



## "GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD."

BY THE RIGHT REV. THE BISHOP OF DERBY.

**W**E can only try to gather just a few of the thoughts contained in these well-known simple words. We will take them in their natural order.

1. "*Give*."—It is the petition of a child from its father. Any father or mother knows the word well. It may get tiresome in its repetition, but a father likes to be asked, even though he may not give. And God our Father likes giving; He is always the Giver. He says, "Ask what I shall give thee." Jesus Christ points to an earthly father's gifts, and then adds, "How much more shall your Heavenly Father give good things unto them that ask Him?" So if the word "give" comes naturally to a child's lips it comes still more naturally to the lips of one who prays, because there is so much more power and will in the Father to give.

2. "*Give us*."—"Give" is generally the first word in a child's request; but it is not the first word in the Lord's Prayer. The prayer is almost half finished before "give" comes. It is God's glory first, His Name, His Kingdom, His Will; and *then* our needs. What a model of self-restraint! "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." I fancy our private prayers constantly need this caution, this self-restraint. We want something badly for ourselves, and it seems so little for God to give; we want it so badly that it has got the first place in our hearts, and therefore in our prayers; we want it, irrespective of God's glory and our Father's will. And the result is that if we do not get it, we are inclined to sulk; and we know exactly how a sulky child feels.

But if a child's first word is generally "*give*" its second is almost certainly "*me*." "Give me this; I want it for my very own." This selfish instinct, this desire of possession, comes very early, as every parent knows. Later on an

elder child may come with a request which will include more than himself, but it is not the first instinct. The idea of self comes before the idea of brotherhood. The Lord's Prayer breathes brotherhood all through. Prayer must not only be self-restrained, it must be unselfish. Yet how many prayers are prayed which really come to nothing more than "Give me!"

3. "*Give us this day*."—The prayer is for to-day, not to-morrow. To-morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. When it comes, it will be to-day, and with its renewed needs must come renewed prayer. Two lessons, then, we may learn from this: first, that it is possible to be over-anxious in our prayers; and secondly, that the need for prayer is continuous. To-day has its own needs, its own worries, its own trials and difficulties; but it has, on the other hand, its own strength. What a power of strength there is in the man or woman who rises from prayer in the morning, after having laid the outlines of the day before God, as far as they may be seen in prospect, and having asked the Father to give the strength which may be needed, and having resolved to use the strength when given! If you have really prayed to do God's will, you will be ready to say, "Give us this day" the strength to go and do it.

4. "*Give us this day our daily bread*."—Now we have the petition in full, and how exquisitely simple it is! Yet it contains the only hard word to be found in the Lord's Prayer. The word translated "daily," is found nowhere else. Many meanings have been given; but it is satisfactory to have the authority of such a scholar as Bishop Lightfoot for saying that there is probably no other English word that comes nearer to the true meaning. "Our daily bread"; that is, the bread which is necessary for our livelihood, the bread without which we can't do our appointed work, the