No. 173.

"Give us this day our daily bread."

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Matth. VI. 11. "Give us this day our daily bread."

It is not necessary, or would scarcely be edifying, to call your attention to the critical remarks or explanations with this passage has called forth. I will only observe upon its meaning, without going into detail. The word "bread," as occurs in this petition, is, according to the Hebrew phraseology, a general expression for all the means of living sustenance, for every thing relating to the comfort or support of our bodies, not merely for the food we eat. The word in the original, which answers to the word "daily" in the text, has been the subject of much dispute, as it is asserted by no writers but the evangelists. But upon investigation its meaning seems to me to be, not "daily," as it is expressed in our translation, but "necessary to the preservation of welfare of life." Thus the sense of the whole petition may be rendered thus: "grant us day by day, all these things, which are necessary for our bodily comfort and support, our comfort and enjoyment."
The reasons for this interpretation need not now be given; but it seems most consistent with the rest of the passage.

It has been imagined that there were figurative meanings connected with the terms of this petition of the LP and the word "bread" or "meat" to understand that true bread that cometh down from heaven" spoken of elsewhere in Scripture. It is, therefore, and in the sense of the Lord's Prayer and elsewhere, that the whole is only a concise way of praying for the glory of the Messiah's kingdom. According to this explanation, it would have no reference to our temporal wants, but be merely a reiteration of the preceding petition for spiritual blessings, a little varied. But this would be slightly an empty and superfluous without the least support, either in the sense of the language or in the nature of the subject. They, therefore, in their own opinion, ground it, in great degree, on their concomitancy of such a petition in the middle of such great heavenly subjects. But there is surely no reason why we should not pray for temporal blessings, as well as spiritual, as it is their due place and proportion: they are important, not necessary. Especially when we consider the peculiar circumstances of these for whom this prayer was made, and shall, still, be considered, that this petition in the sense I have attached to it, was in the highest degree proper and worthy of being inserted in that admirable form of prayer.

Now the condition of the disciples of it, as we must remember, was such, as to allow them no time for common cares of ordinary life. There were very few situations, in which any one of their duties should be allowed to become so conspicuous as to swallow up all inferior duties. But such great ones to have been the case of these primitive men, that such an among the few, who might of indeed must be exempt from attending to common cares of common concerns. They were to be the devoted to a cause, not demanding its service all their energies, the strength of every faculty. They were to be the bearers of the enemies of a new religion, not to underestimate all other religions, as the rising sun overshadow the mists that shut in the heaven. Leaving aside common thoughts, of rising above every day pursuits, interests, they were to go forth with singleness of heart, without sharing the least part of their soul to considerations regarding self; they were to go forth, no those who could the living truths of the being God to immaterial beings, for
were not to expect supernatural intercessions to give them the necessary of life, but merely that by the providence of God, they might be so protected, as never to be in want. But as they were to the great cause of God, this petitioning them to rely on God for all subordinate concerns, by his providence, they were sent forth to that important holy service, which is their only support. Therefore by his providence, they ought trust to be supported.

Such are the reasons, which gave this petition a peculiar propriety of force in the mouths of the first disciples. Do you wonder then, that it should be found in a form of prayer inscribed for their use? Or is it, from being incongruous or out of place, that it harmonizes admirably well with the whole design of this beautiful prayer. It was an humble acknowledgment of dependence, a pious suppllication for needed assistance.

In applying to our own case, the petition in the text, we must constantly bear it in mind that our situation is highly different from that of the primitive times; therefore, that it was rather necessary for them, may by no means less so. Mistakes in matters in this subject, have given rise to a great many unhappy misapplications of it.
The precepts and rules of conduct, which were addressed to men under certain circumstances, apply them without any qualification to ourselves, who are in totally different circumstances. We forget that the scriptures are a voice from a distant age, and of course a voice which in the accent of that age... It is from abuses of this sort, that the Bible is sometimes brought into contempt, being supposed to require duties that in the present condition of the world are unattainable, or to enunciate principles, that would tend to paralyze the energies of man. Applying these remarks to the present subject, then, it must be observed that we cannot use the sages' advice to us this day our daily bread in any such sense, as we might suppose was attached to it by the first authors for a good reason, because our situation does not prevent us from making every provision in our power for ourselves. Do we understand one to say, that we are not as dependent on God as they were. Doubtless we are. But we are not, like them, to look for extraordinary uncommon care and protection, if we make any such use of this petition, as to encourage insensibility of thoughtlessness about the future, or abuse it shamefully. Nor must any person, placed in circumstances like those of the Hebrews, I would agree, that like them you may take no thought about the morrow; you ought to be felt like

The prophet, without human help, but till you can show this, I see not how you can be released from the obligation and the duties of discreet provision. We are not to sit still and arms, and wait until God may happen. We may pray for temporal blessings, it is true; but if that prayer releases our efforts and concerns, it works an effect directly the contrary of that, which God designed should be produced. People talk sometimes as if foolish men, who are about trusting to the providence of God, and that trust was wholly unconnected with duties on our part. There is a rational reason that in providence, and consists in the form of a reasoning, that the system of causes of effects lies as mainly it is necessarily changed by the great Ruler of the Universe, as to favor those turns effects of pure intentions of man; if this arrangement is in fact, the smile of God's providence upon our exertions. Then the man, who should be still in good time neglect his food, though he might pray ever so earnestly for the harvest, would have as little religion as wisdom; but he, who improves the driving time of the seasons in diligent preparation, and childlike precautions, often turns to that God, who has constituted the laws of nature, so as to bless the labors of man, has that true genuine sense of dependence in un
The use of one's own powers, it is the proper basis of the sentiments of a rational being. It has been sufficiently said, that the soul is careless about the proper concerns of life, if it gives way to a kind of indolent speculations of thought and action. But nothing can be more false. There are precepts, it is true, which were adapted to these extraordinary states of things at the commencement of the state of man in all ages foolish enough to take the precepts according to the letter, and according to the spirit, thus to make applications of them, at the common sense, as well as strictly so. But the blame of this absurdity must lie with man, not with the inquisitorial attempts of those who require information or wanted reflection. Everything about it tells us, that activity in temporal as well as spiritual things, is one duty; there is a constant call for obedience, of labors, of foresight, of care, and preparation.

When therefore, Jesus commands us to pray for our daily bread, he does not mean that we are not to labor for our daily bread. Let no one take encouragement from this to be idle, in provident, or careless about the duties of life. Such conduct would be as little acceptable in the sight of God, who has given us power of faculties to use, as it would be ruinous to the individual. If then, perhaps you will say, if the injunction in the text has not the same meaning for us, as it had for the disciples, what use are we to make of it, or are we to cast it aside? He has given a meaning to use for us, it is now time to consider what these are:

1. This petition may serve to impress on our minds a deep sense of theaconce, where our blessings flow. One can scarcely use this prayer, without feeling that we are as children to a father to be taken care of, provided for. The few days we are here, in this transient life, constantly move us to the knowledge of the blessings that God has given us.

2. For we pray, give us this day the things necessary for us. The prayer for outward blessings, for health, for comforts, for temporal subsistence, for all that makes life happy, while we thus pray, the heart is so directly turned to God, and we cannot forget, for the time at least, the hand that is making the bounty, that diminishes us. This is a truth, of which though we are sincerely convinced, we need to be constantly reminded. We may not disbelieve, but we may cease to have our belief refreshed. Many a heart, that was once restored from a denial of the providence of God, is apt to forget...
without God in the world. Now the true effects of public prayers, as that oth is here prescribed to us, is to cause the soul to feel on the subject, to give a place in the heart to that, and has already a place in the understanding. It will train the mind to that invaluable habit of connecting those constant temporal enjoyments from all as much of our holding springs with the love 4th source 2 idea of the great Father above. This is an exceedingly important point. It is a very common fault to refer all striking extraordinary blessings to the agency of God. The very same terms of felicity is passed in short inappreciation, because being possession blunts the edge of perception & feeling, as because our own agency is so constantly employed in procuring them. The power of benevolence from all originally comes, forgotten. God is placed too far off in our thoughts. Therefore it is that the glorious image is seldom aims the affections of our hearts. It is an interest as well as our daily enjoyment every pleasant & delightful association with the thought of our relation to God. To blend together all that makes the heart glad, all that should elevate it to God. Now the petition given in this gracious daily bread, seems finely adapted to produce this effect. It heightens the mind's frame, the grateful & gentle connexions with the awful & solemn grandeur of God. While we pray for the comforts necessary for the joy and happiness of life, we cannot but entertain the thoughts of the beautiful provision around us with that of the great Provider. While your heart ascends in this petition, think of your daily enjoyment, remember that God is there. You are surrounded, perhaps, with domestic blessings; your home is gladness; your brightened with countenances of affection of kindness; think that God is there. You have friends, by whose intercourse you are enlightened in goodness, be they who give a lovely relish to the3dmg moments. You will relive the weary hours of life of their mercies, always remember that God is there. You are sheltered in warm habitations from the inclemency of the season; you are fed with abundant, grateful food; you are clothed with garments that protect & make you comfortable—be here, I see too, that God is there. Truly God is in all these things, by the operation of causes, we derive all their efficacy from Him. By his hands, and he alone, has it all like. May we should these associations of religious feel...
ing, small stuffing, as they may seem. They are not so in reality. It is of more importance than we can at first see it suppose, that the thoughts of God should be connected with our daily bread. For this reason, if some other let us cherish the habit of praying for our daily bread.

2. The frequent use of this petition will remind us of the duty of necessity of industry. We are to have our daily bread, but only through the medium of our own exertions; and, therefore, no praying for that comfortable provision, although life habitus are constantly reminded that we must do it in the blessing of God, to our own exertions. The inducements man is the only man who uses this hunger in its proper object. Illness in a rational being is as disagreeable as it is criminal. Who, that thinks of it seriously, would not be ashamed to hang up as a dead weight in society, not only stand still, but return the motions of others, and hide the wheels that keep diligence in motion? But what has God given us our bodily organs, if they are out to be used? Why has He given us the capacity of doing much, if we are to do nothing? An inductive man is an expression to all around him; that God is not for being, that He wills what He does. Whence evidence degenerates into evidence.

is not, certainly, a false Brika. The great part of the entire prize and the الجنسندلable exertions, are dignified above the various ranks of life, arise from the necessity of being indolent, in order to procure the means of subsistence. In fact, an important class of virtues spring from these exertions. They give a manly tone of energy to the movements of man, the surface agitate the mass of what would otherwise be stagnant waters. They are no friends to the cause of religion or the welfare of mankind, who would reproach so great and so great an industry and enterprise, as virtues of too worldliness to deserve much in the skies esteem. Because they are not the first and highest of virtues, but without diligence in some form or other, the more elevated virtues will appear by stand. We should not, may, have been direct taking for our daily bread, if we had not made it one of our duties to labor for our own sustenance. It is a more shining pretense, that we should do so, if it is a fact well worthy of constant remembrance, that diligence was made an enemy to one happiness, as it is to our worldly interests. This last a step from a life of indolence to a life of ostentation over, in common worldly passions, labors with the
coming diligence for a competence of the good things of life is most likely to be happy, seen跑了 for his duty
with most conscious sincerity, that the idle man, whom the whole world around him, made by God's crea-
tion, is constantly pursuing, who is just to shun over,
by the various degrees of animals. Who to the ant, they destroy
god, considers her ways, of burrow, who having no guide,
overs, or rules, provides her meat in the summer, yields
with her food in the harvest.

3. From the part of the 23 prayers now under consid-
eration, the thought is suggested to us, that the enjoyments
of this life are transient, compared with others. The
side of expression seems exactly to express the trans-

temporary of the blessings prayed for: "Give us this day our
daily bread." We are not to pray that we may have these
things forever, but only for one day to another, as were
passing along, like travellers, who are hastening to the jour-
ney's end, which must merely to be accommodated by the way.
This vice, in spite the way, the poor are taught to hold
various blessings of virtue, of plenty, of the favor of God;
it is not merely for joy to day that we are to seek these
things, but for all time—nay, for they would only, in to
for an eternal world. The contrast between these two views
of blessings is thus finely illustrated to us, in the ver-

ter act of prayer. I mean, by this to underline two

real blessings. They are among the bright instances of Hi-
god's, without them, our life would be a meaner

pilgrimage indeed. They show most remarkably, that
the minutest circumstances, in which makes

happy, are not neglected by God. Though this life, which
a span, it is not left without the smile of the sovereign

There are blessings scattered by the way in our march

to immortality, they brighten the way, cover up the

things that might otherwise pierce our feet. But by

all, thankful we ought to be for them; we must

not forget, that in their very nature they are trans-

ient. They come up day by day, if they are alike not.

They are mortal blessings for our mortal parts. We

are hastening away, must leave these earthly engage-

ments behind. The space is hourly waiting for us, if the earth

things we have delight to us by the way, will die with

us. Our funeral bell will toll the knell the

dearth from us, as well as of ours from the earth. They

have answered their purpose, must be laid aside; we

must soon leave our homes, our green fields, our comforts.
go with us through that dark valley, an enterprise
the nations pass of earth, travel with us, who are not
unknown before us. There indeed they will begin
their life, in its true sense; there they will find other
nature regions, a breath the atmosphere for which they were
made; there they will live a year or two, past through
eternity. When, therefore, this is done, let us bear it
mind, that though the preacher is powerful
acceptable to God, there are other blessings which they cannot
find. Daily after temporal ones. So, therefore, let us
must arise to worth, our constant zeal, our best energy,
be directed. “Seek ye first his will, and all other things
will be added unto you.”

Such is some of the instruction, and the consideration
this petition may furnish. Be it our care, that not a
day may pass without the thought of Him, from
our daily bread comes, while we labor in His service
for the meat that perisheth, let us labor still more
for the meat that endureth unto everlasting life.

Dec. 1822.

At home, Dec. 29th, 1822, afternoon.