

Prayer

At the end of Book III of the *Institutes* are the topics of prayer, election, and what Calvin called final resurrection, which is his treatment of eschatology. Then Book IV of the *Institutes*, "The External Aids," includes Calvin's treatment of the church, sacraments, and finally the civil state. Calvin called prayer "the chief exercise of faith, and by which we daily receive God's benefits." I will be talking about the place of this chapter on prayer in the 1559 edition of the *Institutes*. Before I recite the prayer for this lesson, let me talk briefly about prayer as it appears in the *Institutes*.

I heard a story once that I am not sure is true. It sounds apocryphal to me, but I will tell it anyway with that caveat. Wesley and Whitefield were preaching together. We know they did that from time to time. Wesley was an Arminian, and Whitefield was a Calvinist. According to this story, they were spending the night at an inn and each man knelt by his bed to pray. Whitefield prayed, "Lord, we thank Thee for all those with whom we spoke this day, and we rejoice that their lives and destinies are entirely in Thy hand. Honor our efforts according to Thy perfect will. Amen." His friend John Wesley then said, "Mr. Whitefield, is this where your Calvinism leads you?" Apparently, that was a comment about what a brief prayer it was. Wesley went on to pray. Two hours later when Whitefield woke up, Wesley was still on his knees, asleep. Whitefield said, "Mr. Wesley, is this where your Arminianism leads you?"

As I said, I do not think that story is true, but it is a good story. It does not mean that Calvinists fail to pray because they are Calvinists. Nor does it mean that Arminians fail to pray because of human weakness. That affects us all. If the story means anything, then it teaches us that zealous Christians face real difficulties in prayer. I certainly do, and I expect that you do too. In the long chapter in the *Institutes* concerning prayer, Calvin seems very much aware of that reality. Prayer is not easy. We need to be stimulated, encouraged, and aroused to pray. We also need to learn how to pray.

I would like to read a quotation from Abraham Kuyper. It is a fairly long quotation from Kuyper's works. B. B. Warfield quoted this passage in one of his writings and said that Abraham Kuyper had written nothing better than what Warfield quoted. Kuyper said, "Religion on earth finds its highest expression in the act of prayer." That does seem to correspond with Calvin's title of chapter 20, which is "Prayer, which is the Chief Exercise of Faith." Here is the full quote from Kuyper:

Religion on earth finds its highest expression in the act of prayer, but Calvinism in the Christian church is simply that tendency which makes a person assume the same attitude toward God in his profession and life which he exhibits in prayer. There is no Christian, be he Lutheran or Baptist, Methodist or Greek, whose prayer is not thoroughly Calvinistic. No child of God, to whatever church organization he may belong, but in his prayer he gives glory to God above and renders thanks to his Father in heaven for all that grace is working in him and acknowledges that the eternal love of God alone has, in the face of his resistance, drawn him out of darkness into light. On his knees before God everyone that has been saved will recognize the sole efficiency of the Holy Spirit in every good work performed and will acknowledge that, without the atoning grace of Him who is rich in mercies, he would not exist for a moment but would sink away in guilt and sin. In a word, whoever truly prays ascribes nothing to his own will or power except the sin that condemns him before God and knows of nothing that could endure the judgment of God except it be wrought in him by divine love. While all other tendencies in the church preserve this attitude as long as the prayer lasts will lose themselves in radically different perceptions as soon as the amen has been pronounced, the Calvinist adheres to the truth

in his prayer, in his confession, in his theology, in his life. The amen that has closed his petition reechoes the depth of his consciousness and throughout the whole of his existence.

What Kuyper was saying, and what Warfield was saying amen to, was that as a Christian prays, a Christian ascribes all credit and glory to God and acknowledges that everything comes from God's gracious hand. When the prayer is over, Calvinists continue to hold that theology, whereas others, once the prayer is over, collapse into something less than full Christianity, which according to both Kuyper and Warfield finds its expression only in Calvinism.

One of my favorite books on Calvin is a book I have referred to before. It is a little book called "The Gospel as Taught by Calvin" by a professor named R. C. Reed who taught at the old Columbia Seminary about 100 years ago. In that little book, he said, "Calvinism is the only creed that will bear translation into prayer." So he was communicating the same idea that appears in that Kuyper quote. R. C. Reed expressed it much more succinctly. In the section of his little book dealing with Calvin's treatment of prayer, R. C. Reed told a story. He said, "Some years ago I heard an Arminian preacher close a very earnest and impressive sermon to the unconverted with this statement, 'Now sinners, I have done all that I can do, and God has done all that He can do, and so your salvation rests with you.' He then called on me to pray. It occurred to me that it must be a waste of breath to pray to a God who had already exhausted all of His resources." If God has done all that He could do, then why pray to such a God? If the whole matter rested with the sinner, then he was the proper person to plead with in prayer, not God. Those are some ideas that preface this treatment of Calvin on prayer. Perhaps they also illustrate some of the things I will be talking about.

Calvin wrote many prayers. There is even a little book of Calvin's prayers. I have been using that book to offer the prayers at the beginning of each lesson. The prayers in that book of prayers are ones that Calvin prayed in connection with his teaching in Geneva. His students noted those prayers and recorded them so that we have them preserved for us. Calvin also wrote prayers himself that he presented to the Christians in Geneva to use at various times throughout the day. One of those is called "The Prayer for the Morning." There are prayers that Calvin created for different times of the day. Let me recite "The Prayer for the Morning" as we begin our study of what Calvin said about prayer.

"My God, my Father and Preserver, who, of Thy goodness, has watched over me during the past night and brought me to this day, grant also that I may spend it wholly in the worship and service of Thy most holy name. Let me not think or say or do a single thing which tends not to Thy service and submission to Thy will that thus all my actions may aim at Thy glory and the salvation of my brethren. While they are taught by my example to serve Thee, and as Thou art giving light to this world for the purposes of external life by the rays of the sun, so enlighten my mind by the effulgence of thy Spirit that He may guide me in the way of Thy righteousness. To whatever purpose I apply my mind may the end which I ever propose to myself be Thy honor and service. May I expect all happiness from Thy grace and goodness only. Let me not attempt anything whatever that is not pleasing to Thee. Grant also that, while our labor for the maintenance of this life and care for the things which pertain to food and raiment, I may raise my mind above them to the blessed and heavenly life which Thou hast promised to Thy children. Be pleased also in manifesting Thyself to me as the protector of my soul as well as my body, to strengthen and fortify me against the assaults of the devil and deliver me from all the dangers which continually beset us in this life. But seeing it is a small thing to have begun, unless I also persevere, I therefore entreat of Thee, O Lord, not only to be my guide and director for this day, but to keep me under Thy protection to the very end of life, that thus my whole course may be performed under Thy superintendence. As I ought to make progress, do Thou add daily more and more to the gifts of Thy

grace until I wholly adhere to Thy Son, Jesus Christ, whom we justly regard as the true Sun shining constantly in our minds. In order to my obtaining of Thee these great and manifold blessings, forget, and out of Thy infinite mercy, forgive my offenses, as Thou hast promised that Thou wilt do to those who call upon Thee in sincerity. Amen.”

The importance of prayer for Calvin is clear as we read his chapter on the topic and as we know something about Calvin's own life. Chapter 20 of Book III is the longest chapter of the 1559 edition of the *Institutes*. In terms of space, Calvin was concerned to deal adequately with this topic. Remember that Book III started with the Holy Spirit and then went to faith, which is the chief exercise of the Spirit, and then there is a long section on sanctification and then another long section on justification. Then we come to prayer. Then there is election. And the final topic of Book III is the final resurrection. Some commentators have said that there is a “mixed bag” at the end of Book III, in which Calvin merely threw things in so that he could fit in as much as he could before he moved on to Book IV and deal with the external means, which took him into the doctrine of the church. I do not believe that was the case. Calvin was very aware of his order. After all, Calvin expressed his concern about order when he said he never felt he had the right order until the 1559 edition of the *Institutes*. So he never tried to put things in carelessly. He had a purpose in what he was doing.

Prayer is followed by election in the *Institutes*. It may surprise us that it has taken so long for Calvin to treat this topic. It is near the end of his teaching on soteriology. It is not at the beginning of Book I, with the decrees of God, but at the end of Book III, after prayer but before final resurrection. I will make the case in another lesson, when we study election, that Calvin was very aware of what he was doing in creating the order of the *Institutes*, he did it for a specific purpose, and he was wise in his placement of the doctrine of election. Thus I do not believe that Calvin was trying to get as much information in as he could at the end of Book III. Calvin was consciously moving through a sequence of doctrines that he wanted to cover and needed to cover. He was aware of what he was doing.

While some have said the end of Book III looks like a mixed bag, others have seen it differently. T. H. L. Parker, in his book called *Calvin: An Introduction*, said, “We might even say that the *Institutes* reaches its climax here,” in this chapter on prayer. Parker saw everything moving toward prayer, which is the chief exercise of faith. I do not believe that we can actually identify the climax. Others have said that it came in Christology in justification. I believe that the best thing to say is that all those doctrines were important to Calvin. Prayer was certainly a central teaching in the *Institutes*, as it is in the Bible.

Under the idea of the importance of prayer, let me suggest two pictures that Calvin put before us. In my comments I will range throughout the chapter. Calvin did that too. He had an outline and a sequence in mind, but he tended to move back and forth. Thus the same idea comes up a number of times throughout the chapter. The first of the two pictures that illustrate for Calvin the importance of prayer is the picture of the treasure. Calvin said in Book III, chapter 20, section 1, “To know God as the Master and Bestower of all good things and not to go to Him and ask of Him, this would be of as little profit as for a man to neglect a treasure buried and hidden in the earth after it had been pointed out to him.” That picture is given right at the beginning. There is a treasure, and it has been pointed out to us that we have access to that treasure, so it would be foolish if we do not go get it. If a person does not pray, Calvin says, it is like a person who has been given knowledge about a treasure but ignores it. Calvin returned to that same idea in Book III, chapter 20, section 2 when he said, “So true is it that we dig up by prayer the treasures that were pointed out by the Lord's Gospel and which our faith has gazed upon.” Calvin's use of this image is a very good one, because he emphasized that prayer is hard work just like digging up a treasure is hard work. We know the treasure is there, but we have to dig it up. We do that because our

faith has gazed upon the treasure. We know what is there, and we come in prayer to claim it. That is the first of the two pictures that illustrate the importance of prayer to Calvin.

The other illustration that I will use is that of the Father, our heavenly Father. One picture is treasure in the earth that we dig up. The other picture is the Father, whom we go to and ask. Calvin said in Book III, chapter 20, section 12, "As children unburden their troubles to their parents, we go to God with our prayers." There are many more illustrations in this chapter. Yet these are two—treasure and Father. We dig up the treasure. We ask the Father.

Calvin was aware throughout all this material that there is a problem with prayer. That problem could be expressed in two ways. One way to express the problem is with this question: why do we pray if God already knows everything and has already determined what He is going to do? That is a problem that many people have when they think about prayer. It has probably crossed your mind as well. Why are we doing this? God knows what is needed. He is going to work all things out according to His will. So is prayer just an exercise in futility? It does not seem to make much sense.

Calvin's answer to that objection is that "prayer is not so much for His own sake as for ours." Prayer is not to inform God or try to get Him to change what He is going to do. It is rather something that changes us. Calvin said in Book III, chapter 20, section 3, "...so that our hearts may be fired with a zealous and burning desire ever to seek, love, and serve him." As we pray, our hearts are aroused to greater love for God and greater concern for His will and purpose. Calvin would say that we are never so close to God as when we are earnestly praying to Him. This is not Calvin's expression, but one might express his thought by saying that prayer does not bring God close to me, but prayer brings me close to God. God is always close to me, but I am not always close to God. When I pray, however, then I am as close to God as I ever am in this world. So one of the problems with prayer is that we cannot change God's will or inform Him of what He does not already know.

The other problem that we often face and which Calvin did too is the problem that we pray and God does not seem to hear us. We can pray for something that never happens. Calvin said in Book III, chapter 20, section 3, "Our most merciful Father, although He never either sleeps or idles, still very often gives the impression of one sleeping or idling." God is never off somewhere not paying attention, but it seems like He is. Calvin said that He gives us that impression "in order that He may train us." The fact that God seems not to hear is for our benefit as well. Calvin went on to say, "...otherwise idle and lazy to seek, ask, and entreat him to our great good." So to pray is to our great good, because it brings us closer to God. To keep on praying, because God does not seem to be doing anything, is for our great good, too, because it keeps us close to God. Thus Calvin recognized some problems with prayer, but he had something to say in answer to them.

Let us go to Calvin's description of prayer. It is a very practical orientation to prayer, which you will recognize if you read the chapter. It is not only a doctrine of prayer, but it is also a practical manual on how to pray. One could turn this entire chapter into a prayer itself rather easily. It is interesting that in some of the warm confessional statements, such as the Heidelberg Catechism, the teaching on prayer becomes a prayer. That seems to be a good way to do it. What we say about prayer becomes a prayer in itself. Calvin's description of prayer is "The chief exercise of faith by which we daily receive God's benefits." I will summarize some ideas that I have put together from Calvin, not following precisely his order of things, but considering various points that Calvin made.

First Calvin told us to do it. Pray. It is not enough to talk about prayer or try to understand how it works if we can. It is not enough to deal with the problems that we face when we pray. We should pray. We must pray.

Why should we pray? Calvin would answer that in two ways. First, God commands us to pray. Calvin repeats that point. God tells us many times in the Bible that we should pray, and who are we to question God's command, whether we understand everything about it or not. Another reason we should pray is that God promises to hear our prayers. We are commanded to pray. We are also assured, whatever it seems to us, that God is actually listening to those prayers and hearing what we pray. Thus we are to pray.

We are to pray often. We are to pray at all times, as Ephesians 6:18 tells us. I believe that means we should have a spirit of prayer, an attitude of prayer. We should never be very far from prayer while we go about our daily business. We are also to pray at special times, as James 5:13 tells us. One does not eliminate the other. Special times of prayer do not mean that we do not pray always. Praying always, on the other hand, does not mean that we do not pray at certain times. Calvin said in Book III, chapter 20, section 50, "It is fitting to set apart certain hours for this exercise." That was the reason he wrote prayers that Christians in Geneva could use at different times of the day.

Calvin suggested that each day Christians should follow a pattern of prayer. He suggested four times. The first is on awakening in the morning. That was the prayer we used at the beginning of this lesson. The second is before going to work or school. Calvin wrote a prayer called "Before Going to School," which begins, "O Lord, who art the fountain of all wisdom and learning, since Thou of Thy special goodness has granted that my youth is instructed in good arts which may assist me to honest and holy living..." The prayer goes on to ask for God's help and blessing in the life of the student. The next prayer is the prayer before eating, a blessing at table. There is also thanksgiving after eating. For Calvin there was the blessing before the meal and thanksgiving after the meal. That prayer begins, "Praise the Lord of all nations. Extol Him all peoples. For great is His steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord. We give thanks O God and Father for the many mercies which Thou of Thy infinite goodness are constantly bestowing upon us." Finally, there is a prayer at night upon going to sleep.

Some have suggested, and it could be true, that Calvin's pattern of prayer is a kind of evangelical substitute for the canonical hours in the monasteries. The monks in the monasteries had special times to pray throughout the day and part of the night. Calvin encouraged Christians to pray, not in the monasteries but wherever they are at those particular times. Calvin also furnished model prayers for Christians to use. It was not that Calvin wanted or expected people to pray only the words that he wrote. They were rather model prayers. So you could use those words, or your own words, but they were a guide for Christians to learn to pray at those specific times throughout the day.

There is another significant point that should be made. Along with praying often, using a pattern of prayer, and using model prayers, there was also the model prayer. That was the Lord's Prayer. Calvin did treat the Lord's Prayer in some detail in this chapter. I will go through the different parts of the Lord's Prayer, which is the premiere model for praying. I will make a few comments about what Calvin tells us about the Lord's Prayer.

Calvin saw six petitions in the Lord's Prayer. That is not of huge importance, but Augustine and Luther found seven petitions in the Lord's Prayer. The way they found seven was to separate "lead us not into temptation" and "deliver us from evil." Calvin put those together as one petition. The form of the Lord's

Prayer in Luke omits that second statement. Consequently, Calvin wanted to see those words as one petition.

With six petitions, Calvin said that the first three point to what is owed to God. They are “Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done.” They are prayers that we pray so that the glory that belongs to God might be given to God. The second three petitions are for human needs. They are “Give us this day our daily bread, forgive us our debts, and lead us not into temptation.” Even though Calvin made that distinction of three petitions directed to the glory of God and three petitions of human and earthly concerns, both parts are concerned with God’s glory. God’s glory is furthered by His providing for us our daily bread, as it is when His name is hallowed. Both parts, the three petitions for the glory of God as well as the three petitions for our human needs, benefit believers. We are benefited, blessed, when God’s name is hallowed, as we are benefited by the provision of our earthly food.

The prayer begins, “Our Father.” Calvin immediately relates this ascription, the beginning of the prayer, to Christ. We are not addressing Christ in prayer, but by addressing God as Father, we acknowledge our access through Christ as well as acknowledging God’s goodness and love for us. There is a kind of Christocentric approach to the Lord’s Prayer in Calvin’s view. We pray to our Father, but we know that we are praying through Christ and in His name.

Calvin says that praying to our Father who is in heaven reminds us that God is majestic and powerful. It is not really telling us where God is, for God is everywhere, but rather telling us how great God is. He is not limited. He is not bound by earthly constraints. We say, “Our Father, who art in heaven,” and as we say the words “in heaven,” we have great assurance that the petitions and the needs that we bring to Him are not requesting more than He is capable of providing.

Calvin stresses every word in the Lord’s Prayer. He says that we should think about the word “our.” It is important that we are praying to “our Father.” He made the point that is often made by commentators, which is that we do not claim God exclusively for ourselves. We recognize that God, who is my God, is also the God of other people. Thus we pray, “Our Father.” Calvin went even beyond that in his exegesis. We are not simply saying that God is “ours” rather than simply “mine.” Calvin emphasized that I should love other people, especially those of the household of faith. Calvin emphasized love for all people who dwell on earth, especially those of the church. There is an active mode when I say, “Our Father.” It reminds me that I have responsibility toward other people, who are included in that word “our.”

The first three petitions are directed to God. Calvin made the point that in one sense we are praying the same thing three times: “Hallowed by Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done.” There is real similarity in those statements. Calvin also said, however, that we need that triple list. We need to be reminded of the importance of God’s glory three times so that we can embrace it and pray it. So we pray, “Hallowed be Thy name.” We are praying that the honor that is due to God would be given to Him.

We also pray, “Thy kingdom come.” It is interesting that at this point in Calvin’s treatment of the Lord’s Prayer in the 1559 edition of the *Institutes*—in comparison with the 1536 edition of the *Institutes*—there was some development, or shift. We do not often see that in Calvin, but things did not always stay precisely the same in each edition. In 1536 when Calvin prayed, “Thy kingdom come,” he was thinking about individual Christians. He was praying for the Gospel to be extended, for people to be converted, for there to be more Christians. That was the heart of his prayer. The idea was that the kingdom comes through the conversion of more people. In 1559, however, the emphasis developed into a prayer for more churches. Calvin’s ecclesiology had become more prominent between 1536 and 1559. Calvin said

in Book III, chapter 20, section 42, that as we pray “Thy kingdom come, we must daily desire that God gather churches unto Himself from all parts of the earth.” Thus you can see in the teaching on “Thy kingdom come” in 1559 that there was an emphasis on churches. There was an implied missionary emphasis in the hope for all parts of the earth.

We also pray, “Thy will be done.” We ask God to answer our prayers, not as we wish, but as God foresees is best. When we say, “Thy will be done,” we are asking God to answer the prayers in the way that He knows is best, not in the way that we perhaps think He should answer those prayers or might want Him to answer those prayers. When Calvin said, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” he was not thinking of what is sometimes called God’s “secret will.” That will is going to be done. Calvin said that we are praying that we may obey willingly. We are not concerned with God’s hidden will, by which all things are ruled, whether they wish to obey or not. We are rather praying that we may obey willingly. Calvin again turned the interpretation of the Lord’s Prayer into a personal application. When I pray, “Thy will be done,” what I am really praying is “Lord, make me willing to do Your will.” That is Calvin’s interpretation. Not everybody would view the prayer that way, but that was the way Calvin saw it.

When the prayer says, “Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven,” the angels in heaven are completely willing to do the Lord’s will, and His will is completely done there. We are praying that the same thing would happen on earth. We are praying that Christian people, and all people, would be willing to do the will of God, so that His will would be done on earth as it is in heaven. Should we pray for something that we know, because God has told us, is not going to happen on earth? God’s will, in this sense, will not be done on earth as it is in heaven. God’s hidden and secret will is done on earth. It is being done today, it has always been done on earth, and it always will be done on earth. God’s will in the sense of people gladly embracing God’s will and following it, however, will not happen. Should we pray for something that God says will never happen until the end of the world, which is the perfect obedience of all creatures? Calvin answered yes. Of course, the Lord’s Prayer tells us to pray for that. Calvin said, “By this prayer we witness that we hate all that is opposed to the will of God and eagerly offer ourselves to participate in its fulfillment.” When we say, “Thy will be done,” we are expressing our hatred for the rejection and despising of God’s will on earth. We are also giving ourselves to embracing and following God’s will on earth.

The first of the second three petitions is “Give us this day our daily bread.” Calvin was quite sure that the prayer means bread, such as that which we pick up and eat with our mouths. Not all expositors before Calvin had taken that position. I do not know if modern commentators differ much on this petition. Yet Erasmus, for instance, a humanist Reformer, believed that “bread” here meant “heavenly doctrine.” In other words, the request would mean asking for God to feed us spiritually. That was the way that Erasmus understood it. It was too much of a shocking contrast for Erasmus from the great prayers for God’s will to be done and then the next prayer to be for God to give us something to eat. It seemed to be improper to him. Calvin, however, was quite sure it was proper. He said, “We come in this prayer to a prayer for sustenance needed for our earthly lives.” It is not improper in the same prayer to pray for God’s glory and for my food.

Calvin emphasized the word “daily.” We pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.” What Calvin said on this point is something you probably would expect from him after reading this far in the *Institutes*. He said, “What we mean here is to supply our needs in a proper and moderate way.” In other words, we are not asking for extravagance or luxury. We are asking for what we need. God knows we need to eat. We pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.” No matter what we may think we possess, we are able to enjoy it only by God’s grace. All we have will nourish us only if God so ordains and not by the intrinsic value

of the elements. Calvin has said this before. In God's providence, when we partake of bread, we are nourished by God's secret blessing. Calvin knew that food had certain qualities that nourish our bodies. Yet he also knew that sometimes food does not nourish the bodies of certain people, such as those who are sick or in a situation in which the food cannot be properly assimilated. Thus it is not automatic. When we pray to God for our food, we are asking Him for the food on the plate, but we are also asking Him that He might use the food to nourish us and to strengthen us physically.

There is also an emphasis that we pray for "our" daily bread. It might seem to be a contradiction that God is going to give us this bread, because it is His bread, but it becomes our bread. Calvin said that even if it comes to us by our own work and diligence, it is by God's grace that He gives us bread. We work hard for it. We buy it. It is ours, but it is really God's because He has given it to us.

Then we pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." For Calvin, this is the evangelical heart of the Lord's Prayer. This takes us back to justification by faith alone in the preceding section. Forgiveness comes only by God's sheer grace. Calvin liked to use the word "debt." He did use the word "sin," but he believed that the word "debt," which is found in one biblical form of the prayer, is appropriate because it sets before us the fact that as sinners we are in debt and we cannot pay that debt. The prayer is, of course, referring to sin. It is not referring to financial transactions that we are asking to be forgiven. It is referring to the great pile of our sins, the great amount of our sins, which we can do nothing about. We are bankrupt, and we have all these debts.

We pray that God will forgive our sins "as we forgive our debtors." Calvin's point, like that of most commentators, is that forgiving others is not a condition by which we oblige God to forgive us. The prayer is not saying, "Because we have forgiven other people for what they have done against us, therefore forgive the sins we have committed against You." The forgiveness on our part can only be accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit and the presence of the Spirit in our lives. It is a witness of our adoption. In other words, we are praying, "Forgive us our debts, and because You have, we are enabled to forgive others their sins against us."

We also pray, "Lead us not into temptation." Calvin was concerned to say we are not asking God to keep us away from any problems, testing, or temptation. We are asking God to make it possible for us to be strengthened when temptation, testing, or problems come. Calvin thought of temptation in a broad sense. It was not just temptation to sin, but also temptation that comes from good things. It could be temptations that appeal to us, such as good grades, prestige, or any other thing that could be good under certain circumstances, but that also can lead us astray. As these things come, we ask God to keep us from falling and to enable us to stand.

Finally, we pray, "For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory." Calvin knew that those words are not found in the original text. He thought they were appropriate words, and he did not object to them being added to the Lord's Prayer. God's kingdom, power, and glory are invincible. So we are safe in God's care as we could never be in our own. Calvin approved of the words, whatever their source. He was not concerned about their source. They do bring us to a full circle, because the prayer starts with the glory of God and ends with the glory of God. There is something appropriate about these concluding words.

The amen strengthens our hope. Luther said that one place Christians should say a loud amen is at the end of the Lord's Prayer. That is a good habit to get into, and Calvin would agree.

Those are Calvin's points on the model prayer. Let me summarize Calvin's points about how to pray. We pray. We pray often. We pray properly. We pray with reverence, with concentration, with humility, with repentance, and with confidence. The last of those points, praying with confidence, means that we pray knowing that God can answer our prayers and that God will answer our prayers. As I have said already, God can and will answer our prayers. Does God always answer our prayers? Calvin said in Book III, chapter 20, section 52, "He cannot disappoint the expectation and patience of His people." So the answer is yes. God will always answer our prayers. He will not disappoint our expectations and our patience.

If I were preaching a series of sermons on the Lord's Prayer, I would include the final words, but I would make it clear to people that those words do not appear in our earliest texts, so there is some doubt about whether they belong in Scripture or not. Yet they do represent ancient tradition. So they represent the faith of the early church. As the faith of the early church, we can read them and profit from them as we would from the early church fathers. I would be clear about it, because people can be confused by using different texts of the Bible. We must realize that some versions have the final words of the Lord's Prayer and some do not. I think it is fine to preach a sermon on those words, however, and I think you could preach a rather good sermon from them.

When Calvin said, "God cannot disappoint the expectation and patience of His people," there are two points to emphasize: expectation and patience. Let me illustrate it with a quote that I found and I think is helpful from the missionary Adoniram Judson, who went to Burma. He said, "I never was deeply interested in any object. I never prayed sincerely for anything, but it came at some time no matter how distant the day. Somehow in some shape, probably the last I should have desired, it came." So Judson was saying that an answer to prayer comes some day in some shape. It was maybe not in the shape expected or desired, but in some way or some time the prayer was answered.

We pray with confidence and with perseverance. Calvin said that we should pray and keep on praying. Not only can God answer our prayers, but also God will answer our prayers. Calvin said in Book III, chapter 20, section 52, "For lest there be in prayer a constancy to persevere, we pray in vain." This is difficult for us. I have been praying for something for two years, every day, and there does not seem to be an answer in sight. Does that mean I have persevered? I am in the process of persevering. I do not know how many more years I will pray for this. I do not know in what shape or when the answer will come. I do know, however, that I should keep praying, because "unless there be in prayer a constancy to persevere, we pray in vain." The Bible says to pray without ceasing. A friend of mine once said, "My temptation is to cease without praying." Let us resist that and pray without ceasing.

Let me make a few comments on public prayer. This is corporate prayer, public prayer, or prayer as part of the liturgy of the church. Calvin said that the time is indifferent to God. That means that the times should be set for the convenience of the people. Worship, according to Book IV, will certainly be on Sunday, but it can be at other times in the week as well. It can be on Sunday plus other times in the week. Calvin's church in Geneva not only met on Sunday, but also on several other times during the week. There were sermons and prayers not only on Sundays, but also at several other times during the week.

The place would be in the church. This does not mean that God inhabits a particular building in a special way or that it has a secret holiness. We can pray to God anywhere. In corporate prayer, however, we come together in the church to pray.

Calvin said that corporate prayer in worship is in two forms. It is in spoken word, and it is in singing. I want to comment on this point to conclude this lesson. When Calvin wrote the 1536 *Institutes*, he apparently was not of the conviction that singing would be an appropriate mode for prayer in church. He seemed to be close to Zwingli's view that singing should be eliminated from public worship. Quite soon after that, however, he seems to have changed his mind. It was probably because of the time he spent in Strasburg with Bucer, because Bucer was an advocate of singing in worship, just as much as Zwingli was an opponent of singing in worship. Zwingli's view of music was not limited to instruments. He opposed the use of instruments, but he also had no singing at all in his service. When Calvin came to Geneva in 1536, Farel, who had started the Reformation in Geneva, under the influence of Bern, which was in turn influenced by Zurich and Zwingli, had no singing in his liturgy either.

Quite soon after Calvin's return to Geneva, however, his new idea was that he was a strong advocate of singing the Psalms in worship. The place where Calvin expressed that view most clearly in all his writings, although it also came out in the 1559 edition of the *Institutes* in chapter 20, the place where he put it forth most clearly was in the enlarged preface to the Genevan Psalter of 1543, which Calvin had planned and guided through publication. Even before that, Calvin, in writing some articles for the organization of the church and its worship in Geneva, said, "It is a thing most expedient for the edification of the church to sing some psalms in the form of public prayers by which one prays to God or sings His praises, so that the hearts of all may be aroused and stimulated to make similar prayers and to render similar praises and thanks to God with a common love." When Calvin first went to Geneva to help Farel, he remarked several times that the prayers were cold and dead. Whether those were spoken prayers that the people were repeating, or whether it was the prayer of the minister and the people were remaining silent, Calvin felt there was a coldness and deadness about the service. He encouraged the use of the singing of psalms. Calvin became convinced that this was the apostolic practice. Thus he was not innovating but returning to an earlier practice.

We must remember that, while it is startling to us that Zwingli would say there should be no singing in church, the corruption of singing in the medieval liturgical pattern was such that singing was in Latin, and even the priests generally did not understand what they were saying. Zwingli said in 1523, "As soon as it can be done, this barbarous mumbling should be dispatched from the churches." It was not edifying nor understood. It was "barbarous mumbling."

About the same time that Zwingli was taking it out, however, Calvin was bringing singing back in as part of the congregation's worship. The new liturgy of Strasburg included congregational singing of the Psalms, the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and perhaps some other songs as well. Perhaps they even sang "I Greet Thee Whom My Sure Redeemer Art," which appeared in the Strasburg liturgy and is sometimes attributed to Calvin. If so, then Calvin wrote a hymn, and his view of exclusive psalmody would be compromised by his own writing. We cannot really prove that Calvin wrote it, however, and I rather doubt that he did. Yet Calvin said that singing is a form of prayer, and it is a good form of prayer because it arouses the heart. Calvin believed that music had a very strong impact on the human psychology. He believed it was both dangerous and wonderful. Calvin came to the conclusion that we should sing psalms in church and we should sing psalms outside of church, and that was all. We should not have any other music whatsoever. There should be no secular music. It would be good if people were singing psalms all day long wherever they went. That was not possible, of course, but that was Calvin's goal.

The church of Rome was using music, instruments, and singing, but generally it was not congregational. It was a group like a choir, and often the priest, and always in Latin. It was very convoluted, complicated music. When Calvin introduced psalmody in Geneva, he wanted simple, new tunes. He

did not take secular music and put the psalms to it. The Genevan Psalter begins with the text from Psalm 90, "Sing unto the Lord a new song." Calvin really meant "a new song," not only with new words but also with new tunes. That was quite different from Luther. Luther was quite willing to get good tunes wherever he could. Calvin, however, wanted new tunes.