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The Chemawa American

Printed at Chemawa, Oregon, and Devoted to the Interests of Indian Education

Vol. XXIX

Wednesday, Dec. 7, 1927

3 MAY 8 No. 10

COPY - 1956

THE LORD'S PRAYER

A few weeks ago we printed an article on the "Twenty-Third Psalm," and the reception accorded this article inspires us to attempt something of an essay on the "Lord's Prayer." First of all let us state, frankly, that we do not feel equal to the task which we have laid out for ourselves—it is far beyond us and we know it. But there is a possibility that some good may come from our effort; there is a chance that some of our readers may glimpse between the lines something which we may be unable to make as clear as we would like; that, at least, our article may move some of our readers to serious reflection.

It seems to us that of all God's gifts to weak humanity a sense of "mental peace" must be the greatest. After living through a period of strife, of turmoil, of scenes which almost wreck the mind and heart—the very soul—what a solace is peace, the gift of an All-Divine Creator!

Channing, writing of "Peace," says: "Has the reader never known a season when, in the fullest flow of thought and feeling, in the universal action of the soul, an inward calm, profound as midnight silence, yet bright as the still summer noon, full of joy, but unbroken by one throb of tumultuous passion, has been breathed through his spirit, and given him a glimpse and presage of the serenity of a happier world? Of this character is the peace of heaven."

This is a sense of the harmony between God and what he has created. We are inclined strongly to believe that mankind never is able wholly to tear himself away from what his soul cries out to him is good—that which is good at all is certainly good for man. There are periods of yearnings and wonderment, and perhaps even the shadow of doubt, but in the end there remains as immovable as the "Rock of Ages" the seed of faith.

It is a law that whatever man wants the most he is the most likely to possess. This law applies to the qualities of the mind as well as to material things. However, it probably is true that material things are more easily obtained than are qualities of the soul.

Material things are more easily estimated and valued by the work-a-day human being, who denies himself the time to reflect on the beauties of soul and mind,

than are those priceless qualities which are within us awaiting self-development that we may enjoy a peace far beyond that possible in the mere possession of some material bauble.

The first step for our young readers to take is the cultivation of a more serious view of all things; they must rise above horse-play mirth, the jazzy things that produce nothing but froth; they must give heed to the more refined and cultural things which surround them on all sides. Be serious, at least a part of the time, and give your minds and souls a chance.

Let those things which you do, whatever they may be, mean something—and see that it is something worth while. Make it literal. To be literal is often a stepping stone to that which is admirable and desirable. Let us now again consider the "Lord's Prayer," by taking into account what this prayer meant to Mathias Claudius.

Mathias Claudius was a German poet born in 1740 who lived the life of a "country editor," and we shall be happy to have our readers follow us in the "Lord's Prayer" as set forth by Claudius:

"Our father who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name."

Here I am already at fault. The Jews are said to have known special mysteries respecting the name of God. But I let all that be, and only wish that the thought of God, and every trace by which we can recognize Him, may be great and holy above all things, to me and all men.

"Thy kingdome come"

Here I think of myself, how it drives hither and thither within me, and now this governs and now that; and that all is sorrow of heart and I can light on no green branch. And then I think how good it would be for me if God would put an end to all discord and govern me Himself.

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Here I picture to myself heaven and the holy angels who do his will with joy, and no sorrow touches them and they know not what to do for love and blessedness, and frolic night and day; and then I think: If it were only so here on earth!

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