

The Prayer for Disciples

Matt. 6:9-13

Are you a disciple of the Lord Jesus Are you born of the Spirit? Are you it child of God entitled to say Abba, Father? Such were they, ¹ and no others, whom the Lord taught to pray thus:

Our Father that art in the heavens, Sanctified be thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done as in heaven also on the earth, Give us today our sufficient bread, and forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors, and bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

If you are a disciple as they were, you too can pray thus, even if like them you could not say that you have in Christ redemption, the forgiveness of your trespasses (Eph. 1.7). Such too was necessarily their state then, for Christ had not yet suffered for sins. But it ought not to be yours now; for the atoning work is done. If then you believe on the Lord Jesus, be it known to you, that through Him is (not promised, but) proclaimed to you remission of sins, and in Him is every believer justified from all things (Acts 13:38, 39). You have not appreciated the alphabet of the gospel, if you know not that once purged you have no more conscience of sins.

While in this unformed condition, born of the Spirit but not resting on redemption known as yours (and therefore not yet having the Spirit of adoption, Gal. 4:4-6, Eph. 1:13 {;Rom. 8:15}), you do well to pray as the Lord taught His disciples waiting for the Spirit (Luke 11:1-3). When the Paraclete was given, they entered into peace and liberty, far beyond their then state (Rom. 5:1-11, 2 Cor. {sic} 17, 18); and so may you prove when thus subject and obedient to God (Acts 5:32). Nevertheless, though the standing of a Christian will lead you to pray in the Spirit according to the new relationships, how blessed ever is that which the Lord here taught! Do you really know what He meant? Many fail in this. Let us weigh His words.

It is in the First Gospel we hear of the Father who is in the heavens. The aim was to raise the eyes on high of Jews who were used to wait for God to display His glorious power on earth (Isa. 25:9, 31:4, 35:4, &c.), as He did in measure since the day of redemption from the old house of bondage. Now He is made known as the One who makes His sun rise on evil and good, and sends rain on just and unjust, yet with special favor to His sons.

1. {The reader will subsequently see that it is not according to the position in which the sealed saint stands now, and prays to "Abba, Father," that the prayer taught to the disciples *in their state at that time*, before redemption was accomplished by the cross, expresses the Christian's position.}

The petitions are seven, and divide into two classes; the first three are of righteousness, as the last four are of grass. This is an order intrinsically due to God, and proper for saints. If lost sinners as such were contemplated, all must begin with sovereign grace. But of this we hear not in the so-called sermon on the Mount, but such grace shines appropriately elsewhere.

1. And how right, even our hearts feel, is the opening petition, Sanctified be thy name It is the foremost desire of the renewed, however young in faith. Without this made good, there can be nothing good.

2. Thy (not My) Kingdom come, the Father's Kingdom (Matt. 13:43) where the heavenly saints shine forth as the sun in risen glory, the dearest object of His love here as Father, Who will have them there with and as Christ, through Whom alone it could be.

3. Thy will be done as in heaven also on the earth. This is at the same time the Son of man's Kingdom, Who will send His angels to gather out of it all offences and all that work lawlessness (Matt. 13:41). It is the earthly things of God's Kingdom, as the other the heavenly (John 3:12), Christ being Head of the church and over all things (Eph. 1:10, 22). Then come the petitions of grace.

4. Give us today our sufficient (or, necessary) bread. Thus are they taught to begin with confessing dependence for ordinary wants, as the apostle called us to be content with food and raiment.

5. And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. For indeed all saints are bound to judge self and confess sins, as an antecedent spirit of forgiveness is imperative. See Matt. 18, Luke 17:3, 4.

6. And bring us not into temptation. So the Lord impresses on the disciples; for He ever knew their weakness as none else did yet. Luke 22:46. To "endure" temptation is as blessed, as "entering into" it is full of danger.

7. But deliver us from evil in general, if not from the evil one in particular. This was not the sifting, or temptation, deprecated in the clause before, which grace may put us through for good, as we see in Peter; but the power of the enemy in drawing into sin against God. The proper desire was to be kept from the evil, or, if one fell, to be restored from it. Grace in no case fails, if a disciple alas! did. Deliver us from evil.

The doxology is an ecclesiastical accretion and therefore uninspired. Luke was led by the Holy Spirit to omit the special title (2), the earthly Kingdom (3), and the final clause (7), as not so much called for in the case of Gentiles.

From *The Bible Treasury* NS 4:20.

The Lord's Prayer

by W. Kelly

I propose to examine the Lord's prayer as briefly as is consistent with a plain, perspicuous exposition: first, looking at it, as it is given in its most comprehensive form in the gospel of St. Matthew; next, comparing the form which St. Luke presents; and, in the third place, seeking, as far as the Lord enables me, to gather His design touching its use, whether at the time it was given, or afterwards.

I. -- The first thing I desire to point out, is the accordance of the Lord's prayer with the place it holds in the first gospel and with the object the Lord Jesus had then in view. It occurs in the Sermon on the Mount where He is addressing Jewish disciples, and leading them out of their previous thoughts and feelings and ways into the new principles of the kingdom of heaven, which he was about to introduce. That is important to remember for understanding either the meaning or the object of the prayer. It does not contemplate, as it was not addressed to, the whole human race indiscriminately; it does not express the state, wants and feelings of every person who has certain desires after God or a fear of coming wrath. Thus, when the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, realizing his sin and unworthiness, he does not venture to say, "Father," or "Our Father which art in heaven." He has no thought of taking up the profound and lofty petitions with which the Lord's prayer opens, nor has he leisure of heart to think of the full sup' plies and the, tender mercy counted on in God, which the latter portion breathes. "God be merciful to me a sinner" was the just, becoming cry from his contrite heart. Here was a man under the guidance of the Spirit of God, contrasted by our Lord Himself, not with disciples of course, but with the Pharisee who trusted in himself that he was righteous and despised others, whose prayer, if prayer it is to be called, betrayed his self-gratulation, and whose thanks were not for what God, but for what he, the Pharisee, was. The publican, on the other hand, might be dark, but at least, as far as his conscience was enlightened, he really felt and owned his condition as a sinner before God. He, who is mighty, despiseth not any, and the publican went down to his house justified rather than the other. At the same time, it is not to despise a man, if we call his attention to the actual condition of his soul, and remind him that the Lord's prayer supposes discipleship and the relationship of children with a Father. Sincerity can never change wrong into right, and ignorance, though less guilty than the conscious utterance of language which goes beyond our state and experience, is a sorry excuse before the full blaze of God's revealed light in His

Word.

If asked how we are to know for whom the Lord's prayer was meant, I would answer that there are two ways of ascertaining, which, if rightly applied, lead to a right conclusion. First, we have to observe whom the Lord had in view in the prayer or the context in which it occurs; and next, we must consider the nature of the petitions, separately and as a whole, which, if duly appreciated, will be found in harmony with the true wants of those for whom the prayer was designed.

Now, it is obvious that, when the sermon on the Mount was pronounced, there was an immense crowd listening, but it was not directly addressed to them. They heard the Lord and were astonished at His doctrine, for He taught them as One having authority, and not as the scribes. Wherever confidence in man usurps the place of the truth, uncertainty before God is the never failing result, and hence the craving after tradition, official and successional authority, and such like props of conscious weakness. This was the case with these scribes in a very large degree. Their employment even of Scripture had no power in it, neither flowing from nor producing simple, happy-hearted confidence in God. They were a class who handed down a measure of Scriptural knowledge, crusted over with a coating of tradition which often obscured and perverted even what was true in itself. Such is the inevitable effect of traditions it always brings in foreign ingredients, which so mix themselves up with truth as to put a blind between the soul and God. The Spirit of God, on the contrary, uses the Word to detect and expel all hindrances, and thus to place the soul without disguise in the presence of God, there to learn *His* thoughts. And if what God thinks of me as a poor convicted sinner crushes me, what He reveals of His own perfect love towards me calls me from the dust, sets me firmly on my feet, and bids me fear not. It is so even now where the Holy Spirit works in any power by the vessels whom He deigns to use; how much more when Jehovah-Jesus was there! "For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God; for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him."

In that discourse, then, the Lord had His own disciples immediately before Him. For their wants as having been Jews and not yet taken from under the law, He was providing.

And seeing the multitudes He went up into a mountain: and when He was set, *His disciples* came unto Him; and He opened His mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit {Matt. 5:3}, &c.

The disciples were a class who (excepting Judas or any other special case of the kind, if such there were), had truly received Jesus as the Messiah by the Spirit of God. They had not chosen Him, but He had chosen them that they should go and bring forth fruit, and that their fruit should remain. They were gathered

around Him as His witnesses, and separated from the rest of the nation even now in a measure (i.e. in faith and affection to His person), soon to be so far more fully by His death and resurrection and in the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. These were the persons to whom the Lord addressed Himself in the sermon, and of whom He thought in His prayer.

Hence, while the discourse consists of an admirable exposition of the principles of the kingdom, and announces great and precious truths of God which must ever abide, the actual circumstances of the disciples were not overlooked by their gracious Master. On the contrary, the proper application and only full meaning of many parts in detail are found in their necessities and adapted to their condition. And most blessedly He did provide for them, as One who, though a divine person, was made of a woman, made under the law, and thus by experience, and not omniscience only, knew what they lacked most and where their real dangers lay.

For though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered {Heb. 5:8}.

For Him obedience was indeed a new thing, assuredly not because He had a rebellious nature as we have, (for He was God, as Well as with God, and even as born of the Virgin He was "that holy thing" {Luke 1:35}), but because from everlasting He was the Word who had spoken into being all things, all creatures, heavenly and earthly, visible and invisible. Therefore, had He to learn obedience, and learn it He did in a pathway of such suffering as none but He could know. What, then, was His first, last, and constant thought as He walked and served in perfect grace here below? It was His Father's name: as He says elsewhere, "the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father." Viewed as man it was the power of His communion, as it was the aim of His work. And it is as the One who was thus familiar with the Father, whose heart was ever overflowing with the sense of His glory, that He puts forward His own heart's feeling as the first and prominent thought for His disciples in their intercourse with God. Some of the petitions He was about to put in their mouths were only suitable for them (e.g. that about the forgiveness of their debts or sins), but He would have them begin with their Father, not with themselves.

Accordingly, viewed in its structure, the prayer naturally divides into two sections. The first portion is made up of the desires proper to righteousness in the largest and highest sense -- the atmosphere, I think I may say, in which our Lord Himself lived and moved here below. The second part is composed rather of supplications suited to those who were needy in every way, but withal the

objects of grace.² The three first petitions form one division, and the last four the other.

The very opening title or address to ‘God appears to me in beautiful keeping with the gospel and the then position of the disciples: “Our Father which art in heaven.” It is a phrase which constantly occurs in Matthew’s gospel, and there only. It is true that the authorized Bible has it in the corresponding passage of St. Luke (Luke 11:2); but it is known to every person of competent acquaintance with these matters that there are weighty reasons for reducing the clause there to the single word “Father.” My own conviction is that the larger form which appears in the common text of Luke was borrowed from Matthew, and this probably either through the mistake of some ancient copyist who trusted to his memory, and thus introduced confusion, or through the graver fault of designedly making as exact a harmony as possible in the language of the two evangelists. It is unnatural to suppose that if an open enemy tampered with the sacred text, his corruption would gain currency in Christendom. On the other hand, no friend of revelation could possibly justify to himself the deliberate introduction of a discrepancy with another gospel. The tendency, therefore, and more particularly in the gospels, has always been, on the part of misguided, professing friends, to interpolate words or clauses from one into another, so as to give not only concurrent testimony, but as much as might be of verbal resemblance. I need hardly say that it is grievous and presumptuous thus to meddle with a word or letter of that which the Holy Ghost has inspired; that such a step, even if well meant, invariably spoils, so far, the beauty and perfection of Scripture, though of course the substantial truth remains; and that they are the truest friends of the Bible who seek to go back to the earliest and purest sources, relying on the abundant evidence which the goodness of God affords in order to arrive at a just decision.

Assuming that this difference is well founded, what does it teach us? or why, we may reverently ask, is it thus written? In Matthew, I think, the disciples are regarded according to their connection with God’s ancient people Israel, accustomed therefore to look on or hope for the earth as the sphere of their exaltation as a nation. Here the Lord is gradually breaking their merely Jewish links by the revelation of a Father in heaven with whom they would have to do. It is not now “the Lord of all the earth” causing the Jordan to be not a barrier but a highway for His conquering people to pass over and take

2. The old and common assertion, that the Lord borrowed most of His prayer from existing forms, is now confessed by competent authorities to have very slender proof. Lightfoot and others, to have a show of making out the case, have been forced as much to exalt these Rabbinical relics as to depreciate the Lord’s incomparable prayer. I cannot but feel that such an hypothesis is as irreverent as it is unfounded.

possession of the land. Neither is it “the God of heaven” conferring imperial power, in His sovereign will, on a heathen when His people had utterly, shamefully, sinned away, for a season at least, their heritage. But, again, it is no such fulness of blessing as was conveyed in our risen Lord’s message to the disciples through Mary Magdalene:

Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God {John 20:17}.

The address, in Matthew, wears to my mind an intermediate or transitional character. It supposed certain elements in the ancient oracles which Israel had, but there was an accession of light in accordance with the state of disciples, who were associated with a Messiah whom the people did not receive, and who were thus in process of weaning from their former prejudices and of training for yet higher privileges. “The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD’S: but the earth hath He given unto the children of men.” “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear Him.” These sentiments from the Psalms, or sentiments akin springing from the Lord’s divine wisdom, seem to me the basis of the address, though there is (naturally, when we think who the speaker was) that degree of progress in it which exactly met and reflected the due place of the disciples at that time. The Father is regarded as in heaven, and those who look up to Him were on earth, ³ far from Him as it were, and in circumstances of weakness, want, and danger, though with hearts in a measure yearning for His glory. The Lord, in the address, would fix their first thought on the Father above, would familiarize their spirits with looking up to Him as infinitely blessed and benignant as well as most high. There was not, nor could be at that time, the sense of nearness which was afterwards their privilege: nevertheless, the Lord Jesus assumes them to be real believers from among the Jews, and while maintaining the authority of the law and enlarging its scope, leads on their souls to higher things. But there is not an allusion to redemption in the prayer, nor indeed throughout the whole of the sermon on the Mount. Those who are taught to pray are in no way regarded as worshipers once purged, having no more conscience of sins: indeed, far from having and enjoying such a place, they would scarcely, I think, have understood then what such language meant. There is no thanksgiving to the Father

who *hath* made us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who *hath* delivered us from the power of darkness, and *hath* translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son {Col. 1:13}.

3. How different is the measure of blessedness conveyed by the phrase in St. Matthew, from what we find in Eph. 1:3; 2:6! In these last Scriptures the Christian, even while in this world, is regarded as at home with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, seated together with Christ in heavenly places. It is an immense step forward.

All this and more could not be so said because the work of redemption was still a promise merely and not accomplished. This gives its tinge to the whole prayer; for there is no haste in the ways of God, nor would He so far slight the suffering of His Son, nor the mission of His Spirit, as to anticipate in the experience of the saints the precious results which were to follow from these two glorious facts, when once they had come to pass. God forbid that I should insinuate any thing imperfect as to the Lord's prayer or His Sermon. For any one to speak disparagingly of either would be, in my judgment, blasphemy.

The Lord takes up the disciples where they were. If He had uttered the as yet undeveloped truth which was revealed when redemption- was wrought and the Holy Ghost thereon given, His language would have been unintelligible to the disciples. If any thing had exceeded what was suitable to their then state, if the standing, experience, or worship proper to accomplished redemption had been supposed, it would not have been the perfect prayer it was for them.

Take the instance of a person in prison. A petition is framed on his behalf to the sovereign. If the document were rightly drawn up, two things at least would characterize it: a full owning of the majesty offended against, and a humble, thorough acknowledgment of the prisoner's guilt. That would be the only language becoming one under such painful circumstances. He might have sure grounds to believe that the petition would find favor in his sovereign's eyes and that its prayer would be granted. This would not be by ignoring the actual circumstances of the case, but rather by a frank confession: to adopt the tone of a freeman would be false ground. Now, the condition of those under The law was, in the main, analogous to this, till redemption, when accomplished, changed all. Confidence in God that He would save, they had, and it was right; for it rested upon a believing estimate of God's character, and upon His positive promises, spite of what they knew themselves to be. He had announced over and over again, by word and oath, in type and prophecy, that He would, through the Messiah, accomplish the deliverance of all who trusted in Him. Still, they were not yet set free, however certainly they would be, because that depended upon, His faithful goodness and truth; and "God is not a man that He should lie." But as yet it was a thing desired, not possessed -- a privilege longed and prayed for, but not bestowed and enjoyed as a constant settled portion, till the death and resurrection of Christ made it to be God's righteousness so to deal with the believer.

This consideration, by the way, explains much in the Psalms, and in particular the alternations of conflict found there. Sometimes the speakers are hoping, sometimes fearing; one moment confessing themselves the sheep of God's pasture, and the next moment afraid of being consumed in His hot displeasure. All this was the experience of the saints, before the cross of Christ

made it possible for the Holy Ghost to bear witness to the soul of a complete and eternal lifting away of sins. It was well and of God that they should feel their state, without presuming to run before the dealings of God; and thus it was with the disciples also. Many prophets and kings had desired to see what they saw and to hear what they heard; but redemption, with all its fruitful issues, was still a blessing in prospect only. And the Lord's prayer was the perfect expression of their desires and wants, before that mighty change came in as a fact. It is essential, I believe, to an adequate understanding of the prayer, that we should realize the position of those to whom primarily it was given; and it will always be misapplied, if we do not appreciate the new ground on which accomplished redemption sets the faithful.

It is well to observe also that the prayer is the expression of individual wants. I do not mean that the disciples may not have used it together as well as singly, but it nowhere supposes the Christians formed into one body. A prayer for the Church, therefore, as such, it is not; for it never passes beyond an aggregate of individuals, irrespective of the uniting bond of the Spirit who baptizes into one body. But this may appear more distinctly as we look briefly at its several parts.

“Hallowed be Thy name” is the great foundation of all, the first and strongest feeling of a renewed mind. Flowing from the sense of the holiness due to the Father's name and obligatory on every soul that has to do with Him, as well as on His house for ever, there is also the desire of the glory in which all shall answer to the Father's heart and character -- “Thy kingdom come.” It is not exactly Christ's kingdom, but the Father's. The gospel of St. Matthew, if examined with care, shows that the Father's kingdom is distinguished in Scripture from that of the Son of man. Thus, in Matt. 13:41-43, we are told that the Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of *His kingdom* all scandals, and them which do iniquity . . . then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. At the end of this age the Lord will take the world as His kingdom, and must have evil purged from it, sooner or later, by His judicial power. But the Father's kingdom is another and heavenly sphere where only the righteous shine.

But it does not satisfy the heart that the Father's will should be done in heaven only. Accordingly, the third petition runs: “Thy will be done on earth as in heaven.” When the Father's kingdom comes, this will be the moral answer to it, if I may so say, though in a lower sphere. The Father's will, instead of being despised or resisted, is yet to be the guide and ensurer of all blessing in that which was still but a rebellious province. The disciples were to pray that it might be done on earth, where there was nothing like it yet, save in His ways who thus led their desires Godward. This closes the first division of the Lord's

prayer.

Next, comes what was suited to the disciples as the objects of divine compassion, in circumstances of sorrow and trial here below. First, their bodily need is confessed, then that of the soul. "Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive ⁴ our debtors"; the last being put on the ground or pattern of the merciful spirit which had been so strongly inculcated on the disciples at the close of the chapter before. It was no longer to be "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," no longer evil for evil, but good only, good always. The model for their imitation was their heavenly Father, and not merely God as God; because as such He has vindicated Himself from time to time, and He shall yet deal most righteously with all that demands judgment in man. As Father in heaven, He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust, not to speak of His intimate and everlasting relations with His children, who enjoy the outflow of all His love. So here the Lord teaches His disciples, not as a question of remission as sinners, but of divine government as children, to say, "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." That is to say, we have this principle of forgiving mercy to others not only enjoined on the disciples as the will of the Lord, but solemnly interwoven with their own habitual need of it when they lifted up their hearts to their Father. The application and value of this to such as had been Jews must be manifest, because as a nation they were responsible to walk according to then-law, the character of which was not mercy in case of wrong, but the infliction of just punishment on the guilty. Thus it was that Israel of old was employed to purge the land of Canaan of its defiled and defiling inhabitants. And therefore it was that they themselves, when they and their kings thoroughly apostatized from God, fell under its terrible lash.

You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities.

But now another principle was about to govern -- not earthly retributive righteousness, but heavenly grace, which has power to transform as well as forgive the guilty. The Jews who believed were to be taken gradually out of their previous standing and set in a new place as children, having to do with their Father in heaven, and responsible to reflect His character on earth.

Again, we do well to remember who they were that the Lord instructs thus to plead with their Father. They were *disciples*, who were thereby shown the continual necessity of dependance upon Him and of confession. Nevertheless,

4. There is very good authority, Greek and Latin, for "forgave." The aorist here, if well founded, certainly makes the sense more specific. Its spirit agrees well with Matt. 5:23, 24, of which it is the converse.

it is the Father besought to forgive the debts of His children, not a poor sinner in an agony about his iniquity and without the knowledge of Christ. Scripture provides for such an one elsewhere, but it is not the question here; and, if the Lord's prayer were applied to, or appropriated by, an unregenerate soul, as the prescribed means of blessing for his case, a real injury would be done. Does God make the forgiveness of an unconverted man depend, in any sort or degree, upon his forgiveness of others? By no means. That were to ask a very high practical requirement from a person in the lowest possible condition; it were to impose a new law more fatal to the sinner's hopes than that of Sinai: in a word, it would ruin and deny the gospel, which in that case would be of works and no more grace. Thus, the very petition which ignorance would cite to prove that men indiscriminately were provided for here, is enough to show the utter inapplicability of the Lord's prayer to their condition. It supposes a living link with God by faith, and proves that the nature of the petitions is an additional ground for affirming that the prayer was not meant for men in their natural, unrenewed state. Those whom the Lord was instructing how to pray were persons ignorant, it is true, of redemption and of the new rights its accomplishment would usher into, but possessed of real faith in the Lord Jesus -- persons who would assuredly have gone to heaven, had they died then. They were, so far, on the same footing with the Old Testament saints; they were all alike forborne with, by virtue of a work not yet accomplished but sure; they were safe in God's mind, because He was looking on to that work. The disciples had the privilege of the Savior present with them; but the rich, blessed, perfect salvation which He was to bring in by His death and resurrection was still vague and dimly understood, if at all. In and for this condition of things the Lord's prayer was given.

Then, they were to ask their Father not to lead them into temptation, which cannot therefore mean sin here. With temptation, in the sense of lustful evil, as St. James says, God tempteth not any man, as He, of course, cannot be Himself. But Scripture uses the word in the same chapter and in other places, from Genesis to Revelation, for a man's trial and sifting in a greater or a less degree. Take Peter's case in the gospels. It was no sin that he should be put to the proof, whether he would in the face of shame confess his Master. The Lord had already warned him of his weakness, but the too confident apostle heeded not the word, slept when he should have been praying against the temptation, and consequently, when it came, he fell -- fell miserably, repeatedly. It was quite right, therefore, for the disciples, conscious of their own powerlessness, to ask that they might not be led into circumstances so sorely trying. Knowing their liability to fail under its pressure, they ought humbly and earnestly to deprecate such a sifting. No such prayer is or could be in the Bible as, Lead us not into sin; for this would be to impute moral evil to God. The temptation here

was the putting a person thoroughly to the proof, and the consequence of it would be that, if there were unjudged evil in the heart, it would come out to his humiliation. The undetected mischief working within would be brought to the surface and the light. The Lord Jesus Himself passed through every kind of temptation, first in the wilderness, and again, at the close, in the garden of Gethsemane, when the power of darkness came upon Him to the uttermost. But *He* had nothing in Him that could be touched by Satan; as He said,

The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me.

In us there is something that is brought out by the temptation, and then, if we do not lean very simply on the Lord, we break down in sin against Him. Therefore it is added in the next and last clause, “but deliver us from evil [or the evil one]”; because the effect of temptation ordinarily is that evil is manifested, and he who is its source and prime mover acquires advantage over the soul.

I do not enter into the doxology which concludes the prayer in the received text of St. Matthew; for while every body agrees in leaving it out of St. Luke, it is well known that its authority, even in the other gospel, is, to say the-least, doubtful. Probably, it was an accretion derived from ecclesiastical usage in the fourth century, or perhaps earlier. Chrysostom comments on the doxology without a note of distrust, but previously to him not a trace of it appears in any exposition or citation, either in the East or West. It would appear that the prayer began to be, or at least was, spoken of in the third century as “*oratio legitima et ordinaria*.” But this seems scarcely to have been the case in the days of Justin Martyr,⁵ who speaks of the ruler offering up prayer and thanksgiving *δοση δύναμις αὐτῷ*; (that is, I presume, extempore). But I trust I have shown that which we started with -- the special suitability of the prayer to the class with which our Lord was thus dealing. I do not go further now, for the question of His will as regards later times will come before us before I have done. But it is well to bear in mind, that, everlastingly true as is every word which our Lord spoke, we have to take care that all be rightly divided and applied. I yield to none in reverent admiration of the most sublime and the most pregnant form of prayer ever written. The question, nevertheless, remains, not of its intrinsic value, but of its due and intended use, after redemption: and the descent of the Holy Ghost.

II -- We must now turn for a few moments to St. Luke’s report of the prayer, which differs in several respects from St. Matthew’s, though both I hold to be of equal, i.e., divine authority, and the points of distinction therefore to

5. Pro Christiania, Apol. II. p. 98 D, Ed. Paris, 1615.

be not the slips of the evangelists, but the result of a different object in the mind of Him who inspired them. Difference there is, unquestionably, even in our common and excellent English Bible, but that difference is considerably greater if we adopt the text which flows from the combined testimony of the most ancient and best witnesses (manuscripts, versions and Fathers). It is notorious that there has always been a tendency on the part of copyists to try and assimilate the language of the various portions of Scripture as much as possible; and clearly from their nature we might expect, as we find in fact, that no part has suffered so much in this way as the synoptic gospels. These copyists seem sometimes to have assumed that, if they found the same truth or fact variously presented in Matthew and Luke, there must needs be an error; and then they sought, by marginal glosses and even by textual changes, to make the corresponding passages almost a verbal repetition of one another. This of course has entailed trouble on those of our day who desire in all cases to know the very words of the Holy Ghost; for if they, resting on the weightiest authorities, recur to a better text than the vulgar one, they are open to the charge of innovation -- at least from the ignorant or the prejudiced. Most groundless charge for they are in truth those who alone vindicate the oldest vouchers for the Word of God against comparatively modern change and corruption.

To return, however. The place or connection in which the prayer is given in the two gospels may be noticed with profit. In Matthew the Lord speaks as Jehovah-Messiah, not neutralizing the statutes of His servant Moses, but with the conscious authority of the Master. And hence; I think, it is that whether or not the questions of the disciples drew out any part of that instruction, nothing is permitted in the first gospel to break the onward, continuous flow of its sententious wisdom and lofty discourse. Hence, such notes appear as

ye have heard that it was said to [not by] them of old time . . . but I say unto you,

not annulling the law or the prophets, but giving fresh heavenly light on some things, and opening the way for other things far higher. Hence, too, the prayer is introduced in St. Matthew in pointed contrast with Jewish, Pharisaic love of publicity and lack of pitifulness. It is one of the three examples of the righteousness (not alms) in Matt. 6:1 which was not to be done before men to be seen of them. In Luke, on the other hand, the Lord meets the condition, of man here below -- if there was any difference, of the Gentile more emphatically, than the Jew. Therefore it is that here only we have the scene of the woman of the city that was a sinner (whom there is no good reason for identifying with Mary Magdalene or with the sister of Lazarus), the good Samaritan, the prodigal son, the rich man and Lazarus, the preaching at Nazareth, the Samaritan leper, Zaccheus the chief publican, &c. Facts and parables like these plainly indicated the affections of God, about to burst the

barriers they had been pent up in under the Jewish dispensation, and soon to overflow wherever there was need created by sin and wretchedness. At the end of ch. 10 the Lord shows us the all-importance of the Word of God -- of His own words indeed. This had tested the two sisters, Martha and Mary, both of whom we know He loved (John 11). While Martha was cumbered about much serving, and her love, most true in its way, went forth in actively providing for the Lord's outward need, Mary, unconsciously perhaps, proved her stronger faith and deeper love by sitting at His feet and drinking in His words. The thought of Martha's heart was, What a feast I must give the Messiah when I receive Him at my house Mary, on the contrary, felt that the best feast for Him, as for herself, was to receive and treasure up all she could from Him -- to see, and hear, and be with *Himself*. If we are learning thus from the Lord Jesus, we honor and please Him incomparably more than by any thing we think to confer upon Him. In the long run, too, it is the listening at His feet which best fits for the most acceptable worship and service. (Compare John 12:1-8.)

But besides the Word of God, we want another element and exercise of spiritual life. By that Word we were begotten again, and then nourished (1 Pet. 1, 2); by it we are cleansed, and instructed, kept from the paths of the destroyer, and set apart to Christ in heaven. But withal we need something more, and that is prayer. Without prayer the Word, not being received in dependance on God, may be used as new material for mere mental activity, and thus the soul may find a positive and grave snare. Really to thrive in the things of God is from hearing the Word not with the ears or mind only, but with a conscience quickened and freed by the Holy Ghost's presentation of Christ. Now, prayer is the great means by which we are practically kept in God's presence, and the Word is made welcome, profitable and sanctifying. It is the proper expression of our weakness to God and of our confidence in His love and care day by day and evermore. Instead of presuming, as men, to enter into the deep things of God or to take and pursue the path of the cross of Christ, we confess in prayer our constant need of dependance upon God. And hence it is that throughout Luke the Lord Himself, "born of a woman," is so often brought before us as One that habitually walked thus with God. (Luke 3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28, 29; 22:41-45; 23:34. See also His exhortations there to perseverance in prayer -- chs. 11:5-13, and 18:1-8 -- besides the following parable.) It was indeed His own praying which gave occasion to the request of the disciples in ch. 11.

In comparing the prayer in Luke with that in Matthew, it will be observed that, though the manner of its introduction be somewhat different, the application to the disciples is, if possible, more precise in the later gospel.

And it came to pass, that as He was praying in a certain place, when He

ceased, *one of His disciples* said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And He said unto them, When ye pray, say, Father.

It has been already noticed that the formula, "Our Father which art in heaven," was in all probability an interpolation from St. Matthew. A scribe, from habit of using the longer address, may have written it down by mistake in Luke's gospel, or he may have designedly assimilated the two reports of the prayer.

"Father, Hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come." These two petitions are alike in both gospels. It did not matter under what circumstances the Lord spoke, or with what special aim or outlook. That the Father should be exalted in His holiness, and that the bright scene and season may come when His love and power shall establish it without dispute or effort, must always be the prime desires of a true heart, and the necessary condition of unalloyed and changeless blessing.

But it is remarkable that the next clause in the ordinary text was foisted in, probably in the same way as the address has suffered. "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth" is a petition peculiar, I believe, to St. Matthew. And I wish to state once for all that in these questions of the true text, I never give a mere conjecture, but a judgment founded on a full survey of the extant evidence, and one which is generally received by those who are best informed and most able to pronounce on matters of the kind, If the omission be allowed here, it becomes us to ask why it is that the Spirit drops that clause in Luke which He had given in Matthew? What are we taught by the omission? It is well known that, throughout Luke, God has Gentiles in view, and not Jews merely. Therefore such words of Christ and such circumstances as bear upon the uncircumcision, both in their natural outcast condition and in the character of their privileges when brought in, are recorded there with care and precision. With this agrees the very genealogy of the Savior; for He is not, as by Matthew, traced down from Abraham and David, the heads of Jewish promise and glory, but traced up beyond all such limits to the first man, the head of the whole human family -- "Adam, which was the son of God." What, then, would the poor heathen have known about the righteous expectation of Israel as regards the earth? To the latter it was an ever present desire of faith, whatever their temporary degradation through their own sin.

For Jehovah loveth judgment and forsaketh not His saints; they are preserved for even but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off. The righteous shall inherit the land and dwell therein for ever.

Then and thus would God's will be done on earth as in heaven. This expectation is kept up in the Sermon generally as well as the Lord's prayer in Matthew, while other and brighter hopes accompany it; but from Luke it disappears in the

wisdom which ever marks the Holy Ghost. Peculiarly familiar to the Jew, it was foreign to the Gentile's proper hope even when converted: *his* outlook was to be exclusively heavenly.

Then, we have a perceptible difference in the language of the next petition. Luke says: "Give us *day by day* our daily bread"; Matthew had, "Give us *this day*," &c. The believing Jews looked simply at the one day, it might be, before them. It was a definite request for the present exigency. How soon the trumpet of Jubilee would sound, and the true liberty and final return and everlasting possession would come, they knew not; meanwhile they say, "Give us this day our daily bread." But the Gentile believer, for whose instruction the Lord was specially providing in Luke, is characterized by a more constant spirit of dependance: -- "day by day" is the word. ^{6*} He was never to expect rest, or establishment on the earth, as the other might. His inheritance lay elsewhere; his portion here was to be always that of a stranger. -- I think that this is strengthened by the mode of its introduction here. The prayer is much later and nearer the close than in Matthew. All hope of Messiah's reception by the Jews was manifestly at an end. Thus, in Luke 9 He had His rejection and death ever before Him, and repeatedly names it to the disciples, both before and after His transfiguration (cf. 1 Pet. 1:11). In Luke 10 the mission of the seventy follows, as a sort of final message, in which He pronounces woe on the cities which had seen His mighty works but had despised Himself. Grace is then shown as replacing law, and doing what law could not do. The prayer in Luke 11 partakes of the progressive character of the circumstances which surround it.

But that is not all. In the next petition, "Forgive us our sins," the expression is worthy of note. The only right principle for interpreting God's Word is, that God never changes without reason. It is our own ignorance if we do not see the bearing of different words used in Scripture. Thus, if in Matthew it is said "debts" and in Luke "sins," there is a slight shade of difference that ought not to pass unnoticed. What is the distinction? I believe it to be this: that "sin" expresses, in all plainness of speech, the depth of the soul's moral need. The simplest Gentile would understand the word "sin." The Jew would feel what a debt was in his responsibility to God: it supposes a known relationship in which he had been placed and had failed. To the Gentiles who had not been in such a position, the idea of "debt" was not so obvious or applicable, unless the word "sin" prepared the way for it and made it more intelligible. The word "sins" has a more evidently moral meaning, being equally true whether people

6. The word for "give," though the same verb, has a slightly different form and force in the two gospels. In Matthew it implies a bare transient act; in Luke, the continuous habit, which naturally accompanies the phrase "day by day."

were without law or under it. "Debt" is figurative rather, though perfectly understood by a Jew. The parable of the merciless servant in Matt. 18 sets forth the Lord as dealing with Jew and Gentile in a way substantially similar. The servant that owed his lord ten thousand talents is the Jew guilty of the rejection of Christ. How deeply was he involved! Forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, &c. But, moved with compassion, he forgave him the debt. Then the same servant went out and found one of his fellow-servants which owed him one hundred pence. The Gentile was certainly indebted to him, but now found no mercy (1 Thess. 2:14) for a debt small indeed compared with that which had been forgiven the Jews; and therefore wrath is come upon the Jews to the uttermost. (Compare also Matt. 5:25, 26, and Luke 12:58, both of which refer to Israel's position in our Lord's time.) There is another expression which confirms this, the Gentile dispensation being one of full grace; "*for* we ourselves also [poor as we are] forgive *every one* that is indebted to us." It is a stronger, broader word than the expression in Matthew.

The conclusion in Luke appears to be, "Lead us not into temptation," what follows ("but deliver us from evil") being probably copied into it from the first gospel. No motive can be assigned for leaving out this clause, like the former one, if it had been originally inserted; whereas it is natural that men, observing that they undoubtedly are found in Matthew, should hastily conclude that they ought to be in Luke also. Nor is any thing lost thereby, but the contrary. For the omissions in an inspired book, as well as what is declared there, are meant to arrest attention and to instruct.

The last clause is most appropriate in Matthew, where it has special reference, I think, to the power of Satan, which, beside what is ordinary, is directed against Israel as God's great earthly witness, and the severity of which is yet to fall upon them in the last days (cf. Zech. 3). Luke, as usual, brings out general, moral principles, and hence retains the petition lest we enter temptation.

III. -- Having stated these points of distinction, I come now to a question of great practical importance: What was the Lord's intention in regard to the use of this prayer? The answer is involved in my first statement. I showed that, while intended for disciples, it exactly suited the condition they were in before Christ had finished His work. It therefore follows that when redemption became a fact and a known basis of relationship with God, the prayer that suits those who stand in the enjoyment of its full results would be formed according to their new circumstances. In other words, referring to my former illustration, the man's prayer when out of prison would not be the same as his prayer in prison, unless he were under a delusion. If he had afterwards to do with the sovereign,

he would owe not a petition for deliverance, but a memorial of gratitude and a lifelong service of devoted loyalty.

But besides that, we shall find that the accomplishment of redemption was the foundation of another and a most exalted privilege -- the gift of the Holy Ghost, in a way of which the Old Testament saints had no experience. It must be remembered that there are certain operations of the Holy Ghost, common to all saints in every age, such as regeneration, conviction of sin, holy obedience produced in the heart and ways. These ways of the Spirit are not peculiar to any time: they were always true of every saint of God from the first; true of Noah, Abraham, David, &c. They were all regenerate men, believing men. But while this is matter of common knowledge, there is another thing equally true, but not so generally acknowledged. When the Lord Jesus Christ was about to finish His work on earth and ascend on high, He promised His disciples that the Holy Ghost should be given in a way never before known.⁷ The disciples were certainly believers then, and possessors of eternal life. Yet we find that when the Lord was about to depart, He says: "It is expedient for you that I go away." What could make it expedient that they should lose their best Friend and Savior? Why was it not rather preferable for them in every way that He should stay with them? The word is plain:

It is expedient for you that I .go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but, if I depart, I will send Him unto you.

Does not that imply that there was to be some further and immense blessing imparted to them that they had not enjoyed before? Clearly so. But more than that. There are persons that confine the gift of the Holy Ghost to tongues, miracles, ministerial gifts, &c. But "the Comforter" is not to be confounded with the various powers that the Comforter produces. It is the Holy Ghost in person whom the Father would send in Christ's name. This was the grand truth that the Lord was teaching His disciples. All saints had had the Holy Ghost operating upon them from the beginning, but besides and beyond that, after the departure of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost Himself was to come down, in a personal, more direct, and immediate way, to be in the disciples and with them unto the end. The Son of God had come down in a special way and become incarnate. The Holy Ghost would come after Christ had accomplished

7. It was from not distinguishing these two things that, if I remember rightly, Professor Olshausen and the late Archdeacon Hare fell into no slight error as to the Old Testament saints; for they actually taught that regeneration is the peculiar blessing of this dispensation! Dean Alford is also confused on the subject. The new birth, though of the Spirit, is entirely distinct from His baptism {as well as sealing}.

redemption and gone up to the Father. ⁸ Therefore it is said in Acts 2: "Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." The powers that were conferred on the day of Pentecost drew attention to this blessed, divine person, whose presence these powers indicated: they were valuable chiefly as the outward evidence and effect of that unprecedented gift, the promise of the Father.

This, then, is the great truth that lies at the bottom of the question as to the Lord's prayer. It was intended for those who were true believers, but for whom redemption was yet a prospective thing, and to whom the Holy Ghost had not been given in this fuller and unexampled way. In this very context in Luke the Lord says, a little afterwards:

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children,
how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them
that ask Him? {Luke 11:13}.

That was their condition. They were already children, and yet were to ask the Father to give them the Holy Spirit. It could not mean the Holy Spirit to make them believers: such they were already -- "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." But there was still the Holy Ghost to be given personally, to bring them into all the full consequences of the redemption of Christ, when that should be effected, and to form them into union with Him as the glorified man at the right hand of God, members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. These privileges, which were neither known nor possible to be enjoyed by the saints before the cross, are, nevertheless, the essentials of Christianity, properly so called. Therefore, I do not hesitate to say, that while the Lord's prayer was the perfect expression of the disciples' requests to God in their then circumstances and actual condition, for that reason it was not intended to be the expression even of the same men when their whole standing and condition was changed: when the work was done and all trespasses were forgiven; when all that believed, whether Jew or Gentile, were by one Spirit baptized into one body, and were all made to drink into one Spirit.

The change, indeed, was so momentous and complete, that our Lord Himself prepares the disciples for it solemnly, in John 16, when, after having fully brought out the mission and presence of the Comforter in and with them, He says:

in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you,

8. "The gift of the Spirit at and since the day of Pentecost, was and is something TOTALLY DISTINCT from anything before that time; a new and loftier dispensation." -- Alford's Greek Test. I., p. 783; cf. p. 706. (Second Edition.) The emphasis is the author's.

Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you.
Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive,
that your joy may be full . . . {John 16:25}.

At that day ye shall ask in my name, &c. {John 16:26}.

What did our Lord mean when He said, "In that day ye shall ask me nothing?" That was what they had been doing while He was upon earth; they always went to Him as their blessed and gracious Savior, and were quite right in doing so. Yet He adds: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, &c. "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name." What! asked nothing in His name? Had they not been using the Lord's prayer for some years? Certainly they had; and yet they had asked nothing in Christ's name. ⁹ Now, He says to them, you are going to be put upon a new ground. No longer to be merely coming to me and asking me, but asking the Father and asking in Christ's name. What is meant by asking in Christ's name? Is it merely saying "for Christ's sake" at the end of a prayer? No. The meaning is no less than this: that, by virtue of redemption when accomplished, and by the Holy Ghost uniting them to the Lord Jesus in heaven, they would be put in the same position as Himself. Therefore it is said in 1 John 4: "As He is, so are we in this world." And so St. Paul, in 1 Cor. 6, "he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit." This may illustrate the meaning of asking in the name of Christ, or rather of the ground on which it rests. It is to ask the Father in the consciousness of all their sins being put away, and of their being actually brought nigh to God, and in the full enjoyment of His favor, without a question or cloud between God and their souls: going to God and making supplication to Him as standing in the possession of the full blessing to which Christ above, and the Holy Ghost below, should entitle them in that day: this is asking the Father in Christ's name. The Lord had given the prayer already, and the disciples had been using it. Yet He intimates to them here that there was a new position into which they had to be put, and that the old ground would no longer do. Their circumstances being changed by the gift of the Holy Ghost, prayer must now take its form from the new standing, the full grace into

9. The present Dean of Canterbury has had the intelligence to perceive and the candor to own, in his comment on this passage, that "*it was impossible, up to the time of the glorification of Jesus, (ἕως ἄρτι* proleptical, as before, *to pray to the Father in His name.* It is a fulness of joy peculiar to the dispensation of the Spirit, to be able so to do, Eph. 2:18." The reader will hence infer how he is to estimate Wheatly's assertion that the Lord's prayer "is so framed, that it is impossible to offer it up, unless it be in the name of Christ." (Rat. Illust. of the Book of Common Prayer, p. 6.) It is singular, however, that Mr. Alford was guilty of the contradictory remark on the preceding verse, (John 16:23,) that "that day," in its full meaning, cannot import this present dispensation of the Spirit, but the great completion of the Christian's hope when he shall be with his Lord. His own note on 24, already quoted, sufficiently refutes him, not to speak of verse 26 and his note thereon. -- (Greek Test. pp. 788, 9.)

which they were brought. What is the effect of believers now putting themselves back into the position of disciples before redemption was accomplished? They never can know what it is to have real settled peace; they cannot take the place of worshipers once purged, having no more conscience of sins. In a word, they forfeit, as far as enjoyment goes, the vast and entire sum of blessing which Christ's death and resurrection have procured.

Still more manifest is the mistake, for a company of believers, or of believers and unbelievers mixed together, to take up the Lord's prayer, as the expression of their common need and worship. There is no such thought in the passage as a body thus using it. Indeed, just before, the Lord had told them, when each prayed, to enter his closet, and then follows this prayer as the suited language of an individual's wants. But whether it be a company or an individual now expressing wants to God in the Lord's prayer, I have only to repeat, You are putting yourselves back into the state of the disciples under law and before the Lord had done His work of reconciliation, and thus you are doing, unconsciously, great disrespect to the will of God the Father, to the work of Christ, and to the present witness of the Holy Ghost. (Cp. Heb. 10.) If a soul, converted indeed, but still under bondage of spirit and ignorant of the Lord's ways and of the full extent of His redemption, were to kneel down and pour out his heart in the words of the Lord's prayer, I could, for my own part, quite sympathize with the feeling; for I believe that such a condition of heart and conscience as nearly as possible approaches that of the disciples whom the Lord actually had before Him. Still, under the gospel of God's grace, the state I have described is altogether anomalous. It is themselves who go back -- not God who puts them -- as it were, before redemption. Though they believe in Christ, they are not quite sure that they are justified from all things, or whether they stand in the full favor of God or not. They certainly do adopt and use a prayer given to disciples who *could not* know what every Christian since the cross ought to have his heart filled with, and what his prayers should assume and more or less express to God. So that, without questioning the final security of such believers in Christ, I dare not withhold my conviction that they do not see their most precious privileges, and thus, without intending it, are guilty of real dishonor to the Lord's sufferings and glory.

The fact is, then, that saints on earth are contemplated and provided for in the prayer before Christ died and rose, and before the Holy Ghost was sent down from heaven, the witness of perfect acceptance in the Beloved. True honoring of Christ is to apply His words as He intended. If our souls have entered into this, that we are brought nigh to God; that our sins are all forgiven; that we have got the Holy Ghost sealing us, and uniting us to Christ in heaven; we are on altogether new ground, and our prayers should savor of it. This would be to ask the Father in the name of the Son.

It will be said, How was it that the Lord gave the prayer in His Word, if it was not intended for the permanent use of all His people? I answer that the Lord said much which did not and could not apply to all. Look, for example, at Matt. 10. While there are many principles there which abide for our instruction, who will deny that the mission of the twelve was Jewish? Supposing a person were to quote vv. 5 and 6, and to say, "These are the Lord's own words: we are not to go into the way of the Gentiles, nor to enter any city of the Samaritans, but rather to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," the absurdity would be manifest. We ourselves, poor Gentiles and yet saved, are proof enough that such an application of our Savior's words would be false. It would set a few words here against the great mass of the New Testament, which supposes special mercy to those very Gentiles. As the Lord was then sending out the disciples on a special errand, so He had previously provided for their then state in the prayer. The death of Christ, in my judgment, necessarily interrupted the prohibition of testimony to the Gentiles, deepened and extended the ground of prayer, and laid the foundation for the introduction of another order of things. Therefore, after His resurrection, the Lord, at the close of the same gospel, charges them to go and make disciples of all the Gentiles; as in the Gospel of John He, anticipating His ascension, tells them that at that day they were to ask the Father in His name. Hitherto they had not done so.

Much, therefore, as I desire to sympathize with those who continue to use the Lord's prayer now, or at least to feel for their difficulties, I must say that we ought to understand His word and will, besides having upright intentions. And what intelligence can there be if it is not seen that the redemption of Christ and the gift of the Holy Ghost have wrought a total revolution as to conscience, communion, worship, and walk; have brought us out of bondage into liberty, and consequently put our prayers on a different footing from what would have been right and comely before .our deliverance?

Hence, in the Acts of the Apostles, not a trace appears of such an use of the Lord's prayer as has become the traditional practice of Christendom. And when you read the various prayers which the Holy Ghost inspired in the different epistles, such as those in Romans, Ephesians, &c., everywhere the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ form the great substance and basis. The petitions were founded thenceforth upon these great and glorious facts, on which rest alike our faith and hope; they were not made and were inapplicable before.

Evidently this is a question of no small importance for the child of God who desires to know his full standing in Christ since the Holy Ghost has been given. We all believe that the Lord's prayer was divinely suited to the actual state of the disciples. But for that reason it could not fully express their subsequent relations nor the outgoing of affection proper to them. Those who appreciate the

extent of the change can profit by every clause of the prayer, even if they do not repeat it literally. But to ignore the results of redemption is not to the honor of Christ, while it is a slight upon the presence of the Spirit, and voluntary poverty in the midst of the riches of grace which are now lavished upon us. The humble and obedient heart will seek to know and do the Lord's will in this, as in all else.

The last verse but one of Matt. 6 may be helpful to some, as an instance of the modifying effects of redemption. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," says the Lord to the disciples in the same chapter which contains the prayer. Does that adequately describe the condition of a Christian man now? Certainly not; because *he is now made* the righteousness of God in Christ. When the address was given by the Lord, the righteousness of God was a thing still to be sought: as yet none could be said to be made it. But since then

He has made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

There (2 Cor. 5) we are not said to be in quest of it; we are made God's righteousness in Him. Planted in Christ, a new and divine righteousness is ours. It is our present portion, but none could say so before redemption. They were told to look for that righteousness and to ask for the Holy Ghost previously. But when they received both, never will you find the saints still seeking and asking for them, as if they had them not. It would have been to overlook their best blessings. Again, in Matt. 7:7, it is written: "Ask, and it shall be given you," &c. Here there is not, and could not be such a thing as asking in the name of Christ. It was precious and most surely not in vain, even then; but what an accession of blessing was there, when Christ, in view of their being set in this world in and as Himself before the Father by virtue of His all-sufficing work, could add "*in my name!*" "Hitherto" (I must repeat) "have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

May we too receive things as the Lord puts them in His Word. May we rise above our natural thoughts and be thoroughly rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith as we have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

Short Appendix omitted. This paper is taken from a pamphlet; also found in *The Bible Treasury* 16:3, etc.