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## Seven Men

George Duncan, Cleveland, Ohio  
Genesis Chapter 14:10-24

In the book of Hebrews chapter 11, we find the names of seven men recorded, whose lives are found in the book of Genesis. If we were to combine what God has to say in Hebrews 11, concerning these men, we would doubtless have a perfect Christian. Among those seven men we have Abraham and he occupies thirteen and one-half chapters in the book of Genesis. No less than three times Abraham is called "The Friend of God." He is the only man to whom that name is given, therefore how outstanding he must have been, when God could speak of him in that familiar way.

In the above chapter we find a very interesting incident in the life of this remarkable man. In the previous chapters Abraham and Lot have come back from the land of Egypt. They have abundance of everything; in fact, their herds were so numerous that the land could not hold them and they had to separate. It's nice to see how thoroughly Abraham was restored to God; not only restored back from Egypt, but restored in soul, because he said to Lot, "Take thy choice." "If thou go to the east I will go to the west, etc." He was just simply content to take what Lot left, and its more remarkable considering that Lot was the younger man. Abraham could well afford to let Lot take his choice for after Lot turned toward Sodom, God said to Abraham: "Lift up thine eyes and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward and eastward and westward for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever."

In chapter 14 Abraham is still in the plains of Mature, or Hebron, which means "fellowship." Here we have a true child of God in the place of fellowship with

God. Lot chose to pitch his tent toward Sodom and in this chapter he is altogether in Sodom. These two individuals are spoken of in Scripture as righteous men, for the New Testament tells us that Sodom vexed Lot's righteous soul from day to day as he saw and heard their ungodly deeds. Over and over again we find God speaks of himself as "The God of Abraham" but never as the "God of Lot." When Abraham is brought down to die we read concerning him that "he died an old man of many days;" the revised version says, "Full of years," but the original is just "full" or "satisfied" (Genesis 25:8). Wouldn't that be a wonderful epitaph to put on his tomb. But the last mention of Lot was his sin. Both righteous men, but Oh! so different. These things were written for our learning and instruction. Many today are going to have an abundant entrance to the glory for their testimony has shone brightly all through the journey and there are those who shall be saved, so as by fire. God would seek to encourage us by the life of Abraham to so live that we may not be ashamed before Him at His coming, and to shun a life of partnership with the world as was Lot's.

Chapter 14, opens with warfare. Four kings are grouped together in conflict against five kings. Sometimes one on top, then the other. If Lot, the nephew of Abraham had not been taken captive at this time we would not have heard of this warfare, for God only mentions other nations when in connection with the

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children of Israel. It is a very noticeable thing to see the King's names. First and foremost is the king of Shinar, which is the old name for Babylon, meaning "confusion." In the Old Testament God's people were carried down to Babylon when they sinned against Him. In the New Testament we find in Revelation that Babylon is termed, "Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots." Then there was the King of Sodom and Gomorrah. These two places are often spoken of in Scripture of that which is ungodly. These two groups which war against each other is a picture of what we find in the religious world today. The religious world, fights against the ungodly world and sometimes one is on the top, sometimes the other, but notice here that the man who is used for God is outside the whole thing, for he dwells in the plains of Mamre. He is not entangled in this terrible mix-up. The one group overcomes the Kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and Lot who now dwells in the midst of Sodom is taken captive. Many of God's people are taken bondage by the religious world. Word is brought to Abraham (the Hebrew). This is the first mention of this word which means "a passenger" or one passing through. That is just what Lot should have been, but instead he dwells in Sodom. When Abraham heard that Lot (his brother) was taken captive he armed His trained servants, born in His own house, and pursued. Abraham and Lot were brothers in a spiritual sense, being both righteous men. Abraham's servants were born in his own house. The men whom God uses are only those born again, and not only that but men whom God has trained, not in a religious seminary but in the school of Christ; in the secret place, there learning, to trust God.

In due course, they overtake the Kings and God gave Abraham the victory. Now he is coming back laden with the spoil. If we are to win the victory it will only be as you and I are living in some measure in fellowship with God. When one gets the victory over the enemy, the spirit, the flesh and the devil, we are quite pleased that God has given us the victory, and it may be, we are taken off our guard, and Satan lays a trap for our feet and we fall miserably but not so with Abraham. Two men meet him. First the king of Sodom and the other man, Melchizedek, the priest of the most High God. Melchizedek met him first and blessed Abraham in the name of the most High God and gave him bread and wine. We sometimes sing, "Bread to strengthen, wine to cheer." Melchizedek is a type of our Lord Jesus Christ in his present priestly work for "He is a priest forever after

the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 7:21). There is no mention of Melchizedek's mother or father, his birth or his death. We don't question however that he was born and died like other men but God leaves that out in order to picture the Lord Jesus Christ. He blessed him and gave him bread and wine. This reminds us that the Lord Jesus Christ is now in the presence of God for us and He ever lives to make intercession for us. In difficulty and in turmoil, when winds are contrary and waves are beating high just remember there is a Man on the throne, "who tends with sweet unwearied care, the flock for which He bled." He too, was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. He too knew what it was to hunger and thirst, to be weary and worn. He as a man endured these things, yet without sin. Now He sits at God's right hand, ever living to make intercession for us. And, I am perfectly sure, we shall never know the value of that present intercessory work of our Lord Jesus Christ until we reach home, then we shall know how many pitfalls and snares we have been spared from. Then we shall see "He led us by the right way."

On Lord's day morning we do not come to remember the Lord in order to receive strength. We come to praise and adore Him whose body was bruised for us and His blood shed to cleanse us from all sin, but who shall say we do not go away strengthened and cheered for our toil and warfare till Jesus comes. After Abraham received the bread and wine and the blessing He gave tithes unto Him who was God's representative. This is the first occasion of giving tithes unto God.

The second man goes out to meet Abraham and makes a proposition. "Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself." This offer might have sounded all right to the worldling but Abraham answers, "I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich." Abraham was the man of faith who had strength to refuse. There are three men in the Word of God who had strength to refuse. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures

of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward" (Hebrews 11:24-26). Moses chose rather to link himself up with a nation of slaves rather than be the King of Egypt. But was not this refusal worthwhile for we read in Revelation 15:3: "And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb." How wonderful to think this man Moses has his name associated in a future day with the "Lamb," the King of Kings.

Naaman in his gratitude for cleansing offered Elisha a large sum of money, but He had the strength to refuse saying, "As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none." And Naaman urged him to take it, but he refused. Gehazi was not of the same mind as his master and followed after and succeeded and claiming some of the riches, but Oh! how solemn his punishment for Naaman's leprosy came to him and his seed forever. Faith oftentimes in the child of God causes him to refuse the overtures of the world, if they interfere with his fellowship with God. So let us remember,

He always wins who sides with God,  
With Him no chance is lost,  
God's will is sweetest to him, when,  
It triumphs at His cost.

In chapter 15, we read, the Word of the Lord came unto Abram saying, "Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Was not that ten thousand times better than all the goods brought from the battle? These things were written for our learning so that we may learn from warnings and failures recorded in the Old Testament. We find even after all this, Lot didn't take the lesson for He still dwells in Sodom. God never identifies His name with Lot. In the book of Esther there is not a single mention of God's name. Why? the people were quite content to dwell in the land of Babylon. So we see that God identifies His name only with those who seek to go on in fellowship with Himself.

Let us, like Abraham, dwell in Mamre, for in chapter 18 we still find him in the place of fellowship, and how wonderful to think the closing remarks of Abraham's life was "He died an old man of many days and satisfied," not with himself, or with his testimony but satisfied with God. (WIS Sept 1939)

## The Shepherd and His Sheep

Christ is "The Good Shepherd" (John 10:11), for He loves His sheep even unto death.

"The Great Shepherd" (Heb. 13:20), for He cares for all His vast flock.

"The Chief Shepherd" (1 Peter 5:4), for He appoints, supports, and will reward all His faithful undershepherds.

Christ, the Good Shepherd, knows His sheep—yes, all of them—as none other can. Again and again did Jesus affirm this: "I know My sheep"; "He calleth His own sheep by name." However far they have wandered from the fold, He knows where they are, and all about their character and ways. Psalm 139:11-16 beautifully sets this forth. He knew them ere time began, and throughout eternity Jesus Christ will know His own elect; and, blessed be God, it is also true, though in a less degree, He is known of them, for "they know His voice."

Christ, the Good Shepherd, bought the sheep. "The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." They who "sold themselves for naught" were "redeemed without . . . money"; "redeemed, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ." Redemption by the blood of Christ forms the cardinal doctrine of the Gospel, notwithstanding the assaults made upon it by the enemies of the Cross of Christ (albeit in many instances, professed Christian teachers.) "At the place which is called Calvary," Christ, the Good Shepherd, purchased His whole flock "by the sacrifice of Himself." "All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

Christ, the Good Shepherd, seeks and finds His sheep. Far, very far, alas! had they all wandered, but not farther than He can find them. "For thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I, even I, will both search My sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered, so will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." And it was on this errand He left the fold above, as He Himself testified: "The Son of man is

come to seek and to save that which was lost." He sought the lost one; and oh, the joy! when the wanderer is found: "And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, 'Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.' I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."

And in this gracious work of seeking and finding the lost, the Good Shepherd is still carrying on by His word and His servants. "Other sheep I have," said Jesus, "which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice, and they shall become one flock, one Shepherd"; and in that day it shall be said of the whole glorified company gathered around the throne, "Ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."

This Good Shepherd furthermore cares for the sheep. He does this collectively, "when He putteth forth all his own," for so the motto verse should read. This is one of the points more strongly brought out in the revised version. "All His own"; not one—"not a hoof"—shall be left behind. Individually, too, Christ cares for His sheep, in all their manifold personal necessities, to the smallest of their daily need throughout their whole course. "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." Paul could say, "I know Him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded He is able to guard that which I have committed unto Him against that day." And to others he wrote, "Himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee. So that with good courage we say, The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What shall man do unto me?" Peter also, in view of the wiles of our adversary the devil, who "as a roaring lion" (answering to the "wolf" of our chapter) "walketh about seeking whom he may devour," while exhorting the scattered believers in his day to sobriety and watchfulness, thus intimates the secret of their rest and safety: "Casting all your anxiety upon Him, because he careth for you." Yea, "He carries the lambs in His bosom, and gently

leads" those of little strength.

Notice also how Christ, the Good Shepherd, guides His sheep: "When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them" (John 10:4), after the manner of Eastern shepherds, who do not drive, but go before the flock, to lead the way, guiding them to green pastures and by still waters. Thus Christ goes before us, as of old He went before His flock in the desert, with the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. And, if we but keep near enough to our Divine Leader, we shall realize the fulfillment of the promise, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye." This Divine Shepherd leads His sheep in paths of holiness, such as are spoken of in Isa. 35:8: "And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."

In paths of happiness. "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

In paths of usefulness. "And he saith unto them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

All those who follow Him therein make their calling and election sure, and know the secret of power with God and with men. Christ's sheep are double-marked—in their ears and in their feet—for they hear His voice and follow Him.

Christ, the Good Shepherd, feeds His sheep. Remember His care in this respect in the case of the damsel whom He raised from the dead. Immediately He recalled her life He provided for her sustenance: "He commanded that some thing should be given her to eat." Thus He ever provides for His own as David also proved: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures"; "Thou preparest a table before me"; "I will feed them in a good pasture." Yea, with honey out of the rock does He satisfy His chosen. Who can minister to our soul's deepest needs like Christ? Who can meet the longings of the human soul but this Divine Shepherd? But HE can and does, even now, blessed be His glorious name!

And, in a little while, He will bring them to their everlasting home, "before the throne of

God," and "He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

MEANWHILE, it is the same Divine Shepherd who says to us,

### **"FOLLOW THOU ME."**

Shall we not, then, with our whole hearts surrendered to Him, reply,

"Lord, submissive may we go,  
Gladly leaving all below;  
Only Thou our leader be,  
And we still will follow Thee,"

and, step by step, pursue the path indicated above, seeking to put our feet down in the very footprints of the Good Shepherd who "goeth before," taking the eyes off from all others, and not asking, "Lord, what shall this (or that) man do?" but fixing them on Him, bend our whole energies to the fulfillment of His Divine call,

### **"FOLLOW THOU ME."**

One word more to those who have not yet responded to His call. Oh! consider the joys you are missing, and the eternal interests you are imperiling, by delaying to come to this gracious and good Shepherd! Ponder well the infinite ability of Christ to save and bless you. Meditate upon the wondrous exhibition of His love in dying for you, till you experience effectually its constraining power to woo and win you to Himself; and consider the almighty reward of this Divine Lord and Master to abundantly reward all those who obey His blessed precept,

### **"FOLLOW THOU ME."**

Come, take up your cross and follow Him. Thus shall you have a life of unspeakable happiness here, and eternal felicity in His presence for ever.

WIS Nov 1943

## **Departure, pt. 1**

*Robert Surgenor*

Departure is nothing new to the student of the Word of God. He recognizes two basic facts that accompany departure, namely: (1) Departure very rarely comes suddenly. Usually departure is the result of a continual process called "little steps." (2) Departure always brings with it plausible excuses, such as, "Times have changed," or "We are in danger of losing our young folk," or "I don't see anything wrong with it." In fact, even the Holy Scriptures are used by most of those who have departed in order to seek to condone their departure. Perhaps one of the most impudent defenses for an act of departure is the old phrase, "Show me a chapter and verse for what you are saying!" Persons who speak like that are usually ignorant as to the Lord's method of illuminating divine principles to the spiritual mind. What these persons do not realize is that God does not reveal all scriptural truths simply by "chapter and verse."

Before explaining this candid remark, let me make it very clear that we do NOT believe in present-day divine revelation. There are no new revelations being given from God today. Divine revelations completely ceased when the Word of God was complete. Then how is the mind of God perceived if not by chapter and verse? The answer is simple – it is by the mind of God, the personality of God, the attributes of God, the ways of God, that are made known through a general knowledge of the Word of God that can only be gained by a constant and diligent study of the Word from Genesis to Revelation. God often reveals His way through overall pictures, and it is only the diligent reader of the Scriptures that will properly discern the ways and divine principles of his God.

Another element that is vitally needed, apart from diligent reading of the Word, is humility. Without a humble spirit no divine truths, no matter how often read, will reach the heart. They may be stored in the brain, but never lodged in the heart. God says, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word" (Isaiah 66:2). "The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way"

***Our service is not because people, believers or unbelievers, deserve it; it is because the Lord deserves it.***

(Psalm 25:9). Let us always be aware of this vital truth.

To most of the younger element among us there is no visible evidence in their eyes of departure. The reason for this is that departure is a moving away from the prescribed blueprint, and young people have never been immersed and surrounded by the original blueprint, consequently they see no change.

However, in each generation changes take place, and our present-day young folk, as they mature, will begin to notice changes from whence they commenced their Christian experiences. Older saints in 1952 talked about departure from their youthful days. As newborn souls, my wife and I saw no departure, for we were just being introduced to the assemblies and certainly were not aware of "the former days" as older saints spake.

However, almost sixty years have come and gone since then and consequently, what do we as older saints see? – Departure. If our younger brethren live thirty more years and the Lord has not come, what will their lament be? It will be – "departure," for younger ones will be coming in, introducing things not practiced before.

### **Progress of Departure**

Departure moves in steps, here a little and there a little, each generation introducing different things not found in the divine plan. What is the ultimate end, brethren? Turn to Israel and notice an example. When coming up out of Egypt, in their first love, the jewels that had been given to them as wages were all donated to the Lord for the building of the Tabernacle. Seven hundred years later the women of Israel were adorning themselves with jewels to the lament of the prophets. Finally, we read, "Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the LORD which He had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by His messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because He had compassion on His people, and on His dwelling place: But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets until the wrath of the

LORD arose against His people, till there was no remedy" (2 Chronicles 36:14–16). We certainly hope and pray that this will not be true of God's assemblies; however, let us be aware, for Israel stands as a beacon of warning to us today. Every era ended in blindness, as is noticed in the era of the judges, the kings, the teachers of Israel in our Lord's day, and finally the church. "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot ... and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:15,17).

We have noticed that often on the heels of departure, there are times of revival, involving a renewing of truths formerly cast aside and of godly living previously forsaken. This can be seen in the case of Josiah (2 Kings 22–23) and the mighty revival in his day. Israel had departed from the right ways of the LORD, with God terming their ways as "evil." However, God raised up a lad. "Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jedidah ("Beloved"), the daughter of Adaiah ("Jehovah has adorned Himself") of Boscath. And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left" (2 Kings 22:1-2). The right hand denotes power and the left hand weakness.

Turning to the right hand would be going beyond the Word of God. This is **legalism**. Turning to the left hand would be coming short of the Word of God. This is **liberalism**.

Josiah had no good example from his father, but notice his mother's name and his grandfather's name and one gets a clue as to Josiah's godly influences. The "book of the law" had been disregarded for years but had been found and there was a great cleansing of the land of everything contrary to the Word of God. Yet Jeremiah lamented, "And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto Me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the LORD" (Jeremiah 3:10). The revival was not deep or lasting, and things afterward progressively grew worse.

Compare the moral and doctrinal departure in the Corinthian assembly only four years after its planting. Paul writes them to correct

the conditions. In his second letter to them he exclaims, "For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter" (2 Corinthians 7:11). There was a revival. However, where is the Corinthian assembly today? It is gone!

The apostle Paul's convert, Ignatious, stated in the year 107, that the Christians were to look upon their bishop as they would look upon the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Clerisy was in! Soon, the need of a personal conversion was less emphasized and Christian's children were accepted as Christians. Toward the end of the second century the baptism of infants was introduced, the false teaching of baptismal regeneration was accepted, the hierarchical government was developed and there was a development of the episcopal office beyond the limits of the local company.

In 1827 a great revival took place, commencing primarily in Dublin, Ireland, and soon Christians in various places were gathering simply to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. A similar work commenced in Canada in 1872 and spread to the United States of America. However, in 1912, at a conference in Warmunster, Ontario, Robert McMurtal from Scotland gave ministry advocating the open table and many were carried away with his false teaching, resulting in the formation of gatherings in chapels, which remain among us until this day. Thus the days of departure were introduced among us on this continent. It is interesting that the ones who departed first are farther along the road of departure than those who remained in the so-called Gospel Halls. Instrumental music was introduced and ultimately, in some places, deteriorated to rock and roll bands. Jewelry was introduced, later bringing in the painting of the face. Proper dress was minimized, until finally, some have been seen preaching in a tee-shirt and shorts. Separation from Babylon was lost, until finally D. L. Moody and Baptist preachers were invited speakers to their platforms.

In light of these sobering and depressing facts one may comfort oneself and say, "I have not departed to that degree!" Yes, dear believer, but remember this, departure takes time. Yes, those associated with chapels entered the road to departure ahead of us and departed more rapidly, but we, too, are on the road to departure. Before saying more, let me emphasize the fact that there are godly souls associated with some chapels, who are like a little remnant seeking to go on in spite of such departure. Loving the Lord's people, I am thankful for them, and also truly feel sorry for them. (continued)

*The gospel of Christ is a more open enemy to the pride of man than is the law of Moses. Israel received Moses' commandments with vows of obedience, but said of Christ, "Away with Him! crucify Him!"*  
R. C. Chapman

## Thoughts on the Lord's Prayer

W W Fereday

No devout mind will ever question the absolute perfection of the prayer itself, seeing that it came from One with whom neither error nor flaw are possible. But we may legitimately question whether it was intended for the perpetual use of His people, and under all circumstances. Even that which is divinely excellent may prove injurious to the soul if wrongly applied. Spiritual intelligence in the ways of God is of the greatest possible importance to us all.

The Lord's prayer was admirably suited to the disciples in the position in which they found themselves as favoured with the personal presence of the promised Christ. He Himself emphasized the privileges of their position in Matthew 13:16-17: "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things

which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them," Others had looked and yearned for His coming; the disciples had Him before their eyes from day to day.

This being so, their experience went beyond anything known by Psalmists and Prophets, and this must needs be reflected in their prayers. But Christ not having yet died and risen again, and redemption being yet unaccomplished, the disciples were not in the marvelous position of blessing in which Christians now stand. Hence, while they could speak to God in a way that saints of earlier ages could not, they were quite unable to speak to Him as we can who are in the full grace and blessing of a perfect Christianity.

The prayer was thus suited to the intermediate or transitional condition of things then prevailing, and it will probably be found truly suitable again when Israel's believing remnant steps into our place of testimony after the Christian era is closed.

It is a fact to be noted that (leaving aside the Lord's prayer for the moment) no forms for use in approach to God, whether in prayer or worship, are ever suggested in the New Testament Epistles. Moreover, there is no reference whatever to the Lord's prayer after Pentecost. The Acts and the Epistles are alike silent as to its ever being used in the early Church. Why is this? The answer is very simple. This is the dispensation of the Holy Spirit.

He is personally present upon the earth while Christ is away. By His power the Church has been formed, and in it He dwells, for it is God's habitation in the Spirit (Ephesians 2:22). The living presence of the Spirit suffices for every need. He is perfectly able to furnish the suited language for every occasion. All that is needed is simple-hearted subjection on the part of those who are born of God. To no others could it apply.

Was the Lord's prayer meant to be a model or a form? Scarcely the latter, for then we should be obliged to ask which form we should use, seeing that in Luke 11 the prayer is given more briefly than in Matt. 6 (see Revised Version).<sup>\*</sup> Moreover, the fact that the Lord has left the prayer in what some would consider an unfinished state has led to the unauthorised

addition of the words *"for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen,"* in order to render it suitable for congregational use. We suggest therefore that the Lord intended no more than a model of prayer for His disciples.

{\*Taking into account the context in both cases, it is possible that Luke's shorter form was given at an earlier date than Matthew's longer form.}

True Christian prayer is in the name of the Son (John 16:23-24) and obviously the Lord's prayer is not that. Prayer in the name of the Son is not the mere tacking His name to the end of our petitions; it is prayer in the consciousness that Christ by His death and resurrection has brought us into His own standing before God, accepted in His acceptance, blessed as He is blessed, and loved as He is loved. Praying in this happy consciousness, we expect the Father to respond to our requests according to His delight in His Son: with whom we are now eternally identified. Several years after the Lord's prayer was given, the Lord said to His disciples: "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." (John 16:24). The whole context in John 16 shows that He was now leading them into a deeper privilege in connection with prayer than they had ever known before.

Let us now briefly consider the prayer itself in the fuller form of Matthew 6:9-18. It may be divided into two parts:—the divine interests (5:9-10); and the disciples' need (5:11-13).

"Our Father, which art in heaven." This is a distinct advance on anything previously known of God. The patriarchs communed with Him as the Almighty; Israel knew Him as Jehovah; but the coming into the world of the Only Begotten Son has brought out the sweet name of Father. Here then He is declaring the Father's name, as He says in John 17:6-26. It is true that in Exodus 4:22, Jehovah says, "Israel is My son, My firstborn," but that was merely a national relationship; while we have in the Lord's prayer is personal and individual. But Matthew 6:9 falls far short of John 20:17. There we hear the risen One

announcing the fruits of His great victory thus: "go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." In Matthew 6:9, there is no suggestion of identification with the Son; it goes no further than this, that men who had previously know God as Jehovah should now know Him as Father; John 20:17 lifts us up to the Son's own platform of blessing. To His Father and God we are henceforward "many sons" (Hebrews 2:10) and to Himself we are many "brethren" (Romans 8:29).

A moment's reflection should convince anyone that it is perfectly shocking to teach a mixed company to say "Our Father." It is teaching them to utter the biggest of all falsehoods, to their own hurt and delusion. as well as to the divine dishonour. Though the Lord's prayer was uttered in the hearing of the crowd, the Lord was manifestly instructing His disciples only (Matthew 6:1). In the words "which art in heaven," supplemented later by the title "your heavenly Father," the Lord was seeking to lead His disciples beyond Jewish hopes to relationships and expectations of an immeasurably higher character. As Jews, they followed Him with anticipations of an earthly kingdom; the Lord knew that no such kingdom was possible for the time being, and so in all His teaching He sought to prepare them for the heavenly unfoldings of Christianity.

"Hallowed be Thy name." Grace must not be presumed upon. He who has brought us wondrously near to Himself is our Creator and God. The deepest reverence becomes us in our every thought of Him, and with unshod feet we should draw near into His presence.

"Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven." Thus were the disciples (and we also) taught to desire that throughout the universe everything may be brought into fullest correspondence with the Father's character. This petition goes beyond the Millennium in its scope; not until the new heavens and the new earth appear will the Father's kingdom be fully established. We shall enter into the Father's kingdom as soon as we are caught up, and from thence we shall shine forth as the sun, as Matthew 13:48 shows; but not until the Son of man has subjugated every foe will He deliver up the kingdom to Him who

is God and Father, that God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:21-28). But realizing, as we do, that everything here below is as wrong as it could be, we long, and we pray for, this blessed consummation.

Meanwhile, we seek to be fully subject to the Father's will ourselves. Else, how could we consistently take such a petition upon our lips? Thus the Lord teaches us that the divine interests should be uppermost in our hearts.

But human need has a large and sympathetic place in the Father's heart, and so the disciples were taught to say next: "Give us this day our daily (or sufficient) bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." Thus both body and soul are considered in their various necessities. An aspect of forgiveness is here found which needs to be carefully considered. It is not sinners speaking to God, but disciples—children to their Father. The Gospel to the sinner speaks of forgiveness full and free in virtue of the Saviour's blood, nothing that the sinner can do having anything whatever to do with the matter; in Matthew 6:12 it is the Father's government of His family, a different principle altogether. He expects to see in all His children a merciful spirit towards everybody. His own attitude towards men is to govern ours, and "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:45). Those who do not cultivate this generous spirit of grace cannot walk happily with the Father.

It is interesting to note that while we read "debts" in Matthew, we have "sins" in Luke. Now Matthew's is essentially the Jewish Gospel. Most suitably therefore are the disciples taught to ask forgiveness for "debts." Did they not belong to a people who had long stood in special relationship with God, and who had grievously failed in the discharge of their obligations? (cp. Matthew 18:23-35). Luke's Gospel, on the other hand, has Gentiles more particularly in view. They never stood in special relationship with God, but they were "sinners" indeed, if not exactly "debtors" as the people of Israel were.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Here we have the language of dependence upon God, and of

utter mistrust of self. We may well deprecate being put to the proof, Knowing how very frail we are. Both Job and Peter were thus tested, and how much badness came out in both cases, though the utterances of the patriarch are not to be compared with those of the apostle, If God is pleased to test us, then we may well consider ourselves "blessed" as James tells us in his first chapter, for God will not fail us, and He is well able to turn the painful experience to profitable account for our souls. But it is fitting that we should humbly pray that no such sifting may be our portion. Our Lord could meet the full power and deepest subtlety of Satan, as the story of the forty days in the wilderness shows; But we are not equal to these things.

Brief as the Lord's prayer is, it is wonderfully complete, as far as it goes. It takes into account both the divine interests and human necessities, physical and spiritual. It speaks of the realities of to-day, while looking onward to the final issue of all the ways of God in the new heavens and the new earth. We repeat, the prayer is complete, as far as it goes. It was the Lord's gracious provision for believers who lived prior to the accomplishment of redemption, who were therefore not in the blessed condition of having their consciences once for all purged from sins (Hebrews 10:1-2), and in whom as yet the Holy Spirit did not dwell. Indeed, in Luke 11:13, immediately after the giving of the prayer, the disciples are instructed to ask the Father for this crowning endowment.

We look in vain in the Lord's prayer for any reference to the characteristic blessings of Christianity, and to use it habitually now is to put ourselves back into the dim light from which the death and resurrection of Christ has delivered us once for all. "Wherefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ, let us go on to perfection" (full growth). (See Hebrews 6:1. R.V. margin.)

***To be strong in Faith two things are needful, – very low esteem of ourselves, and a very high esteem of Christ.***

## Gospel of Peace

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" (Isaiah 52:7)

It is rather surprising that Isaiah contains more references to "peace" than any other portion of God's Word. However in view of the emphasis on the "salvation of Jehovah" in this prophecy, it shouldn't surprise us. It is most appropriate, as Isaiah evidently gives hope that in Christ, peace is possible now and ultimately universally. This verse stands in the middle of all those references in this wonderful "gospel" prophecy, and it emphasizes the proclamation of salvation that anticipates the coming reign of the Lord over all the earth. That is in keeping with the fact that peace is always linked with salvation in Christ that points forward to universal peace when He reigns in the position that is rightfully His.

It is most interesting to us that the first time we read of "peace" in Isaiah, it is with reference to that Person, the coming King, who will bear the name, "the Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). He alone will bring in a condition of peace that "will extend peace to Zion like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream" (Isaiah 66:12).

We find that the verse in the middle of Isaiah is quoted in Romans 10:15. "And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!". This is most appropriate, in view of the context of Israel's unbelief that is the subject of that chapter.

It is also quoted in Ephesians 6:15. Paul says that the Christian is to be "shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace". How blessed it is to be linked today with the One Person who will usher in the longed for peace, and now, to seek to be faithful messengers to a world of people who experience everything except true peace, as we bear the blessed tidings of the "gospel of peace."