be visited upon the transgressor. The executing of the sentence may be delayed, but God never forgets. Justice demands punishment for every unforgiven sin. We cannot go back over the past and undo what has been done. We cannot by good works atone for past mistakes.

At New Creation

Forgiveness is the only way out, and it is obtained only by asking for it. The question of guilt is not settled by political pull, by a board of pardons, or by signatures on a petition. Sin is disposed of by a mere personal request of the great Executive of the kingdom of heaven. While condemnation is a judicial act, pardon is an executive act. Our petition is made to Him who is both Judge and King. He condemns that He might pardon. We cannot forgive ourselves any more than we can cancel the debts we owe to our fellow men. Pardon can be ministered only by the person wronged. Forgiveness involves more than the canceling of sin; it means full restoration to divine favor.

The petition under consideration includes far more than mere pardon for the sins of the past; it is the cry for a new heart, a new creation, that takes away the bent to sinning by making us partakers of the divine nature. It gives us the desire to do right as well as to be kept from doing wrong. The forgiveness of God is not a mere judicial act by which we are set free from condemnation. It is not only pardon *for* sin, but it is also the reclamation *from* sin. It is the flowing forth of the redeeming love of God that transforms the character and makes us new creatures in Christ Jesus. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he cried out, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." *Ps. 51:10*. This "right spirit" within the heart is essential to genuine forgiveness, and this is possible only through a new birth, a new creation.

The need for daily pardon is just as universal and constant as the need for daily bread. There are many who receive from God their daily bread who fail to seek the forgiveness of their daily sins. A neglect or a refusal to ask for daily pardon brings on us the condemnation of *1 John 1: 8-10*: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us." In this age of lawlessness, sin has ceased to appear "exceeding sinful" and the terrible thing that it really

is. The only way in which we can sense its enormity is to accept God's own estimate of sin, and this is revealed to us by the cross of Calvary.

The Measure of Forgiveness

God makes no unconditional promises. In the petition for pardon, we lay down the condition on which it is to be answered. We ask that God pardon us *as* we pardon those who have wronged us. We ask that mercy be given only to the merciful. The offering of this prayer indicates that we accept the condition laid down by Christ. Our offenders must be forgiven first; for on the basis that we *have* pardoned, we ask for pardon. "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors," reads the Revised Version. "Forgive us our shortcomings, as we also have forgiven those who have failed in their duty towards us," is the rendering by Doctor Weymouth. In respect to forgiveness, the Lord treats us as we have treated others; and we ask Him so to do. It is the golden rule for forgiveness. Whatever we would that God should do to us, we must be willing to do to our fellow men. The apostle Paul laid down the same rule when he said, "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us." *Eph. 4:32*.

The Jews had a maxim that no person should lie down to sleep at night without forgiving all who had wronged him. Christ made this spirit the prerequisite to divine pardon. An unforgiving spirit is virtually an unpardonable sin. He who is unforgiving will remain unforgiven. It is an insult to God to ask Him for what we refuse to give our fellow men. The request for pardon from God, therefore, includes reconciliation with those who have wronged us. We have no right to pray this prayer unless we are willing to forgive even our worst enemies. Only those who are willing to show mercy to their debtors can expect mercy from God, whose debtors we are.

So important is this principle that as soon as the model prayer was finished, Jesus returned to this petition to emphasize its importance with a further statement. He said, "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." *Matt. 6:14, 15*. This is the only part of the entire prayer that Christ explained and enlarged upon, and the very fact that He took pains to explain it indicates the danger of our misunderstanding the conditions laid down.

"Forgive us" must include not only my neighbors, but also the person who offended me, the person whom I hate as an enemy, the person I have been unwilling to forgive. But if I refuse to forgive him, it is also evident that I do not desire to be forgiven; and I am therefore asking God for what I do not really desire. It is a vain request that will remain unanswered until I am willing to comply with the conditions. In one sense the qualifying sentence "as we forgive our debtors," is an encouragement for us to ask God for pardon. If we human beings with our faults and failings are willing to forgive those who have wronged us, surely our heavenly Father, who abounds in mercy, will gladly forgive our greater offenses against Him. The Lord has asked us to forgive others "seventy times seven" times, or without limit, and we can expect Him to do more for us than He asks us to do for others. There is no limit to His forgiving grace. The supreme requirement and prerequisite of pardon is that we love one another as God loves us. Not the same degree of love, for that would be impossible, but the same kind. We must possess the same spirit of mercy and forgiveness. We must possess the *little* before we can confidently ask for the *much* from God.

To illustrate this principle still further Jesus gave the parable recorded in *Matthew 18:23-35*. This question is so important that Jesus not only made it a part of the model prayer and then emphasized it with a further statement at the close, but He also devoted one of His principal parables to the enforcing of its lessons. This is because this requirement is one of the very hardest to fulfill. No request is more frequently and easily made to God than the request for pardon, and no condition is so easily forgotten as that God pardons only those who pardon others. Only persons with the noblest of character possess the spirit of forgiveness and the moral courage to bring about a reconciliation, even at the expense of their pride.

The parable shows that the person who begs God for pardon for his many and grievous offenses and is unwilling to forgive another for one small offense, is one of the smallest and meanest of men. Ten thousand Hebrew silver talents is equivalent to about twenty million dollars, and one hundred pence to about sixteen dollars. This illustrates the difference between the seriousness of our debts to God and those of others to us. Since our unpaid debts to God are incomparably greater than those of others to us, we can only forgive in the same spirit or likeness to God's forgiving grace, rather than in the same proportion. We must be prompted by the same spirit of charity. In other words the petition demands that we be Godlike in our attitude toward others and thus be in tune with the Infinite. Jesus closed the parable with the declaration: "So likewise shall My heavenly Father do also

unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

This test is added to the petition for forgiveness to prove our sincerity; to give evidence that we really want what we ask for. Harbored feelings of bitterness or resentment toward others disqualify us to ask pardon from God. When we feel that their wrongs are too great to forgive, it is proof positive that we do not sense the seriousness of our own offenses against God. Divine pardon produces a love and gratitude in the heart in which hard feelings cannot exist. A vision of our spiritual insolvency will make us charitable in all our dealings. We too often forget the terrible cost of divine pardon. It cost God more than anything else we can ask for—the death of His only-begotten Son. The cost of anything is the measure of its value.

The real but unexpressed attitude of many has been put into language by A. W. Hare and called "the prayer of the unforgiving man : " "O God, I have sinned against Thee many times from my youth up until now. I have often been forgetful of Thy goodness; I have not duly thanked Thee for Thy mercies; I have neglected Thy service; I have broken Thy laws; I have done many things utterly wrong against Thee. All this I know; and besides this, doubtless I have committed many secret sins, which in my blindness I failed to notice. Such is my guiltiness, O Lord, in Thy sight; deal with me, I beseech Thee, even as I deal with my neighbor. He has not offended me one tenth, one hundredth part as much as I have offended Thee; but he has offended me very grievously, and I cannot forgive him. He has been very ungrateful to me, though not a tenth, not a hundredth part as ungrateful as I have been to Thee; yet I cannot overlook such base and shameful ingratitude. Deal with me, I beseech Thee, O Lord, as I deal with him. I remember and treasure up every little trifle, which shows how ill he has been to me. Deal with me, I beseech Thee, O Lord, as I deal with him. I am determined to take the very first opportunity of doing him an ill turn. Deal with me, I beseech Thee, O Lord, as I deal with him."

The spirit of forgiveness is noble and kingly. When Belgium was being invaded by hostile armies during the World War, and portions of it were being laid in ruins, a group of children gathered before a roadside shrine that had escaped the terrible bombardment, and were repeating the Lord's prayer. They had just reached the plea for pardon when a shell struck near by, reminding them of their bitter enemies; and they hesitated to finish the sentence. The eldest girl tried to get her companions to go on and finish the petition. She said: "I know, I know, but we must say the prayer-'As we

forgive those-" She stopped; and then another voice from near by took up her words, "As we forgive those who trespass against us." It was the voice of King Albert, who had been standing close by unperceived. Under some circumstances it is difficult to pray the petition through, but it is a kingly thing to do.

HE LEADETH ME

"IN pastures green?"-not always. Sometimes He,
 Who knoweth best, in kindness leadeth me
 In weary ways, where heavy shadows be;
 Out of the sunshine warm and soft and bright,
 Out of the sunshine into the darkest night;
 I oft would faint with terror and affright
 Only for this, I know He holds my hand;
 So whether led in green or desert land,
 I trust, although I cannot understand.

"And by still waters?"-No, not always so.
 Ofttimes the heavy tempests round me blow,
 And o'er my soul the waves and billows go.
 But when the storm beats loudest, and I cry
 Aloud for help, the Master standeth by,
 And whispers to my soul, "Lo, it is I."
 Above the tempest wild I hear Him say,
 "Beyond the darkness lies the perfect day;
 In every path of thine I lead the way."

So, whether in the hilltops high and fair
 I dwell, or in the sunless valleys where
 The shadows lie, what matter? He is there;
 And more than this. Where'er the pathway lead,
 He gives to me no helpless, broken reed,
 But His own hand, sufficient for my need.
 So where He leads me, I can safely go;
 And in the blest hereafter I shall know
 Why in His wisdom He has led me so.

-Selected.

The Prayer for Guidance

"Lead us not into temptation"

LEAD us not into temptation" is a prayer for divine leadership. Those who ask for daily bread also need daily pardon and daily guidance. Pardon for the sins of the past is not sufficient. We are still in a sinful world and are possessed of sinful flesh, with its continuous allurements toward evil. We are not only in daily need of the forgiving grace of God to cover the transgressions of the past, but we also need divine leadership as we face the temptations of the future. The blessed assurance, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," is immediately followed by the injunction, "Go and sin no more."

The command to "go" calls for progress and advancement, which always require guidance. All moving things need to be directed in their proper course, or they will come to a tragic end. The sons of God are not left to travel the dark pathway of life alone. The consciousness of the mistakes of the past, because of dependence on human wisdom, leads to a request for divine guidance in the future. The very fact that the sins we confess daily are largely the same sins that we have many times confessed before, gives us a sense of our own weakness and dependence. Fearing lest continual transgression will defile our characters and lead to eternal ruin, we cry for a divine guidance that will bring deliverance from the power of evil.

"Lead us not into temptation" is considered the most difficult of all the petitions of the Lord's prayer. It can be rightly understood only in the light of other scriptures that make clear the source of temptation and sin and the responsibility for it. The apostle James said: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren." *James 1:12-16.*

Here we are told that the source of temptation is within us and therefore a mere prayer for pardon is not sufficient. James' statement may have been made to correct a misunderstanding in the apostolic church in regard to this petition of the model prayer. Some may have excused their sins on the basis of a misapplication of the words of Christ, as some do today. God is not responsible for the temptations that come to us. Leading mortals into temptation and sin is the work of an enemy, and not of our Father in heaven.

The original word for temptation as used in this petition literally means "trial," or "test," and is so translated in many texts, including *James 1:2-4*. "Reckon it nothing but joy, my brethren, whenever you find yourselves hedged in by various trials. Be assured that the testing of your faith leads to power of endurance. Only let endurance do its full work, so that you may become perfect and complete." Weymouth.

The prayer is not to be kept from temptation, but to be divinely led during the temptation, so as to be kept from yielding. To ask to be kept from temptation would be a request for that which is impossible in this world of sin. The Lord never asks us to do the impossible. Even Christ was unable to escape temptation, "but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." *Heb. 4:15*. Temptation, of course, must never be confused with sin. If temptation were a sin, Christ would be the greatest of sinners, for He was tempted more than any man. Freedom from temptation would be positively unwise in this world where our characters are being tested and perfected for the world to come. There is no other means of character development or moral progress. It is by this process that we "grow in grace" or the favor of God. Only the overcomer is promised the heavenly reward, and there can be no victory without temptation and conflict. Those who live protected lives are always weak and lacking in stability of character.

By Divine Permission

In the Scriptures the Lord is sometimes said to do that which is done by another only by His permission. God does not originate or approve of all that He allows to happen in this rebel world. He permits trials and afflictions to come to us when it is for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. The tests and trials of life are blessings in disguise to those who believe that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." *Rom. 8:28*. They come in the providence of God to remove the impurities and the unlovely traits from our characters. We may not be able always to recognize divine

leadership or the purpose of the trials and temptations that come to us, but someday all will be made plain.

Jacob, in his distress, enumerated his troubles, and then declared, "All these things are against me." He learned later that some of his difficulties existed only in his mind, and that all of them were for him rather than against him. Joseph finally learned that his cruel treatment by his brothers and his experiences in Egyptian dungeons were in the providence of God. Whereas from our limited viewpoint we can often see only confusion and disappointment, broken promises and thwarted plans, when we reach the end of the Christian journey, we shall be able to see in it all a grand and overruling purpose, a divine harmony.

Jesus is pictured by the prophet Malachi as a goldsmith diligently watching the process of refining in the furnace of affliction and trial until the dross of evil is all removed and consumed, and He can see in His people the reflection of His own image. Under His watchful eye the gold of character will not be destroyed. This is an important function of divine leadership during temptation and trial. God's remnant people will be permitted to pass through "great tribulation," but as the result their character robes will be washed and made "white in the blood of the Lamb." (See *Rev. 7:9, 13, 14.*)

During this refining and purifying process the divine promise applies: "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." *Rev. 3:10, 11.* The request is for divine guidance during the hour of temptation, that we may be kept from failing. While temptation is always inspired by the devil, yet it was by the Spirit that Christ was led into the wilderness battle to meet and conquer it.

The person who asks for and is assured of pardon for his past offenses against God, will make every possible effort to avoid future transgressions. Those who have received the blessings of justification will long for the added provision of sanctification. Imputed righteousness is in itself a demand for the further blessing of imparted righteousness. Conscious of the fact that sin "dwelleth in me," and that "when I would do good, evil is present with me," I am convinced that my only hope is in divine leadership, for which I humbly pray.

The petition under consideration has been variously translated in an effort to explain its meaning. Augustine rendered it, "Suffer us not to be led into temptation." "Let us not be led into temptation," is the rendering in

Cranmer's Bible. While this is doubtless a gloss, it expresses the real meaning of the sentence. "Lead us away from temptation," "Leave us not alone in temptation," "Do not allow us to be led into temptation," and "Abandon us not in trial," are other translations which indicate the true meaning of the request. Satan is the great tempter and the source of all temptation to evil. He entices us through the lusts of sinful flesh. Divine assistance is needed in meeting these tests and trials in a way that will do us good instead of harm.

A blessing is pronounced upon the man who "endureth temptation," because "when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life." The prayer is for protection, not from the temptation itself, but from being drawn through the exercise of our own wills into the way of temptation and thus yielding to the demands of the flesh. As far as possible we must avoid placing ourselves in the atmosphere of temptation and evil. We cannot ask God to "lead us not into temptation" if we deliberately walk into it. We must keep off the enemy's ground and shun with all our power the very path that leads toward sin.

Entering into, or yielding to, temptation is a voluntary act on our part for which God is in no way responsible. That the responsibility for sin rests with us is evident from many Scriptural statements. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus said to His disciples: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." *Matt. 26:41*. It is because man is in constant danger of being drawn by the allurements of the flesh to choose to sin and find pleasure therein, that he is asked to pray for guidance which not only leads away from sin, but puts into the heart a hatred for sin and a love for righteousness such as Christ possessed.

A Way of Escape

In our struggle with temptation we are greatly encouraged by the comforting promise: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." *1 Cor. 10:13*. This immediately follows the warning, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Overconfidence leads to defeat, because "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." *Jer. 10:23*. The Lord provides a way of escape and then leads us through it. In order to find the best way of escape, we

must have divine guidance. We need to be led to Christ, who is "the way, the truth, and the life." Christ is our victory. In Him is no defeat.

In the light of Paul's statement quoted above, the sixth petition of the Lord's prayer virtually means: "O Father, you know how weak I am of myself; permit me not to be tempted above my ability to endure, but when the temptation comes, show me Thy way of escape from the snares of the evil one." It is a cry that comes from the sense of human weakness in view of the cunning and power of the deceiver, who works "with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness," to deceive, if possible, "the very elect." The prayer includes a request for vigilance against our wily foe. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." *1 Peter 5:8.*

There is always danger that the overconfident will rush into temptation because of their feelings of security. They do not realize their own weakness, nor do they reckon with the strength of the enemy. The fact that we all possess certain tendencies toward evil is evidence of our need of help. We need to pray that God will help us to keep out of situations in which we would be powerless against temptation. Besetting sins are usually agreeable and fascinating, and therefore must be avoided and even shunned. The prayer will keep us from presumptuously bringing about circumstances that expose us to allurements that we are unable to resist. It will keep us from flirting with those temptations which carry a special appeal to our carnal appetites and passions.

Another dangerous temptation comes through the surprise attacks of the enemy. He often strikes unexpectedly and without a moment's warning when we least expect it. This has been the cause of some of the greatest sin disasters in the noblest of saints. David committed his most terrible sin under such circumstances. Joseph suddenly met a similar temptation, but resisted unto victory. But whether the temptation makes its appeal on the basis of ignorance, weakness, habits, or circumstances over which we seem to have no control, or a sudden assault in an unguarded moment, we need to ask for divine leadership and power.

It is important to note that the request is that we be not led *into* rather than *unto* temptation. Between the two there is a vast and important difference. Jesus asked His disciples to pray that they "enter not *into* temptation." He well knew that they would soon face the most severe temptation of their lives. They would be tempted to cowardly deny and even forsake Him.

They were urged to pray that when the temptation came, they would not be conquered by it or yield to its power. This interpretation of the meaning of this petition is confirmed by the one which immediately follows, which many declare is a part of the same—"But deliver us from evil." The temptation must be met. It cannot be escaped. The divine leadership is for the purpose of deliverance.

"Lead us" indicates an unselfish prayer that includes our fellow mortals who also need divine guidance on their way to the heavenly kingdom. We are told to "do good unto all men" and "especially unto them who are of the household of faith." We are to "pray one for another," and our brethren are to be especially embraced in our requests, for the Lord's prayer is the prayer of the sons of God. The petition reminds us that temptation is universal to the whole human family. None can escape from temptation, and only those who seek help from God can escape the ruin wrought by sin.

The Only Refuge From Sin

There is no earthly shrine or fortress into which men can flee for refuge from the attacks of Satan. Adolph Saphir said: "Satan regards not the sanctity of place. He enters the Garden of Eden, and he stands on the pinnacle of the temple. He is not deterred by the influence of holy companionship; he tempts Achan in the camp of Israel, Judas among the disciples of Christ, Ananias and Sapphira among the first Christians in Jerusalem. He is not afraid to attack the most favored saints: David, the man after the heart of God; Peter, the first of the apostles; the three disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane; he tempted even Jesus, the Lord of glory. He is not moved to pity by the helplessness and innocence of childhood; he will not relinquish hope, even when the aged pilgrim is on his deathbed. Everywhere and always he tempts."—"*The Lord's Prayer*," p. 336.

While there is no place where we are exempt from temptation, there is a refuge where we are safe from defeat. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." *Prov. 18:10*. "Name" as here used means character. When Christ abides in us and we abide in Him, we are safely enclosed in an impregnable fortress. We cannot save ourselves from the power of the great tempter, for he is the conqueror of humanity. But he, in turn, has been conquered by our Elder Brother, and he trembles and flees before the weakest saint who finds refuge in that all-conquering name. While Christ is the fortress of His people, the soul that is fully yielded to Him becomes His own fortress in this revolted world. The person

thus possessed by the Captain of the Lord's host is impregnable to the assaults of the prince of evil and his angels.

The divine instruction is: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." *James 4:7*. The very attacks of the enemy, designed to bring about our defeat and ruin, may, through our submission to God, result in his own defeat, and redound to our good and God's glory. Thus it was in Satan's attempt to ruin Job. The very weapons of the enemy designed to weaken this saint of God were used by the Lord in revealing to Job his unknown weaknesses, so that he became strong wherein he was weak. Paul had the same experience: "Therefore, lest I should be overelated there has been sent to me, like the agony of impalement, Satan's angel dealing blow after blow, lest I should be overelated. As for this, three times have I besought the Lord to rid me of him: but His reply has been, 'My grace suffices for you, for power matures in weakness.' Most gladly therefore will I boast of my infirmities rather than complain of them-in order that Christ's power may overshadow me. In fact I take pleasure in infirmities, in the bearing of insults, in distress, in persecutions, in grievous difficulties-for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong." *2 Cor. 12:7-10*, Weymouth.

Even though temptation may be a blessing in disguise, we should do all that is in our power to avoid it and to keep off the enemy's ground. Solomon gave the following counsel regarding the immoral woman who tempts to sin: "Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house." *Prov. 5:8*. It is even dangerous to pitch our tents toward Sodom, as did Lot. We are advised to avoid even the "appearance of evil" if we would be safe from suspicion and gossip and the danger of falling. The offering of this petition of the Lord's prayer will lead us to avoid the border line of evil and do all in our power to keep away from the enemy's territory. We are counseled to "flee fornication" and to "flee from idolatry" and to "flee also youthful lusts." After enumerating the fleshly lusts through which Satan makes his appeals, Paul said to Timothy: "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." *1 Tim. 6:11*.

The prayer is also one of sympathy. It should lead us to be very careful of our own life and conduct lest we be a temptation to our neighbor and prove a stumbling block to him. It makes us sympathetic with him in his struggles against besetting sins, because of the recognition of our own weaknesses. The faults that we see and criticize in others are usually those which are the

most prominent in our own characters. This is the reason that we so readily recognize them. It is impossible for us to place ourselves in the position of another so as to be able to judge justly. Adolph Saphir aptly says: "Think rather of the cruelty and subtlety of the enemy than of the sin of its victims. Regard them with sympathy, as wounded men lying on the battlefield. It is our common foe who has injured them." This will keep us from the spirit of pharisaism, which proudly boasts: "God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are." May God give us the love and humility and sympathy of Jesus, so that our petition for divine guidance may be fully granted.

BENEATH HIS WINGS

THERE is a safe and secret place
 Beneath the wings divine,
 Reserved for all the heirs of grace;
 O be that refuge mine!

The least and feeblest there may hide
 Uninjured and unawed;
 While thousands fall on every side,
 He rests secure in God.

He feeds in pastures large and fair,
 Of love and truth divine;
 O child of God, O glory's heir!
 How rich a lot is thine!

A hand almighty to defend,
 An ear for every call,
 An honored life, a peaceful end,
 And heaven to crown it all.

-Henry F. Lyre.

The Prayer for Deliverance

"Deliver us from evil"

DELIVER us from evil" is the last of the seven petitions of the Lord's prayer. It is closely related to, but not a part of, the previous request. The one naturally follows the other. Seven is the Scriptural symbol of fullness, completeness, and perfection. The seven petitions of the model prayer include everything needed by the children of God in this world of sin. Nothing needful is omitted, and there are no useless requests.

Clovis Chappell declares that of all the petitions of the Lord's prayer this is "the most intensely human. It is the natural cry of conscious weakness to infinite strength. It is also the most inclusive, summing up as it does all the petitions that have gone before."-*"Sermons on the Lord's Prayer,"* p. 126. It is indeed an appropriate ending of the seven petitions of the perfect prayer.

The apostle Peter declared that "the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations." *2 Peter 2:9*. He has promised to "make a way to escape." "Deliver" carries the meaning of the breaking of the chains or the loosing of the bands that hold one captive or enslaved. It does not mean merely to guard and preserve as in the previous petition, but to rescue from the very power of evil when it comes. It is a prayer for deliverance from evil of every kind and in every form—from sin and all its terrible consequences, "fully and finally." The promise is, "The Lord shall deliver me from, every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom." *2 Tim. 4:18*. For what more could the Christian ask?

When we meet the temptation that is inevitable because it is for our good, we are to pray for deliverance from its power; to be kept from falling or entering into the sin that would follow. "Deliver us from the evil one," is the Revised Version. When brought to temptation by the evil one, we need to pray earnestly that we may be saved from yielding to his enticements. Meeting temptation is a daily experience from which no human being can escape. In fact, it is a necessary part of our schooling in preparation for the heavenly kingdom. The prayer is for power to stand our ground against the

attacks of the enemy. The evil is in the surrender rather than in the temptation itself.

If this petition is answered, we will be permitted to meet only those temptations that are for our good in the development of character. Then it can be truthfully said that all things work together for our good. Marcus Dods aptly said: "If we have asked God to keep us from temptation, and still meet it, then we believe that what we meet is of His ordering, and that good, and not evil, will come of it. Passing through His fire, we are purified. Warring in His warfare, we are rendered more hardy, faithful, and experienced. But if we have not asked His guidance, but have gone forth at our own charges and risks, then how can we with any confidence ask in temptation the help which very probably we should never have needed to ask had we asked God's guidance before?"-*"The Prayer That Teaches to Pray,"* p. 168.

Just before His ascension, Jesus offered His memorable prayer in behalf of His disciples who were left behind to finish His work, in which He said: "I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil." *John 17:15*. The evil we need to fear most is that which has its source in sinful flesh rather than that which is outside of us in the world. It is the Lord's plan that His sons shall be delivered from evil long before they are delivered from the world itself. The water of the seven seas is essential to successful sailing and can do no harm to the boat as long as it remains outside. The voyage is safe and prosperous as long as the boat remains in the water and the water does not get into the boat. The same is true of our voyage over the sea of life. The evil that is without may even do us good. It is the sin that enters and defiles the character that "bringeth forth death."

"Evil" as used in this petition includes every enemy of the sons of God, every foe to spiritual, mental, and physical progress. It is a prayer for victory over all sin, for clean hands and pure hearts, for freedom from guilt and a guilty conscience. The prayer includes a cry for deliverance from inbred sin that has its dwelling place in "sinful flesh," as well as from "the evil one," who makes his appeals through the lusts of the flesh. We have inherited a sinful nature that makes self our worst enemy. We need deliverance, not only from the sins we commit, but from the very sin nature we received from Adam, so that we shall become "partakers of the divine nature." The distinction between the sins we commit and the sin nature that is within is clearly defined in *1 John 1:8-10*. Regeneration includes the

transformation of our very natures from the Adamic to the divine. This, of course, does not mean freedom from temptation, for there can be no "holy flesh" till Jesus comes and changes "our vile body" into the likeness of His glorious body, as set forth in *Philippians 3:20, 21*. Paul describes this indwelling sin and its great power in *Romans 7: 14-21*.

This sin nature brings its victims into a wretched state of spiritual bondage from which they need deliverance through divine power. Paul continued: "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" *Rom. 7:21-24*. The apostle found what we also discover-that it is not so difficult to obtain deliverance from the sins we commit as it is to obtain deliverance from the law of sin that dwells in our flesh, where it becomes a fountain of evil in our lives. This sin nature Paul represents as a "body of death" (margin), taking the illustration from the ancient custom of tying a corpse to a criminal and making him carry it till he himself dies from contact with putrefying flesh. In his agony the apostle cried out, "O wretched man that I am!"

The Great Deliverer

In his desperation Paul sought an avenue of escape from a bondage that had become intolerable because of an enlightened conscience. He asked, "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Then he found deliverance in Christ, the great Deliverer. "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Then there came to him a complete change from a state of wretched slavery to glorious liberty and victory. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." *Rom. 8:1-4*. Not only is the sinful nature brought into subjection by the great Deliverer, but, through His indwelling Spirit, the requirements of the law are fully met. What a happy change when Jesus comes to dwell in human flesh where sin did dwell and rule!

Another apostle thus describes the secret of victory over sin: "We know that no one who is a child of God lives in sin, but He who is God's Child keeps him, and the evil one cannot touch him." *1 John 5:18*, Weymouth. This is the experience Jesus had while He was in the world. He said, "The prince of this World cometh, and hath nothing in Me." *John 14:30*. In Jesus there was nothing that responded to the sophistries of the enemy. Satan was unable to get Him to consent to sin. While He was severely tempted, He did not yield to temptation even by a thought. In the gospel the same provision is made for us. The humanity of Jesus was united with divinity, and this was the secret of His power to resist evil and the evil one. He came into the world to make us partakers of the divine nature; and so long as we are united with Him by faith, so long can sin have no dominion over us. Those who lay hold on the divinity of Christ will attain perfection of character. The person thus kept by divine power can say with the psalmist: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me." *Ps. 23:4*.

Paul, the veteran Christian warrior, bore witness, before his triumphant death, of complete deliverance from all evil. Speaking of his first trial before Nero, he declared, "No man stood with me, but all men forsook me." Then in anticipation of the coming test of faith he said, "The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom." *2 Tim. 4:16-18*. When the hour of execution arrived, the Christian hero declared that he was ready because he had finished his course and had kept the faith and had received the imputed and imparted righteousness of Christ.

Not an occasional but a continuous deliverance is assured the Christian: "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life." *2 Cor. 2:14-16*. "Christ ever heads our triumphal procession," is the rendering by Doctor Weymouth. The illustration is drawn from a Roman triumph. As the victorious Roman general and his staff rode through the triumphal arch into the Eternal City, followed by the army and a long train of captives, incense bearers waved their censers and filled the air with sweet fragrance which signified death to one class and life and honor to the other. The apostle represents Christians as performing the priestly office of incense bearers in Christ's triumphal procession as He leads the heroes of the cross to victory. The gospel message sheds its

fragrance everywhere, bringing life to those who accept it and death to those who reject it.

With the child of God, deliverance and victory are not dependent on place or circumstances. Environment is no excuse for sin, because the place of abounding iniquity is also the place of abounding grace. Provision has been made for continuous and complete victory, for deliverance from evil and the evil one "always" and "in every place." Deliverance is promised for the past, present, and future: "Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver." *2 Cor. 1:10*. What more can we ask for than this? Yet all this is included in the request to "deliver us from evil."

Christ has promised to do more for us than we can ask or even imagine. "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." *Eph. 3:20*. The One to whom we address our prayer is able to do all that we ask; all that we ask or think; above all that we ask or think; abundantly above all that we ask or think; exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think; according to the power that worketh in us. He is not only able to grant our every request, but He is exceedingly and abundantly able to give us above and beyond anything we can ask or think of asking. Why, then, should the sons of God be so reluctant to pray? Armed with the omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit, the soldiers of the cross can gloriously conquer in the contest with evil and the evil one. Full provision has been made so that the lives of Christ's trusting disciples shall be like His, a series of continuous and uninterrupted victories. And so, when you send heavenward the petition, "Deliver us from evil," you have the blessed assurance that the required assistance for every trial has been abundantly provided by your heavenly Father, who will "supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." *Phil. 4:19*.

LEST WE FORGET

O GOD, our Father, Thou dost know
How oft Thy children careless grow.
By Thine own Spirit, Lord, we pray,
Our memories quicken day by day;
That, though by earthly cares beset,
The Christ of God we ne'er forget.
O God above, who knowest all,
Thy children's weakness dost recall;
Turn Thou our thoughts from things of time
To Thine eternal truths sublime;
That, mid life's toil and strain and fret,
Christ's saving power we ne'er forget.
O God, whose care doth never fail
Toward us, Thy children weak and frail.
Kindle a flame that shall impart
Warm, grateful love to every heart;
That gratitude and love so met
May ne'er Christ's sacrifice forget.

-Mary B. Smith.

CROWN HIM

CROWN Him with many crowns,
 The Lamb upon His throne;
 Hark! How the heavenly anthem drowns
 All music but its own!
 Awake, my soul and sing
 Of Him who died for thee;
 And hail Him as thy matchless King
 Through all eternity.

Crown Him the Lord of love!
 Behold His hands and side,
 Those wounds, yet visible above,
 In beauty glorified!
 No angel in the sky
 Can fully bear that sight,
 But downward bends his wond'ring eyes
 At mysteries so great.

Crown Him the Lord of peace!
 Whose hand a scepter sways
 From pole to pole, that wars may cease;
 And all be prayer and praise:
 His reign shall know no end,
 And round His pierced feet
 Fair flowers of Paradise extend
 Their fragrance ever sweet.

Crown Him the Lord of years,
 The Potentate of time,
 Creator of the roiling spheres,
 Ineffably sublime!
 All hail! Redeemer, hail!
 For Thou hast died for me;
 Thy praise shall never, never fail
 Throughout eternity.

-M. Bridges.

The Prayer's Doxology

"Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory"

THE Lord's prayer ends with one of the most beautiful doxologies of the Scriptures: "For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen." While this doxology is omitted in some of the oldest manuscripts and in some modern translations, it is found in most of them, including the Syriac Peshito, which dates back to the second century. The spirit of every true worshiper recognizes it as the natural and logical conclusion to this model prayer. Without it, the prayer would seem unfinished and incomplete, and would to that extent seem to miss perfection.

Like the Bible itself, the Lord's prayer ends where it began; it starts with God and His perfection and brings us back again after our contact with sin, and victory over evil. "Forever" is the proper ending rather than "evil." To bring the prayer to an end without the doxology would be like concluding the Scriptures with the scene of the destruction of the wicked in *Revelation 20*, instead of the description of Paradise restored as contained in the last two chapters.

The same exultant ascription of praise and honor is found in connection with, or at the conclusion of, many of the prayers of the Bible. The ascription that is the most similar to the one under consideration is found in the prayer of David recorded in *1 Chronicles 29:10-12*: "Blessed be Thou, Lord God of Israel our Father, forever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine; Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come of Thee, and Thou reignest over all; and in Thine hand is power and might; and in Thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all." All this is embraced in the doxology of the Lord's prayer. (See also *1 Tim. 1:17; Rev. 1:6; 5:13.*)

It is evident that such an ending could not properly be omitted from the prayer that is a summary of all the prayers of the past and was to serve as a

model for praying Christians till the end of the reign of sin. The opening sentence places the worshiper in the proper attitude toward God, and the closing sentence leaves him with the same reverent attitude. The prayer appropriately closes with an ascription of all sovereignty, power, and glory to Him "whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He 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?" *Dan. 4:34, 35*. It is by the power of God that His kingdom is established, and its progress and success bring Him glory which will continue forever.

Praise Is Essential

All true prayers end in praise, for praise is an essential element in every petition to God. Paul said, "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." *Phil. 4:6*. "Praise is comely for the upright," declared the psalmist; and the Lord said, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me." *Ps. 33:1; 50:23*. Psalms are praises, and "the Psalms" in English are "the Praises" in Hebrew. Practically every psalm ends in praise, even those which represent the deep repentance and heartrending anguish of sin-burdened souls crying out for pardon and cleansing. Humble and contrite souls praise God for His love, grace, and mercy. Fifteen of the psalms end with "Praise ye the Lord," which in the Hebrew is "Hallelujah." Praise always has been and always will be an important part of true worship.

The doxology of the Lord's prayer is a closing plea that the seven petitions of the prayer be granted. It also presents an argument as to the reasons why the prayer was offered with the expectation of an answer. We are not asking in vain for something that is impossible, for the One to whom we make our requests "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." In this doxology we recognize God's ability to give us that for which we ask. The expectation of an answer is not based on anything in ourselves, on what we are or hope to be, or on human works or merit, but on God alone, because of His character and power. "Not even our faith or our helplessness is our plea, but His own kingdom, power, and glory. With that little word 'for' we plant our foot, as it were, on the step of His throne, and remind the Lord that in Himself we seek the foundations of our hopes and expectations."-*Adolph Saphir*.

A recognition of the sovereignty of God is an essential element in prayer. "Thine is the kingdom" is a recognition of the fact that the kingdom is not ours. Literally, there is no other kingdom, for the revolt of Satan has never been entirely successful. He is a usurper, and he reigns as prince of this world, subject to the permission of God, the Supreme Ruler. Because Christ died to destroy the power of evil, the Father has given the kingdom of this world to His Son, who is declared to be "the Prince of the kings of the earth." *Rev. 1:5*. "The Prince over the kings of the earth," is another translation. That the kingdom is altogether the Lord's is evident from many texts. (See *Dan. 4:17, 34, 35; 7:18, 27; Matt. 13:41-43; 1 Cor. 15:24, 25*.) There are now many things that offend in the kingdom and many enemies of the King, but nevertheless the kingdom belongs to God, the sovereign ruler.

God's Sovereignty

The recognition of *God's* supreme sovereignty has been one of the hardest lessons for rebellious man to learn, and but few have fully learned it. It has been especially difficult for kings and rulers to recognize that their power and authority are not supreme. The ten plagues of Egypt failed to teach Pharaoh the lesson. Nebuchadnezzar learned it only after a hard and humiliating experience. If Belshazzar learned the lesson at all, it was too late. The message written by an unseen hand on the palace wall spelled out his doom. Napoleon acknowledged his mistake after he was banished to the island of St. Helena. The rulers of the modern nations seem to have learned nothing from the blunders of their predecessors. As individuals, we pass through the same struggle in yielding our personal kingdoms to the sovereignty of God, so that we can crown Him Lord of all.

The model prayer closes with an "Amen." Martin Luther said, "As your Amen is, so has been your prayer." "Amen" is often used with but little thought as to its real significance or the feelings it is intended to call forth as the final urgent plea that our petitions be granted. The word has several important meanings. First, it indicates the end of a sermon or a prayer. It is the last word in a request to God or in a plea to the people by the mouthpiece, or spokesman, of God. It is also an expression of approval and hearty concurrence of what has been said. It means "So be it," or "It is so;" and it therefore represents profound conviction. It is also an expression of trust and confidence that all we have asked for will be granted. "Amen" has

the same meaning as "yea" or "truly." We have used it so many times, and often very flippantly, that it "lies bedridden in the dormitory of our soul."

As far as we know, "amen" was first used in the days of Moses. When the priest pronounced a solemn oath, the person charged answered by saying, "Amen." When the blessings and curses of the law were pronounced from Mt. Ebal, the people all responded with a united "Amen." When David and the Israelites celebrated the return of the ark containing the law from the house of Obed-edom, and Asaph and his musicians sang a song of praise ending with the words, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel forever and ever," "all the people said, Amen." *1 Chron. 16:36*. David concluded psalm 106 with the statement: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the Lord." When Ezra read the book of the law and prayed during the great open-air meeting in the streets of Jerusalem after the captives had returned from Babylon, "all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground." *Neh. 8:1-6*.

"Amen" was used constantly in the early church by both the apostles and the laity. The congregation often responded to stirring messages with hearty amens, to indicate their approval of the message and to encourage the speaker. One of the early Christian writers describes the amens of the congregation as being "like the waves rolling on the shore." Many amens were heard during the great Reformation and again during the Wesley revivals and others that followed. Will the congregations of modern Christendom ever become so enthusiastic over a prayer or a sermon that they will respond with a united "Amen"? The word is so seldom used today that when it is heard from a single individual it has a startling effect. This is partly due to the fact that loud and single amens often come from those who are fanatical or overemotional, and, rather than be classed with such, the more conservative believers have curbed their enthusiasm and silenced their responses. This, however, is no reason why there should not be a chorus of low amens from the congregation when the prayer or message from the pulpit strikes a responsive chord in their souls.

But "Amen" has a more important meaning still. It is one of the names of Christ. He introduces His message to the church of the Laodiceans with the statement: "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God." *Rev. 3:14*. This should especially interest modern Christians, for they live in the Laodicean period of the Christian

church. Introducing Himself to *us*, Jesus calls Himself the "Amen." He is the truth, "for all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen." 2 *Cor. 1:20*. Christ is the "Amen" of God, for all of God's promises are fulfilled in and through Him. He is "the first and the last," "Alpha and Omega." All things were made by Him, and He will bring about all consummations.

This gives the model prayer a wonderful conclusion. It is as if we closed the prayer by saying, "For Christ's sake," or "In Christ's name," for "Amen" is one of His many names. The prayer begins with our lifting up our hearts and sending up our petitions to "our Father which art in heaven," and we conclude all of its requests with the name of Christ, our Brother, through whom we have the right to say "Father" to His Father. The prayer is therefore sealed with the name of Christ, the Son of God, who is also our High Priest and Mediator before Him to whom we address our petitions.

Just as the Lord's prayer is the summary of all prayer, so the doxology is the summary of the Lord's prayer. It is to God's kingdom that we belong, and He is its King and Lawgiver. By His power we are delivered from evil and made the sons of God, and therefore it is for His glory that our petitions are granted. This closing sentence makes the entire prayer a doxology, according to Bengel, who says, "Hallowed be the name of our God. His kingdom has come; His will is done. He has forgiven us our sins. He has brought our temptations to an end; He has delivered us from the evil one. His is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." God grant that we may pray this prayer in the spirit and in the understanding, so that its requests shall be granted to us and to our fellow Christians by the Father of us all. "Amen and Amen."