THE LORD'S PRAYER: NINE SERMONS

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I WISHED in these Sermons to connect the Lord's Prayer with the thoughts which are most likely to be occupying us at this time. If they lead any to ask themselves how their study of passing occurrences may be made more serious, and their worship more real, my purpose in publishing them will be answered.

London, May 25, 1848.

SERMON I. OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN

Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany, February 13, 1848.

MATTHEW VI. 9.

After this manner therefore pray ye: 'Our Father which art in heaven.'

'After this manner,' and therefore any manner but this is a wrong manner; a prayer which has any other principle or method than this, is not the Lord's Prayer.

The remark may seem superfluous, but it is not so. The Paternoster is not, as some fancy, the easiest, most natural, of all devout utterances. It may be committed to memory quickly, but it is slowly learnt by heart. Men may repeat it over ten times in an hour, but to use it when it is most needed, to know what it means, to believe it, yea, not to contradict it in the very act of praying it, not to construct our prayers upon a model the most unlike it possible, this is hard; this is one of the highest gifts which God can bestow upon us; nor can we look to receive it without others that we may wish for less; sharp suffering, a sense of wanting a home, a despair of ourselves.

At certain periods in the history of the Church, especially when some reformation was at hand, men have exhibited a weariness of their ordinary theological teaching. It seemed to them that they needed something less common, more refined than that which they possessed. As the light broke in upon them, they perceived that they needed what was less refined, more common. The Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, were found to contain the treasures for which they were seeking. The signs of such a period are surely to be seen in our day. We can scarcely think that we require reformation less than our fathers. I believe, if we are to obtain it, we too

must turn to these simple documents; we must enquire whether there is not a wisdom hidden in them which we do not meet with elsewhere; whether they cannot interpret the dream of our lives better than all the soothsayers whom we have consulted about it hitherto.

I. Much of the practical difficulty of the prayer lies assuredly in the first word of it. How can we look round upon the people whom we habitually feel to be separated from us by almost impassable barriers; who are above us, so that we cannot reach them, or so far beneath us, that the slightest recognition of them is an act of gracious condescension; upon the people of an opposite faction to our own, whom we denounce as utterly evil; upon men whom we have reason to despise; upon the actual wrong-doers of society, those who have made themselves vile, and are helping to make it vile: and then teach ourselves to think that in the very highest exercise of our lives, these are associated with us; that when we pray, we are praying for them and with them; that we cannot speak for ourselves without speaking for them; that if we do not carry their sins to the throne of God's grace, we do not carry our own; that all the good we hope to obtain there, belongs to them just as much as to us, and that our claim to it is sure of being rejected, if it is not one which is valid for them also? Yet all this is included in the word 'Our;' till we have learnt so much, we are but spelling at it; we have not learnt to pronounce it. And what man of us—the aptest scholar of all—will venture to say that he has yet truly pronounced it; that his clearest utterance of it has not been broken and stammering? Think how many causes are at work every hour of our lives to make this opening word of the prayer a nullity and a falsehood. How many petty disagreements are there between friends and kinsfolk, people dwelling in the same house—so petty that there is no fear of giving way to them, and yet great enough to cause bitterness and estrangement, great enough to make this 'Our Father' a contradiction. How often does my vanity come into collision with another man's vanity, and then, though there be no palpable opposition of interests between us, though we do not stand in the way of each other's advancement, what

a sense of separation, of inward hostility, follows! As the mere legal, formal, distinctions of caste become less marked, how apt are men to indemnify themselves for that loss by drawing lines of their own as deep, and more arbitrary! As persecution in its ruder shapes becomes impossible, what revenge does the disputatious heart take under this deprivation, by bitter manifestations of contempt for an adversary, by identifying him more completely with his opinions, by condemning him, if not for them, then for the vehemence and bigotry with which he supports them! How many pretexts have the most tolerant amongst us for intolerance! How skilful are the most religious in finding ways for explaining away the awful command, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged!'

II. But when we say 'Father,' are we more in earnest? Do we mean that He whom we call upon is a Father actually, not in some imaginary metaphorical sense? Alas! in stumbling at the first word 'Our,' we do, I fear, destroy the next also. For though all countries and nations had a dim vision of this name; though men, in whom the reverence for fathers had any strength, were taught by a higher wisdom than their own, to connect that reverence with their thoughts of the unseen world, and of One who ruled it; though the sense of this connexion was a balance to the tendency which they felt to idolize the powers of Nature, and yet kept them from a mere abstract, formal notion of the Divinity; though by it they learnt to realize, in a measure, their own spiritual existence; yet the revelation which fulfils the heathen expectation, which turns the dream of a Father into substance, is that which is expressed in the words, 'He hath sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons,' and in those which are inseparable from them, 'Because ye are sons, he hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' Now this revelation is grounded upon an act done on behalf of Humanity—an act in which all men have a like interest; for if Christ did not take the nature of every rebel and outcast, he did not take the nature of Paul and John. Therefore the first sign that the

Church was established upon earth in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit, was one which shewed that it was to consist of men of every tongue and nation; the baptized community was literally to represent mankind. If it be so, the name Father loses its significance for us individually, when we will not use it as the members of a family. No doubt it is a true name; it expresses an actual relation; and therefore, if we attain by ever so unfair a process, through ever so narrow a chink, to the perception of it, we may be thankful. But the possession is an insecure one: if some feelings or apprehensions give us a title to it, the title will become uncertain with every variety of our feelings and apprehensions. We shall regard the Unchangeable as a Father to-day, and not to-morrow. And then what becomes of the Lord's Prayer as a fixed manner or model for all prayer? What becomes of it as a resource in times of tribulation, when our feelings and apprehensions are in the lowest, most miserable, state? What is its worth when we are tempted by suggestions addressed to these very feelings and apprehensions—suggestions which overmaster them, and get possession of them? Does any one answer, that God is called the Father of our spirits, that He is said to beget us to a new life, that as natural men we are not His children, though we are His creatures? All this is true and most important; and it is precisely what we assert, when we say that God has redeemed mankind in Christ. We mean that He has not left us to be fleshly creatures, to be animals, as we are naturally inclined to be, and would be altogether, if He were not upholding us; we mean that He has owned us as spiritual creatures, has claimed us in that character to be His servants and children, has given us His Spirit. We say that when a man arises and goes to his Father, he renounces his vile, selfish, exclusive life, and takes up that human privilege which God has given him in Christ; he enters upon his state as a man when he confesses God as his Father. If, instead of doing this, he will stand upon certain feelings and apprehensions of his, which separate him from his kind, he is not a penitent; he is still a self-exalting, self-glorying man; he has not been brought to feel

that he is nothing; he has not been forced to cast himself wholly and absolutely upon the love and mercy of God in Christ. And, surely, such dependence, such self-renunciation, such willingness to take up a common position as portions of a family, is very difficult for creatures proud as we are, eager to have something of our own, always hoping to make out for ourselves special pleas of exemption from the laws of the universe. Only by discoveries often forgotten, often repeated, that we cannot establish any such pleas, that they must prove trumpery and preposterous, when they are urged before the Judge of the whole earth, only through the dreary conviction that our faith and hope and love, as well as our deeds, are shallow and insincere, are we drawn to real trust in Him who is faithful and loving, who is the God of all hope; who can impart to us the power of believing, of hoping, of loving, of doing what is right; who is willing to impart it because He is our Father, and has promised all good things to them that ask Him.

III. It might seem till we know a little of ourselves, that the next words, 'which art,' had nothing in them to cause us offence or perplexity. But they too are hard words. The greatest temptation, perhaps, of this age, is to think of the Most High rather as one about whom we read in a book, than as the Living God, the name by which the book always speaks of Him. It is a fearful tendency; but if you search your hearts, you will find it there. Nay, there is not need of much searching; the habit is so natural. In all ages, a disposition has been apparent, not in irreligious minds, but in those which are specially serious and reverential, to turn their devotion towards that which has been, rather than to that which is, towards images and relics, towards whatever carries with it the sign and reminiscence of personality, but is not personal. The modern English form of it which makes words rather than visible objects the substitutes for the unseen realities, is externally so unlike the other that we are not easily persuaded of their essential identity. It is the effort of prayer which brings the evil fully before us. What a dim shadow, thrown it would seem from our own minds, has often been before us when we were kneeling to the Majesty of Heaven.

What a strange self-congratulation, that we were performing an act of worship, good and desirable, to some Being; but to what Being we hardly dared to ask ourselves! Oh! surely even in such hours there have been flashes upon the conscience, wonderful assurances that the place was a dreadful one; that God was there, though we had not known it. These are admonitions that the Father of all lives, though our spirits be ever so dead. But they are also admonitions that we should stir ourselves to the recollection of Him, who is always near our spirits; who can both restore life to them, and keep them alive. And if, at any time, He has taught us to feel that the universe would be a horrible blank without Him; that His absence would be infinitely more to us than to all creatures beside; that if He is not, or we cannot find Him, consciousness, memory, expectation, existence, must be curses unbearable: but that when the burden of the world and of self is most crushing, we may take refuge from both in Him,—if at any time such convictions have dawned upon us, let us not hope to keep the blessing of them by our own skill and watchfulness. Let us say, 'Our Father which art, when we least remember Thee, fix the thought of Thy Being deeper than all other thoughts within us; and may we, Thy children, dwell in it, and find our home and rest in it, now and for ever.'

IV. Once more: the words 'In Heaven,' as they are closely united with those which went before in meaning, so too, like them, come into collision with some of our strongest evil tendencies. The impulse of ordinary polytheists was to bring God down to earth; to make Him like themselves. Against this impulse the philosopher protested, representing the Divine Nature as wholly inactive, self-concentrated, removed from mundane interests. The Gospel justifies the truth which was implied in the error of the first; Christ, taking flesh, and dwelling among men, declares that Heaven has stooped to earth. But here a great many would stop: they would bring back Paganism through Christianity. The Son of God, they say, has become incarnate; now fleshly things are again divine; earth is overshadowed by Heaven; it is no longer sin to worship that which He has glorified. In the manger

of Bethlehem they sink the Resurrection and Ascension; they will only look at one part of the great Redemption, not at the whole of it; at the condescension to our vileness, not at the deliverance from that vileness, which the Son accomplished when he sat down at the right hand of the Father. But He does not sanction this partial and grovelling view. 'After this manner,' he taught his disciples, even while he was upon earth,— 'pray ye, Our Father which art in Heaven.' As if He had said, Do not think that I am come to make your thoughts of God less awful than those of Moses were, when he put his shoes off his feet and durst not behold; than Solomon's were, when he said, 'He is in Heaven and thou upon earth, therefore let thy words be few.' The revelation of the divine mystery in me is not given that you may entertain it better in your low carnal hearts, that you may mingle it more with the things which you see and handle; that each of you may have a warrant for the form of idolatry which is dear to him. This revelation is given that the mystery may be no longer one of darkness, but of perfect light: light which you will enter into more and more as your eyes are purged; but which, if it colour the mists of earth for a moment, will at last scatter them altogether.

'Our Father:' there lies the expression of that fixed eternal relation which Christ's birth and death have established between the littleness of the creature and the Majesty of the Creator; the one great practical answer to the philosopher who would make heaven clear by making it cold; would assert the dignity of the Divine Essence, by emptying it of its love, and reducing it into nothingness. Our Father, which art in Heaven: there lies the answer to all the miserable substitutes for faith, by which the invisible has been lowered to the visible; which have insulted the understanding and cheated the heart; which have made united worship impossible, because that can only be when there is One Being, eternal, immortal, invisible, to whom all may look up together, into whose presence a way is opened for all, whose presence is a refuge from the confusions, perplexities, and divisions of this world; that home which the spirits of men were ever seeking, and could not

find, till He, who had borne their sorrows and died their death, entered within the veil, having obtained eternal redemption for them, till He bade them sit with Him in heavenly places.

What I have said may have seemed to prove that this simple prayer is too high and too deep for creatures such as we are. Would you have it otherwise? Would you have a prayer which you can comprehend and fathom? I am sure the conscience and reason would reject such a prayer as a delusion, an evident self-contradiction. I have said nothing to shew that this prayer is unsuitable to the wants and ignorance of any beggar in our streets. I have shown only, that the wisest man, who will not use it as that beggar does, who will try it by his own narrow methods and measures, will find that he has never entered into the sense of it, that he is condemning himself in the repetition of it. And if, brethren, we all know that we have been guilty of this mockery again and again, how clearly do our consciences witness, that it is after this manner, and no other, we must make our confession. What despair we should be in, if our unbelief were indeed truth, and not a lie! If the word 'Our' did not express the truth, that we participate in the blessings, as well as the curses, of the whole race; if the word 'Father' were a word merely, and not the expression of an eternal truth; if we might think of Him as not nigh, but afar off; in a book, not as one in whom we are living and having our being; if He were subject to the changes of earth, not for ever fixed in Heaven, whither could we turn under the overpowering sense of our own sinfulness and heartlessness? It is the full conviction that our misery has proceeded from ourselves, from our maintaining a resolute war with facts and reality, which can alone give us encouragement. For we know there is One who is willing to teach us how to pray this prayer in spirit and in truth; we know that there is One who is praying it. He who died for us and for all mankind, He who is ascended into Heaven, He, who is true and in whom is no lie, did when He was here clothed with our mortality, does now in his glorified humanity say, in the full meaning of the words, for us and for his whole family above and below, 'Our Father which art in Heaven.'

SERMON II. HALLOWED BE THY NAME

Septuagesima Sunday, February 20, 1848.

MATTHEW VI. 9.

Hallowed be thy name.

I SAID last Sunday that in this Prayer our Lord taught us the method, as well as the principle of all prayer. It is, indeed, impossible to separate one from the other. The principle of a prayer which asks first for bread or forgiveness, must be wholly different from the principle of one which begins with 'Hallowed be thy Name.' The conceptions of Prayer which you would derive from them are unlike, nay, they are opposed.

I think there can be little doubt which form men would most readily adopt. "Let us have bread enough, bread to satisfy all bodily appetites: bread, if you will, that shall meet our intellectual, our spiritual desires—what other petition can possibly take precedence of this? If an earthly ruler could send us this blessing, should we not implore him for it before all things? If we are hearty in believing that the Heavenly Ruler is willing to send it, shall we not take the same course when we call upon Him? Shall we strain ourselves to introduce needless, artificial preliminaries, when this is what He knows we are craving for?" So men are likely to reason till they painfully discover that there is something they need more than bread, till a certain inward gnawing in lonely hours, on a sick bed, suggests that sin has need to be pardoned, as well as hunger to be appeased. Is it not still more monstrous to interpose any check to the utterance of this cry? What can be so desirable as that it should be poured forth with all the agony and intensity of a spirit which has learnt that such a boon would be cheaply purchased by the sacrifice of all things else?

Language of this kind would seem to be religious as well as natural, proceeding from sympathy with human needs, and a belief that there is a divine provision for them. And yet our Lord says, 'After this manner pray ye: Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy Name.' He recognizes the desires of which I have spoken as reasonable and true, but he postpones them; and this, too, when he is warning us against babbling in prayer, against all vain, idle, formulas; when he is directing us especially to ask for the things we have need of.

Brethren, in this difference lies, I believe, the great contrast between those systems of theological doctrine and practice, which have been shaped out by the subtlety of divines in accordance with the cravings of disciples, and that teaching which begins from God, which never lowers itself to the base and selfish thoughts of men, and which, therefore, is able to satisfy all that is real in man as nothing else can. Ask the systematizer what that Revelation is which the Bible records: he will tell you, that it is the announcement of the duty which man owes to his Maker for the good things he enjoys upon earth; and of a scheme of redemption by which he may obtain pardon for his sins, and higher blessings hereafter. Ask the Apostles, or our Lord Himself, what that revelation is, and they say it is the revelation of a Father whom men were feeling after and could not find, and who at length declared Himself to them in His well-beloved Son. If the first statement be accepted as the truest and simplest, the prayers, 'Give us bread,' 'Forgive us our sins,' are all that we have any concern with; we should rush into them at once; by them we grasp all the good which creation and redemption have in store for us. If we are led by any process to feel that the news concerning a father is really the good news, apart from which the promise of food or pardon would signify nothing, we shall feel that 'Hallowed be thy Name' is the first and most necessary and most blessed prayer for the whole human race and for every one of its members.

For every gross and cruel superstition has this origin and definition: it springs from ignorance of the name of God; it consists in and by that

ignorance. It mixes Him with His creatures; first with what is highest in them, next with what is mean, then with what is basest; finally it identifies Him with the Evil Spirit. What is darkest and most hateful; what a man flies from most and would desire should not exist; this becomes the object of his worship. He has within him a witness that there is a Being whom he ought to love with his heart and soul and strength. That which he conceives of as this Being, that which his fancy and his conscience represent to him is one whom he inwardly hates, and from whom he would be delivered.

But these horrors belong, it will be said, to the ages of priestcraft; civilization puts an end to them. Let us understand ourselves clearly on this point, that we may not deny what is right in the assertion, nor be deluded by mere phrases. The classes which have been brought within the reach and sway of civilization have, no doubt, learnt that the inventions of superstition are false and mischievous; they have seen that a dark notion of the divinity is at the root of them; they have made strenuous efforts to rid themselves of what they believe to be a phantom. In place of it they have substituted a being answering to their own habits of mind, good-natured, indifferent, tolerant of evil. To such a being they have paid a homage which they have almost felt to be fictitious, a homage justifying itself chiefly on the plea that the dependence of inferiors—the general order of society—could hardly be maintained without it. The humbler men, partly perceiving why this decent devotion was thought desirable, partly observing that it only lasted during summer-days, and was often changed for another and more vulgar sort in calamity; but, above all, conscious that it was of a nature altogether unsuited to them, either cherish amid the glare and glitter of civilized life the dark thoughts of another age, or change them for a more resolute and courageous atheism, or, lastly, learn that God is a refuge in time of trouble, a deliverer from the horrors of conscience, not an enemy who must be persuaded to forego his hatred of them, or a mere phantom of benevolence, who leaves His creatures undisturbed in their wickedness and misery. 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.

The civility or intelligence of a people may seem to have grown up, and to be growing, under the influence of a multitude of adventitious circumstances. But if you search well, you will find that whatever there is in it not false, whatever has not the sentence of speedy death written upon it, has had a deeper and more mysterious origin. It has been the fruit of struggles, carried on in solitary chambers by men whom the world has not known, or has despised; struggles which were to decide what power they were meant to obey, and to what power they would yield themselves; struggles to know the name of Him who was wrestling with them; to know whether He was one who cared for them, or who hated them or despised them; whether they had a real or an imaginary Master; whether God is a presence floating in the air, or a Person who can be loved, feared, trusted; whether they and the universe were separated by a thin plank of opinion and sentiment from a bottomless pit of Atheism, into which both must sink at last; or whether they were resting upon a rock which could not pass away, though not earth only should be shaken, but also heaven. But for these questions, which those who were exercised by them knew were not propounded by any human doctor, do not fancy that there could have been any thought or energy or hope in the world.

Luxury and comfort do not confer these; there is no exorcism in them to cast out the demons of indolence and despair. No! men have learnt to say this prayer, 'Hallowed be Thy Name;' and to say it before all others. They have found that the prayer for bread might mean anything, from an Eleusinian mystery to the cry of a Genoveva in the desert for milk to nourish her babe; that a prayer for forgiveness might mean anything, from the words, 'Thou desirest truth in the inward parts; Thou canst wash me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Thou canst wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow;' to the sacrifice of a virgin, that the wrath of the gods might be averted, and a favourable breeze granted to a fleet. One petition as much as the other, these

sufferers perceived, must derive its worth from that which went before. What is the Name of Him to whom we pray? all the meaning of prayer, of human existence, turns upon the answer which we make to this demand.

II. But is it not quite certain what answer we shall make to it? How can we hallow the Name of God, if by hallowing is meant, keeping it separate from all other names; preserving it as the special treasure of our spirits; not suffering the idea of absolute holiness, purity, goodness, to be soiled by any defilements from without or from within? Suppose I could shut myself out from the world, drawing round me some charmed circle which should exclude not only its direct assaults but its secret plague influences, should I not still have to ask myself whether I was a safe steward of the divine treasure; whether my pride in the trust might not destroy it; whether the Name might not pass into a shadow, while I was thinking of it as most substantial; whether it might not be acquiring from the imaginations of my heart all the same mixtures which it had contracted among the tribes of men?

Experience authorizes these enquiries; it scarcely authorizes us in giving more than one answer to them. Solitude is no security for the hallowing of God's Name; recluses have dealt as irreverently with it as men in the world's bustle. For us, however, this point is of no great practical importance, except to preserve us from desiring a state which is evidently not intended for us. We know that our thoughts of God, as well as our other thoughts, are, and will be continually, affected by speech, by books, by the movement and attrition of society. We know how various these thoughts have been: earnest yesterday, indifferent to-day; the Name now so little heeded, that we could trifle with it in the most ordinary conversation, in the most vulgar adjurations; now so terrible, that we dared not entertain the thought of it; now looking so beautiful at a distance, that we were content it should always remain at a distance; now approaching into awful nearness; now making us fear that it would ever be a shadow to us, and nothing more; now inviting us to take refuge in it from a hopeless Atheism. To hallow

God's Name, habitually to hallow it, amidst such countless variations of the external atmosphere, such colds and heats in ourselves—how is it possible? Must not we give up the attempt?

III. Certainly it is better that we should; then we shall begin to pray, 'Hallowed be thy Name.' We cannot hallow it; we cannot keep it from contact with our folly, baseness, corruption; the world cannot keep it; the Church cannot. But Thou canst. Thou canst make the darknesses of the world a foil to thy clear untroubled light, a means to its manifestation. Thou canst make the intricacies, falsehoods, contradictions of our hearts into reasons for our seeking and apprehending Thy simplicity and truth. That which would be in us, left to ourselves, terror of Thy power, Thou canst make awe of Thy holiness; what would be presumption of Thy indifference, Thou canst make into hope of Thy mercy; what would be defiance of Thy judgment, Thou canst make trust in Thy righteousness. Thus will Thy image be restored in man, because he will be able to behold Thee the Archetype.

Such a prayer is not one which men could have dreamed of themselves, but it is one which God himself has taught them. He led His saints in the old time to pray that He would declare His great Name; to thank Him for all His past revelations of it; to flee to it as a strong tower, in which they were safe from their enemies. Every new act of His judgment and His mercy was an answer to the cry; in every such act the prophet saw the witness and pledge of a fuller manifestation. The petition then was no new one. The disciples had often heard it before that day when our Lord was alone praying, and when they said, 'Teach us as John taught his disciples.' But they knew that He had stamped it with a new impression; for though they understood but imperfectly why He had come, and who He was, their hearts testified that He had certainly come to do that which He bade them ask for. If He brought gifts to men, if He proclaimed forgiveness to men, this was His first gift, this was the ground of His forgiveness, He hallowed the Name of God. He showed forth the Father who dwelt in Him full of grace and truth. Men could see Him after whose likeness they had

been created, in a pure untroubled mirror. They were not obliged to measure the Eternal Mind by the partial distorted forms of truth and goodness which they found each in himself. Here was goodness and truth in its primitive form, in its entire fulness. They needed not to reduce goodness and truth into abstractions; here they were exhibited in actual human life; the perfect man reflecting the perfect God. They need not dream of qualities which the shock of the Fall had separated in their minds—mercy and justice, freedom and obedience—as having a corresponding conflict in the Eternal Mind; here they were seen working harmoniously in every word and deed.

Thus God's Name was hallowed for them, thus it has been hallowed for us. This revelation is for all ages: if one has more need of it than another, ours is the one.

We are in danger alike from the invasion of all old superstitions, and of a fanatical Atheism; for they have a common ground. All superstition, all idolatry, has its root in the belief that God is made in our image, and not we in His; the most prevalent assumption of the modern as of the ancient sophist is, that man is the measure of all things; that there is nothing great or holy which is not his creation. Do not wonder, then, at any combinations you may see in our day between parties seemingly the most hostile—at any apparently sudden transitions from one camp to the other. There is no real inconsistency, no abandonment of principle. Do not let us be hasty in urging that charge or any charge. But let us be very careful in understanding the temptation of the age, because it is certainly our own. Let us not think we escape it by doing just the opposite of those who seem to us to have fallen into it; by cultivating all opinions and notions which they reject; by fearing a truth when they speak it. We may find that their practical conclusions meet us at the point which we thought the furthest from them, and that we have turned away from the very principle with which we might have strengthened ourselves, if not have done some good to them. Still less let us refuse to have our own loose and incoherent notions brought to trial, lest in losing them we should

lose the eternal truths of God's Word. Depend upon it, they are in the greatest peril from every insincere habit of mind we tolerate in ourselves; they will come out with a brightness we have never dreamed of when we are made simple and honest. Therefore let us pray this prayer, 'Hallowed be Thy Name,' believing that it has been answered, and being confident that it will be answered. It was answered in the old time by God's covenant; by the calling of every holy man; by the Divine law; by all the ordinances of family and national life; by every prophet and teacher whom God sent; by every witness which He bore to one people or another, in their consciences, in the discipline of their lives, through nature, through death, of His own character. It was answered by the whole life and death of the only-begotten Son, the firstborn of many brethren, the Prince of all the kings of the earth. It was answered by the gift of the Holy Spirit to abide with the Church for ever, for this end, that He might teach men of the Father and the Son. It is answered by our baptism into the holy and blessed Name, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. It is answered by confirmation and prayers, and holy communions, by individual trials, by visitations to nations, by the gift of new life to churches, by the conversion of sinners, by dying beds. It will be answered when we all yield ourselves up in deed and truth to the Spirit of God, that we like our Lord may glorify His Name upon the earth, and may accomplish the work which He has given us to do.

SERMON III. THY KINGDOM COME

Sexagesima Sunday, February 27, 1848.

Matthew VI. 10.

Thy kingdom come.

We have reached this petition of the Lord's Prayer at a time which would seem to give it special emphasis and significancy. I suppose few have repeated it this week without a kind of impression, however vague, that it bore upon events which were occupying themselves and the world. The words, 'Thy Kingdom,' must have suggested to most a contrast between a Kingdom which cannot be moved, and kingdoms which appeared firm one day, and have been shaken to the ground the next.

But this general reflection will have taken different forms according to the previous habits, convictions, associations, of those who entertained it. The first and most natural form is surely an expectation that there will be some time or other a better order in all our relations to each other, and in all the circumstances which affect us here on this planet. Upon what ground soever this expectation rests, it lasts with wonderful vitality through fair and foul weather, through killing-heats and frosts. No one who has once cherished it entirely loses it; or if he loses it, he loses himself with it. Disappointments, desertions, mockeries, may change its shape, or drive it further within, but they do not destroy it. If it fades away for a while, it bursts out more vigorously when you least look for it. Many who have expected from one civil movement after another that which they have not found, believe that a better ecclesiastical organization, or a freer working of that which exists, would remedy all confusions; others find refuge in the promise of a universal education; not a few, who have convinced themselves

that no human rulers of one kind or another, in Church or State, no systems of government or instruction, will avail for the removal of evil and the establishment of good, cling more strongly to the belief that One who is above all human rulers and systems will soon claim the earth as His rightful possession; that all convulsions in the existing order of things are the trumpets by which He announces that the city He has accursed is about to fall down. All these convictions, different as they are, belong to the same habit of mind. Those who entertain them mean when they pray, 'Thy Kingdom come,' 'Let the earth be governed wisely and truly, not as it has been, by the help of folly, insincerity, crime.'

Such a prayer will call up some echo in the hearts of all. But in many good men only a feeble echo; for the wish which it expresses is, in them, swallowed up by a stronger one. They never knew where to find or how to make for themselves a position upon earth; it never cheered them or soothed them. Now and then they have had sudden revelations of beauty in hill or valley, at sunrise or sunset, but these spoke, as they appeared and vanished, of some region to which the eye could not reach. Now and then they have met faces which smiled on them, but they seemed to have descended from a distant home to which they soon returned. Even the narrow circle in which these pilgrims dwell confuses them by the various interests and opposing sentiments of those who belong to it; the larger circles of society, with their manifold complications, altogether bewilder them. It seems to them a weary maze, without a plan; men are running a race with each other, of which a few withered leaves are the prize; they are beginning a tale which must be broken off in the middle; death makes all plots imperfect; only that state to which he introduces us can unravel them. There in that state must lie all that we dream of and hope for. Their vision of the land that is very far off may be not as clear as they wish, but it is more clear than their vision of anything which lies about them; without it all would be shadow and darkness. When such persons think of tumults and revolutions, they feel more keenly what it is they would

escape from. When they pray, 'Thy Kingdom come,' they ask that the Great Shepherd will lead them and their brethren out of a land of pits, a thirsty wilderness, a valley of the shadow of death, to a peaceable habitation, and a sure dwelling-place.

But there are also men who feel strongly that the kingdoms of this world are of a weak and perishable material, and yet who cannot be satisfied with the mere anticipation of a better inheritance after death. They require what is different in kind from anything which their eyes see, not merely that in an improved and perfected form. They desire a blessing which by its very nature cannot be more for one time than another, cannot be less needful for men here than hereafter. They have spirits which are haunted with the sense of a beauty and righteousness and truth which may be imaged in the world around them, but of which the source must lie much nearer to themselves. Some of them would say that it is in themselves: if men were but great and noble, and disengaged from the impressions of sense and the notions of society, they would perceive it. Others affirm, that when they exalt themselves this secret is hidden from them; that they enter into it only when they are humbled.

The first would say, not indeed in a prayer, but in their professions, their daily acts, their processes of self-discipline, 'My Kingdom come;' let my spirit be lightened of the outward impediments which prevent it from being right, wise, free; let it be lifted to its proper throne, from which it may look upon all beneath and around it, and if there be aught above it, as its own possession. The other says, 'Thy Kingdom come;' let the eyes of my understanding be cleared of their native mists, that they may see Thy wisdom; let me be purged of my inward pride and self-seeking, that I may know Thy truth; let me be set free from my exceeding sinfulness, that I may confess Thy righteousness, and be clothed with it. And that this may come to pass, do Thou take the government of all that is within me, of conscience, affection, reason, will, that they may do Thy work and not their own, and be

directed to the great ends for which Thou hast designed them, not to those meaner ends which they would invent for themselves.

We have found then, at least, three distinct interpretations of this prayer, leading to practical conclusions, apparently very remote from each other. It is surely important to know whether they are incompatible; if they are, which is the right one; if they are not, how they are reconciled. I think you will agree with me that there is but one authority which can decide these questions. He who taught His disciples the prayer, can alone tell them what the nature of that Kingdom is, which He bids them desire.

I. You will remember, that when our Lord began to preach, saying, Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, the expectation of a coming kingdom was strong in the minds of at least a large body of the Jewish people. Those who felt the Herodian family to be cruel oppressors and foreigners likewise, those who were tormented by the recollection of a still more shameful servitude, which the sight of every Roman soldier, of every taxgatherer, brought before them, believed that the divine Kingdom, the Kingdom of God, was to be the deliverance from these. Have you not sometimes wondered that we are not told of any direct words in which our Lord combatted this impression? He might have said at once to the people of Galilee, or Judea, The Kingdom I speak of has nothing whatever to do with those to which you compare it; you only confuse yourselves by thinking of them together. But He did not say so. He used the phrases, 'Thy Kingdom,' 'The Kingdom of God,' 'The Kingdom of Heaven,' on every possible occasion, though He knew that this association was present to the minds of those who heard Him. It is true, that those who had come before Him appealing to the desire for liberty in their countrymen, and holding out the hope of a divine interference to satisfy it, had led their followers into the wilderness to insurrection and to murder. There was that difference, amidst a multitude of others as wonderful, between His method and theirs. What I am observing is, that there was not this difference. The Jews generally, the Galileans

more than the rest of their countrymen, looked upon themselves as in an oppressed, anomalous condition, such as the chosen people of God ought not to be in. He did not tell them that they were mistaken. They believed that God meant to deliver them out of this condition. His words and His acts confirmed them in the hope. They thought that they must be brought into a different social position before they could attain freedom. He admitted the necessity. Many public acts, besides His last entry into Jerusalem as the Son of David, proved that He claimed to be what Nathanael declared Him to be, "The King of Israel." His parables, so far from setting aside common language, from disconnecting His Kingdom with the common relations and feelings of men, affirmed that all facts in nature and social life were testifying of it; His miracles, so far from diminishing the impression that He came to set men free from a galling yoke, were one and all acts of deliverance; of deliverance, not from some bondage of which the sufferers were not conscious, but from the most visible, obvious, bodily torments. These are sufficient proofs, I think, that our Lord did not intend us, when we prayed His prayer, to shut our eyes against the actual confusions and oppressions under which men are suffering, or to think that His Kingdom is of too transcendent a character to take account of them. Assuredly when we do, we depart from His teaching and example; we bring ourselves into a very artificial, visionary state of feeling; we set aside the great truth, that as nothing human should be foreign from those who are partakers of humanity, nothing human can be foreign from Him who is the Head of it. The lofty expressions of contempt for the littleness of mere earthly transactions, and the vicissitudes of human governments, which some divines affect, are not learnt in His school, or in the schools of His prophets. They rather teach us to be ashamed of the cold indifference with which we trace His footsteps and listen to His voice, in the present and past history of mankind. Surely, then, we are not to condemn those who hope for the cure of the ills which they know to exist, through a larger and wider sympathy in civil governors, through a deeper knowledge of

the ends for which the Church exists, and a more faithful use of the powers with which she is endowed, or, lastly, from the manifestation of Him to whom State-rulers and Church-rulers alike owe homage. All these expectations are sustained, not crushed, by the Word and Spirit of God. Without divine succour and encouragement they must have perished long ago, to our great misery, under the pressure of selfish feelings and interests, and of the despondency which experience, not penetrated with a higher principle, brings after it. And wherein then do those who have cherished these expectations, to which we owe so much of all that has been best in the world, seem to have wandered from His guidance who justifies their higher aspirations? In this respect, I think, mainly. Our Lord speaks of His Kingdom, or His Father's Kingdom, not as if it were to set aside that constitution of the universe, of which men had seen the tokens in family and national institutions, of which they had dreamed when they thought of a higher and more general fellowship; but as if it were that very constitution in the fulness of its meaning and power. He who is the ground of the world's order, He in whom all things consist, reveals Himself that we may know what its order and consistency are, how all disorder and inconsistency have arisen from the discontent and rebellion of our wills. Now an opposite feeling to this seems to characterize those who are noticing the present distractions of the world, and are suggesting how, in this day or hereafter, they may be removed. All seem to assume that the constitution of things is evil; not that we are evil in departing from it. With strange unanimity, eager politicians, restless ecclesiastics, hopeful millenarians, seem to take it for granted that the Devil is lord of the universe: only that by an improvement in the arrangements of civil life, by a stronger assertion of priestly authority, or by the final coming of the Son of Man, the evil power may be weakened or broken. Which sentiment, by whomsoever entertained, is surely unchristian and ungodly. The holiest men protested against it before our Lord's coming. Though the Kingdom was not yet shewn to be a kingdom for the whole earth, they believed that it was; they declared its laws, testified that heathens were

at war with their own proper ruler; told the chosen race that by their evil acts as kings, priests, people, they were breaking the everlasting covenant. Any other language since Christ has come is, practically, a renunciation of His authority, and a denial of His incarnation. Those who use it cannot effectually connect the command 'Repent' with the announcement 'The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand;' though our Lord's example forbids us ever to separate them. For they cannot say, "There has been a holy, blessed, order among you, which you have been darkening, confounding, hiding from men, by your sins and selfishness; but which must and will assert itself, in spite of you and of all that resist it." Were this mode of speaking generally adopted by pastors and preachers, their hearers might be led each to ask himself, What have I done to frustrate the ends for which the Kingdom of Heaven has been established upon earth? how can I cease my strife with it, and become its obedient subject? a question which, instead of destroying their interest in the doings of the world generally, would make that interest practical and personal; instead of lessening their hopes of the time when the darkness shall pass away and the true light shall shine out fully, would make them less earnest in guessing about it, than in preparing for it.

II. But if our Lord spoke thus of His Kingdom, did He frown upon the wishes and longings of those who would cast this world behind them, and project their thoughts wholly into a future state? So far as anything in their anticipations is incompatible with an entire recognition of the sacredness of our life here; so far as they imply the Manichean notion, that the earth, or the flesh, is the devil's creature and property; so far as they utter a merely selfish cry for escape from toil and warfare; He certainly gives them no encouragement, who hallowed all human life, who overcame the Evil Spirit, whose own garments were dipped in blood. But this, we must all confess, is only the dark and feeble side of a faith which is, in itself, gracious and inspiring. To despair of the present must be bad; to hope for the future must be good. And this hope our Lord cherishes and confirms, as much as

he disowns that despair. Think of those words which came with such power to the mind of a scribe who had maintained the doctrine of a resurrection always, but had probably never before felt it to be a reality: "As touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him." What are all speculations about separate states and intermediate existences to this celestial sentence? Those whom you read of in ages gone by, who sometimes stand out in such clear individuality, who sometimes melt into shadows, all live; for He lives from whom their life came. Nothing of it is departed, only the death which encompassed it. They have lost no personality. Here, there was but the first dawn of it. They were beginning feebly to be conscious of powers; to recognize distinctions; to feel after unity. He was educating their affections through the first stage of infancy; their reason, in its struggles to know its object; their will, in its endeavours to be obedient: who is now bringing them into more wonderful affinities, infinitely deeper apprehensions, a perfect liberty. And what is true of them is true of all who have yielded to the same guidance, who have desired the same light. All live to Him, with not one sympathy impaired or raised too high for human interests. With Him, as the common centre of all their thoughts and adorations, everything which He bestowed specially upon each is, necessarily, quickened and perfected, and finds its relation to the gift of every other. With Him as their centre they must care for all whom He cares for, but still, one would suppose, be knit closest in all bands of attachment and service to those with whom it was His pleasure, by holy pledges imperfectly understood, to unite them below. Such thoughts followed out, not by the fancy, but by the most legitimate reflection upon the state which must remain if the infirmities and sins of earth were purged away, would surely go far to satisfy men who have learnt to mourn over the meanness and incoherency of our earthly existence, considered by itself. And our Lord's own resurrection, and His appearances to his disciples after

he was risen, which were so brief, and yet carried with them such a wonderful witness of a perpetual presence,—these translate His words into life, and declare that our existence is not rounded with a sleep; or that it is a sleep in Him at whose voice all creation was first awaked, and will awake again. With such thoughts, brethren, we may comfort ourselves when we pray, "Thy Kingdom come." But we must not think that we are waiting for death to solve a problem which is not solved yet. The death of Him who took away the sins of the world, solved it at once and for ever; we only die to understand how perfect the solution is.

III. But this we shall not understand if we suppose that while our Lord sanctioned the expectations of those who look for a better government of this world, and of those who look for a world after death, he did not include in His gift and promise the satisfaction of those who feel that they want not a visible kingdom, but a Kingdom of righteousness, truth, love; not a future, but an eternal Kingdom. To them and to their hopes we may say that He spoke first. He awakened their longing, He met them before He could respond to the others. "For now," said John the Baptist, "the axe is laid to the root of the trees." He who is at hand is not coming to deal with external circumstances, but first with the being to whom those circumstances belong. Our Lord spoke straight to the conscience, reason, will, in man, which were asking after the Unseen, which were seeking for a Father. Even by his bodily cures He shewed that He was the Lord of the unseen influences which produce the outward signs of disease and decay. When He cast out evil spirits, He bore witness that He was holding converse with the spirit of man, that with the pride, lust, hatred, the powers of spiritual wickedness in high places which have enslaved us, He was carrying on His great controversy. By this victory He accomplished His great work. He manifested forth the true state and glory of man, as the child of God, and the inheritor of truth and righteousness, and built His Church upon that foundation of His own divine Humanity, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. Here, in this inner

region, in this root of man's being, He is still subduing His enemies, He is conducting His mysterious education. To that which He cultivates within us, He promises the great reward, the knowledge of Him who is, and was, and is to come. But be it ever remembered, that while He gives all encouragement to the highest desires of man's heart and reason, He gives none whatever to any mystical conceits and imaginations. "The axe is laid to the root of the tree; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." The Kingdom of God begins within, but it is to make itself manifest without. It is to penetrate the feelings, habits, thoughts, words, acts, of him who is the subject of it. At last it is to penetrate our whole social existence, to mould all things according to its laws.

For this we pray when we say, "Thy Kingdom come." We desire that the King of kings and Lord of lords will reign over our spirits and souls and bodies, which are His, and which He has redeemed. We pray for the extinction of all tyranny, whether lodged in particular men or in multitudes; for the exposure and destruction of corruptions inward and outward; for truth in all departments of government, art, science; for the true dignity of professions; for right dealings in the commonest transactions of trade; for blessings that shall be felt in every hovel. We pray for these things, knowing that we pray according to God's will; knowing that He will hear us. If He had not heard this prayer going up from tens of thousands in all ages, the earth would have been a den of robbers. He will so answer it, that all which He has made shall become as it was when He beheld it on the seventh day and, lo, it was very good.

SERMON IV. THY WILL BE DONE

Quinquagesima Sunday, March 5, 1848.

Luke XI. 2.

Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

The prayer we considered last week could not easily be separated from the spectacle which we had just witnessed, of a fallen kingdom. Since that time we have been watching attempts to construct a new society out of the ruins of the old. If I do not mistake, many have regarded these experiments with greater impatience, with less complacency, than the events which preceded them, and made them necessary. Such words as these have risen very readily to our lips: "What a weary repetition is here of a thrice-told tale! Is it possible that phrases which have been tested and found hollow nearly sixty years ago, are still fit for use and circulation now? Can it be that we must pass through another series of the same false promises, vain hopes, bitter disappointments, the same dreams of peace realized in blood, which were appointed for the last generation?" Not to entertain thoughts of this kind is difficult—difficult even not to give them expression. Yet when they are spoken they must drive others to ask, while we harbour them, does not the question present itself to ourselves—Is then the belief a phantasy, that men are intended for a brotherhood? Must the effort to realize it terminate in ridicule or in crime? Supposing that is the fact, should we begin with accusing other men of deception? Have we not a long list of falsehoods to confess which we have been proclaiming ourselves—in pulpits especially—which have been proclaimed throughout Christendom for near 1800 years?

Such an enquiry may no doubt be evaded by the reply: "Oh! we do not take Christianity into account. That, of course, may affect anything. We complain of those who think they can work all good to

their species without it." But our conscience will not be so appeased. It will rejoin, "And if you take Christianity into account, what then? You know that it will not of course set the world right. Do you believe seriously in your heart, that it can set the world right at all, under any conditions? If not, you should not pretend to believe it. Certainly this end will not be accomplished by phrases and professions. These are not the least better when they are coined in one mint than in another. It does not help us more to talk of brotherhood on Christian principles, than of brotherhood upon any other principles. The more sacred the language, the more offensive is any trifling use of it. We must not blame our neighbours for trying to make men brothers without the Gospel, if we are not ourselves convinced that the Gospel can make them so." There is still another resource which I know is commonly adopted by those who seek to escape from this difficulty. They say, "Christianity declares to us the exceeding sinfulness of the human heart and will. There is the root of all the confusions and miseries of the world. What mockery then to reform it by new schemes of government and society." Christianity does, no doubt, declare to us, or rather assumes, the exceeding sinfulness of man's heart. But it comes not proclaiming sin, but proclaiming a remedy for it. Do we believe the remedy to be effectual? If not, in what sense do we call ourselves Christians? If we do, how dare we blaspheme Christianity by calling her to prove that evil, social evil or individual, is inevitable? We cannot then avoid the enquiry, severe though it must be to most of us, What have you meant hitherto by this prayer, "Thy Will be done, as in heaven, so on earth?" What have you taken the Will of God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ to be? How do you suppose it is done in heaven? What is implied in asking, that even so it may be done on earth?

I. It would be a great mistake to identify this petition with that which I spoke of a fortnight ago. The Name denotes that which a Person is in Himself, his own character. This is an object of contemplation; it is to be hallowed. A Will imports energy going forth; it points to action, to effect; it is to be done. It is very needful for the clearness of

our minds, and for great practical results, to remember this distinction. But it is equally needful to remember that the Name and the Will exactly correspond to each other, that at all events in a Perfect Being there cannot be the slightest clashing or contrariety between them. Nay more; if the Name be that which has been revealed to us as the Name of God; if it express goodness, mercy, lovingkindness, we cannot think of it at all without thinking of a Will, directed towards other beings, and exercising itself upon them. To identify Will with mere Sovereignty, is to destroy the earlier petition. We cannot hallow the Name of God if we suppose power to be His most essential characteristic, or the manifestation of power to be His chief delight. This notion of Him is evidently fashioned out of our own low appetites and base fancies; it is the notion which lies at the root of the dark fables of heathenism. The whole Revelation which is delivered in the Old and New Testament is nothing else than a continuous protest against it, or rather a continuous unfolding of the truth from which it is a departure. It assaults the natural tendency of our minds which is to worship all the different shapes and appearances of power that we discern in the world around us; it leads us to feel that we need some power of an altogether higher and different kind to rule ourselves; it shews us that this power must be a Will; that it must be moral; that righteousness must be its essence, power its instrument. A God of righteousness and truth, just and without iniquity, is He whom the Bible speaks of, He who presents Himself to the conscience, heart, will, of His creatures, as the Author of all that is right and good in them and in the universe.

When we say, Thy Will, this must be the sense in which our Lord would have us speak the words. To enter into the inmost recesses of that Will, was His only, who perfectly delighted in it. But we are sure, that were it possible for us to know as He knew, we should not discover a difference of purpose, another kind of Will than that which His acts exhibited; we should only behold that infinite abysmal love, which, through our evil and selfishness, had been hidden from us. It would be well for us, brethren, if we were more careful of insulting the Majesty

of Heaven in our confessions of ignorance as well as in our boast of knowledge. We have no right to say, We are such poor creatures, we cannot tell the least what are the designs of God; we can only submit to His irresistible pleasure. It is precisely His design which He has made known to us; what His Will is to the human race and each of His members, is not one of the secrets which He withholds from us and from our children. Nor is there any real awe of Him while we choose to think our own thoughts about it instead of His, whilst we insist upon doing homage to a dreary, naked Omnipotence. For, however we may fancy that there is something at once humbling and elevating in the thought of that which may crush and may uphold us, it is not a contemplation in which we care to abide; the spirit within us soon starts up from the momentary depression it has caused, soon betakes itself to other and more natural ways of realising its own dignity. We want a mightier charm than this; we want the belief and knowledge of a Will that is always originating and effectuating good—good, and nothing else. Before such a Being, the spirit of man trembles; in His presence it feels its own nothingness; to Him it can look up, and be sure that He is raising it. Hence comes a conviction, not of weakness, but of sin; the sense, not that we have been unable to resist, but that we have actually resisted that power which is working for the deliverance and blessedness of us and of our whole race. A power we shall then joyfully confess it to be, when we know that it is not that merely or principally. We could not bear to suppose it would be the most flagrant of contradictions—that a perfectly Loving Will was ever idle, that it was not continually energizing, continually accomplishing its own deep and gracious ends. Where the limit is to their accomplishment, how is it possible that a creature Will can contend with that which has formed it; by what mysterious concurrence, which cannot be understood in either alone, obedience is produced out of rebellion here is a depth indeed, in which we may be content not to see our way; here is that secret which, except in life and practice, we never penetrate. I say, except in life and practice; for we can and do know in our own

experience the fact of resistance and the law of submission. We do know that every evil act has been one against which there was a divine remonstrance within us; we do know that this act has brought disorder and contradiction after it; we do know that, not we ourselves, but He, who has curbed us and forewarned us of the evil, has wrought the repentance for it; since only when we confessed the wrong and cried to be made right were we brought into our true state. Thus much every man may know in himself; but to generalise from this experience is a more difficult process than we sometimes suspect. The logical terms in which we express our conclusions are even less adequate to describe the subtle operations of spirit than those of nature; we should not, therefore, suffer them to embarrass us either in our dealings with our individual consciences, or in our judgments respecting the purposes of God. Generalities are not accurate enough for the one; they are far too narrow for the other. A man cannot be honest in action if he applies maxims and formulas about the extent of prescience and human power to his own particular conduct; he must be profane and false if he uses them to measure the Eternal Mind. By a strange perversity those who are using their intellects to determine what must be the acts and intentions of God, resent every appeal, though grounded on express revelation, to his moral nature; as if it implied that we were circumscribing Him by our own imperfections. But this appeal is a witness against all such circumscription. We say, that we must acknowledge the absolute goodness of that Will, which was manifested in act by the onlybegotten Son, or we shall make it merely the image of our own. We must have an invariable standard to which we can refer ourselves; or we shall make ourselves, with all our variations and contradictions, the standard. We must not let logical formulas, or deductions from our own experience, and the world's experience, or possible dangers, or the fear of losing plausible topics of declamation, come in the way of the strict simple use of this prayer, or force us to mean something less by the words, Thy Will, than a Will of efficient good to every creature; otherwise we shall either be contracting our own love within limits

which God commands us to transgress, or blasphemously suppose that it is, at some point or other, greater than His. At all hazards, in despite of all reasonings and all authority, cling to the prayer. That will never do you harm, or lead you astray. The more we use it, in the faith that the Will we ask should be done is the right loving and blessed Will, the more we shall know that it is, the more we shall be sure that it must be done. We shall meet every day with a set of new impediments to that conviction; at times, it will seem the most monstrous and incredible of all convictions; then when it does, the prayer is specially needed to raise us above the plausible lies of our understandings; to place us in a point of view whence we can see the truth which surmounts them. That point of view is obtained when our state is the lowliest; we must sink not rise, if we would feel our relation to the Will which is guiding all creation; the Cross is at once the complete utterance of the prayer and the answer to it.

II. For it is the Cross which tells us how this Will is done in Heaven. We should be giving an intelligible sense to this clause, if we took heaven in its simplest, most outward, sense, as synonymous with what we call the heavenly bodies, and if we supposed the prayer to be that, as all these silently and calmly obey the law which was given them on the fourth day, so the voluntary creatures of God, who have set His Will at nought, might be brought into a submission as complete, into an order as unbroken and harmonious. There would be a deep significance in such a petition, though we should need great caution to prevent it from turning into the most unchristian and dreadful of all desires—the desire to be free from responsibility, to lose our wills, to become mere natural creatures. And I do not think any one who has prayed the Lord's Prayer ever rested in this interpretation, even if it might be cherished for a moment. The general feeling of Christian people has been that this Will is done in heaven, not by blind agents, but by intelligent, spiritual, creatures; by wills which might have fallen, but which stood in holy, cheerful obedience. Of such beings Scripture speaks often; their existence it assumes throughout; only it does not

indulge us with any such account of their condition and circumstances as would lead us away from that one great truth of their history, in which all others are included: 'They do His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His words.' We have, in the Bible, no description of celestial hierarchies, such as the schoolmen of the middle ages were wont to draw out: above all, no allusions to the angelic nature, in terms so common in more modern writers, which would lead us to suppose that it was essentially different from our own. The more carefully you consider the passages in Scripture concerning angels, the more you will be struck with the use of a language which seems almost to confound them with men. And why, but because Scripture never for an instant contemplates the derangement of man's state, which is the consequence of his disobedience, as determining what that state is. It looks upon the unfallen creature, or the creature renewed after the fall, as the proper representative of humanity—not upon one who is dead in trespasses and sins; it never treats an anomaly as a law. 'Their angels,' says our Lord, 'do always behold the face of my Father in heaven; for the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.' The true form of human existence and society has not perished because certain fragments have been severed from it; the flock was not destroyed because a set of sheep had wandered from it: only He, in whom the whole harmony stood perfect, came to reunite the fragments; the Shepherd came into the wilderness to carry home rejoicing the lost one. It is the effect of our sin to make us look upon ourselves as the centres of the universe; and then to look upon the perverse and miserable accidents of our condition as determining what we ourselves are: so all the manifestations of God are treated as if they were merely appropriate to those accidents, till we learn at last to look upon sin, not as that which takes us out of the harmony God has established, but as that which has been able to subvert the harmony; to frustrate the Divine will. To feel sin, as we are intended to feel it, seems almost impossible while we adopt this scheme; still more, to feel the might and mystery of redemption. But if we contemplate

the Son of Man as the Lord of the unfallen as well as of the fallen creation, if we believe that He perfectly fulfilled that Will under all the conditions of temptation and misery upon earth, which He had fulfilled before the worlds were, our minds become quieter and more hopeful. Let Science discover to us as many myriads of worlds as it may; let each of these myriads of worlds be peopled with myriads of creatures; we know, if they are involuntary, they are subject to the same Will which rules every animal and vegetable on this planet: if they are voluntary, their state must be one of cheerful dependence upon that Will, or else of rebellion against it. There must be an order for them, and it must be a blessed order. Space and time can make no difference in that which concerns the Eternal government; in the principles of obedience, disobedience, redemption. And however darkly we may see into these things, we are sure of this prayer 'as in Heaven;' we are sure that we are not presuming when we believe it and offer it up. As we do so, the fetters of time and space become more and more loosened through His might who willingly took them upon Himself, and then ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, that he might fill all things. It becomes no hard effort to suppose the existence of multitudes of blessed creatures, formed and kept in the image of Him who said, 'Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight;' or to believe that mysteries of love have been revealed to them, through our fall and redemption, which they desire more deeply to look into; or to feel that they must rejoice over one sinner who repenteth.

III. And therefore the prayer may well go on, 'Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.' Holding fast the testimony of Christ respecting His Father's Will; believing that it is continually at work to execute its purposes; believing that there are multitudes of wills in whom it does work effectually, triumphantly, who obey it and are free; believing, lastly, that He who guides them, and to whom they do homage, has taken account of this earth for the purpose of restoring those who dwell upon it to submission, liberty, unity, we can ask without fear, that all which resists this Will in one place or another, may be brought to

acquiesce in it, and to become its cheerful servant and child. If place makes no difference in the view which we take of those who confess this Will, and yield themselves to it, place can make no difference in its power of reaching and subduing those who have been refractory. There is nothing, surely, in this fair earth to make it an unfit dwelling for all that is pure and gracious. It is the revolted will which interposes the one barrier to all communications from above, to union and fellowship below. The selfish, self-seeking, spirit, says 'Thy Will be not done;' love shall not have dominion here: supposing that demon cast out, supposing the spirit of man brought to desire that it should serve in heaven, instead of reigning in hell; and the earth, the battlefield between them, which Christ won when he gave up Himself, becomes not potentially but actually God's; by its own acknowledgment, as well as by His victory. And we know, assuredly, that spirits which have yielded themselves to the tyranny of the evil power are, day by day, set free from its yoke; that God, by the mighty instruments which He has wrested out of the hands of His enemies, by individual sorrows, by national calamities, does lead men to feel that it is better to live in their Father's house, than to feed upon husks, or to starve. If we do not think so, why do we use this prayer? what sense is there in it? what hope can we have from it? If we confess so much, how can we ever make it a charge against any people, that they hope for a brotherhood upon earth? To tell them, if that is the case, that they are not resting their expectations on a safe ground; that there is no brotherhood, unless we begin with confessing a Father; that we must attain it by giving up ourselves to do His Will; that if we set up our own, we are enthroning the very principle which has made all unity impossible: this is right, this is benevolent. But we have scarcely a right to dispossess a man of a pleasant dream unless we can give him a reality in place for it; for every hope points upwards: if it does not find an object, it is in search of one; you cannot crush it without robbing your fellow-creature of a witness for God, and an instrument of purification. I do not mean that falsehood can ever do good to a human soul, or be anything except a

curse to it; but I mean that hope is a deliverance out of the falsehoods of sense, and that there is a truth always corresponding to it, which is missed, not because the hope is too strong, but because inconsistent elements are mingled with it, which weaken and debase it. Therefore let us labour diligently to clear ourselves of all such mixtures. One I referred to before, and will speak of now. We say that Christianity can bring about a true fraternity among men. But this is an elliptical mode of speech, and may be a misleading one. Christianity, as a mere system of doctrines or practices, will never make men brothers. By Christianity we must understand the reconciliation of mankind to God in Christ; we must understand the power and privilege of saying, 'Our Father—Thy Will be done in earth as it is in heaven.' No notion, or set of notions, will bind us together; He binds us who has given His Son for us all, that we might not live for ever in separation from Him and from each other. There is another error which is, perhaps, in practice, even more fatal. We are apt to say, 'These large schemes of the universe, which we hear so much of, are vain; what good can come of them? let us try to do our duty each in his own sphere. An excellent resolution: but, too often, adopted merely in spite, and therefore leading to no result. We exalt the little for the sake of disparaging the large; presently we grow weary of not doing more; we fly back to great schemes which we have pronounced abortive: because we find them so we do nothing. This prayer meets us at each point; it will not allow us to escape by one pretext or the other. It does not treat the projects of men for universal societies, unbounded pantisocracies, as too large. It overreaches them all with these words, 'As in Heaven.' It opens to us the vision of a society, in which angels and archangels, and the spirits of the just made perfect, are citizens, and in which we too have an inheritance. It does not look upon any homely individual task of self-sacrifice as insignificant: 'So upon earth' meets every such case, and reminds us that the lowliest tasks beseem the disciples of Him who 'took upon Him the form of a servant, and was found in fashion as a man.' 'Thy Will be done' reconciles the high and the mean; the Will

of Him who created the heavens, and stretched them out; the Will of Him who was born in the manger; the Will of that Spirit of Holiness in whom they are eternally one.

SERMON V. GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

First Sunday in Lent, March 12, 1848.

MATTHEW VI. 11.

Give us this day our daily bread.

HERE are many points of view from which this season of Lent may be regarded. One of them is given us in the beginning of the Gospel for to-day. The tempter said to Jesus, 'If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.' He answered, 'It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God shall men live.' If these last words had declared that man does not live by bread, they would have been naturally construed to mean that he has a higher, more mysterious life than that of his body; one requiring a diviner nourishment. But this sense, though it may be latent in the answer, has not generally been felt to arise immediately out of it. That the most perfect man does, in some sense, live by bread, was shown by our Lord's hungering. He did not exalt himself above the conditions of creatures with bodies, dying bodies; those conditions He entered into. It was to His weakness, to His suffering, that the Tempter spoke. And the reply did not move the question to a different ground, but met it on its own ground. Man's body lives not by bread alone, but by the Word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God. This was, obviously, the first intention of the language when it was used by Moses. The manna proved to the Israelites that their support came from the Word of God. That Word did not sustain them without visible food; but it conferred upon the visible thing its power of sustaining them. Take away the life-giving Word, which proceeded out of the mouth of God, and the little round thing which lay upon the ground would have been useless. This lesson

they were to lay to heart; the pot of manna in the tabernacle was to remind them of it when they were come into the promised land, and were eating bread made by various processes from the corn which they had themselves sown and reaped. They were not to think that this derived its nourishing power less from the Word of God than the manna which their fathers ate in the wilderness. They were not to suppose that this bread had any virtue of its own more than the other. Its virtue lay in its fitness for the creature whom God had endued with a life incomparably more wonderful than that of the corn, wonderful as that is; wonderful as is its capacity of growth, maturity, conversion into a material quite unlike itself; wonderful as is the whole relation of the vegetable to the animal substance. Rightly reflected on, this bread contained a deeper, more comprehensive, revelation of God than the manna. But, because deeper and more comprehensive, therefore less adapted to an infant nation, which had been sensualized and debased by animal and vegetable worship, and by the slavery which must accompany it. Such a people have to begin at the alphabet; they must be taught by the falling of food from Heaven, that they depend upon an invisible Person, a sure Friend who cares for them; not upon the hard material thing which will not come to them when they ask for it; which they will be least able to procure when they treat it with most reverence. But that truth had need to be fixed in their hearts, again and again, in different stages of their history, by methods adapted to those stages. In the city as much as in the wilderness, when they had grown old in a settled independence, as much as when they had just escaped from the flesh-pots of Egypt, in the monotony of ease, as much as when everything around them spoke of famine and drought, they would be assailed by materialism and unbelief; they would be in danger of losing all thought of an unseen Protector. Therefore the heavens would become brass, and the earth iron, the locust and the palmerworm would eat up the fruits of the ground, the Philistine, or the Assyrian, would lay it waste for the same reason that the manna had fallen in the sight of their fathers; to shew them that they lived

by the Word which proceeded out of the mouth of God, and not by any necessary fertility in the soil, or special exemption from the plagues of Egypt, or any strength in their hands or in their wit. There might come, in the latter days of the nation, even a harder and more desperate condition than that which is the result of men's natural inclination to trust in things seen, and in the works of their own hands. A stiff religious formalism, a comfortable conceit that they were going on with suitable decency through a round of appointed services, or, were acquiring merit by acts of voluntary supererogatory devotion, might make the heaven brass and the earth iron in another sense. All real communication might be cut off between them; the Lord of all might be exhibited as a tyrant to be won over by presents and bribes; the heart which should receive His grace might become utterly impenetrable. In such a period of the history of the Jews, our Lord appeared among them; at such a time the voice from Heaven said, 'This is my beloved Son,' and the voice from hell, 'If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.' At such a time, He claimed to be the Son of God not because He could make stones bread, but because He could stand on the old promise, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' And having thus asserted His own filial dependence and filial faith, and having claimed the privilege of dependence and faith, not for Himself but for man; He, who came as the firstborn of many brethren, could say to the band of fishermen, His disciples, 'After this manner, therefore, pray ye: Our Father—give us this day our daily bread.' That childlike petition was the fruit of His Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation.

The forty days then which bring that Fasting and Temptation to our mind, are given us especially that we may be taught how to pray this prayer. Those who find it quite easy, in all circumstances of indulgence and comfort, to believe that they receive their bread from God; who, when it is most abundant, ask him to give it—meaning what they say—have not, perhaps, any call to self-restraint. But there

are some who know, in their consciences, that they are apt to mock God when they speak these solemn words, apt to take food and every other blessing as if it were their right of which no power in heaven or earth except by sheer injustice can deprive them. Something which shall tell them of dependence, some secret reminiscence, insignificant to others, that all things are not their own; some hint that there are a few million creatures of their flesh and blood who cannot call any of these things their own, is needful for them. If it comes in the form of punishment sent specially to themselves, they cannot say it was not wanted; if it is a voice addressed generally to the whole Church, a season returning year by year, they cannot pretend that there are any satisfactory reasons why they should close their ears to it. What they ought to desire is, that they may keep the end in sight: so they will never reckon means, of whatever kind they be, of any value for their own sakes; they will not fancy that to abstain from food is more meritorious in God's sight, than to eat it; if in either case, equally, they are desiring to recollect that it is a good which He bestows. Above all, they will feel that, whatever else Lent is, it is certainly a time of confession, and their great hope of being ever able to use this prayer more faithfully must be grounded on an examination of the causes which have made it so unreal in times past. Let us look manfully at some of these causes this afternoon; if we study the petition, we shall not be long in discovering them.

I. It may seem strange that I should put, first of all, our unwillingness to acknowledge God as a Giver; our inclination to think of Him rather as an Exactor. Such a charge will, I know, sound to some most paradoxical. 'What!' they will say, 'do you affirm that people in this day like especially to be reminded of the duties that are required of them, and dislike to be reminded of the gifts and mercies which they may expect with or without the performance of those duties? Is not precisely the opposite error that to which our age is prone? Are we not most restless and impatient when we are told, Such things you ought to do, such men you ought to be; most eager to receive the comfortable

assurance that we may rest, for that God's grace is everything—man's energy nothing?' Those who make this objection, shew that they have considerable experience, both of other men's infirmities, and of their own. That a certain languor, not incompatible with much fever but one of its symptoms, is characteristic of our time, I should indeed be afraid to deny. We cannot feel it ourselves without being conscious that it is abroad. That when we are indisposed to strenuous effort, we often take refuge in theories, religious or philosophical, which disparage it, or represent it as needless, is also indisputable. We try stimulants first, then opiates; and each empiric, who would suggest a new one, may reasonably speculate upon the failure of the last. But where did this listlessness begin? what is the root of it? Our Lord puts this interpretation of it into the mouth of one who had exhibited it and wished to justify it thus: 'I knew thee that thou wert an hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering where thou didst not straw: therefore I hid thy talent in the earth; lo! there thou hast that is thine.' If we can trust Him who knew what was in man, the two accusations are not inconsistent; we may be very slow in listening to calls of duty, and the reason may be that we regard Him who calls us an Exactor, not a Giver. I press this confession before all others, not only because the first word of the Prayer suggests it, but because I believe we, the ministers of God, are more bound to make it than other men. We have thought, it seems to me, that our chief business was to persuade and conjure and argue and frighten men into a notion and feeling of their responsibilities: whereas our chief business is, assuredly, to proclaim the name of God; to set that before our fellowcreatures in its fulness and reality; so to convince them of their sin; so to teach them how they may be delivered from it. Being very eager to make out a case against mankind, comparatively indifferent about the assertion and vindication of the Divine character, we have failed in one object quite as much as the other. We have not dared to speak of God broadly, simply, absolutely, as a Giver, lest we should thereby weaken His claim upon man's obedience; whereas this is His claim upon their obedience:

in this way He enforces His claim. Thus we have begotten in men a feeling that they are obliged to do something which they cannot do. A struggle ensues, passionate, irregular, hopeless, after an unattainable prize; then bitter discontent and murmuring against Him who seems to have created us for vanity and wretchedness.

See how this consideration affects the petition for daily bread. If we dared to look upon God as a giver in the full, free, intelligible, sense of the words, we should, in asking for bread, feel that we were asking for the power and energy wherewith to work for it. We should say to ourselves; 'This is the law under which God has put the universe, a merciful and good law which if man is able to evade as he is in some regions of exuberant fertility, the seeming privilege turns out to be his curse. It is desiring a stone, and not bread, to desire that we may have all we want without the sweat of our brow; and such a stone the Father will not give us. But when we desire the will to toil, and the wisdom to toil, and the strength to toil, and the fruit of toil, we plead as men with Him who desires that we should subdue the earth and replenish it, because He has made us in His image, and would have us share His work and His rest. Then we ask according to His will, and He heareth us. Then does the earth bring forth and bud, and God, even our own God, blesses us. We are not the creatures of chance; we are not the slaves of a Pharaoh; we are doing the blessed command of Him who created the ground and man to inhabit it.' How entirely then does the life and sense of this passage depend upon those which have gone before it! If we misrepresent the Name of God, and the Will of God, how inevitably does this petition for bread turn to evil instead of good. If we will think of Him, not as the Scripture and the Church teach us to think of Him, as the Author and Giver of all things, but only as one who demands so much work of us, and offers so much pay in return, we fold our hands in indolence and despair; we cannot love that which He commands, or desire that which He promises. Let us confess, then, this sin first, that we have slandered His holy Name, not believing that He gives to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.

II. If we think of God as an Exactor and not a Giver, exactors and not givers shall we be. And so the word us acquires a very contracted signification indeed. The prayer will express a hope that we, who are sufficiently well supplied with all necessaries and comforts, may never be stinted of them; it will express a lazy half-formed wish that people, who have none of our comforts and little of what we call necessaries, may not quite starve. Think what meaning it must have had when it was offered up by that band in Jerusalem, after the day of Pentecost, who were of one heart and one soul, eating their bread with joy and singleness of heart. They will have understood it to be indeed a petition to the Father, who had so loved them as to give His only-begotten Son for them, and who had filled them with His own Spirit, that He would give them that which they needed for body and soul; would give it them under that condition of which I spoke just now: and under this further condition, that each, upon whom the Lord bestowed superfluity, should hold himself a steward, and distribute his bounties. As the first principle which united bread and work together had been proved, by a long experience, to be a blessed one, so the second they will have felt to be the fulfilment of Christ's promise, that they should be children of His Father in heaven; that they should be gracious and merciful as He is. Without the one the Church would have been a hive of drones; without the second it would have been a collection of separate bees, each working for itself, bringing in its contribution to a common stock, but wanting the sweetness of affection, sympathy, subordination. Will it be said that the law of that Church was never intended to be perpetual; that even in apostolical history there are few vestiges of it after the Church had diffused itself beyond a single city or province? I answer; the accidents of that Jerusalem Church were indeed transitory; more transitory than the fall of the manna in the camp of Israel: but the law which those accidents made known was as permanent a law as that which the manna revealed. The selling of houses and lands was only one exhibition of a state of mind, an exhibition never enforced, as St. Peter told Ananias, But the principle

implied in the words, 'No man said that which he had was his own,' is the principle of the Church, in all ages; its members stand while they confess this principle, they fall from her communion when they deny it.

Property is holy, distinction of ranks is holy: so speaks the Law, and the Church does not deny the assertion, but ratifies it. Only she must proclaim this other truth, or perish. Beneath all distinctions of property and of rank lie the obligations of a common Creation, Redemption, Humanity; and these are not mere ultimate obligations to be confessed when the others are fulfilled. They are not vague abstractions, which cannot quite be denied, but which have no direct bearing upon our actual daily existence; they are primary, eternal bonds, upon which all others depend; they are not satisfied by some nominal occasional act of homage; they demand the fealty and service of a life; all our doings must be witnesses of them. The Church proclaims tacitly by her existence she should have proclaimed openly by her voice—that property and rank are held upon this tenure; that they can stand by no other. Alas! she has not spoken out this truth clearly and strongly here or anywhere. She has fancied that it was her first work to protect those who could have protected themselves well enough without her, provided she had been true to her vocation of caring for those whom the world did not care for, of watching over them continually, of fitting them to be citizens of any society on earth, by shewing them what is implied in the heavenly filial citizenship into which God has freely adopted them. Failing in this duty, she has become powerless for the one she ignominiously preferred. She can give but feeble help to the rich in their hour of need, because she ministered to them with such sad fidelity in their hour of triumph and prosperity. She can scarcely make her voice heard against schemes for reducing all things to a common stock, for establishing a fellowship upon a law of mutual selfishness, because she has not believed that the internal communion, the law of Love, the polity of members united in one Head, of brethren confessing a common Father, is a real one

—has left people to fancy that it is only a fine dream, a cruel mockery, incapable of bringing any tangible blessings. If she can yet avert such a calamity, it must be by calling upon all of us her members to confess the insincerity with which we have uttered these words, 'Give us our daily bread.' If we had understood that we were children of one Father, and were asking Him to bless all the parts of His family, while we were seeking blessings for ourselves, that, in fact, we could not pray at all without praying for them, we should have found the answer in a new sense of fellowship between all classes, in the feeling that every man, in every position, has an office and ministry which it is his privilege to exercise for those over whom he is set; in a clearer apprehension of the relationship between the master of a household and his domestics, the landlord and his tenants, the farmer and his labourers, the manufacturer and those who work at the loom or the mill, the tradesman and those who serve in his shop; between these and then between all of them and the outlying mass, which seems to be beyond the bounds of all ordinary civil relationships, but which, as it has the great mark of human relationship, may be adopted into these, or be fitted to take a part in the establishment of new societies elsewhere.

If we meet continually in the streets creatures of our own flesh and blood, who have a look of hunger and misery, without being able to determine whether it is a greater sin to withhold that which may save them from death, or to give what may lead to the worst kind of death; if a thousand social problems, which we once supposed were of easy solution, present themselves in new and embarrassing aspects, tempting us to pass them by altogether and then forcing upon us the reflection, that they must settle themselves in some way, whether we forget them or not; if we hear masses of creatures spoken of as if they were the insects we look at in a microscope, and then are suddenly reminded by some startling phenomenon that each one of them has a living soul; then, before we become mad, or escape into an apathy that is worse than madness, let us ask ourselves whether we have yet

prayed this child's prayer as we would have a child pray it, in simplicity and truth. And if we are conscious that we have not, let us confess the sin, and see whether He to whom we confess it does not shed some light into our minds which makes our path clearer—a light which we may believe He will vouchsafe to our brethren in this land, and in all lands, for their practical guidance, when their large theories are found to be reeds, upon which, if a man leans, they will go into his hand and pierce it.

III. But the prayer is only for this day. Hence it is often thought that the spirit of the Gospel is adverse to foresight. How can the command, 'Take no thought for the morrow,' be reconciled with the kind of anticipation and preparation which seem to distinguish the civilized man from the hunter of the woods? The answer lies in our own experience. Have we found that anxiety about possible consequences increased the clearness of our judgment, made us wiser and braver in meeting the present, and arming ourselves for the future? Is it this kind of temper which enables a man to plough the ground, to sow the seed in the appointed month, to wait patiently for the harvest? Is it the temper which would have enabled any sailor, any merchant to venture himself or his goods, upon the deep? We know perfectly well that the most opposite habit of mind to this, a simple and hearty reliance upon a power whom the ground, and the seasons, and the winds, and the waves obey, could alone have made such acts and enterprises possible. Clearness of vision, providence, discovery, are the rewards of the calm and patient spirit. The cases are rare indeed where they have been given to any other. Out of that care for the morrow which our Lord denounces, spring the fever of speculation, the hasting to be rich, endless scheming, continual reactions of fantastic hope and deep depression in individuals, of mad prosperity and intense suffering in nations. If we had prayed for this day's bread, and left the next to itself, if we had not huddled our days together, not allotting to each its appointed task, but ever deferring that to the future, and drawing upon the future for its own troubles which must be met when they

come whether we have anticipated them or not, we should have found a simplicity and honesty in our lives, a capacity for work, an enjoyment in it, to which we are now, for the most part, strangers. Here, I believe, we shall all find abundant matter for confession, if we look faithfully into our lives. This part of the prayer too has been unfaithfully repeated; we have been wearying ourselves in thoughts of what would be, because we have no confidence in Him who is.

IV. But it is our daily bread we ask for, τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον. This word ἐπιούσιον gave rise to one of the controversies between Abelard and Bernard in the 12th century. The former following a hint of Jerome, adopted the translation panem supersubstantialem, and taught Heloise and the nuns in her convent to use it in repeating the prayer. It appears that the practice was not a new one there; at all events, Bernard had no right to accuse his opponent of wilfully perverting Scripture, when he was following the guidance of the most approved Latin Father. We shall all probably agree that he was right in objecting to a phrase which, even if it had more philological plausibility than really belongs to it[1], would be entirely out of harmony with the tone and spirit of the prayer. It is less easy to say what exact word we should adopt; we have no analogy to help us, for the word does not exist in any classical author. The balance of evidence seems decidedly in favour of those who derive the word as Jerome did, but take it to mean 'bread for subsistence.' Our translators followed a different course, but they arrived nearly at the same result. Bread for subsistence defines accurately what we intend by daily bread, when we intend anything. We ask for bread to sustain us, bread that shall be enough for our needs. What is enough we happily are not called to fix; the act of prayer throws the decision of that point upon a wiser judge. No one, therefore, could infer from the use of this expression that a rigid sumptuary law is involved in the petition; that one has, of course, the same needs as another. The Bible admits the distinction

[1]It confounds ἐπί with ὑπέρ.

of rich and poor; in commanding hospitality, it assumes that there are some who have the means of exercising it, and others towards whom it may be exercised. But the words are not the less cutting because they do not reduce all expenditure to a level. They may dilate to take in a great variety of cases, but they can never lose their proper original signification. Bread for subsistence will not, under any circumstances, be bread for mere display, for waste, for rivalry. The prayer asserts a broad, palpable, everlasting distinction between the different reasons for seeking wealth, the different ways of using it; though it leaves every man's conscience to determine in the sight of God which reasons govern his acts, which ways he is taking. Honestly offered up, therefore, it will, I conceive, make us very uneasy in that kind of ostentation which men in each class of society are apt to affect for the purpose of not being distanced by those of the same grade, and that they may assert their right to a higher. Moralists, satirists, divines, have long been using their different weapons against this folly apparently with little success. It is now coming before us in a new form. Competition is denounced as a monstrous evil, which a new organization of society is needed to remedy. How numerous and weighty are the facts which the advocates of this theory are able to allege! how much excuse does there seem for the root and branch schemes which they suggest! Yes, if they were root and branch schemes; if they did find out the source of this evil, if a reconstruction of civil life could prevent its renewal. But we trust neither in satirists, moralists, divines, or communists. Another hand than ours is needed to deal with a disease which has penetrated so deeply, which has so nearly reached our vitals. What we can do is to tell men that this hand is stretched out, that any secret corruption which has been cherished in the heart of individuals, or in the heart of society, will be brought into the clear light; that national judgments will purge away those of which the removal is not first sought by national repentance. What we can do is to say, He who sends these judgments is willing to give that repentance. He invites us now at this time to acknowledge the sins that we know, to ask Him to search our hearts,

and discover those which we know not. He bids us believe that the most inveterate cancer as in ourselves, so in the body politic, may be taken from us by His knife, if we will submit to it. He exhorts us not to wait till the dark and evil day actually comes upon us, till the house is left desolate of His presence, and stript of every good gift which we have received through it. He calls upon us this day to turn to Him with thanksgivings, as to the great Giver of all blessings, with confessions as to the Father whom we have grieved by disbelieving in His love, and not showing it forth to our brethren; with prayer that He will give us and them all we need, and most of all, the heart to receive it from Him as His stewards, for the good of those who are dear in His sight.

SERMON VI. FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS

Second Sunday in Lent, March 19, 1848.

Matthew VI. 12.

Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

We should be sorry, I think, to lose the word 'Trespasses,' which we use in our ordinary repetition of the Lord's Prayer, and which is translated, no doubt, from the word ἁμαρτίας in St. Luke. Yet St. Matthew's expression presents a more distinct image to the mind; it interprets itself more easily. Therefore I have chosen it this afternoon, not wishing you to consider it alone, but believing that it may help us to a clearer apprehension of a word which for many, at least, has lost its brightness through continual attrition. The idea which the petition embodies, results, I suspect, from the union of that which is peculiar in each of these forms. We find it so generally, when we take the pains to examine different expressions evidently answering to each other, or different reports of the same transaction in the Gospels. From the comparison of them there proceeds a fuller and more profound meaning than we could have obtained from either separately. What is called the study of parallel passages, may in this way be really profitable; it is often made into a very childish exercise, one which involves no reflection; sacred words being turned into an irreverent game; all sense of their unity and relation being lost in the eagerness to hunt out the precise places in which they occur, or their most superficial and insignificant resemblances.

That there is something in the word 'debts,' which we are bound to keep in mind when we consider this prayer, is evident from the use of the cognate verb by St. Luke, in the other clause of the sentence. "Forgive us our trespasses, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to

us." It is evident also from the word ἄφες, 'send away' or 'remit,' which is common to both Evangelists. Every one feels the appropriateness of such an expression to a creditor's release. We have no need to go beyond the very simplest notion of such a release; we are not bound to think of deliverance from a prison, or from any infliction consequent upon the failure in the fulfilment of an obligation. Discharge from the debt itself is that which the verb suggests. Perhaps we may find that this sense gains, instead of losing strength, when we apply it to trespasses, —to sins. Still we should first fix our minds upon that which stands in the most obvious connexion with it.

I. Our Lord then bids us pray, Remit, or send away, or discharge, these debts or obligations of ours. Whatever they are, He bids us ask Him for this; this and nothing less. He who tells us to pray, Our Father, says also, Ask for this full remission. He must mean that it is such a request as a child should make of a father, and a father could grant to his child. He who teaches us to say, "Hallowed be thy Name," bids us ask for this remission. He must mean that God's Name is hallowed in our making the petition, and in His hearing it. He who taught us to say, "Thy Kingdom come," bids us say, Grant us this remission. He must mean that it is consistent with His Royalty, and part of it, and a proof of it, that we should desire and receive this release. He who desired us to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," tells us also to ask for this sending away of debts. He must mean that this is the Will which is obeyed in heaven, and that so, we are obeying it on earth. He who taught us to look up to God as a Giver, not as an Exactor, and to pray for the bread which is needful for us, further commands us to ask for this freedom. He must mean that rain and fruitful seasons are not more a sign to men of what He is, than remission; that one is as much an utterance of His disposition and purpose as the other; that one is at least as much needed by His creatures as the other. He who came down to declare the Name, the Kingdom, the Will of God, and to bring all good gifts to men, must have wished us to understand Him

thus; or He could not have trained us to the use of a word so precise, and yet so unlimited.

II. The objects of this prayer must be those who were united with us when we said, "Our Father," and, "Give us this day our daily bread." If there were any for whom we did not pray when we said those words, they will be excluded from these. If there are any human beings whose nature we suppose Christ did not take, any for whom we suppose the Father does not care, for those we do not ask the remission of trespasses. Where such limitations begin, where they must end, I have had occasion to consider while I have been commenting on the former clauses of the prayer. They begin in a feeling that we must, for our own safety, establish certain boundaries beyond which the divine compassion cannot go; they proceed to the invention of securities and exclusions which compass their end so little, that their places must be presently supplied by others; they end in the discovery that we have destroyed the ground under our own feet, while we have been making it untenable for our fellowmen. I need not repeat the evidence, but I must repeat the warning. When the publican prayed, "God be merciful to me a sinner," he claimed for himself a place among the whole body of sinners; he would not say like the Pharisee, I am not as other men are. If in literal imitation of his example, in real contempt of it, any one of us chooses to say, Forgive me my debts, rather than, Forgive us our debts; he will not go down to his house justified; he will feel that the petition has not been granted.

III. And yet when we come to consider what these debts are which we crave should be put away, it does not seem wonderful that we should choose individualizing language rather than that which is more general. For each man says within himself, Are not these debts mine in the strictest sense? Are they not obligations which I have contracted, and which I have violated? Upon me lies a burden which I cannot shift upon any other human creature—the burden of duties unfulfilled, words unspoken, or spoken violently and untruly; of holy relationships neglected; of days wasted for ever; of evil thoughts once

cherished, which are ever appearing now as fresh as when they were first admitted into the heart; of talents cast away; of affections in myself, or in others, trifled with; of light within turned to darkness. So speaks the conscience; so speaks or has spoken the conscience of each man. In some it may be a feeble voice, soon lost in the noises of the outward world, or silenced by violent efforts, or choked by the senses, or bribed by the fancy. In others, it is loud and stormy to-day; then comes a reaction of fierce merriment or a temporary lull, which will be followed again by new blasts of passion. In some it is a low but perpetually sounding knell, witnessing of a death begun and going on in themselves; of the past accursed, the present withered, the future vaguely terrible. But each one who has ever known what conscience is, feels that it is upon his own very self these obligations lie. They may sometimes present themselves to him in dark outward visions, they may be associated inseparably with certain places and persons. But they sit like nightmares upon him; they stop his breathing; they hold him chained. How often would he persuade himself that they are only phantoms! How often would he task his understanding to prove that he has himself brought them thither by some strange conjuring! Why cannot he cast them aside as dreams of the night? Are they anything more? They come back with fearful distinctness; the very act of which conscience testifies, every circumstance, look, tone, clearly recorded; it is no dream of the night. The voice, be it from Heaven or Hell, is a real one, which says, 'It is done, and cannot be undone,' and, 'Thou art the man.' What signifies it that years have passed away. The act is gone, but thou art still the same. The act is gone into Eternity, and there it will meet thee.

These are the debts; are they to ourselves? Often it seems so. We have suffered by them more than all others—our bodies and souls. But if they are to ourselves, we cannot release them. The more we try, the more hopelessly the coil is twisted round us. Are they to our fellows? Often we think so. We were bound to them by sacred ties which were forgotten; the friend repulsed, because we did not understand him, or

his opinions seemed dangerous, or because we took a cry of agony for a mocking laugh; the child petted and fondled into sin, or driven into it by roughness and what we call parental authority; those who looked to be raised and purified by us, degraded through our weak and grovelling ways; those who would have entered into the Kingdom of Heaven hindered, because we cared not that they should be wiser and better than ourselves. But if our debts are to our fellow-creatures, they cannot discharge them. If we could hear each one distinctly saying out of the grave or from Heaven, 'I forgive,' though the words might be unspeakably delightful, we feel they would not penetrate deep enough, they would not set us free from that which has seemed to become a part of our own being.

Are they debts to God? The first vague consciousness of such a belief, how terrible it is! All the former aspects of the debt seem mild to this one; yet all were surely prophetical of this one. That sense of permanence of Eternity being bound up with our acts and the results of them, what was this but a witness that they had a relation to God himself? He surely was speaking that voice which we thought came from ourselves, and which was echoed by every thing and every person in the world around. Yes, Debts are Trespasses: we have not only forfeited an obligation, but committed a sin; we have broken a law which was not formed on earth, and cannot be repealed on earth.

But at this point of despair hope begins. It is sin; sin against God. These very feelings we are groaning under are sinful; this sense of evil is evil. For has it not brought death into the soul? Is not this torpor, this incapacity for action, feeling, loving, Death? Assuredly it is. And He willeth not the death of a sinner. He cannot be pleased that I should continue in a state of sin. He is not pleased with it. Then come dim recollections of words heard in the nursery, of doctrines which had been reduced into mere phrases and stored away in the memory as lumber, or more courageously cast aside as absurd contradictions of human experience and ordinary logic; doctrines which had perhaps been associated with the remembrance of some hard, comfortless

teacher, who first imparted them to us in traditional shapes and moulds, or who mixed them with views of the divine character from which the conscience and reason revolted; doctrines, however, which do not sound now as if they were unsuited to our necessities or unworthy of One who cares for His creatures; the doctrine of reconciliation, of a Father who so loved the World as to give His only-begotten Son for it; of a Son who came down from heaven not to do his own Will, but the Will of Him who sent him; who did that Will by laying down his life for the sheep; who was manifested to take away sin, and in whom was no sin; by faith in whom a man may rise out of himself, cast away the slough of death, and become a new and righteous creature. Such words,—however imperfectly understood, yet carry in them an amazing power for one who has felt his debts and known them to be sins. But they acquire a newer and a fuller meaning for him when he finds that what seemed to him an entirely isolated experience is that of numbers of his fellowmen; when he hears of publicans and harlots who, through the same storm, have sought and found the same haven. Then he learns to say, and not to say in vain, 'Forgive us our Trespasses.'

IV. There perhaps he stops; the words which follow are either forgotten or they give him no present anxiety. In the spring-tide of wonder and enjoyment, at the discovery that there is a communication between Earth and Heaven, and that the Angels of Heaven and the God of Heaven rejoice over every sinner that repenteth, it does not strike him that there is the least difficulty in remitting to other men any debts they may have incurred to him. But the first fervour of these convictions dies away. He seeks to keep them alive by association with those who are or have been sharers in them. By mutual encouragement, that which is feeble and flagging in each may be invigorated. Every one has realized something which another might be better for knowing; the barter and interchange of thought will make all richer. It should be so certainly; but those who make the experiment often suspect that the reverse is true. While they are discoursing of

that which is passing within, it seems to be within no longer. In the commerce of feelings, notes and bills which there is nothing to meet soon circulate rapidly from hand to hand. And then the latter words of the prayer suddenly assume a disagreeable significance. 'Forgive as we forgive:' Surely here is a condition appended to that which we thought absolutely free! Does it mean that our forgiveness is the cause of God's forgiveness—that He expects so much of us before He dispenses to us out of His infinite treasures? Or does it mean that our forgiveness is the measure of His; that the acts of us fallible creatures determine the kind and degree of the Divine Mercy? Surely if this be so, the Gospel cannot be large and infinite. Forgiving is not forthgiving as we have been used to think; a narrow and clumsy derivation must take the place of this; it must import the giving for an equivalent. Accordingly a great part of men, even of religious men, are content to sit down without determining what the words which they repeat so often actually signify. They cannot mean that, therefore it is better to suppose that they have no distinct meaning at all. 'Of course,' thinks the Christian who is trying hard to be at peace with himself, 'in a sense, I do forgive every one who is indebted to me. I should not be deserving of the goodness I receive if I did not; and if I come short, I ask to be forgiven: is not that the very use of prayer?'

There are, I am sure, thousands and tens of thousands who repeat this petition in spirit and truth, and upon whom it brings down blessings unspeakable, though they could not express to others what they mean by this clause, and though their own minds are probably far from clear about it. Prayer seeks that which lies below all words; it aims at the light whereof that which shines in our understandings is but the dim reflection. From those who pray as children one desires only to learn; their lives are better and more beautiful commentaries upon their prayers than any the schools can furnish. But it is altogether different with those who try to explain away words upon which our Lord dwells with special carefulness; those words to which he drew his

disciples' attention, as if they contained the spirit and essence of the whole form.

'If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses' this is His own express language which He illustrates again and again in His other discourses, always strengthening not diminishing its awfulness; making in one case the significant addition, 'if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.' It will not do surely to make light of such solemn oracles, or reduce them into nullities, because they do not accord with a notion we have formed about the freeness of Christ's Gospel. But as little ought we to part with our belief in that freeness or with any deep conviction which has been given us, because something which we have not yet understood seems to contradict it. We need, for our practical life, that the apparently inconsistent principles should be reconciled; and if we are honest with ourselves we shall not be long in discovering the reconciliation.

How is it that persons who have had that lively sense of mercy and forgiveness to which I referred are not able to retain it? They know in their consciences that they do not; they continually confess it; they are sure that they ought to retain it, but it will not stay. The feeling of a debt grows up in the mind again, after they supposed it was cancelled; they refer to the evidence upon which they rested their confidence; it is as satisfactory as ever; they assure themselves that all must be right, and yet their hearts say there is much wrong. Then they resort to theological distinctions and formulas: this sense of debt and sin is very tormenting, no doubt, but it is inevitable; it must stay with us while we are in this bad world. Perhaps so; but must it be ever multiplying, nay producing fresh sin? Must the consciousness of it make me sour to others; often make me false in dealing with myself? Will theological terms and distinctions, or the recollection of bygone experiences, or a general apprehension that God is at peace with us, make ill-temper gracious or self-deception truth? Must there not be some other more excellent way than this of bringing the facts of our

own lives into coincidence with the truths of the Bible? One would think that the most obvious, the most excellent way was to study our Lord's own interpretation of the case. He says that when a servant who had been pardoned the debt of ten thousand talents went out of his lord's presence, he found a fellow-servant who owed him a hundred pence, and that he took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest, and would not listen to his cry, 'Have patience with me.' This, he says, was the cause that his own debt came back to him heavier and more hopeless than ever. Is there not a clear light thrown on the dark passages of our lives by this parable? Only think how we are wont to speak of the obligations which other men are under to us, of the debts they have incurred to us, of the demands which we have a right to make upon them. Only think how exactly our Lord's language represents our feelings, how it is uttered in all our daily actions. 'Pay me that thou owest, servant, child, poor dependent, friend, wife, brother:' is not that the first natural thought of our hearts? Do we not encourage it, justify it to ourselves and others? have we not a host of religious excuses for tolerating it till it becomes the habit of our souls? There is abundance of good-natured charity afloat in the world, charity for all sorts of people, for all forms of distress. But this is the ornamental part of our existence, the capital or fret-work of the building. The substantial part, the pillars of it, we seem to think are our rights; rights to position, property, rank, the homage of others, their gratitude. If these are withheld—the hundred pence which each man has a claim upon from his fellow—with what indignation do we repulse the claims which we had acknowledged that mercy and charity have upon us!

Now, brethren, if this be so, is it very wonderful that the sense of divine forgiveness, the apprehension of perfect unclouded mercy, should not be very clear and strong in our minds?

It is surely the most fantastic of all dreams, that a man can cut his being into two portions, call one of them religious and the other mundane, and administer them on directly opposite principles. One or other must come to nought. If we believe that the world is governed

by a forgiving Being, His forgiveness must be recognized as the Law of the Universe; the Law of our being. If we believe that Individual Right is the great principle we are to assert in all common transactions, that principle will be carried to the highest ground of all, and so far as we acknowledge a Divine Being at all, we shall regard Him as one like ourselves; we shall feel that His main desire is to assert His rights over us. I say, so far as we acknowledge a Divine Being at all; for I cannot help perceiving that Atheism is the natural, almost the necessary, refuge from such a notion of the Lord of all as this. The naked contemplation of one who has no will but self-will is so intolerable, that the conscience which remains in human beings, in spite of all their theories, shrinks back in horror from the belief that such an one can be he to whom the name of God, the good, was once ascribed. Yet what avails the denial? If self-will do govern the world, if we confess it to be our lord, we may or may not attribute to it personality; but it does, all the same, hold us in its iron bonds; we are in prison, the evil spirit is our jailor, and we cannot come out till we have paid the uttermost farthing.

Brethren, it is this which makes the consideration of our times so profoundly awful. We cannot avoid the conviction that the maxims upon which we have been acting will come forth into full display; that they will be thrown back upon ourselves; that the rights we have asserted against our fellow-men will be asserted by them against us. We have had and we have warnings enough of this catastrophe; let us hope that they have not been wholly lost upon us. Even yet the dark image of mere selfish power, in one or in a multitude, is not revealed; it struggles strangely, wonderfully in the minds of those who seem most ready to fall down and worship it with the belief of a Love which must rule at last, which we are permitted to obey now. Oh! if we might interpret to any that strange conflict of two opposing principles —two Kingdoms—in the womb of humanity! Oh! that some voice might be heard declaring clearly and mightily, 'The elder shall serve the younger. He who won the battle in the wilderness, proved that His

Father and not Satan, love and not self, is the King of kings, and Lord of lords.'

But if that proclamation is to be heard on the housetops, it must first be spoken in the ear in closets. It must come forth as the interpretation and fulfilment of this prayer, 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them who trespass against us.' We must thoroughly believe and understand that what seems to be a limiting condition of the request, is really an enlargement of its scope and power. We ask to be forgiven, and the revelation of God's mercy in Christ, of the love which is in Himself, of the perfect atonement made once for all, is an answer. It seems to be transitory; we try to fall back upon it, and feel that that which we trusted in yesterday is not so strong to-day. Why? Because we asked too little, because we did not enter into the fulness of the word, 'Remit,' 'Send away.' If we had, we should have prayed not for a momentary sense of Forgiveness, but for the spirit of Forgiveness; not merely that we may know what God is and is to us, but what He can accomplish in us; that we may understand in Him and shew forth in ourselves that mercy which is no tolerance of wrong but the tormentor of it, which does not reject stern discipline, but makes it an instrument; which is a fire to consume the evil of all in whom it dwells, of all to whom it reaches. Forgiveness is not forgiveness when it is turned to our ease and comfort. It is in its nature expansive, diffusive; it cannot be cooped up in the heart of any creature; it must go forth into the open air, or it dies. The debts, we know it well, cannot lose their penal hold upon the conscience, their present and future terror, till love comes in to fulfil them and transfer them; till the man who in his pride thought that all nations owed him homage, learns to say, 'I am a Debtor to Jew and Greek, to Barbarian and Scythian, to bond and free.' The sense of sin—sin itself—does not finally depart from the conscience till love its great enemy possesses the ground which it once occupied, till he who was crushed under the sense of powerlessness and evil—'To will is present with me, but how to do that I will I find not,' can exclaim,

'He worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure,' and, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.'

Wherefore, as it should be one of our saddest subjects of confession this Lent that we have not lived as if we were under the law of Forgiveness which God has established for us and for all, so also let us earnestly believe, whensoever we pray, that we are praying to a Forgiving and Merciful Father, who can yet do for us more than we ask or think; even inspiring us with His own love, and enabling us to walk in love and to forgive all who are indebted to us, as He for Christ's sake hath forgiven us.

SERMON VII. LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

Third Sunday in Lent, March 26, 1848.

MATT. VI. 13.

And lead us not into temptation.

I SAID that the words of our Lord, 'It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,' were a ground for the petition, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' Lent, above all seasons, might teach us the sense and power of it. 'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,' had surely as close a connexion with these forty days. To be delivered from a heavy burden, this is the blessing of confession: a blessing which (as the prophets so often told the Jews) we cannot realize by any prayer or fast unless we seek to set others free from their burdens. The subject of Temptation might seem even more than either of these, to embrace the whole history and purpose of this time in its relation both to our Lord and to ourselves. But here a difficulty presents itself. We are told by the Evangelist, that our Lord was 'led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil.' We are taught to pray, 'Do not lead or bring us into Temptation.' Must we not infer from this opposition, that there is not that close resemblance between His struggles and ours which we have sometimes imagined; that our spiritual life is not under the same law as His; that we are to deprecate that kind of trial to which He cheerfully submitted?

There are some, perhaps, who will not feel even the semblance of perplexity here. They will say, 'Certainly; there are multitudes of perils into which it was fitting for the Son of God to enter, and which it would be madness for his followers to encounter. He stood in the might of his impeccable divine nature; how can sinners, nay, even mere human

creatures if they were not sinners, ever forget their own readiness to fall?' Persons who use this language cannot be aware what practical heresies they are uttering, how completely they are demolishing the whole intent of the Gospel, the very ground of man's trust and hope. If there are some parts of our Lord's example that we are not to follow, what authority is to tell us which? Does not the assertion that He stood by the strength of a nature in which we are not sharers, exclude us as much from communion with one of his acts as with another? We make void the doctrine of His having taken our nature: it is too little to say that we lessen the perfectness of the relation; it becomes imaginary.

And surely no record of our Lord's life is so entirely outraged by this hypothesis as the record of His Temptation. If He had asserted an independent standing ground, He would have listened to the words of the Tempter. He would, because He was the Son of God, have made the stones bread, have cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple, have taken to Himself the Kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. He refused to do this. He would simply stand by faith and dependence on his Father; thus and thus only would He assert his filial character. He did put himself upon a level with those whom He called his brethren; he did claim for them a right to depend as He depended, to trust as He trusted. Dependence and trust are not inconsistent with the condition of creatures who are human, and who have sinned. Because we depend and trust so little, we prove that we are still trying to be gods—that is our sin. Just so far as we depart from our Lord's example, we show our pride, not our humility, our self-confidence, not our fear of ourselves.

The prayer then cannot be justified on this plea; it cannot bear a construction which would make it a separation between the creatures who offer it, and Him in whose name it is offered.

Indeed, if we reflect, we shall perceive that such a notion of it would be as much at variance with what we know of ourselves, as with what we believe of Him. Is it not the fact that we, too, are led up into one place or another—a wilderness or a city—to be tempted? Is not

this whole life of ours one continual succession of temptations? I say, advisedly, of Temptations: for we shall gain little, I think, by changing that word for 'trials,' as if every trial did not of necessity involve a temptation. When we speak of undergoing 'trials,' we do not mean merely 'troubles;' we mean that in some way or other we are proved, that we have an opportunity given us of doing wrong or right. When we speak of Temptation, we look at the same fact from another side; we wish to indicate, not merely that we have the good and evil set before us, but that there is a power biassing us to the evil. But this is implied in either form of expression. And therefore, if we suppose that God has brought us into this world, and that we are dwelling in it under His guidance, and that all trials are ordained by Him; we must suppose that He just as much intended us to be tempted as He intended His Son to be tempted. If we make out a difference, we do it wilfully. Our consciences, and Scripture, equally oppose the attempt.

But why then should we pray, 'Lead us not into Temptation?' I answer, Because this, and no other, is the prayer which, if we believe the Scripture account of our Lord's forty days in the Wilderness, He must Himself have prayed at the very time when He was led up to be tempted, and when He was going through the Temptation. His first act of dependence and obedience was to go whithersoever He was led; not to choose His circumstances for Himself; to be equally ready for the desert or the market-place. His second act of dependence was in the desert or market-place, in the full sight and foresight of the Temptations which beset him to say, 'Father, bring me not into them.' And the prayer was heard. That wicked one touched Him not. The Tempter had no power over Him, not because He exalted Himself in His own strength, but because He would not exalt Himself in it; because in all things He glorified Him whose will he came on earth to do. It may seem a subtle and shadowy distinction to make; and subtle and shadowy must be all verbal distinctions which concern the Will and its acts. If you would realise the distinctions which words try to embody, you must leave them and turn to facts. There you will find

how substantial are these subtleties; that in them lies all the difference between the best and the worst man; between an angel and a devil. To be incapable of temptation is the privilege of involuntary creatures; a man, or an angel dares not desire it. So long as he feels who it is that has made him capable of such danger, who has given him a will, he is safe; for his life is a prayer that he may not be left to his own guidance. The moment he ceases to offer that prayer he is brought into temptation, he comes under the Tempter's power; because he has lost trust and allegiance and claimed independence. Then he tries to say that he was tempted by God; but he is conscious that he lies; he knows that his act was one of submission to another than God, that it was a secret defiance of Him. He had a right to believe that God placed him in the circumstances which his own will has made destructive; but that belief, if he had hallowed the Name of God, if he had cried, 'Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven,' would have been a security against the Temptation; it would have given him confidence to cry, 'Thou, Father, art leading me; bring me not into this temptation, but through it.'

The deflections and eccentricities then which sin has introduced into our lives do not make the life of our Lord, which exhibits to us humanity in its orderly state, in its perfect harmony, a less practical standard; on the contrary, they oblige us to look for such a standard: we cannot measure or interpret our own acts without it. In the sunlight of His history, our relations to the Father, and to all which opposes Him, stand out clearly and distinctly revealed; though it is only in prayer and in action that we can fully appropriate the lesson, and feel the truth as it is in Jesus to be also a truth in us.

However strange it may be to affirm that God is leading us every day into some circumstances of temptation, and that here lies the very strength and warrant of the prayer that He will not bring us into it—will not suffer our enemies to prevail against us; we can boldly adopt that paradox, and find the blessing of it in all ordinary events and in all terrible emergencies. Riches, we know, are temptations; poverty, we

know equally, is a very great one. The king in the Proverbs might be judicious in desiring a mean; but therein too lies a peril of its own; a kind of secure hardness, self-indulgence comforting itself with the assurance that it is not luxury, the rich and the poor man's sins both regarded with abhorrence because they interfere with us and there is no knowledge of either. What wild pride and recklessness there is in the sense of health! how miserably are those deceived who fancy that a sick bed is in itself a cure for natural infirmities, and not an aggravation of them and an excuse for them! What selfishness is there in possession, but oh! how it turns inward, how gnawing it becomes in the hour of deprivation and loss. Various gifts and endowments we speak of as full of danger, and yet the man in the Gospel hid his talent in the earth because he had only one. The physician, lawyer, divine, may each suspect that the other has some especial means of usefulness, some exemption from evils which he has felt; but the heart knows its own bitterness; not one of them is wrong in saying that his position is full of snares; and that what seem to the on-looker securities, are really dangers. If the busy man is every day tempted to worship the idola fori, how many idola specus are there which continually seduce the contemplative man from his allegiance! How easy it is for monks to bring evidence that marriage makes the soul less free; how utterly they fail when they would praise the safety of celibacy. When the characters of those who are bound together are unsuitable, what irritation and restlessness; if they perfectly accord, what fear that each may confirm that which is wrong in the other! How free from all debate and turmoil the halls of philosophy may be thought by one who has only known the region of politics: sometimes men escape from both for security to the religious world, and find that there they are in the midst of more fierce and implacable contentions.

The last discovery seems appalling. Can religious habits, a religious atmosphere, tempt us into evil, into falsehood, into Atheism? Experience answers, Yes! It tells us not only that no sect, no Church, is free from these dangers, but more, that sects and even Churches directly or

implicitly, by the idolatries or self-righteousness which they encourage, or by the reaction against them, by pious frauds, or the unbelief which follows upon their detection, may lead us into utter ruin. It is most necessary, in our day especially, to know that fact, and to keep it in our recollection. There may be a Protestantism, a Catholicism, a Christianity without a God; all that sounds most religious, all that really is full of deepest worth, of divinest meaning—confessions, ordinances, the Bible—may be used to make us in practice and ultimately in theory, deniers of Him from whom they have proceeded and of whom they speak. Where then lies the security? In this, that He is, that He lives, and that in one condition or another we are still led by Him. Into what perils soever we have come, into what perils soever we may come, let us be sure it was not the Evil Spirit, but God himself who ordered the whole frame and condition of our lives, and that this frame and condition is not the worst but the best possible for us, the best possible though—yea, because—it is one of tremendous temptation. Let us be equally sure that He is not our tempter; that He never tempted any man to evil; that we fall into it only when we think He is not with us to deliver us from it; that to think so is to believe a lie; that at all times, and in all possible states, this is a right and true prayer which He inspires and which He hears. 'Bring us not into temptation. Those old words, 'The Lord is my Shepherd, therefore can I want nothing. He prepareth a table for me in the midst of mine enemies. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me; these words have lasted three thousand years, and they are just as living and as good now as they ever were; as adapted to the temptations of every Englishman in the 19th century as to those of David.

The words 'Lead us not into Temptation,' are of the same kind; equally reminding us that we are in the midst of enemies, that we may have to pass through a valley of the shadow of death, through a state of utter darkness; equally telling us that there is One who provides us a table now, and will be with us then. But it is a prayer which goes

down more deeply, for He taught his disciples to use it, for whom the table had been prepared in the wilderness where there was no bread, but only stones; who was Himself to pass through the valley of the shadow of death, and to feel all that can be felt of desertion and solitude there. He bids us say, 'Lead us not into Temptation,' assuring us that God is not merely the Shepherd over each lonely man, when passing through hours and days of gloom and doubt and anguish which no other creature knows of, but that He is also the Guide of the whole flock, of His own Church upon earth, and of the great human family, out of darkness into His marvellous light. 'Lead us not into Temptation,' said He who is the Head of the whole body, intimating that though it consists of many members, and each has its own special trial, which would not be precisely such an one to any other—though it often seems as if this were the greatest hardship and misery of all, that sorrow is incommunicable, that each person understands so little of his neighbour's,—yet in spite of this seeming diversity and solitude, there is the most intimate relation between all the parts of the body, that what affects one, of necessity affects all. We know it to be so, and in our different ways express the conviction. We talk of family likenesses, of national feelings, of a particular age having its characteristic tendencies, its own special good and evil. The observation of these sympathies is one of the necessary qualifications for conversing with men and describing their acts; we may have made comparatively small progress in the enquiry, but all confess it to be real and full of interest. Our hearts bear witness to the Scripture assertion, that we have a common Tempter and a common Deliverer; that all things, though made the instruments of one, are yet actually and truly the instruments of the other; that there must be such a cry from all hearts as this, and that it must be the most helpful and uniting of all cries: 'Lead us not into Temptation.' O strange and mysterious privilege, that some bed-ridden woman in a lonely garret, who feels that she is tempted to distrust the love and mercy of Him who sent His Son to die for the helpless, should wrestle with that doubt, saying the

Lord's Prayer; and that she should be thus asking help for those who are dwelling in palaces, who scarcely dream of want, yet in their own way are in peril as great as hers; for the student, who in his chamber is haunted with questions which would seem to her monstrous and incredible, but which to him are agonizing; for the divine in his terrible assaults from cowardice, despondency, vanity, from the sense of his own heartlessness, from the shame of past neglect, from the appalling discovery of evils in himself which he has denounced in others, from vulgar outward temptations into which he had proudly fancied that he could not fall, from dark suggestions recurring often, that words have no realities corresponding to them, that what he speaks of may mean nothing because to him it has often meant so little. Of all this the sufferer knows nothing, yet for these she prays—and for the statesman who fancied the world could be moved by his wires, and suddenly finds that it has wires of its own which move without his bidding; for her country under the pressure of calamities which the most skilful seek in vain to redress; for all other countries in their throes of anguish which may terminate in a second death or a new life. For one and all she cries, 'Lead us not into temptation.' Their temptations and hers, different in form, are the same in substance. They, like her, are tempted to doubt that God is, and that He is the Author of good, and not of evil; and that He is mightier than the evil; and that He can and will overthrow it, and deliver the universe out of it. This is the real temptation, there is no other. All events, all things and persons, are bringing this temptation before us; no man is out of the reach of it who is in God's world; no man is intended to be out of the reach of it who is God's child. He himself has led us into this wilderness to be tempted of the devil; we cannot fly from it; we cannot find in one corner of it a safety which there is not in another; we cannot choose that we shall not have those temptations which are specially fitted to reach our own feelings, tempers, infirmities; they will be addressed to these; they will be aimed at the heel or head, at whatever part has not been touched by the fire, and is most vulnerable. We must not crave

quarter from the enemy: to choose for ourselves where we shall meet him, is to desert that guardianship in which is all safety. But we may cry, 'Lead us not into Temptation:' and praying so, we pray against ourselves, against our evil tendencies, our eagerness for that which will ruin us. Praying so, that which seemed to be poison becomes medicine; all circumstances are turned to good; honey is gathered out of the carcase; death itself is made the minister of life.

Away then with that cowardly language which some of us are apt to indulge in when we speak of one period as more dangerous than another; when we wish we were not born into the age of revolutions; or complain that the time of quiet belief is passed, and that henceforth every man must ask himself whether he has any ground to stand upon, or whether all beneath him is hollow. We are falling into the temptation, when we thus lament over it. We are practically confessing that the Evil Spirit is the Lord of all; that times and seasons are in his hand. Let us clear our minds from every taint of that blasphemy. God has brought us into this time; He, and not ourselves or some dark demon. If we are not fit to cope with that which He has prepared for us, we should have been utterly unfit for any condition that we imagine for ourselves. In this time we are to live and wrestle, and in no other. Let us humbly, tremblingly, manfully look at it, and we shall not wish that the sun could go back its ten degrees, or that we could go back with it. If easy times are departed, it is that the difficult times may make us more in earnest; that they may teach us not to depend upon ourselves. If easy belief is impossible, it is that we may learn what belief is, and in whom it is to be placed. If an hour is at hand which will try all the inhabitants of the earth, it is that we may learn for all to say, 'Lead us not into the Temptation' of our times; that so we may be enabled with greater confidence and hope to join in the cry of every time, 'Deliver us from Evil.'

SERMON VIII. DELIVER US FROM EVIL

Fourth Sunday in Lent, April 2, 1848.

Luke XI. 4.

Deliver us from evil.

When a man prays, 'Lead us not into Temptation,' he prays against himself; prays that he may not go where he has an inclination to go; prays that neither he nor his brethren may have what they have a false taste for, even though God's hand seems to offer it them. Such a prayer, till we know something of ourselves, something of His purpose in placing us here, must needs appear strange and perplexing. Is not the one which follows it altogether different; the simplest, most spontaneous utterance of the heart; one which all the world has been pouring forth; which we should certainly have learnt, though no one had taught it us?

It would be idle, indeed, to deny the universality of this prayer. Wherever men are visited by any storm, or fire, or earthquake; wherever they are plagued with any bodily sickness; wherever they are oppressed by their fellow-men; wherever they have a vague sense of being crushed by fortune; wherever they have learnt to look upon custom or law as an incubus; wherever they are stifled by systems; wherever they are conscious of a remorse which stays with them and moves with them; there is a cry ascending to some power, known or unknown, 'Deliver us from Evil.' The question what evil is, and whence it comes, is for such sufferers of easy solution; they know well what they mean by it; they know or guess generally what brought it to them; at all events it has overtaken them. They may suppose that some fellow-creature can rescue them from it, or chance, or themselves; they may look to the physician, the priest, the legislator; to alterations in

government; to new dispositions of property; to a friendly executioner; to suicide. But a deliverer there must be; something or some person to hope in. If once we believe evil to be omnipotent, or suppose that it was intended for us, and we for it, I do not think it is possible to conceive of human society or human life. Recollect the worship of every country you ever heard of, how many names or characteristics of the different divinities had relation to deliverance of some kind, or to the averting or avenging of wrong. If you took these away from the mythologies, you would find that there remained a mere caput mortuum; all that had held them together and appealed to human trust and sympathies would have escaped.

Now it would surely be a very hard and Stoical doctrine to proclaim that what these different creatures of our flesh and blood have cried to be saved from, were not really evils, but only certain conditions of existence, which they fancied to be such. No one, I should think, can imagine that he served truth by maintaining such a proposition against the sense of mankind, and against the witness of his own heart. That from which men have revolted as utterly unnatural and inconsistent and unreasonable, that which they have felt to be in positive disagreement with their constitution, they have a right to call an evil; and all the theories, political, philosophical, religious, in the world, can never deprive them of the right. Nor can these theories, so far as I see, prove even the most extravagant hopes that our race has indulged to be utterly vain and delusive, or take from any man the right to seek deliverance from human helpers, kings, lawgivers, shepherds of the people; from his own strong arm, from invisible helpers, from some fate that is higher, sterner, more inflexible than all other powers. There was a warrant for all such hopes, even for hope from the last resource of self-destruction. We have no right to take away such refuges until we can provide a better; and it is at least probable that if a better be found, we shall find some explanation of all the rest.

We may readily grant them, not only that the prayer has been offered in all places and in all ages, but that in all places and in all ages

a deep truth has been expressed in it. But do we, therefore, say that the prayer had no need to be taught, that it sprang up naturally in the mind of man without any inspiration from above, that it was not like the former, the petition of a man against himself, but altogether one from and for himself? I rather think the evidence, if it is well considered, will lead us just to the opposite conclusion; that the prayer was, in all cases, taught and inspired from above; that what was contributed to it by the natural heart of man in his different circumstances and positions, was just the false, confused element of it, just that which narrowed its scope and divided its object; that in its true sense and purport it is in perfect accordance with the cry against temptation; that He who imparted it to men in the old time, was He who gave it to His disciples in its clearness and purity, in its length and breadth, when He said, 'After this manner, therefore, pray ye: Our Father—deliver us from evil.'

I. Other portions of the Lord's Prayer have led me to remark, that there is a fearful tendency in us all, which has infused itself most mischievously into our theology, to look first at our necessity or misery, only afterwards at our relation to God, and at His nature. The last are made dependent upon the former. We are conscious of a derangement in our condition; simply in reference to this derangement do we contemplate Him who we hope may reform it. We have just been tracing this process in heathenism. A mischief is felt; if there is a mischief, there must be a deliverer. Undoubtedly the conscience bears this witness, and it is a right one. But the qualities of the deliverer are determined by the character or locality of that which is to be redressed, or by the habits of those who are suffering from it. From this heathenish habit of mind the Lord's Prayer is the great preserver. Say first, 'Our Father.' This relation is fixed, established, certain. It existed in Christ before all worlds, it was manifested when He came in the flesh.

He is ascended on high, that we may claim it. Let us be certain that we ground all our thoughts upon these opening words; till we know them well by heart, do not let us listen to the rest. Let us go on

carefully, step by step, to the Name, the Kingdom, the Will, assuring ourselves of our footing, confident that we are in a region of clear unmixed goodness; of goodness which is to be hallowed by us; which has come and shall come to us, and in us; which is to be done on earth, not merely in heaven. Then we are in a condition to make these petitions, which we are ordinarily in such haste to utter, and which He, in whom all wisdom dwells, commands us to defer. Last of all comes this 'Deliver us from evil.' When we are able to look upon evil, not as the regular normal state of the universe, but as absolutely at variance with the character of its Author, with His constitution of it, with the Spirit which He has given to us, that we can pray, attaching some real significance to the language, Deliver us from it. Then we shall understand why men looked with faith to the aid of their fellow-men; to princes, and chieftains, and lawgivers, and sages. They were sent into the world for this end, upon this mission. They were meant to act as deliverers. They were to be witnesses of a real righteous order, and to resist all transgressors of it. We can understand why strong men felt that they had better act for themselves, than depend upon foreign help. For the Father of all put their strength into them, that they might wield it as His servants in His work; it was His Spirit who made them conscious of their strength, and of that purpose for which they were to use it. We can see why these hopes were so continually disappointed, though they had so right a foundation; why they were driven to think of higher aid, of invisible champions, because those upon the earth proved feeble, or deserted the cause, and served themselves. It is true that the hosts of heaven are obeying that Power which the hosts of earth are commanded to obey; that they are doing His service by succoring those who are toiling below; it is true, because He who rules all is not a destiny, but a loving will; not an abstraction, but a Person; not a mere sovereign, but a Father. All creation is ordered upon this law of mutual dependence and charity; but it is only in the knowledge and worship of the Highest, that we can apprehend the places and tasks of the lower; when He is hidden, these are forgotten;

society becomes incoherent; nothing understands itself; everything is inverted; the deliverer is one with the tyrant; evil and good ran into each other; we invoke Satan to cast out Satan. See, then, what a restorative, regenerative power lies in this prayer! See what need there was that the Son of God should come from the bosom of the Father, to make men know that they were not orphans, to show how they might be in fact, and not merely in idea, children!

II. For now it is not any longer by this or that man, or unseen power, by this or that subordinate agency, by this or that alteration of events and circumstances, that we are forced to bound our plans and prospects of deliverance. We have not to work our way upwards by stairs winding, broken, endless, to an indefinite shadowy point, which we are afraid to reach, lest it should prove to be nothing. We begin from the summit; we find there the substance of all the hope men have drawn from the promising, but changeable, aspects of the cloud-land below; we see that all the darkness of earth, all its manifold forms of evil, have come from the rays being intercepted, which would have scattered it and shall scatter it altogether. Therefore we pray boldly, 'Deliver us from evil,' knowing assuredly that we are praying to be set free from that to which the will of the Creator is opposed, and against which all the powers of the universe are engaged: that which all natural things, doing Him quiet homage, are punishing; that against which all voluntary creatures by the law of their being are pledged to co-operate. We are praying against that which men have not been praying against in vain for six thousand years, but rather which they have been stemming, overcoming continually; each of their prayers, if offered in ever so much dimness and confusion, opening a vision out of the darkness, because each of them derived its first impulse from Him, who through them and in answer to them was preparing the full discovery of Himself, and of that strength whereby all that resists Him shall be broken. I say the prayer offered with this recollection, becomes one full of cheerfulness and confidence. The difficulty is, to offer it in that recollection. God forbid that I should speak lightly of

that difficulty! knowing how great it is; how hard, when evil is above, beneath, within, when it faces you in the world, and scares you in the closet, when you hear it saying in your own heart, and saying in every one else, 'Our name is Legion,' when sometimes you seem to be carrying the world's sins upon yourself, and then forget them and yourself altogether,—which is worse and brings a heavier sense of misery afterwards,—when all schemes of redress seem to make the evil under which the earth is groaning more malignant, when our own history, and the history of mankind, seems to be mocking at every effort for life, and to be bidding us rest contented in death; oh, it is hard, most hard, to think that such a prayer as this is not another of the cheats and self-delusions in which we have worn out existence! But, courage! if the evil were less pressing, we might have leisure to doubt the remedy; when all possibilities are exhausted, we begin to understand that here is certainty; we must believe on some ground or other that evil is not absolute, not victorious; we must believe it honestly, and without a trick, not pretending that it is nothing, when we feel inwardly that it is only not all. And we can believe it honestly with our whole hearts, while we say, 'Our Father—deliver us from the evil.' Then that which seemed so terrible, because it was so manifold, is condensed into one; it means in all its forms that which is opposed to the mind and will of Him, who so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son, that we might be His children, and brethren one of another.

III. This truth, that evil, though by its nature multiform and contradictory, has nevertheless a central root, our Lord teaches us by His temptation in the wilderness, and again by the prayer, 'Deliver us from the evil.' He, for the first time, made it fully evident that mankind has not merely enemies, but an enemy; that neither the various external torments which seem to make up evil, nor the desires and appetites of the man himself, upon which we often charge it, create or constitute the mystery of iniquity which is at work. Most blessed was this discovery; it justified the thoughts which had been in a number of hearts; it

justified the ways of God. I said that the Stoical denial of external evil is an artificial doctrine, at war with conscience and reason. Our Lord never for a moment yielded to it; he acknowledged palsies, and hunger, and leprosies, to be plagues and curses from which men should seek deliverance. But he did at the same time explain wherein the truth of Stoicism lay. He shewed that these sufferings are not the evils of man; they belong to a wrong condition, but they are not the causes of it; nay, their sting may be taken out of them, they may become instruments for the cure and destruction of evil. He himself underwent them; He felt them as none ever felt them; so He shewed that men are intended to feel them. He exhibited love and mercy in them, and through them; so He shewed that they are not the masters of the will; that they may be its servants. Equally does He prove that the good things of life, the riches and beauty of the universe, are not the origin of its evils, as men have wickedly imagined; and if not, then that the desires and appetites of our heart, which correspond to these, and which they address, are not the origin of evil, and carry in them no necessary corruption. And yet He does bring the sense of evil nearer to us than it was ever brought before; He does explain by His words, by His life, why we must feel that evil to be actually bound up with ourselves, why it is the most difficult of all things, not to identify it with ourselves. For He by bidding us deny ourselves, He by giving up Himself in every thought and act, He by presenting Himself as the one great Sacrifice to the Father, makes us perceive that the setting up of self, the worship of self, is the evil from which all others flow, from which we are to pray, 'Deliver us.' Here is the wonderful Gospel mystery which meets all the mysteries of our own hearts and of the world, and expounds them. Here is that which makes that last refuge of man in self-murder intelligible. It is self he wants to get rid of; he has sought evil elsewhere, and not found it; he has it in his own being; that must perish. What a sense of solitude must be in the spirit before it can dream of such an act! what a feeling that all which it has seen without is centered within! And yet what it feels in that hour, all the world is feeling in a

measure; this self is the curse of each, as much as it is his. Oh! if he could rise for a moment to that perception, if he could feel 'It is not I, it is the spirit of self-will, who is counterfeiting me; it is this from which I must be delivered, it is this from which my race must be delivered! That each may be himself, that the universe may be what the Lord of all created it to be; this must be overcome for each, for all.' With what a new and wonderful feeling would he then turn to the words, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world!' 'Lo, I come, (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God: thy law is within my heart; and to this, 'By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Christ once for all.' Such words may have seemed hitherto quite vague, the fragments of an obsolete theology. Seen in the light of this discovery respecting the nature of Evil, seen in the light of that other more glorious discovery respecting the infinite charity of God, how they harmonise with all that our hearts had prophesied of, with our consciousness that we have capacities of sympathy and fellowship, which are destroyed by self-will; with the conditions of a world, created for brotherhood, destroyed by the same self-will. How little a man, who has learnt this lesson, wishes any more to resolve the evil spirit into the feelings and passions of the individual heart! How he abhors such implicit practical Manicheeism, against which Christ's temptation, and the history of His redemption, extending as it does to every thought and movement and appetite of our souls and bodies, as well as to the whole outward universe, is the protest! How he must rejoice to think, 'I can pray, I will pray, Deliver us from the evil. I will pray to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ against myself, against my inclination to make self the object of my existence, of my worship, against every act and thought which involves that inclination. I will pray to Him, whose will is that I should be in submission to Him, that I should be His servant in all the powers and affections of my spirit, soul, and body; who would use all these for the manifestation of His love, for the deliverance of His creatures. I will pray to Him in the confidence that He has accepted the perfect sacri-

fice of His Son for me, and for all mankind, the sacrifice which He had himself prepared, the sacrifice which was the fruit and perfect setting forth of His own love, the sacrifice which was presented to Him by the Everlasting Spirit. I will pray in the confidence that He will receive the sacrifice of myself and of all to Him in that Name. I will pray in the certainty that He is maintaining a conflict with the self-will which is the curse and dislocation of the world, and that every plague, pestilence, insurrection, revolution, is a step in the history of that conflict, tending towards the final victory. I will pray that we may not be cast down and lose faith, because change after change only seems to bring out the evil more fearfully, to exhibit some darker and more inward form of it. I will pray that we may not acquiesce in any evil about us, or within us, because we fancy that a worse might come from its removal. I will pray to feel that our only safety is in the God of truth and love, to recollect that self-will, as its different veils and bandages and rags of borrowed finery fall off, must be displayed more nakedly and horribly; to give thanks, nevertheless, that its resources are nearly exhausted, that its rage will be fiercest when its hour is shortest; to make, therefore, no truce with it; to wish none for my fellow-men; to act and live in the confidence that if we wait the appointed time, the travail-hour of creation, He who overcame the principalities and powers of evil in the wilderness, in the city, on the cross, in the sepulchre, and who ascended on high, making a show of them openly, will fully deliver us and our race from them, that we may serve without fear Him, the Father, and the Holy Ghost, the one God, world without end.'

SERMON IX. FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM

Fifth Sunday in Lent, April 9, 1848.

MATTHEW VI. 13.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

As this Doxology occurs in only one Evangelist, the Church, in her repetitions of the prayer, omits it at least as often as she uses it. The idea contained in the words has been expressed already; it is involved in all the petitions. But the distinct utterance of it at the close of the prayer teaches us some lessons which the prayer might fail to teach us, and yet which we must always remember if we would say it truly.

I. The words, 'Thine is the kingdom,' certainly assume that it is not ours. Now if by 'Kingdom' we understand the kingdom of Nature, the courses of the planets, the succession of day and night, of seed-time and harvest, perhaps the temptation to say, 'This is ours,' may not be very great. Some Opifex Mundi, or Intelligent Principle, or Demiurgus, or fixed law, may be admitted to preside over these arrangements. But if we apply 'kingdom,' as I suppose most of us would, to the order and conduct of human society generally, or in some of its particular divisions, the feeling is very different. Here we have a claim to be masters; over this order man exercises a most evident influence. Is there any thing monstrous in the notion, that he established it, and that he upholds it? There can be nothing strange in it, for we all drop into it most easily and naturally. True, there are old forms which denote a belief the most opposite of this, forms which indicate that the highest ruler of the land, and every subordinate magistrate, derives his authority from an Invisible Person, to whom he is under a fearful responsibility for the fulfilment of his duties. The recognition of an

actual King of kings, and Lord of lords, of One not only interfering at certain crises to disturb an existing monotony, but present at all times, the real source of government, through whatever hands it may be administered,—this recognition enters assuredly into the institutions and laws of every nation in Christendom; I might say, of every nation in the world. But we have become more and more convinced that these witnesses are, as to their real and original intent, obsolete. They belong, it is said, to a theocratic period of the world's history; when that had passed away they lingered still and are even now not without their use in enforcing obligations, the true ground of which cannot be apprehended by the people at large, in giving an historical sacredness and mystery to that which would else seem a creature of the present, in sustaining the force of laws by sympathies and affections, by the terrors or hopes of another world. But all these explanations and apologies clearly assume, that the schemes for upholding society, be they religious or secular, are of our creation; that society itself is.

Some would throw a decent veil over its origin; some would lay bare the savage contests, victories of cunning and terror, contests of the weak many and the strong few, out of which it arose; some would find a resting-place in the physical conformation and mental temperament of different races; ultimately, the great majority of those who think for themselves, and of those who are thought for, subside into the conclusion, that man is an absolute sovereign over his own social relations; or, at all events, that there is merely a reserved right dwelling with some other power, which in ordinary calculations hardly needs to be taken into account. It may happen, undoubtedly, that this claim of sovereignty assumes a shape which we find startling. We may be suddenly required to recognize, not the abstract phantom, but the practical exercise of popular supremacy. Then we begin to observe, that whenever that which is in conception so sublime takes a concrete form, it is a very coarse and very narrow one; the most ignorant part of some city or district embodying the great idea. We may begin to ask, Whether that which seems to be the highest achievement of liberty

does not involve a perpetual alternation of despotism and servility; whether that which is the last and highest effort of reason does not lead to incessant contradiction? Such expressions may be true, such doubts amply justified, but do not they come too late? Have we not already admitted the principle, sanctioned the contradiction? If this ultimate sovereignty resides in any creatures, surely there must be a law of gravitation which will make it settle at last where we dread to think that it is settling now. That law cannot for ever be resisted by mere prescription, or tricks of diplomacy, or arms which may lose their edge and change their object; or, lastly, by spiritual influences which we resort to for a purpose, which we wish to be effectual for others but can trifle with ourselves. Surely all these things must come to nought; all, that is to say, which interposes between us or any country, and the abyss of self-willed mob dominion, if these words which we utter so often have not a reality in them above all realities, a depth beneath all depths. "Yours," says our Lord, "is not the kingdom, though you may be called to sit down in it, and occupy honourable places in it; though each of you has some place in it; some work and office assigned you by the Great King, a rule over a portion of his subjects. Yours is not the kingdom; nor, as so many of you come to think, when all your plots have failed, and you are desperate of overcoming evil and establishing good in your fashion, is it the Devil's kingdom. He claims it; he says to you, as he said to Me, 'It is mine, and I give it to whomsoever I will.' On the strength of that assertion he bids you, as he bade Me, fall down and worship him. He asks you to traffic with him for the means of regenerating your fellow-creatures, and getting the kingdom out of his hands. But you can answer him as I answered: 'It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord God, and Him only shalt thou serve.' You can say, 'Thine is the kingdom; thine it is now; not thine it shall be hereafter. Thine it is who art our Father, and hast called us to be thy children. Thine it is, whom we have asked according to thy will to deliver us from the evil.'"

Now, my brethren, in making this ascription, we do not affirm Theocracy in the sense which some persons give to that word, and which may well have made it hateful. We do not say, 'Thine is the kingdom,' meaning that it belongs not really to an invisible Father, but really to certain visible priests, who claim the homage due to Him for themselves, and bring men into bondage by the perversion of that truth which is alone able to set them free. We do not mean, according to the Filmer and Sacheverel doctrine, that the divine power is transferred to certain visible kings, in whom it rests absolutely and indefeasibly. We do not mean, according to the fifth-monarchy teachers, that this kingdom resides in a certain body of saints whom God has authorized to claim the world as their possession. All these doctrines we should reject, not as exaggerations, but as evasions; not more for their folly than for their profaneness. If the words, 'Thine is the kingdom,' are true words, priests, kings, saints, must say as much as any, yea, more than any: 'It is not ours. We exist only to testify whose it is, only to bring all whom we can reach within the experience of its blessedness.' They are to make it manifest that their consecration is not a falsehood; that all the services by which we hallow our civil acts are not horrible mockeries; that all the forms of human discourse which unconsciously witness of a divine order and government, need not for the sake of honesty be cast out of it, till it is reduced to little more than the chattering of savages. They are to declare—we all of us, brethren, are pledged by our baptismal vows, to declare,—that there is an actual eternal ground for what we have treated as fictions, for what men declare, and declare rightly if we could by our lie make God's truth of none effect, to be worn-out fictions. We are bound to affirm, that a Fatherly kingdom is established in the world; that to be members of it is our highest title, and that the beggars of the land share it with us; that in it the chief of all is the servant of all; that under Him all may in their respective spheres reign according to this law; that all ranks and orders stand upon this tenure, and are preserved or overturned by their honour or contempt for it; that all offices, the

highest and lowest, have hence their responsibility and dignity; that this kingdom has its highest throne over the human will, and its secret impulses and determinations; that it reaches to the most trifling acts and words; that not one of the suffering myriads in a crowded city is forgotten by Him who is its Ruler, any more than one of the spirits of just men made perfect; that when all the subordinate vassals of the kingdom shall confess their dependence upon Him, shall know that He is, and shall feel towards those who are beneath them and to one another as He feels towards them, then His kingdom which is now, will indeed have come in power.

II. And so it shall come; for Thine is the Power. Different words from the last, however closely allied to them; and I think harder words to say in perfect sincerity. Here we are not limited, as in the other case. We were obliged to confess that we did not call the Kingdom of Nature into existence. But we do put forth a great and notorious power over that kingdom; men can say, with much apparent justification, 'Ours is the power,' even there. Accordingly they did say it. The students of Nature went forth, like the Persian king, with the chains wherewith to bind her, with the magical sounds which were to make her do their biddings. But then the humbling maxim was proclaimed, which has been the foundation of all real discovery and victory in this department: 'Man, the servant and interpreter of Nature, knows nothing, can do nothing, except what he had first observed in her.' All the boastings to which two centuries of wonderful success might have given birth are stopped by the recollection, that obedience to this canon has been the single secret of success, that any one who would resist it, and determine to conquer without stooping, has gone away discomfited. Nature, even when she seems most confessing the dominion of man, is saying with all her voices, 'Yours is not the power; you are learners, interpreters, receivers; you can use the strength which you have first asked for; that is all.'

Yet how wide a field remains, if this is denied us! Ours is surely the power, in some way or other, to affect our fellow-men. There is

the direct power which lies in relationship, station, age; the power of outward attractions; the power of wealth; the power of conversation; the power of moving crowds by speech; the power of written words and of song; these, with all the innumerable subtle mysterious agencies which are only known in their operation. Surely, whatever may be said of the objects to which these powers are directed, their existence must be admitted. It cannot be said that they are not put forth by human beings, that they are not human powers. Can it be pretended that they would be in any respect better if they were less vigorous, that there is in power itself an inherent curse? Such a proposition would, I believe, be a denial as great as there can be, of the truth which this ascription affirms. But upon this point experience has its own testimony to bear, which must be listened to, and which cannot be at variance with that which comes from any true authority. These exercises of power do not only bring with them pain, which might be easily understood, but after them, disappointment. And this not only when the end sought for has been mean, but when it has been glorious; when it has been the triumph over wrong and the setting up of right. A bitter wail is heard again and again, that weak insignificant men do the work of the world, and that those who could do it are kept back or crushed; a wail which they who make it are half ashamed of, but which, nevertheless, they cannot suppress. The thing that was aimed at is not achieved; hopeless obstacles from the force of circumstances, and the ignorance of mankind, are said to stand in the way. What is stranger still, those in whom no power is apparent, who are not conscious of its existence in them, are seen to exert it; the meek people whom the world does not regard, whom the men of power have been used to look upon with scorn, effect what they cannot; at some time or other that influence reaches even them and overmasters them. Strange facts, but recurring continually, making up the history of mankind! How can they be explained? They are not explained, I think, to any person who has much vaunted of his own powers, till he is led to perceive that man, the servant and student of the ways of God, knows nothing in morals,

can do nothing in influencing his fellow-men, except what he hath first perceived in Him after whose image he is formed. In other and much better words, he learns to say, 'Thine is the power. Thine are all those powers which I have found in myself and called mine. From Thee they came, by Thee they must be sustained and directed. That perpetual restlessness which I have experienced, which sometimes made me curse the world, sometimes myself, sometimes thy gifts, was the effect of my claiming that which did not belong to me, trying to wield armour which was too weighty. Those whom I complained of because they were set in high places, with so little right to be there, were less mischievous than I should have been, because they did less, struggled less, and left more room for Thy working. Those whose strength I was forced to admit, though naturally I despised them, might have fewer powers than mine, but what they had were submitted to Thee, were confessed to be Thine; therefore they had Omnipotence with them. And now, since Thou hast taught me, by sore and tremendous discipline, that I cannot strive with Thee, I believe, indeed, that Thine is the power; the power to make this will conformable to thine; the power to use what Thou hast endowed me with as thine own; the power to make all circumstances, which have no virtue of their own, and which, whether sad or happy, may be my plagues, really blessed; the power to bring order out of the chaos within me; the power to change selfish remorse into gracious repentance; the power to quicken the bodies of thy saints, to restore the age, to renew the earth, to subdue even all things to thyself.'

III. For lastly, Thine is the glory. To what is this Kingdom tending? What is to be accomplished by this power? 'Though we admit,' it is often said, 'that there is some Being who formed individuals and human society, and who is continually directing both, still, if we hold Him to be a gracious and benevolent Being, we cannot conceive Him to have any object but the happiness or well-doing of His creatures; we must not dream that self-glory is ever His aim. But if not, then surely the blessedness and glory of humanity may be our ultimate aim,

we need not, cannot look higher.' This statement you must all have heard frequently, in one form of words or another, and we shall hear more of it yet. We ought not to overlook the important truth which is contained in it, or to be unthankful for the confutation it contains of a deadly doctrine which divines have been too ready to propagate. If the glory be His, whom we have called our Father, whose Name we have desired to hallow, whose Kingdom we have prayed might come, whose Will is to be done on earth and in Heaven, who is the Giver and the Forgiver, who guides us through temptation, and brings us out of evil; we dare not believe for an instant that it is a Self-glory of which we are speaking. It must be that which is the eternal opposite and contradiction of Self-glory; the glory of a Being whose name and nature is Love. That such a Being must seek the good of the creatures He has formed, we are all agreed. What we say is, that He would not be seeking the good of His voluntary creatures, if He did not raise them above themselves; if He did not give them a perfect absolute object to behold, and to dwell in. Those of our age who speak so much about the glory of humanity, affirm that man wants no such object, or cannot attain it if he does. Either it is really the satisfaction of all his wants, or else the only one he can hope for, to be a Narcissus, ever beholding his own beauty and becoming more and more enamoured of it. I am aware that many who use this kind of language, would protest strongly against the notion that a man becomes necessarily a self-worshipper, a seeker of his own glory, because he seeks the glory of his race or kind. I admit the distinction; it is a very important one. What I desire earnestly is, that they would ask themselves how it may be practically realized. Humanity cannot be contemplated merely as an abstraction; it must be seen in some one. For a time we may choose a favourite hero, and think that he embodies all we covet to behold. Imperfections appear in him, or he does not meet the new cravings of our mind; he is discarded, another is raised up, who has a shorter reign. We discover that we must not exalt one against another; each one carries in him the nature of all; each man has that nature very near to him. A great

and wonderful conviction! but if existing alone, sure to turn into that state of mind which I just now spoke of. Around, beneath, above, the man finds no object so worthy of his delight, admiration, adoration, as himself.

It is very possible, that those who put forth a theory which justifies, as it seems to us, this mournful result, are not practically nearer to it than we are, who denounce it. God forbid that I should exaggerate their danger, or our safety! I believe that we are one and all haunted by this tendency to self-glorification every day and hour of our lives; that no religious systems, no religious practices, are a protection against it, nay, will, if we trust in them, infallibly lead us into it. It signifies not under what pretext, philosophical, political, theological, we build altars to ourselves; the worship is in all cases equally accursed. To throw down these altars, to destroy the high places in which men are burning incense to divinities that will prove at last to be fouler than Belial or Moloch; this must be our work. But if we have commenced this process, where it always should commence, in our own hearts, we shall know that we can only drive out the false by turning to the true. It is only God who can break the yoke of the tyrants under whom we have fallen from forgetfulness of Him.

Therefore I have desired that we should meditate upon the prayer of our childhood, in which lies, I believe, the charm against all that has assaulted us in our manhood. Within the few weeks that we have been considering it, as many events have been passing before us as might fill many centuries; it has seemed to meet them all; to be the best and fullest language in which we can express our fears, hopes, longings, for ourselves, our nation, the world. We have not found that the wants and sorrows of Humanity were forgotten in it, because it begins from a higher ground, because it starts from a Father, because it acknowledges all the highest and lowest blessings as proceeding from Him. If we believe that this Father beholds Humanity created, redeemed, glorified, in His beloved Son; if we believe that in that Son we may behold it and behold Him; that being members of His body we may

see Christ in each and Christ in all; we cannot think less nobly of our kind than those do who shut their eyes to the facts of its corruption and misery, or who will not acknowledge that this corruption comes from our refusal to retain God in our knowledge. If we believe that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Father and Son, is given to us that we may be united to each other, that we may be fitted for all knowledge and all love, we cannot have less noble anticipations of that for which man is destined than those who speak most loudly of his emancipation from all thraldom, and of his infinite capacities. But what we desire for ourselves and for our race—the greatest redemption we can dream of,—is gathered up in the words, 'Thine is the glory.' Self-willing, self-seeking, self-glorying, here is the curse: no shackles remain when these are gone; nothing can be wanting when the spirit sees itself, loses itself, in Him who is Light, and in whom is no darkness at all. In these words therefore we see the ground and consummation of our prayer; they shew how prayer begins and ends in Sacrifice and Adoration. They teach us how Prayer, which we might fancy was derived from the wants of an imperfect, suffering creature, belongs equally to the redeemed and perfected. In these the craving for independence has ceased; they are content to ask and to receive. But their desire of knowledge and love never ceases. They have awaked up after His likeness, and are satisfied with it; but the thought, 'Thine is the glory,' opens to them a vision which must become wider and brighter for ever and ever. Amen.