

A HEAVENLY PATTERN FOR OUR EARTHLY LIFE.

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“Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” — Matthew 6:10.

OUR Father’s will shall certainly be done, for the Lord “doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth.” Let us adoringly consent that it shall be so, desiring no alteration therein. That “will” may cost us dear; yet let it never cross our wills: let our minds be wholly subjugated to the mind of God. That “will” may bring us bereavement, sickness, and loss; but let us learn to say, “It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good.” We should not only yield to the divine will, but acquiesce in it so as to rejoice in the tribulation which it ordains. This is a high attainment, but we set ourselves to reach it. He that taught us this prayer used it himself in the most unrestricted sense. When the bloody sweat stood on his face, and all the fear and trembling of a man in anguish were upon him, he did not dispute the decree of the Father, but bowed his head and cried. “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” When we are called to suffer bereavements personally, or when, as a holy brotherhood, we see our best men taken away, let us know that it is well, and say most sincerely, “The will of the Lord be done.”

God knows what will best minister to his gracious designs. To us it seems a sad waste of human life that man after man should go to a malarious region, and perish in the attempt to save the heathen: but infinite wisdom may view the matter very differently. We ask why the Lord does not work

a miracle, and cover the heads of his messengers from the death-shaft? No reason is revealed to us, but there is a reason, for the will of the great Father is the sum of wisdom. Reasons are not made known to us, else were there no scope for our faith; and the Lord loves that this noble grace should have ample room and verge enough. Our God wastes no consecrated life: he has made nothing in vain: he ordains all things according to the counsel of his will, and that counsel never errs. Could the Lord endow us with his own omniscience, we should not only consent to the deaths of his servants, but should deprecate their longer life. The same would be true of our own living or dying. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints"; and therefore we are sure that he does not afflict us by bereavement without a necessity of love. We must still see one missionary after another cut down in his prime; for there are arguments with God, as convincing with him as they are obscure to us, which require that by heroic sacrifice the foundations of the African church should be laid. Lord, we do not ask thee to explain thy reasons to us. Thou canst screen us from a great temptation by hiding thyself; for if even now we sin by asking reasons, we might soon go further, and provoke thee sorely by contending against thy reasons. He who demands a reason of God is not in a fit state to receive one. In the case of the honored men whom the Lord has removed from us this year, there is assuredly no loss to the great cause as it is viewed by the eye of God. See the great stones and costly stones laboriously brought from the quarry to the edge of the sea! Can it be possible that these are deliberately thrown into the deep? It swallows them up! Wherefore is so much labor thrown away? These living stones might surely have been built into a temple for the Lord; why should the waves of death engulf them? Yet more are sought for, and still more: will the hungry abyss never cease to devour? Alas, that so much precious material should be lost! It is not lost. No, not a stone of it. Thus the Lord layeth the foundation of his harbour of refuge among the people. "Mercy shall be built up for ever." In due time massive walls shall rise out of the deep, and we shall no longer ask the reason for the losses of early days.

Peace be to the memories of the heroic dead! Men die that the cause may live. "Father, thy will be done." With this prayer upon our lips let us bend low in child-like submission to the will of the great Jehovah, and then gird up our loins anew to dauntless perseverance in our holy service. Though more should be taken away next year, and the next, yet we must pray on, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."

My heart is grieved for the death of the beloved Hartley, and those noble men who preceded him to “the white man’s grave.” I had seen him especially, for it had been a joy to assist him for three years in preparing for missionary service. Alas! the preparation led to small visible results. He left us, he landed, and he died. Surely the Lord means to make further use of him; if he did not make him a preacher to the natives, he must intend that he should preach to us. I may say of each fallen missionary, “He being dead yet speaketh.” “Faithful unto death,” they inspire us by their example. Dying without regret in the cause of such a Master, they remind us of our own indebtedness to him. Their spirits rising to his throne are links between this Society and the glorified assembly above. Let not our thoughts go downward to their graves, but rise upward to their thrones. Does not our text point with a finger of flame from earth to heaven? Do not the dear departed ones mark a line of light between the two worlds?

If the prayer of our text had not been dictated by the Lord Jesus himself, we might think it too bold. Can it ever be that this earth, a mere drop of a bucket, should touch the great sea of life and light above and not be lost in it? Can it remain earth and yet be made like to heaven? Will it not lose its individuality in the process? This earth is subject to vanity, dimmed with ignorance, defiled with sin, furrowed with sorrow; can holiness dwell in it as in heaven? Our Divine Instructor would not teach us to pray for impossibilities; he puts such petitions into our mouths as can be heard and answered. Yet certainly this is a great prayer; it has the hue of the infinite about it. Can earth be tuned to the harmonies of heaven? Has not this poor planet drifted too far away to be reduced to order and made to keep rank with heaven? Is it not swathed in mist too dense to be removed? Can its grave-clothes be loosed? Can thy will, O God, be done in earth as it is in heaven? It can be, and it must be; for a prayer wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit is ever the shadow of a coming blessing, and he that taught us to pray after this manner did not mock us with vain words. It is a brave prayer, which only a heaven-born faith can utter; yet it is not the offspring of presumption, for presumption never longs for the will of the Lord to be perfectly performed.

I. May the Holy Spirit be with us, while I first lead you to observe that THE COMPARISON IS NOT FAR-FETCHED. That our present obedience to God should be like to that of holy ones above is not a strained and fanatical notion. It is not far-fetched, *for earth and heaven were called into being by the same Creator*. The empire of the Maker comprehends the upper and

the lower regions. "The heaven, even the heavens are the Lord's"; and "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof." He sustaineth all things by the word of his power both in heaven above and in the earth beneath. Jesus reigneth both among angels and men, for he is Lord of all. If, then, heaven and earth were created by the same God, and are sustained by the same power, and governed from the same throne, we believe that the same end will be subserved by each of them, and that both heaven and earth shall tell out the glory of God. They are two bells of the same chime, and this is the music that peals forth from them: "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever. Hallelujah!" If earth were of the devil and heaven were of God, and two self-existent powers were contending for the mastery, we might question whether earth would ever be as pure as heaven; but as our ears have twice heard the divine declaration, "Power belongeth unto God," we expect to see that power triumphant, and the dragon cast out from earth as well as heaven. Why should not every part of the great Creator's handiwork become equally radiant with his glory? He that made can remake. The curse which fell upon the ground was not eternal; thorns and thistles pass away. God will bless the earth for Christ's sake even as once he cursed it for man's sake.

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." *It was so once.* Perfect obedience to the heavenly will upon this earth will only be a return to the good old times which ended at the gate of Eden. There was a day when no gulf was digged between earth and heaven; there was scarce a boundary line, for the God of heaven walked in Paradise with Adam. All things on earth were then pure, and true, and happy. It was the garden of the Lord. Alas, that the trail of the serpent has now defiled everything. Then earth's morning song was heard in heaven, and heaven's hallelujahs floated down to earth at eventide. Those who desire to set up the kingdom of God are not instituting a new order of things; they are restoring, not inventing. Earth will drop into the old groove again. The Lord is King: and he has never left the throne. As it was in the beginning shall it be yet, again. History shall, in the divinest sense, repeat itself. The temple of the Lord shall be among men, and the Lord God shall dwell among them. "Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven."

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." *It will be so at the last.* I shall not venture far into prophecy. Some brethren are quite at home where I should lose myself. I have scarcely yet been able to get out of the gospels

and the epistles; and that deep book of Revelation, with its waters to swim in, I must leave to better instructed minds. "Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of that book," to that blessing I would aspire, but I cannot yet make claim to interpret it. This much, however, seems plain, — there is to be "a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." This creation, which now "groaneth and travaileth in pain," in sympathy with man, is to be brought forth from its bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Blessed be the Lord Christ, when he brought his people out of their bondage, he did not redeem their spirits only, but their bodies also: hence their material part is the Lord's as well as their spiritual nature, and hence again this very earth which we inhabit shall be uplifted in connection with us. The creation itself shall be delivered from Materialism, out of which there has been once made a vesture for the Godhead in the person of Christ, shall become a fit temple for the Lord of hosts. The New Jerusalem shall come down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride is prepared for her husband. We are sure of this. Therefore unto this consummation let us strive mightily, praying evermore, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

Meanwhile, remember also that *there is an analogy between earth and heaven*, so that the one is the type of the other. You could not describe heaven except by borrowing the things of earth to symbolize it; and this shows that there is a real likeness between them. What is heaven? It is Paradise, or a garden. Walk amid your fragrant flowers and think of heaven's bed of spices. Heaven is a kingdom: thrones, and crowns, and palms are the earthly emblems of the heavenlies. Heaven is a city; and there, again, you fetch your metaphor from the dwelling-places of men. It is a place of "many mansions" — the homes of the glorified. Houses are of earth, yet is God our dwelling-place. Heaven is a wedding-feast; and even such is this present dispensation. The tables are spread here as well as there; and it is our privilege to go forth and bring in the hedge-birds and the highwaymen, that the banqueting-hall may be filled. While the saints above eat bread in the marriage supper of the Lamb, we do the like below in another sense.

Between earth and heaven there is but a thin partition. The home country is much-nearer than we think. I question if "the land that is very far off" be a true name for heaven. Was it not an extended kingdom on earth which was intended by the prophet rather than the celestial home? Heaven is by no means the far country, for it is the Father's house. Are we not taught to

say, "Our Father which art in heaven"? Where the Father is the true spirit of adoption counts itself near. Our Lord would have us mingle heaven with earth by naming it twice in this short prayer. See how he makes us familiar with heaven by mentioning it next to our food, making the next petition to be, "Give us this day our daily bread." This does not look as if it should be thought of as a remote region. Heaven, is at any rate, so near that in a moment we can speak with him that is King of the place, and he will answer to our call. Yea, before the clock shall tick again you and I may be there. Can that be a far-off country which we can reach so soon? Oh, brothers, we are within hearing of the shining ones; we are well-nigh home. A little while and we shall see our Lord. Perhaps another day's march will bring us within the city gate. And what if another fifty years of life on earth should remain, what is it but the twinkling of an eye?

Clear enough is it that the comparison between the obedience of earth and that of heaven is not far-fetched. If heaven and heaven's God be, in truth, so near to us, our Lord has set before us a homely model taken from our heavenly dwelling-place. The petition only means — let all the children of the one Father be alike in doing his will.

II. Secondly, THIS COMPARISON IS EMINENTLY INSTRUCTIVE. Does it not teach us that *what* we do for God is not everything, but *how* we do it is also to be considered? The Lord Jesus Christ would not only have us do the Father's will, but do it after a certain model. And what an elevated model it is! Yet is it none too elevated, for we would not wish to render to our heavenly father service of an inferior kind. If none of us dare say that we are perfect, we are yet resolved that we will never rest until we are. If none of us dare hope that even our holy things are without a flaw, yet none of us will be satisfied while a spot remains upon them. We would give to our God the utmost conceivable glory. Let the mark be as high as possible. If we do not as yet reach it, we will aim higher and yet higher. We do not desire that our pattern should be lowered, but that our imitation should be raised.

"Thy will *be done* in earth, as it is in heaven." Mark the words "*be done*," for they touch a vital point of the text. God's will is *done* in heaven. How very practical! On earth his will is often forgotten, and his rule ignored. In the church of the present age there is a desire to be doing something for God, but few enquire what he wills them to do. Many things are done for the evangelizing of the people which were never commanded by the great

Head of the Church, and cannot be approved of by him. Can we expect that he will accept or bless that which he has never commanded? Will-worship is as sin in his sight. We are to do his will in the first place, and then to expect a blessing upon the doing of that will. My brethren, I am afraid that Christ's will on earth is very much more discussed than done. I have heard of brethren spending days in disputing upon a precept which their dispute was breaking. In heaven they have no disputes, but they do the will of God without discord. We are best employed when we are actually doing something for this fallen world, and for the glory of our Lord. "Thy will be done": we must come to actual works of faith and labors of love. Too often we are satisfied with having approved of that will, or with having spoken of it in words of commendation. But we must not stay in thought, resolve, or "card; the prayer is practical and business-like, "Thy will be *done* in earth, as it is in heaven." An idle man stretched himself on his bed when the sun had risen high in heaven, and as he rolled over, he muttered to himself that he wished this were hard work, for he could do any quantity of it with pleasure. Many might wish that to think and to speak were to *do* the will of God, for then they would have effected it very thoroughly. Up yonder there is no playing with sacred things: they do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Would God his will were not alone preached and sung below, but actually done as it is in heaven.

In heaven the will of God is done *in spirit*, for they are spirits there. It is done *in truth* with undivided heart, and unquestioned desire. On earth, too often, it is done and yet not done; for a dull formality mocks real obedience. Here obedience often shades off into dreary routine. We sing with the lips, but our hearts are silent. We pray as if the mere utterance of words were prayer. We sometimes preach living truth with dead lips. It must no longer be so. Would God we had the fire and fervor of those burning ones who behold the face of God. We pray in that sense, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." I hope there is a revival of spiritual life among us, and that, to a large extent, our brotherhood is instinct with fervor; but there is room for far more of zeal. Ye that know how to pray, go down upon your knees, and with the warm breath of prayer arouse the spark of spiritual life until it becomes a flame. With all the powers of our innermost being, with the whole life of God within us, let us be stirred up to do the will of the Lord on earth as it is done in heaven.

In heaven they do God's will *constantly, without failure*. Would God it could be so here! We are aroused to-day, but we fall asleep tomorrow. We are diligent for one hour, but sluggish the next. This must not be, dear friends. We must be steadfast, unmovable — always abounding in the work of the Lord. We need to pray for sacred perseverance, that we may imitate the days of heaven upon the earth by doing the Lord's will without a break.

They do God's will in heaven *universally, without making a selection*. Here men pick and choose — take this commandment to be obeyed, and lay that commandment by as non-essential. We are, I fear, all tintured more or less, with this odious gall. A certain part of obedience is hard, and therefore we try to forget it. It must no longer be so; but whatsoever Jesus saith unto us we must do. Partial obedience is actual disobedience. The loyal subject respects the whole law. If anything be the will of the Lord, we have no choice in the matter, the choice is made by our Lord. Let us pray that we may neither misunderstand the Lord's will, nor forget it, nor violate it. Perhaps we are, as a company of believers, ignorantly omitting a part of the Lord's will, and this may have been hindering our work these many years; possibly there is something written by the pen of inspiration which we have not read, or something read that we have not practiced; and this may hold back the arm of the Lord from working. We should often make diligent search, and go through our churches to see wherein we differ from the divine pattern. Some goodly Babylonish garment or wedge of gold may be as an accursed thing in the camp, bringing disaster to the Lord's armies. Let us not neglect anything which our God commands lest he withhold his blessing.

His will is done in heaven *instantly, and without hesitation*. We, I fear, are given to delays. We plead that we must the thing round about. "Second thoughts are best," we say, whereas the first thoughts of eager love are the prime production of our being. I would that we were obedient at all hazard, for therein lies the truest safety. Oh, to do what God bids us, as God bids us, on the spot, and at the moment! It is not ours to debate, but to perform. Let us dedicate ourselves as perfectly as Esther consecrated herself when she espoused the cause of her people, and said, "If I perish, I perish." We must not consult with Mesh and blood, or make a reserve for our own selfishness, but at once most vigorously follow the divine command.

Let us pray the Lord that we may do his will on earth as it is done in heaven; that is, *joyfully, without the slightest weariness*. When our hearts are right, it is a glad thing to serve God, though it be only to unloose the ratchets of our Master's shoes. To be employed by Jesus in service which will bring us no repute, but much reproach, should be our delight. If we were altogether as we should be, sorrow for Christ's sake would be joy: ay, we should have joy right along, in dark nights as well as in bright days. Even as they are glad in heaven, with a felicity born of the presence of the Lord, so should we be glad, and find our strength in the joy of the Lord.

In heaven the will of the Lord is done *right humbly*. There perfect purity is set in a frame of lowliness. Too often we fall into self-gratulation, and it defiles our best deeds. We whisper to ourselves, "I did that very well." Mite flatter ourselves that there was no self in our conduct, but while we are laying that flattering unction to our souls, we are lying, as our self-contentment proves. God might have allowed us to do ten times as much, had he not known that it would not be safe. He cannot set us upon the pinnacle, because our heads are weak, and we grow dizzy with pride. We must not be permitted to be rulers over many things, for we should become tyrants if we had the opportunity. Brother, pray the Lord to keep thee low at his feet, for in no other place canst thou be largely used of him.

The comparison being thus instructive, I pray that we may be the better for our meditation upon it. I do not find it an easy thing even to describe the model, but if we essay to copy it: "this is the work; this is the difficulty." Unless we are girded with the divine strength we shall never do the will of God as it is done in heaven. Here is a greater labor than those of Hercules, bringing with it victories nobler than those of Alexander. To this the unaided wisdom of Solomon could not attain; the Holy Ghost must transform us, and lead the earthly in us captive to the heavenly.

III. Thirdly, I beg you to notice, dear friends, that THIS COMPARISON of holy service on earth to that which is in heaven, IS BASED UPON FACTS. The facts will both comfort and stimulate us. Two places are mentioned in the text which seem very dissimilar, and yet the likeness exceeds the unlikeness — earth and heaven.

Why should not saints do the will of the Lord on earth as their brethren do it in heaven? What is heaven but the Father's house, wherein there are many mansions? Do we not abide in that house oven now? The Psalmist said, "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, they will be still praising

thee.” Have we not often said of our Bethels, “This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven”? The spirit of adoption causes us to be at home with God even while we sojourn here below. Let us therefore do the will of God at once.

We have the same fare on earth as the saints in heaven, for “the Lamb in the midst of the throne doth feed them:” he is the Shepherd of his flock below, and daily feeds us upon himself His flesh is meat indeed, his blood is drink indeed. Whence come the refreshing draughts of the immortals? The Lamb doth lead them to living fountains of waters; and doth he not even here below say to us, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink”? The same river of the water of life which makes glad the city of our God above, also waters the garden of the Lord below.

Brethren, we are in the same company below as they enjoy above. Up there they are with Christ, and here he is with us, for he hath said — “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” There is a difference as to the brightness of his presence; but not as to the reality of it. Thus you see we are partakers of the same privileges as the shining ones within the city gates. The church below is a chamber of the one great house, and the partition which separates it from the church above is, a mere veil, of inconceivable thinness. Wherefore should we not do the Lord’s will on earth as it is done in heaven?

“But heaven is a place of peace,” says one: “there they rest from their labors.” Beloved, our estate here is not without its peace and rest. “Alas,” cries one, “I find it far otherwise.” I know it. But whence come wars and fightings but of our fretfulness and unbelief? “We which have believed do enter into rest.” That is not in all respects a fair allegory which represents us as crossing the Jordan of death to enter into Canaan. No, my brethren, believers are in Canaan now; how else could we say that the Canaanite is still in the land? We have entered upon the promised heritage, and we are warring for the full possession of it. We have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. I for one do not feel like a lone dove flying over waters dark, seeking rest for the sole of her foot. No, I have found my Noah: Jesus has given me rest. There is a difference between the best estate of earth and the glory of heaven, but the rest which every soul may have that learns to conquer its will, is most deep and real. Brethren, having rest already, and being participators of the joy of the Lord, why should we not serve God on earth as they do in heaven?

“But we have not their victory,” cries one, “for they are more than conquerors.” Yes, and “our warfare is accomplished.” We have prophetic testimony to that fact. Moreover, “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” In the Lord Jesus Christ the Lord giveth us the victory, and maketh us to triumph in every place. We are warring; but we are of good cheer, for Jesus has overcome the world, and we also overcome by his blood. Ever is, this our war-cry, “Victory! Victory!” The Lord will tread Satan under our feet shortly. Why should we not do the Lord’s will on earth as it is done in heaven?

Heaven is the place of fellowship with God, and this is a blessed feature in its joy; but in this we are now participators, for “Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” The fellowship of the Holy Ghost is with us all; it is our joy and our delight.

Having communion with the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we are uplifted and sanctified, and it is becoming that by us the will of the Lord should be done on earth as it is in heaven.

“Up there,” says a brother, “they are all accepted, but here we are in a state of probation.” Did you read that in the Bible? for I never did. A believer is in no state of probation; he has passed from death unto life, and shall never come into condemnation. We are already “accepted in the Beloved,” and that acceptance is so given as never to be reversed. The Redeemer brought us up out of the horrible pit of probation, and he has set our feet on the rock of salvation, and there he has established our goings. “The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger.” Wherefore should we not, as the accepted of the Lord, do his will on earth as it is done in heaven?

“Ay,” saith one, “but heaven is the place of perfect service; for his servants shall serve him.” But is not this the place, in some respects, of a more extensive service still? Are there not many things which perfect saints above and holy angels cannot do? If we had choice of a sphere in which we could serve God with widest range, we should choose not heaven but earth. There are no slums and over-crowded rooms in heaven to which we can go with help, but there are plenty of them here. There are no jungles and regions of malaria where missionaries may prove their unreserved consecration by preaching the gospel at the expense of their lives. In some respects this world has a preference beyond the heavenly state as to the extent of doing the will of God. Oh, that we were better men, and then the

saints above might almost envy us! If we did but live as we should live, we might make Gabriel stoop from his throne and cry, "I wish I were a man!" It is ours to lead the van in daily conflict with sin and Satan, and at the same time ours to bring up the rear, battling with the pursuing foe. God help us, since we are honored with so rare a sphere, to do his will on earth as it is done in heaven.

"Ay," say you, "but heaven is the place of overflowing joy." Yes, and have you no joy even now? A saint who lives near to God is so truly blessed that he will not be much astonished when he enters heaven. He will be surprised to behold its glories more clearly, but he will have the same reason for delight as he possesses to-day. We live below the same life which we shall live above, for we are quickened by the same Spirit, are looking to the same Lord, and rejoicing in the same security. Joy! Do you not know it? Your Lord says, "That my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." You will be larger vessels in heaven, but you will not be fuller; you will be brighter, doubtless, but you will not be cleaner than you are when the Lord has washed you and made you white in his own blood. Do not be impatient to go to heaven. Nay, do not have a wish about it. Set very loose by the things of earth; yet count it a great privilege to have a long life in which to serve the Lord on earth. Our mortal life is but a brief interval between the two eternities, and if we judged unselfishly, and saw the needs of earth, we might almost say, "Give us back the antediluvian periods of human life, that through a chiliad we might serve the Lord in suffering and in reproach, as we cannot do in glory." This life is the vestibule of glory. Array yourselves in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, for this is the court-dress of earth and heaven. Manifest at once the spirit of saints, or else you will never abide with them. Now begin the song which your lips shall carol in Paradise, or else you will never be admitted to the heavenly choirs; none can unite in the music but those who have rehearsed it here below.

IV. Lastly, THIS COMPARISON, which I feel I can so feebly bring out, of doing the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven, OUGHT TO BE BORNE OUT BY HOLY DEEDS. Here is the urgency of the missionary enterprise. God's will can never be intelligently done where it is not known, therefore, in the first place, *it becomes us as followers of Jesus to see to it that the will of the Lord is made known* by heralds of peace sent forth from among us. Why has it not been already published in every land? We cannot blame the great Father, nor impute the fault to the Lord Jesus. The Spirit of the Lord is not straitened, nor the mercy of God restrained. Is

it not probably true that the selfishness of Christians is the main reason for the slow progress of Christianity? If Christianity is never to spread in the world at a more speedy rate than the present, it will not even keep pace with the growth of the population. If we are going to give to Christ's kingdom no larger a percentage than we have usually given, I suppose it will require about an eternity-and-a-half to convert the world; or, in other words, it will never be done. The progress made is so slow, that it threatens to be like that of the crab, which is always described in the fable as going backward. What do we give, brethren? What do we do? A friend exhorts me to say that the Baptist Missionary Society ought to raise a million a-year. I have my doubts about *that*, but he proposes that we should, at least, try to do so for one year. There is nothing like having a high mark to aim at. A million a-year seems hugely too much by the general consent of you all, and yet I am not sure. What amount of property is now held by Baptists? The probable estimate of money now in the hands of baptized believers in the United Kingdom might make us ashamed that a million is not put down at once. Far more than that is spent by a similar number of Englishmen upon strong drink. We do not know how much wealth lies in the custody of God's stewards; and some of them are not likely to let us know until we read it in the paper, and then we shall discover that they died worth so many hundreds of thousands. The world counts men to be worth what they hoard; but in truth they were not worth much, or else they could not have retained so much from the work of the Lord when it was needed for the spread of the gospel. As a denomination we are improving *a little*. We are improving a little. I was obliged to repeat that sentence, and place the emphasis in the right place. We may not congratulate ourselves: considerable room for improvement yet remains: the income of the Society might be doubled and no one oppressed in the process. It is not for us to say, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven: but, Lord, thou hast many ways and means of accomplishing that will, I pray thee do it, but let me not be asked to help on the work." No, when I utter this prayer, if I am sincere I shall be searching my stores to see what I can give to make known the truth. I shall be enquiring whether I cannot personally speak the saving word.

I shall not decline to give because the times are very hard, neither shall I fail to speak because I am of a retiring disposition. An opportunity is a golden gift. Now, do not offer the prayer of the text if you do not mean it. Better omit the petition than play the hypocrite with it. You who fail to

support missions when it is in your power to do so should never say, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done," but leave out that petition for fear of mocking God.

Our text, dear friends, leads me to say that as God's will must be known that it may be done, *it must be God's will that we should make it known* because God is love, and the law under which he has placed us is that we love. What love of God dwelleth in that man who denies to a benighted heathen that light without which he will be lost? Love is a grand word to talk of, but it is nobler as a principle to be obeyed. Can there be love of God in that man's heart who will not help to send the gospel to those who are without it? We want to bless the world; we have a thousand schemes by which to bless it, but if ever God's will is done in earth as it is done in heaven it will be an unmixed and comprehensive blessing. Join the Peace Society by all means, and be forgiving and peaceable yourself, but there is no way of establishing peace on the earth except by God's will being done in it, and that can only be done through the renewing of men's hearts by the gospel of Jesus Christ. By all manner of means let us endeavor so to control politics, as Christian men, that oppression shall not remain in the earth; but, after all, there will be oppression unless the gospel is spread. This is the one balm for all earth's wounds. They will bleed still until the Christ shall come to bind them up. Oh, let us then, since this is the best thing that can be, show our love to God and man by spreading his saving truth.

The text says, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Suppose any one of you had come from heaven. It is but a supposition; but let it stand for a minute: suppose that a man here has come fresh from heaven. Some would be curious to see what his bodily form would be like. They would expect to be dazzled by the radiance of his countenance. However, we will let that pass. We want to see how he would live. Coming newly from heaven, how would he act? Of, sirs, if he came here to do the same as all men do on earth, only after a heavenly sort, what a father he would be, what a husband, what a brother, what a friend! I would sit down and let him preach this morning, most assuredly; and when he had done preaching, I would go home with him, and have a chat. I should be careful to observe what he would do with his substance. His first thought would be, if he had a shilling, to lay it out for God's glory. "But," says one, "I have to go to shop with my shilling." Be it so, but when you go say, "Oh! Lord, help me to lay it out to thy glory." There should be as much piety in buying your

necessaries as in going to a place of worship. I do not think this man coming fresh from heaven would say, "I must have this luxury; I must have this goodly raiment; I must have this grand horse." But he would say, "How much can I save for the God of heaven? How much can I invest in the country I came from?" I am sure he would be pinching and screwing to save money to serve God with; and he himself, as he went about the streets and mingled with ungodly men and women, would be sure to find out ways of getting at their con sciences and hearts he would be always trying to bring others to the felicity he had enjoyed. Think that over, and live say-so he did who really did come down from heaven. For after all, the best rule of life is, what would Jesus do if he were here to-day, and the world still lying in the wicked one? If Jesus were in your business, if he had your money, how would he spend it? For that is how you ought to spend it. Now think, my brother, you will be in heaven very soon. Since last year a great number have gone home: before next year many more will have ascended to glory. Sitting up in those celestial seats, how shall we wish that we had lived below? It will not give any man in heaven even a moment's joy to think that he gratified himself while here. It will give him no redactions suitable to the place to remember how much he amassed, how much he left behind to be quarrelled over after he was gone; he will say to himself, "I wish I had saved more of my capital by sending it on before me, for what I saved on earth was lost, but what I spent for God was really laid up where thieves do not break through and steal."

Oh, brothers, let us live as we shall wish we had lived when life is over; let us fashion a life which will bear the light eternal. Is it life to live otherwise? Is it not a sort of fainting fit, a coma, out of which life may not quite have gone, but all that is worth calling life has oozed away? Unless we are striving mightily to honor Jesus, and bring home his banished, we are dead while we live. Let us aim at a life which will outlast the fires which shall try every man's work.

If I may have moved any person here to resolve, "I will so live," I have not spoken in vain. I have at least stirred myself with the intense desire to cast off the mere outsides and husks of life, and to ripen the real kernel of my being. Thy will by me be done on earth, as yet, my Lord, I hope to do it in the skies. May I begin here a life worthy to be perpetuated in eternity. God bless you, for Christ's sake. Amen.