

ward plague-spots, the sores that Isaiah mentions, "from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot," that testify to the most sceptic mind that there is an inner, deep seated, universal disease, of which these are but the outward signs.

All humanity has prayed this prayer, "Deliver us from evil." Ever since man felt the evil that he himself had introduced, man has in some shape, in some form, in words, in deeds, or in writings, prayed, "Deliver us from evil." What is medicine? It is sick human nature crying in its agony, "Deliver me from this evil." What, let me ask, is legislation? What is war? What are police?

The varied struggles and efforts of man oppressed and suffering, "Deliver us from evil." What are schools, academies, colleges, study by night, and labor by day?—but the litanies of that express universal want, "Deliver us from what we feel to be evil." What is the mythology of the heathen,—their "gods many and their lords many;" their rites, and sacrifices, and ceremonies?—but efforts to propitiate him whom they think to be the author of the evil? The varied litany, in short, of all humanity in all ages, in all tongues, under all circumstances, is, "Deliver us from evil."

Thus, then, we have seen that it is the universal cry of man that he may be delivered from evil. The plan that he adopts, the person to whom he addresses the prayer, the spirit in which he does it, the end he has in view,—these all may and do differ; these have their shades of meaning and significance, their imperfections and their relative perfections; but the cry is universal. And what does all this imply? That evil in the world is not a part and parcel of the world, as it was originally made; that it is an interpolation on it, and in it, but not of it. The very cry, "Deliver us from evil," implies that evil is not, if I may use the expression, the normal state of the world—that is, its original state; that, in other words, whoever made it, whoever introduced it, God neither made it nor introduced it, nor is responsible for its ravages. Here, then, is a great admission. If humanity felt in its best moments that evil was a law of the world,—the same as gravitation, the same as spring, and summer, and autumn, and winter,—it would not pray to be delivered from it. You do not hear of any man in this latitude, or in this climate, praying to be delivered from the winter or the summer; he knows they will come, and must come, by great laws, the reversal or destruction of which would be the ruin of mankind. But when man prays to be delivered from evil, there is an undertone in that prayer, audible to the listening and sanctified ear, which conveys this great truth, that man's innermost, deepest, and most real conviction is, that evil is here, but that it should not be here; that it is here, but God did not place it here—whoever placed it here, He did not.

This is a ray that lingers in the nooks and crannies of the human heart,—a ray from the first day that burst upon Paradise, when Adam and Eve were created, reminding them what the world once was,—so fair, so beautiful, and so holy; and what the world has now been made,—so evil, so bitter, and so wicked, and a forelight of what the world will yet be,—more fair and glorious still. Humanity will not settle down in the horrible conviction that evil is a part and parcel of the world—an irremediable thing; but it hears the cries of creation, groaning and travailing in pain, waiting to be delivered; and it echoes these groans and cries, too, in solemn harmony with it, "Deliver us from evil."

It is not only implied that evil is not a part of the world, but there is implied a belief, wherever the prayer is uttered, that there is or shall be a deliverer. It is not only the formula of Nature's prayer, but it is the embodiment also of Nature's creed. Why pray that a deliverer would deliver from evil, if there be no previous creed teaching that there is such a deliverer, and that such a delivery is not impossible? It is true, millions do not know who the deliverer is; and hence they have appealed to deliverers many. It is true, they have no conception of the purity, the majesty, the glory of Him who is the true deliverer; but it is nevertheless true, it is applicable to Egypt, to Nineveh, to Greece, to Rome, to the most barbarous lands, to the most unenlightened ages, that Christ is the desire, and was the desire of all nations. They did not know this Christ who could meet and fulfill that desire; but humanity felt within it an aching void that nothing upon earth could satisfy, and that Christ alone does, and can, and will satisfy; and He, in this sense, was the desire of all nations. Hence, there was a cry that has resounded all along the corridors of space, and through all the centuries of time,—a cry that intimated the previous creed, that there is a deliverer somewhere, and that gave expression to its feelings in the present petition, "Deliver us from evil."

Then, what is the advantage, we ask, or where the necessity, of Christ teaching us this prayer, if this has been the prayer, if it has been the creed and the cry of all humanity? Here is the difference: Christ has revealed, with no faltering or uncertain sound, the petition, and Him to whom the petition is to be addressed. He has revealed, first of all, the hearer of prayer—God; He has revealed the formula and model of prayer—what is before us; He has revealed the name in which that prayer is to rise—"Whatever you ask, (whether it be in this or any other prayer,) ask it in my name;" and He has revealed the inspirer of prayer, who alone can make extempore prayer to be not formal, and liturgical prayer to be spiritual,—namely, the Holy Spirit of God. What nations, therefore, in their ignorance addressed to