

illustrate Keble's poem, 'Bereavement.' The poet had suggested that the departed sister might, perhaps, 'by Heaven's decree,' prove a guide to the surviving one 'in ways to angels known'; but this is a very different thing from the 'unseen' spirit of the departed child becoming an angel.

Against such unscriptural language on topics of which revelation tells us but little, every true Churchman will be on his guard, and will not allow himself, or others if he can prevent them, to give currency to theories which the Church and the Bible contradict. But there are other 'popular heresies' which are more mischievous than these.

We constantly hear it said, or see it written, concerning some person of general good character that he is 'incapable' of such and such sins. This is downright heresy. There would be no harm in saying 'unlikely to commit,' but 'incapable of' means actually *unable* to commit. There is no sin of which any child of Adam is really incapable. David and St. Peter committed sins of which they may have been thought 'incapable'; and are a standing warning to him that thinketh he standeth to take heed lest he fall. Some wise words of Thackeray's, written as by Esmond (Book II., chapter,) are worth repeating here:—

'Fortune, good or ill, as I take it, does not change men and women; it but develops their character. As there are a thousand thoughts lying within a man that he does not know till he takes up the pen to write, so the heart is a secret even to him (or her) who has it in his own breast. Who hath not found himself surprised into revenge, or action, or passion, for good or evil, whereof the seeds lay within him, latent and unexpected, until the occasion called them forth?'

Another most objectionable phrase which savours of dangerous heresy, is the verb 'atone' applied to human actions. A person is said to 'atone for' a wicked act by a good one, as though he could propitiate the wrath of God by his 'own works or deservings.' 'Atone' is really a very sacred word, not to be lightly misused. It is derived from the two words '*at one*,' of which it is compounded. By the atonement of Calvary the Mediator between God and man made them 'at one' by removing that barrier which separated them. There is no other 'atonement' for sin.

It may be said that no heresy is intended by the employment of such expressions as these, but it cannot be denied that there is in the present age a vast amount of free-thinking on subjects of the profoundest importance, and that the tendency of this free thought is decidedly towards the breaking down of all restrictions, especially in religion. Misbelief concerning the absolute necessity of real repentance, and the justice of God as the Punisher of sin, is widely spread amongst us, and careless and wordly people are ready enough to make use of any language which encourages such misbelief. It behoves serious Church folk, therefore, to be much on their guard, lest by lip or by pen, they should, even unwittingly, condone, much less propagate, such pernicious error.—A.M.W. in *Church Bells*.

BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

The number of nominal Christians who play with Buddhism as if it were an innocuous fad is not small. But when it is considered that Buddhism, according to one of its most exalted disciples, teaches the highest wisdom and goodness without a personal God: a continuation of being without an immortal soul: an eternally blessed state without a local heaven: a possibility of salvation without a vicarious Saviour: a redemption which can be reached without prayer, without divine grace, and solely through one's own will and power, there is no excuse for even a merely nominal Christian's non-appreciation of the width of the vast gulf that lies between the doctrines of Buddha Gautama and the divine truth as enunciated by Christ.—*Churchman*.

CONFIRMATION.—PART III.

GOD'S GRACE, AND THE MEANS THROUGH WHICH WE RECEIVE IT.

PRAYER.—THE LORD'S PRAYER.

THE LORD'S PRAYER—the Prayer taught us by our Lord Himself—is at once the best prayer and the compendium of all prayers.

There are *two great principles* of prayer to be gathered from this Prayer—

1. That God's honor and glory should be the first, and therefore chief, subject of our thoughts and desires when we pray. The first three petitions concern such subjects, the last only relate *immediately* to our own wants, whether temporal or spiritual.

2. That we must not pray only for ourselves, but must in all our prayers think of the needs of our fellow men, especially our brothers and sisters in Christ. We say "Our Father," not "My Father"; we pray, "Give us," not "Give me." "Our prayer is public and common, and when we pray, we pray not for one, but for the whole people, because we, the whole people, are one." (Cyprian.)

We may remark, also, how *simple*, and yet how *comprehensive*, the petitions of this prayer are; most unlike the ordinary prayers of mere human framing, especially what are called extempore prayers. Too often men seem to think that they will be heard for their much speaking, or fineness of language; but this prayer teaches us that God only requires simplicity and brevity *with earnestness*.

But the words are so familiar that many persons, it is to be feared, use them without sufficiently realising the fulness of meaning in each petition.

"No prayer should be said, at times, at least so slowly, so collectedly, so humbly, so reverentially. No prayer requires more teaching of God's Spirit to enter somewhat into its depth and fulness, and so to say it aright." (M. F. Sadler.)

Our Father. We address God as His children not only by creation, in common with all men, but in a special manner, "*by adoption and grace*," in Christ Jesus His "only-begotten Son" by nature. Hence this prayer used to be called "The Children's prayer," and in the early days of Christianity only those who had been baptized were allowed to use it.

But the next words—"Which art in heaven"—remind us that though He is our Father, we must ever think of Him with the utmost reverence and awe, for He is in Heaven, the Creator and Ruler of all things (Mal. i. 6). There, also is Jesus Christ our Mediator and Advocate (Heb. ix. 24).

Hallowed by Thy Name. God's "Name," in Scripture, means Himself, His character, and all that belongs to Him. "To hallow It" means not only that we should keep the Third Commandment—"Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain"—in all its fulness, but that we should endeavor to bring honor and glory to God by

1. Our lives as Christians (S. Matt. v. 16; 1 Cor. vi. 20);

2. Holy Worship (Ps. xxix. 2; S. John v. 23).

"I desire, my Lord God, our heavenly Father, Who is the Giver of all goodness, to send His grace unto me, and to all people, that we may worship Him . . . as we ought to do." (Paraphrase in Catechism.)

Thy Kingdom come. God's kingdom may be regarded in three ways—

1. His Kingdom—or His Church—visible here on earth.

2. His Kingdom of righteousness within the heart (S. Luke xvii. 21).

3. His Kingdom of future Glory, when "the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ."

We therefore pray herein—

1. That the Church may grow and prosper, and spread over the earth. It is the great missionary Prayer.
2. That Christ's Second Coming may be hastened; and, in order thereto,
3. That we may grow in holiness, as children of the light. That Christ may reign over our hearts more perfectly.

"That we may serve Him . . . as we ought to do. (Catechism.)

Thy will be done, etc.

The Angels in Heaven do God's Will perfectly, lovingly, ceaselessly, by

- a. Reverent adoration (Isa. vi. 2, 3);
- b. Active service (Dan. vii. 10; Heb. i. 14).

We pray that even thus God's Will may be done by us; not only patiently borne when His Will seems contrary to ours, but actively and lovingly done in faithful obedience—"that we may obey Him . . . as we ought to do." This petition is the most comprehensive of all prayers, for what does "God's Will" not include?

"Give us this day, etc." We now come down to ourselves and our needs. We herein pray that Our Father "will send us all things that are needful both for our souls and our bodies."

Nothing can be better than Wesley's note on this petition:

"Give us, O Father (for we claim nothing of right, but only of Thy free mercy), this day (for we take no thought for the morrow), our daily bread; all things needful for our souls and bodies; not only the meat that perisheth, but the Sacramental Bread, and Thy Grace, the food which endureth unto everlasting life." (Quoted by Sadler, Com. in loc.)

"Forgive us our trespasses," &c. Our Lord alluded to this petition immediately after having given the prayer. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your father forgive your trespasses;" thus making very strongly the importance of this petition, and the fact that our forgiveness is conditional on our forgiving others.

What a continual lesson of charity there is in this prayer! What are the offences that have been committed against us compared to the sins with which we have wearied our Father in heaven?

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

God tempts no man, says S. James (i. 13), i.e., He cannot desire to allure into sin, but He allows temptation, since nothing can happen without His permission, and He also *tries* (and this is the root meaning of the word temptation, e.g. Gen. xxii. 1; James i. 12), that He may prove men's faith and perfect obedience.

Temptation may thus prove a blessing (S. James i. 12). Nevertheless, since we are so frail and weak, we may well pray that we may not be thus tried, and that if we are we may be delivered from evil. Some ancient authors, and our Revised Version, render this "evil," "the evil one," i.e. Satan. But it more probably means, as in the paraphrase of our Catechism, all real evil, i.e. all sin, for sin alone is really and necessarily evil; that it will please Him to save and defend us in all danger, ghostly and bodily; and that He will keep us from all sin and wickedness, and from our ghostly (spiritual) enemy, and from everlasting death."

When we pray not to be led into temptation, it should continually remind us how careful we should be not voluntarily to go where temptation is likely to meet us. In our path of duty we may confidently rely on God's protection, but not if we go out of that path into the way of temptation.

For Thine is, &c. "The doxology with which the Lord's Prayer is ordinarily concluded probably does not form part of the original prayer, but was added afterwards, perhaps from the Liturgies" [Sadler]. In our Prayer Book it is used sometimes with it, and sometimes without.

It is a fit and appropriate manner of summing