

**PRAYERS FROM
PLYMOUTH PULPIT**

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Prayers from Plymouth Pulpit by Henry Ward Beecher

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HENRY WARD BEECHER

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PRAYER



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BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

PHONOGRAPHICALLY REPORTED.

FIFTH EDITION.

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CHARLES SCRIBNER & COMPANY
654 BROADWAY.
1867.

DEDICATION.

*To the Congregation of Believers worshipping at Plymouth Church,
Brooklyn, N. Y.*

- To you these outpourings of the mind and heart of your much loved Pastor, in days gone by, now rising as from ambush to aid in reviving the spirit of true devotion and self-consecration, must come with a tenderness and force as to none beside. To you, therefore, this volume is appropriately dedicated, in the hope and belief that it will prove a rich comfort and blessing to you and your families, both now and when the voice of your Pastor may be hushed in death, and when you are crossing the flood to part no more.

PULPIT DEVOTIONS.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

OUR FATHER, another day of rest is granted unto us. We accept it ours—the token of thy love and remembrance. We bring honor to thee and desire to make mention of thy name, and to call thee Father. Thou art our Father, and thou hast made that name more venerable and more full of love than all our earthly associations of parents have been able to do; for thou art greater and better and more true to all the duties of love than earthly parents can be. And now enrich us this day by giving us the power more perfectly to approach thee, and to understand thee, and to enter into sympathy with thee. This is our strength, the joy of the Lord. And we beseech thee that thou wilt drive intrusive cares and thoughts away. May the world no longer have dominion over us; may we find ourselves easily controlling it, and may it be sweet to draw near to thee with praise. May we make mention of our sins without fear, since thou hast washed them away. May we be able to view thee with uplooking face; may we gain strength to-day by the power of thy love; may every thing conduce to thine honor and thy glory in our worship. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

O THOU that dwellest in heaven: round about thee are those that are risen indeed—the spirits of the just made perfect, and other ranks, dominions, and powers that are nameless. Thou art in blessed society. We

know not what thou art in perspection, and can have but faint thoughts of what is divine glory. Yet we believe that, central among all other things, is thy paternal nature; and that, when we are inspired to say from the heart "OUR FATHER," we have touched the very height of that to which we shall come through ages. We know not what we say—we know not all the meaning of that precious word; we know not what FATHERHOOD means when enveloped in all the majesty of the infinite, and stretched abroad in all its fullness, richness, and tenderness;—when over it is all the grandeur of the eternal spheres.

When we think of that power by which thou didst cause the material creation, which in its appointed course is the smallest part, and that not there is thy pride and thy glory, but that thy nature, in its reality and grandeur, is in thine heart—O when we understand that thou art greater than any outward world can make thee seem to us, and that thou art greater in thy moral nature than in any conception which we can form of the greatness of thy physical power, our minds are overwhelmed; and yet we are encouraged to come to thee. Thou dost not sit to thunder us away. Thou dost not sit to be terrible, though thou art august. Thou dost not sit to burn as an unquenchable fire, though thou art a consuming fire to thine enemies.

We rejoice that thou drawest us toward thee with sweet permission, with persuasion, with blessed command; that thou art endeavoring to persuade us by all the processions of nature, by all the daily occurrences of providence, by all the teachings of thy word, by all the ministrations of thy grace, and by all the influences of the Holy Ghost, shed abroad upon our souls.

What we are that thou shouldst so desire us, what there is in us that thou couldst look at to love, we do not understand; but thou seest us not only in what we are, but in what we are to be. Thou beholdest us as we shall be when our education is complete, when thou shalt present us before the eternal throne, without spot or blemish. We rejoice that thou dost love us;—that thy love is omnipotent; and that, by thy grace, we shall persevere unto the end, and finally be saved.

We thank thee that we are brought together into church relationships, and have had so much joy in public worship and in all social service of religion. We thank thee that thou hast purged from our minds so much of wickedness; that thou hast removed so many doubts; that thou hast brought many of us to experience so much of thy love; and that thou art bringing others to the same conviction of the sufficiency of Christ for all their sin, so that they are able to sit down under his banner of love with the sweetest composure and rest.

O, how blessed shall be that entrance when we that have known each other in the flesh with manifold imperfections; when we that have consorted together in this vale of tears, bearing each other's burdens, shall stand up in everlasting perfection, where we shall bear with each other no longer, but be as the angels of God and equal in light for evermore! Grant that the forethought of this coming glory may sanctify our earthly association.

O carry forward every one of thy people. Teach them how to live less by fear and by conscience, and more by the nobler impulses of love and trust; how to behold thee, not as a taskmaster, rigorous and exacting, but a God full of tenderness and of love. May the way of

prayer be easy ; may access to thy throne be short ; may we be humbled by our weakness and unworthiness, and while we take every thing, may we claim nothing. May we feel that there is no end to thy bounty ; not because we deserve these things, but because of the nature of thy loving heart. The bounty of thy heart is so great that thou dost cause every day to pour itself abroad in endless beneficence ; not because of our deserts, but because it is thine own pleasure.

Brood upon our souls, that we may catch something of thy nature, and know thee more and more perfectly. We beseech of thee that we may not feel that thou art harsh in thine administration toward us when thou sendest burdens. May we believe that they are sent for wise purposes. When thou sendest afflictions and bereavements, may we understand the way of God toward us. May we never be so puffed up by pride that we shall think ourselves too good to be afflicted ; may we never become so much at ease in our prosperity that we shall think it some strange thing when God casts up his highways through our fields. May we never feel that we are so secure in this mortal state as that there is no danger of losing our cherished possessions and treasures. We beseech thee, O God, that we may feel that all our times and seasons are in thine hand ; that every thing which we possess comes from thee, and is to be resumed at thy good pleasure ; and may we be able to say in all our experiences, "Thy will be done." May we have a submission to thy will that runs before the coming trouble, so that we may never be broken down, but always live in the light of thy countenance, our own lifted up to receive its brightness. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt be very near to all that are passing

through trouble and affliction, that they may not sin nor grieve thee by distrust; and grant that they may submit themselves and all their affairs willingly to thy hand. Guide them out of all their troubles, and exercise them thereby, working in them the peaceful fruits of righteousness which thou hast declared thou wilt work by trouble and sorrow.

Grant, we beseech thee, that we may not grow selfish. May we be delivered from the luxury of religion; may we not seek such experiences and joyful emotions because it may be pleasant. May we feel that we are called to all the experiences that Christ had; that, like our Captain, we are to be made perfect through suffering. May we take cloud or sunshine, storm or calm, sorrow or gladness; be able to bear affliction or prosperity, to be lifted up or to be cast down, to feel that we are as ships that cross the tempestuous deep, forever swaying and rocking, forever elevated and lowered by the conflicting waves, but safe through all storms; that the troubles through which we pass are waves, that life is a voyage, and that we are ships making haste to cross the deep. May none of us founder before we reach the harbor, but may every one of us have that pilot in the ship, that guidance, that living Christ, that we shall be sure, through calm and conflict, of reaching the land which he appoints; and may it be Immanuel's land—that place of rest, where no storms are, and where no tears wet the eye.

We thank thee that so many have reached it. O, how many of our friends that have cried upon earth have forgotten long since to weep or cry! How many that on earth faltered in praise, go forth in the grandeur of heavenly joy! How many that hisped by our sides are speak-