

and know more is, that God is our Father; and that the secret of all those suspicions we have, those fears, those shrinkings, those doubts, lies in this, that we lose our grasp of this beautiful and blessed truth, that God is our Father. It is a very strange thing that natural men contemplate God, the Lord's Supper, the Bible, the Sanctuary, religion, with feelings of terror; they place very much in the same category, the grave, death, and disease, the sacrament, religion, and the priest: these all belong, they think, to the one class of terrible things, that it is always best to put them all off to the last moment, and crowd them into that moment, and have nothing to do with them, lest, like baleful shadows, they darken and make gloomy the life that we live. My dear friends, this is no more like Christianity than like Mohammedanism; it is liker Mohammedanism and heathenism than Christianity. I repeat, not as my own conviction, but as the reiterated expression of the Bible, that this book and this religion were as much designed to make men happy, as ever they were to make men holy; and that never will men know what real happiness is, till they know what real religion is. Every element of sadness in a Christian's heart is not from this, but from another source; and every element of joy in a Christian's heart comes from this, and no other source. Carry this conviction, then into your warehouses when you have great losses to bear; carry it into your counting houses when the last post brings you the worst intelligence of what you have afloat; carry it to your rooms when you are upon a sick-bed; carry it to the grave when the earth falls cold and heavy upon the bosom of the near, the dear, and the beloved, and hear whispered from the skies, "My child;" and respond in adoring, grateful, and happy accents, "My Father!" And if He be a Father, will He needlessly afflict? It is for our good, and not for our pain, that He afflicts us when He sees it meet to do so.

This Father of ours, I would notice in the next place, to whom we pray, is not the author of evil. Nay, when poor untutored humanity prayed for a deliverer, it could not think so; because God cannot be the author of it, and the deliverer too. To pray that the author of evil would deliver us from evil is like praying that Satan may be divided against himself. God is here set before us as the deliverer from evil, not as the author of it. He sends chastisement, but that is, not evil. He sends judgments on his children to draw them to himself, and win them from the world, but that is not evil. There is no evil in anything that has not sin in it; the only evil in the universe is sin, and where sin is not, there cannot be evil; where sin is, there, of course, must be evil. But here we pray to God, not as the author of evil, but as the deliverer from it; and this teaches us that He did not make it, that He did not

send it, that it is an intrusion and an interpolation, that it is a discord in creation's harmony, that it is God's mind to root it out, exterminate it, to destroy it for ever, and make the earth that it has marred beautiful as when first it was made; so that if He pronounced it good at the beginning, He will pronounce it better in the end, in as far as redeeming work transcends in glory creating and ruling work. But the original passage, as I daresay you have often heard, is properly and strictly translated, not "deliver us from evil," but "deliver us from the evil," *apo tou ponrou*. Some have said it meant the Evil One—Satan; and I do not know but that this may be the meaning. It depends upon whether *ponrou* is in the neuter or masculine gender. In the Greek adjective, which we translate "evil" or "bad," the masculine and neuter gender are the same. If the world be masculine, the rendering would be "the evil person," "the evil one;" but if it be the neuter gender, it means the "evil thing." My idea is that the neuter gender is here used, and that it is sin which is referred to; teaching us that all evils, whatever they may be called, are branches from one common root, and that root is sin—that all that is wrong in the universe coheres and finds its strength, its force, its nutriment, in sin. Thus, then, sin is the evil that rends humanity from God, and humanity from humanity. Sin is the explosive power in the depths of the human heart that gathers strength from indulgence, and from years, till it bursts into insurrections, revolutions, wars, convulsions, and strews the earth with its wrecks—the evidence of what sin is, and what sin can do. Sin, therefore, is the great root; and sickness, as far as it is evil; and sorrow, and plague, and pestilence, and famine are either the exponents of it, or in other cases the fruits of it; and evil, in as far as they are tainted and impregnated by it. Nay, properly speaking, pestilence, that dire one amid whose ravages we have been, is not evil, but it is the punishment of evil; for by a most mysterious law, but a law beautiful and good, the effects of sin recoil upon itself; so that pestilence, for instance, is not only the result of sin, but the avenger of sin. Sin gives birth to plague, and pestilence and famine; these are then formed into a scourge by God himself, with which sin is punished. It is thus that sin, by its very rebound, acts, and tends to its own final destruction and extermination.

Therefore, then, we who have been in the midst of this city that has looked for so many weeks so plague-smitten—we who have escaped, not because we were more worthy, but because God was more merciful—we who acknowledge and feel,—let philosophers scoff,—let scientific men look down with profound affected sovereign contempt—we who believe the old-fashioned truth, that becomes more true, or rather more apparent, the longer the