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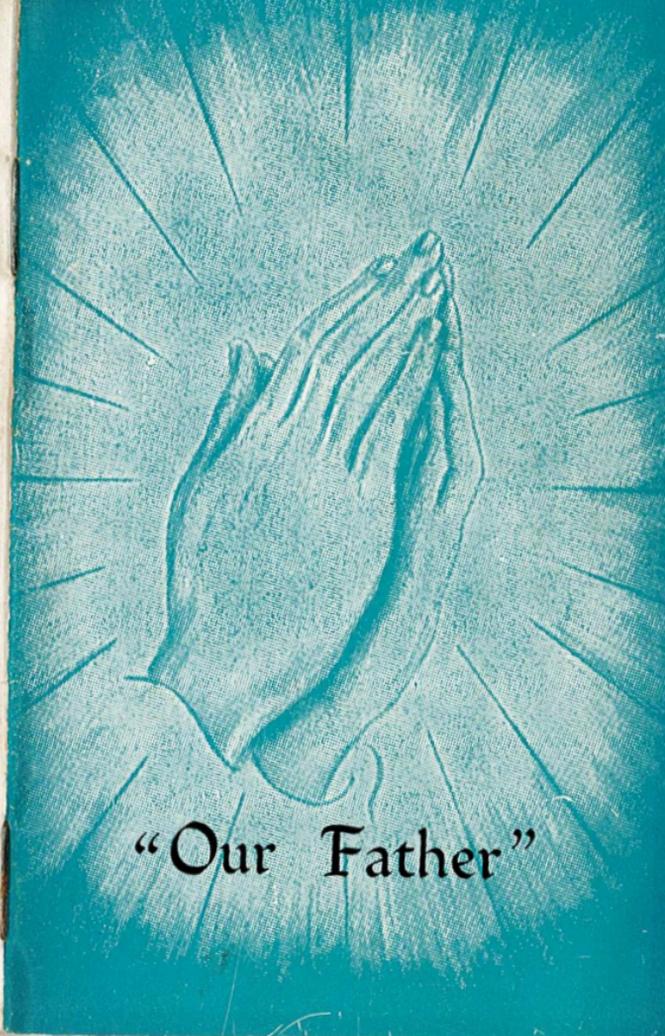
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**THE AUSTRALIAN LUTHERAN
HOUR**

70 Pirie Street, Adelaide South Australia.



“Our Father”



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*Our Father, who art in heaven;
Hallowed be Thy name;
Thy kingdom come;
Thy will be done on earth as it
is in heaven;
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who tres-
pass against us;
And lead us not into temptation;
But deliver us from evil;
For Thine is the kingdom, and
the power, and the glory, for-
ever and ever.*

Amen.

OUR FATHER

THE GREATEST PRAYER in the world is our Lord's own prayer. In His Sermon on the Mount He placed on the lips of men of all lands and all ages this perfect prayer. Today, after nineteen centuries, it is still the prayer by which we make all our requests known to God. It sums up all the needs of our hearts and all the cares of our lives. It is God's own prayer.

"Our Father." The very opening of the prayer has heavenly meaning. It is the prayer of a loving and trusting child to its Father in heaven. It brings God near to us. We do not pray to a God who is shut away in the heavens beyond the stars. We pray to our Father. God is our Father because He has given us life. He is our Father because He has made us His dear children through faith in His beloved Son. He is our Father because He daily gives us the Comforter, who keeps us close to Him. In the simple little words "our

Father" lies the whole magnificent story of His boundless love for us.

"Our Father." Every time we say these words we join our Lord Jesus in the only prayer which He Himself has taught us. How often did He not turn to His Father in heaven! Even His first word on the cross and also His last begin with the blessed word "Father." His blood has given us the supreme right to say it as He said it. How thoughtfully and lovingly the glorious word should pass our praying lips! It was one of the first words we learned in childhood. We have said it a thousand times, but to the very end of life it should never lose its God-given meaning. "Our Father who art in heaven." There is no greater joy on earth than to say that in faith and love.

Meditation—Why did our Lord often go up into a mountain to pray?

HALLOWED BE THY NAME

THE EXPLANATION of this petition in our Catechism is beautifully clear and simple: "God's name is indeed holy in itself; but we pray in this petition that it may be holy among us also." This is therefore a very personal petition. We are asking God to give us the strength and faith to keep His name holy in our hearts, in our lives, and in all we say and do.

There are various ways of doing this. God comes to us in His holy Word. There His name is revealed to us. To hallow His name, it is necessary therefore above all that we read and believe His Word. We must see to it that it is taught among us, in our churches and our homes, in all its divine truth and all its holy purity. Every time we study our Bible or confess God's holy name before men we are doing one of the greatest things we can do on earth. We are hallowing the

name of Him to whom we owe everything.

That is the heart of this petition. Around it everything else in life is built. When by the mercy of God we do good to others, when we resist temptation and overcome evil, when we carry our faith and hope into the world, we are hallowing His name. His name is glorified by a holy life. Whenever and wherever people see a Christian live in obedience to the will of God, His name is hallowed. The very smallest things we do, if they are done in His name, keep it holy among us. As our Lord stood in the Temple at the beginning of the first Holy Week, He had only one thought: "Father, glorify Thy name." He knew that His suffering and death would hallow God's name as nothing else had ever done. It would give us the marvellous power to pray all the days of our life, "Hallowed be Thy name."

Meditation—Do we always remember that all we do is done unto God?

THY KINGDOM COME

THIS PETITION strikes deep and hard into the lives of all of us. John Ruskin once wrote: "We have all been taught to pray: 'Thy Kingdom come.' Now, if we hear a man swear in the streets, we know it is very wrong because he takes God's name in vain. But there is another way of taking His name in vain. **It is to ask God for what we don't want.** He does not like that sort of prayer. If you don't want a thing, don't ask for it. But if you do, you must do more than pray for it. You must work for it."

There is much truth in this. If ever there was a petition which cannot be spoken idly and carelessly by the Christian heart, it is this one. When we pray it, we should think of our missionaries in the dark corners of the earth, of our pastors and teachers, of all the work of the Church of God in all the world. We ask God to be with our pastors, missionaries, and teachers, to strengthen them, and to

bless the work of their hands. But in addition to this there should be also a deep personal note in the words "Thy kingdom come." We are asking God to give us grace and power that by our lives, by every deed and every thought, we may help His kingdom come into the hearts of men.

There are a thousand ways of doing this. The silent, persistent testimony of a godly life has brought many a soul into the Kingdom. When we go down the street to church on Sunday morning, when we are silent in the face of insults, when we say a word of comfort to the suffering, we are transforming this prayer of our lips into the living prayer of our lives. For the power to do that we ask God when we pray: "Thy kingdom come."

Meditation—Have I ever brought a soul to Christ?

THY WILL BE DONE

THERE IS NO HOUR, neither during the day nor at night, when somewhere in the world the prayer "Thy will be done," is not rising to heaven. From the lips of a mother at the sickbed of a beloved child, from the voices of men and women standing at new graves, from the hearts of Christians lying on a bed of pain, these four words rise to the throne of divine grace and mercy in an unending stream.

This is above all the prayer of the trusting, the afflicted, and the sorrowing. It is easy for us to say, "Thy will, O God, be done" in days of happiness and joy. It is not so easy when the way grows dark and sorrow comes into our lives. Then we need the full strength of our faith in our Heavenly Father to say: "Thy will be done." This strength always comes. The whole history of the Church is radiant with the God-given glory of men and women who have cried out of darkness:

"Thy will be done." They learned it from their Saviour in the Garden, waiting for the angel with the cup, looking toward the cross with the words: "Not My will, but Thine, be done."

We thank God that none of us will ever be compelled to carry the burden of sorrow which our Saviour bore in Gethsemane. On Him was the terrible burden of all our sin and all our griefs. He carried it because it was the will of His Father in Heaven. And now all our burdens have been made lighter, and all our sins have been taken away, so that by His everlasting atonement we can really say to His Father and our Father; "Thy will be done." He bore our sins and so taught us the meaning of the perfect prayer of perfect obedience; "Thy will be done."

Meditation—Do we always mean what we say when we pray: "Thy will be done?"

OUR DAILY BREAD

MAN is body and soul. The Lord's Prayer does not ask for blessings for the soul only. It includes also petitions for our bodily needs. Day by day it reminds us that everything we have comes from God and that we should pray to Him also for the things of this life. The First Petition is the prayer of reverence; the Second, of service; the Third, of obedience. In the Fourth Petition we pray for the things we need for our natural life.

"Give us this day our daily bread." How often do we take food and clothing, all that we need to supply this bodily life, as a matter of course! Or, even worse, we think that we have earned it by ourselves and do not need the aid and blessing of our Father in Heaven. We forget that the earth and the sea are His, and that all their treasures belong to Him. We forget that day after day, year after year, century after century, His loving hand has upheld the world, giving seed-time and

harvest, silver and gold. The food we eat, the clothing we wear, the money we spend, come from Him and Him alone.

That is why the Christian prays: "Give us this day our daily bread." We do not say, "Please, God, make us rich. Give us enough not only for today, but also for tomorrow." If God does that, if He gives us more than we need today, food and shelter and, maybe, money in the bank, we must promptly find ways and means of using it for His Kingdom and the needs of others. But He has not taught us to pray for that. All that He has taught us is that, lovingly listening to our prayers, He will always hear us and supply us with all that we need, day by day, until the day when all the needs of our glorified bodies and souls will be supplied by the Bread of Heaven.

Meditation—What does Christian stewardship mean?

FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES

THIS PETITION reaches far down into the heart and life of every one of us. It brings an unforgettable picture to the inner eye. There is a great crowd gathered around three crosses outside the gates of Jerusalem. As the crosses are raised into the air, a hushed silence falls over the crowd, and a voice rings out from the cross in the centre: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Our Lord's first word from the cross is a plea for forgiveness.

Humbly and faithfully we must repeat His plea every day of our lives, but for ourselves. How greatly we need the continuing assurance of His forgiveness! Lord, forgive us our trespasses—the vicious gossip which we have permitted to pass our lips, the unkind deed we did today, the coldness of our hearts toward the work of Thy kingdom. Daily we need the forgiveness which He has won for us on the cross.

"As we forgive those who trespass against us." With His forgiveness He has given us the power to forgive those who have hurt or harmed us. This is a tremendously important fact. We cannot pray "Forgive us our trespasses" with hate and revenge in our hearts. The petition becomes a mockery. Let us think carefully for a moment. Is there any one who has trespassed against us? Deep in the bottom of our hearts what do we wish for such a person? Are we ready to forgive?

When any one hurts or offends us, there is only one good way to deal with it, and that is instantly, while we are still angry and disturbed, to tell our Lord all about it. We pour out our anger, and then the words begin to falter and cease, and we hear only the still voice of His everlasting mercy: "Forgive if you have aught against any man." (Mark 11: 25).

Meditation—Is "I can forgive, but I can't forget" the Christian way?

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

THIS PRAYER grows with the years. Christians have always been tempted by the devil, the world, and their own flesh; but in our modern world the temptations have multiplied. Here and there the walls of our Christian homes have broken down. Especially in our large cities the temptations of the world are strong. How we need the prayer "Lead us not into temptation" every hour of the day! "We pray in this petition that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not seduce us into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice." We are praying for God's protection for our immortal souls.

Also here our Lord Jesus went before us. He was tempted, and He showed us how to overcome temptation. In the wilderness He hurled the Word of God at the Tempter. In Gethsemane He prayed to His heavenly Father. His obedience and

trust won the victory. By His suffering and death He made it possible for us to win also. No Christian should seek temptation. We pray God to keep us away from it. But when it comes, our Saviour's victory makes us victorious also.

Twice, while our Lord was here on earth the angels came and ministered unto Him. Both times He was being tempted. The same angels are with us. God sends them when we need them most. They bring His strength down to earth.

Temptation will come into our lives. As the world grows darker and darker, it becomes increasingly harder to avoid it. By daily reading of God's Word, by prayer, by staying close to our beloved Church, we can avoid much of it. What still remains in our business world and our social life God will take care of. Let us continue to pray: "Lead us not into temptation."

Meditation.—Are we doing all we can to keep our youth from temptation?

DELIVER US FROM EVIL

THE last petition in the greatest prayer on earth. In one single word it sums up all the sin and pain and temptation of this life: "Deliver us from evil." It is a petition which includes time and eternity. Our need for it began on the day that our first parents fell into sin, and will end on the day that our Lord takes His redeemed children home.

This last petition is a reflection of the bitter struggle which is always going on in the world, and also in the Christian's heart, between good and evil. On the last night before His death, our Saviour said to Peter: "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." "Satan hath desired thee—I have prayed for thee." There is the battle between good and evil in a few simple words. Satan desires us. He tries to break down our faith and destroy our hope. The sin in our heart threatens to

overwhelm us. We live in the shadow of evil.

And then our Saviour's voice comes: "I have prayed for thee." "I have redeemed thee. My nail-torn hands will deliver thee from evil. The battle between good and evil is won when you are with Me." Also the last prayer of your soul, "Deliver us from evil." will be answered.

The day will come when the long battle between good and evil will end and this petition will be answered fully and forever. Almost at the end of his life, in his last prison cell at Rome, St. Paul speaks for all of us: "The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work and preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom; to whom be glory forever and ever! Amen" (2 Tim. 4: 18).

Meditation—Do we always pray this petition as thoughtfully as we should?

THINE IS THE KINGDOM

WE have finished the seven petitions of our Lord's Prayer. Now the picture turns from our needs and sorrows to the glory and power of God. At its very close the Lord's Prayer soars up from earth to heaven. No more temptation, no more evil, no more wants. All our petitions are answered, and all our prayers are heard—"for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever."

Thine is the Kingdom of Power. Our heavenly Father, to whom we pray, controls and directs the universe. Nothing happens on earth without His will and command. Our prayer is safe in His almighty power.

Thine is the Kingdom of Grace. Our heavenly Father, to whom we pray, has given us His own dear Son. In Him we have become His children. The scars in the broken and mighty hands of our Saviour have become the living promise

that our petitions will be heard. Our prayer is safe in His almighty mercy.

Thine is the Kingdom of Glory. Our heavenly Father, to whom we pray, will one day take us to His eternal home in heaven. Our souls will be in His hand forever. There are the waiting saints, made perfect at last. There is the great multitude of those who have come out of tribulation and trial, adorned with the white robes of the redeemed of God. And there we shall be also, our prayers transformed into praise and our tears turned into joy.

Thine is the Kingdom! May God give us grace to see it, now and hereafter! This is the only part of the Lord's Prayer which we shall take to heaven with us. Not one of the petitions will be heard from the saints in heaven; but this song of praise will go on forever.

Meditation—How often do we think of the power and glory of our faith?

FOREVER AND EVER

IT is always difficult to speak about eternity. Our minds cannot grasp the idea. We count the time of our life by hours and days and years. Next year we shall be so many years old. Next week friends will come. Tomorrow we are going to work. These things we can understand. But when we speak of eternity, all these pass away. There will be no more time, no hours and no days. Forever and ever! We say these words easily, but on this side of eternity we shall never fully understand them.

Only the Christian can think of eternity with **joy**. To the unbeliever it is a horrible thought. He tries to forget it; but when he thinks of it, as he must at times, the idea strikes him with terror. Only the fool says, "There is no God." If the unbeliever suspects there is a God, he knows there must be a life after death, which will be either eternal glory or eternal punishment. But to the Christian

secure in Christ, eternity is a joyful thought. He knows all his life on earth is only a brief preparation for heaven's eternal day.

We can think of eternity with **longing**. We know our Saviour has gone before, to prepare a place for us. He is waiting for us. His is the kingdom forever and ever. Because all power is His, we shall live with Him and reign with Him. Death is only the door to life eternal.

Lord Jesus, King of Paradise,
Oh, keep me in Thy love,
And guide me to that happy land
Of perfect rest above!

Meditation—In the light of eternity, what is important in life?

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