

A father provides for his children. God provides for birds and flowers—"shall he not much more clothe you?" (vi. 25-34.)

A father cares for *all* his children, bad as well as good. Just like God again, (v. 45.)

Therefore, says Jesus, "pray to thy Father;" "when ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven." If only we can realize that "this God is *our* God," an ever-present and ever-gracious Friend, prayer will become the simplest thing in the world—just this, "Ask, and ye shall receive." Do any still feel afar off? Then it is because sin separates from God; see Isa. lix. 1, 2. What is to be done? Resolve as the Prodigal did, "I will arise and go to *my* Father," and you will find that, though once "far off," you are "made nigh by the blood of Christ." (Eph. ii. 13.)

Berean Notes.

I. GENERAL STATEMENT.

The sermon on the Mount continued. The mode and the nature of prayer considered.

II. TOPICAL AND EXPOSITORY NOTES.

Topic: "Lord, teach us to pray."

1. PRAYING TO BE SEEN OF MEN, ver. 5. HYPOCRITES. A term originally signifying *stage-players, mask-wearers*, that is, pretenders. STANDING. The devout frequently stood. 1 Sam. i. 26; 1 Kings viii. 14; Luke xviii. 13. Yet kneeling was the more frequent posture, especially among early Christians. Dan. vi. 10; Matt. xxvi. 39; Luke xxii. 41; Acts vii. 60; ix. 40; xx. 36. CORNERS. Places well adapted to show off pretenders. THEIR REWARD. Applause of men, not of God. James iv. 6. (*Illus. 1.*)

2. PRAYING TO BE HEARD OF GOD, ver. 6. CLOSET. A place of retirement. A tree, a shrub, a garret, a barn, a palace, a thoroughfare, a hovel, the heart itself. Psa. xxxiv. 15; cxxx. 1. (*Illus. 2.*) SHUT....DOOR. 2 Kings iv. 33. Secret communion with God is sacred. Keep holy thoughts in; keep the world out. SECRET....OPENLY. Real prayer brings a triple reward: in the "closet," in daily life, before an assembled universe. (*Illus. 3.*)

3. SIMPLICITY IN PRAYER, vers. 7, 8. VAIN REPETITIONS. "Babble not." Heartlessness of talk. Eccles. v. 2. "Much speaking," little devotion. Luke xviii. 10-13. AS....HEATHEN. 1 Kings xviii. 26. Hindus, Mohammedans, Romanists still illustrate this babbling. "Pray without ceasing," 1 Thess. v. 17; not in ostentation, but in the simplicity of sincerity.

4. OUR ADORABLE FATHER, ver. 9. (1.) *Mode of prayer.* THIS MANNER. (a) With acknowledgment of your own character and relations as here set forth; (b) For the objects here specified; (c) In the spirit and with the arguments here indicated—PRAY YE. (2.) *Character of God.* (a) A FATHER; (b) Highly exalted—IN HEAVEN; (c) Holy; (d) King; (e) Provider; (f) Forgiver; (g) Deliverer; (h) Sovereign; (i) Almighty; (j) Glorious; (k) Eternal. (3.) *Name.* "The name signifies everything that belongs to God—his essence, attributes, house, day, word, ministers," etc.—*Wordsworth.* This HALLOWED BE THY NAME is a prayer for ourselves May Thy name be enshrined in holy hearts! (*Illus. 4.*)

5. THE COMING KINGDOM, ver. 10. KINGDOM. Rule, authority, dominion. Let God be King of all nations; King of all hearts. Luke xvii. 21. AS....IN HEAVEN. (1.) With alacrity; (2.) With purity; (3.) With intelligence; (4.) With perseverance; (5.) With cheerfulness; (6.) With constancy; (7.) With rapturous delight; (8.) With success. (*Illus. 5.*)

6. OUR DAILY NEED, ver. 11. Soil, seed, germ, plant, harvest—all from God. Man dependent. Needs all things—temporal and spiritual. Lord, GIVE US....BREAD—for body and for soul.

7. FORGIVE US, vers. 12, 14, 15. Discords among men—"debtors," "trespassers." We ever need forgiveness. Luke xi. 4. "Seventy times seven." Matt. xviii. 22; James ii. 13. Christ's wondrous spirit of forgiveness. Luke xxiii. 34. (*Illus. 6.*)

8. LEAD AND DELIVER US, ver. 13. The Satan that tempted Christ tempts us all. The "temptation," that is, the *testing, the proving*, of God's providence are used only for our good. James i. 12-17. DELIVER. (1.) "From this present evil world." Gal. i. 4. (2.) From the EVIL ONE. Deliver—*loose our bands, break our chains, snatch, pluck us from all evil.* (*Illus. 7.*)

9. EVERLASTING PRAISE AND GLORY, ver. 13. (1.) *The glory of earth.* Good-will, charity, peace, purity, joy—in every clime, in every nation, in every heart. Wildernesses are glad and deserts rejoice. Isa. xxxv. 1. Earth not far from heaven. (2.) *The glory of heaven.* The FATHER there; JESUS there; the COMFORTER there; sinlessness; perfect obedience; God honored; reunion; perfect love between all the inhabitants; freedom from all evil and temptation; holiness unto the Lord. The glory lasts FOREVER. (*Illus. 8.*)