

My dear friends,

It is my present desire, in the strength of God, to illustrate that portion of Scripture which you are accustomed to call the Lord's Prayer. I desire to be enabled to set forth to you what is taught us, by the prayer which our Lord gave to his disciples, concerning the true character of those who are the people of God.

For the sake of parents, and masters and friends and all, in regard to the influence which one person may exercise over another, and of the responsibility under which people are, to be useful to those who in any way depend on them, or who are likely to be influenced by their example, I would remark, before I go on to illustrate this prayer, the circumstances under which the apostles put the request to Christ, "**Lord teach us to pray**".

You observe that it is said, "And it came to pass that as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord teach us to pray". And the practical application of this is obvious, that if we would have others pray to God, they must be made to take the same notice of our prayers to God which the disciples took of the prayers of the Lord. We know from the Psalms, that when our Lord was reviled, persecuted and evil spoken of, he said, "But I gave myself to prayer". We may well believe that the apostles, who saw what He was enduring, who understood something of the reproach He was bearing, must have desired to understand how he bore these – his bitter trials, and how he was sustained under them, and seeing that he went to his Father in prayer, and that he received the spirit of peace, and was enabled to preserve the serenity of his mind, and was not disturbed for all that was coming upon him, because he gave himself to prayer: they were naturally made to feel that their was in his communion with the Father, something which they would desire to share, and a secret of peace, and of victory over an evil world which they would like to possess, so when the Lord prayed they asked him to teach them how to pray.

Now my dear friends, I would just ask your attention for a moment to the word "**disciple**". I know that a great deal is spoken in the Gospels by our Lord, for all who have ears to hear people have turned away from themselves in reading the Scriptures from the feeling that these things were spoken to the disciples – that is to say the feeling that they were spoken to persons of a privileged class, and that there was something in them being disciples that would make things very fit to be spoken to them which it would not be right to speak to all.

Now my dear friends, it is important that you mark the meaning of the word and see that there is nothing of a privileged class in it at all. It means some plain person who has been taught by another. It was not as individuals it was not as person selected but simply as persons who were willing to be taught by him, that these things were said to them. The only distinction that the Lord made was that to them without he spoke in parables, and any privilege which was enjoyed by the disciples, was a privilege which they enjoyed because they were willing to be taught of Christ. There were some disciples who did not continue to be his disciples, but while they remained with him they enjoyed all the peculiar privileges of disciples and of all the facilities of understanding what he taught which were offered to his disciples. While they were not of the election as is plain from the fact that they went away and left him, and followed no more after him. Therefore I beseech you, let no one of you in reading the Gospels be prevented from taking to himself what he reads, because of the use of the word 'disciples', for while you are reading your proper place is that of disciples, and I beseech you dare not to feel that you are excluded from anything that you read.

My dear friends, you would undoubtedly admit that our Lord would have all men to pray to God – you will certainly admit that it is the duty of everyone to pray to God, and also that in praying to God, we should pray to that God who is revealed to us in the Bible, and not to a god of our own imagining. You will admit that the God revealed in the Bible is just the God revealed in Christ – you will admit that it is Christ that reveals God and that no man knows the father but the Son and he to whom the Son reveals Him.

Now my dear friends, I wish this also to be in your minds as we go along inasmuch as the thing asked is, "teach us to pray...? Inasmuch that it is in prayer that we approach God as God, that the answer to the question must be an answer for every person – that it is an answer which every person is bound to take to himself – that in short, the instructions given to these men were intended for each of us.

Before proceeding to the prayer itself, I would also ask **what it is to pray?** You, of course, know that to offer up petitions that are mere words is not to pray – that to speak anything with the lips, while

the heart goes not along with the thing spoken is not prayer. And you, of course, know, that in order to be prayer at all, it must be a thing in which the person is in earnest, and unless that be really felt which is expressed, is not prayer at all.

Prayer is offering up requests to God because we desire the things we request, other wise we mock God. Prayer is the offering up of requests to God because God has taught us that it is from Him that we are to expect everything which it is right for us to desire, and because He has warranted us to expect from Him what ever we can trust Him for, in regard that it is truly good.

Prayer then, is the offering up of our desires to God because of this encouragement that God has given us to approach him and it is offering them up in the expectation that God will answer them; for it is quite clear that if I honestly desire a thing and honestly ask for a thing; there can be no reason why I should not expect it unless I do not believe the willingness of the being from whom I ask it to bestow it, or else *I doubt his power*.

We do not doubt the power of God – we do not doubt that He can and may, if He chooses give us what we ask – the *willingness* of God is the great thing of which we are ignorant. But prayer implies not merely the wish to get what we ask however honest that wish may be but an expectation of getting it because I not only see that God is God but that God has warranted me to ask it of Him.

Now my dear friends, it is more especially with **honest desire that is in prayer** that I at present engage you attention, because I wish you to see that the Lord's Prayer just as a picture of the heart of the child of God – because, I wish you to see it as the breathing of the Spirit of Christ in a man, and because, if you come to see it in this way you will feel that unless you have been taught by the Spirit to pray the Lord's Prayer you are not Christians at all! There are two things here, the desires themselves and the succession of them, and both are instructive as to what is the state in which God desires to see us, and we who can be recognised to be children of God.

If I am coming to one who I know, who is willing to give me anything I wish for, that which I most desire I shall, of course, first ask – that which is nearest my heart shall be the first on my lips. Therefore, if in the coming to pray to God my prayer is a real honest prayer, the first thing I ask shall be that very thing I most desire: and it is so with all my requests.

There is much taught us in regard to this, by this prayer. It shows us the place which the things here asked are to have in our hearts, and if I wish you to come with me to the study of this prayer with the feeling that to be in a right place in the sight of God it is needful that your hearts be moved after the tone and meaning of this prayer, and should be longing for the things here spoken of, and should be expecting them from God, for these two things are needful to our having the true character of God's people, that we should choose right things, and that we should trust God regarding them and expect them from God.

Now the first thing that meets us in this prayer is the remarkable words, "**our Father**," You see Christ teaches men to cry "Abba Father!". Christ does not teach men to pray to God that he may become their Father – He does not teach men a prayer which they are to offer up while they are in preparation to become the children, and some request that they are to make *before* they will venture to look on God as their Father. But the prayer He gave men begins thus, 'Our Father, who art in heaven. Our Father...

My dear friends, I feel that the Gospel which was preached by our Lord when He taught men to pray, and to say 'Our Father' – I feel that when the Son of God came to the rebellious children of men in the state of alienation from the God that made them, of rebellion against his will, and when He taught them in this state to pray and say, 'Our Father' that then He preached to them the gospel of the grace of God – that then He made to them the important discovery that God continued to have the interest of a Father in them although they grieved Him by being rebellious children, that He declares to them that their having sinned against God did not now cause them to be excluded from the high privilege of calling God Father, and that in very truth the forgiveness of their sins – the fact that God made them welcome to approach Him and dwell with them as dear children, was preached in them being taught to say, 'our Father'.

My dear friends, Satan has prevailed with many to teach men to make a distinction, which the Bible no where recognises as just, and to feel as if the words, "Our Father," should have a right meaning on the lips of person who did not know that they were partakers in the adoption which is *in Christ Jesus*. I ask you "who taught the prayer?" was it not Christ Jesus? I ask you what was to be inferred

from his teaching them so to pray, and say "Our Father", but that he was teaching them to come to God in the full spirit of adoption? And I ask what right any man can have to say that the word 'Father' as applied to God is to have any lower meaning than that I feel I am his child, and that I feel that He has a father's heart towards me, and that I feel that I can put my confidence in Him as my father? If there was anything needful to prove that our Lord intended them to have all the confidence of saying 'our Father', which he himself had in saying "My Father", it is contained in the petition which follows; for observe our Lord's teaching men at once to say, Abba Father, expects that they are hereby put in a condition to have their supreme interest awakened by the glory of God.

What I refer to here, is this; that it is natural for you, and natural for me – that it is a sinful instinct of our being that we should desire our own preservation from evil – that we should desire to escape misery, and to be partakers of happiness - that it is a natural thing for us when we feel that we have broken God's law, if we think seriously of God at all, and wish to win God's favour, that we may be safe; and that it would be a piece of hypocrisy in any of us, while we do not know whether we have forgiveness or not – while we do not know whether we have the place of children or not – while we do not know whether we have ground of peace before God or not – to pretend to say that the things uppermost in our hearts was that God's Name should be hallowed or that God's kingdom should come, or that God's will should be done in earth as it is in heaven.

Oh my dear friends, I know that it is a very common thing with people to pray, much as they speak or write to their fellow men, that is, with one thing in their heart and another thing on their lips. You know that it is not an uncommon thing, if a person come to call on another in order to ask some favour of him that the last thing he speaks of is of that which induced him to come and that he tries to prepare the way, for getting a favourable answer, by that kind of conversation which is likely to dispose the person to whom he comes for the favour, to grant it. This is a piece of hypocrisy, for all the time the person is thinking of the favour he is going to ask but is speaking to men who know not what is in the heart and he speaks under the protection of this ignorance which is in one man regarding every other man. It is strange that men should deal in this way with God, but it is the fact that people do the very same thing, who come to God telling God that He is holy, telling God that he is good, confessing in his sight that he is worthy of all praise : not because they value his holiness, not because they delight in his goodness, not because their heart are praising Him - but because they hope by this to get the forgiveness of their sins. And this is real, downright hypocrisy, for this is speaking of one thing while they mean another thing. And the prayer hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done comes as it is in the life of a person who is only praying because he wishes to get safety for himself, not because he wishes that God's name be hallowed thinks that his prayer can lead to the hallowing of God's name – not because he longs for the coming of God's kingdom, and thinks that his prayer can lead to the coming of the kingdom of God – not because he truly desires that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven, and expects that his prayer may be the means of hastening this change, but because he thinks that it is a right thing in him to pray , and that it is a thing to please God and to save his own soul.

But is it not quite clear that, if it is to save my own soul that I pray it is impossible for me to truly say "hallowed be thy name?" It is quite clear that our Lord, when he puts the words on the lips of his disciples, and when he thus taught that this desire is to be uppermost in their hearts well knew that they could not be so if they felt that the matter of their own salvation was uncertain. It is quite clear that when he taught them to say "Our Father", he was teaching them to believe that about God and as such was to take away the temptation to be thinking first about themselves when they approach God.

If to teach me to say, "Father forgive..." is to teach me that God freely forgives the sins I have committed – if to teach me to pray "Father be kind..." is to assure me that I have no need to make God kind because He is kind already – if to teach me to say, "My Father", is to teach me that I may at once begin with trusting – that because He is a Father I am to trust – then I can conceive how after being taught to say "Father", with that meaning in my heart, that I should be expected to say from the heart, 'hallowed be thy name'; for if I have this knowledge of God, in calling Him Father, then unquestionably is my heart bound to Him, and to all that concerns Him, and his glory, and with the interest of a child in the credit of his father, an interest like an affectionate Son feels in the good name of his earthly parent, whereby he would be made to grieve if he heard his father ill-spoken of, and pleased if he saw him respected, an interest like to this, a person who says to God, "our Father..." really feeling the meaning of that word, is a person who, in the world where the Father's name is not hallowed – where the Father's glory is not acknowledged - where men are not giving Him the credit due to him, will have the desire uppermost in his heart that the Father's name should be hallowed.

My dear friends, do you not see that the prayer, "**hallowed by thy Name...**" is intended to be the expression of a desire that God may receive the glory that is due to Him – that God's name may be

held in that esteem and respect in which it ought to be held. Now, this is the prayer of one who knows God's name, and who knows that that name is excellent, and worthy of all praise, and who finds himself in a world where God's name is not hallowed, in a world where God's glory is not acknowledged.

My dear friends, I would ask you attention for a moment to the fact that God's name is not hallowed – that men do not acknowledge God to be what He truly is. People are little aware how truly this is the case. People are not aware how true it is that men are not what they ought to be in the sight of God but that they do not think of God as they ought to think. It is a grievous sin to think wrong thoughts of God – and to think God such a one as ourselves. It is not a matter of opinion – it is not a subject upon which one man may think one way and another another – it is a grievous evil not to think of God aright – for this is to refuse to hallow God's name. This is one view of the question as to the feeling with which God regards man, and as to what God has done for man, it is most important – and I never feel so moved to pray “hallowed be thy name” as when I hear men deny that God is love – that God loves all men – that God's ordinary providence and all God's actings are expressions of real love as when I see them looking on the events of life as things that take place as they say, in the course of providence – as if God had no feeling, no desire, no goodwill in what he did. When I hear men treating God there is now as little feeling in giving us the bread we eat – to bless us as there is in the bread itself – when I see this the prevailing state of men's minds regarding God I am made to feel that God's name is not hallowed – then I am made to feel that God is not thought of, and spoken of as God ought to be thought of and spoken of – and I see it as a sin crying to God for vengeance that men should seek to cast discredit on God's character – that men should seek to disprove God's excellence and to deny that he is the excellent living God that He claims to be.

Now my dear friends, the person who prays to God as his father in heaven, because he sees God as having a father's heart to the children of men, is the person who will be most alive to the dishonour done to God's name. If in saying “Father” to God I am taking courage to do so because of something peculiar to myself then I would not see much to complain of in that others were not saying, “Father” unless I knew that they had something peculiar in their condition. But if I say “Father” because I see a father's heart to me and all men, then I cannot myself cherish towards Him the confidence of a child in a father without feeling that the like confidence is due from all men around me – without feeling therefore that when they speak as if they had not this ground of confidence, when they will even allow me to have it, and not blame me for having it, and yet will not take it themselves, then they are dishonouring the name of my Father. The prayer then, “hallowed be thy name” is the cry of that heart that believes that God has a father's heart to all men, and has felt that none can know God's glory except those who think of him as a father, and therefore he is sorely grieved when men refuse to cry Abba Father. It is a vain thing for men to multiply high-sounding words – it is idle for men to talk of God's glory, and of God's sovereignty, and to think that they honour God by these words. The person who really loves God's name must feel that God's name is not hallowed so long as men are not treating God as a father; and he can derive no comfort from any confession of respect, or form of words that would give God a high place while that is wanting, for he knows that nothing really honours the love of God but a trust that corresponds with that love. You see therefore, how a person who is taught to say, “Our Father” to God, because he sees God's love to all men, and because he sees God's love to himself, is prepared thereby to be deeply grieved when men do not treat God as a father, and in consequence of this will be much moved to cry to God that the spirit of adoption may be found in the hearts of men, and that they may be made to cry Abba Father.

Now, my dear friends, before I proceed to illustrate the other verses, and while what I have already stated is still in your minds, I would earnestly entreat of you to bear with me while I put to you that question as to your own state which is naturally suggested by what you have now heard. You have all, no doubt, been taught to repeat this prayer. The question I now ask of you, and beg of you to seriously answer to God is “Have you ever yet truly offered the Lord's Prayer *to the Lord*? Have you ever yet prayed this prayer? Have you ever yet said, ‘Father’ to God? And has the searcher of hearts ever yet had cause to rejoice over you on account of the child-like confidence which He saw you putting in Him? I do not ask whether you have ever acknowledged that you ought to have this confidence: but I simply ask, “Do you know certainly that you have ever *prayed* this prayer? Do you know certainly that you have ever called God ‘father’, understanding it as I have now explained it? Do you know that you have ever put in him the trust and confidence which is due from a child to a Father? Ask yourselves this, my dear friends, if you have not done so it is no light matter – it is no light matter that God has never heard from you the name of Father with the meaning he desires it to have – it is no light matter if while God has been revealing himself as Father to you, and asking you to approach Him as your own God you have never yet done it.

My dear friends, you are doubtless aware that many feel unwilling, and it is more than probable that a great proportion of those who hear me, are themselves, more or less, unwilling to admit that the Spirit of a Christian is a Spirit of an assured truth in God – that the Spirit of a Christian is the Spirit which cries 'Father' with the certainty that he addresses as a father. Now I entreat of you to remark with deference to this matter, the express and decided teaching of our Lord who here teaches you to say 'Father' to God, and who never intended that you should mock God with empty words. Who never intended that you should say it without feeling it – who never intended that you should come to Him with the ...[illegible...] offering right and becoming forms of expression, while in your hearts you have not the spirit of children. Do you not see clearly that if a prayer is to be really a prayer – if prayer is to be nothing but the inward state of feeling of the heart – and if the prayer of our Lord begins "Our father", teaching us that God is our father, and do you not see how this proves to you that you are not Christians – that you have not the mind of Christ – that you are not the children of God through faith in Christ unless you say 'Father', to God just in the Spirit of adoption – really meaning – really feeling what you say!

My dear friends, the words "**in heaven**" may require some explanation before pressing on to the other petitions; I shall very shortly notice them.

"Our Father, who art in heaven..." you know that it is told us that a time is coming when the tabernacle of God shall be with men. We are constantly taught in the Bible that, while God is everywhere yet does He manifest his Presence peculiarly in heaven. We are also taught that that peculiar presence of God which is now manifest in heaven is hereafter to be manifested here upon the earth when the tabernacle of God is to be with men. But what is taught us by the expression, "...who art in heaven..." is, that our Lord, while he teaches us to know God as our Father, would have us to recognise the difference between the things which are here around us, and that state of things which we connect with the word heaven. Our Father, who art in heaven is the cry of the children of God while not yet in heaven, and while in a strange country, and far from their Father's house, and are just saying 'our Father who is in our Father's house'. The spirit thus expressed is the spirit of a Son who is a pilgrim and sojourner in a strange land. It is the Spirit of a Son who, while knowing his adoption, does still feel that there is a presence of his father which is not enjoyed here – a presence which he has not reached but is enjoyed elsewhere, - and thus 'Our father, who art in heaven'.

The contrast between heaven and earth comes out afterwards in the other petitions. But in the very commencement our Lord teaches us to so to come to God as to a Father who yet is in heaven, who is there and not upon the earth, - who is there in a peculiar sense present and revealed - and that there is a difference between that presence of God and what is now known and enjoyed in the heart – that it is not to be a matter of indifference to me that I can only say our Father who art in heaven - that is not to be a matter of indifference to me that I am still in the place in which I speak to my God and Father as if He were elsewhere; but that the feeling in which I am to cry Abba Father is the feeling of a Son who is far from the presence and the glory of God which is associated with heaven.

I have already illustrated the petition "hallowed by thy name" and I ask you now to consider what new desire if the heart follows in the expression "**they kingdom come.**" There is no vain repetition in this prayer of our Lord and every new request is a request for an additional thing. And therefore my dear friends, give a patient attention while I seek to show you what is taught by these various requests, and while I seek to show you the difference between 'hallowed be your name' and 'your kingdom come, they will be done on earth as it is in heaven'. It is not an idle distinction that is between these petitions and let none of you think that you cannot understand it. For how could you pray the petition?

Mark then the difference between the request that God's name be hallowed, or acknowledged and the request that God's kingdom may come. The former is that God's true character may be acknowledged, that the praise that is due to him may be given Him – it is as one knowing the excellent character of God, and grieved that God has not got the credit and honour due to Him is made to cry to God that this delusion which exists in men's minds concerning the name of God shall cease, and that they shall be made to acknowledge Him as what He truly is, and that his name may be holy and sacred in their hearts – that his name may be hallowed by the devotion of the heart, that it may dwell there as in a sanctuary, and a holy place, and that from the hearts of men it may receive that feeling which is due to it.

Now this is a different request from 'thy kingdom come' which refers to God as a sovereign - as one who is entitled to reign over others – not merely as one who is to be addressed by others but as one who is sovereign over them. There is a difference between admiring God's character and obeying God as my King. Now this second request is the prayer of a person who is himself giving God a right place, and acknowledging God as his King and who feels the desirableness that this should be universal, who feels that the secret of all evil is in man's not giving God the homage which is due to Him as God.

My dear friends, there is a great and exceeding great glory to God in the fact that all the evil of man's condition is connected with their not giving God his own place as God, and not serving Him as God – there is an exceeding great glory to God in the fact that while they think they would be made happy if they were their own masters the fact is they can only be made happy by receiving the Lord to reign over them. This is an exceeding great glory to God that, such is the sceptre of his kingdom, that such is the measure of his governments, that such is the character of the principles upon which he rules over his creatures, as that in order to be blessed it is needful that men should receive God to reign over them.

Now the prayer, 'thy kingdom come' is just the prayer of one who is himself experiencing the rightness of God's sceptre – the righteousness of God's government – who is himself experiencing that it is good to cease from all controversy with God, that it is good to give God the place which is due to Him of reigning in our hearts - who earnestly desires that He may prevail and "thy kingdom come'.

The third petition is **"they will be done, as in heaven so upon the earth"** and this also differs from the two preceding requests. This request is a prayer moved to offer by an understanding the reward that there is in keeping of God's commands. It is important that we should never forget that what God requires is good in itself – that it is not good merely because God requires it; but that God, who is good, requires it *because it is good*. It is important that we should always feel that it is not an arbitrary choice which God makes when He says, Choose this and reject that; but that God's making this choice for us under the influence of His own knowledge of good and evil.

Now, all who are taught to do God's will, find that God's will is good, that it is a blessed thing to do God's will. I am not speaking of the blessedness that is the thing itself. For example, God commands us to be under subjection and to cherish the spirit of lowliness. In obeying this command we experience what is in being lowly, and we find that to be lowly is far more blessed than to be proud and haughty. The command of God is to love our enemies. Naturally, we have a rising of our heart against them – but in obeying that command we discover that it is a more blessed thing to love than to hate, a more blessed thing to be cherishing the tenderness of affectionate interest towards those who use us ill than to be cherishing a wrathful and vengeful spirit. Now God says to us to keep ourselves from evil – keep yourselves holy to your God – be not lawless be not self-willed; but wait always to know the will of God. There is a pleasure in being lawless – in being our own masters - there is an enjoyment in having our own way – otherwise people would not seek it as they do: but the person who receives God's commands, and cherishes the opposite spirit, finds that there is a hollowness in his former pleasure; that there was a hatefulness in the cause of his former pleasure, and finds what a peace and joy there is in the opposite state, and that to have the peace of God reigning in him is infinitely more glorious and blessed than to be his own master although he had long cherished the desire to be his own master. This petition, 'thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven' is the prayer of one who is tasting of the sweetness that there is in keeping God's commands, and who is realising something of what is experienced by those who cease not day and night to praise and serve God and who have no rebellious will, no desires to oppose to those of God but whose desires are one with His.

Now these three petitions are unquestionably requests which, in putting up I put up regarding myself and my brethren in Christ and the world around me; but still all these prayers have a reference to the time when God's tabernacle shall be with men, and to the restitution of all things. In asking that God's name be hallowed I speak not as one by whom his name has been fully hallowed, and therefore, I ask for myself; that I may be made fully to acknowledge his excellent glory. In praying that his kingdom come I do not pray as one who am myself perfectly in obedience to the will of God" and therefore I pray not only for others; but also for myself that I may be more entirely and fully worshiping and honouring God as my Lord and my God – so that in praying that God's will may be done on earth I do not except myself from the prayer, for I feel that whatever blessedness I have tasted in the keeping of God's commandments, there was a full and deep meeting of God's requirements which might have been in me which, if it had been in me, I should have had more of the blessedness. Therefore all these prayers are prayers of persons who to pray for themselves, and unquestionably as for myself so for others – for those who have already received God to reign over them, for those in whom there has already taken place a saving change, and also for those in whom it has not. All these prayers are offered as present petitions, and crying to God from the spirit of a child of God, groaning under the feeling of evil within him and about him, and desiring that that evil may cease so that these prayers ultimately point to that which is to come, and God's name will be hallowed – God's kingdom will come - God's will will be done in earth as it is in heaven, fully, according to the fullness of the cry of the Spirit in the children of God – in sending up these petitions

when God's kingdom is assured and when the glory of God in Christ fills the whole earth, and when there is the reign of righteousness and when the tabernacle of God is with men.

I feel, my dear friends, that there should be a continual pressing on to that consummation of all things – continual cry for the perfect reign of righteousness in all our prayers, and while we seek it now these should be a part of the world come revealed, and ask that multitudes should be brought to life as those who are to be prepared for that world yet we are not cherishing the desire we should cherish unless our hearts are stretching on towards the time when God's name shall be truly hallowed that there shall not be one in all the earth that does not acknowledge Him for who He truly is, and when God's kingdom shall be so truly come that all power shall manifestly be ascribed to God and all shall willingly obey the sceptre of his kingdom. And God's will shall be so truly done in all the earth that there shall be as universal a moving in harmony with it on earth as there is in heaven.

Now, my dear friends, I desire to direct your attention to the prayer which must ever be the cry of the heart of everyone who feels himself called on to plead with God.

"Give us this day our daily bread..."

My dear friends, I believe that many are under the false conception that the daily bread here means our food – the food by which this body is sustained and nourished. If we would eat to the glory of God we must ask and receive our daily food in that sense just as directly from God's hand but I feel that it is abundantly manifest from the context that the daily bread here spoken of is the Spirit, the holy Spirit, for you observe after having concluded the prayer that our Lord Jesus obviously spoke with especial reference to this petition. You see he says, "which of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight and say unto him. Friend, lend me three loaves" in which he is obviously referring to his having taught them to seek for daily bread as if considering the dishonest hearts of men, as if considering that men would perhaps say we may indeed put up petitions which concern God's honour and glory and we may expect that God will answer them but this petition for our daily bread for ourselves is a thing for ourselves, and how can we expect an answer to it?

My dear friends, there is such a dishonesty of heart in us that if we were certain a thing was for God's glory we could trust God's sufficiency to give it but when it is for ourselves we see not how we can trust God for it. This is very horrible but it is just a plain statement of the feeling in men's hearts, and our Lord, in tenderness to us, though it is a great sin to think in this way, has returned to the special pressing of this petition, "Give us this day our daily bread" because he knew that this being a request for ourselves was what we would be least ready to believe that God would give us. He refers to this when speaks of the loaves, and again "Ask and it shall be given you, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you, for everyone who asketh receiveth...", and when he follows this affirmative declaration by referring to that witness to himself which God has put within us "And if ye, being evil know how to give good gifts to unto your children, how much more shall your father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him. If a son ask bread of any of you that is a father will he give him a stone; or if he ask for a fish will he give him a snake, or if he ask for a n egg will he offer him a scorpion..." This is our Lord's reasoning, he calls upon us to put this question to ourselves "are you better..." Our Lord calls on us to consider whether it is reasonable to suppose that the cry of his child should move and interest the heart of any parent and yet that our cry should not interest the heart of God.

My dear friends, men may philosophise and reason as they please, and having their heart and conscience wander away into the regions of intellect and imagination and may try to satisfy themselves, that because some men ultimately perish, God there fore does not love them at all. But God has given us a witness for himself in the existence of such a thing as a father's heart and all that idle reasoning by which you would excuse yourselves for being without the Spirit of God, and *without* the mind of Christ, because you are without the Spirit of God, is at once cast aside by this simple word, "If you, being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children *how much more* shall your heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to those that ask Him."

My dear friends, it is not to a privileged class but to sinners that we thus speak. Trust you see it is of the Holy Spirit that he speaks in the prayer when he says, "Give us this day our daily bread" for at the conclusion of all he says that God will give the holy Spirit to those that ask Him, showing us clearly that this is what he would have them to ask – that this was what He was encouraging them to ask. I said to you, my friends, that anyone who knows what it is to pray the first petition of this prayer – knows that it is in the strength of the Spirit that he can pray, and therefore every such one feels that he needs continually the Holy Spirit to enable him to ask...[illegible...] those things which are to God's glory... here is day by day...

I beseech you to mark, that we are here...that the expression of the spirit of adoption the experience of present confidence towards God, and of power to worship God truly, does not give is the feeling of independence from God but on the contrary, such a one will feel that he is to look to God, that he is to ask of God, and expect from God this Spirit which is to be to him as daily bread. Oh, it is a lesson most important to be taught, that our strength is in our Head, and that it is ever to be received from Him.

But I now desire to engage your attention, for a little while, with the expression "daily bread" as applied in this prayer. And I wish you to see how we are called onto ask the Spirit, because it is written that "unless you eat of the flesh and drink of the blood of the Son of man there is no life in you". How are we to eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ? We cannot do so *literally*, in respect of the true body broken and the true blood shed, as some have erroneously held and thought, but the Spirit coming into us of the reason Saviour is to us the body and blood of Christ. It is because the Spirit comes to us from the risen Saviour – it is because it comes as the spirit of truth which is indeed Christ in us – it is because of having the spirit of the risen Saviour within us - because this is the truth that the Holy Ghost is called our daily bread just as the life we are to live is not our own but Christ in us.

Now my dear friends, to prevent any misconception in your mind it is necessary before I part with you that I illustrate the petition "**Forgive us our debts as we forgive the one who is indebted to us**".

My dear friends, I entreat of you in coming to this petition to remember the place that is given to it, and the persons who were to present it. I entreat of you to remember that it is a petition to be used by those who know God as Father, who feel the interest in his glory and his kingdom and in the doing of his will, and who know the Holy Spirit, and trust God for the Spirit as their daily bread; I entreat you to remember that this petition is to be used in the full assurance of our own adoption into the family of God. It is not a petition asking admittance into God's family – it is the prayer of a child of God.

Now my dear friends, that forgiveness of sin that men dispute about, that pardon which they desire to be allowed to be ignorant of, cannot be here the thing spoken of. I entreat you to mark that when men say 'I cannot know whether my sins are forgiven or not' they say 'I do not need to know if I am a child of God or not'. They think that the forgiveness of which *they* are ignorant, the person who knows that he is a child of God is not ignorant of. And it is in regard to this whatever it be that they say, that it is not a thing that belongs to all, and that it is not a thing that a person might take for granted belongs to him. Now I entreat you to see that, whatever is meant by the words "Forgive us our trespasses – or sins" – seeing that it is the prayer of a regenerated person, and spoken in the light, and offered up in the feeling that he is a child of God, it does not mean that which people speak of when they object to saying that the forgiveness of sins extends to all men, for the thing they object to is possessed by believers.

I trust that you are now giving heed to this, and seeing that the prayer "Forgive us our sins" is not the prayer 'Give us the place of children', seeing that the prayer "Forgive us our sins" is not the prayer of one who is not yet feeling himself to be in the family of God, but who expects and wishes to be taken in to it, but is obviously the prayer of one who feels himself to be in the family of God, and knows well the peculiar footing on which he stands – knows well that he is there not as a person against whom God has no charge but that he is there as a person to whom God is not imputing sins, and therefore his prayer to God is always a prayer for forgiveness because it is always an acknowledgment that to receive him is to forgive sin – it is a prayer for forgiveness because it is the feeling that God's act of receiving me at any moment is not to be the act of receiving a holy being that had never sinned but that though I can come to God with the certainty of reception, and in the full spirit of adoption, and in the full confidence that I am welcome, I know that the manner of receiving me is a forgiving of sin – that the very act of receiving me is the forgiving of sin and that all God's intercourse with me is a continual passing over of guilt and not dealing with it as it deserves.

And this is the kind of feeling that I am enabled of the Spirit of God to see one greatly offending against me while I am enabled to have my arms always open to receive him. I wish not to conceal from myself that God receives me as I receive such a person – He receives me as one who has offended against Him. On the contrary, I come to God and ask Him to receive me just as He is enabling me to receive those who offend against me. But my dear friends, while we are taught that it is not just a past act of God in the shedding of the blood of Christ, and in the accepting of the sacrifice of Christ that is spoken of in scripture as forgiveness, and that this word is used to express God's continual receiving of his own children who are dwelling in flesh and blood and having no ground whereto to approach to God but pardoning mercy yet it is manifest that the whole of this

Spirit within me which says 'Father' – which says 'Hallowed by thy name, thy Kingdom come and they will be done on earth as in heaven', and which trusts to God for daily bread and which is conscious of the forgiving others in a spirit that receives through faith of that mind in God which we thus cherish, and that all this in us is just the reflection back of all that came down from God unto us. So that the plain statement of the fact is this that God in Christ reveals himself as the Forgiver of our sins and reveals to us what it is to forgive by His act of forgiveness to ourselves, and teaches us to forgive by forgiving us – that the Spirit of God coming into us and enabling us to dwell in the light of this forgiveness does, in our approach to God, cause us to recognise, as in ourselves, that forgiveness which we, receiving from our God and causes us to ask God to receive us as we are going to receive others.

My dear friends, there is often a mystery in things when we look at them at a distance which disappears when we come near it, and have to deal with it as a reality. And I assure that whatever mystery you see in this forgiveness extended to all men and revealed in Christ that they may return to God, in point of experience there is no perplexity about it, but, if you believe in the forgiving love you will find it an easy thing to know why you should be made to cry 'Forgive us our sins as we forgive them that trespass against us'.

I conclude by entreating you to remember that when our Lord was upon the earth much of his teaching appears a perfect mystery to those that heard Him, and that they took exception against it, and made objections to it, which, if you have been reading your Bibles with attention you will feel that you have a great deal of sympathy with them, and that you would have been very apt in their situation to have made the same objection.

I entreat you to read, in order that you may see the truth of that which I now state, chapters 7,8,9 and 10 of John's Gospel and ask yourselves whether it was not, as men would say, natural to take it as they took it.

Now my dear friends, is this to excuse them? Certainly not – because they ought not have leant to their own understanding, but have looked to the Lord for teaching. And so, if you take up impressions of the things I teach which you ought not and make objections – if you mistake the thing because you lean to your own understanding, and will not become as little children, then you are justly condemned. I therefore solemnly warn you that if it should appear that there is anything that you have heard that is mystical and too deep – or that in any other way you can excuse yourselves for being ignorant of it – I solemnly warn you that you have no apology for being ignorant of its being truth because the Holy Spirit is ready to enable you to enter into it. AMEN.

