

Rudolph Hofmann

After This Manner Pray

Messages on The Lord's Prayer

OUR FATHER

who art in
Heaven



HALLOWED BE THY NAME



Thy kingdom come
Thy will be done

on earth as it is in heaven

give us this day

our daily bread



and forgive us our trespasses, as we
forgive those who trespass against us

lead us not into
temptation

BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL

for
Thine
is the

KLINGDOM

and
the

POWER

and

GLORY

"The history of the Church confirms and illustrates the teachings of the Bible, that yielding little by little leads to yielding more and more, until all is in danger; and the tempter is never satisfied until all is lost. –
Matthias Loy, *[The Story of My Life](#)*

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AFTER THIS MANNER PRAY YE

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SERMONS ON OUR LORD'S PRAYER

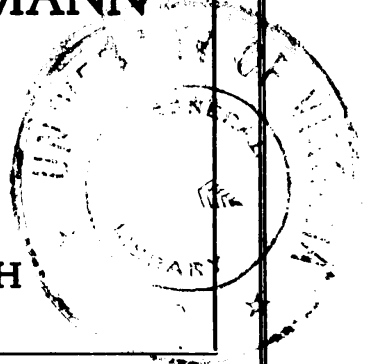
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—
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AFTER THIS MANNER
PRAY YE

The Gospel of St. Luke, Chapter 11:1-4. Compared
with the Gospel of St. Matthew, Chapter 6:13.

“And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples.’”

“And he said unto them, ‘When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

Give us day by day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.”

THE INTRODUCTION

OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN.

“The grace of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all!”

Beloved in the Lord: Those of you who were present at my last sermon, know that I had planned to speak upon the Lord's Prayer and its separate petitions, in a connected series of discourses. Therefore, the last time I had made the prayer in general, its attributes and its bestowal the subject of our consideration. To-day we come to the Lord's prayer itself, as the text selected introduces it to us, and Luther explains it in his small catechism. We ask, what then, does this prayer signify? Namely, how are we to regard the Lord's prayer?

Our text tells us. It is the Lord's answer to the entreaty of his disciples: Lord, teach us how to pray. Therefore a lesson upon prayer is obliged to be presented in the form of a model prayer, which tells us what

we are to pray for, and how we are to make such prayer. But, Beloved, do we not thus come into direct collision with that which belongs to the nature of prayer, seeing that is the freest outpouring of the heart, not called forth by any force whatever, or any prescription whatever, but driven forth by a necessity from within, through the impulse of glowing child-love, that is only satisfied, while it confides to the father in prayer, what is stirring the heart of the child, at that very instant. How is it possible, to confine to a fixed form, what has value only as a voluntary act; how is it possible to want to express something, that will necessarily be of as manifold nature as the necessities of man are manifold, through a prayer of quite fixed, abiding substance; how is it possible to force, what will necessarily strike a different key, in every change of mood, to employ a single key for all moods and states of mind alike? The Lord's prayer with its uniform contents, and its abiding form, seems as little suited to be offered to the children of the kingdom, as a prayer for repetition, as it is altogether inconceivable that a finished prayer, already worded can cover the special feelings, which move the pious heart of the individual, who desires to pour out his heart to God. Is it not to be feared, that, if a set formula of prayer be recommended for free use, the same outward and unthinking adoption of it, creep in, such as we find there,

where the worth of the prayer is made dependent upon the number of Pater-noster and the frequent repetition of the same? The rosary in the Catholic church prescribes that one hundred and fifty Ave Marias and fifteen Pater-nosters be recited through the telling of beads. What evangelical child of God could fancy himself by such repetition, as carrying out the direction for prayer, that our Lord meant to give us in our text and the presentation to us of "Our Father which are in heaven?"

Therefore the question comes back again: Is it, in general, possible to present a fixed formula of prayer for use and repetition? Now, as certain as it is, that only a spontaneous prayer, springing immediately from the heart's real feeling, in which the mouth only overflows with that of which the heart is full, corresponds to the ideal of prayer held by a child of God, so certain is it too, that all our prayers, even the most fervent, are only a struggling after this perfection, and that it is precisely the most ardent worshippers, who will accept it with sincerest gratitude, so as to obtain help in learning what to pray for, and how to offer their petitions. A Paul sighs: "We know not what we should pray for as we ought." I think, that, we too will thankfully seize the hand that is held out to us, with the promise: "I will teach you; Come, and

hearken to me: Thus must you pray.” See now, the Lord holds out this hand to us, while he presents us with: “Our Father which art in heaven.” And if we look upon it in this way, in a wonderfully satisfying manner, it represents that which a model prayer must contain, not to save us from making our own prayers, but praying for us the model prayer, to inspire us to pray aright ourselves.

Furthermore. Each prayer assuredly has its own spirit; but the controlling spirit is the same in all prayers and is laid down in “Our Father which art in heaven.” Now if we would pray, we find the right spirit of prayer better, if we attune the strings of our heart into accord with the Lord’s prayer. If the fundamental principle in all prayers is the same, then, too, it must be possible to give the key-note, which must sound through every proper prayer. You see, now, a sacred octave of such key-notes is offered to us by the Lord’s Prayer, in its address and seven petitions. Out of the octave the musician constructs his works of art, out of the octave of prayer-notes the worshipful heart composes those sweet, spiritual songs, that it sings to the Lord. The art of music has not yet exhausted the millionth part of possible compositions to be evolved from the diapason: methinks there remains to the heart that delights in prayer, as well, freedom enough

for his creations, if his original prayers are based upon a like number of fundamental tones. And if you had a thousand tongues and were pleased to sing differently with every tongue, the fundamental tones, as they are distinctly designated in "Our Father which art in Heaven," are broad enough to admit of thousands of variations. If it did not sound too worldly, one might say if each true prayer is only a variation upon a theme that is taken from the Lord's prayer. Oh! what a holy task for the holy arts of the imagination, to create the highest work of art, that a child of man can create, viz: to compose music well-pleasing to our Father's ear, to compose a prayer, that he will hear and give heed to. When the psalmist begins to pray, he says: "Lord, incline thine ear to me and hearken unto my words." When we begin to pray and strike the key-note of the "Father which art in heaven," then we know, that these tones are those to which he gladly inclines his ear.

To be sure, it is not merely the spirit of prayer that matters, but its substance likewise. Many a child of God prays in the most devout and fervent mood, without finding the proper material for his prayer; earthly, human wishes press into the most ardent concerns of the soul; it would ask only for that which is according to God's will, and yet exchanges for the wishes of its

own heart, what is after the will of God. Not as if asking for earthly, human good were excluded, we saw, indeed, in my last sermon, that nothing is too small for a child of God to lay before his Heavenly Father, all the little desires of the heart too, all those manifold necessities of the body, which it needs for a happy completion of its earthly pilgrimage. But still very much more depends upon the place which is assigned to those blessings within the scope of the desirable, as the one good thing, for which we plead in prayer, is put in the rank of blessings worth asking for. You know every prayer has its settled order and it is easily possible, to designate a certain succession of thought, for prayer in general, which must be followed, if it would begin properly, rise to the proper height, and end in the correct manner. And it is this again, that constitutes our Lord's prayer, a model one in the most exalted sense, seeing that it embodies for us the sequence of thought, that every true prayer must follow.

Every genuine prayer begins with the conscious aspiration of the soul to heavenly heights. The soul would talk with her God, and with the address "Our Father" draws near to the Almighty. There she stands now, and what she wants to bring forward of her own affairs, is, in the first place swallowed up by the sight of his sacred person, and her lips utter no other sound

than that of wondering awe: "hallowed by Thy name." And amazement at His glory overflows in the wish that this may ever more spread abroad in the wide realm of his children here below; that heaven may also come down to earth. Therefore the second petition runs: "Thy kingdom come!" But because this cannot be done unless His will is done on earth as well as in Heaven, she adds: "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so also upon earth."

Herewith the eye of the worshipper turns again to earth, there where lies our need, which we would lay before God. But the thought of our earthly necessities is immediately brought into the right state of purification, going through which it emerges in the right manner, as nothing more than "Give us this day our *daily bread.*" Beside the daily bread of the body appears directly the thought of that much more imperatively needed daily bread of the soul, and hardly have we touched that, ere prayer turns directly again to the spiritual, to "give" follows immediately "forgive," and the praying lip stammers "and forgive us our debts."

That concerns the present; but before us lies a future with all its dangers of temptation, that can always lure us away from our heavenly goal. Therefore, for protection against this temptation pleads the heart conscious of its weakness, and finally for deliverance

from all the evil of this earth, so that the soul may return again, whither it belongs, and be at home with the Father, for “his is the kingdom and the glory forever and ever.” This is the course of thought in the Lord’s prayer. We see that all is so closely and naturally welded together, that the thoughts can take no other course. First, prayer ascends to heaven, then touches the earthly, with the hem of its garment as it were, in order to mount up again to heavenly heights. And the thoughts that it projects, are indeed the fundamental thoughts, that must pervade every prayer; therefore it can certainly serve us for the model whereby to shape our prayers.

Indeed, so long as it appears to us a copy for imitation, it does not fulfill its purpose toward us, but as soon as it is the mirror in which we behold our own heart praying, and see whether it prays aright; the tuning-fork, that tells whether we have the true tone, the true spirit of prayer, it is an inestimable help, a real means of grace for the heart that delights in prayer. He who has learned his Lord’s Prayer by rote, is not necessarily the one who can pray it, but he who in his heart of hearts is in accord with the spirit of the Lord’s prayer, he can pray it. “Our Father which art in heaven” is a bunch of flowers that the Lord brought down, with him, to us from heaven. But why does my

weak tongue extoll, what is exalted beyond all praise? The words, in which the Son of God has prayed, in our presence, this prayer for God's children, are, to our apprehension sacred sounds from a higher world by which we are to learn the language of the beyond. Or, they are seven rounds of a ladder, by means of which we climb up and down, so that we learn to mount upward on the heavenly ladder. Oh! that the last "Our Father which art in heaven," that crosses our lips, that the last "deliver me from evil," which our dying lips utter, may be but a stepping from the last round into heaven itself. Meanwhile, the heart ceases not to learn from the Lord's prayer, as the soul climbs heavenward.

And to that end, let us not overlook, either, the glorious explanation of it given by Luther. He seldom gives us there his own words, but words taken from the comments made, upon the Lord's Prayer, by the fathers of the church in centuries the farthest apart, the consensus of the church as it were upon the hallowed significance of the Lord's Prayer. Luther has only collected and arranged them, because there echoed in his own heart this and no other resonance, and he thought that it must be the same in every child of God. If the Lord's Prayer is a sacred inheritance from the Lord's mouth, so is the explanation of it also a sacred inheritance from the mouth of the church. A Catholic priest

came across it in an Italian translation without knowing that it was by Luther. He wrote under it: Blessed are the hands that wrote this book; blessed are the eyes that read it; and blessed are the hearts, who will thus pray. Take it all in all, Luther is well justified, when he calls the Pater-noster “a prayer above all prayers,” and we appreciate his confession, when he affirms of this Lord’s prayer: “it is my prayer, from which I draw nourishment like a child, cannot be satisfied. It is of such inexhaustible depth, that no man on God’s footstool can so pray it as to take in its full meaning.”

This, however, by no means releases us from struggling to attain unto this, and in the pursuance of this struggle we now approach the text of this prayer itself, and seek in the first place to come to a clearer understanding of those words in the invocation: “Our Father which are in Heaven.” This invocation is, as it were, the spiritual bridge through which is spanned the chasm between the earthly standpoint of the praying mortal and the heavenly abode of God the Father. It is the conscious link binding child and father together.

In this opening we have to call attention to three things: to the “Father,” to the “our” and to the “who art in heaven.” “Father.” With this name the one praying addresses God, and while this name appears at the head of the prayer, it forthwith marks it as a

Christian prayer. The heathen, to be sure, had already used the expression: "Father" for their gods, especially for their supreme God, but in doing so, they thought only of the power, that a father has in the house; the all-father is to them the all-powerful and therefore to be feared. The Jews also called God, father, and already attached a deeper meaning to the idea; it was he who had cared for his people like a father; the people of Israel was the great family of God, and in the remembrance of the divine guidance and all the good that he had done to his chosen people, they call Him their Father. But however much they held to the perception of a loving Father, they had not yet arrived to the recognition of that love, for the sake of which we Christians call Him Father. Otherwise the apostle (John I. 3, 1) could not have vaunted it as a new thing: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God." What is new in this name is, that we recognize in Him the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore our Father also. It is true, every one can say, "Father," for the love which he sheds abroad upon good and bad alike, is such that every one must admit, that he treats us like a father. But not everyone can say "Our Father;" that, only a Christian can say. If one is able to address God as "Our Father," then he cannot see in His face that wrath, with which he looks upon us, as

his fallen, sinful children. O! the holy wrath of God upon our iniquity, forbids us to speak of our Father; that wrath must first be propitiated, ere the right and drawing to it is given to us again; and to have done this is due to the merit of Christ. His redeeming arm, it is, that takes by the hand every child of man, that is willing to pray, and presents it to his Heavenly Creator, and says: "See, there is your Father; now talk with him of whatever preys upon your heart? O! the familiar name of father is only a shadow of that which is included in God's name of Father. For, however much love, self-sacrifice and tenderness a human father may heap upon his child, no earthly father can love, as God has loved us in Christ. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." There God the holy one, to whom all sin is an abomination, and here humanity, the unholy, which, heaping sin upon sin challenges the wrath of the Holy One. Then the All-Holy determines to take, from his bosom, his own dear Son, and give him up to the death of sinners, perhaps in order that such love may break their hearts and call back lost sons to their father's heart. That was his plan of redemption, and that the counsel, which Jesus Christ has carried out as our Mediator, and it is on account of his mediatorial death, that we now commence every prayer with the

address, "Our Father," that is to say: Oh! God, thou who hast given thine own Son to die for us, how shouldst thou not, with him, freely give us all things;" in such confidence I come to thee and implore thee, that thou would'st graciously hearken, and grant what thy child would have of thee.

A religious art painting entirely too humanly has depicted God the Father with a heart, that flames up like a burning fire. In this portraiture superstition has blended, but so much of it is true: if you were to take all the love that is poured out in a father's or mother's heart, and gather it together in one flame of fire, it would be only a feeble reflection of the fire of love that heaves and burns in the heart of God. Therefore says the apostle (Ephes. 3:14), "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." And therefore Luther in his catechism explains the address "Our Father" in the question: "What is meant by this?" With the words: "*God would hereby tenderly invite us to believe that he is truly our Father, and we are truly his children, so that we may ask of him with all cheerfulness and confidence, as dear children ask of their dear father.* Now, how do these ask? If a child throws himself on a father's breast, throws his arms around his neck, and with childlike joy looks

into his father's eye, and says rapturously: "My father," there you have an earthly picture of how a child of God prays to his heavenly father, saying "Our Father."

Why, though, does he not pray my father, but our father?

All genuine children of God represent one great family, not a member of which wants to be or to have anything for himself alone. If my heart were not filled by true brotherly love, then in its prayers it could think only of itself; in the fellowship of the faith it must forthwith join with all the members of the great family of God, and can offer no prayer that would not, at the same time, be an intercession for the brethren. Into the word "Father" I put my love to God, into the word "Our" I put my love to the brethren.

And that again has a double reaction upon the uplifting of my soul by prayer. One time, because it is not merely my need, my care, that I bring before God, but at the same time, their need, their care, confidence grows, that such an unselfish petition is pleasing to the Father in heaven. And at another time, as I pray for my brethren, I am penetrated by the feeling, that my brother is doing the same for me; and indeed, there is something grand in knowing, that every day I too am thought of by thousands in prayer; that they too bear

me, upon praying hearts, and that all our wishes meet together before the throne of God as in their common center. Before the throne of God! With the words "thou who art in heaven" we have expressed that very thing. Heaven is, indeed, not to be bounded by the laws of space, but we speak as if it were, seeing that we know him, who is enthroned on high above the turmoil of earth, with his father's eye looks down upon the least thing that goes on here, and upon the least individual, that lifts his eye to him. To aid our power of realization, we need a definite place for his habitation, although, we know, that he is shut in by no boundaries of space. Faith builds her temple in the skies, and the eye of faith fixes God in this heavenly sphere, like the sun in the real skies, whence streams forth light and warmth. Yes, God is our sun, only in a much higher and more universal manner. As the sun pours its rays over the whole world; as the same light floods the tops of the mountain-peaks, and drinks the dew-drops from the floweret's cup in the depths of the valley; as the same beam penetrates into the splendid apartments of royal palaces, and brings comfort and refreshment into some wretched hovel of the poor; as the beasts of the desert rejoice in the newly awakened light, and the tiniest flies rock gently in the glow of the evening sunset; quite in the same manner gushes from the father-heart of God Most High, the warm breath of a love

cherishing every creature. Our Father is indeed in heaven, but the life of every creature, our own life, too, is bound to him, as with a thread, by which he holds and regulates it. It is by this thread, too, that he draws the praying heart to Himself; were this thread broken, we could not pray; but as it is, 'tis possible, that the heart, while it prays, feels itself drawn upward, but perceiving the spiritual uplifting, that it experiences, at the same time perceives, that it is brought into nearness to God. But that was precisely what the pious heart wanted, viz: to be brought near to God, so as to pour out one's heart to Him. The three words of the opening sentence, "Father," "Our," "Who art in heaven," have uplifted him. The word "Father" was a word of faith, the word "Our" was a word of love, the word "Thou who art in heaven," was a word of hope. Faith, love, hope are ever the three strokes of the wing, which the soul of a mortal must make in order to soar upward to heights divine. Now she stands before God, now she can speak with Him: the further contents of the Lord's prayer will tell us what she said. Concerning that dear people, I think to tell you the next time. Amen!

THE FIRST PETITION

HALLOWED BE THY NAME.

Beloved in the Lord: In the series of sermons on The Lord's Prayer, we come to-day to the first petition: "Hallowed be thy name."

Why is this the first petition? We recall the significance, which the address "Our Father which art in heaven" had. "Father," that was the word of faith, "Our," that was the word of love, "thou who art in heaven," that was the word of hope which signified the threefold flapping of the soul's wings, wherewith she soared above the earth and rose to heavenly heights. Now she stands before God. The splendor of his majesty falls on her. His infinite sublimity and exaltation, all the fullness of his holiness stream in upon her. What is she to do? Ah! she would like to join in that which she sees the angels doing, in the cry of the cherubim: Holy, holy holy is the Lord God of Sabaoth. Yes, if she were an angel! What the angels can do, she cannot do yet, for looking within, she feels too keenly the distance of the sinful child of earth from

the height of the all-holy God. Therefore, what she cannot yet do, breathes from her lips, as their first petition: “hallowed be thy name.”

The earthly atmosphere untunes the strings of the harp of prayer. There is a lower tone requisite for chamber music; it has its conditions in the laws of the eternal harmony between deity and the heart of man. “Thou shalt be holy for I am holy,” runs the law. But observe, what in the Second Commandment was the subject of command, has now already become the object of individual petition. What God had to order in the old covenant, the child of God begs for in the new covenant. Such is the progress made by the children of his kingdom. Now let us look more closely at the petition itself. We have, in the first place to consider:

1. *What is expressed by “Thy name.”*
2. *And then in the second place by the words “hallowed be.”*

The Lord led in this petition, “hallowed be thy name.” Why, then, did he only say *His Name*, and not God Himself?

Do we not expect this expression of the petition: Thou, Oh God, art holy; why is it that, instead, there is only: “hallowed be Thy Name?” It has its foundation in the same circumstance, that we have already

touched upon a while ago, namely, that we men are no angels. It is still a thing impossible for us, to imagine the person of the holy God. He is the Infinite One and therefore inconceivable by us finite creatures. He dwells in light to which no man can approach. Our spirit can only catch the rays that he allows to escape thence, and out of them he constructs the image that he calls God, conscious himself that thereby he has not, in the least taken in the whole fullness of the deity, but only as much as God has revealed of himself. In fact, it is thus with us, in regard to every object of the perception; we see and become acquainted with single sides of it, what is deepest and innermost remains hidden from us; that much, however, suffices to give us a definite name for it, and to this name we hold it fast. The name, therefore, is the embodiment of that which we know of a thing. The name of God, also, is the embodiment of that which has been revealed to us of God. The great difference as to the things of nature remains, however, that, while we can perceive these immediately, just God dwells in a light that no man can approach unto, so that, if we are to learn anything, in general, of him, he must reveal Himself to us. Now he has done this primarily, in a twofold revelation of nature: He has put within us an inner voice, that testifies of Him, and He has left upon His creatures, an impress of His image, that also tells of Him.

In the first place, that inner voice. We call it consciousness of God. That it really might speak, and reveal God's pure essence to man, we are informed in the account given us of the state of man in Paradise. Adam and Eve beheld God, and conversed with God; spiritually, of course, since God Himself is a spirit, but their seeing and talking were truth and reality. With the fall of man, all was changed. Sin has troubled the light of the spirit in man; now, as it were, there has fallen a veil before his eyes, and he has no longer been able to see God clearly. In the Holy Record it is said: "and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the face of the Lord God;" the consequent punishment was, that God drove them out of his presence; indeed it was also God's hiding of Himself from the sinful eye of mankind. Only the pure eye can behold God, and that is what sinful man no longer possesses. What has been left to him of that inner voice of God is only a small residue; it is the conscience alive to the good and also the true. But this residue, too, is so perverted, that we talk of an erring and a self-deceiving conscience. The source of divine life within us is pitiably troubled. Only in so far as a brook is clear, is the sun mirrored in it; only in so far as the stream of life within us runs pure, is the divine nature reflected within. Enough to recognize, that the revelation of God, originally entrusted to us, does not suffice for learning the full, clear truth concerning Him and His dealings.

Thus a second revelation has been given to us in Nature, in His creatures. The work testifies of the workman. St. Paul says in his letter to the Romans, first chapter and twentieth verse: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." But a twofold thing causes this revelation to appear unsatisfying enough. For one thing work can never be more than a partial revelation of its designer. All the art-works of an artist put together, still, do not represent all that lies dormant in the creative brain of the artist. Thus it is also with the creation of the world. Who shall say that therein was spent God's creative powers? Who will maintain that the creature, too, is only capable of reflecting God's pure and perfect image. And suppose it were, there is yet another thing opposing itself as an obstacle to its recognition. In order to see it, pure, unclouded vision is required. But sin has weakened, blinded, misguided the spirit's light, and frequently enough, sinful man recognizes, in the revelation of Nature, only a caricature of deity. The gods of the heathen prove this affirmation, corresponding in nature as they do to the imperfection of the human spirit that devised them. The same thing is demonstrated by the imaginary representations of the godhead as they occur from the coarsest idolatry of the Fetisch-worshipper

up to the ideal forms of the Greek and Roman gods. As St. Paul says (Romans 1st chapter, 23d verse). “And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.”. Yes, Beloved, so long as man depends upon finding out God from himself and Nature, his conception of God must be an extremely imperfect one. Should he ascertain truth as to the attributes of God, he must obtain it immediately from Himself. If we deny that such a direct revelation has been given, then shall we have, from the very outset, to despair of attaining to any true knowledge of God. Whatever is revealed, is recorded in Holy Writ. But even revelation does not tell us all that God is, and what proceeds from him; there are only individual traits of his infinite personality, that have been revealed to us. But the chief thing to be thankful for is, that whatever the Scriptures reveal to us of His character, is truth and reality. And for this altogether we have a comprehensible designation, just as we have for every object of our perception; the word by which we designate Him, is *His Name*. The name is the embodiment of that which is known to us of our object. The *name* of God embodies all that is known to us concerning God, through revelation. Therefore Christ, too, in his high-priestly prayer, does not express himself thus: (John 17:6) “I have *manifested* thee to men,” but, “I

have manifested Thy Name to men.” Therefore, in our worship the question is ever only about the name of God, and Holy Writ speaks of “praise the name of God.” If not even the name contains the whole fullness of the Godhead, yet it contains enough of the sublime, majestic, infinite, almost to overwhelm the human spirit, that would fathom it: enough, at all events, to fill him with the most solemn dread, of sinning, in any manner whatever, against this name. The Jews were so deeply penetrated with this dread, that they altogether avoided taking this name upon their lips; they never uttered it. The Christian ventures to, but not because he is less reverential than the Jew; he is conscious, though, that his trespass would be yet greater, because, the more brightly shines the sun of revelation upon God,—the more significant seem to us the words of the Second Commandment: “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.” He therefore dares to use it, not because he thinks more lightly of his relationship to God, but because he sensibly feels, that, there cannot exist a powerful consciousness of the religious relations of man to God without the use of His name. It is no good sign of the strength of a person’s piety, if one never hears the name of God from his mouth, and it is a poor recommendation of the same, when one observes it in him, that it is an unusual thing for him to introduce the name of God into his

discourse, that it is hard for him to bring himself to utter that sacred name in a greeting, benediction or giving of thanks. But on the other side, too, he says to himself, that the little spirit of man, in calling the name of God, continually hovers in danger of degrading it from its inexpressibly lofty height, and therefore he cannot pronounce it, without his words shaping themselves into a prayer: “hallowed be Thy name.”

It is the same inward longing, as pervaded the whole of nature, to sanctify its creator. Nature turns her face towards God, and had she a voice, she would compress all that she has to say in the one sentence: “hallowed be Thy name.” There rises invisibly from the hearts of all living creatures a perpetual incense of silent adoration to God. Creation unconsciously brings this homage to her creator; man the crown of creation, has the ability and disposition to do it consciously. “Hallowed be Thy name,” then, is his first word, so soon as he lifts his eyes, with consciousness to God, that it to say, as soon as he prays.

But what is to hallow God’s name? Luther says in his explanation of the catechism: “*The name of God is indeed holy in itself; but we pray in this petition that it may be hallowed also among us.*” We can add nothing to God’s glory and take nothing away from it; but the one thing we can do, is, to see that his holiness is recog-

nized by us and among us, in word and deed. But incompatible with this, is what we so frequently find, namely, a thoughtless use of the name of God, as a mere empty formula for the expression of admiration, astonishment, or surprise. How often, too, is Jesus appealed to, in this vain, unmeaning fashion! The sinful feature of the thing being, that it is irreverential towards the Almighty, to call Him by His name, without any real desire for His presence; to make him the attendant and bearer of all our follies and acts of levity.

No less sinful is it, to intermingle His name with our discourse only to give it a pious coloring. Either the germs of hypocrisy are already at work there, or there is lacking that holy reserve, which locks up in the heart what is sweetest, not bringing to the surface every instant, that deep-seated tenderness, which touches the sacred only in reverent mood. It is assuredly well pleasing to our dear Saviour, for us to hold childlike and confidential intercourse with Him, as good children do with a beloved father, yet this confidence is not to degenerate into familiarity, and love not into undignified demonstrations. He, "before whom the angels veil their faces," and in whose presence Heaven and earth tremble, is too highly exalted above such familiar approach. But still more above any use of his name for unworthy things, for mere jest and sport.

And here I cannot forbear referring to another thing that will always hurt the religious sensibilities of the heart, like a profanation of the holy, and this is the use of God's name on the stage, the employment of the sacred for mere amusement. I cannot consider it otherwise than highly improper, for a person, who perhaps never prays otherwise, to exert himself to imitate a fervent prayer on the stage illusively and effectively. I cannot look upon it as other than highly insulting, when a person takes a solemn oath on the stage, calling God to witness. I cannot do otherwise than designate it as impious, when, in general, on the stage, holy persons are introduced, and holy functions discharged as such. For me, the second commandment is obligatory, without exception. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

And to the what we shall not do, corresponds now a what we shall do. We are to hallow His name. And to the question: How is this done? Luther answers: "*When the word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God, lead holy lives, in accordance with it.* Therein lies a twofold significance: as the all-holy he is to stand before our mind's eye and as the all-holy we are to revere Him in our lives. But our conception of God is made up of that which he has revealed to us of Himself; and most

clearly had he revealed Himself in His word. A devout soul can be so filled by the wish to learn to know God ever nearer and better, that every power of his spirit is put forth to reach this goal. Luther recognized this, and in his simple explanation bursts forth into an exclamation of enthusiasm, a sigh full of desire: “this grant us, dear, heavenly Father!”

On the other hand it happens so easily that the soul separates herself from the true knowledge of God, that she mingles what is false and irreconcilable with the holiness of God in her conception of Him, so that Luther, appreciating this danger with her, bursts forth again into an exclamation of deep feeling, into a sigh full of sadness: “From this preserve us, Heavenly Father!”

Side by side with the knowledge of God goes His worship: and when we say in the Lord’s prayer: “Hallowed be thy name,” it presupposes, that we have a corresponding adoration of His holiness. But we are to worship God in the beauty of holiness, in His holy temple. He among us who does not do this desecrates the name of God. Oh! you lukewarm Christian, you who duly repeat your Lord’s prayer, but never repair to the sanctuary of your God, do you not feel, what an inconsistency there is in praying daily: “hallowed be thy name,” and yet so despise the vow, which you make

at the same time, that you thoughtfully keep aloof from the place, where His honor dwelleth and where they exalt His holy name. O you lukewarm Christian, who, indeed, come into the house of God, and repeat your Lord's prayer, do you not feel that the "hallowed be Thy name" extends beyond the limits of the house of God? Why do you profane the day set apart in his honor, by turning it into a season of mere selfish pleasure-seeking? The keeping Sunday holy is also included in the first petition. Woe to that Christian land and people, who cease to prize the sacred privilege of using one day in seven, as a rest from worldly labor, and a precious opportunity for learning about God and heaven, man's only true home.

It contributes little to the welfare of our soul, to know God as the Holy One, if we do not also confess him outwardly in our life. Hence Luther adds in his explanation: and we, too, as the children of God, lead holy lives, in accordance with it." According to the words of Scripture our prayer should be "without ceasing;" it is just as if our whole life were to be a continuous prayer, an uninterrupted hallowing of the name of God. Our whole person, body as well as soul with all that they do or leave undone are to be consecrated to the glorifying of His holy name. Our body too?—Yes. Holy Writ has a very deep thing to say

concerning it. It is called there a temple of the Holy Ghost (I. Cor. 6:19). It is so, for the body is the building in which the heart solemnizes its divine service. As a church building can be profaned, just so is it with the body. The sin, through which this is done is called unchastity; and in the same way to hallow the name of God is also called: "to live chastely and modestly." Chastity is the shrinking from desecrating anything holy through contact with anything impure. Chastity is the modest nature, withdrawing into itself, as soon as it is aware of the approach of an impure touch. Yes, the word "chaste" is itself a chaste expression; I mean it defines something that does not lend itself well to speech. It is like a flower, that when it has been plucked to pieces, is simply a flower no more, and the main part, that is intangible, is the perfume of the flower. Thus I might make each one discern more sensibly, though I should dismember it, that the body, too, can bear its part in giving praise to the holy name of God.

Once more I come back to this, that the Holy Scriptures call it a temple of God. A church-building can also, in itself be a sanctuary of the name of God, as on the other hand, an untidy, tumbledown, ruinous house of worship makes the impression upon us of being an abode unworthy of the most-high God. From the be-

ginning believers have endeavored to embody their ideal of what that house should be, wherein dwells God's honor, by rearing a glorious cathedral. The same can be done with the body. I compare the chancel in the church to the church-building itself, with the heart in the body and itself as the temple of God. From the chancel in the church you hear the voice of the preacher, from the heart in your inner being you hear the voice of God; the outer stone building is a sermon hewn in stone, its text is: Glory be to God on high. The body of man is also a sermon moulded in flesh, its text is "hallowed be Thy name." The image of God is stamped on the body; in the countenance especially is the likeness of God mirrored. Where sin has polluted the body, the likeness has, indeed, ceased; from the body of the fleshly minded, God sensibly and gradually withdraws his image, it loses its reflection of the divine, and ever more assures a sensual bestial expression.

On the contrary, when the body really is what it ought to be, viz: the temple wherein the heart performs its devotions, he becomes himself more and more the reflection of a holy, devout frame of mind, and where the light of transfiguration rests upon a human countenance, it becomes in itself a glorifying of the name of God among men. If you know persons of whom this

is true, persons, upon whose faces are written the spirituality of a John, the holy earnestness of a James, the fiery zeal of a Paul, the priestly loftiness of a Peter, you will justify me in what I say. There are such consecrated dignified human countenances that are nothing else but perpetual emanations from the spirit of that prayer: "hallowed be Thy name." And that, indeed, is the highest thing that we can attain unto, namely, that our whole appearance be a reflection of our striving after holiness, or that all, which stirs and lives within us, what we plan and do, our world of thought and field of work, our outer and inner life are in harmony with the key-note: hallowed be Thy name. Amen.

THE SECOND PETITION

THY KINGDOM COME

Beloved in the Lord: We are in Advent, that time of waiting for the coming of the Lord, or his kingdom. What petition could suit better with that which is the deepest concern of this sacred season, than the petition, which to-day is to form the basis of our meditation, in the series of my sermons on the Lord's Prayer. The second petition, "Thy kingdom come," is most appropriately the Advent-prayer. It was so already, ere there was yet any Christian Advent, it was so already in that great long Advent that preceded Christendom. From that minute on, when there was given to mankind the promise of one who was to come and redeem the world from the curse of sin, which had come into the world through Adam, from that minute on there was also waiting for him who should come, there was also, on the part of all pious people, the longing that he would soon come to set up his kingdom, and the heaviest burden of their prayer was comprehended in the Advent plea: "Thy kingdom come." Thus have the

children of the old covenant prayed from century to century. "Thy kingdom come," 'tis the deepest sigh of the Old Testament. And as it is in the gross, so also in the individual. The story of salvation, as it has come to humanity repeats itself in like manner in each individual, who is made partaker of salvation; he must first go through a period of waiting, ere the actual arrival of the Lord follows. He comes not when and where he is not expected. The reason is, because the time of waiting is at the same time to be a time of preparation. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." (Psalm 24:7). "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." (Isaiah 40:3). Such is the call of the church to her children in the Advent season; and because the Lord comes not unbidden, she recommends her children not to omit the invitation; it is the second petition. Some one has called this petition the great postal establishment in the kingdom of God; through that prayer we carry on our correspondence with Heaven; prayers are the letters, that we send up; the Holy Spirit is the carrier, who takes them up and brings back to us again the answer. Now, if, speaking after the manner of men, the comparison be kept up, the second petition is, at all events, such a letter of invitation for the Lord to feast, and the words written in it are: "Let Thy king-

dom come to us,” words which give expression to this invitation. So be this, then, also, the theme of my present discourse :

The second petition our Advent-prayer.

It has a twofold relation, in so far also as the kingdom of God has a twofold relation ; for

1. *The kingdom of God is in us.*
2. *The kingdom of God is among us.*

“Let thy kingdom come to us.” Why do we thus pray, and not rather, “come thou thyself to us?” Yes, perhaps we might have been able to speak thus also; the Holy Scripture often enough expresses itself thus; but it is as in the first petition, where we do not say either: “Hallowed be thou, Oh God!” but “Hallowed be thy name.” We saw in the first petition that this had its foundation in the fact that we cannot comprehend God Himself in His infinity, with our finite ideas, but only take in so much of Him as is revealed to us of him, and which we include in his name. If, in the second petition we continue, “Thy kingdom come to us!” this is also done in the consciousness, that God cannot come down to us in the infinitude of his being, but only in the fullness of his power; and where his powers hold sway there is His kingdom, there He administers His own government, with His own laws and His own institutions. We can also say of His empire all that is

said of any other empire. Only that we have to take everything spiritually, and must look away from the outward forms of a worldly kingdom. The Lord himself says of this kingdom, that it cometh not with observation, but is within you. And yet another characteristic it has: It is at the same time in twofold shape upon earth, once as the kingdom of God in each individual heart, and again as the kingdom of God in the communion of those only, who carry him in their hearts. And in regard to both spheres there is matter for prayer.

In the first place the kingdom of God, as manifested in the individual.

Each kingdom extends over a certain territory and has definite boundaries. The territory of God's kingdom is our heart, and its boundaries are co-extensive with our heart. Note well that where God's kingdom is, possession of your whole heart is required. He that sitteth upon the throne resteth not until the whole domain is in subjection; it is not to be allowed that there be any corner whatever cut off, where another prince holds rule. If perchance it is haughtiness which does battle for a bit of the heart it must be quelled; or perhaps it is some passion, a sinful inclination that bespeaks more room, it must be driven out. The *whole heart* must be land belonging to the kingdom, and in it only *one* must reign, that one is God; only *one* will may

prescribe laws, that one being God's will; only *one* may concentrate all love in himself, and this one is the God of love. The kind of government is a pure theocracy; yes, if you would like to become acquainted with a state where the prince is sole ruler to the smallest thing, then examine the heart in which God has set up his throne. He needs no minister nor counsellor of the crown; how often man, too, with his wisdom, wants to intrude into His counsels. God does not suffer Himself to be advised and persuaded; how often, too, will a whole host of inclinations and wishes want to interfere with the divine council; like the chambers in a state, he pays not much heed to the states and their arguments, but carries His point as He sees fit. His lawgiving is uncommonly simple; His book of laws contains only two, namely, the double law of love: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thine understanding; and the other which is like unto it;—thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Each subject is furnished with this, and knows in every case what is his duty. It is an old truth: "the plainer an order is the more perfect." Subjects of the kingdom constitute all our forces; every power astir within us must do its share of service; whatever the mind reasons out must be consecrated to the service of God's kingdom. The kingdom has also its peculiar good things; the Apostle Paul names

them to us (Rom. 14:17). “The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.” This gives to the land within so peaceful a character, that everything is carried on without noise and disturbance; all inequality is smoothed away, no more sundering of hearts, no power sets itself up against any other, but all recognize that they are one in the single aim to be something to the praise of God. Peace within, and on the other hand armed to the teeth against any foe from without. The prince of this world, to be sure, will often enough assail the heart, that belongs to God; but it stands upon guard, and calls to its Lord, so soon as the enemy draws near, and He leads it to victory.

Thus the heart in which the kingdom of God has been set up, offers, on all sides, points of comparison with a real kingdom. Yes, it has its own language, too: it is the language of prayer; and its country’s colors, blue, red, green, faith, love, hope; and its own armorial bearings; a heart, over which are laid a cross and anchor. You surely know, dear Christian, the meaning of this escutcheon, if not, then take it from the hymn:

I’ve found the ground at last
Which holds my anchor fast;

and where?

In the wounds of my Jesus, there it lay before the foundation of the world,

A ground that will forever stay,
Though earth and heaven melt away.

Now I have said enough as to the description of the kingdom of God, as it is seen in the heart of the individual, but what more needs a description, is, that the Lord in his own prayer makes it the subject of prayer and that he exhorts us, with regard to it, to pray, that it come to us as well. Is it not, then, already our property? Is it not already promised to us through baptism? Yes, Luther means that, when he says, God's kingdom comes to us, indeed, without our prayer. As to the preparations for His coming into our heart, these are purely God's affair, and as to the offer of the gift of the kingdom, this depends purely upon God's free gift of the plan of salvation. He does both; it is He who offers the gift, and it is He who prepares the heart so perfectly, that it is receptive of the gift. And how does that happen? According to Luther's explanation: when He gives us His Holy Spirit. He sends forward the Holy Spirit in advance, that He may so prepare the heart for Him, that He may come and take up His abode there. God has so many ways of procuring access for Himself into the human heart, as the spirit is something so ethereal, that everywhere it finds room enough to enter with everything that penetrates into the heart of man. All that is able to make an impression upon, is also fitted for bringing with it the Holy Spirit into the heart of man, whether it be the reading of God's word or the hearing of preaching,

friendly exhortation or brotherly conversation, sweet or mournful experiences, strokes of trial or the soft allurements of the shepherd's voice. With the word of God, that goes in through the ear, the Holy Spirit also enters and sinks down into the heart. And what does He effect there in the first place? In the first place that state of dissatisfaction with those things in which the natural heart had hitherto found its satisfaction. Such were the good things and enjoyments of this earth. Now it becomes clear to him that all these things were only apparent good things and illusory enjoyments. Apparent good things, for they can never prepare for him everlasting joy. It is with him, as with the child and his toy; first the most impatient desire to possess it, then a time of eagerest use of it, then comes disgust and it is thrown aside. Apparent enjoyments, for they can never lastingly satisfy him. It is with him as with every one who wants to live on nothing but dainties, they finally pall upon his palate; or it is with him as with the bird in a golden cage, which cannot be indemnified for the loss of freedom by the richest and best food. Man feels that, while he yields himself up to pleasure, he, at the same time resigns his freedom, that he is a slave to his desires, a prisoner in the cage of his pleasure-seeking. Yes, if the world had a single good, a single pleasure, that could actually satisfy us, lastingly content us, then the heart might

be persuaded that it had what it needed. But the heart has many a time before felt this inadequacy of the world, so, it feels it now so much the more clearly, deeply and painfully, since the Holy Ghost has touched the depths of his heart, for he says to himself at the same time, what is to blame for it, namely, that man himself is to blame for the sinful corruption of his heart. Acknowledgement of the guilt of sin follows contrition for being in a state of sin, and to the sigh for one's sinfulness follows the sigh after the burden is lifted. That is the longing desire of the heart conscious of the guilt of its sin, that state of penitence which God would have in order to find grateful reception for the offer of the gift of his kingdom, which is to bring to the heart justice, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Man now stretches forth his spiritual hand after it, thus have we that which we call faith, the organ with which one becomes the recipient of God's kingdom. Faith draws the Holy Spirit into itself, opens the sources, whence this streams into itself, and makes the heart wide and deep, so that it may be filled to overflowing with his fullness. Now have we the kingdom of God within us; now it can spread itself out both far and near, as is consonant to its nature, now nothing further is necessary, than the constant prayer: "Thy kingdom abide in us," or, because there is no standing still in the kingdom of God, but only progress,

“Thy kingdom come to us ever more!” Yes, there is a being there, and yet simultaneously a coming ever more: it can grow. St. Paul says: “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Jesus Christ.” St. Paul certainly bore the kingdom of God in his heart, and yet he strives after more, yes, just for that very reason he strives after more with all the fervor of his soul. Thus will it also be with us, if the kingdom of God has entered into us of a truth: there is no let-up for us, we must ever entreat the more eagerly: thy kingdom come to us. There is still much room unoccupied, where it has not yet penetrated, many powers that have not been transformed, many impulses that have not yet become regenerate. All this remains yet to be accomplished; therefore ere the mouth closes in eternal silence, this prayer may not cease: “Thy kingdom come.”

This petition ceases only when, through a happy death we actually pass over into His kingdom, but also, only to rise up again in that sense, in which the heavenly spirits pray the second petition: Thy kingdom spread, as it did among us, so among all mankind, until there is not a spot upon earth, where thou shalt not be worshipped as King and Lord. That leads us to the second division of our subject, to the consideration of

the petition, in so far as its sense is: "Thy kingdom spread among us."

According to Luther's explanation, this again happens to us without our prayer. It is a necessity of nature for the kingdom of God to increase perpetually. There has been given to it of God the disposition as well as the power to penetrate everywhere and to pervade everything. The Holy Scriptures say: "God wills that everywhere men be saved." And the kingdom of God brings help for all. From its beginning on, Christianity has set up its claim to be the universal religion. When as yet it hardly numbered twelve souls, when it was still like the little grain of mustard-seed, still Christ commanded his disciples thus: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." We do not find this claim to be made by other religions, because they already carry their limitations within themselves. They have sprung up from a certain soil with quite a decided nature and national characteristics, hence only suit people of quite the same qualities. Asiatic religions, for example, are only adapted to Asiatic people. But Christianity is bound to no peculiarities; it possesses the wonderful elasticity of adapting itself to all circumstances and individualities, without sacrificing anything of its essential character. Therefore it can become the religion of all. It appeals to the rich fancy of the oriental as well as the practical sense

of the occidental; it appeals to the pious warmth of the Southerner as well as to the calm reason of the Northerner. It appeals to the independent thought of the cultured religionist, as to the credulous simplicity of uncultivated people. And Christianity, in its essence, brings with it power to perform that which it is impelled to do through the force of its own being. Christianity is the religion of missions, as none other has been. It is the natural law of its nature to expand forever; no bar can stop it, no boundary-lines can set bounds to it; no Chinese wall can block its path. And wherever Christendom has once established itself, there also will it be the leaven that leaveneth the whole lump; it rests not until it has imprinted its stamp upon all. It imprints its stamp also upon outward forms; the forms of art as of trade must bear witness to this, that Christian art and Christian commerce are of a different type from non-Christian art and non-Christian commerce. All associations of human society, whether the family, community or state bear witness, that a Christian family life, a Christian community, a Christian commonwealth are of a different type from the ante-Christian one.

All this, too, the kingdom of God does without our praying for it, and even if there be fluctuations, if in troublous times it occasionally seems as if its progress was made doubtful, the fruit of its victories snatched

from it, those dark nights are only the passage-way to a brighter morning, and it is manifest here, as in the course of outward nature, that the sun, the Christian sun, stands the next morning, a day's march higher in the arch of heaven. Often is it with the ship of the church, as with the ship tossed on a boisterous sea some pitch-black night; when the dawn breaks, it finds that the waves have only driven it so much quicker to its "desired haven."

Yes, most assuredly, God's kingdom will come without our prayers, but what we want in the second petition is, that God would grant us the grace, to be permitted to contribute something towards its coming, through our own exertions. Now, if the three holy powers, which are all in all in the kingdom of God, pervade us too, then most assuredly this will be vouchsafed us. Faith, Hope, Love, these are the three consecrated forces; hear how they are forever laying anew the foundations of the kingdom of God, building it up, and urging on its completion. They all three have this one thing in common, namely, that they seek fellowship. Faith is the possession of truth. But with this possession it is different from what it is with that of worldly goods: it is not enough for me to have it for myself, it urges men to help others to a possession of the same. That were a remarkable truth, which I should selfishly seek to keep entirely to myself; no, he who

has the real truth, will feel as though his bosom would burst if he may not impart of it to others. Faith is the praise of truth, wherefore faith naturally tends to confession, and again confession is nothing else than the call to one's fellow-members.—And as faith makes communion, so also does love. I cannot love God without, at the same time, loving those who are the objects of his love; “he who says that he loves God and hates his brother, is a liar,” saith the Bible. The children of my brother or friend are commended to my love, as such, even although I may not know them. The children of God, the brethren of my Lord Jesus Christ, as such, are also embraced in my love. It were contrary to human nature, if brothers and sisters did not feel peculiarly near to one another: Nature gives them a representation of this closer affiliation in the shape of the family. It were unnatural, if God's children did not join together in intimate association, and seek to give ocular demonstration of it in the form of a great family of God, forming the foundations of God's kingdom.—Contributing to this comes the genial power of hope. If I stand solitary with my hope, it is a comfortless thing, and there seems lacking to me exactly the element constituting content. Involuntarily I seek sharers of my hope. All who hope with me are so many props to my expectations; and not until I have sympathizers is hope exalted into joyfulness. Solitary

joy is suppressed joy. What would Christmas be to a man living entirely alone. People invite guests, only to have sharers in their enjoyments, namely, through them, to heighten their own pleasure. That already indicates a feeling of mutual dependence; and the feeling increases, the more conscious we become that it behooves us in the kingdom of God not merely to enjoy but to work also: to work all the individual task allotted to each person, according to his gifts and means, as at the great common tasks, that can only be performed by the joint labor of all the subjects of the kingdom. It is an acknowledged necessity, that one member be helped by the other, and just so that the individual is merged in the whole, as he is upheld by the whole. He who flees the assemblies of the saints, thinking to be able to serve his God for himself alone, forgets to take into account, what others can give him, and, for his part forgets to render the service, that he owes to others. Only in the form of social life can all the virtues and perfections of God's kingdom be demonstrated. The Christian church has never consisted of mere individuals, but from the very first moment of her existence, namely, that first Pentecost morning, when she was founded, she appeared in the form of a community. She cannot deny either that in her organization she belongs to a kingdom. She is entirely made up of God's children only, and is held together by that

which holds a kingdom together. Yes, a truly patriotic tie binds them all. It is the consciousness of having a common country—her common country is up yonder in the skies; a like government,—God reigns in their hearts; like interests—the salvation of the soul is their aim; a like equipment—with the world winning power of faith; a like warfare, under the banner of Christ against the princes of the same sorrow and the same joy. Their look is fixed upon something invisible; but in this look they all meet together, that is the unifying force, and from this center, they are all ruled, and held together as a unit.

Thus the invisible realm obtains a visible expression. However imperfect, too, yet it is the foundation of the coming kingdom of God upon earth, which is ever increasing its boundaries and going on unto perfection. Do you understand now, why in the second petition also, it can only be said, “thy kingdom come?” Its whole glory will unfold up to the end of days, but its approximative image is to be found more and more in humanity even now. And each presence is worth exactly as much as it reflects of the image of God’s kingdom. Beloved, how much is our presence worth? It is true, that again a fresher breeze of churchly air blows through our days. But how much is lacking now of the Lord’s being received by every one as King of

his heart? How much, ere every family erects a domestic altar, at which the father and mother do service as priest and priestess. How much, ere our people as an entirety, bow before him as their heavenly King? If I do not chime in with the complaints of those, who see only degenerate conditions in our own time, and excessively laud the good old days—were it so, we should make void the promise, that God's kingdom advances in spite of everything—although I do not see things in so black a light, yet I see much black that must become white. The alarming increase of crime, that is proved by statistics, unsettled social conditions, the estrangement of whole families, yes, whole classes of people from the church, all this lets me see only a little of the image of God's kingdom, that nevertheless we are to represent. But are we therefore to despond? I think it only imposes upon us the duty of praying yet more fervently, "Thy kingdom come!" They say that perhaps, the German nation is constitutionally fitted above all others to bear the impress of a Christian people. The present may have obliterated much of this, but I do not despair of my own people, and only pray so much the more fervently, "Thy kingdom come to us." At present five hundred millions, upon the whole earth, bear the name of Christ: assuredly a considerable number, but, even, if we do not bring into the account the millions who do not deserve to bear the name

of Christ, what signify the five hundred millions of Christians compared with the eight hundred millions of men, who still walk in the darkness of heathendom? But this does not permit me to doubt, that the day will come when all nations shall bend the knee before him, but only makes me pray the more fervently: "Thy kingdom come." Most assuredly, the foreign mission has still much to do, but that urges me only so much the more emphatically, as often as I use the Lord's prayer to retain the lively consciousness, that while I pray "Thy kingdom come," I too solemnly vow, to work with God, to the utmost extent of my ability, that His kingdom come to ever more. The second petition is the petition for the soul's welfare, the petition of the inner mission, and the petition of the outer mission: three pairs of hands are uplifted to the heavenly being, and confidence deserts them not, they work in hope. Let us mingle our prayers with their's and let us also hold fast to the like hope: there can be no rest, until His love conquers, and this circle of earth lies at his feet. Therefore let us not be weary of praying: "Thy kingdom come!" The church has only four weeks in the season of Advent, but with us let Advent last the whole year through, and the Advent petition never cease: "Thy kingdom come!" Amen.

THE THIRD PETITION

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

Beloved in the Lord: To-day is Memorial Sunday or *Totenfest*, as it is called in Germany, the day which is set apart for reminding us of our dear dead and of our own death. I have asked myself whether, on this day which has its own significance, I should interrupt the series of sermons on our Lord's Prayer which I have begun. But, I have said to myself, if on any day, the Lord's prayer will be repeated by many with all fervor on this Sunday sacred to the dead; hence there must be one petition in it especially suited for Memorial Sunday. We may look upon this day as a reminder of the close of our own life, "Thy will be done" to be sure, is a sentiment that must be kept to the front through the whole course of our lives, if we would attain to a happy end. Or we may look upon this present day as a reminder of those painful hours, when our dear departed were taken from us: "Thy will be

done” speaks the word of resignation, that is required of us as Christians even when undergoing the bitterest of experiences. Therefore have I concluded that the sermons on our Lord’s prayer ought not to be interrupted.—Therefore I call upon you, too, to join with me to-day, in a close consideration of the third petition, and from this consideration to draw that instruction and consolation, which this petition so richly contains.

“Thy will be done.”——

Our Memorial Sunday plea! For by this it is expressed :

1. *That we strive after the right aim of life, and*
2. *That, in truly Christian spirit, with all our mourning, we yield to God’s judgment.*

The church year is at an end ; its last Sunday is the most solemn of all. It teaches us to think of our own death, and its concomitant, the judgment to which death is the gateway. Life is so easy and pleasant in the morning. We go on our way as though on a pleasure-trip ; we pluck every flower by the way-side, enjoy every refreshment that offers itself. Then the light-hearted pilgrim is met by a few men bearing a coffin. That interrupts the cheerful mood. Why had they to bring him just our way? The thoughts are involuntarily directed towards death ; this house of boards

with its narrow walls will one day be your own abode, perhaps quite soon, much sooner, perhaps, than you think for. This day, perhaps, such has been the experience of many a light-hearted traveler. The coffin that met him, was the name of this Sunday, *Toten-Sonntag*, Day sacred to the dead has such a dismal sound, and awakens such melancholy feelings. We do not know, but that just this time, it will have a peculiar significance for ourselves. How if he should say to us your days, too, are numbered; soon comes the end whose will be what you have prepared? Stealthy is the approach of death to man, and there is no life-insurance whereby it could be kept at a distance, according to will. It is easy to understand, that even the gray-beard, who, already, has a long series of years behind him, nevertheless, desires to live to see this and that, ere he lays his head down to everlasting rest. But what asks death after this and that. If the hand on the clock of life shows the hour appointed for the individual, then comes death, and in the name of the eternal judge, summons him to go with him to the grand judgment-bar, where every one must give account of all that he has done or left undone. This it is, for which each one must be prepared, but only he who has his account in good order, will be prepared for it; on the contrary, he who has an evil conscience, is terrified at the knock of death, as the unfaithful steward is hor-

rified, when he hears a knock, and upon opening, finds standing there an officer of the law, who hands him a summons.

Yes, it is a serious thing, this preparedness for death. And too many are the circumstances calculated to convince man, that he should hold himself in readiness. There is the man in the fullness of his strength, at the height of his usefulness, in the finest development of his life's mission, in his engrossment with earth he forgets, that his term of service is not guaranteed to him for a single day. Many a minister obtains his dismissal in the midst of the realization of his plans laid off with such enthusiasm; you less conspicuous servants of your heavenly King may, no less, be dismissed from your service at any moment; one thing only you will never be excused from, namely, the giving an account of your service.— There is the youth, his bosom inflated by lofty hopes, his heart full of glorious ideals, his eye flashing from heroic impulses,— yes, you with your self-elected part in hand, to act in life's drama, you are by no means sure that you will ever come to the performance: one thing only is settled for you in your brief span of life, you will have to render up your account to the Judge beyond the grave. And you child, you boy, you girl, I have to say to you, too, be ready to offer your hand to the accredited messenger, that he may take you with him to the grand

assizes. One does not like to speak with you young people, with your rosy cheeks and eyes full of the pleasure and joy of life, of the hideous spectre of death,—ah—but I must advise to keep your little life-account well balanced, and ever ready: death reaps almost a richer harvest from the children's circle than from that of the mature. These are sad words, pathetic words, are they not, dear congregation. And yet how can I spare you them to-day, this Memorial Sunday, which is meant to direct our thoughts fully and entirely upon death and its dark shadows.

I know that there are many, who would like it to the best in the world, never to hear the word death spoken; weakly natures, who become excited if even the name be called in the course of conversation; if any circumstance in life, looks as if it were a warning of death. Oh! this fear of death, that laments over any little sickness, lest it might be the beginning of death; it is terrified at any unusual accident, dreading it as the forerunner of death. Why, there are actually people who purposely omit, what conscientious householders do betimes, in view of the constant liability of departure, namely, putting their house in order. They will, on no account be persuaded to make their will, or send for the minister to administer the communion to them, because, in their eyes a preparation for death seems to

precipitate its certainty. O! that shyness of death on the part of persons not otherwise irreligious; it is fundamentally distinguishable in nothing from that infidel way of meeting death, purposely putting one's self into a state of stupefaction, in its presence, esteeming it most enviable, to be called away suddenly, in an unconscious state. It is not mere cowardice, as in the case of a dizzy man, desiring to be led blindfold over the bridge crossing the valley of death; it is sinful blindness, which does not realize, that among all the steps taken in our earthly pilgrimage, the last is the most significant, the one upon which a whole eternity depends. And would you wish to take this unconsciously, without the possibility, of perhaps doing more in that last minute, which might shape this eternity for you more favorably! No, no, it is not worthy of the man, who knows that his goal is not upon earth but in the beyond: Moreover, for a child of God, hastening to his father's arms, it is disgraceful, bringing ruin.—

The dread of death is only overcome by readiness for death. And who is ready? Only he whose conscience bears him witness, that he need not fear to render up his account. A proverb says, that a good conscience is a soft pillow for one's couch, yes one upon which one may drop sweetly asleep for the everlasting rest. But he only has a good conscience, whose single

guiding thought through the whole of his life was: “Thy Will, O God, be done.” The modellers are in heaven. The Lord himself indicated this to us, when he continued “as in heaven so also upon earth.” Heavenly spirits have no other thought than the will of God, no other business than to execute his will, no other bliss, than to rejoice over his glorious will. So must it be with us too. Then, in general, shall we have attained to the height, where it will be possible for us, not as the expression of submission to an inevitable requirement, but as a devout prayer, proceeding from the inmost recesses of our own hearts: “Thy will be done.”

But is there not something singular in thus praying “thy will be done.” Luther himself says: “God’s good and gracious will is done indeed of itself without our prayer.” Why therefore should we thus pray? Luther goes on: “*but we pray in this petition that it may be done also among us.*” This prayer then, becomes a vow and that constitutes its peculiar significance for us. We vow to God, that, henceforth we will be guided by only one will, namely, His will. The petition still stands. We only feel too strongly, how hard it is to do his will fully and purely; we feel that a battle is to be fought. Luther, too, speaks of the will of the world, the flesh, and the devil; we feel that we cannot overcome these evil powers by our own might. For that

very reason then, we implore, that God helps us, and trust again, according to Luther's explanation, that "when God breaks all wicked counsels and wills," we shall succeed, in having His will prevail everywhere. This we cannot do in our own strength. Yes, of ourselves, often, we do not even recognize the foe who wants to put his evil counsel and wicked will in the place of the divine. Therefore Luther has given us, in his explanation a sign whereby we can, at once, recognize him: evil is that counsel or that will, which puts itself in opposition to the two first petitions of the Lord's prayer, or, as he says in the explanation: he who does not hallow the name of God, and will not let His kingdom come. That is the sign to judge by— and the way.—How does God help? Luther tells that, too: He strengthens and keeps us steadfast in his word and faith. The word is our sword, the faith is our shield. With the word of God, did Christ, when he was tempted, put the tempter to flight. "It is written," his repulse began thus every time. A word of God, clearly fitting our case, often helps us victoriously over our temptation. St. Paul calls faith, a shield against which all the arrows of the wicked one shall be hurled in vain; with us, too, it is the armor against which shall raise harmlessly all the darts of temptation, ere they shall have been able really to wound us. Protected by this armor we may confidently look forward to accomplish-

ing happily our journey through life: Whether, then, bodily sickness, painful corporeal sufferings conduce to its end, we fear them not either. If the tabernacle of the body crumble away, the released soul spreads her wings and soars gladly heavenward. With a “Thy will be done!” she follows the Father’s call and enters the world beyond. O how glorious, if the last sound on the lips be only a dying away of the third petition, because the back being already turned upon earth it is no longer necessary to go on saying “give us this day our daily bread.” In heaven only the three first petitions are prayed, the four last are merely for mortals.

Beloved, herewith we are already in the second part of our contemplation. The petition, thy will be done, means, in the first place, let it be done by us, but it also means, in the second place, let it be done to us. Heretofore it marked the aim of all our struggling, now it is the expression of resignation. And to-day, on the Sunday sacred to the dead, this resignation bears a special significance. We think first of all of that resignation which the Christian is to show whenever and wherever he comes face to face with death. “Thy will be done to us.” In this sense we must say, in general, of the petition, that it is not exactly necessary to put up this petition, for here, too, Luther’s explanation is in place, viz: “God’s will is done indeed without our prayer.”

We do not presume to fancy or desire that anything in His wise counsels could be altered by our request. But that which is striven for, is again just this, that we recognize therein God's will, and acknowledge the recognized will as "a good and gracious will." Note well: "Good and gracious" will—for, one can, I hope, discern God's will in that which befalls him, and recognize it as inevitable and unalterable, but one does it like the slave, who feels his chain like the weak man, who, with gnashing of teeth submits to be overpowered by superior brute force. Here more is demanded. And however it grieves you, you are to acknowledge God's good will in it, and however bitter may be the taste, you are still to accept it as of grace. That, to-be-sure, is not easy to the natural man, as well if the thing in question is a trying loss of earthly estate or endurance of hardly bearable bodily pain, as if the matter were some deeply incisive distress of mind and the bitter loss of love through the death of persons dearly beloved. Therefore has Christ not merely prayed before us this petition, "thy will be done," but lived this precept before our eye, that we might find power in following his example. In the Garden of Gethsemane lay a burden upon his soul such as no other man had ever borne, before him impended a woe such as no other man has ever felt since, a death more cruel than ever villainy had devised—drops of sweat fell from his brow like

drops of blood upon the ground, and yet he prayed: "Not my will but thine be done." If among us cases can be hardly thought of, where we might even approximately be in a similar situation, so much the more emphatically comes the demand upon us: to be like him in this unconditional submission to God's will.

With us men, there is something else, which, if it does not render easy, yet gives good reason for submission in the most distressing conditions of life. Christ suffered being innocent, but what man could say of himself, that the suffering which he had encountered in life had been unmerited. If it did not happen through his own fault, yet it was deserved on account of other sins. And our sins are to blame in far more cases than we suppose. The most of which we complain in life, will, upon closer study, be recognized, as a necessary result of sin in general; and our own sin in particular. In the first place, all misery came into the world through sin; among perfect creatures there would be no wretchedness. And our own sinfulness continually gives occasion for new sorrow, above all that which affects us personally.

But do not lament on that account; no, rather recognize in this God's good and gracious will. That sin does not leave behind sweet fruit, but bitter consequences, is in itself a proof of his mercy; it is appointed

us of his love, for the discipline of our souls; for it is simply inexpressible, how low we would sink, if sin had permanently pleasant fruit. No, thank your God, that he has allotted us suffering for our chastisement; only “whom he loveth, he chasteneth;” he who is no longer loved is allowed to go on to his destruction. God *would* not have you go on to your ruin, therefore he has sent you suffering, which is His “good and gracious will.” Say on that account: “Thy will be done.”—In that case, too, where it cannot be said, that we are to blame for what we mourn over, a proper understanding leads to resignation. If there be actually nothing to punish, yet there is certainly enough in you to purify. Gold is purified in the fire, the heart is cleansed in the furnace of affliction. If you have to bear so many crosses in life, just so many proofs are they of divine love, that they may make out of you something yet more perfect. Crosses have a shape like the guide-post; the cross that comes to you in life, consider as such an one, with a legible inscription from on high, that will show you the right way to the heavenly Jerusalem. Therefore, in this case, too, say, “Yes, I will suffer, thy will be done.”

Resignation is a plant, that has its roots and strength in eternity, but they bloom, you see, only in the earthly valley of woes. It is the rose beneath the cross, deep crimson, when the heart bleeds for pain,

ashen gray, when the heart mourns in dismal melancholy, but ever full of the perfume of faith, ever the symbol of trust in divine love even in the deep grief. Every Christian should have it in store. And that I say, too, in reference to the mourning, that moves us to-day in particular. Our thoughts are with our beloved dead. You and we understand not, why God has taken from us precisely the dearest. Why did He take thee, the only joy of life, thee, the only prop of life; thee, the very center of family happiness; thee, the family adviser; thee, the family's support? So many widows, so many orphans, so many desolate ones among us, so many, too, asking with tears: "Why has God so dealt with us?"

And although I could give no solution of what the divine purposes might be, I would instill into you the desire to recognize in this his good and gracious will and to say resignedly: "thy will be done." For this nothing further, is required than unconditional confidence in God's fatherly heart, that he will not send to his child, what would not be good for him. Because God sends it, it must be good. That is the Christian's consolation. If I understand aright the Christian signs of mourning, the black of the mourning garb does not denote the dismal color of disconsolate grief, but the deep-toned color of firmly grounded resignation. Its

foundation is again typified by the cross, which we plant upon graves. Christ is our life. He has taken from death his power, has broken his staff, and put, in its stead, the hope of everlasting life, and the certainty of, some day, meeting them again. In this hope, we gain the victory over self, in so far as to place wreaths of flowers and growing plants upon the grave of our best beloved, that place of horror, which changes their precious form into dust and ashes. Those flowers are the earthly sisters of the blossom of faith, which changes death into life, and mourning into blessed hope. "I am the resurrection and the life, he who believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." This word of the bishop of our souls banishes all dread of death, and fills with wondrous thoughts of comfortable hope.

And as though he had wanted to provide beforehand, that no case of death should seem so mournful to us, that the Christian's hope were not stronger than the mourning, he has shown us by three examples, that he is the conqueror of death. First he leads us away to the grave of Lazarus, wherein lies a beloved brother, a precious friend.

At the word of Jesus, he comes back to stand among the living. He who has a dead brother or a true friend, knows that although the dark grave may have swallowed him up, yet faith will open its jaws, and let him

come forth again as one to whom the Lord hath given life and immortality. Then he leads us to the death-bed of the daughter of Jairus. He who sees a dear child, a blooming young girl or a promising son lie upon the bier of death,—faith has awakening power, the Master says: “the little maid is not dead, but sleepeth.”

Again we follow him out into the street, and behold the grief of a disconsolate widow, who walks behind the bier of the young man of Nain.

Ye mothers who are likewise widows, and must see your only son borne out for burial in the cold ground, yes, you others, too, with whom, to the pangs of love is added the yet bitterest lot of desolation, and oppressive anxiety for a bare existence;—but nevertheless, the words that the Master spoke to the widow of Nain have momentous power for the faithful, even to-day.

To the widow, he said: “Weep not.” The truthful lips of our Lord could not have thus spoken, had he not had power to wipe away tears. Learn to know him in his resurrection power. He brought that young man to life again: to you, too, he will at the same time stir up helpers, so that your material wants may also be supplied. How? In what way? That indeed I cannot tell you beforehand. But one thing I know, that neither did the widow of Nain know, how she should be helped,

while the Lord was already on the way, coming to her assistance. Therefore you may trust that, too, to his love and almighty power; he will find ways and means, to bring you succor. He always has a way, and never lacks for means. Say, then, with devout resignation: “My hope is in God. God, my Saviour, help thy poor servant, stand by me until death. My hope is in God.” And hereafter when you use the Lord’s prayer, and come to the third petition, methinks, it will have a new sound in your mouth; now it no longer sounds like a sigh, but like a really earnest entreaty: “Thy will be done.” And this is the highest that we can attain to. Resignation must turn into prayer, and the Sunday sacred to the dead, into a day of rejoicing over the blessed dead. Yes, God be praised, the power is given us, even in face of death to pray: “Thy will be done.” Amen!

THE FOURTH PETITION

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

Beloved in the Lord: In the consideration of Our Lord's Prayer, we have come to-day to the fourth petition: "*Give us this day our daily bread.*" At the outset we are met here by a change in the terms of address. Hitherto we had always used the little word "thy"; "Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done;" now and in the petitions following the little word "our" is found "give us this day our daily bread." Now this corresponds to the progression of the prayer, which is entirely conformable to nature. Prayer is the uplifting of the soul to God; although in the first instance, it comes chiefly on account of its own affairs, yet these thoughts are silenced as soon as ushered into the presence of the Most High, and there must first be expressed what the soul feels, when standing before His glorious majesty. The three first petitions express this, and now for the first time the soul ventures forth with her own affairs. The substance of the petitions takes a like course. First three requests

for heavenly blessings; for only so does it correspond to the Christian law, which enjoins: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." Afterwards a request for earthly good. The last word of the foregoing third petition had itself glanced that way. "Thy will be done on earth at it is done in heaven," we had prayed, and the thoughts which had been fixed upon heaven, had, with these words, traveled back, as it were. It reminds us, that we spring from earth, and on earth, in the first place, have our home, and in order to perfect this conformably to its destination, need the means of earthly existence. Hence arises the request for the granting of daily substance. It does not push itself forward, precedence is allowed to the three petitions for heavenly blessings, but it is urged, because man, too, cannot pursue his heavenward course unhindered, if the soul is completely absorbed in anxieties about daily necessities. Thus viewed, the fourth petition finds justification within itself, and it would be a mistaken feeling, should the Christian suppose himself, to be, in some sort, called upon to crave forgiveness on account of this petition. No, nevermore will it be prohibited to God's children upon earth, to pray for earthly blessings; the right or wrong only depends upon how one asks for them, and in what spirit they are desired. And that will be our main task in our study for to-day, to tell in what spirit we are to make the fourth petition.

These petitions have been classified and special names given to them. The first petition has been called the holy, the second the blessed, and the third the hard one, but the fourth the easy one. Yes, it does seem as if it is the easiest of all. For experience teaches that it requires but a little want to teach one its use. "Want teaches prayer," says the proverb, and what man learns immediately how to pray for in distress, usually corresponds exactly with the fourth petition. Yes, though one were wholly unpractised in the art of prayer, up to the petition: Give us this day our daily bread, it comes easy to him; but whether he rightly makes this prayer, that is the question?

Methinks, however quickly it rises to the lips and however easily it issues from the mouth, it *is* hard to pray it aright, in such a manner as to be well-pleasing to God. Perhaps you will bear with me, if I once more remind you of what place this request for earthly good holds in Our Lord's Prayer. First, it comes in the fourth place, therefore it has no right to be spoken if the three first have not gone before; three times must you have prayed for spiritual blessings, ere it should occur to you to plead for earthly good things. Moreover, it is in the middle of the seven petitions, and is again followed by three petitions for heavenly gifts: hence, because it is neither at the beginning nor at the

end, the desire for bread should neither be your first nor your last thought. The petitions being seven in number have their counterpart in the days of the week, being seven. The week has six working days and one Sunday, the Lord's Prayer has six Sunday petitions and one everyday prayer. This seems to involve a difference of aspect; but the thought lying at the root of both arrangements is the same. There a Sunday, but it stands at the head, to express thereby, that Sunday is to permeate the whole week with its spirit. Here a working-day prayer, but encased behind and before by Sunday petitions, whereby to express that all our toil for the sake of satisfying earthly needs is to be secondary to striving after heavenly things. In this sense, therefore, must the fourth petition also be prayed, if it is to be properly offered up.

There are seven words: "Give us this day our daily bread." I know no better way of dividing the explanation in to heads, than by considering each of these words in its special relation to the petition.

In the first place the little word Bread. It evidently forms the kernel of the prayer and was purposely selected by our Lord in his model prayer, instead of the more general expression "earthly good." It directly points at a limitation of the idea "earthly good;" inasmuch as it only names the most indispensable good,

therefore the petition, too, gives the sense that it does not extend to aught but what is most indispensable to life. Bread is the most absolutely necessary good; just as needful to the rich as to the poor. As such it is held in high honor in the Scriptures also. Christ has honored it most since He has styled Himself the Bread of life. Yes, it has been supposed, that in our Lord's Prayer too, reference is only made to this spiritual bread, because it is unworthy of the Christian, to ask for anything else, than for the daily bread of the soul, to the end that He nourish us with His heavenly bread, His word and his sacraments. It is certain, indeed, that this, too, is included, and I can devise no more beautiful explanation of the fourth petition, than that which Savonarola gives, when he says: "give us O Lord daily bread for the sustenance of the body, and give us the bread of the word for the nourishment of our soul." The Christian should know that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. But herewith both foods are only put in correct relations with one another and the subordinate is not excluded through the higher but indicated as likewise something indispensable to man, and therefore as a fit subject for prayer. Luther, too, had a right, then, in his explanation of the catechism, to accentuate before all this significance of bread as the good necessary for bodily life. He answers the ques-

tion: "What, then, is daily bread?" All that pertains to the wants and support of the body. And then he proceeds to reckon up twenty-two names and "and the like" in addition. In the first place there were: "Food and Drink, clothes and shoes, house and garden." Thus two different things pertained to nourishment, two to clothing, and two to shelter. Such are the most indispensable things; food, clothing, shelter, without these a man cannot live. But man needs, furthermore, the means for acquiring and keeping these very needful things. Accordingly Luther adds: "Land and cattle, money and estates," things whereby one can win a self-support. But this, too, is not wholly satisfying.

If life is to flow on undisturbed so that man's time for preparation for heaven may be undiminished in every respect, then there appertains to it also all that which makes the possession and enjoyment of earthly blessings conducive to a calm, unclouded mind. Luther reckons as chief in that regard: "pious man and wife, pious children, pious domestics;" only a godly household contains the conditions favorable to a blessed life; and an expositor of the catechism adds, where are pious husband, pious children and pious servants, there is the family a preparatory school for Heaven, where the contrary exists, there is a preparatory school for hell. Pious and conscientious rulers make good gov-

ernment, continues Luther. Every man stands in the relation of a subject; the welfare of subjects lies essentially in the hands of the government, and only where a good, just government exists are the citizens content. Yet more is demanded: "good weather," so that the fields may bear fruits; "peace," for peace causes a land to thrive, while war consumes; "health," for of what avail is wealth, if sickness makes any enjoyment of it impossible; "good standing, honor," without the esteem of my fellow-men there is not a glad hour; "good friends, trusty neighbors," envy and malice poison all happiness, cordial sympathy and friends to share our joy enhances happiness unspeakably. Luther accounts all this as daily bread, because without the same, there is no unclouded, contented existence. Yet more belongs to it under circumstances, which Luther would indicate with "*and the like.*" But it is of special importance that one thing be reckoned as "our bread." We come with our explanation to this second little word "our."

People use that expression in very different senses. *Our* bread might mean the bread belonging to us, on which we have a claim. Thus came the prodigal son to his father, in the parable, and desired: Give me the portion of goods, that belongs to me. Now, in general, man has not a claim to anything at the hands of the

Almighty, and no creature is so presumptuous as to present himself before God with the demand to have what is due him. Our bread rather means, in the first place, bread in contradistinction to the property of strangers. We need not mean by theft, but any deceitful gesture, usury, taking advantage of another in trade and intercourse leads to a possession, that we cannot call, in any respect, "our bread." Would to God that all might take it conscientiously to heart. In these times, when many a merchant gives his wares out to be what they are not, when the adulteration of food is the order of the day, when the shopkeeper, be it man or woman, rejoices over having deceived somebody into the purchase of worthless goods, in these days, it is needful to remind of this meaning to the expression "our bread," so that every time a man repeats the Lord's prayer, his conscience may be touched by the reproach lying in that "our." So that gradually, again may be honored the language of the prayer used by our forefathers, who prayed: "Wilt thou give me something of wealth, and the good things of this life, then grant, too, that there be nothing of ill gotten-gain found in my portion."

Our bread, means furthermore the bread which has become ours in the regular way of God's appointment. God wills that we procure our's through work, and in

this sense each one eats his own bread. "If one will not work, neither let him eat," says Holy Writ, and the apostle exhorts the people, that they labor in all quietness and eat their own bread.

There has been and yet is, in the Christian Church a gross misunderstanding in respect to work. The so-called mendicant orders in the Catholic church scorn to support themselves through their own toil, while they declare that the service of God and prayer for things exclusively Christian, is worthy work. The apostle already says of such as these, who would not work for this reason, "they are indiscreet," and we must assuredly accuse them of a complete misconception of the purpose of human existence. "Pray and work" is the Christian's motto, but never one without the other. Much more should each one be conscious, that, while he prays "give us this day our daily bread," he gives utterance to a vow at the same time, the vow, that he will labor faithfully and honestly, that his daily bread be given him of God. Without this promise, without the most conscientious exertion of his own powers prayer for daily bread is a mockery of God's fatherly goodness. And this extends, too, to the case, where a rich man uses the fourth petition. Yes, for does he, in general need to make this petition? Does he not already possess more than is needful for daily necessi-

ties? An old sage has already given to the rich the only accurate prescription for life, "to possess as though they possessed not." Its application is doubly justified, inasmuch as primarily his possessions are not secured to him and by no earthly means can be secured to him. It has been said, that all the different insurance enterprises, which the modern world has founded are just so many assaults upon our Lord's prayer, being calculated to make the fourth petition superfluous. This, again, is a misconception of the task, devolving upon man in regard to his possessions: namely, that he make use of all allowable means for keeping his property. The fourth petition is not thereby superfluous. O, Almighty God sees to it that trees do not grow in the sky. When a good many years ago Chicago was destroyed by fire, the loss was such an extensive one, that almost all the insurance companies in America declared themselves insolvent, and thousands of wealthy people were plunged into the depths of poverty. After that can they have deemed the fourth petition a superfluous one? It seems to me it would require only a little mother-wit on the part of the millionaire, to say to himself, that if God does not again give him day by day his wealth, that is to say protect it, it may be blown away, like the dust of the streets; he therefore, also has need to pray every day: "Give us this day our daily bread." And that leads us to the other meaning of the

precept, that we possess as though we possessed not. We are not in any full sense, the owners of our earthly property, but only stewards of it, having to render account of it to God. The richest lord of a manor has only the station of a steward under God the real master, and the richest merchant has only the office of procurist acting for God. That is to say, each rich man has to admit, in the first place, that the fruits of his wealth belong to God and are to be expended for works well-pleasing to God; in the next place, that his treasures are only to be considered as stock in trade, the disposition of which is entrusted to him of God, not merely for winning a support for himself, but also for the aid of all those, who work in the service of the common master; for the support of the needy, for the sustenance of widows and orphans, for promoting the welfare of all their fellow-men. The task of the rich lies in the faithfulness with which he has discharged his duty as steward of his property, and in the charitable institutions upon which he has spent it. He who dispenses it only for the greater comfort of life, for richer and more select enjoyment, for luxurious display and the tickling of his own vanity, I should think it would be hard for him to bring out the fourth petition, when he repeats—as we hope he does—his *pater-noster*. For that “our” must remind him, that he withholds from others what is their due. Or why should he

repeat that fourth petition, any way? When the Lord presented his disciples with a model prayer, he said nothing of that: "for the poor are to be seven petitions, the rich need to pray only six."

At the same time I should not like to leave unmentioned, what is also contained in the "our daily bread," and if it is overlooked might give license to certain socialistic views. In the our bread lies, without doubt, a hint, not merely of the moderation but also the sufficiency of the possession, and nobody, in making this petition for daily bread is to think of more than he needs to live. The discontent shown in so many circles, comes mostly not from lack of food, but from covetousness. Thus, if every one only prayed "Give us this day our daily bread," and not, at the same time, cast covetous glances at the bread which others have, a universal settlement of that social question would soon be arrived at. And then, is the happiness of the rich actually always so enviable? Is it not often enough mere illusion? Contentment is the greater art, to be content great bliss, to remain content the masterpiece.

The contented person therefore adds to the petition *our bread* yet another little word and says Give us *this day* our daily bread. I know of no place in the Holy Scriptures, where a pious man asked for a life of ease and wealth, but I know well one proverb from the

mouth of the wise Solomon: (Proverbs 30.8, 9), which runs thus: "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain."

Solomon well knew the temptations which attend upon being rich as well as being poor. That which alone meets his wishes, is, to see such a life made possible, as best accomplishes the surrender of itself, as the time of preparation for the heavenly world beyond. And that is a life free from care, namely a life that does not hinder us through the cares of this world, from devoting ourselves wholly to concern for the life beyond. Being provided for day by day precludes this, and it is enough that each day have its own ills. Not as if this excludes foresight, so that we may have our bread each following day; on the contrary, all our work, is, in the main, provision for future days, and we blame him, who lives from hand to mouth, and consumes the day's wages, without inquiring whether he shall also have the wherewithal to supply to-morrow's necessities. Therefore, when we pray, "give us to-day our daily bread" provision for the coming day is not excluded, but anxious care for the future is forbidden. In the little word "daily," is expressed confidence in God, that he will not forget his creatures a single day.

A mother prepares food for her children every day. And the child comes to its mother and asks only for the food that it needs in the present, because it knows that it may come again just the same. What would we say of the child, that in the outset would have its bread and butter for to-morrow and the day after to-morrow! And we should not like to hear, either, of a child of God, that he asked for more than for to-day.

Therefore this little word to-day is expressly added, in the petition, signifying thereby, that with each new morning God's fatherly goodness is again new. Perhaps you have some day thought, that the "daily" and the "to-day" in the fourth petition are synonymous and hence one of them superfluous; but no, the "to-day" adds to the "daily," the thought that, each coming day will hereafter become to us "to-day," and make known its own needs. Thus the admonition is that we are to repeat our holy Lord's prayer every day. God gives us our daily bread, indeed, without our prayer, says Luther in his explanation, even to wicked men, but we ask in this prayer, that he lead us to acknowledge it and receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What are we to recognize? The fifth little word tells that, viz: "give." "Give us" thus pray we in the consciousness, that we have no claims to it, "give us," thus pray we also in the consciousness, that we cannot

give it to ourselves. Work is indeed our own affair, but who gives us our strength for work, and who grants the blessing upon our labors? And if we have accomplished something, who gives the health and cheerfulness? Thou alone, all-gracious Father, it is therefore to thee are due our daily thank-offerings.

God's goodness is every morning new, dear Christian; is it also thy morning prayer?

Each noon God sets his children's table: do they also reverently say grace? Every evening God sends his blessing upon the labor of the day. See that you forget not your evening thanks. And one thing more: in all this think not merely of yourself, but also of your brothers and sisters. Note well, too, the last word of the fourth petition, that we have not yet considered, but which belongs to it integrally, the little word "give us this day our daily bread." This excludes all self-seeking, and includes in the intercession all those who have like necessities with ourselves. What good child would say to his mother, give me my bread, and not think to include his brothers and sisters in the request? So it is likewise unworthy of a child of God, to think only of himself in his petitions and not also of his brethren. Now it is also possible, that the Heavenly Father gives to a child like that, what is meant for the others, and then there is comprehended in the words: "give us this

day our daily bread” the pledging of one’s self to share what we have with our fellows, in short to benevolence. This part of the Lord’s prayer concerns the rich chiefly; God has given to them more than they need, the remainder is just for distribution. And yet it fundamentally concerns every child of man; for the Heavenly Father always gives to his other children, too, more than they need, so much that they have some to spare. Say not, mine extends not so far; except me. I have hardly enough, wherewith to still the pangs of hunger. You are thinking merely of material bread, but not of this, that man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. If you have no food for the body to offer, you yourself must be to blame for it, if you have no spiritual food to bestow. And again, think you, perhaps, that too high a thing is required of you, when to your spirit it has been given only in modest measure, then know: one thing, you can bestow, under all circumstances just this that you include the wants of others with your own, whenever you repeat the prayer of our Lord. Intercession is also a sort of benevolence. The poor have hardly any other kind than this; but they exercise benevolence therewith, perhaps in a much more perfect manner than ever a rich man. Pious superstition of the olden time, accordingly, attached a particular value to the intercessory prayers of the poor, and many a

rich person let his alms slip into the hand of the poor with the challenge: to pray a *pater-noster* for him. O ye poor, if you know how to pray aright the fourth petition, then, indeed, are you rich also; and ye rich, not until you know how to put up this petition in proper spirit, are you really rich. Amen!



THE FIFTH PETITION

AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE
OUR DEBTORS.

Beloved in the Lord: My last sermon had for its theme the fourth petition: "Give us this day our daily bread." There follows the fifth petition, "and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." Upon the "give" follows immediately the "forgive." This may once more remind us of how dangerous a petition the fourth one is; how hard to pray it without sin. We would ask for daily bread alone, because it does not become the Christian, to think of more and set his heart upon worldly goods; and yet it is to be feared that the heart's wish did not pause at daily necessities, but has admitted thoughts, that craved many a thing more. We should want only what we needed to accomplish this earthly pilgrimage, so that anxiety about the earthly should not hinder us from devoting ourselves wholly to the heavenly, and yet perhaps a selfish care for the coming day has intruded itself, and the lack of trust in God's fatherly goodness damaged the spirituality of our mood. Ah, the flesh is so greedy, that if the heart

goes to pray, its desires are forcibly thrust in and the prayer already impaired by sin. And the heart feels this; has already known long since, that precisely its holiest moments are the ones most beset by temptations, and that when the brain is busy with holy thoughts, the foul birds of temptation whir most numerous around the head; therefore in the man's anguish, in his solicitude lest he commit sin, while endeavoring to pray, the request rises to his lips: "and forgive us our debts." Yes, this "and" which stands at the head of no other petition, but links together the fourth and fifth, obtains thereby a weighty significance. Both petitions are as closely bound together as body and soul, and, in this sense, form a single prayer-thought: Give, Oh Lord, daily bread for the body, and the forgiveness of sin for the soul. The "and" necessitates the continuance of the petition; it would say to us, stop not at the fourth clause, it might bring you only half help for the half of your existence, add the fifth petition for the much more important help needed for the other half, needed for the life of your soul. Now how runs the fifth petition?

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

Its component parts are three, which we shall consider, one after the other.

1. *In a look at our guilt.*
2. *In a look at God's grace.*
3. *And in a look at the condition, under which alone God can forgive us.*

Our great German poet has said: "The greatest evil is debt." He who agrees with him will comprehend the deep sigh of the fifth petition.—To the fifth petition belongs, in the first place, a heart full of penitence, but in that case, too, a heart full of faith and love. Repentance has a double face; one turns to the past, where it beholds sin, the other turns to the future and beholds its consequences. Sin as a sinful deed is going by, but debt remains behind as the condition of the wounded conscience. The sense of guilt is the realization of all the consequences, which the disregard of God's will draws after it, namely, God's wrath, with temporal and eternal punishment. Out of this sense of guilt is born the fifth petition. Under the Lord's prayer it is aroused to new and stronger bitterness. "Hallowed be thy name" we had spoken, and the echo answered from within: Ah! how often have you desecrated it; "let thy kingdom come," we had gone on, and the echo spoke from within: how can you expect that it should enter thy sinful abode; "Thy will be done," we had stammered furthermore, and the echo within responded:

how little dependence there is upon your vow, you who have so often transgressed His will; and then to be presumptuous enough, to proffer the request to be fed with daily bread by the Father who had been so deeply insulted and aggrieved by our action, while the echo in the heart repeats, what Luther, too, says, in his explanation: “Ah! we deserve nothing, nothing whatever!” What wonder, if the heart now bursts out with the plea: “forgive us our debt.”

Yet these premises are actually to be made by every one, who comes to the fifth petition. It is not conceivable, that any one can repeat our Lord’s prayer, free from any sense of guilt, any more than that the fifth petition be omitted by him. On the contrary, beloved, this already says, that the Lord gave out his model prayer—the fifth petition included—for all, without distinction of persons. We saw in the fourth petition, how the Lord gave no separate model prayer for the rich and the poor, the rich, too, being obliged to pray for daily bread. This is true also of the fifth petition; the Lord has given no separate prayer for the pious and for sinners; nowhere has He said, the pious may leave out the fifth petition, but sinners are to use it. No, “Our Father who art in Heaven” is presented to all without distinction, and thereby is it proven, that we all have occasion to plead for the forgiveness of our

sins. Luther, in his explanation, gives the reason with clear words: "For we sin much every day and deserve nothing but punishment." This is indeed a doctrine that every one will not accept. At all times there have been such persons, to whom the doctrine of the universal sinfulness of mankind was something repulsive or esteemed a folly. To the proud man it comes very hard, to acknowledge: "I am a sinner;" the self-righteous, of course, would much rather say: "Lord I thank thee, that I am not like other men, nor even as this publican." Besides, if, on taking a full survey of himself one must say: there is nothing that I could call good, not even one thing: all my deeds spring from evil seeds (Psalm 51:7) and all my thoughts are conceived in sin. Verily this is a repulsive doctrine. And yet I must forever repeat that, inasmuch as the Lord gave out the fifth petition to all, he took the truth of this doctrine for his premise. And thus it is, whether we will or no, yet we must still plead guilty to the accusation, which God expressed to Noah (Gen. 8:21), "the thoughts of man's heart are evil from his youth up." Fear not while you make this confession, that you will find yourself in very bad company. All holy men of the old as well as the new covenant have recognized the truth of this proposition. Yes, the more perfect they seem to be to us, the more fully we hear from them the conviction expressed, that sin has penetrated

to all mankind. The psalmist laments (Psalm 14:3) there is none that doeth good, no not one; Eliphaz says to Job: "Lo! among His saints there is none without spot" (Job 15:15), and the prophetic books again sound notes of lament over the universal sinfulness. And the New Testament offers only a continuation of the same. John who was nearest to the heart of the Saviour says: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." James to whom was given the surname of the just, says (James 3:2).

And Paul, that hero of the faith, is not ashamed to designate himself as the chief of sinners. And to this host of witnesses would you advance and assert boldly: "I have no sin." O! the truth would not be in you! From a thousand fissures of your heart I hear opposing voices; it seems to me as though all the doors of the long rows of cells in your heart opened and there poured out: sinful thoughts, sinful words, sinful deeds, sinful devices and aspirations, all testifying to your sinfulness; the conscience is your accuser; God will be the judge; in expectation of that inevitable sentence you sit before the bar in timid apprehension; this timid anxiety is what we call consciousness of guilt.

And "forgive us our debts" is a petition spoken for everyone, all have inasmuch as each one has his own

debt. Perhaps this measure is already large enough, but know, that I must heap it up, while I call your attention to this, namely, that in the term "our debts" lies another avowal. You confess herewith, that another's debt is your debt also, and that you also have a share in their indebtedness. Do not be startled at my venturing to say this out plainly, but if one looks deeper into the web of sin, which is spread out over humanity or a very large community, then one perceives how all the sins of men are intermingled, how not one stands for itself alone, but is the daughter of another sin, and again the mother of many other sins. Yes, sin is a mother, to whom children are born in countless numbers, such as she knows not herself, and which nevertheless call her mother.

It is the curse of the evil deed, that, continuing to breed, it must produce evil: and thus many a sin seems to have nothing to do with you at all, and yet in it flows blood of your blood. Perhaps, too, certain sins may occur to you, for which you are partly responsible; let this serve to convince you that our debt stands never alone, but like a limb is joined to the general debt; and turned around, so that in that, which appears like the sin of a whole generation, a certain time, a great community, of which you also are a member, quite certainly there has been given by you a contribution to the

whole phenomenon. be it through sins of commission or omission, be it through support of the bad, or failure to do what you might have done for the prevention of the wrong. Ah! we are much too overhasty in the condemnation of a stranger's guilt, considering not, that while we condemn it. we, at the same time, condemn the part we may have had in such misdoing. At all events, under all circumstances, we have cause to pray: "Forgive us our trespasses."

Once more in another sense. The term "our debts" contains the acknowledgement that we actually admit ourselves to be partners in guilt. Man excuses himself so gladly, and tries to lay the blame on some one else or on the circumstances. Thus, after the first sin Adam sought to lay the blame upon the woman, but Eve upon the serpent. And so, as soon as an accusation is heard, every one has at hand an excuse, or a palliation of his fault. But the fifth petition, if prayed aright, excludes any such excuse through the expression "our trespasses," and confesses that we fully and unequivocally consider ourselves sinners.

Only thus, too, will it be possible to take the second step, and obtain of God forgiveness of this debt. It is the primal basis for faith in the possibility of any forgiveness, that full acknowledgement of one's guilt be first made. God who sees into the heart, and

knows its thoughts, must consider it as a crime against his omniscience and holiness, if the bold child of man seeks to extenuate his guilt and nevertheless dares to plead with him for forgiveness. Thus it lies in the nature of the thing, that only into a fully contrite heart actually enters the sense of reconciliation with God, where, on the contrary there does not exist full repentance, there disquiet of soul much more increases, because it must say to itself, through its incompleteness it has only drawn upon itself so much the more God's holy wrath.

But now watch well your heart, that while it prays "forgive us," it is really thinking, that the question concerns only his own forgiveness. The human heart is a proud, defiant thing by nature, and ere it puts up the petition for forgiveness, it would rather take some hard task upon itself, in order to merit by it the remission of the debt. That has been the root of all the enormity of Romish indulgences. The church promises pardon, but demands a recompense in money or good works. And the faithful agree to this gladly. For it comes much easier to human nature to consent to render indemnity for an offence, so as to be able, afterwards, to claim a right to have his debt expunged from the account-book, than to renounce every claim, and with the unequivocal confession: we are altogether un-

worthy and deserve no good thing," to throw one's self down before the Holy Judge and expect all from His compassion. Catholic opponents once cast it up against Luther, that his doctrine of obtaining pardon through repentance, did not require the man to pay a penny for the easing of his conscience, the easy task of a prayer sufficing to attain his end; O, they had no appreciation of how much harder it is, to say in unreserved self-humiliation: "God be merciful to me a sinner," than to part from a few dollars, or to merit absolution of his sins through a pilgrimage. It may, indeed, be a very difficult act, to crawl on one's knees up the steps of the Catholic Mount of Calvary up to the end of the pilgrimage, the cross-crowned summit, but a much more painful pilgrimage has the heart to accomplish, if, according to evangelical faith, it goes through all the steps of genuine repentance, until with unspeakable agony, it casts itself down before the All-Holy One, and only stammers out the one word: Mercy, Mercy. That is to ask for forgiveness, that is to pray the fifth petition.

And our own sorrow is enhanced by this, that, as a while ago we bore the weight of our own sins, so we carry in our hearts sorrow for the sins of all others. We say, indeed, "forgive us our sins." If anywhere the thought of self only is excluded in a prayer, it is

here. While we feel the misery caused by our own sin, we are equally sensible of the wretchedness caused all mankind by sin; we cannot entertain the desire, to be ransomed from the guilt of our own sins, without, at the same time, longing for the same blessing to come to all our race; our petition involuntarily becomes intercessory, and can take no other form than this: "Forgive us our sins."

In this sense alone was it possible, that the spotless Saviour should join with us in the fifth petition. It seems, indeed, as if the other sixth petition corresponded to his holy personality, but the fifth beseems not his hallowed lips. But when we reflect, how he bears upon his heart the sin of all mankind, and while he condescends to be one with all his brethren, in infinite love, feeling more deeply and sensitively than any one else the burden of their sins, then we perceive, too, how he, the immaculate, could utter this petition: "Forgive us our sins." Never, either, has this petition been lifted up with such certainty of acceptance, than that time, from our Lord's lips. It is the most painful petition, and yet for the sake of the answer obtained the most blessed one. There are still no sweeter words in heaven and upon earth than: "Grace, thy sins are forgiven thee."

But beforehand mind one thing more; the blessedness of the certainty of acceptance is dependent upon

one condition, which you yourself express in the petition "as we forgive our debtors." The consciousness of unreadiness to forgive those who have maltreated us, renders impossible the consciousness that God is ready to forgive us our sins. It is a beautiful custom, that, of repairing, before confession, to those who have injured us, of offering our hand to them, in token of reconciliation. It springs from the conviction, that God cannot be inclined to forgive us our much worse offences against him, so long as we cherish bitter resentment against those who have injured us. They must be well convinced of the justice of the principle "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." And the limitation in the promise of the forgiveness of sins must be recognized as a matter of course, which the Lord expresses, while he says (Matthew 6:15): "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." What actual relations in the fundamentals of soul-life would be made thereby, if it were different, our Lord Himself has demonstrated to us in right drastic manner, in the parable of the unjust steward. Upon his urgent entreaty his lord releases him from the payment of his enormous debt, and the servant leaves him with a lightened heart; we see him crossing the courtyard with a cheerful countenance. There he meets a fellow-servant, who owes him a small sum, and he

steps up to him, throttles him and says: "Pay me what you owe me." Then the fellow-servant does as he had done a while ago before his lord, he falls down and implores him to have patience with him. But the hard-hearted fellow has him seized and cast into prison, until he should pay all that he owed.

In the narrative we read: "Then were his fellow-servants much troubled;" yes, such a case is well calculated to make heaven and earth grieve over such a perversion of the heart into unnatural cruelty; and how sternly the Lord looks upon such a case, we are told in the close of the parable: "then was the king angry, and handed him over to the tormentors, until he should pay all that he owed him." And the moral? Christ Himself adds it with these words: "Thus will my heavenly Father do to you also, if you, from your heart, forgive not each one your brother his trespasses. Note the "from your heart." Luther has also from this place transferred it to his exposition: "thus will we, truly, forgive heartily again and again."

He puts it in the form of a vow, because, if we speak out ourselves the condition of the petition, under which alone he can grant it to us, we bind God, too, to the fulfillment of this condition; and indeed to its fulfillment in a willing, cordial manner: thus will we truly—that is old German for "verily," "in truth,"—thus

will we truly forgive heartily again and again. Making sure that in our hearts not the least of the old hatred remains. This, to be sure, requires conquest of self, and often it seems to the natural heart, as if too much were expected, in putting no limits to the extent of forgiveness required of a man towards his fellow. Even a Peter asks the master: "how often must I forgive my brother, who has sinned against me, until seven times?" But the Lord answered him, "I say not unto thee until seven times, but seventy times seven." That is to say, your willingness to forgive, in general, is to have no bounds. And that these were no mere words in his mouth, but the principle of his personal action as displayed in a holy life, is borne witness to by sacred history. Yes, if you lack power to exercise this broad spirit of forgiving love, then seek it by the survey of his perfect carrying out of this principle in action.

If one sinks himself in the innocent sufferings of Jesus, and in the sea of love, that bears and suffers everything and yet forgives, he becomes capable of forgiving his fellow-creatures everything. In particular the expression of his pardoning love for sinners pervaded the last days of his life. Ah! how bitter was the experience, when he, who had eaten bread with him, betrayed him for 30 pieces of silver, and still no bitterness,

but only the expression of melancholy in the reproach, with which he received him in the garden of Gethsemane: "My friend, wherefore art thou come?" (St. Mat. 26:50). Ah! how bitter was the experience when the rock upon which he wanted to build His church, showed itself also tottering, when Peter denied him thrice in the high-priest's palace.—And still, no bitterness, but only a glance of sadness, that sufficed to touch deeply, so that Peter went out and wept bitterly. Ah! how bitter was the experience, when they, whom he wanted to ransom, nailed him to the cross, and even on the cross pursued him with their hatred, so that, when he said "I thirst," they offered him a sponge steeped in vinegar mingled with gall. But, in spite of this gall in his mouth there was still no bitterness in his speech, but the prayer of pardoning love: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Yes, in that cup of suffering as he drank it, there were no drops of bitterness. And now, you who call yourself his disciple, who have not to bear the hundredth part of what your Master had to endure, will you continue to find it so hard to cherish in your heart, a disposition to be reconciled to whomsoever may have done you an injury? O, methinks, a glance turned upon yourself, a glance at your poor sinful form must be enough to say to you: how are you to expect mercy from God, the Holy One, if you, unholy as you are will be so severe

against your brother. To your petition: "Forgive me my debt," the answer must sound like a holy mockery: "Yes, as you forgive your debtors."

Oh! believe me, you are only consulting your own interest, when you are ready to forgive your debtors. There is no granting you the grace of the fifth petition, without the fulfillment of the condition: as we forgive our debtors. Amen!



THE SIXTH PETITION

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION.

Beloved in the Lord: In the petition of which my last sermon treated, we had prayed for the pardon of our sins. Therewith he had properly come to the end of our wishes, and it might seem as though here "Our Lord's model prayer" must break off. Now, indeed, we have the highest good, and with it, all that we need; for where *there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation*. Yet nevertheless there is one petition more; yes one that is again added on with the conjunction *and* so that it makes the impression, of the heart not being able to rest at the fifth petition, but being drawn on forthwith to the following one. And it is so too. At the very moment when we became aware of our past sins having been forgiven us, we were penetrated by the feeling that we had only been half helped, for who was there to insure us against ever committing sin again, and heaping new guilt upon the old. A glance at our heart tells us, that the cast off fruits of sin have been removed, but that their sinful root has, nevertheless, been left behind, and from

it may spring up, again, at any time, new sinful inclinations. If the body is healed of a sickness, that does not mean that it can never again be sick. But it is clear, that a person who has just been cured of an illness, will cherish the liveliest wish, not to fall sick again; just so, he who has been cured of the disease of sin, will wish not to be betrayed into sin again. Therefore to the petition: "Forgive us our sins," is directly joined the plea: "lead us not into temptation," and they are linked together with an "and" because they are uttered in the same breath, and properly speaking the fifth and sixth petitions constitute a single pious ejaculation. Luther relates how that once upon a time, he had begun to say the Lord's Prayer when he went to bed and gotten as far as the fifth petition when he fell asleep and rested quietly. On awakening the next morning he instantly continued the prayer with the sixth petition.

Now assuredly, the fifth petition is the proper conclusion of each day's work, because it certainly has not remained without sin; with the consciousness of wrong doing forgiven one quietly falls to sleep; but with the opening of the eyes revives also the possibility of sinning again. This liability to sin slumbered so long only as we are asleep; are we awake, then is sin also stirring too, and ready for conflict, and will tempt us, so

that the sixth petition is altogether needful, and we continue the prayer of the evening with the words:

“And lead us not into temptation.”

Now let us examine more closely what this petition would augur.

Let us first consider:

1. *The nature of temptation.*
2. *The help besought against it, and*
3. *The victory over it.*

In what does temptation consist? We might say: in the opportunity to sin. But what do we call opportunity? Mean you the affairs, the circumstances, and the occurrences of life? Temptation to sin cannot attach to them; for the same thing the same event, that becomes temptation to one, leaves another wholly unscathed. The opportunity for embezzlement only entices the unfaithful officer, not even the thought of it arises in the man of probity. The voice of the lewd woman hardly reaches the ear of one, while it excites all the senses of another. Poverty stirs up wicked thoughts in one man's breast, while this same poverty in another only enhances his confidence in God. Many experience the same thing: some call it a severe temptation, others feel not the smallest change in their state of mind. The incitement to evil, then, cannot come

from what meets us. Not so for another reason also: Since God guides all our destinies, those, too, therefore, which are linked with an evil tendency for us, then he must have adjusted the evil in them, if it really attached to them; but that would make God the inciter to wrong-doing, and He would actually be a tempter to evil. But against this Luther puts in a decided protest in his explanation for the catechism, when he says: "God indeed tempts no one." The same shadow would fall upon God if our nature were thus constructed, that it must feel the tendency to evil, perhaps in quite irresistible fashion. Rather, if susceptibility fits man for sinful impressions, the power of resistance must also be given to him in the same measure; every force exerted in the moral domain excludes responsibility, and throws it back upon the one who ordains that force.

But would it not have been better perhaps, if God had so constructed human nature originally that it would not have been susceptible to sinful impressions. O! you little creature, you who would like to dictate to your creator. You would like well, I suppose, to be the crown of creation. See now, to what end God has given moral freedom; without this you would be a slave to natural law, like any animal; through this you become an exalted being, "only a little lower than the angels," who through his own will power can create his

own world, but also, to be sure, plunge into ruin. God would, that you should share in his blessedness, but there is only the sense of blessedness, if one can say to himself, that one has voluntarily chosen the good; and no claim can be made to the exercise of free choice, if one might not have been able to select the opposite side. Accordingly, if God would qualify man to take part in His blessedness He must also grant him the possibility of sinning; only that in every case, where possibility has become actuality, the cause lies not in God, but in the free will of man. Therefore not in outward happenings lies the tendency to evil, but its real seat is in the perverted will of man.

And yet this does not hinder God from ordering even such outward events, as must have alluring charm for sinful wills; only His design in this is directly opposed to sin. The sting of sin in man is to be thereby gradually destroyed.

Without the possibility of being able to sin, he would indeed be condemned to inactivity, but this inactivity would be only a slumber, not a being dead. The danger that at the first opportunity it would break forth again, would not be removed thereby. On the contrary, if opportunity is offered the sting of sin to come to the surface, but if through firmness in the good on the part of man, its head is regularly broken off, it

will become more and more dull, until finally it will have no head at all. Or compare the sin in you with the seed of the weed. It may lie, long years, in the ground; if no rain falls it does not come up, but its power of germination has not been lost on this account. On the contrary it would lose this, if the germ had an opportunity to develop itself, but through man's resistance is broken off; if the germ is destroyed the plant also comes to naught. Thus explain to yourself the temptations, that God sends you; they are not a temptation to evil, but a means for conquering evil; more than that, a means for strengthening and confirming you in goodness.

Every exercise makes stronger and more agile, and steels the consciousness of ability to do. The battle against evil exercises man in the use of his weapons against the same. A soldier bears arms in peace also, but not until in battle does he show whether he knows how to wield them. Man is not sure of his virtue, if he has not battled for it.

Temptations are testings. God darkens the sky of your life with clouds, that often break in storms upon your head; he would see if you are true to him in dark days as well as in the sunshine. He demands of you painful sacrifices; know, he would see if you are true to him, not merely when he gives, but when he takes

away. He lays heavy burdens upon you: know, he would see, if you are his friend, not merely when he calls you to enjoy with him, but also to bear something for his sake. After all temptations are not so horrible that man need beseech God to keep them far aloof from him; on the contrary, they are something absolutely necessary for the development of his spiritual life, as necessary as fire to steel, since without fire iron would never turn to steel. But why, then, do we pray against temptation, why do we use the sixth petition? Now this leads me to the second part of my discourse.

The petition that every temptation may be kept away from us cannot be directed towards what has been said, but probably in the first place, that we may recognize it when it is there. For it always brings with it the danger of sinning, and so much the more would we fall into it, as every temptation has its being in a deception or a seduction. Luther expresses it in his explanation of the catechism: "that the devil, the world and our flesh may not deceive us." The worst kind of deception would be if we should be led to indulge the opinion, that we could not fall into temptation.

The Scripture warns us, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." Yet possessed by this self-deception we so easily allow ourselves to be persuaded to look upon things differently from what God

meant that we should. Most frequently temptation makes its approach in the form of suffering, and we might say that the main error consists in our permitting ourselves, in general, to talk of suffering. For how can that be a suffering for us, which is appointed to effect our highest good. Is it worthy of lament, if God deems us strong enough to be tempted yet more through the most effective means, namely, suffering? Are we to murmur if God sends us to the high school of Christ, which is the school of suffering. Every pupil goes gladly from a lower school to one higher; and know, that if you had not obtained the certificate of graduation, he would not have let you advance to the higher one. It is a proof that your God has confidence in you, if he sends you to the school of suffering; what you are to learn there has been thus expressed by a pious Christian: "The Christian's school of suffering has four chapters: in the first, one learns "I must suffer; in the second, I will suffer; in the third, I can suffer; in the fourth, I may suffer." Yes, if you have climbed up to the point of recognizance, where you are in a position to thank him for having deemed you worthy of suffering with or for him, then you are mature enough, too, to be dismissed from the school of suffering. And assuredly you will not look back, without piety, at the school time lying behind you, for you have taken away with you the conviction that precisely the

sufferings, which you had passed through, were the most needful and beneficial experiences of your life. If a true Christian were asked if he would like to have missed the sufferings with which his life had been checkered, he would not like to dispense with them. But he would perhaps prefer happy days, you will remark with some indiscretion. O! the sun of joy is much more blinding than that of affliction; and the worst illusion is, that we esteem the good things of this earth as making us truly happy. Gellert sings on this subject: "Is not undisturbed bliss often harder to bear, than even the adverse trial, over the weight of which we so bitterly lament."

For this, then, we pray in the sixth petition, that we may recognize it, so that we may arm ourselves against the temptation lying in happiness.

Temptation loves one more deception above everything. She wants to deceive us as to sin itself. First the sternness of the command is softened down; the meshes are made wider so that the sinful little thought-fishes may more easily slip through, then what is wrong in the action is smoothed down; she says, what is so wrong in it any way, it is just nothing at all. Then the sinful itself is palliated; she says: one must rise above the limited views of ordinary people; many a thing is allowed to a great mind at which little minds

tremble. And so it goes on, and whoever is not armed against it, allows himself, as Luther says in his explanation, to be led away into great shame and vice, not even realizing that he ought to be ashamed of himself. So, that we may recognize this deception, is the first thing for which we pray, in using the sixth petition, but also for power to overcome it. With our own strength this is not to be done, we feel and know; thus if God does not stand by us, we shall not succeed. Therefore, with Luther, we pray that He will protect and uphold us; and in response to our prayer He gives us the right weapon whereby we shall battle victoriously: the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit (Ephes. 6:16) which is the Word of God. But it would be a contradiction to pray that God would defend us, if we did not defend ourselves. And the most important thing of all is, that we do not rock ourselves into a false security, as though we had nothing to dread from the evil one. Luther says: "We cannot prevent foul birds from fluttering around our heads, but we can prevent their building their nests there." The life of the Christian is a perpetual being on guard; the Christian's watch is to be constantly at one's post. The heart of man is like a fortress. And inasmuch as most fortresses have one or several places where they are most open to attack, so, generally, the heart of man has a few weak spots, where it is most easily assaulted and

forced to surrender. But as the commander provides those weak points of the fortress with a double garrison, so should the Christian guard the weaknesses of his heart with redoubled watchfulness, so that the evil one take him not unawares. We say of a person, such and such is his weak point, and suppose that there he will yield most easily to temptation. Beloved, every one has his weak side; find out what it is, and guard it well.

The sainted court-preacher Reinhardt once preached from this pulpit on this theme: namely, that everybody has a price at which he may be bought. Judas sold himself for thirty pence, you probably hold yourself at a higher price, but the danger of your really doing so, if the right price be only offered, is ever present with you. Many, indeed, are bold and even challenge temptation. Know, that it is already a triumph for the tempter, that he has misled you into such boldness. Do you know how you appear to me? We compare the heart with a fortress; those who defend it, are covered from view behind the wall; but you are bold enough to stick your head over the wall, on one occasion, in order to spy upon the enemy, or to tease the foe: O! his arrow will hit you, why do you offer him your head? You must not invite danger, must not yourself give sin the occasion for over-reaching you. One should not

play with fire. Sin, too, is a burning fire, and if you come too near to it, it will easily kindle in you a burning desire. Many an one has only wanted curiously to inspect sin, and has fallen a victim to its snares. Ah! sin is as blinding as the candle for the moth; she flies around and around it, her circles becoming ever narrower; there! see! the flame has singed her wings and she is helplessly consumed. One must not dance about the fire, if one has on a gown of inflammable material. Keep entirely aloof, therefore, from the things that may kindle within you an impure flame. Coquet not a little with sin, but flee her, just as soon as you perceive her decoys.

Beloved, these warnings all have a universal application, if they are to be serviceable for a man, he must be told more positively where the enemy is, against whom he must arm himself and with whom he must measure himself. Now Luther says to him in the catechism: "Lest the devil, the world and our flesh deceive and mislead us." Luther therefore mentions the devil as the chief tempter. He is the invisible power, whence evil whisperings proceed and which traverse our holy thoughts. It is a fact, if a holy thought springs up within us, then forthwith another springs up beside it, which will ruin it for us. Even if you retire into your own little closet intending to be alone with your God,

still the invisible evil one stands there behind you, and interpolates what is distracting. If you build up a temple for God in your heart, so pure that only hallowed thoughts have place there; if you do but close your eyes, the evil one has hung the walls with unclean pictures, so that you start back shocked at yourself. A proverb says, that where a man builds God a church, the devil directly builds a chapel by its side. And he knows that your thoughts, too, will many a time stray to that chapel. The devil is the tempter in spiritual things. He drives his trade by preference on the narrow strips of border-land between virtue and sin, there where the highest perfection so easily passes over to exceptionable sin, and seeks to bewitch souls, so that they step aside, still under the impression that their feet are within the domain of virtue. How close together lie trust in God and a rash tempting of God, firmness of faith and blamable obstinacy, the shunning of evil and inclination to condemn others, love of peace and cowardly complaisance, tolerance and indifferentism, zeal for the truth and recklessness in speaking the truth. Ah! that wicked one often confuses us so that we cannot distinguish the boundaries of ideas, and we appear to be the very opposite of what we aim to be. We should like to practice humility, but whence comes it, that our humility looks like pride; we would serve,

but how comes it, that our service will look like a purpose to rule. There is a self-seeking in benevolence, a self-esteem in our condescension, a desire to please in our simplicity. All this is done by that invisible wicked one, who paints our robe of virtue with colors out of *his* paint-pot.

And a comrade he has in this world, that Luther names in the second place. She knows perfectly well, that you will give something for her opinion. You would like to be great and beautiful in the eyes of the world. These are two desires upon which she can always calculate, in every human being. She flatters your ambition, or she flatters your vanity, and you will certainly fall into the trap. The Mythology of the ancients had created Syrens; these were treacherous voices, that allured travelers away from the aim of their journey and enticed them to tarry in their abode. Even now the world still has sweet strains with which she charms you, hoping to entice you away from your heavenly goal and persuade you to be her vassal. But you resist her; for this, too, she is prepared. If the syren-song avails nothing, then she lets loose fiercer, more violent agencies, that make such a din around you, that your ears fairly tingle. Then you have to listen to slander and threatenings, geerings and words of abuse, until you finally, can hold out no longer, and

promise to do her will, if she will only cease tormenting you. Only to behold how she has overpowered you. Perhaps she was aided in this by the second, worse half of your own nature. You have a twofold nature: spirit and flesh. And the latter so gladly makes common cause with the enemy. Yes, if this were not in the league, the other two could accomplish nothing. The fiery darts of the evil one would kindle no lust, if there were no inflammable material. Therefore James was right, when he said: "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed."

That a sinful picture rises before your soul involves no sin. The first glance at it is involuntary and therefore free from guilt. But if you will look once more, that depends upon yourself; and if you do so, that is yielding to temptation, even if it were only a furtive glance at the picture. How often man turns away from the shameful, and yet cannot give it up entirely, with his back half turned, sending after it one more glance. Lo! the tempter had only waited for that; now the fire has caught. O crush it out! Let not the flesh rule over the spirit. The battle against temptation begins with the battle against the flesh. If this is crucified together with its affections and lusts, then the temptations of the world rebound harmlessly from you, and the tempter himself gives up making the child of God rebel longer against his Lord and Master.

An old superstition says, that, the devil can do nothing if one clutches at a crucifix. Oh flee perpetually to the cross of your Redeemer; him who holds fast to that, no power upon earth can pluck out of the arms of his Saviour. Amen!



THE SEVENTH PETITION

BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL, FOR THINE IS THE
KINGDOM, THE POWER AND THE
GLORY FOREVER! AMEN.

Beloved in the Lord: We shall occupy ourselves to-day with the last petition: "but deliver us from evil." It is the last petition, that is to say therefore, with it is exhausted all that we had to lay before our Heavenly Father in prayer. It forms the conclusion, but at the same time is also the crowning of the whole; for as Luther says in his explanation: "*We pray in this petition, as the sum of all, that our Father in heaven would deliver us from all manner of evil—in body and soul, property and honor—and at last, when the hour of death shall come, grant us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this vale of sorrow to himself in heaven.*" It is the sum-total in a double sense; inasmuch as all prayers have their origin in a sense of evil, and inasmuch as all prayers refer to the removal of evil.

For if we were free from evil, then just nothing is left but pure happiness: again we lie in the arms of God, and resting on His bosom express our perfect sat-

isfaction, with the psalmist: "If I only have Thee, I ask for nothing more in heaven and earth; every other petition therefore has become objectless.

Now, then, let us consider this cardinal petition more closely: "*But deliver us from evil.*"

I shall speak:

1. *Of the object of this petition.*
2. *Of the way of granting this petition.*
3. *Of the ascription of praise for the granting of the petition.*

The object of the petition is the removal of evil. What is evil? Most languages have only one word for evil and bad, in proof of this, that men from the beginning, have had a more or less conscious feeling of both being linked to one another in the closest manner, that all evil has its cause in badness, and that without sin there would be no evil in the world.

In the narrative of the creation we find a sentence, over whose words the eye of the reader generally passes too carelessly. It runs: "and God looked upon everything that He had made, and lo! it was very good." From the hand of God all came forth good and perfect; in paradise there was as yet no imperfection, no evil; evil came into the world first with the fall of man through sin. But not as an insulated phenome-

non, not as a thing, which took its stand beside many others in the world, too, but as a mass, that penetrated all that was left present with its nature, and since then fastened to man like a sickly excrescence. Sin is the sickness of the world, and the irrational creature has to suffer as much under it as the rational. Sin, sin has changed earth from a paradise to a "*Vale of Sorrow*," as Luther has said in his explanation of our petition, and she has changed man from a friend to all creatures into the cruelest of foes. The apostle speaks of a groaning creature, and he means by this, that she sighs under the sinful treatment of man. And the poet says: "the world is perfect everywhere, that man comes not with his wail of woe. But wherever man comes with his consuming toil, there it ceases to be so." The traces of it are often plainly perceptible. His sinful avarice has disembowelled the earth, and made dry deserts out of fruitful soil, where thousands of years ago flowed milk and honey, its fruitlessness being proverbial, his avarice has felled the forest trees, without inquiring whether future generations should lack for water, and other supplies of nature's providing. Through avarice his mastery of the animal world has been perverted to a cruel despotism and often enough exterminated the beast through maltreatment so that a suffering creature's cries of distress was no uncommon sound. Yes, if the irrational creature could be questioned, it would

answer with regard to its treatment on the part of sinful man: "this earth is a place of suffering."

And man? What has he to say? Walther von der Vogelweide sings: "The world is outwardly beautiful, is green and white and red, yet inwardly is of a black color and black as death." Yes this world might be a home of happy creatures, but sin has transformed it, so that there is hardly a home to be found on it, which grief has not entered. I well know how many an one might answer me just here: It seems to me that the world is not at all so full of wretchedness: I like it, and whatever you may say, life is beautiful. I might reply, in my turn, "Then it would seem as if a sinful world pleases you as much as a world without sin."

But I must go farther, and say only sin itself can shut your eye to the sorrow that sin has brought into the world. Yes, there is a certain levity in the nature of man that seldom allows him to be conscious of the whole depth of earthly tribulations; but in sober, reflective hours, in those hours, when, by divine appointment every bandage is taken from the eyes, then we come to a full consciousness of what sin is with all her glitter and world-destroying effects; then is it no longer possible to deceive us as to all the trouble that sin has brought upon mankind. If it should be counted

up, there would be no end of the reckoning. Luther counts up, in the first place, various ills of body and soul, besides those affecting property and honor.

The body suffers under sin, for although it belongs to the spirit, yet body and soul are so closely joined together, that if one part is injured, the other suffers with it. It has been proven, that sicknesses of the mind have their cause in bodily hurts, and *vice-versa* that mental aberrations also cause physical disorders. In the first disturbance that affects the health of the soul, there is bound to be also an interruption to the health of the body. The body is made for the use of the soul, and develops itself only in perfect naturalness under the dominion of the spirit: but where this has not used, or abused its power, there is an end put to keeping the body within bounds, the fleshly instincts crop forth inordinately and ruin the proper nature of the body. That is what must show itself as the result of man's fall. Consider the narrative of the enjoyment of the stolen apple, as you will, the fact that must be drawn from it is, that the flesh had its way in opposition to the weakness of its ruler, the spirit; this introduced the first interruption to that development of the body which was conformable to nature, an interruption, the consequences of which are not to be undone, and presuppose a sickly condition of the body for all time to

come. But sickness is the beginning of dissolution and death the inevitable close. Therefore says the Scripture, "The wages of sin is death." Life is now only a continuous dying. Birth itself is the commencement of death, and we do well if we consider every enjoyment in life as a farewell feast to one, who, every day has new occasion to take leave of something that lies irretrievably behind him. Thus man deports himself since he has fallen a prey to sin, naturally with a sickly body. Is it not a pity? And even if sickness does not acquaint him with painful sufferings and tormenting bodily disorders, is not the thought that every day brings death one step nearer, when all that is fair must be swallowed up by corruption and return to its original dust. Is not the very thought of death sufficient to shape life into a bitter lament? And what sort of death? One needs only to mention all the woe, that is involved in death, to chime in with the chorus of lament: "the earth is a vale of tears." The dissolution of the tabernacle of the flesh is the lesser of the evils, the more horrible part is, that it is the passing over to what comes after death, namely, the judgment. Who can contemplate this spectre behind death, who can think of the horrors of hell, without having new sorrow interjected into his earthly sojourn? And yet, even this is not all the trouble that is hidden in mortal life. Our fellow-travelers through this wilderness of life are

minded to make it yet more painful and suffering a pilgrimage. Luther talks of the evils of wealth and honor. We might have joys and men darken them for us; we might be happy in our personal relations, and men make pleasantness impossible. Possessions do not make us happy, for thousands of envious eyes look upon them, and like the miser, we might well sit crouching over them day and night lest we be robbed of them, anxiety about them forbids any solid enjoyment of what we have. We gain honorable distinctions, but the honor that we have won, does not make us happy, for at the same time a thousand tongues are busy slandering us, and Solomon already has said: "the words of the slanderer are sharp arrows that pierce through one's heart." Where is the hero, who in face of all this can keep a calm mind? And if, despite all this, we do not suffer our lives to be embittered, who will protect us against the bitterness of the consciousness awhile ago described, that evil does not strike us undeservedly, that it is the necessary consequence of our sin, that the guilt which man has incurred, is the unhallowed cause, which has transformed all the harmonies of life into a series of shrieking discords, the glad chalice of life into a black caldron whence issue only foul vapors. Yes, here, too, we may speak of a sum-total of evil, and in the poet's words, designate it thus: "But the greatest evil is guilt." In view of this fullness of ills, the offerer

of prayer, having reached the seventh petition says: "deliver us from evil." Yes, the six preceding petitions have become to himself once more so many reminders of the evil from which he wants to be delivered.

Cyprian says of the seventh petition: "The preceding petitions show us all the evil, into which man has been plunged." Namely: that we live in a world where God's name is not kept holy, and where man will not let His kingdom come, nor His will be done, a hungry land without bread, a groaning of people full of guilt, the wailing of souls borne down by temptation, an inn wherein the devil is host; who writes down our sin on the black tablet, and daily sends the officer of justice, to count them up to us, and distress us with them, that he may have us cast into prison and handed over to the tormentors.

We Christians are not alone in this view. The old world already resounded with the same lamentations: their poets and thinkers are inexhaustible in the description of the misery in which men have to live, and it is among the wisest of them that we find the expression: "It is the best thing never to have been born, and if born, to be quickly at the goal."

An expression that reminds us of St. Paul's speech: "O! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

It is true, that here and there a breath of a more cheerful looking upon life is poured out, which seems to oblige us to judge differently of their sentiments. Goethe envies the ancients this indomitable cheerfulness; and yet, if one looks deeper, one easily recognizes, that this breath of cheerfulness is only a bright-hued cloth thrown over a corpse. Savages dance at the graves of their best beloved, but as this funeral-dance has nothing merry in it for us, but on the contrary something very melancholy, so this assured levity on the part of the ancients can just as little deceive us as to the inwardly dissatisfied condition of mind, pertaining to all human spirits. The old world, too, used to consider itself as a vast church-yard, only a much gloomier one than the Christian world. For in the church-yard of the old world is lacking the cross, the symbol of there yet being a hope for deliverance from evil; but the Christian cemetery bears this saving sign of redemption. There sounds only laments over this vale of tears; here the prayer confident of a hearing: "deliver us from evil."

This leads us to the second division of our discourse, to the consideration of the granting of our request. The petition sprung from the longing after a more satisfying life than this earth can offer. The life of the natural man is a perpetually repeated and perpetually

failing attempt to find rest and refreshment for his much tried soul. The wise men of the old world supposed that they would find them in striving after culture and knowledge. But the best culture and highest attainments are powerless in face of the evil inclinations of the heart, and with the unfolding of the intellectual faculties develops also what is wicked.

Cultivation of mind is not always synonymous with moral perfection of soul. On the contrary history teaches, that one-sided cultivation of mind only alters the form of sin, but does not remove its presence nor lessen its dominion, and is only put in place of nature, and thus the sins of culture are not less, but only more select and refined.

From himself man draws not that help which delivers him out of his sad condition. Yes, in himself he finds not even a hold upon which he can hang a consolation of hope. Mankind in general is like the people of Israel in captivity. The Jews languished in the Babylonian captivity; their rulers tyrannically treated them like slaves; in themselves they found neither strength nor hope of redemption, but a promise, they had carried along with them from their lost fatherland, of a future deliverer, and in firm faith in this promise, their prayers ascended to Heaven: "Deliver us from this evil." We, too, languish in captivity to a foreign des-

pot; the prince of this world has carried us away captive from our real native land, and afflicts us with ills of body and soul, property and honor; in ourselves we find neither strength nor hope of deliverance; but we have brought with us from the lost paradise a promise, which announces itself in a continual longing after our real home, and refers to a future deliverer, now realized in Jesus Christ. And building upon this promise, we pray: deliver us Thy children from this world of woe, so that we may everlastingly praise Thee in the real fatherland of our heavenly home.

The misery which follows every sin, is itself a prophecy, that there is a lasting conquest of sin in prospect. Evil is a punishment for sin, but as such also a remedy against sin. What would become of the world, if sin had no evil consequences? if it did not make us wretched? So correctly felt our ancestors the nature of a sense of guilt, that it appeared to them like grief for being no longer at home, rather like being miserable in a foreign land. We want to be delivered from misery, is the prayer of the earthly pilgrim tormented by home-sickness.

Partly this prayer finds its answer already, here upon earth. God softens our distress, opens up to us earthly ways out of our misery; he gives us health after sickness, refreshment after hunger and thirst, joy after

sorrow. Yes, even in this life he removes many an evil from us; or he so transforms our heart, that what has hitherto seemed like suffering to us is no longer so; he delivers us from evil inwardly, while we recognize in it no longer a misfortune, but a means of training for heaven, a chastisement, a test, a purifying of the heart that is to be cleansed from sin. But all such deliverances, however, are only partial deliverances, because we are not yet finally rid of sin, and because, so long as sin cleaves to us, the danger is still present, that new sins may bring new clouds over our lives. Depend upon it, there is no heaven for us on earth, therefore the expectant glance is directed to a period beyond this earthly life, to a time of which the Scripture says, that God will wipe away all tears from our eyes, where also there will be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying nor any more pain. Luther, in his explanation, has expressed it by the words: "and, at last, when our hour comes, he will grant us a blessed end and mercifully take us out of this vale of tears to himself in heaven." Not until this earthly tabernacle breaks, can the weariness of the pilgrimage quite cease. Man dreads his end, and yet it is only the means for attaining to perfect bliss. An old church-father says: "Nothing is harder for God than to make us believe that He will render us happy; yes, He must lead us through much tribulation, to fit us for entrance into His kingdom. But this way

of deliverance leads us also safely to the goal, and we express the certainty of the attainment of this goal in this way, while we exultantly add the words: “for Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever.”

This doxology is the third subject of our consideration. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, we say. This “for,” is verily the rock, on which the foot of faith stands. In faith have we lifted ourselves up to God, leaving the world behind us. And yet again are we dragged down to it, prayer is wrestling with it and breaking away from its chains, and then feeling, that we are freed, the soul joins in the triumphant song of the redeemed: “For, Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever.” It is as if the clouds part and the sun bursts forth in splendor. The clouds are withdrawn which had veiled God’s glory from our view; and beholding it, a shout of praise breaks forth. Beloved, this doxology was not added to this prayer by Christ Himself, it is an addition of the church, but worthy of standing at the close of our Lord’s Prayer. I might say that it was the sublime response of the church, when her high priest Jesus Christ dictated to her that prayer of prayers. “Thine is the kingdom,” so sings the soul, that is rid of Satan’s dominion and for the first time breathes the heavenly

air: "Thine is the power," thus sings she when she has become aware, that He is mightier, for He is in the world; "Thine is the glory," thus sings she, when she is at home with Him, overpowered by the blessed fullness, that streams in upon her; "forever," now and always for me and for all believers a loving, mighty, and a glorious God. If, already, we shall no more pray: "Our Father which art in heaven," because we ourselves are above there with Him, nevertheless we shall still pray with all saints: "Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever." Once for all the prayer of entreaty, the prayer of praise and adoration is, for the first time adequately uttered, when we see Him for ourselves in His glory. As for that, all our earthly prayers are but an effort to bring us in touch with heaven. Prayer begins when the heart gets out of tune; through the same it is brought into perfect accord, making harmony sweet and strong. The closing chord of every true prayer must ever be anthems of praise to the Most High. This is the note that will sound also in the world beyond.

The foregoing petitions of our Lord's Prayer will be, then, no longer needed, but with the angels shall we sing: "Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever." If we would speak as men do, then must we say all the compositions of heavenly music are

built upon this motive. And whenever mortal music attempts the imitation of angelic strains, its arias and fugues are ever based on this same high motive. We have just recently admired again the exalted composition of our Sebastian Bach; we boast of him, that he seems to have overheard the melodies of the saints and angels themselves. Single voices are heard, and the heavenly hosts join in with their voices, and all voices seem to vie in sweetness and power, one wanting to outdo the other in ascribing praise to God. It is a prelude to such a song as this, if, at the end of the Lord's Prayer we break forth into the doxology: "For, Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever, Amen." Yes, there is an amen here, a double "amen." One comes of itself, and would say to us, that all this is assuredly so; and we remember His word spoken to us through His prophet (Isaiah 65:24): "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."

And we give back to Him an amen as an echo, to testify that all this is laid up in our hearts as well. *Amen, Amen, that is, Yea, Yea; it shall be so.*

Beloved, we are at the end of the exposition of Our Lord's Prayer, that marvel of simplicity and power. The grand plan, according to which this prayer appears as the sum-total of all the desires of a New Testament

child of God, gives to it its place opposite to the law of the old covenant, as the summary of all the claims of God most holy upon a human being. What in the old covenant is law and claim, is in the new covenant prayer and the inmost wish of the heart.

The mountain of blessings, where Christ taught us how to pray, stands facing Sinai, the mount of the law, where Moses taught us the will of God. To earthly apprehension, this one is higher, but its prospect admits us to a view of abysses, pictures of yawning chasms of sin and hellish depths. The other one is lower, from an earthly point of view, but it commands a view of lovely fields, that stretch away to an horizon, above which rise the spires of the eternal city. Jerusalem, the heavenly it is, the goal of all pilgrims of the earth, our's too, by the grace of God. Amen!

The End.