

"The Lord's Prayer"

The Present Truth – November 8, 1900

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"OUR FATHER"

These are the first words of the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples. Last week we told you of the heathen who think that they must cry aloud many times before they can get the attention of the gods that they worship. The Bible tells us that these idols have eyes, but they see not, and have ears, but they hear not. So no matter how many times nor how loudly they may be called upon, they pay no attention, for they can see and hear nothing.

But Jesus tells us: "Then when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which seeth in secret." When Jesus Himself prayed, "He lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, Father."

This sweet name by which He has taught us to call the great God who made all things in heaven and earth, is the assurance that He will do for us all that we ask. For even a true earthly father will always supply all the needs of his children as far as he is able.

We are the children of God, because He made us. We are born of Him,—brought from His own being. You will remember that we are told of the first man that "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground." But where did this dust of the ground come from? This question is answered for us in the thirty-third psalm, where we learn that "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth." This world, like all the other worlds—the planets and stars that we see shining in the heavens at night, is one of "the host of heaven," and—"all the host of them" were made by the breath of the Lord's mouth. That which gave to each thing its own shape and character was the Word that God spoke when He breathed it into existence.

Perhaps this is a new thought to you, and though you of course believe it, because the Word of God tells us that it is so, you wonder how it is that the solid, material things that you see around you, earth, the rocks, the trees, the animals, and even you yourself, could be formed from the breath of the Lord.

You may understand this better when you remember that everything can be changed by heat into the invisible gases that are in the air. For instance, if you put a stick of wood into the fire, the heat will soon turn it back again into what it was made from,—gas and sunbeams. You see in the bright blaze the sunlight that was stored up by the plant when it was growing; the gas that it gathered from the air

escapes up the chimney, and what have you left? Just a little ash, that in a hotter furnace would be all burned up, and changed into gas that could not be seen any more than the air that you breathe. If the whole world should be burned in this intense heat, it would pass away, leaving nothing visible behind.

From this you may be able to understand better that it is the breath of the Lord, as His Word tells us, that contains all the elements from which this and all the worlds were formed. And therefore when "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground," He was taking some of His own substance, and shaping it into His own image. Then so breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and so His first human child was made,—born of God, for "Adam was the Son of God."

But all that God did for this first man, He has done for every child of Adam. Every one has been formed by God from the dust of the ground, and into every one He has breathed the breath of life.

Notice what David said of himself, and this is just as true of you and me: "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect, and in Thy book were all my members written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them."

This tells you that long before you came into this world, your Heavenly Father thought of you, and was preparing your substance in the dust of the ground. And at last, when all was ready and the fulness of time was come, He formed that substance into a living being bearing His own image, and you appeared in this world,—a child of God into whose nostrils He breathed His own breath of life.

Think then, how greatly He must love you. He says: "Can a mother forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee."

But O, He has so many "prodigal sons," those who have wandered away from the Father's house, and who will not own Him as their Father, and obey Him. And there are many, many more who know nothing of Him. No, one has ever told them the wonderful story of their own creation, and their Father God.

But Jesus, the only begotten Son, has come into the world to bring us all back to the Father's house, to "bring many sons unto glory." And "as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in His name."

He came to show us the great love of our Father for His children, to make us know God, that our hearts might be won to love Him and that we might obey and serve Him for ever. Though our hearts are so sinful that we cannot of ourselves do the things that are pleasing to God, His Word says that "because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Father!"

When the Spirit of Jesus the Son comes into our hearts, we know that God is our Father, for "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." The Spirit of the Son is the spirit of obedience; it makes us love to please our Heavenly Father, and to do His will, for Jesus said: "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law to within My heart." So the Spirit of Jesus writes the law of God the Father in our hearts; it sheds abroad the love of God in us, and "this is the love of God that we keep His commandments."

Does it not then mean a great deal for us to come to God with the words "Our Father" upon our lips? Let us not take this sweet and holy name in vain, but ask Him to fill us with the loving, obedient spirit of His Son, that like Jesus we may "do always the things that please Him."