

THE LORD'S PRAYER AND HOLINESS.

Joseph H. Smith.

The question is sometimes asked: "How can one professing the experience of Holiness sincerely offer the Lord's Prayer?" I purpose on this occasion to present reasons for reversing that question and will probably send you away wondering, "How can one truly pray the Lord's Prayer unless he has been entirely sanctified?"

But first a few reflections about Prayer in general.

(1) What is that strange something about our human nature which makes us slow to learn and quick to forget the things which are most essential to our life? For instance, **our eating**—what more vital and necessary to our life and health and well-being than eating! And yes here we are, many of us, in middle life and some beyond, who have to be doctored now and again for our wrong eating. And almost all of us still sending off for or reading books that would teach us how and what, and when, and how much to eat. Nor will we long practice nor remember what we have read. Now eating is not more fundamental and vital to our physical life than praying is to our spiritual life. Reading and testifying and preaching and almsgiving will no more keep our souls alive without prayer, than will seeing and hearing and talking and working, keep our bodies alive and well without eating. And while this is so, and so with all of us and so all the time, and we have known it was so here we are asking again, "Lord, teach us to pray," as though it were some new art or accomplishment we were striving for.

I ask again, What is that which keeps so many of us with respect to what is more vital to our bodies and to our souls, to be "ever learning but never coming to the knowledge of the truth?"

(2) Next I wish to note that we are most highly favored in that we have CHRIST to teach us Prayer. Think of that a moment! To have had Samuel or David or Paul or other men who had been mighty and successful themselves in prayer to teach us would have been incalculably valuable. But in our Lord Jesus Christ we have both the **man** of successful prayer, and GOD who hears and answers prayer to direct us in the way of prayer. He who asks, and He who answers, both are one. And it is that one who has given us what we not improperly call the Lord's Prayer. As enemies when he preached, went away saying, "Never man **prayed** as this man."

He teaches US to pray. We wonder if this time, notwithstanding that inveterate predisposition to only half learn and then quite forget to pray, we may really "LEARN" to pray? To insure this I think there are three factors:

His teaching.

The Spirit's grace (of prayer see Zachariah 12:10).

Our application.

That was a good school teacher that once in my boyhood taught and impressed me with the distinction between learning

and simply being taught. This last, she said, was her part, the other was **my own**.

This prayer of our Lord which He dictated that day (or night, as it may have been) is not the whole of His answer to them requesting that He teach them to pray. No, he gave also some great general **principles** and two striking **illustrations** and this at length a great crowning **promise** to be secured by prayer itself asks for even more than all the time we can devote to this interesting and important matter today.

We will observe:

I. **The Prayer is encircled in Praise.**

(1) Hallowed be Thy name. (2) Thine is the power, etc., and consider for a moment the Doxology adjunct of apostolic prayers, the spirit of worship which attended all the prayers of Jesus and the constant injunction to Thanksgiving as an essential accompaniment of prayer. Now it takes the experience of such as do "rejoice evermore and in everything give thanks" to harmonize with this. And this all, we will remember is for **daily** praise.

II. There are three "Thy's" before there is one "us" or "our" in this prayer. **Thy** name, **Thy** kingdom, **Thy** will, before even "our daily bread." What grace, think you, does it or will it require to keep God's will, God's kingdom and God himself thus ever uppermost in all the wishes and desires and plans and prayers of one's life?

III. Request **daily** for bread implies two things, that no matter how **much** we have we depend alone upon Him. And no matter how little we have we **confide** altogether in Him.

IV. Now comes the crux petition—**FORGIVE us AS WE FORGIVE.** Shows the need of forgiveness still upon the part of all who pray. Shows a failure or forfeiture of forgiveness of those who will not forgive.

V. "Lead us not into temptation," that is "above that we are able to bear." This voices our faith in God's supreme and sovereign government of all the affairs of our life. But it takes a pure heart to see God in everything. It requires that we do love the Lord our God with all our heart to sustain us in wavering faith that "all things work together for good."

VI. "But deliver us from (the) evil (one)." Do we who voice this all see and say and mean and believe that both the personal devil or evil one, and the evil that is in the world and in every heart by nature is stronger and greater than we, and that we must have a **divine** deliverance from the wicked? And do we from the heart believe that He is thus "able to save to the uttermost," and that we may "be delivered out of the hand of our enemies and serve Him without fear before Him **in Holiness and righteousness all the days of our life?**"

THE WAY OF THE CROSS.

We may spread our couch with roses,
And sleep through the summer day;
But the soul that in sloth reposes,
Is not in the narrow way.
If we follow the chart that is given,
We need not be at a loss,
For the only way to heaven
Is the royal way of the cross.
To one who is reared in splendor
The cross is a heavy load;
And the feet that are soft and tender
Will shrink from the thorny road;
But the chains of the soul must be riven,
And wealth must be as dross;
For the only way to heaven
Is the royal way of the cross.

We say we will walk tomorrow
The path we refuse today,
And still with our lukewarm sorrow
We shrink from the narrow way.
What heeded the chosen eleven
How the fortunes of life might toss
As they followed their Master to heaven
By the royal way of the cross.

—Selected.

FRUITFULNESS OBSTRUCTED.

A young lad was playing in a garden and noticed a tree which was bearing fruit and had abundant leaves on all its branches except one little twig which was hanging dry and withered. This twig riveted his attention; all the other branches passed unheeded, so much was he taken up with the useless twig. Searching for and finding the gardener, the lad asked, "What makes that twig so dry and barren?" The man answered, "Climb up the tree and you will soon find out." The lad did so and saw that some person had tied a piece of string around the twig close to the trunk of the tree, thus stopping the flow of sap and killing the little branch. The lad is now a minister of the gospel in Edinburgh, but he has never forgotten the lessons he learned from that dead twig. It was, that when he found his soul getting dry and hard, there was some sin gradually lighting round his heart, stopping the flow of the Holy Spirit into his soul and thus he was in danger of becoming dead while attached to a living trunk. To avoid this fate, he fled to Christ, the fountain of Life, and He it is who loosens all the bands of sin from us, so that His own life may flow into us.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

It seems to me that the whole work of the Holy Spirit in connection with the Church may be summed up as follows:

"The Holy Spirit has come to make the Person of Christ a living reality to us, and to cause the facts of His life, His death, His burial, His resurrection, His ascension, His position at the right hand of God, His coming again, and His presence with us in the power of His love, the exercise of His offices in the fullness of His grace for us, and the titles He bears toward us, to be beneficial to us, and to be a blessing to others through us."—Wes. Methodist.