## *Prayer in the New Testament: a study of the occasions and vocabulary of prayer in the New Testament*

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This thesis represents an attempt to discover what prayer actually is, by exploring New Testament teaching about prayer. However, if that were a straightforward matter, the questions with which the present work grapples would be non-existent! There is in the New Testament no deliberate exposition of the meaning and practice of prayer. A line of approach into the New Testament has, therefore, to be determined. This is found by considering the Christian Gospel, with its understanding that God is our Father. Following this line, it is suggested that Mark and Romans together provide a central "pivot", as regards the form of the New Testament; the essence of the Gospel is highlighted by reference to Philo's treatise De Vita Contemplativa, a work, and a writer, serving also to enable freedom in exploration and assessment in the investigation into the theological foundation of "spirituality".

But the fatherhood of God is not a new idea, so some space is allowed for consideration of the Old Testament understanding of Father.

Having found a way in to the New Testament, no straight line of investigation presents itself; subjects, words, categories are inter-related, and what emerges could be said to resemble the formation of a rose, with its petals, varied in shape, size, and colour, clustered into the whole.

First comes a look into Christianity's inherited vocabulary of worship; this leads on to the "prayer of asking" - an idea embedded in our word "prayer". After fairly lengthy exploration into intercession, then fellowship, prayer "for its own sake" is examined.

The second part of the New Testament exploration looks at Jesus himself.

The conclusion reached is that, as Mark and Paul provide the centre-point of Gospel exposition, John provides a central point of reference in "spirituality".

# PRAYER IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

A study of the occasions and vocabulary of prayer in the New Testament

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M. A. C.

TEXTS, AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN REFERENCE TO THEM

| | |
|---|---|
| | H KAINH ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ BFBS (2nd edition) 1958 |
| LXX | The Septuagint Version, Bagster, 1976 reprint |
| Good News | Good News Bible, 1976 |
| JB | The Jerusalem Bible, 1966 |
| NEB | The New English Bible, 1970 |
| RSV | Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version, 1952 |
| RV | Holy Bible: Revised Version, N.T. 1881, O.T. 1885 |
| Moffatt | A New Translation of the Bible, 1926, revised 1935 |
| | La Sainte Bible, 1939 (tr. Le Chanoine A. Crampon - Desclée et Cie) |
| | The Bible in Order (ed. Joseph Rhymer) Darton, Longman and Todd, 1975 |
| | De Vita Contemplativa: Philo-IX (tr. F.H. Colson) Loeb Classical Library 363, Heinemann, 1967 |
| | Journals: |
| BJRL | Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Manchester |
| JTS | Journal of Theological Studies |

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# D I P T Y C H

## 1

## JENNIE

You

have no need to travel miles
to find the open spaces of your soul;

You

have no need of visual aid
to know the glory of the world;

for you, my Jennie, hold within your graceful self
the heart - the fullness - all the joy

of God
unique,
beloved,
deepest,
deepest,
mystery.

You

are humble;

You

depend
on me - for creature comforts;
But I depend on you
for insight, quiet, vision, strength;

for you, my Jennie, show within your love-filled eyes
the depth - the light - the very

life of God,
unique,
mysterious,
deepest,
deepest,
love.

Margaret Musk
from Cat Collection
(unpub. 1977)

# D I P T Y C H

## 2

## GLIMPSES.

"Life affords, from time to time, and out of the blue, moments which defy description. In my collection, four stand out.

"The first happened in a dingy classroom; I was in the fourth form, the subject was 'Music Appreciation'. Having been absent the previous week, I was quite unprepared for what was to come. A recording (Wolfgang Schneiderhan's) of the second movement of Beethoven's Violin Concerto was put on, and the classroom vanished - the music was all that was.

"Switzerland, walking in the mountain paths above Wengen on an afternoon of brilliant sun and deep blue sky; the silence profound, within it the sounds of water and birds and crickets; and fragrance of meadows and pines - this was the Garden of Eden.

"Glasgow, the Art Gallery, and Salvador Dali's 'Christ of St. John of the Cross.'. Did the picture come out of its frame or was I taken into the picture?

"The fourth transcends even these. At a Sunday morning Eucharist in Canterbury Cathedral the heavens opened, and glory shone round about us all; we were part of the dazzling being of God. It happened at the moment of Communion: the choir sang Benedictus from Haydn's 'Harmoniemesse' - and there was light."

from "Canterbury Cathedral - Our Mother Church - An Exultation" -
an unpublished paper by Margaret Cooper -
May 1976

## PROLOGUE.

Mankind may glimpse the deep harmony of creation - yet conflict, confrontation, disputation, argument, and even battle, seem from the beginning to have been part of the life of the people of God, not only in their struggles to maintain their identity and preserve their traditions in the face of rival claims, both political and religious, but also in the internal affairs of the Chosen Race itself. In the first stages of the drama, as Abram obeys the call of God, there is trouble between Abram and Lot, and the travelling party divides. Later comes the rivalry between the twin sons of the apparently ideal marriage of Isaac and Rebekah, and a long-standing division occurs. The beginning of the Exodus event finds the Children of Israel very much a distinct community in Egypt, but once freed from Egyptian oppression there is struggle in the wilderness, revealed not least in the astonishingly easy slip into idolatry, led by Aaron (Ex. 32) even while Moses is on the mountain top. The books Joshua and Judges tell of struggles to establish leadership within and superiority without; the advent of a king is itself a matter for dissension - is it the will of God, or is it a concession to the demands of the people that they should be "like their neighbours"? In the event the King, the Anointed One, holds a special place in the understanding of the unfolding divine purpose. But the presence of an anointed king did not mean that life reflected the will of God; David, the supreme king in the judgement of Jewish history, came to power in opposition to Saul, who, however, according to the Biblical account, was rejected by God (1 Sam. 15:26). David contends with rebellion, falls into shameful sin, and is succeeded by a son who fails to live up to early promise. Until the Exile the story is of waywardness, failure to understand the law of God, failure to recognise, or heed, his word proclaimed through his prophets. Though the Exile may have taught a lesson in its vindication of prophecy, the return to Jerusalem did not herald a time of harmony. The experience of exile led to different attitudes; some developed a strict application of the law, and kept themselves distinct and separate from their neighbours; others had made the best of things by befriending their neighbours and intermarrying. There was no eventual

re-establishment of the Jewish nation as it had been before. Scattered colonies of Jews were content to remain where they were and to live according to their own developing customs. In the face of derision and difficulty, Nehemiah brought to order the disarray of Jerusalem, but while succeeding in the completion of the city walls, he did not restore a nation. Through Ezra "Israel's transition from a nation to a law community had been made.... The distinguishing mark of a Jew would not be background, nor even regular participation in the temple cult (impossible for Jews of the Diaspora), but adherence to the law of Moses. The great watershed of Israel's history had been crossed, and her future secured for all time to come." [1]

The transition to a community of Law brought a new set of tensions arising out of the interpretation and application of the Law. This is most clearly shown in the rival schools of Shammai and Hillel, contemporary with Jesus. With exceptions, generally the former was strict, the latter gentler in comparison; two examples will suffice to illustrate the variety of issues over which there were differences: "The School of Shammai say: A man may not divorce his wife unless he has found unchastity in her.... And the School of Hillel say: He may divorce her even if she spoiled a dish for him...." [2] "The Mishnah is authority for the fact that relative to the feast of Tabernacles, at all events, the schools of Hillel and Shammai disputed regarding when the Lulab....should be waved. The former traditionally waved the Lulab with the singing at the beginning and end of the psalm and at v.25, while the latter performed this ceremony additionally at the second half of v.25" [3]

It was the Law which brought Jesus into conflict with, ultimately, all sections of Judaism (e.g. Mk 3:1-6, 7:1-13, Mt. 15:1-9), so that in the end, ironically, all rival groups were united in condemnation of him who claimed to be the fulfilment of the Law.

The essence of the conflict is perhaps found in the conversation between Jesus and a rich young man (Mk 10:17ff // Mt. 19:16-30 // Lk. 18:18-30). Eternal life involves keeping the commandments; the young man thinks that he has done so, and thus has fulfilled what God requires. Jesus implies that this is not the case; he may indeed have kept the outward observances as

prescribed, but he has not penetrated to the true purpose and meaning of the Law. His training has not, in fact, prepared him to recognise Jesus, and be ready to "follow him", as fulfilment of the Law.

What does God require? What is the nature of his relationship with humanity? How is that relationship expressed? Though Jesus declares himself to be "the way, the truth, and the life" - that is, the answer to these questions - his advent did not bring an end to strife even among his followers. The story of the spread of the Gospel message is indeed a story of powerful witness to truth, of constant unfolding of the deep reality of God. Drama and excitement are conveyed by Acts, in the ready acceptance of the Gospel by large numbers, and in the authority wielded by the acknowledged leaders of the Christian people of God in the manifestation of the Spirit at the laying on of their hands, and the occasions of healing. Nearer our own day we may think of the journeyings of such as David Livingstone, Gladys Aylward; of the witness of Christians under the régimes where this is forbidden; of miracles of healing both "scientific" and "spiritual". But this is also a story of holy war, of persecutions, of faith in the teeth of fearful opposition, of unpopularity; and within the church itself of heated argument leading to schism and sectarianism. And it is those things which are the very kernel of religion - ways of corporate worship, teaching on "Christian life", on "methods of prayer", on "ways of worship", rather than, for example, on questions such as Christology, or the nature of evil, which have given rise to the deepest and most widespread disagreements in a spirit of rivalry which, viewed from the safe distance of a study desk, seems not only sad, but in direct opposition to the spirit of Christ and the life of the Kingdom of God.

We seek to reach into the heart of Christian prayer - that is, to cut through the dense accumulation of

ideas (that heaven is above the sky)
fashions (such as dress, and liturgy)
customs (feasts and fasts)
dogmas (specific directions as to right organisation of life; or what the sacraments are).

We seek to discover what Jesus meant, and practised, and taught, about prayer.

It has been suggested that, in view of the fact that this is an explosive area, New Testament teaching is sharpened if set alongside something of Philo of Alexandria, a contemporary of Christ (c. 20 BC - 40-50 AD). Philo lived, and thought, in the world Christ knew, even though they did not move in the same area; and they shared a background of Jewish tradition; but the adjustments of interpretation of the tradition which Diaspora Judaism made necessary, and the approach of the philosopher, combine to produce a scholar of integrity, whose writings give an impression of one whose search is for truth (not the assurance of the safety of his own soul). Like Jesus he is confident that truth is not to be feared, and therefore his attitude is balanced and calm.

Philo's treatise De Vita Contemplativa describes, and incidentally assesses (indirectly), the value of the way of life of the community of the Therapeutae.

We may ask three questions as we look at what he has to say:

1. What is Philo's conception of God's "personality" and attitude to mankind?
2. What kind of response from mankind does such an attitude evoke?
3. What is Philo's ideal of life?

F. H. Colson [4], in his introduction to it, states that for him this treatise does not rank high; the subject matter is slight and gives little scope to richness of thought. This would seem, with respect, to be a superficial judgement. At first sight it is indeed a slight work, and its style is anything but concentrated. It is a series of impressions rather than a closely argued case. But if its original intention was slight, it touches profundities, and by the end one feels one has sat at the feet of a man of God. It could be compared with a "slight" work of an acknowledged master in another, and quite different, field: Mozart's Fantasia for a mechanical organ, K. 608, has a light-hearted start, and perhaps the original intention was to remain in this vein, but there is an imperceptible transition - to the great mind nothing is trivial, and we move into realms of serious and absorbing thought and exploration. Just such a progression is to be found in this treatise.

The opening paragraph is ironic in tone: διαθλητέον δὲ

ὅμως καὶ διαγωνιστέον (1) is strong language if taken seriously! In the next paragraph the claim of the Therapeutae seems incredible: ἤτοι παρόσον ἰατρικὴν ἐπαγγέλλονται κρείσσονα τῆς κατὰ πόλεις — ἡ μὲν γὰρ σώματα θεραπεύει μόνον, ἐκείνη δὲ καὶ ψυχὰς νόσοις κεκρατημένας χαλεπαῖς τε καὶ δυσιάτοις, ἃς ἐγκατέσκηψαν ἡδοναὶ καὶ ἐπιθυμίαι καὶ λῦπαι καὶ φόβοι πλεονεξίαι τε καὶ ἀφροσύναι καὶ ἀδικίαι καὶ τὸ τῶν ἄλλων παθῶν καὶ κακιῶν ἀνήνυτον πλῆθος — ἢ παρόσον ἐκ φύσεως καὶ τῶν ἱερῶν νόμων ἐπαιδεύθησαν θεραπεύειν τὸ ὄν, ὃ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ κρεῖττόν ἐστι καὶ ἑνὸς εἰλικρινέστερον καὶ μονάδος ἀρχεγονώτερον. οἷς τίνας συγκρίνειν ἄξιον τῶν ἐπαγγελλομένων εὐσέβειαν; (2f)

But perhaps their incomparability is not so surprising, for it stems from their worship of τὸ ὄν - the self-existent, which shows that they understand the meaning of worship: the intelligent reverence for superiority of being; an apprehension which is not shared by τοὺς τὰ στοιχεῖα τιμῶντας (3) or

τοὺς τὰ ἀποτελέσματα (5) which are manifestly not "self-existent", nor by worshippers of demigods, sharing humanity and anyway born in sin; nor by worshippers of images which are manmade and essentially one with ordinary household effects; and most amazing of all is the worship of animals whose life-style is visible and obviously inferior in every way to that of which human life is capable[5]. Detailed description of the Therapeutae introduced briefly at the beginning of the treatise, comes at the end of this sequence, and it would seem probable that even they are seen, at this stage, as equally irrational, for they are remote from reality: ὑπ' ἔρωτος ἁρπασθέντες οὐρανίου, καθάπερ οἱ βακχευόμενοι καὶ κορυβαντιῶντες, ἐνθουσιάζουσι μέχρις ἂν τὸ ποθούμενον ἴδωσιν (12).

This interpretation of Philo's attitude is reinforced in what

follows: the rash abandonment of property (how much better, if it is to be disposed of, that this should be done thoughtfully), and a wide circle of family and friends with whom these people feel they have nothing whatever in common: τὰς ἐκ τῶν ἀνομοίων τὸ ἦθος ἐπιμιξίας ἀλυσιτελεῖς καὶ βλαβερὰς εἰδότες (20).

The tone changes as Philo describes in detail the life of the community he knows, and there emerges a picture of people at one with each other in the Spirit of God. οὔτε δὲ ἔγγυς, ὥσπερ αἱ ἐν τοῖς ἄστεσιν, — ὀχληρὸν γὰρ καὶ δυσάρεστον τοῖς ἐρημίαν ἐξηλωκόσι καὶ μεταδιώκουσιν αἱ γειτνιάσεις — οὔτε πόρρω, δι' ἣν ἀσπάζονται κοινωνίαν... (24).

The description of life gives rise to a contrasting description of the hideousness of the excesses of other supposedly convivial gatherings. Even the famous banquets attended by Socrates were not free of taint, and are in marked contrast to the feasts of those who in their way of life are κατὰ τὰς τοῦ προφήτου Μωυσέως ἱερωτάτας ὑφηγήσεις (64).

The heart of the treatise comes in the description of the exposition of the sacred Scriptures: ἅπασα γὰρ ἡ νομοθεσία δοκεῖ τοῖς ἀνδράσι τούτοις ἐοικέναι ζῴῳ καὶ σῶμα μὲν ἔχειν τὰς ῥητὰς διατάξεις, ψυχὴν δὲ τὸν ἐναποκείμενον ταῖς λέξεσιν ἀόρατον νοῦν, ἐν ᾧ ἤρξατο ἡ λογικὴ ψυχὴ διαφερόντως τὰ οἰκεῖα θεωρεῖν, ὥσπερ διὰ κατόπτρου τῶν ὀνομάτων ἐξαίσια κάλλη νοημάτων ἐμφαινόμενα κατιδοῦσα καὶ τὰ μὲν σύμβολα διαπτύξασα καὶ διακαλύψασα, γυμνὰ δὲ εἰς φῶς προαγαγοῦσα τὰ ἐνθύμια τοῖς δυναμένοις ἐκ μικρᾶς ὑπομνήσεως τὰ ἀφανῆ διὰ τῶν φανερῶν θεωρεῖν (78).

This is the climax of a way of life which revolves around God, whose being and ordinance are beautiful: ἀεὶ μὲν οὖν ἄλλοτον ἔχουσι τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ μνήμην, ὡς καὶ δι' ὀνειράτων μηδὲν ἕτερον ἢ τὰ κάλλη τῶν θείων ἀρετῶν καὶ δυνάμεων φαντασιοῦσθαι (26).

The purpose of their existence is to be one in spirit with this sublime godhead - something which is possible because

ἤρξατο ἡ λογικὴ ψυχὴ διαφερόντως τὰ οἰκεῖα θεωρεῖν (78)

so that πολλοὶ γοῦν καὶ ἐκλαλοῦσιν ἐν ὕπνοις

ὀνειροπολούμενοι τὰ τῆς ἱερᾶς φιλοσοφίας ἀοίδιμα δόγματα (26).

Their concern is with what is invisible; even the Holy Scriptures are taken as an allegory, and it is the metres and rhythms and melodies of hymns and psalms which are worthy of mention: these are symbolic rather than dogmatic expressions of worship.

The practicalities of this way of life reflect the central truth of the life of the soul attuned to God. Ἐγκράτεια (34) is the foundation: a careful organisation of the physical, with all things balanced and controlled, both solitude and companionship, both silence and song, both discovery and instruction; and the needs of the body are met in the simplest way.

In summary then, and in answer to our questions:

1. The God who emerges is one who has ordered all things for good, for the well-being and delight of mankind; whose living presence is to be found in every aspect of earthly life. This is shown in the thoroughness of the way of life followed by the Therapeutae, for whom the practicalities of life are as significant as its religious activities - hence the need to withdraw from "the world" in order to live according to their convictions.

   God is τὸ ὄν - self-existent, the only being to whom true worship can be ascribed, since he is the only being who (by his very nature) can elicit true worship. He is to be enjoyed - hymns and dances produce ecstasy, likened to the self-abandonment of drunkenness: total absorption, without shame, for ecstasy is the vision of God which is the fulfilment of ἡ λογικὴ ψυχή.

   He is hidden; the vision must be sought through study and contemplation, through the penetration of allegory and the triumph of the soul over the physical instinct

for that excess which overthrows reason and dignity.
He is beautiful.
He is acclaimed as Saviour for his action at the Red Sea.
He is ὁ Πατήρ.
He is perfection, and offers φιλία to those who seek to share his being.

2. Since he is perfection, proper response to him can be no less than the dedication of all life, which is rewarded with οἰκειότατον γέρας καλοκἀγαθίας .... πάσης ἀμείνον εὐτυχίας, ἐπ' αὐτὴν ἀκεότητα φθάνον εὐδαιμονίας (90).

3. Philo's ideal of life would seem to be the spirit of the Therapeutae without the need for withdrawal. However, since the general attitude offered little hope of its becoming a reality, Philo seems to see the withdrawn community as contributing to the life of the whole. He himself obviously knows it well, and from his detailed and vivid description of what goes on it is not unreasonable to suppose that he valued an occasional "retreat" there, not for the sake of winning heaven nor of escaping hell, but, free of pressures and stresses, to respond wholeheartedly to the Lord of all life.

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Philo was a Jew. Do the ideas he puts forward in De Vita Contemplativa in fact mirror faithfully, as he claims, τὰς τοῦ προφήτου Μωυσέως ἱερωτάτας ὑφηγήσεις (64) (rightly translated by Colson [6] as "truly sacred instructions of the prophet Moses") ? To answer this we look at the Old Testament. In the context of a New Testament study, the Old Testament cannot be ignored, but neither can it be adequately treated. Any selection is bound to be arbitrary, and the present approach is readily acknowledged as impressionistic rather than analytical. At this stage we select the accounts of Creation, for they offer a deliberate expression of the Israelite understanding of the fundamental relationship between man and God; and Moses, for he towers above the great names of the Old Testament, recognised as the agent of

God in the central event of Israelite/Jewish faith, the Exodus, and as the one who on the holy mountain faced God and received the Law.

*

Genesis 1- 2:3

This comes across as sheer poetry - as a piece of artistic creation, in which God is portrayed as an artist, glorying in his creative achievement. The feel of it is that it is composed for enjoyment; with its shape and form punctuated by the recurring phrases: καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Θεὸς·
καὶ εἶδεν ὁ Θεὸς ὅτι καλόν·
καὶ ἐγένετο ἑσπέρα, καὶ ἐγένετο πρωὶ ἡμέρα μία...

one can imagine its use as cultic recitation. Equally, with Psalm 104, and many works of art, it may be seen as composed as an outpouring of intense feeling. It would grip its "audience" - through its intrinsic artistic skill, certainly, but also through its similarity coupled with contrast with ideas contained in the mythologies of Israel's neighbours. Whether or not the author of this poem was familiar with the Babylonian Epic of Creation, all religious thought in some way and at some stage looks at the visible world and offers explanations of its meaning and origin. What is striking, and unique, in Genesis, is the directness and simplicity of the relationship between Creator and Creation. Here is no hierarchy of divine beings (cf. the Babylonian idea), no system of emanations (cf. Gnosticism), no sequence of "ages" separating humanity from the first creation (cf. Hesiod), and nothing to suggest some form of obstacle course of initiation procedures in order to approach the Deity. Here is God alone, the source and authority of the life of the world.

Introducing Genesis, von Rad [7] points out that everywhere but in the Old Testament sagas there is a tendency to transfigure and idealise the characters; the Israelite is able to portray his heroes as the men they are, for he is concerned with faith in God. Such an attitude finds expression in this poem; von Rad describes 1: 2 as "unusually daring", for the existence of "chaos" is accepted. Belief in God as Creator demands faith - faith in his will as well as his ability to limit the chaos which is always there. In the light of this, the section

on the creation of humanity would be especially compelling and it is highlighted by its extra length, as the recognition that the creative power of the artist is one with that of the Creator: κατ' εἰκόνα Θεοῦ ἐποίησεν αὐτόν (1: 27). This must mean also an involvement in the limitation of chaos - an awesome truth indeed. One senses the tension in the evocation of a sense of worship: the pianissimo breathing of the chorus, now embracing all things: Καὶ εἶδεν ὁ Θεὸς τὰ πάντα, ὅσα ἐποίησε, καὶ ἰδοὺ καλὰ λίαν the concluding line: Καὶ συνετελέσθησαν ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ, καὶ πᾶς ὁ κόσμος αὐτῶν (1: 31 - 2: 1), and the coda on the sabbath. As we share in the vision, we share the blessing, and entering the peace of fulfilment, we worship.

*

Genesis 2: 4 - 3: 25

The next two chapters are different in approach: here we have a sequence of stories, doubtless arising from questions, some of which were very probably posed by children.

How did the earth come to be?
Where did the first man come from?
Why are things the way they are if in the beginning man and woman were equal?
Why are some animals dangerous?
If God is maker of all, why is there suffering?

The stories speak of an original face-to-face friendship with God, contrasting with the impassable gulf between the being of humanity and the being of God which is a common, and instinctive, idea, in the face of the being of God. Now, and for always, the language of banishment implies, there will be a yearning for the restoration of that original harmony, and a reaching out towards a goal which is unattainable for humanity. But can there be an instinctive striving if there is no goal? The Platonic answer to the question raised was that the separation of mankind from divinity is the difference between mortality and immortality - a distinction which is within humanity itself. The physical, mortal body is incapable of reaching the fulfilment it seeks, but when the mortal body dies,

the soul imprisoned in it will be freed for fulfilment, which is attainable, but beyond this life. In contrast to this, the Jewish mind recognised a challenge: that of crossing the chasm, which was seen as a possibility for this life, to be achieved by faithful adherence to the covenant and observance of the Law of God.

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Exodus 3 - 20

The most powerful impression, in the context of our present study, in these chapters is the complete freedom of speech between Moses and God; speech uninhibited, honest, spontaneous, natural [8]. In this, Moses contrasts with the rest of the people, who are fickle in their attitude to God, and, when they remember him, afraid. Moses, despite his reluctance to take on the responsibility to which God called him, is completely fearless: Εἱστήκει δὲ ὁ λαὸς μακρόθεν, Μωυσῆς δὲ εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν γνόφον, οὗ ἦν ὁ Θεός (Ex. 20:21).

But though at the time of his calling Moses speaks freely, it is through signs and assurances that he accepts the mantle of leadership - signs of unmistakable power and authority in things of importance: a magician's rod, sickness appearing and disappearing, water polluted, brotherly support. Such signs are needed by the people: Moses knows that the mysterious name of God, ὁ Ὤν , will not hold them. And so through outward and visible signs of power the presence of God is made known - the plagues, the path across the sea, the pillars of fire and cloud, the provision of food and drink, the arms of Moses stretched out during battle, the thunder and lightning of Sinai. But while these things make known the presence of God in their midst, there remains the unbridgeable chasm: πᾶς ὁ ἁψάμενος τοῦ ὄρους, θανάτῳ τελευτήσει ....(19:12) οἱ δὲ ἱερεῖς καὶ ὁ λαὸς μὴ βιαζέσθωσαν ἀναβῆναι πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, μή ποτε ἀπολέσῃ ἀπ' αὐτῶν Κύριος (19:24).

But there is a sense of looking forward to a change: Ὑμεῖς δὲ ἔσεσθέ μοι βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα καὶ ἔθνος ἅγιον (19:6). This will happen ἐὰν ἀκοῇ ἀκούσητε τῆς ἐμῆς φωνῆς, καὶ φυλάξητε τὴν διαθήκην μου (19:5).

There emerges a conception of a God of power and authority, who makes himself known where and how he will, according to circumstances. He is one who, as demonstrated in the destruction of the Egyptians, and stated in the "Decalogue", is a jealous God, whose power militates against those who are not his people, and against his people when they are disloyal. He is fearful, he is awful, he is powerful, he commands obedience - and yet he can be known face to face, and by one who in the beginning was rebellious; and the laws to which he commands obedience are laws of society - of the common good. Humility towards and recognition of the Creator must result in the offering of worship, and a society based on mutual respect.

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Do the ideas of these passages blend with the attitudes we have remarked in De Vita Contemplativa?

The spirit of the opening of Genesis is certainly akin to that of Philo; God is creator, and, ideally, life is good, so to worship God is natural and joyful. The perplexities of life - as reflected in the stories of Genesis 2 and 3, are demonstrated in the distance, literally, in the demarcation of the Tent of Meeting and the mountain top whither Moses alone went; and psychologically, in the instinctive fear of drawing near to God - are matched by the general view suggested by Philo; the ideals exemplified by the Therapeutae can be lived only in withdrawal.

But there is also contrast.

The God of Genesis 1 is essentially eternally creative - chaos must always be held in check. The God of the Exodus event demonstrates his essential involvement in the events of the world. The Exodus is central because it is an event of historical significance for the People of God, clearly demonstrating their peculiar role in the world; it is not unique as an act of God; the Scriptures record the activities of God in the perpetual pilgrimage of his people, because where there is life there is work, and there is progress.

An eschatological sense was noted above, (pp. 12,13), and the transition in the final centuries BC to a community of Law has been noted. An essential part of the Hebrew/Jewish understanding of religion is that it involves life in the world,

even though this means entering into conflict. Conflict can be found to be essential to human religion. To recognise that all aspects of life (not only, that is, religious affairs) are subject to God's Law (and such recognition is demonstrated by the scope of the Mosaic Law) implies two things, which are in fact different aspects of the same: first, that circumstances require that God's way should be indicated in distinction from other possibilities; second, that human nature is capable of going against God's Law, and such inclination is to be resisted and rejected. This further demonstrates that the power of opposition is able to be undermined even though its presence is not eliminated; hence conflict is inevitable. Thus a community of Law was essentially an eschatological [9] community, since its understanding of life was based not on conclusions drawn from observable facts of earthly existence, but from knowledge of God.

N.P. [ "The Torah became a means for strengthening the supremacy of the divine holy will as the measure of all strivings of the human heart, and for bringing all details of life, individual and corporate, into relation with the service of God ..... the destiny of the priestly mission entrusted to Israel was the world as it was ..... Israel had thus to be apart from the world and yet remain of the world. Whilst keeping distinct from the surrounding nations, they had to throw the whole of their effort into the midst of current civilisations, seeking to raise human life to higher levels of existence... This was no easy task; yet they were to perform it because the Holy God who had chosen them was to be served in Holiness, and because their life could achieve its meaning only in the universal service to which they were summoned.

"Such was the significance of the Covenant promulgated at Sinai and of the Torah which was given to enforce it; and as the curtain rings down on that most momentous event in history, Israel is seen starting off on its national career, pledged in consecration to the service of God and humanity." [10] [ The people N.P. of God not only looked forward to, but also worked towards, a fulfilment, the hope of which brought to an end any sense of absence of or separation from God, for in the fullness of time there would be complete transformation in the total harmonisation of all things. This sense of vigour, of movement, of growth and unfolding, of world vision, is absent from De Vita Contemplativa

in which God is proclaimed as Saviour, certainly, as God of the Exodus - but there all stopped, it seems, and the aim of the Therapeutae is to uncover and dwell on what is there; neither to follow a lead, nor to join in pilgrimage, but to withdraw from the scene of conflict.

The goal for the people of the Old Testament is the fulfilment of Creation.

The goal for the Therapeutae is the ecstatic vision.

NOTES

1. John Bright: A History of Israel (SCM, 1960) p.375.

2. Quoted by C.K. Barrett: The New Testament Background: Selected Documents (SPCK, 1961) p. 140.

3. See J.W. Bowman: "The Life and Teaching of Jesus" in Peake's Commentary on the Bible (Nelson, 1962) : para. 648e.

4. Philo - IX. Translated by F.H. Colson (Loeb Classical Library, 1967).

5. In fairness to the Egyptians, one may point out that what actually captured their wonder was the mysterious self-sufficiency and innate wisdom and intelligence so often found in animals, especially the cat; qualities which humanity acquires slowly and for the most part by training and experience.

6. op. cit. (Note 2 above).

7. Gerhard von Rad: Genesis (SCM,1963) pp. 48-49.

8. But we note, with some interest, that Paul did not find in Moses an example of a "man of prayer". For discussion of Paul's treatment of Moses, see C.K. Barrett: From First Adam to Last (A. and C. Black, 1962) Ch. III.

9. In view of the article "Slippery Words - 1. Eschatology" by the Rev. Dr. I. Howard Marshall in Expository Times June 1978, Vol. LXXXIX No. 9, it is perhaps advisable to define the meaning of eschatological as used in this thesis: eschatological means "finally decisive" - i.e. there is no return. The ministry of Christ brought knowledge of and experience of a relationship with the Father which results in a unique (among religions) attitude to life, and a confidence which rests on God alone. St. John, in his Gospel, gives expression, in terms of Jesus the man and Jesus the inspiration of men, to this radical understanding of life. John's position is that life is eternal life - which means that every moment experienced draws to a focus past, present and future (cf. T.S. Eliot:

> Time past and time future
> What might have been and what has been
> Point to one end, which is always present
>
> Burnt Norton: Four Quartets
> - Faber, 1944);

conversely, each moment is free of past or future, for past is past and future is unknown. To live eschatologically is to live in a spirit of discovering God and his creative work, as opposed to hoping or waiting for his intervention, or seeking to invoke it; Jesus' reluctance to work signs and his sighs when asked support this; the truth is present, and is apparent to the eye of faith. This understanding does not reject any idea of Parousia; since

only the Father knows of it (Mk 13: 32) and since the Father is to be trusted and there is no need for fear, we do not dwell on what is beyond our control at the expense of the responsibility which is entrusted to us.

10. Isidore Epstein: Judaism (Penguin, 1959) pp.30-31.

# INTRODUCTION

## What is prayer?

This study is the search for an answer to the question "What is prayer?". This is a query which arises out of the fact that the conceptions which seem to be widely and often unthinkingly held, when set alongside the Gospel message, are found to be in contrast to it. Such conceptions are, for example, that

> Prayer means talking in theological vocabulary.
> Prayer persuades God to act.
> Prayer is a means by which God can be persuaded to look kindly on one.
> Prayer is an essential Christian duty.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines "prayer" as "solemn request to God or object of worship; formula used in praying; form of divine service consisting largely of prayers; action, practice of praying; entreaty to a person." The verb to pray is rendered "make devout supplication to; beseech earnestly (God, person, for thing, to do, that); ask earnestly for (permission, etc.); engage in prayer; make entreaty (to God, to person, for thing, for or on behalf of person to do, that)"; these are the common usages of the words "prayer" and "to pray", to set against which there is a considerable variety of attempts at re-defining prayer. For example (at random):

> "Prayer is you surrendering to the unknown" [1]
> "Prayer is an encounter and a relationship" [2]
> "Contemplation and prayer are the blossoming of our real selves" [3]
> "Prayer is the process by which we become what we are" [4]
> "All prayer is some form or extension of thanking or offering" [5]

The problem which confronts pastor and pray-er, and pastor as pray-er, is that such definitions, and the sources from which they are taken, imply self-consciousness on the part of the pray-er. Furthermore, the very existence of books on "prayer" and "spirituality" implies that prayer and spirituality are measurables; that in order to understand these things it is necessary to be capable of reading books; that there is a scale

of degrees of attainment. It seems inevitable that this should be so, for "progress" is a fact of life, and "progress" implies growth and development, which implies stages of attainment.

Yet Jesus, without levelling life into a dull flatness, preached a message of equality in the sight of God (see especially Mt. 5-7), a message which Paul preached in terms of δικαιοσύνη (Ro. 5: 1) given by God, not proved by man; a gospel which declared the people of God to be sons of God, united with Christ, and thus children of his father, and able to know him as he knew him. Such knowledge has the power to set man free from the fear of the "Supreme Being"; sets him free from the slavery of seeking to propitiate, or claiming favour; such efforts are fruitless, for God's favour is already assured. Instinctively man thinks God is against him; the Gospel is that he is for him [6].

It is a disquieting fact that the Gospel proclamation is actually a declaration of the answer to many reiterated petitions, to repeat which seems to be a denial of the Gospel. "Show us your mercy, O Lord" calls forth the response "but he has!" Petitioning for particular things, e.g.

> "Give your people the blessing of peace:
> and let your glory be over all the world" [7].

implies that God will do something around us, or over us, or despite us, and entirely misses the invitation to creative co-operation which is the responsibility and privilege of the people of God (by which we mean those whom God regards as his: Pharaoh was repeatedly asked to co-operate in setting free the Children of Israel).

It is striking that "prayer" is not the main subject of any of the New Testament writings: indeed it occupies remarkably little space in comparison with the volumes which have appeared through the centuries of Christendom.

It has been the instinct, and is now the assertion, of the writer, that prayer is something which is identifiable after it has happened rather than something which can be made to happen, and that "worship" is a word which denotes an attitude rather than an activity; that "prayer" is responding rather than doing.

The approach to the subject should be comparable to the approach to "the Gospel" found in Good News [8]: "It may be the case, therefore, that the question, 'What is the gospel?' is not the

right question to be asking. If we start looking for a statement which is the common factor in all expressions of the gospel, or the historical basis of them all, we shall find ourselves led into a dead-end, because we shall never unearth such a magical formula. In our search we shall probably meet with a number of varying statements. It will not be a question of choosing one as the winner and discarding the others. Each will have to be evaluated against the notion of gospel to see whether it legitimately fits."

There follows an investigation into the treatment of the subject by the various writers of the New Testament, and an attempt to suggest what sort of guidance, if any, it is possible for one pray-er to give to another and what sort of corporate expression is appropriate for the Christian gathering for worship together.

## NOTES

1. Sebastian Moore: The Experience of Prayer (Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1969). p.11.

2. Anthony Bloom: School for Prayer (Libra, 1970) p.2.

3. Mark Gibbard: Prayer and Contemplation (Mowbrays, 1976), p.9.

4. A.E. Duncan: Pray and Live (SPCK, 1966) p.48.

5. J. Neville Ward: The Use of Praying (Epworth, 1967) p.19.

6. This is expounded in lively manner by John Fenton and Michael Hare Duke: Good News (SCM, 1976); see especially ch. 3.

7. Morning and Evening Prayer (Series 3) (SPCK, 1975).

8. op. cit. (Note 6 above).

# I

## 1. Prayer depends on Relationship

### God the Father

In all the variety of definitions of prayer one thing is certain: it is our - i.e. humanity's - communing with deity. Where and how this communing is recognised depends on the understanding the pray-er, or praying community, has of deity. This we now explore.

We have, by way of backcloth, looked at Philo's treatise De Vita Contemplativa and drawn from it something of Philo's conception of God; and we have looked at some Old Testament selections which may be taken as setting out fundamentals of Israelite theology.

From the variety of persons and circumstances represented by the collection of New Testament writings, there emerges, strikingly, a widely and firmly held conception of God as Father. This finds expression in the greetings at the beginnings and endings of the letters, and it is expounded as a climax of the gospel in Romans 8 and in Mark 14 (to which we shall return later - p.46 ); it is striking in Matthew's approach which is to show Jesus as the fulfilment of Jewish hopes and expectations; it is emphasised by Luke at the moment of Jesus' death (Lk. 23: 46), a moment which is understood by Luke to be above all the moment for which reassurance is needed by all men; it is at the heart of John's understanding of the Gospel for all generations (especially 17, and see p.52 ).

### What is commonly understood by "Father"?

During a course of Confirmation preparation a group of half a dozen eleven-year-olds were asked to write down, as we considered the Lord's Prayer, what ideas the term "father" brought to mind. Three of these children are from divorced homes, and one has only unhappy experiences of her father, and all live, as indeed do many children nowadays, in an area where divorce and remarriage are commonplace; yet all expressed ideas of "father" as representing security, benevolence, goodness; none, that is, was troubled by the idea of God as father, though they had known insecurity and turbulence at home. It seems that ingrained into Western society, despite its high divorce rate and

incidence of one-parent families, is an ideal of fatherhood which is at least a good foundation on which to build [1].

*

The Old Testament

We look now at the tradition inherited by those who first heard the Gospel - what would the term "Father" mean for them? Was it a natural image of God for them, and if so, what, as an ideal, did it mean?

Our search reveals an astonishingly small Old Testament use of a term so frequent in the New Testament, and used of the same God. πατήρ is used 15 times, of which 4 are the same statement repeated in various contexts (see p.25). The uses in Malachi - 1:6, 2:10 - provide us with an accurate summary of the sociological and theological understanding of fatherhood:

1:6 Υἱὸς δοξάζει πατέρα, καὶ δοῦλος τὸν κύριον ἑαυτοῦ· καὶ εἰ πατήρ εἰμι ἐγώ, ποῦ ἐστιν ἡ δόξα μου; καὶ εἰ Κύριός εἰμι ἐγώ, ποῦ ἐστιν ὁ φόβος μου; λέγει Κύριος παντοκράτωρ·

To be the father of a family is to hold a position which commands respect. For the Hebrew, the father gave the family its name, brought forth the seed which was nurtured by the woman, held responsibility, and therefore rightly wielded authority.

2:10 Οὐχὶ πατὴρ εἷς πάντων ὑμῶν; οὐχὶ Θεὸς εἷς ἔκτισεν ὑμᾶς; τί ὅτι ἐγκατελίπετε ἕκαστος τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ, τοῦ βεβηλῶσαι τὴν διαθήκην τῶν πατέρων ὑμῶν;

This underlines the preceding summary, and adds to it the idea that fatherhood is akin to creatorship. If God is father of all, then all people are together under the same authority [2].

Akin to these ideas are the occasions of the term in Pss. 68:5, 103, Isaiah 9, Is. 63:16, 64:8, Jer. 3:4, 19, 38:9 (LXX); no further comment is needed.

The remaining three instances are of interest in the present context.

*

Deuteronomy 32:6-7

Ταῦτα Κυρίῳ ἀνταποδίδοτε; οὕτω λαὸς μωρὸς καὶ οὐχὶ σοφός; οὐκ αὐτὸς οὗτός σου πατὴρ ἐκτήσατό σε καὶ ἐποίησέ σε καὶ ἔπλασέ σε; Μνήσθητε ἡμέρας αἰῶνος, σύνετε ἔτη γενεῶν γενεᾶς· ἐπερώτησον τὸν πατέρα σου καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ σοι, τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους σου καὶ ἐροῦσί σοι.

This occurs in a song which Moses taught the children of Israel as he came to the end of his ministry among them. The song opens with a celebration of the greatness of God (3-4) with which the behaviour of his people contrasts sadly (5); then come verses 6-7, followed by a recalling of God's organisation of mankind, and election of Israel (8-9). The Christian is perhaps in a position to recognise that coming from Moses, and at this stage of his life, the use of πατήρ could be found to be significant, likewise the second use of πατήρ in its earthly sense; but in this context it seems no more than a synonym for δίκαιος καὶ ὅσιος Κύριος (32:4), ὁ ὕψιστος (32:8), author and sustainer of life.

There is, after all, nothing to add to the understanding collected from Malachi.

* ↕ space

2 Samuel 7:14 = 1 Chr. 17:13 = 1 Chr. 22:10 = 1 Chr. 28:6

God's promise to David concerning Solomon his son: Ἐγὼ ἔσομαι αὐτῷ εἰς πατέρα, καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσται μοι εἰς υἱόν.

Nathan speaks these words to David, who is told that his son will bring to pass his vision of a house for the Lord; that if he transgresses he will be chastened, but the mercy of the Lord will not be removed from him, and his house and his kingdom will stand firm. (2 Sam. 7:14, 1 Chr. 17:13) David repeats this promise to Solomon (1 Chr. 22:10) and again to an assembly of the chief men of Israel. Having exacted from the assembly dedication to the work of building a Temple, David εὐλόγησεν .... τὸν Κύριον ἐνώπιον τῆς ἐκκλησίας, λέγων, Εὐλογητὸς εἶ Κύριε ὁ Θεὸς Ἰσραήλ, ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν, ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος καὶ ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος (1Chr. 29:10).

This does not in fact tell us much about the meaning of the word, especially in view of the development of Solomon's life.

It perhaps expresses the pride and affection of a father for a favoured son; the Christian, knowing both Solomon's future and the revelation of God in Christ, may identify a seed of the manifold mercies of God.

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Psalm 89:26

(Δαυίδ) ἐπικαλέσεταί με, πατήρ μου εἶ σὺ, Θεός μου καὶ ἀντιλήπτωρ τῆς σωτηρίας μου.

This is a psalm of uncertain origin, but it is an expression of profound ideas of God and the world, and it is worth looking at it in some detail.

1 - 14 It begins with praise to the Lord of truth, of mercy everlasting, of glory and might, of justice and judgement, mercy and truth; the Lord who made a covenant with David.

15 - 18 It extols the blessedness of those who know the Lord.

19 - 29 It recounts the promise to David, in fact close enough to be compared with the promise given to David concerning Solomon.

30 - 37 It faces facts about sin, but the promise is stronger than sin.

38 - 45 But the opposite has happened - the covenant is overthrown.

46 - 51 Yet there is trust - bewilderment and anguish certainly, but on a basis of trust - and the psalm ends with a courageous and moving coda:

Εὐλογητὸς Κύριος εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα· γένοιτο, γένοιτο.

The thought and language of this psalm are remarkably akin to that of Paul; the linking of πατήρ, Θεός ἐμός, σωτήρια, πρωτότοκος is striking to those familiar with his writing, but the overall impression is of a sense of the ultimate righteousness of God; there is nothing that would be heard by Jews as a dynamically new revelation of the character of God.

Though we are tracing the use of πατήρ we cannot ignore the important idea contained in Psalm 2:7: Κύριος εἶπε πρὸς μέ, υἱός μου εἶ σύ, ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε.

* ⇕ space

(Note: NEB: "...this day I became your father"
JB: "...to-day I have become your father"
Good News: "...to-day I have become your father"
Moffatt: "You are now my son; this day I am your father")

This reveals the depth of the meaning of kingship: ".. the psalmist recognises even in the small fragment of history which is represented by the enthronement of a Judaic king the invisible hand and will of God who is the Lord of universal history and who, though invisible, is also present at the cultic ceremony for which the psalm was composed. The king in Zion is the anointed of God (Messiah); he is under the shadow of his heavenly Lord" [3]. It also reveals a realistic view of life in the interaction of divinity and humanity; the king does not become divine, though he is in an unique position. He is adopted: the use of "to-day" "excludes the idea of a physical begetting"[3]; [illegible] while γεγέννηκά testifies to the radical meaning of adoption (a point weakened, perhaps, by the translations which paraphrase)- a concept which is to find its full flowering in the New Testament.

*

In a thesis on prayer the Psalter inevitably attracts our attention as a rich anthology of the prayer of the People of God. Since, however, our field of study is the New Testament, and since the variety of the Psalter makes generalisation difficult, we resist its pull, allowing only [illegible] incidental reference (pp. 95, 123 ), and noting both its widespread use, and criticism of that use, in Christendom [4].

*

We insert here a note on Philo's use of Πατήρ in "De Vita Contemplativa".

This term for God appears twice: 68 speaks of the women of the community, most of whom are virgins, who in their yearning for wisdom above all, are οὐ θνητῶν ἐκγόνων ἀλλ' ἀθανάτων ὀρέχθεῖσαι, ἃ μόνη τίκτειν ἀφ' ἑαυτῆς οἵα τέ ἐστιν ἡ θεοφιλὴς ψυχή, σπείραντος εἰς αὐτὴν ἀκτῖνας νοητὰς τοῦ πατρός, αἷς δυνήσεται θεωρεῖν τὰ σοφίας δόγματα.

"Spiritual marriage", that is, the closest possible union between the soul and God, is a concept which, though with variations, is to be found in many religions [5], not least in Christianity. Inevitably we are in danger here of over-simplification in the interests of brevity in what is a

digression from our main line of thought; nevertheless, it is perhaps permissible to extract some points as relevant to our investigation.

1. "Spiritual marriage" is a concept which is found in religions which involve mysticism, defined by F.C. Happold [6] as "a break through the world of time and history into one of eternity and timelessness".

2. It represents a fulfilment of the soul which is not to be found in terms of the world.

3. It has no place in Judaism, which is concerned with the affairs of the world, and finds fulfilment in striving to bring the world into the order of original creation (see p.15 ).

4. Philo is in a sense bridging the gap between mystical religion which turns from the world, and practical religion of Judaism by suggesting that "spiritual marriage" for the Therapeutae is in order to bear "spiritual children" (cf. 1 Tim. 2:15).

5. We noted (p.6 ) that Philo's attitude changes during the course of this treatise; this may indicate his awareness, despite his admiration for the Therapeutae, that mysticism can become self-interest to the exclusion of all else - the quest for personal sanctification. St. John of the Cross identifies as "spiritual marriage" that state in which the individual will is wholly at one with God's will: "And thus the death of this soul is changed into the life of God, and the soul becomes absorbed in life" [7].

6. The danger of stopping short of union with the active, creative will of God has been shown in the notion of spiritual superiority which over the centuries became associated with the "religious life". Many orders are to-day reconsidering their raison d'être; quotations from the Foundation Rule and the present Rule of one flourishing community [8] provide illustration of this: "The life of Religion is a school in which by following the way of the Counsels of Perfection we learn to live for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. By perseverance in this way the individual soul is led to acquire those virtues of humility of spirit and purity of heart which enable her to attain to the vision of God". (Foundation Rule). "A religious house can be a place of meeting, where those of different cultures and beliefs can find understanding and a way of reconciliation".

(Present Rule). "A religious family seeks to reflect that unity in diversity which is the life of the Holy Trinity". (Present Rule).

7. Coupled with this is the superiority which similarly has been associated with celibacy. In a thorough investigation into this question, Donald Goergen[9] asserts that "the decision to be celibate is not the most important decision the celibate makes about his life. The most significant thing about being a celibate is life in Christ, being a member of the body of Christ, preparing the way of the Lord. Celibacy must be seen in that context along with marriage and along with the other variations of the one fundamental call which Jesus of Nazareth issued. Our basic vocation is to follow Christ".[10]. Having drawn attention[11] to the fact that the emphasis on virginity in Christian history was coincidental with monastic development and represented that "radical Christian response" which under a friendly régime was not expressed in martyrdom (to-day, he would hold, "radical response" is most effectively made in social and political involvement), he concludes that "there is a need for a renewed spirituality which re-thinks the spiritual life along other than monastic categories in such a way that it is equally available to the conjugal life and the celibate"[12].

We can find it possible to trace a direct line from Philo to Goergen in an unfolding understanding of purpose in withdrawal from normality; though we suggest that this is Philo's insight, rather than the understanding of the Therapeutae themselves.

In the concluding paragraph of the treatise, where the Therapeutae are described as οὐρανοῦ μὲν καὶ κόσμου πολιτῶν, τῷ δὲ πατρὶ καὶ ποιητῇ τῶν ὅλων γνησίως συσταθέντων ὑπάρετῆς the connection between πατήρ and ποιητής is characteristic of Philo and further emphasises his Judaistic practicality in involvement with the world.

But though the word πατήρ occurs, our impression of Philo's God, from De Vita Contemplativa, set down in the Prologue, did not evoke our conception of "father"; the Therapeutae are those who recognise that they, for their part, must attain to their true being as children of the divine Father.

*

After looking at the Old Testament use of Πατήρ as a title for God, and finding its occasions very few, we shall take some impressions of the conception some of the great men of the Scriptures had of their relationship with God.

We begin with Jeremiah, since "no other Old Testament figure is known to us so intimately"[13].

We note with interest the appearance of several of Paul's key-words: σώζω, δοῦλος, δόξα, ἀλήθεια, κρίνω, πίστις, δικαιοσύνη, εἰρήνη, φόβος, ἔλεος, ἐλεύθερος, Κύριος.

We note the occurrence four times of the prediction (of the nation): ἔσομαι ὑμῖν εἰς Θεὸν, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔσεσθέ μοι εἰς λαὸν (7:23, 11:4, 24:7, 38:1), an expression which sums up Jeremiah's understanding of God's relationship with the people (and we note both its similarity to and difference from 2 Sam. 7:14 : Ἐγὼ ἔσομαι αὐτῷ εἰς πατέρα, καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσται μοι εἰς υἱόν - see p.25).

He is himself a solitary figure; he would seem to see himself as a faithful servant, both of God and of the people. He is one for whom God is Κύριος (see 17:14). He identifies with the people (e.g. 13: 22-25) and goes with them to Egypt, yet he always stands alone as a prophet. He identifies with God as his mouthpiece to the people - his own words and the words of the Lord are closely interwoven. Yet despite this there is an ultimate separation, expressed both in his sadness, which may be contrasted with the general mood of Our Lord's earthly life, where distress was certainly present but not predominant; and with the mood of rejoicing which issues from Paul even when imprisoned. Jeremiah's vocabulary of titles summarises his idea of God: Κύριος, Κύριος παντοκράτωρ, κύριος ὁ Θεός, Θεὸς ἅγιος αὐτῶν, κύριος ὁ Θεὸς Ἰσραήλ, Ἐγὼ Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς πάσης σαρκός, ὁ λυτρούμενος.... κύριος παντοκράτωρ.

But though Jeremiah's idea of God may not be that of the New Testament, his understanding of prayer has much in common with Christian insight.

The responsibility and power of prayer are indicated in two

clear and firm injunctions to Jeremiah not to intercede: Καὶ σὺ μὴ προσεύχου περὶ τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου, καὶ μὴ ἀξιοῦ τοῦ ἐλεηθῆναι αὐτούς, καὶ μὴ εὔχου, καὶ μὴ προσέλθῃς μοι περὶ αὐτῶν, ὅτι οὐκ εἰσακούσομαι (7:16-17); Καὶ σὺ μὴ προσεύχου περὶ τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου, καὶ μὴ ἀξίου περὶ αὐτῶν ἐν δεήσει καὶ προσευχῇ, ὅτι οὐκ εἰσακούσομαι ἐν τῷ καιρῷ ἐν ᾧ ἐπικαλοῦνταί με, ἐν καιρῷ κακώσεως αὐτῶν (11:14).

This reveals an understanding of prayer as activity - human activity in co-operation with God.

Two requests for Jeremiah's intercession (37:3 = LXX 44:3; 42:2-3 = LXX 49:2-3) show the same insight from another angle, and also indicate the ministry of prayer; Jeremiah is one who can exercise this ministry. Perhaps in another setting this would be taken as simply an expression of the special role of the prophet; but linked with other thoughts on prayer, the emphasis is surely intended to be on the nature of the prayer itself.

When we look at the actual prayers, as recorded, of Jeremiah, we discover three categories:

1. Formal prayers, which we identify in 11:20[14], 16:19-21, 17:12-18, 32:16-25 = LXX 39:16-25. These are expressions of the ministry of prayer; that is to say, the activity, or mechanics, of the work of prayer, which we have already found as something to be withheld, or requested. The first of these examples, 11:20, sounds like a cultic hymn, or part of one; the third and fourth like formal pronouncements, ceremoniously declaimed.

2. Personal outbursts: 15:15-18, 20:7-18. These speak for themselves; they are private, spontaneous, from the heart.

Difficult to categorise is 18:19-23. This lacks the force of the above-listed "private prayers", and lacks also the feel of pronouncement in assembly. Perhaps these words record Jeremiah thinking things out; neither pronouncing nor reacting, but meditating.

Our excerpts have so far accepted prayer as a recognisable activity, either in terms of ministry or of personal expression to God; that is, "actual prayers" have been identified by words addressed to God. Our final collection of references extends this:

3. "Interweavings": 10:23-25; 12:1-4: 14:7-9, 19-22. These are all contained in longer poems - according to N E B's presentation (see Note 14), and the poems as a whole demonstrate the close interweaving of words of the Lord and Jeremiah's own thoughts and words to the Lord; they indicate that for Jeremiah life is lived in communion with God. But these are not the only occasions (in the text) of God responding: 15:15-18, 18:19-23, 20:7-18 are all followed by words of the Lord: but ch. 21 is a completely new section; ch.19 is in a different style (NEB, RSV., JB; la Sainte Bible (see Note 14) makes it a separate section); 15:19-21 is a clear response to what has preceded, but it is a balancing section, with the effect of proclaiming God's response, rather than offering insight, as the "Interweavings" do, into the way of prayer.

All these are points which, as we shall see, harmonise with Christian prayer; yet we assert that prayer depends on relationship, and Jeremiah did not know the Gospel insight into that relationship. We suggest that his intimacy is that of a privileged and trusted servant; an intimacy permitting frankness, expressing friendship, and resembling to a considerable degree, but yet radically different from that of Father/son.

From Jeremiah we turn to Hosea. As Jeremiah gave expression to a kind of intimacy with God in the intertwining of his words and those of God, Hosea uses the imagery of faithful love offered to an unfaithful wife. The content of the message of Hosea is as stern as Jeremiah, but the style is altogether different - there shines through the insight of a poet (6:1-6, 14:5-9)[15] and the strength of the relationship between God and his people is love. Hosea does not use the word πατήρ , but what he conveys is akin to our understanding of the loving protection of parenthood; this is summed up in the penultimate verse of the book: "I have spoken and I affirm it: I am the pine-tree that shelters you; to me you owe your fruit" (14:8, 5 NEB).

Ezekiel presents something entirely different. He writes as one possessed, or in a trance. His expression is entirely "otherworldly"; and he may be compared with Christopher Smart's visions expressed in the bizarre and strangely evocative Jubilate Agno:[16]

For in the day of David Man as yet had a glorious horn upon his forehead.
For this horn was a bright substance in colour and consistence as the nail of the hand.
For it was broad, thick and strong so as to serve for defence as well as ornament.
For it brightened to the Glory of God, which came upon the human face at morning prayer.

Our interest with Ezekiel in this context is his use of the phrase υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου (cf. p.54) which for him expresses humanity in contrast with the wonder and splendour he sees and experiences in the spirit. Jesus' use of this phrase, in comparison with Ezekiel's, is somewhat ironic: he used it of himself when, the incarnate Lord, he was revealing the truth of God in relation to mankind; for Ezekiel the term is used to denote the contrast - the gulf of separation - between mortality, represented in himself, and the divine splendour. "By the address 'son of man' God has already made him the anonymous messenger, divested of all earthly claims, who stands in profoundest lowliness before the only exalted one. Only through the call which has gone out to him has he been raised above the 'massa perdita' of his people. It is by virtue of his very weakness that he is to act as the instrument of the Lord, whose will it is to reveal through him the unlimited divine power"[17].

His picture of God seems almost a parody: Καὶ ἐγὼ δὲ κροτήσω χεῖρά μου πρὸς χεῖρά μου, καὶ ἐναφήσω θυμόν μου, ἐγὼ Κύριος λελάληκα (21:17; see also 6:11-14; 8:17-18; 36:22-32). He uses expressions familiar to the Christian from Paul's writing, but in contexts of depression, not hope: Καὶ ἐν τῷ ἀποστρέφειν δίκαιον ἀπὸ τῶν δικαιοσυνῶν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ποιήσει παράπτωμα, καὶ δώσω τὴν βάσανον εἰς πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ, αὐτὸς ἀποθανεῖται, ὅτι οὐ διεστείλω αὐτῷ (3:20).

This has the effect of highlighting (for the Christian) the concept of grace with which Paul transforms δικαιοσύνη, by his emphasis on God's gift and away from main's attainment - or failure to attain. At the command of the Lord οὕτως φάγονται οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ ἀκάθαρτα ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσι (4:13),

cf. Ro. 1:24: διὸ παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ Θεὸς ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς (and see also Ro. 1:26, 28).

Here God has not initiated, though he has allowed, the consequences of unrighteousness to run their course. (See also Ezek. 7:8-9, 4 - LXX order - cf. Ro. 3:21-26; Ezek. 7:22-27). And when a sense of redemption appears, it is not of mercy, but for the glorification of the name of God (see 14:6-11; 36:21-22; 39:25).

The whole tone of the book is remote; from the text we are left wondering wherein is the heart of Ezekiel's faith; he gives no impression of the kind of intimacy with God which was Jeremiah's lifeline (see p.30ff.), nor the joy of Daniel (see below). Eichrodt[18], who seems to understand Ezekiel, says that the one "fixed point" is his conception of "divine majesty".

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Daniel, on the other hand, whilst containing much which is superficially comparable with Ezekiel in terms of other-worldliness and the visionary, yet conveys a sense of humility, of insight, of truth, and of an essential joy which is lacking not only in Ezekiel, but in anything else we have thus far examined.

Despite the fact that Daniel is concerned with τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ (e.g. 2:20) who is Κύριος τῶν βασιλεῶν, ὁ ἀποκαλύπτων μυστήρια (e.g. 2:47), he is not remote - Daniel is one ὃς πνεῦμα Θεοῦ ἅγιον ἐν ἑαυτῷ ἔχει (4:5 LXX). It cannot be accidental that when our Lord, in Mark 13, prepares the disciples for what it means to follow him when exposed to the worst the world can do, his words are strongly reminiscent of this book (7:13, 12:6).

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Habakkuk is the source of Paul's summary of the gospel:

Ἐὰν ὑποστείληται, οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ ἡ ψυχή μου ἐν αὐτῷ·
ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου ζήσεται

(Hab. 2:4, Ro. 1:17).

Habakkuk wrestles with the problem of the Babylonian oppression - he expresses his bewilderment to Κύριε ὁ Θεὸς ὁ ἅγιος μου (1:12) in whom he is confident - καὶ οὐ μὴ ἀποθάνωμεν. He waits for an answer, which comes, and the verse quoted above is part of it: there is hope, but the time for its fulfilment is not yet. The vision is hope against hope: καὶ ἐξέλιπον λαοὶ ἱκανοὶ ἐν πυρὶ, καὶ ἔθνη πολλὰ ὠλιγοψύχησαν. Ὅτι ἐμπλησθήσεται ἡ γῆ τοῦ γνῶναι τὴν δόξαν Κυρίου, ὡς ὕδωρ κατακαλύψει αὐτούς (2:13-14).

The faith is that ὁ Κύριος ἐν ναῷ ἁγίῳ αὐτοῦ, and this is cause for rejoicing, despite outward circumstances (2:20, 3:19). For Habakkuk, God is the source of joy and hope - we are left with a sense of exhilaration.

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This Old Testament survey cannot omit some consideration of Elijah, who with Moses flanks Jesus at his transfiguration, and who is mentioned by James in a passage of some importance (Jas. 5:17). We have already considered Moses - an obvious choice of candidate when dealing with fundamentals of Israelite religion. He is mentioned, but without explanation, by Malachi: Καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀποστελῶ ὑμῖν Ἠλίαν τὸν Θεσβίτην, πρὶν ἐλθεῖν τὴν ἡμέραν Κυρίου τὴν μεγάλην καὶ ἐπιφανῆ, ὃς ἀποκαταστήσει καρδίαν πατρὸς πρὸς υἱὸν, καὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου πρὸς τὸν πλησίον αὐτοῦ, μὴ ἔλθω καὶ πατάξω τὴν γῆν ἄρδην (Mal. 4:5-6).

We ask now - what singles out Elijah to stand with him?

He is a man of power and authority, deriving from an insight into the will of God, who is for him Κύριος τῶν δυνάμεων (1 Ki. 17:11, 18:15), and also Κύριος ὁ Θεός μου (17:21). Elijah experiences doubt and fear, and in flight receives the ministry of an angel of the Lord (1 Ki. 18:5-8) who directs him forward to Mount Horeb, where in a dramatic way he is taught that, though there is power to be harnessed, as at Carmel,

essentially the being of God finds expression as φωνὴ αὔρας λεπτῆς (1 Ki. 19:12). The effect of his reassurance is to make him even stronger in opposition to what is not consonant with the ways of God (1 Ki. 20:21-24, 2 Ki. 1:14-16 - which latter produces a puzzling contrast to the greatness of the ministry he receives; a fact, and an incident, which we do no more than note).

Elijah, then, is one who wields the power of God, one who finds the responsibility almost more than he can manage; and he is, like Moses, one whose departure from the world is unusual (2 Ki. 2:11).

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In summary, we find from these Old Testament gleanings that God is readily accessible to those who call on him; he <u>can</u> be called upon, and he <u>will</u> answer; he can be wrestled with, and he will in some way offer either explanation or reassurance. The overall impression is of one who is supreme, and beyond the reach of the majority; his words are mediated through the select few, whose call is to obedience to his Law, not to share the relationship they know. This is the point at which the New Testament produces such a contrast - Jesus, whom to know is to know the Father, is readily accessible to all - there is none judged - by him at any rate - unfit to approach him, whether beggar or sinner or child or Gentile. The Kingdom of God is open to all who would enter it, and Paul explains that the Spirit of God manifested in Jesus is the inheritance of all believers. Separation of any kind is done away with in the truth of God. We minister to one another (Ro. 15:7): we support one another as we accept our different callings (Ro.12-16). Paul's call is to share in Christ's ministry, and thus to be at one with his brothers and sisters in Christ.

## NOTES.

1. It is perhaps possible that the Father Christmas cult has some influence here; a figure of universal and undiscriminating benevolence is portrayed. For further examples of children's remarks about fathers, see Nanette Newman: Lots of Love (Collins, 1974).

2. See also the universal idea of God in Isaiah 40-55; the genealogy in Lk. 3:23-38, traced back to Adam; the true meaning of the Law expounded in Mt. 5-7 (see p. 70ff ).

3. Artur Weiser: The Psalms (SCM, 1962) p.111.

4. "The Psalter is the voice of Everyman in his every mood: exulting, wrestling, adoring, cursing, confident, beseeching, penitent, impenitent, comprehending, utterly perplexed, always honest..... The Psalms are the collected poems of the People of God: a richly varied collection, mysteriously appropriate for Christian worship, though created long before. This must say something of eternity; of God unchanging, and of human nature unchanging. In Canterbury they have become a natural expression of worship..... But perhaps the Psalter itself is not an indispensable part of the daily office? - perhaps there are other sources from which to draw? - and perhaps to do so would be nearer to the spirit of the liturgy than formal, unimaginative adherence to the prayer book? The Psalter is honest; on its own terms it is worship offered in spirit and truth - in honesty." (from 'Canterbury Cathedral - Our Mother Church - An Exultation' - an unpublished paper by Margaret Cooper, May 1976).
There is much literature on the Psalms; in addition to Weiser (Note 3) we select S. Mowinckel: The Psalms in Israel's Worship (Blackwell, Oxford, 1962); C.S. Lewis: Reflections on the Psalms (Bles, 1958); Annie H. Small: The Psalter and the Life of Prayer (T.N. Foulis, 1914).

5. Consult, for example, Ninian Smart: The Religious Experience of Mankind (Collins, Fontana, 1971).

6. F.C. Happold: Mysticism (Penguin, 1963) p.18.

7. St. John of the Cross: The Living Flame of Love Stanza II quoted by F.C. Happold (op. cit. Note 6 above) p.366.

8. The Order of the Holy Paraclete. The quotations are taken from their current (1978) brochure, available from St. Hilda's Priory, Sneaton Castle, Whitby, Yorks.

9. Donald Georgen: The Sexual Celibate (SPCK, 1976).

10. op. cit. (Note 9 above) p.124.

11. op. cit. (Note 9 above) p.134.

12. op. cit. (Note 9 above) p.226.

13. J.N. Schofield: Law Prophets and Writings (SPCK, 1969) p.166.

14. Cf. Gerhard von Rad: The Message of the Prophets (SCM, 1968) p.171, where 11:18-23 is identified as a poem. This reveals the influence - and responsibility - of editing and printing: JB and NEB isolate v.20; RSV delineates vv. 18-23; RV and LXX set out the whole as continuous prose; Good News has vv. 18-23 as a prose section; cf La Sainte Bible (trad. Le Chanoine A. Crampon - Desclée et Cie, 1939) which presents 11:18-12:6 as a continuous poem. We accept NEB's treatment.

15. But cf. LXX: ἐγὼ ἐταπείνωσα αὐτὸν, καὶ κατισχύσω αὐτόν· ἐγὼ ὡς ἄρκευθος πυκάζουσα, ἐξ ἐμοῦ ὁ καρπός σου εὑρηται (Ωσ. 14:9).

16. Christopher Smart (1721-1771). This extract is quoted from that included in the Penguin Book of Eighteenth Century English Verse (ed. Dennis Davison; Penguin, 1973).

17. Walther Eichrodt: Ezekiel (SCM, 1970) p.32f.

18. op. cit. (Note 17 above) p.24.

## 2. The meaning of "Father" in the New Testament

We now deal with the meaning of "father" as the dominant term for God in the New Testament. In looking at its use, it is necessary to pay attention to the shape of the New Testament, bearing in mind the variety of authors, of styles, of aims, of circumstances involved. In the selection of Christian writings which eventually formed the canon as we know it, there is no indication, by its arrangement, of any central point of reference. Yet such there must surely be, for the burden of the writings themselves is frequently one of pulling back the readers from bypaths of error into which they have all too easily strayed from the truth of the Gospel.

This thesis suggests that such a "pivot" is to be found in Mark and Romans, and suggests further that these two works are linked. We now set out the reasons for believing this to be the case, and the discoveries which are yielded by investigating the New Testament books as grouped around this point of reference.

The events of the life of Jesus of Nazareth are central to Christianity. The gospels recount those events. Some well-attested facts, which this thesis accepts, suggest that among the gospels Mark is a centre point. These facts are:

1. that it was the first of the gospels to appear[1].
2. that it was written in Rome, some time during the years 65-75 AD.
3. that it was accessible to the writers of the other three gospels.

Another book by its very nature stands out in the New Testament - Paul's Letter to the Romans. There is ample evidence for holding, with C.K. Barrett[2], and C.E.B. Cranfield[3] that Romans was written in 55 AD, and there is ground for accepting that Paul was in Rome in 57 AD. Romans was written before Mark, and both are connected with the same place - Rome. It seems highly probable, since Christian fellowship was natural, and sought after in the early days, to suggest that Mark was familiar with the epistle, or at least with its substance; if he was John Mark he knew Paul well[4].

On the basis of these points (and in the interests of brevity in the present context, we shall not stop to list further) we shall take these two books as the pivots for which we look,

investigating first each independently, and summarising what understanding of God is conveyed, and then, bearing in mind the external facts noted above, we shall make some comparisons between them.

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Mark

Mark's style would seem to assume an ability to read between the lines, or would take for granted that the implication of certain terms would be understood. We may point, in illustration, to his opening: Ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καθὼς γέγραπται ἐν τῷ Ἡσαΐᾳ τῷ προφήτῃ... (1:1). With no need for build-up or explanation, the accepted facts are that Jesus is accepted as Christ, that this constitutes good news, and that it fulfils Scriptural expectations. Further, we may note the matter-of-fact way, again without elaboration or explanation, in which remarkable events, both joyful and horrifying, are recorded. Mark writes from the light of resurrection knowledge and Pentecost experience, and can therefore understand, or at any rate accept without panic, otherwise puzzling events and sayings of Jesus. As instances horrifying outside resurrection light we may note: the time in the desert (1:12-13), the lack of response in Nazareth (6:1-6), the references to coming suffering (8:31-38; 9:30-32; 10:32-34; 13), the betrayal (recalled: 3: 19; foretold: 14:17-20; and carried out: 14:43-46), the anguish of Gethsemane (14:32-42), and the whole sequence of the trial and crucifixion. As incredible before the experience of Pentecost we may note the "supernatural" occurrences: the drama of Jesus' baptism (1:9-11), two incidents on the lake (4:35-41, 6:45-52), the Transfiguration (9:2-9), Jesus' conduct through the arrest, trial and crucifixion, all the incidents of healing, and of quiet authority over hostile Jews and "evil spirits". We may also include at this stage the delegated authority (6:6-13) and frequent incomprehension (at the time), on the part of the disciples. All these are things which, if we take seriously the impression of life given by Acts, are within the experience of the community for whom and among whom Mark writes.

However, whilst taking for granted a foundation of belief and experience, Mark also writes with a sense of unfolding purpose. The direction of the narrative may be likened to a two-stranded cord: one strand follows the identity of Jesus and is marked by the sequence of titles used of him; the other is Jesus' dealings with the disciples, who are led step by step to the point of crisis - the Cross. These are the strands; the cord itself is that which links each paragraph, or incident, in coherent sequence; nothing is presented in isolation.

We trace first the thread concerned with the identity of Jesus.

At the outset Mark states that Jesus is Χριστός (1:1), and at baptism the voice from heaven declares Σὺ εἶ ὁ Υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός (1:11). These titles do not appear again until 8:29, when in answer to Jesus' enquiry about opinions of himself, Peter asserts Σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστός. This is balanced in the following incident, the Transfiguration, when again from the heavens comes the declaration: Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ Υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός.
Recognition of the Christ is essential to the gospel - recognition in faith leads on to vision of what is hidden.

But there are other titles of identification before chapters 8 and 9. The first event of ministry is in the Capernaum synagogue with a man ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ, who declares οἶδά σε τίς εἶ, ὁ Ἅγιος τοῦ Θεοῦ. (1:24). Mark pursues this: in 3:11 we are told that it was common for τὰ πνεύματα τὰ ἀκάθαρτα to cry out Σὺ εἶ ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ; "Legion" (5:7) elaborates further: Ἰησοῦ Υἱὲ τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ Ὑψίστου.
The πνεῦμα ἄλαλον tormenting the boy at the foot of the mountain does not speak, but reacts violently to Jesus:
ἰδὼν αὐτὸν τὸ πνεῦμα εὐθὺς συνέσπαραξεν αὐτόν, καὶ πεσὼν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐκυλίετο ἀφρίζων (9:20).

Recognition and reaction burst forth from the opposition - and these titles are the ones taken up by those who try Jesus. The High Priest asks Σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Εὐλογητοῦ; (14:61); Pilate asks Σὺ εἶ ὁ Βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων; (15:2);

and thus designated, Jesus was crucified. Those who taunt him on the cross address ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ Βασιλεὺς Ἰσραὴλ (15:32); and after his death, movingly, it is the centurion who echoes the divine voice in declaring Ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος Υἱὸς Θεοῦ ἦν (15:39). Any direct link with divinity, then, during the lifetime of Jesus, is affirmed by the opposition - with one exception: Peter's declaration at Caesarea Philippi; but this is not a deeply rooted and grounded belief yet, as subsequent events make clear.

Jesus speaks of himself throughout the gospel as ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (2:10, 2:28; 8:31, 8:38; 9:9, 9:12, 9:31; 10:33, 10:45; 13:26; 14:21, 14:41, 14:62). In the impact of the gospel read as a whole, this phrase stands out like a solo instrument in an orchestra. It comes when authority is claimed in the face of opposition (2:10, 2:28); it comes balancing ὁ Χριστός from Peter (8:29) and ὁ Υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός (9:7) from the divine voice. It comes when the passion is predicted (8:31, 8:38; 9:31; 10:33; 14:21, 14:41); it comes in the awesomeness of chapter 13, and in the foretelling of glorification (13:26). It is used (10:45) in the explanation (given in response to James and John) of a mission of service. It reaches a powerful climax in 14:62 where in response to the High Priest's question Σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Εὐλογητοῦ (the most elaborate of titles used) Jesus echoes his words of 13:26, and links τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου with the emphatic Ἐγώ εἰμι. At this moment of crisis, now that the time is fulfilled, Jesus is willing to reveal the hitherto hidden truth by claiming his full identity, which is the coming together in who <u>is</u> τοῦ ἀνθρώπου and τοῦ Θεοῦ. So at the Cross, and by a bystander - an objective onlooker - the two aspects are brought together simply and clearly: ὁ ἄνθρωπος Υἱὸς Θεοῦ ἦν (15:39).

These are the significant titles - but we cannot leave this consideration without brief comment on other forms of address which occur in Mark: Υἱὲ Δαυεὶδ Ἰησοῦ (10:47) is the spontaneous cry of a blind beggar. This is its only occurrence in Mark, and it is coupled with Ῥαββουνει (10:51), again used only this once by Mark. These two titles, the one implying universal acclaim, the other personal, form a miniature reflection of the balance noted above, and the setting gives added point, since the incident follows the conversation with James and John concerning what it is that must be shared if they

would be with Jesus in eternity; and it precedes the entry into Jerusalem, with its reference to David in an echo from the psalter (11:10). David is further referred to in a poser put by Jesus in the Temple (12:35-37).

The disciples address Jesus as Διδάσκαλε (4:38, 9:38, 13:1), a title used also by the rich man enquiring about eternal life (10:17, 20), by Pharisees (12:14), Sadduccees (12:19), a scribe (12:32), by Jesus (14:14). Ραββει occurs three times: twice from Peter (9:5, 11:21) and once by Judas (14:45). The use of Ραββει , coming at significant moments, and acknowledging personal authority is thus linked with the authority of Jewish religion: at a moment of glory, a moment of shame, and an occasion of teaching about prayer. (We shall return to 11:21 for more detailed discussion in due course).

Κύριε is used by the Syro-Phoenician woman (7:28), probably a natural form of courteous address comparable with the English "sir" - but again it is balanced and heightened: by Jesus' own use of it in private conversation with the healed demonaic, when it refers to the Father, who works through the Son (5:19); and by its use in the Scriptures, quoted at 1:3, 11:9, 12:11, 12:29, 12:36.

Having looked at Mark's purposeful use of titles, we now turn to the second strand: Jesus' methodical teaching of his disciples.

The disciples are summoned to be with him (3:14), simply, and in some cases, apparently, suddenly (1:16-20, 2:13-14). They are his close companions, in a position to observe both his way of life and his approach to ministry, and they are able to question him. They see (at least, three of them do: 9:2, 14:27ff) all that Mark shows us of his ministry. Their leader and companion is one possessing unique qualities, with the ability to draw crowds and hold them, with the power to heal, and to inspire confidence. He has a new attitude to the Law, and this causes them to think about some of its details (2:19, 2:23-28, 4:26, 7:1ff); yet he lives within it, attending synagogue, the Temple, observing festivals, and encouraging its observance (1:44-45). They are involved in some occurrences which cause them to marvel - the feeding of large crowds (6:37-44, 8:1-10), surprises on the lake (4:35-41, 6:47-52) and on the mountain (9:2-8). They also see one who calls himself ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου,

and who needs to withdraw from pressures (1:35, 6:47), one who shows emotion, needs companionship, experiences weakness and fatigue, battles with Σατανᾶ, and at times of greatest stress feels alone.

Jesus guides the disciples step by step through these experiences, until they have the whole picture, and then are equipped to continue his work in the name and power of the risen Lord. Not until the right moment does he claim his authority: in the presence of the High Priest - and in the absence of disciples.

The direction of the teaching is clear - it moves to a point where a direct question about identity can be put (at 8:29). Then outward recognition becomes hidden implication, as from now on Jesus teaches the meaning of incarnation (that is, what it means that God became man), a meaning they can only thoroughly grasp when the strain of events has receded and been superseded by the vindication of the promises. We have noted the significance of the centurion's statement (15:39); but he was not involved as the disciples were. In a different way, but for them as real, they too were going through the experience of rejection, desolation, darkness - the lowest ebb possible. Jesus gives to the religion of the fathers a new direction: not the avoidance of that darkness which betokened sin and the disfavour of God, but the entering into darkness to transform it by the eternal love of God. Whether or not it was intended, the main text of Mark as we have it in the most reliable manuscripts ends (16:8) with Jesus risen, at the point where Mark's readers, and his companions, would join in with their experience of the living Christ to supplement the text.

Central in this is what Jesus reveals of his own relationship with God, and how he teaches the disciples to think of God. His identification as Χριστός is followed (as we have noted earlier) by Jesus' immediate linking of ὁ Χριστός with ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, and with a revelation of the glory of God, involving two great figures from the past, for neither of whom is there a marked tomb, for in both cases God himself dealt with their earthly bodies (Dt. 34; 2 Ki. 2). Between these two is ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου - addressed as Ραββεί for the first time (9:5) - of whom it is said before them what has already been stated by Mark before the disciples appeared: Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ Υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός.

This then is the nature of the relationship between God and Jesus. Before this, the disciples have witnessed healings, have heard Jesus preach both in synagogue and in the open, have seen the beginnings of conflict with religious authority, have heard him describe his true family, have heard him speak of the kingdom using illustrations from the domestic scene, in terms of a sower, of seeds, of domestic affairs; have been with him in a storm, have seen a girl apparently brought back from death, have seen him rejected in Nazareth, and immediately after this latter have themselves been sent out by him "with authority over unclean spirits.... They drove out many devils and many sick people they anointed with oil and cured" (6:7, 13, NEB). This, though, was in obedience, not understanding; there is yet more to learn. They work with him on two occasions (or one, but discussion of this question is not at issue here - Mk 6:35-44, especially 37, 41; 8:1-10). They discover his companionship unexpectedly (6:45-52); they discover the almost magical quality of the power at work (6:56). They are taught to get inside the precepts of the Law, to question, to use intelligence and common sense (7:1-23); they hear Jesus divert attention from the signs which inevitably attract attention; and even express disapproval of the request for such signs (8:12). After the Transfiguration they are faced with the difference between themselves and Jesus (9:28-29). Conversely, there is one outside the group who is acting successfully on his own (9:38-41). There is fear, as Jesus speaks of his death, and fear to ask about it (9:32). Children are within reach of - perhaps even closest to - the kingdom of God; there is obviously more involved than the keeping of the Law (10:17-31); and in the request from James and John there is a seeking for security which they seem to understand in terms of luxury which according to earthly standards betokens glory; to which the response is that eternal companionship with Jesus, if that is what they seek, begins in the present and involves following his lead at all times and in all places, in the spirit of his own total disregard for places of honour. There is mounting conflict with authority; there are the puzzles to be lived with (12:13-17, 18-27, 34, 35-37, 38-40, 41-44) leading to the awesome prediction of general trial and suffering; there is the puzzle

of the betrayal, the supper, the anguish of the final events, and the fear of the unknown, such as they had experienced, felt by those who found the empty tomb (16:8).

When he speaks for the first time about his suffering, Jesus refers to the Son of Man coming ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ (8:38). This glory, by its very nature, is something to be discovered, or revealed, not claimed (11:27-33, 12:1-12). The centre of the revelation of the relationship between God and Jesus comes in the crisis of Gethsemane. In the enormity of human fear, human pain, human isolation, in the firing line of the slings and arrows of outrageous human fortune, Jesus, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου , needs companionship, needs the fullness of communion, both of his brothers: μείνατε ὧδε καὶ γρηγορεῖτε (14:35) and of the Father, who is truly his father: Αββα ὁ πατήρ. This is the centre of the revelation of incarnation - this is the new message of Good News about God which Jesus brings. It is into this understanding of God that the Christian is brought by Jesus - and it is towards this that he leads his disciples. This makes sense of remarks about his true family (3:34-35), of his reference to ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν (11:25), of his making much of the ability of children to enter the kingdom - children, who can claim neither status nor authority, and who, as a result (whether in rebellion or affection!) are much more parent-conscious than independent adults, and therefore more ready to accept this relationship, which involves a different approach to God from the flawless keeping of the Law (10:17-31; 12:28-34) or the claiming of ancestry (12:24-27).

It is this understanding of God which Mark illustrates and which Paul expounds, for the central point of Romans has in common with Mark the same central phrase: Αββα ὁ πατήρ.

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Romans

We have already noted external grounds for suggesting a link between Mark and Romans, and we have now arrived at a point of internal contact. Before examining further linguistic similarities, we look at the structure of Romans, and see how Paul reaches this moment of climax.

He begins firmly and strongly, stating the basic facts of the gospel, the identity of Jesus, and his place in the unfolding of divine history, and links himself and all disciples in this chain. In 1:17 the effect of the gospel is clearly stated: "For the gospel reveals how God puts people right with himself: it is through faith from beginning to end." (Good News). The epistle is built on this assertion. First Paul sets out what needed to be put right: the perversions of evil; the separation of peoples which the Law brings about (2-3); he goes on to the paradox of the Law; the meaning of faith (4); the fruit of the gospel (5-8). In 8:15 we are placed firmly with Christ, in Christ, in the Spirit - the rest of the chapter sustains the sense of climax, expressing the power of Gospel truth through the tribulations of life in the world. 9-11 wrestles with the heartache of the schism between Jew and Christian, but holds fast to the belief that in the end they will be united in the fulfilment of God's promises (11:32). The final chapters are concerned with day-to-day Christian living.

We note further that Mark and Romans are similar in shape: a clear introduction, and a halfway point - in Mark, Caesarea Philippi and Transfiguration; in Romans, life in the Spirit. Mark's first half deals with everyday life with Jesus, and the second goes into deeper realms; Paul's first half may be described as academic; his second half deals with present-day affairs. In Mark the realisation of Αβ/βα comes at a point of darkness, in Romans at a point of elation.

Bearing in mind the constant need - and frequent failure - of the Christian church to relate its doctrinal refinements to actual experience, it is not unreasonable to wonder whether Mark deliberately set out to balance Paul's approach; that his vision of Jesus was, either from Peter's vivid accounts or from firsthand experience, of a simple and accessible friend, a loyal Jew, and yet one who demonstrated a glorious liberty in respect of the Law; and that he saw a real danger of this picture getting lost in the sophistication of Paul's intellectualism. He tells the story of which the doctrine is simply another expression; the Christian church needs both, and Mark was possibly the first to see it, and doubtless Paul appreciated it, for personal witness is at the centre of his proclamation.

We note at this point that the phrase Αββα ὁ Πατήρ appears also in Galatians, written from the heart, written for the moment, probably with no thought of preservation; Romans on the contrary gives the appearance of being conceived as a document for preservation. As such it would certainly need to be balanced by the life of Jesus, and who better to write it than one who had contact with none other than Peter?[5]

Remembering that Romans was written first, remembering also that Paul would have been familiar with the life of Jesus through contact with the apostles, we examine now further linguistic similarities which may be taken as points of contact between these two books.

Our survey of Mark began with his use of titles; we begin with a comparison of those used by Paul. In Mark our interest in titles was the identification of Jesus, leading on to the implications for our relationship with God; in Paul we are directly concerned with the question of relationship with God, for Paul expounds the faith of the Spirit-filled church, towards the birth of which Mark moves. Paul's titles are in effect then all variations of the same truth, and all reflect a Christian understanding of truth. We have already noted Αββα ὁ Πατήρ as the central address; we find ὁ Πατὴρ ἡμῶν (1:7) which corresponds with Mark's ὁ Πατὴρ ὑμῶν (Mk 11:25). Κύριος, which is used slightly by Mark, occurs frequently in Romans, with its extensions Κύριος Χριστός, Κύριος Ἰησοῦς, Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν. Υἱὸς Θεοῦ occurs in both, and Πνεῦμα Ἅγιον which appears unobtrusively in Mark (1:8, 12; 12:36; 13:11) appears frequently in Romans, with variations Πνεῦμα Θεοῦ (8:14), Πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ (8:9).

Compressed into chapter 8 we find the most significant words in common, and phrases developed from them.

First (8:2), we find mention of freedom ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου τῆς ἁμαρτίας καὶ τοῦ θανάτου. The first stirrings of conflict between Jesus and religious authority are in connection with his claim to authority to set free from sin: Τέκνον, ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι (Mk. 2:5). Hostility grows as it becomes clear that Jesus lives according to a radically different attitude to

the Law, an understanding to which Paul has had to adapt, which for him meant a radical change. In the same sentence (8:2), Paul speaks of death, of which Jesus has again brought a radically different understanding: he leads his disciples firmly towards the Cross; he ignores danger when they fear it (4:38); a little girl apparently dead is said to be sleeping (5:39); Moses and Elijah appear with Jesus in glory; and all predictions of his coming passion are coupled with predictions of rising again. For the Christian, death is not the transition from mortality to immortality (Paul elaborates this elsewhere); death is the grip of fear which militates against the confidence of the life of the Spirit within, the Spirit τοῦ ἐγείραντος τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐκ νεκρῶν (Ro. 8:10-11, 12-13).

Then there is the distinction κατὰ σάρκα/κατὰ πνεῦμα. Right inside the Christian, justified, τέκνον Θεοῦ, there is a paradoxical conflict of life and death (in the understanding just outlined). This is the paradox expressed by Mark in his use of ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου , which in Romans is superseded by these two phrases. Now, the members of the Church, the body of the Lord, are the incarnation. Those who are υἱοὶ ἀνθρώπων , even those, υἱοί εἰσιν Θεοῦ (8:14 and cf. 1:3-4). The point is emphasised - we are in fact τέκνα Θεοῦ , and that means κληρονόμοι (8:17). The natural address between Christians is ἀδελφοί (8:12); this arises from the fact stated in 8:29: ὅτι οὓς προέγνω, καὶ προώρισεν συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνος τοῦ Υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν πρωτότοκον ἐν πολλοῖς ἀδελφοῖς; — and reminds us of Jesus' extended family (Mk. 3:31-35); of the training of the disciples for taking on the same work (6:6-13); of their co-operation with him (6:37, 8:6); of going through the same powers of darkness in the same spirit (12:1-12; 13).

Δόξα is one of Paul's words (used by Mark but not developed). For the Christian the share in the work of Christ is also a share in his glory, realisation of which is a matter of hope; another key-word not occurring in Mark, but which formulates the implications of the facts recorded by Mark. The glory is something which is to embrace all, as it embraced Moses and Elijah with Jesus; as we tread the earthly path Jesus trod,

so also συνδοξασθῶμεν (8:17). This is possible because the effect of Jesus having been made Υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρωπου is that with him we are within the δικαιοσύνη of God. By this we know that God is ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, not κατ' ἡμῶν; it is God who has justified us; God, who is judge. This is a matter of grace, again, a word not in Mark, but implied in what he says about the Kingdom, which is more easily entered into by children (see above); which is not a matter of keeping the Law, but of faith. Faith is one of Mark's words: it opens the way to healing (2:5, 5:34, 6:6); it drives out fear (4:40, 5:36); it is something which until the resurrection is personal experience is not within the disciples (cf. 16:8), who are constantly on record as being afraid; it is something which saves (5:34): ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε· cf. Ro. 1:16: δύναμις γὰρ Θεοῦ ἐστιν εἰς σωτηρίαν παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι.

It is a matter of reliance on God, which is an intrinsic human need; the gifts of grace are for Jew and Greek, and available before the need is realised. But it must be made clear that this reliance is not a matter of bondage, a relationship of slavery; but of freedom, and a relationship of sonship (8:14-15). To one another we are as servants, as well as brothers, for with Christ we are instruments of God to one another: Mk. 10:35-45 - where we find a conversation which expresses this oneness with Christ's mission in terms of baptism, another aspect of which Paul offers in 6:1-5, where baptism is an entering into the death and resurrection of Jesus. Life in the world for sons of God means in every respect to identify with Christ: ἐνδύσασθε τὸν Κύριον Ἰησοῦ Χριστόν (13:14). To do so is to be in the Kingdom of God - a phrase used only once by Paul (14:17), in dealing with practicalities - a significant use, and complemented by Mark, for whom it is a prominent idea, both the summary (1:15) and the meaning of the ministry of Jesus (4:11, 26, 30; 9:47; 10:13-16, 17-31).

These two books then may fairly be held to complement one another, and may be taken as providing the central pivot for which we looked. The understanding of God which emerges so strongly is of his union - communion - with humanity; an idea present, but not developed, or recognised as universally

significant, in the books of the Old Testament.

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We have suggested that it is necessary to look at the shape of the New Testament and that Mark/Romans forms a point of reference. A twin peak is found in John's Gospel, which gathers to a greatness all that has been expressed, in a variety of ways in a diversity of circumstances in the New Testament writings, and looks forward. It is fitting (following the faith expressed by John the Divine in Revelation that the End is a person, the person of Christ), that this climax should take the form of a re-expression of the ministry of the incarnate Christ, thus setting free the fullness of Christ for subsequent generations (of whom John was a member) who otherwise might feel removed from the Christ because they were at a distance from the man who lived on earth. With different emphases, the preceding gospels had all been presented in the same way; John saw that the traditional material "cried aloud for rehandling; its true meaning had crystallized in his mind, and he simply conveyed this meaning to paper"[6]. "He wrote to reaffirm the fundamental convictions of the Christian faith in the full light of new circumstances, new terminology, and new experiences"[7].

We cannot then agree with Oscar Cullmann's thesis that "there can be traced in the Gospel of John a distinct line of thought connecting with a service of worship"[8], and that in tracing this line (which to describe as "distinct" is perhaps misleading!) "our knowledge of the nature of primitive Christian worship has been deepened, in that John's Gospel proves to be an indirect source for the investigation of this field"[9]. To accept this is to deny the purpose of John, which is to enable Christians to discover and be at home in the dimensions of eternity and infinity - the life of the Spirit. "Because John was concerned "to root the sacrament as observed by the Church in the total sacramental fact of the incarnation he was unwilling to attach it to a particular moment and a particular action"[10]. To attempt to re-plant John, even in the sphere of Christian worship in spirit and in truth, is to re-impose those very limitations from which John sought - and found - freedom.

With remarkable insight and unselfconscious skill John succeeds in portraying the authority of divinity without losing the humanity of Jesus, who is a man fulfilling, step by step and unfailingly at every challenge, the work entrusted to him. At the same time he is one who sighs, who knows fatigue, who weeps, who loves, who knows shrinking from his own future. In his dealings with individuals he shows no dramatic charisma, but keen insight and sensitivity; (we list Nathanael, a woman of Sychar, a blind man, Mary of Magdala, Thomas, John, Nicodemus, and Mary, his mother). In carrying out "signs" we find a blend of initiative (Sychar, Bethseda, 5000, blind man, footwashing) and response (Cana, nobleman, Lazarus); but we find further, that those occasions of response are still guided by Jesus. Mary knows that Jesus will supply the need for more wine, but he knows the moment (2:4); the nobleman is given no outward sign, simply a command and a promise, which he accepts (4:50); Jesus responds to the message from Bethany (11:6, 15), but in his own time, showing a knowledge and purpose deeper than anyone else perceives. We find, in the light of this, that the coming of Jesus into the world is both initiative - of the Father - and response; for the initiative is response to the unexpressed (because unrecognised) need of the world; similarly the crucifixion is in Jesus' control, as John tells the story, and thus it happens through his initiation, and will be the satisfaction of the need of the world; and the resurrection appearances are most gracious and lovingly generous occasions of the revealing of the understanding and character of God.

The purpose of Jesus was the involvement of "his own" in the work of the kingdom; they are charged with responsibility ἂν τινων ἀφῆτε τὰς ἁμαρτίας, ἀφέωνται αὐτοῖς· ἂν τινων κρατῆτε, κεκράτηνται (20:22-23). The kind of authority which enables them to fulfil their mission is one of being rather than doing - an essential authority: ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι (1:12). They are prepared for the fact that they are expected to be active, to bear much fruit, to achieve yet greater works than those of Jesus, to go forward in the spirit of truth. This is possible by living in union with Jesus, as he is in union with the Father.

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We have seen that God as father is at the heart of the Christian Gospel, and we have explored this as expounded in their various ways by Mark and Paul in Romans, and as discovered in John.

But the fatherhood of God is not simply a philosophical or theological concept, it expresses a dynamic relationship. The next stage in our investigation is the examination of the implication of God's relationship with humanity in the face of the existence of evil, and what we are to understand, in the light of our discoveries, of the sacraments of relationship with God, Baptism and Eucharist.

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Evil

We have asserted that prayer is communing with Deity, and that where and how this communing is understood to take place depends on the underlying conception of deity, and on humanity's relationship with deity.

For the Christian this is not as straightforward a matter as at first sight it would seem. Though we may set forth our conception of God in absolute terms: one (Mk 12:29), almighty (Rev. 15:3), everlasting (Rev. 4:8); and though the Gospel of Christ may set forth our relationship with him, through Christ, in absolute terms: justified, at peace, in Christ, set free (Ro. 1, 5, 6); yet there remains the paradox of active, militant, opposition to the Gospel and the works of the Kingdom; opposition which is not only over against the Church of God, but within it, within individual Christians (Ro. 7:14-23). The Christian is constantly called upon to oppose that which militates against the Gospel (e.g. in the Anglican baptism service, the candidate is exhorted not to be "ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto your life's end"[11]). He also finds that he needs to explain, both to himself and to sceptics and honest enquirers, how it can be that the "opposing forces" can be active within the authority of God, and also, what effect such activity has on the declared

relationship of the Christian with God.

How these questions are answered depends on what is understood to be the nature of evil, and also on the nature of eschatological awareness: that is, the understanding of the activity of Jesus of Nazareth and the effect of the Cross. Bultmann identifies a shift in emphasis in the Church's self-understanding: "....the pastoral epistles and Acts show that to a large extent Christians are preparing for a rather long duration of this world and the Christian faith, losing its eschatological tension, is becoming a Christian-bourgeois piety...."[12].

The shift which resulted in the lessening of tension may be illustrated by comparing Mark 13 with its parallels: Mt. 24-25, Luke 21. As Mark records the words of Jesus, the message which emerges may be paraphrased: interpret the upheavals of the world as signs of hope, even though they involve suffering; the truth of the Gospel transcends all this; these happenings are indications of the self-destruction of evil, not evil's destruction of good; understand this so that you may endure in hope. In Matthew's hands, though superficially he reproduces and enlarges Mark, a different message emerges: the emphasis is on the individual, where in Mark it was on the truth. Righteousness is moral, ethical righteousness, whereas in Romans it is the gift of God. Further, Mark's use of "Son of Man"[13] is the use of a term frequently used in Ezekiel, and Daniel (pp. 33, 34). However Mark's full implication is interpreted, his aim is to point to the fact of glory hidden within the apparent triumph of evil. Matthew picks up the idea and identifies the Son of Man with Jesus himself, and understands it to mean that Jesus is "coming back" at some stage (Mt. 24-25). Luke devotes less space to this, and no very clear message emerges (Lk. 21:18-19 cf.v.34). (This is an instance of Luke's tendency - which we shall have occasion to note from time to time - to reproduce what is there without making it contribute to a cohesive development of thought). We have earlier suggested that Mark and Romans may be linked, and suggested that one reason for the appearance of Mark's Gospel was to express the message in readily grasped pictorial form; it could well be that another factor was the

interpretation of eschatology. For here Mark and Paul part company - chapter 13 of Romans seems almost to be an appendix, included because Paul realised that he had not included any explicit teaching on "the End"; the way he deals with it is additional to rather than drawn from his essential thesis of the God-man relationship in Christ. Mark, on the other hand, is vividly aware of the present; hence his emphasis on the truth itself. This is in accord with John the Divine, when Caird's interpretation is accepted: With reference to 11:19 he writes: "Now that the answer to the prayer has been given in the proclamation of the enthronement of God as King, we know that the prayer must have been the daily petition of all Christians, 'Let your kingdom come'. Before that prayer could be granted, Christians must have spelt out for them letter by letter what it is that they have been praying for. They have been praying that the destroyers of the earth should be allowed to burn themselves out in a last monstrous effort to frustrate the plans of God, and that man should be given repeated and agonising warnings not to be involved in their destruction"[14].

The question of eschatological awareness brings us back to the nature of evil itself.

Philo, in De Vita Contemplativa, is quite explicit:

συνόλως γὰρ ἀοκοῦσιν ἀτυφίαν, εἰδότες τῦφον μὲν τοῦ ψεύδους ἀρχήν, ἀτυφίαν δὲ ἀληθείας, ἑκάτερον δὲ πηγῆς λόγον ἔχον· ῥέουσι γὰρ ἀπὸ μὲν τοῦ ψεύδους αἱ πολύτροποι τῶν κακῶν ἰδέαι, ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς ἀληθείας αἱ περιουσίαι τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀνθρωπίνων τε καὶ θείων (39).

That is to imply that evil is derived; it has no independent existence, for it exists only in relation to that which it falsifies. Philo is also confident that evil can be avoided - in the individual soul, through simplicity of life such as that practised by the Therapeutae; and externally, by withdrawing from the world's pressures to a community whose sole aim is true excellence of life.

As far as Philo's understanding of evil as dependent is concerned, the Old Testament is in agreement; everything derives from God, and, broadly speaking, conformity to his will leads to individual and social well-being; failure to conform, either in ignorance or rebellion, leads to individual and social chaos. This sounds logical, and is widely accepted in the

Scriptures, but to the philosophic mind a difficulty presents itself, a difficulty wrestled with in Job: what is the explanation of misfortune and suffering in those cases where there is no rebellion, but on the contrary, uprightness and blamelessness? The friends of Job all insist that there must be hidden sin and that Job should make a "conditional confession". On the grounds of intellectual integrity, Job refuses. The conclusion of the writer is that, in terms of conformity with the will of God, suffering is neither legally justifiable nor logically explicable - it is a fact of life - a fact which the nature of the being of God makes bearable both in terms of its existence and its endurance.

There are three points to note in this work, in addition to our summary of its conclusion:

1. The misfortune is caused by Satan (LXX: ὁ διάβολος) - that is to say that an individual being causes it.
2. Satan is not thrust out of the court of God - his presence causes no stir, and is accepted (though that is not the same thing as being found acceptable): οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ Θεοῦ παραστῆναι ἐνώπιον τοῦ Κυρίου, καὶ ὁ διάβολος ἦλθε μετ'αὐτῶν (1:6). Indeed, Satan himself is a servant of God.
3. Satan's request is readily granted (1:12).

Turning to the New Testament we find that:

1. Evil is identified both in terms of a central individual being[15] and in terms of a phenomenon of which devil-possession is a manifestation[16]. In the Lord's prayer the meaning is ambiguous: ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ (Mt. 6:13). This is rendered by Filson "deliver us from the Evil One"[17]; RV "....evil one" (margin: "evil"); Jeremias: "evil"[18]; NEB "evil one"; series 3 Communion service "evil"[19]. Four words seem to be used synonymously (see especially Mk 1:13 // Mt. 4:1-11 // Lk. 4:1-3, and Mk 4:15 // Mt. 13:19 // Lk. 8:12): διάβολος, δαιμόνιον, Σατανᾶς, πονήρος.

2. The presence of evil is not tolerated - the ministry of Jesus, with its emphasis on healing and exorcism, demonstrates that where he is, evil is not.
3. The presence of evil is identified in unexpected places - e.g. Mk 8:33 //Mt. 16:23; and Judas was one of the chosen twelve.
4. Whether or not the presence of evil is readily accepted as part of the fact of existence depends on the eschatological understanding of the writer - and here, as we have already noted, is a shift of emphasis within the New Testament.
5. The vocabulary of sin used by Paul in Romans supports the idea of evil as derivative - Paul lists negatives which can occur only in opposition to the original positive: e.g. ἀσέβειαν, ἀδικία, ἀσύνετος, ἀφρόνων, ἀτιμία, ἀνομία.
   And words which are not themselves negatives express actions directed against something/someone: παραπτώματα, σκληρότητα, ἐσκοτίσθη, ψεύδος, θανάτος; ἁμαρτάνω, expressing failure, has meaning only in relation to that against which it measures failure.

This last merits special comment; we find in Genesis 2:4-3:25 the Christian idea of "death" as final separation from God; the Gospel makes clear that nothing has the power to sever our relationship (see pp. 36, 155, and Ro. 8:38-39).

For the first Christians the struggle was readily identified; it was within religious circles, as well as social and political. To begin with there was the matter of proclaiming with conviction the truth of the Gospel; against this were those responsible for the death of Jesus - in the way Acts tells the story. Then there was the matter of Gentile converts to Christianity, and their relationship with Jewish Christians: the place of the Law in the Christian community. In due course there was the challenge of political hostility and the persecution of Christians - a situation vividly portrayed in Revelation.

These examples show something of the essential nature of the original Christian community, and its attitude to those outside, which was a matter of responding to circumstances. There was neither leisure nor occasion to philosophise, so the Church was to this extent unselfconscious. When the pressure of circumstances was absent, or lessened, the result, not surprisingly, was a slackening of tension and a corresponding lowering of standards of life (see Jas., especially if late date accepted, and Rev. 3:14-22). Dealing with this slackening gave rise to the idea that the essence of Christianity is moral righteousness - personal holiness. The Christian then becomes selfconscious[20].

The contemporary problem is always one of identifying the opposition in the contemporary scene. The Gospel is about relationship with God - Αββα . This we have found to be the heart of the New Testament. The effect of this knowledge of God is to remove fear of him. The relationship is there and is given, so those who have been mistakenly striving to attain it can relax. But Jesus struggled, as Son of God; and we struggle; this is a reality of life, not a philosophical proposition. What then is the nature of the struggle?

The Gospel message is one of repentance - "Christian repentance....always means returning"[21] - and belief; belief in the truth. The truth is given to the world in the person of Jesus, who needed no repentance because he did not stray from the truth. But his life was one of testing, of struggle - Against what?

Jesus has "broken the power of evil"[22], but he has not removed it. He may remove manifestations of it: disease, demon-possession; but new life in Christ does not guarantee perfection of life.

If evil is derivative, if it is falsehood, distortion, we must find also that it cannot be eliminated, for its absence would mean absolute good, and that is true only of God himself (Mk. 10:17-18). While there exist independent beings, there will be opposition, for nothing but absolute goodness is absolutely good. This is a state of affairs which the Christian, with a leap of faith, accepts. The uniqueness of Christianity is that it is able to hold in paradox apparent contradictions.

about God and humanity: about God, that he is absolute, that in him is no darkness at all, and that he is love, and therefore not self-sufficient, for love involves giving, which means a beloved; about humanity, that it is the creation of God's love, that individuals are free to respond, to love because he first loved us. Hence within the absolute there is freedom - scope for not loving. God is absolute, yet within the life which is absolutely his, there is a turning from him. It is yet true that there is no darkness in him (1Jn 1:5), for his absolute truth reveals the truth which would disguise, or hide, itself, which is impossible. Humanity is given that independence which is essential if we are to be able to give; we are free, yet our being is utterly dependent on him in whom we live and move and have our being.

The concern of the New Testament writers is the truth about Jesus. The thrust of the earliest Christian preaching as Acts describes it is the identification of Jesus as Messiah. Eschatological consciousness then was in terms of military defeat[23]. The war was won, Christians could live confident of this; the battles still going on indicated an interim period; what it all amounted to was that history had been rearranged for our benefit. This is logical, and easily grasped, where the manifestation of evil is obvious: politically, in the existence of a cruel régime; individually, in disease of body, mind or spirit. The problem of the writer of Job recurs where evil is not obviously manifest; this is met in some evangelistic campaigns by artificially creating guilt feelings and then "presenting Christ" as the means of dispelling them. This is an unsatisfactory approach in that it is not reaching the root of evil and the meaning of salvation as the ultimate work of Christ for the world as it is; not dealing, that is, with what is continually true, despite the saving acts, despite the ultimate victory. The Gospel of Christ is true for life in this world (see especially James, Ro. 12-16, 1 and 2 Cor.) and for what lies beyond. We are "in Christ" for this world and the next.

In John the Evangelist we reach a climax in the New Testament - a peak which matches, in importance, in impact, and in truth, that which we identified in the bringing together of Mark and Romans. According to the hypothesis put forward by

C.K. Barrett[24], John's Gospel would be the last work in the Canon, and fittingly so, for it points forward into the life of the world. John has thoroughly absorbed the idea that the future is longer rather than shorter, and thus has a history and a meaning of its own; it is not to be regarded as interim or extension. John has also thoroughly absorbed the facts of life; he has worked out and applied that paradoxical state of affairs only hinted at in the rest of the New Testament: the relation between the continuing activity of that which is anti-God in the light of the ultimate victory of Christ.

J.L. Houlden suggests that "in the theological area usually designated 'atonement', the question to be answered with regard to the New Testament writers is not, 'What did they teach about Jesus' death?' It is rather, 'What did they see as "the best thing about Jesus" which had "made all the difference"?' "[25]. Christians of generations which see their present and future not as essentially waiting for the parousia but as intrinsically eschatological find that, for them, faith is not the discovery of Jesus as the answer to a question that is there, but the identification of the contemporary question to which Jesus is the answer[26].

In summary, the fundamental relationship of man with God is that portrayed in Genesis 1: in God's image, we are intended to be lovingly and joyfully creative. But because this involves independence, it is potentially rebellious; further, because rebellion against God is misuse of the resources of God, it is not necessarily readily identified. The Christian then is a prey to evil, however vigilant he may be (see, for example, Mk 13:35, Mt. 24:43-44, 1 Pe. 5:8), but the Gospel assures him that the relationship into which he has consciously been brought, by Jesus, is indestructible; he can be sure of this, because it in no way depends on him, it is from start to finish a gift of divine - and thus unparalleled - grace.

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Baptism

Baptism is the means by which God's relationship with humanity is actualised to the individual - actualised in a threefold way:

1. in its ministry to him of the knowledge and experience of the grace of God;
2. in its demonstration to the community that he is one accepted by God;
3. in its demonstration to him that the fellowship accepts him as one accepted by God, and thus welcomes him, and accepts the responsibility of ministry to him within the give-and-take of the mutual ministry of the community of Christian love.

But we have thus far used the language of demonstration, and we must ask whether baptism effects that to which it testifies, or whether it actualises what was already true. Cullmann finds 1 Cor. 12:13 and Gal. 3:27-28 as the "decisive Pauline texts", and these assert that "God sets a man within, not merely informs him that he sets him within, the Body of Christ; and at this moment therefore the reception of this act on the part of the person baptised consists in nothing else than that he is the passive object of God's dealing, that he is really set within the Body of Christ by God. He "is baptised" (Acts 2:41), an unambiguous passive"[27]. Faith is a dynamic element in baptism (though this is not the same as saying that it is a condition of baptism): Martin Luther declares that "my faith does not make the baptism but rather receives the baptism....baptism is not dependent upon my faith but upon God's word"[28]. Between these two assertions comes the apparently paradoxical comment "no matter whether the person being baptised believes or no". Luther and Cullmann accept that the faith of the congregation surrounding the person baptised is a powerful element, and therefore is a sufficient response to God's gift in the case of infant baptism. Cullmann further distinguishes two kinds of faith according to circumstances of adult baptisms: "The affirmation of faith that precedes Baptism is (thus) not a constitutive element of the baptismal event incorporating a man into the Church of Christ. It is necessarily present only when ....the situation is one where the person to be baptised is an adult coming over from heathenism or Judaism. Faith after Baptism is demanded of all persons baptised; from those adults just named it is demanded also before[29].

We may note the following, as we investigate the New

Testament references to baptism:

1. It is fair to say, with C.F.D. Moule[30], that in the New Testament Baptism is assumed as the way of entry into the Christian Church.
2. In the case of Cornelius and his company, the act of Baptism followed the manifestation that these people were, through their faith, in fact in Christ (Ac. 10:44-48, 11:17).
3. The act of Baptism seems to have been in a sense insufficient unless carried out by the Apostles (Ac. 8:15-18, cf. 2:37-42 and 16:33); even then it could be a two-stage process - as in Acts 19:1-6; where at Ephesus Paul finds Christians who had been baptised with John's baptism; then after their Christian baptism - which, though it is not said in so many words, is probably to be understood to have been administered by Paul - the experience of the Holy Spirit comes through the laying-on of Paul's hands. But this could also be taken to imply that laying-on-of hands was part of the baptism ceremony; there is no suggestion that the Ethiopian's baptism by Philip (a "deacon", not an apostle - Ac. 6:5) was either incomplete, or was followed by apostolic ministry.
4. Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist, but there is no explicit mention of the baptism, by John, or after Pentecost, of the Twelve.
5. Paul, counted as an apostle, was baptised by Ananias (Acts 9:18).
6. We may assume the likelihood of those disciples of John who joined Jesus (John 1:35-37) having been baptised by John.

We noted earlier (p.20) some surprise that, considering the amount of teaching on prayer, the space devoted to it - explicitly - in the New Testament is so small; we may make the same comment concerning baptism. We now consider the New Testament references to baptism.

Chronologically[31] the first mention is Gal. 3:27, where it is incidental, in the course of an argument on the meaning of life in the Gospel, the truth of which has been incredibly

quickly lost. In context this is incidental; in fact it is a statement of importance, socially and individually[32].

The next occurrence, 1 Cor. 1:13, is again incidental - the act of baptism has become a matter of status according to who performed it, which prompts Paul to say "I am thankful that I never baptised any of you after Crispus and Gaius so none of you can say he was baptised in my name... For Christ did not send me to baptise, but to preach the Good News" (1 Cor. 1:14, 17 -JB).

1 Cor. 12:13 makes a point similar to Gal. 3:27, this time in connection with the working together of the body in which all have a place.

1 Cor. 15:29 is an incidental reference to baptism on behalf of the dead, during a discourse on resurrection. This again is aside from the subject in hand; but again taken as a statement on baptism, it is significant in our present survey in its testimony to the understood "objective" dynamic of baptism, which can, as objective reality, be transferred if received by proxy[33].

Romans 6:1-11. Here baptism is discussed in its own right, though it is subordinated to the main argument which is on the nature of deliverance through Christ. Baptism involves us in the act of deliverance by uniting us, by means of the action of baptism, with the actual dying and rising of Jesus. We note the tenses: ἐβαπτίσθημεν, συνετάφημεν, ἀπεθάνομεν; but: ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς περιπατήσωμεν; ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως ἐσόμεθα; συνζήσομεν.

Above, we noted that Paul's eschatology is futuristic as far as it goes, but that the working out of this is not his primary concern[34].

Colossians 2:12 bears out our suggestion that Paul is not concerned to work out eschatology as a separate topic: here we have the same idea as Romans 6:1-11, but here both aspects of baptism are in the past tense: συνταφέντες αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ βαπτίσματι, ἐν ᾧ καὶ συνηγέρθητε...

An even more striking expression of this union occurs at 3:3: ἀπεθάνετε γάρ, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν κέκρυπται σὺν τῷ Χριστῷ ἐν τῷ Θεῷ.

Ephesians 4:5 is but a reference, but its placing on a level with εἷς Κύριος, μία πίστις, εἷς Θεὸς καὶ Πατὴρ πάντων .... speaks much of its importance. We note further the suggestion that the whole epistle is closely connected with Baptism[35].

1 Peter 3:21 is translated in the Jerusalem Bible as "a pledge made to God". Though this is not the literal meaning of ἐπερώτημα (cf. RV : interrogation; RSV and NEB : appeal; Moffatt : prayer) it has the effect of emphasising the faithfulness of God's promises to his chosen people: here a comparison with Noah is made; this implies a selection, in which case baptism is effective, not merely demonstrative. We note that here also is an epistle closely connected with baptism - according to Kümmel[36] ".... 1 Peter is to be regarded as a hortatory writing formed from traditional paraenetic and possibly liturgical material, which by recalling the gift of baptism and the eschatologically grounded universality of these sufferings serves to present to the consciousness of these Christians in a convincing way the necessity of enduring suffering and the strength to do so".

Strangely, perhaps, in view of the writer's interest in ritual matters, the only mention in the letter to the Hebrews brushes baptism aside as a subject he does not wish to dwell on (6:2). This is probably because, with ... John (p.51 ) he is aware of the danger of being bound by what is external. In understanding Christ as High Priest he is re-interpreting the meaning of High Priest; the Gospel of Christ fulfils the hopes of generations not by being the culmination, the end of a line, but by revealing the truth which was present eternally but hidden (John 1:1, 1 John 1:1).

It is to Acts that we are most indebted for our understanding of the practice of baptism recorded within the New Testament. Clearly Christian baptism was linked with the baptism of John, but this was not sufficient for Christians, and had to be superseded[37] (1:5; 13:24; 18:25; 19:3).

But Christian baptism, in Acts, is capable of different interpretations. In 2:38, 41, Baptism is "in the name of Jesus", and is linked with repentance, and the forgiveness of sins. The only other explicit reference to forgiveness of sins is in Paul's

recounting of his conversion at 22:16, where Ananias exhorts him: ἀναστὰς βάπτισαι καὶ ἀπόλυσαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας σου, ἐπικαλεσάμενος τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ.

In the narrative account of this (9:18) the baptism is a sealing of the conversion, and, one understands, a testimony, to the fellowship, of his good faith. This is also true of Cornelius; and there the Spirit's manifestation was a sign to the "establishment" that these people should be incorporated into the Church. The importance of the sign itself is suggested at 8:38-39 - could anything comparable have been done had there been no water to hand? And would anything else have been found sufficient? We find here too the possibility that Baptism met the candidate's need of assurance; in view of the lack of information about the Ethiopian's life after his meeting with Philip, we ask whether the Ethiopian's baptism constituted a commission to him to extend the Church (for it was obviously not going to admit him to the existing fellowship) or was it an individual, personal, sign of assurance of acceptance into Christ?[38] We find that baptism goes with acceptance of Christian truth, in the example just quoted, at 16:15, 16:34 - though here it sounds as though the immediacy was exceptional; and 18:8 gives rise to the query whether the mention of baptism here implies that it is not to be taken for granted that it would accompany acceptance of truth.

The gospels show clearly the meaning of John's baptism as a sign of repentance and confession of sin - in preparation for its forgiveness, or is the forgiveness there?

Luke: κηρύσσων βάπτισμα μετανοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν (3:3)

Matthew and Mark: ἐβαπτίζοντο... ἐξομολογούμενοι τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν (Mt. 3:6, Mk 1:5)

Matthew: ἐγὼ ... βαπτίζω ... εἰς μετάνοιαν (3:11).

The baptism of Jesus is recorded simply by Mark. Matthew sees a problem, and deals with it: for Jesus to be baptised by John may not be fitting, but given the circumstances (understood by Matthew, of course, though not yet revealed in his narrative) - that salvation is through Jesus, the Messiah, the incarnate Lord

- it must be so; Luke draws attention away from the baptism and emphasises that the Spirit's coming was while Jesus was praying (Lk. 3:21-22). The questions which surround the event are these:

1. Was this an act of identification with humanity?
2. Was it a moment of beginning for Jesus - the moment of the Spirit's testimony to him as well as to those who witnessed the event?

Jesus gives the impression, in dealing with the aspirations of James and John, that baptism means thoroughgoing commitment and sacrificial response (Mk. 10:35-45 // Mt. 20:20-28. Luke, at 12:50, records an echo of this, but it would seem an instance of his inclusion of material without necessarily delving into its meaning or implication). A place in the kingdom of God means the service of the Kingdom; the language of baptism is the language of commitment to the service of the Kingdom.

We conclude that no clear-cut "doctrine of Baptism" is to be found in the New Testament, and that whilst it is administered confidently, there seems to be an acceptance of a variety of occasions and a consequent variety of emphases, none of which is held in priority over the others. What is clearly expected of a Christian is that he testifies to the truth of his relationship with God through Christ by being identified with the company of believers, and being part of the fellowship, that he will contribute to its life and work. John the Evangelist implies (1:29-34) that the baptism of Jesus is a sign of his identification with others, and a sign of his unique identity. We may express the general meaning of baptism thus: it is essentially a mark of entry into the Church, and as such may well be, though it will not necessarily be (see Ac. 10:47), the moment of special awareness of the gift of God; and as such it is the sign that the one baptised has his unique rôle in the life of God's world, and is called and equipped to fulfil it. According to circumstances, then, baptism may well be the moment when all these things come together, in power, to create a new birth, effecting that which they proclaim; or it may be the setting of the seal on that which has already taken place, in recognition and commitment, in which case it may be found to proclaim that which is already true: ἡμεῖς ἀγαπῶμεν, ὅτι αὐτὸς πρῶτος ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς (1Jn 4:19).

This is an all too brief treatment of baptism, but since it is not our central subject, we must leave it here.

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The Eucharist

Participation in the Eucharist is the means by which that which was brought home to the believer in Baptism is actualised as constantly true of God's relationship with him, despite pressures from the world's conflicts and from his own shortcomings as a human being. Like baptism, its truth may be seen in a threefold way:

1. in its ministry to the individual of the knowledge and experience of the continuing, constant, eternal, grace of God;
2. in its demonstration to the community that he is a recipient of the eternal grace;
3. in its demonstration to him that the fellowship reaffirms its commitment to him as a child of the same heavenly Father, and renews its pledge of responsibility to him within the give-and-take of the mutual ministry of the community of Christian love.

From this threefold ministry, a fourth aspect grows: as the believer experiences frequent renewal in the midst of the demands of his vocation as a witness to the truth, so his knowledge and awareness of God deepen, and his vision enlarges, as he gains, through experience, in insight into the meaning of Christ incarnate and the commission of the Body of Christ.

But sadly, though the Eucharist may be the focus of unity of the members of congregations, it is also the focus of disunity and separation of the congregations themselves.

Bound up with the question of the meaning and significance of the Eucharist is the meaning of priesthood in the Christian Church, for in the Catholic churches priesthood and Eucharist are inseparables. The most cursory of glances at the diversity of the Christian Church today shows how unclear are both the understanding of priesthood in Christianity, and the place of sacrifice, which is an instinctive approach to Deity but one which

has to be at least re-considered in the light of the Gospel.

For the Roman Catholic (and this is perhaps an over-simplification), Christ, the lamb of God, is, through the priestly ministry, brought into the present and experienced at first hand; among non-Romans who understand themselves as part of Catholic tradition, there is much variety of interpretation, and this is not the occasion to explore it in detail; perhaps a not unfair generalisation would be to say that the priestly ministry remains, together with the concept of sacrifice, but the nature of the sacrifice differs: the offering is not Christ himself; but bread and wine, as tokens of earthly life, represent the "spiritual sacrifice" of participants, and through this total self-offering they meet Christ and receive the benefits of his self-offering. The reformed churches see the work of priesthood as ended by the fact that Christ is its fulfilment (see Heb. 7:11, 18, 26; 8:6); for many of them, worship is above all thanksgiving for the gracious gift of the assurance of our unbreakable union with God through Jesus who was made one with us in manhood: κατὰ πάντα τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ὁμοιωθῆναι (Heb. 2:17, cf. 2:10, 3:1, Ro. 8:29).

Basically, the priest is understood to be one who stands as mediator between Deity and humanity, and is thus a representative figure; the offering of sacrifice is a means of attempting to secure the goodwill of the deity, by expressing contrition for offences either recognised or unrecognised, by endeavouring to please him by freewill offerings; by giving thanks for benefits received. But though these offerings could well be the expression of simple and true worship, their form suggests fundamental insecurity, and a lack of real relationship between "worshippers" and deity. We have already noted (pp.13,30) the isolation of Moses and Jeremiah, suggesting that there was no possibility of direct communication between God and the "ordinary man". We note also the danger, when the relationship depends on externals, that these disguise the true attitude of the "worshipper"; a truth penetrated by Amos (2:8; 4:4-5; 5:21ff), understood by the author of Psalm 51 (especially vv. 16-17), and

firmly and clearly denounced by Jesus (Mt. 5:2-18), for whom there is no doubt, according to John, that externals are of value only if they express and convey the truth itself (Jn. 4:19-25).

The Eucharist, then, presents something of a problem. Through Jesus we know the Father, both in the sense of seeing what he is like and seeing, in the actions of Jesus, his attitude to people; and in the sense of experiencing union with him. But in Jesus we see a loyal Jew, a worshipper in Temple and synagogue, a participator in the Jewish festivals, in the context of which the Eucharist was born. We digress to consider this background as it is treated in two New Testament books.

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Matthew and the author of the Letter to the Hebrews both deal with the Gospel from the Jewish point of view; we may say that they are largely responsible for the confusion which exists as to whether the Christian religion should see itself as transformed Judaism or as something radically new and therefore different externally as well as internally. But those writers, let it be said, wrote as they did out of pastoral concern; what they say is in no way contrary to Gospel truth, while the impression they leave inevitably, as we shall see, lacks the directness and clarity which we found in Mark/Romans.

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The overall impression given by Matthew is of a strange detachment. He seems to stand at one remove; he seems to be trying to put new wine into old wineskins, with no great deal of success; the freshness, the simplicity, the accessibility of Jesus is blurred by a sternness.

Matthew is concerned above all to emphasise that Jesus is Messiah; in every way he satisfies the expectations of Scripture. This is made clear at the outset: a long genealogy expresses the importance attached to ancestry; Abraham and David are the significant "landmarks" expressing the first election of the Chosen People, and the covenant with them, and the promise for

future glory which issues from David.

At the beginning of Jesus' preaching (4:17) Matthew omits εὐαγγέλιον , which gives a different complexion to μετανοεῖτε (but cf. 4:23). Matthew chooses not to emphasise the newness all the time; he perhaps sees himself as the householder who combines old and new (13:52).

The first discourse, (which contains the Lord's Prayer) the Sermon on the Mount, contains several points of interest. 5:1-12 is cast in familiar Jewish form; words and sentiments which would be acceptable to Jewish piety and teaching. The idea of a reward is one which is not absent from the gospel (see, for instance, Mark 9:41 and Romans 4:4), and it is one which was very much part of Jewish teaching; but it needs careful handling, and this it receives in Matthew's hands. Having started with the familiar, and in the familiar style of the discourse, Matthew moves very carefully into deeper water, and begins to make radical assertions: 5:27-28 brings to an end any sense of separation between people, for none can claim the thorough purity which is indicated; there is then a new understanding of the relationship between God and man: all must stand together before him, for all are one. 6:2 takes up the reward idea implicit in the preceding section, and asserts that rewards there certainly are, but neither of the kind, nor "awarded", as had been supposed.

Thus far then we have two new interpretations of the idea of the Law of God:

1. If instructions are requested, then here they are - but obviously they are unattainable - so:
2. Get inside the instructions and discover their implications - that fundamentally mankind is one, in that all, regardless of observance of the Law or understanding of it, stand in the same relationship to God. Ἔσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι ὡς ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος τέλειός ἐστιν (Mt. 5:48). Righteous actions are to be carried out for their own sake, not for the approval of God, or man.

The context of the call to perfection and the thoughts on righteousness is to be noted: 6:1: righteousness means action,

for example, alms (6:2-4; καὶ ὅταν προσεύχησθε (6:5ff): prayer is more than a matter of pious observance. If it is only that, then the reward sought is built in, and what a slender one it is!

Anything consonant with Jewish tradition would be helpful to Matthew. If Jesus can be shown to have behaved, taught, and made use of "equipment" which renders him recognisable as a rabbi, Matthew will do it. But he is moulding his material. For the Christian, life takes its meaning from his relationship with God, from which springs his attitude to his fellows; it is necessary to remind ourselves of this at this point. It is not contradicted by Matthew, but neither it is the main thrust of Matthew's work.

The remainder of this discourse follows in like manner, taking familiar tradition and setting out to "Christianise" it: fasting (see pp. 148 ff ... for fuller discussion) and inheritance, a Jewish essential, is now dealt with in terms of eternity. The Kingdom (6:33) is our aim - and Mark and Paul have made clear what that means. The Gospel removes barriers; there is no room now for judgmental attitudes, for all are one. Is this, though, apparently contradicted in 7:6, 7:12? 7:6 has the flavour of Proverbs - perhaps these are well-known sayings which would raise a smile, their meaning here: your insight into and experience of God will defy adequate expression (remember Ezekiel, Daniel, Isaiah) - keep these things secret, then, or you will lose confidence when what you try to say is not understood. 7:7-12 - these verses belong together and should not be treated in isolation. They express our communion with each other in God. V.7 could again be proverb-type sayings; here the implication is of the generosity of God, not the action of the "seeker". We have already been reminded that God is aware of our needs before we express them.

In the Sermon on the Mount and in his treatment of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus, we find the essentials of Matthew's aim, and the most careful use of material and expression.

We pick up a good deal about his understanding of God in Chapters 5 to 7:

he is ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς (5:16)

he is τέλειος (5:48)

he βλέπων ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ (6:4) - indeed he is himself

ἐν τῷ κρυφαίῳ (6:18)

he knows ὧν χρείαν ἔχετε (6:8)

he needs our co-operation for the fulfilment of his will (6:14-15)

he τρέφει τὰ πετεινὰ (6:28)

he ἀμφιέννυσιν τὸν χόρτον τοῦ ἀγροῦ (6:30)

he οἶδεν ὅτι χρῄζετε τούτων ἁπάντων (6:32)

he δώσει ἀγαθὰ τοῖς αἰτοῦσιν αὐτόν (7:11)

This is very much God of the Old Testament - the God whom Jesus reveals is God of the fathers. There is an inevitable sense of distance between Jesus and mankind. There is a hint, but only a hint, of our adoption (5:45), and the hint is blurred by sounding conditional: ὅπως γένεσθε υἱοὶ τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν.

The Jesus who emerges from Matthew is a stern figure, aloof by virtue of his authority (7:29; 12:6, 36-37; 11:20-24). Even the recorded prayer of Jesus (11:25-30 - see below pp. 150 ff), despite its address to the Father, gives a sense of distance, and has a slightly unreal ring to it. Matthew places it after words of judgement; Luke has a different setting: the seventy return, and Jesus ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἠγαλλιάσατο τῷ πνεύματι τῷ Ἁγίῳ (Lk. 10:21). And here, clearly, the disciples are the "babes" to whom the source of power has been revealed.

According to Matthew, Jesus often refers to God as ὁ πατήρ μου, which separates Jesus from the others[39]. This is not to deny, or ignore, that as often he speaks of "your heavenly Father"; the point remains the same: this is not saying "The Father" or "Our Father". See also Matthew's new emphasis (cf. Mark) in the

incident of walking on the water (14:28-33). In Mark the presence of Christ is the central idea; in Matthew it is the test of Peter's response.

But there are indications that Matthew knows what he is doing. We said the impression that emerges is of sternness. We must remind ourselves that Matthew writes for those of Jewish tradition, and his method is to win their confidence (see 10:5, cf. 9:17). So, Jesus is presented as a rabbi, who has knowledge of God most high, God of the fathers. Throughout the Gospel, the practice of alluding to Scripture is maintained. Language and ideas familiar to them are used throughout the narrative[40]. But they are encouraged to think. They are well equipped to do so - all Jews were given a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures and their implications were interpreted for them in detail. So Jesus' use of parables is seen as an invitation to them to think: see, for example, the parable of wheat and tares (13:24-30), where the implication seems to be "if the cap fits...." (and see also 21:28-32; 22:2) Ὡμοιώθη ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν - we note that Jesus does not say it is like that, or that he is thus likening it, but that it is likened to, or has been likened to.... and the question thus posed is "how do you react to this? And if it were so, where would you be?"

We notice, too, some quite remarkable, and utterly contrasting, touches of gentleness, which because they are so rare in Matthew shine brightly: his invitation to find relief in him (11:28-30); the father's care for sparrows (10:29-31); his affection for little ones (18:10; 19:13-15); his feeling for blind men (20:34). The "blessing" of children impresses both because it is included in what is a sophisticated approach, and because of the understanding it reveals of the ministry of prayer: .... ἵνα τὰς χεῖρας ἐπιθῇ αὐτοῖς καὶ προσεύξηται .... ἐπιθεὶς τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῖς ... (19:13-14).

By Chapter 23 Matthew is ready for a concentrated thrust. This chapter brings to a focus implications hitherto only hinted at. A complete reversal of standards is now indicated - righteousness is not "attained" by the Law.

The parable of the virgins (25:1-13), followed as it is by

that of the servants (vv. 14-30), says quite clearly: "Be prepared for the unexpected". And the sheep and the goats (31-46) imply "just as you thought, there is a sorting out, but not on the grounds you anticipated! You can't prepare for it as you thought you could!"

In the Passion Narrative various points of sensitivity emerge, both to reassure and to challenge. Matthew clearly links the coming death of Jesus with the Passover - 26:2: the New Covenant is in the light - in the tradition - of the Old. Judas is sharply and mercilessly drawn - perhaps to ease repentance on the part of the non-accepting Jewish attitude, much is made of the fact that from among the ranks of those who have walked with Jesus, came disloyalty and betrayal[41].

Jesus is accused of blasphemy; the question emerges, in the light of Matthew's portrait of Jesus, were they justified in so accusing him?

Jesus restrains an attack on the arrest party (26:52-54); 26:53 ff. is Old Testament language, recalling perhaps Psalm 91:11.

The point is made firmly that this is a religious, not a political affair (27:24); it is Pilate who designates Jesus King of the Jews. (We recall how, in John, Pilate forces the crowd into the position of admitting "we have no king but Caesar"). But - Pilate washes his hands - this is none of his doing, and of Joseph it is clearly stated that ἐμαθητεύθη τῷ Ἰησοῦ (Mt. 27:57).

The triumph of God is emphasised by the thoroughness of the opposition in providing a guard; God was not thwarted by Pharaoh, no more could he be thwarted by the forces of Caesar. What happens is wonderful, joyful, yet awesome, as would be expected of God most high. The Gospel concludes with a commission couched in language which would be appreciated and understood by those of Jewish background: πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς ... διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς .... and the supreme touch is in the final sentence: ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι.

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Dated at the same time, and also dealing with Jewish concepts, is the Letter to the Hebrews, to which document we now turn.

Matthew set out to demonstrate how the life of Jesus and its culminating events fulfil the Scriptures and discover him to be Messiah. As a man living his simple life, he emerges as a rabbinic figure. This inevitably leaves untouched the centre of the Jewish religion of the time - the Temple, which in Matthew and Mark is referred to twice only: once in respect of its use as οἶκος προσευχῆς (Mk. 11:17), and once at the death of Jesus, when the veil was rent. The writer to the Hebrews sets himself the task of demonstrating how Jesus fulfils that which the ministry of the Temple priesthood strove after.

We do not seek to enter into detailed study of the concept of priesthood; we remark that the author of this document has set himself a difficult task, and the considerable indecision as to whether it deserved a place in the canon is testimony to the impression that he has not, by nature of the task, succeeded. For this is again a matter of attempting to put new wine into old wineskins - the attempt reveals pastoral sensitivity; the result is of dubious pastoral value - unless, of course, the subtle intention of the author was that it was precisely this conclusion he wished to be drawn by those for whom he wrote!

Having said that, we note that the new wine of the gospel is clearly here, in all its fullness of grace and wonder; so great that it is easy to fall into disbelief (4:14; 6:1-12). Acceptance of the Gospel truth, acceptance of the benefit of this supreme sacrifice, is always a matter of faith, for we cannot see the whole (11:39 - 12 end), and as in the past knowledge and experience have come in the turbulence of the world and in the recurring "blindness" - error - sin - of humanity, so no less for the Christian people of God is this the case (5:12; 12:1).

Despite its tortuous language and use of imagery, this book is about our relationship with God, and it is an attempt to put that which Paul expounds so clearly in Romans into the priestly framework. We notice especially 2:11; 3:1, 14; 5:8; and our

mutual responsibility: 12:15; 13:1-25.

The aim, then of these writers is in the spirit of Jesus' understanding of people and insight into their various needs. We find a similar understanding in Paul's use of legal vocabulary - there is a human instinct for justice (even though it is often rebelled against or flagrantly ignored) and this is a reflection of divine perfection. If the truth of our being in God is effectively conveyed to some in terms of satisfaction, then that is appropriate - it is to be found also in the oft-quoted ("comfortable words") text in 1 John 2:1: καὶ ἐάν τις ἁμάρτῃ, Παράκλητον ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα, Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν δίκαιον· καὶ αὐτὸς ἱλασμός ἐστιν περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν.

The "text" quoted frequently ends there - unfortunately, since the rest of the sentence enlarges the perspective: οὐ περὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων δὲ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου.

The "propitiation" is not the offering of the contrite, nor is it in relation to the sins of any group - it is, as Paul says, out of all proportion, and the free gift of God (Ro. 5:21).

*

We resume at this point our consideration of the Eucharist. However it is set forth, and whatever its underlying doctrinal position, the Eucharist expresses our continuing relationship with God through Christ, and, inseparable from this, our mutual commitment as brothers of Christ and therefore of one another.

We now gather together certain facts from the accounts we have, dealing first with Mark, Matthew, Luke and 1 Corinthians 11.

All agree that this was associated with the Passover festival, a fact which, at this distance of time, and the independence of the Christian tradition we know from the framework of Judaism, is one all too easily minimised. The Passover commemorated that central act of Jewish history which was also the central revelation of God - and the heartbeat of the faith. It signified God's side of the Covenant relationship which was summed up in the Law, observance of which involved both present wellbeing and future hope. Celebration of

the Passover festival brought home the present reality and relevance of this historic event. This was the setting in which Jesus set forth the signs of the New Covenant. This has the effect of declaring the significance of the imminent events, which are at once fulfilment of promise, and for the present, new beginning, and they symbolise the ultimate fulfilment. The first of these is made explicit by Matthew, who, by including the words εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν (26:28) expresses his grasp of the fulfilment of Scripture in Jesus, and summarises in three words the aim of the writer to the Hebrews; the third is indicated by Mark, Matthew, and Luke, who point forward to the coming fulfilment of the Kingdom of God. Paul, writing earlier, understood this to be near at hand; the gospel writers have accepted that this is by no means as certain as had been supposed.

So we come to the symbols themselves. The bread may be taken as bringing together - a fusion comparable with the attempt of "Hebrews" to express Christian faith by means of Jewish concepts and vocabulary - the traditional unleavened bread which was to be a reminder, and the sacrificial lamb. Both ideas are gathered into this bread which is to be eaten, as a sign of the fulfilment of Jesus and of our union with him and how this was made known. Also gathered in would be remembrance of the manna[42] in the wilderness, provision of which reflected God's understanding of human need and involvement with it. Provision of food for great crowds no doubt was linked with this also (Mk 6:30-44 and //s); and the sign itself indicates God's appreciation of humanity's need for the tangible. The blood of the New Covenant is not an external sign, like that which was sprinkled (Ex. 24:8) or painted on to doorposts (Ex. 12:22); and it is no longer the case - or to be thought the case - that God deals directly only with selected persons (cf. Ex. 19:6); all are brought into one union with him, and all are involved as co-operators with him, in the work of the Kingdom; so all are given a new understanding of their relationship with God. It is a matter of communion, and that leads to a new understanding of responsibility - in communion - with others, as clearly expressed by Paul in the context of 1 Cor. 10:16-17, and that of his account of the Lord's Supper.

We have then a very simple action, such as happened at every Jewish meal, in the setting of a celebration of the manifestation of the power of God.

In Acts we find a variety of occasions which refer to the breaking of bread, - and some of these have given rise to much debate[43] as to whether or not they were in fact the Eucharist or not (2:42, 46; 27:35).

As John's attitude was helpful in our discussion of baptism, so we find again that his insight brings us to eternal truth. For John does not describe the sharing of bread and wine at the Last Supper; and his discourse on the bread of life (which strangely, in view of this, is the main source of the "highest" Eucharistic doctrine) follows a "sign" of generosity, of general ministry; a sign of what is eternally true even though hidden; hidden, that is, because invisible. For Jesus means that his supreme gift is the indestructible knowledge, independent of outward signs, of union with himself and thus with the Father - this is eternal life - experienced in the world's trials (Jn 4:31-34; 6:49; 16:33; 17).

John must have been aware of doctrinal discussions and dissensions which drew attention away from the central truth, and his concern was to testify to eternity. To this end everything is subservient, even to the extent of chronological differences with the synoptic gospels, for what is important about history and the world is that God is in it; not what actually happens. So even the timing of the Passion, and hence the Last Supper, is altered - for the purpose of transforming the idea of sacrifice by placing the emphasis on the victim who was slain, not on those who offer or receive. For John the importance of the Gospel is that it is experience, commitment and mission. If the Eucharist is the means of renewing the Gospel, it has its place; if it does not, then it is not indispensable. It is an expression of communion, it is not the sole means of communion; perhaps were it able to become a universal focus of communion between all Christians it would become the supreme expression and thus the supreme assurance of the eternal meaning and mission of Christ incarnate.

## NOTES

1. But see W.R. Farmer: The Synoptic Problem (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1964); here the thesis is that Mark is the last of the synoptic gospels to be written.

2. C.K. Barrett: The Epistle to the Romans (A. and C. Black, 1962) p.5.

3. C.E.B. Cranfield: The Epistle to the Romans (I.C.C.; T. & T. Clark, Vol. 1, 1975).

4. C.E.B. Cranfield: The Gospel According to St. Mark (C U P, 1966) p.6.
c.f. D.E. Nineham: Saint Mark (Pelican Gospel Commentaries, 1963) pp.38-41.

5. See C.E.B. Cranfield (op. cit. Note 4 above) p.5.

6. C.K. Barrett: The Gospel According to St. John (SPCK, 1955) p.115.

7. op. cit. (Note 6 above) p.117.

8. Oscar Cullmann: Early Christian Worship (SCM, 1953) p.37.

9. op. cit. (Note 8 above) p.116.

10. op. cit. (Note 6 above) p.42.

11. Alternative Services Second Series: Baptism (SPCK, 1967).

12. Rudolf Bultmann: Theology of the New Testament (SCM, 1955) Vol. 2, p.114.

13. See Morna Hooker's discussion of this: The Son of Man in Mark (SPCK, 1967).

14. G.B. Caird: The Revelation of St. John the Divine (A. and C. Black, 1966) p.145.

15. Mt. 4:1-11; 9:34; 12:24; 13:39; 25:41; Mk 1:13; 3:23-26; 4:15; 8:33; Lk. 4:1-13; 8:12; 10:18; 11:15-18; 13:16; 22:3; 22:31; Jn. 8:44, 13:2, 13:27.

16. Mt. 7:22; 9:33; 10:8; 11:18; 12:24; 17:18; Mk. 1:34; 1:39; 3:15; 6:13; 7:26-30; 9:38; (16:9, 16:17); Lk. 4:33; 35; 4:41; 7:33; 8:2, 27, 38; 9:1, 9:42, 49; 10:17; 11:14ff; 13:32; c f. Jn 7:20, 8:48ff, 10:20-21.

17. Floyd V. Filson: The Gospel according to St. Matthew (A. and C. Black, 1971) pp. 92, 97.

18. Joachim Jeremias: The Prayers of Jesus (SCM, 1967) p.90.

19. Alternative Services Series 3 (SPCK): Holy Communion (1973), Morning and Evening Prayer (1975).

20. See Rudolf Bultmann (op. cit. Note 12 above) Vol. 2.

21. Ernst Käsemann: Jesus means Freedom (SCM, 1969) p.112.

22. Anglican Baptism Service, (op. cit. Note 11 above).

23. For full discussion of this aspect of Atonement see Gustaf Aulén: Christus Victor (SPCK, 1931).

24. C.K. Barrett: The Gospel According to St. John (SPCK, 1955) pp.113-114.

25. J.L. Houlden: Patterns of Faith (SCM, 1977) pp.66-69.

26. An approach to the things of God imaginatively worked out in the delightful Mister God this is Anna - Fynn (Collins, 1974).

27. Oscar Cullmann: Baptism in the New Testament (SCM, 1950) p.31.

28. John Dillenberger: Martin Luther - Selections from his Writings (Anchor Books, 1961) p.232.

29. Oscar Cullman: (op. cit. Note 27 above ) p.52.

30. C.F.D. Moule: Worship in the New Testament (Lutterworth, 1961) p.47.

31. According to Joseph Rhymer: The Bible in Order but cf. W.G. Kümmel: Introduction to the New Testament (SCM, 1973) pp.278, 293, 304.

32. This is discussed by Oscar Cullman (op. cit. Note 27 above), pp.64-65.

33. For further discussion see C.K. Barrett: The First Epistle to the Corinthians (A. & C. Black, 1968) pp.362-364.

34. See C.K. Barrett (op. cit. Note 2 above) p.124: "Paul is always cautious of expressions which might suggest that the Christian has already reached his goal, and to say in so many words 'We have died with Christ and we have been raised with Christ' would be to invite if not actually to commit the error condemned in 2 Tim. 2:18" (- and cf. pp. 105ff).

35. See J.C. Kirby: Ephesians, Baptism and Pentecost (SPCK, 1968).

36. W.G. Kümmel (op. cit. (Note 31 above) p.421.

37. Was Apollos baptised into Christ? We are not actually told that he was.

38. We note the use of both Baptism and Eucharist in this personal ministry, in "emergency baptism", "private baptism", "sick communion".

39. Mt. 7:21; 10:32; 11:27; 12:50; 16:27; 18:10; 18:19; 18:35; 25:34; 26:39.

40. e.g. Mt. 9:17; 10:5; 10:33; 10:37; 11:20-24; 11:25-30.

41. There is much to be said about Judas, though not here; suffice it to emphasise that we refer to Matthew's portrayal without committing ourselves to agreeing with it. cf. Judas Iscariot by Robert Williams Buchanan, in The Oxford Book of Christian Verse (OUP, 1940).

42. We do not ignore John 6 in this discussion; but it must be recognised that the "highest" doctrines of the Eucharist are drawn from this chapter, see, for example, Bede Frost: The Meaning of Mass (Mowbrays, 1934) pp.80-81; Olive Wyon: The Altar Fire (SCM, 1954) p.82ff; and the Gospel reading appointed for the Feast of Corpus Christi, (found in various lectionaries - e.g. The Lessons for Holy Communion Series Three - CIO, 1973); yet it is John who deliberately avoids specific reference to the sacraments (see below p.73, and p.159ff).

43. To go into detail here would not advance the present argument; for further discussion see, for example, The Eucharist To-day, ed. R.C.D. Jasper (SPCK, 1974); J.L. Houlden: Explorations in Theology 3 (SCM, 1978) ch.6. Joachim Jeremias: The Eucharistic Words of Jesus (SCM, 1966); J.E.L. Oulton: Holy Communion and Holy Spirit (SPCK, 1951) ch.5.

II

## Prayer in the New Testament

### 1. The Praying Church

There is a recognised vocabulary of prayer. To acknowledge this is not to imply that only where the vocabulary is used is prayer to be found; rather, it is to recognise that words convey meaning, and meanings become attached to words. Our task at this stage is to examine some of the words which convey the meaning of communication with God, and to ask whether the meanings which have become attached to the words used are in tune with the Gospel, but the nature of the subject and its treatment in the New Testament to a considerable extent dictate our approach; vocabulary and occasions of prayer are inextricably interwoven: we follow the main threads, as will become apparent.

In the previous chapter we considered the Eucharist; we begin, both for convenience and continuity, with the words especially associated with this sacrament: εὐλογέω and εὐχαριστέω.

#### Εὐλογέω

This is a word familiar in Hebrew-Jewish worship, and it is not surprising to find it a part of the eucharistic action in the framework of the Passover meal (Mk. 14:22; Mt. 26:26; Lk. 22:17,19). Nor are we surprised to find it used in the account of the breaking of bread at Emmaus (Lk. 24:30) when, by the time of writing, it had doubtless become a word associated with the Eucharist, and Luke would wish this to be recognised in this incident. A similar association is found in 1 Cor. 10:16: τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας ὃ εὐλογοῦμεν ....

Also associated with eucharistic action is the occasion of the feeding of large crowds: Mk. 6:41; 8:7, Mt. 14:19, Lk. 9:16. Interestingly, John does not use the word in this connection, indeed the only use he makes of it (that recorded below) is in quoting Ps. 118. In view of John's sacramental understanding (see below) and his aim to express eternal truth for succeeding generations, it is not surprising that he should cut loose from traditional vocabulary. When referring back, however, John breaks his "rule" - the exception that proves it? - a possible

indication that the Eucharist was in his mind: ἐγγὺς τοῦ τόπου ὅπου ἔφαγον τὸν ἄρτον εὐχαριστήσαντος τοῦ Κυρίου (6:23).

A further link with Old Testament vocabulary is found in the cry at the triumphal entry into Jerusalem - a cry which is a direct quotation from Ps. 118: 26 [illegible], and quoted (more or less) in all four gospels: Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου· Εὐλογημένη ἡ ἐρχομένη βασιλεία τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Δαυείδ.

(Mk. 11:9, 10; Mt. 21:9, 13; Lk. 19:38; Jn. 12:13).
Echoes of this style find a natural place in Christian praise: Romans 1:25, 9:5; 2 Cor. 1:3, 11:31; Eph. 1:3; Jas 3:9, 10; 1 Peter 1:3; Rev. 5:12, 13; 7:12. Also to be mentioned at this point is the wording of the High Priest's question to Jesus: Σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Εὐλογητοῦ; (Mk. 14:61).

The language of the praise of God, familiar in the Psalms, figures prominently in Luke's introductory chapters: (1:42, 64, 68; 2:28; 2:34). This is interesting, for it is tempting to wonder whether Luke, familiar with the kind of approach Matthew uses in his gospel[2], was anxious both to soften the sternness of the rabbinic figure suggested, as well as to offer to Theophilus, and others, assurance that to be a Christian did not necessitate first becoming a Jew. But to say that was neither to deny nor to minimise the Jewish/Israelite heritage into which Jesus was born, in which he lived, and to which he was faithful, and Luke makes this clear by firmly setting the scene in Jewish style, and, like Matthew, stressing the importance of heritage, by the inclusion of a genealogy, while unlike Matthew setting it out in reverse, and tracing our origin to Ἀδαμ τοῦ Θεοῦ (3:38).

This term of blessing receives similar emphasis at the end of the gospel (.... ἐπάρας τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ εὐλόγησεν αὐτούς (24:50). Luke uses the word once more, at the conclusion of Peter's address to the crowds who were astonished at the healing of a crippled beggar at the temple gate - here again the stress is on Jesus' fulfilment of the promises of the Old Covenant. .... ὑμῖν πρῶτον ἀναστήσας ὁ Θεὸς τὸν Παῖδα αὐτοῦ ἀπέστειλεν αὐτὸν εὐλογοῦντα ὑμᾶς (Ac. 3:25-26).

A similar reference, in connection with the faith of Abraham, is found in Gal. 3:9: ὥστε οἱ ἐκ πίστεως εὐλογοῦνται σὺν τῷ πιστῷ Ἀβραάμ ; and Gal. 3:14, and we may also note here references from Hebrews: 6:14; 7:16, 7:11-20, 21; 12:17.

We have moved, via Luke, from the praising of God to the action of blessing which it is in man's power to bestow, according to the (understood) law of God, as Isaac blessed Jacob (Heb. 11:20); gradually, however, cultic blessing became especially important, and only a priest was able to pronounce the blessing. Jesus uses this action, and by so doing combines in it both the blessing of God and the blessing of man, and thus enlarges the scope of the meaning of blessing to indicate part in the Kingdom of God: καὶ ἐναγκαλισάμενος αὐτὰ κατευλόγει τιθεὶς τὰς χεῖρας ἐπ' αὐτά.
... ...τῶν γάρ τοιούτων ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. καὶ ἐπιθεὶς τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῖς ἐπορεύθη ἐκεῖθεν.
(Mk 10:16; Mt. 19:14). Luke seems not to know of this - if he did, it would be characteristic of his interests to have included it.

A different use of the word is found in the challenge of Christian love towards enemies: εὐλογεῖτε τοὺς καταρωμένους ὑμᾶς, προσεύχεσθε περὶ τῶν ἐπηρεαζόντων ὑμᾶς

(Luke 6:28).

A use similar to this is found in Ro. 12:14; 1 Cor. 4:12; 1 Peter 3:9 (and in some texts Mt. 5:44).

Having grouped our references thus, we are left with one remaining: 1 Cor. 14:16 - ἐπεὶ ἐὰν εὐλογῇς πνεύματι, ὁ ἀναπληρῶν τὸν τόπον τοῦ ἰδιώτου πῶς ἐρεῖ τὸ Ἀμὴν ἐπὶ τῇ σῇ εὐχαριστίᾳ;
The gift of tongues, to which this refers, is a subject which merits some special consideration; at this point we note its connection, probably unconsciously, with the traditional εὐλογέω and εὐχαριστέω.

We find in the frequent occurrence of εὐλογέω an indication of a clear link with the heritage of the Old Covenant, and at the same time a fuller and freer understanding of that heritage in its new setting of the Christian knowledge of God.

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## εὐχαριστέω, εὐχαριστία, εὔχαριστος

Thanksgiving is as much a part of Hebrew/Jewish worship as blessing God; indeed Kittel[3] suggests that in the New Testament the words are synonymous. We noted above (p.82) that John did not select εὐλογέω in his account of the miraculous feeding; he did, however, use εὐχαριστέω in similar sense: ἔλαβεν οὖν τοὺς ἄρτους ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ εὐχαριστήσας διέδωκεν τοῖς ἀνακειμένοις ... (6:11) and this is emphasised at 6:23. Both words occur in Mark's narrative: 8:6, 7; Matthew has εὐλογέω at 14:19 [illegible] εὐχαριστέω 15:36.

Its use in all accounts of the Last Supper (Mk. 14:23, Mt. 26:27, Lk. 22:19, 1 Cor. 11:24) again suggests a link with Jewish ritual, where there is to be found a connection with sacrificial thank-offerings: e.g. Lev. 7:12-15, 2 Chr. 29:31, 33:16, Ps. 107:22, 116:17, Am. 4:5, Jon. 2:9. But (against those who would use this link in support of a sacrificial understanding of the Eucharist) there is also to be found the suggestion that the idea was developing that thanksgiving was in itself equivalent to a sacrificial offering - an idea which grew out of the Exile and dispersion, for sacrifice could be offered only in the Temple (Neh. 12:27, Ps. 50:14; 69:30). Certainly thanksgiving was part of the "duty" of man to God[4], and this is carried into Christian worship[5].

Linked with this but distinct from it, and new in comparison with the Old Testament (since there are recorded only the stylised, sophisticated prayers of the articulate, and the spontaneous utterances only of outstanding figures) is simple, personal thanksgiving. While recognising that the greetings at beginnings and endings of letters develop into formulae, and that expression of thanks is frequent enough to be seen as part of such formulae, thus in a sense being a "bridge" category between the formal and completely informal, it would seem on the whole, since the writers are never anything but honest, that these expressions of thanks should be counted among the informal usages. The grateful leper (Lk. 17:16) sums up the approach we note: .... ἰδὼν ὅτι ἰάθη, ὑπέστρεφεν μετὰ φωνῆς

μεγάλης δοξάζων τὸν Θεόν, καὶ ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον παρὰ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ εὐχαριστῶν αὐτῷ.

This is unrestrained exuberance, expressing an attitude of the heart, a point underlined by the failure of the other nine to carry out any "obligation" of offering thanks. We also note that the thanks are to Jesus, that without fuss or comment Jesus interprets this as giving glory to God; and to the man he says ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε, which would clearly suggest a connection between salvation and the recognition of Jesus, the joy of which John writes so tellingly: αὕτη δέ ἐστιν ἡ αἰώνιος ζωή, ἵνα γινώσκωσιν σὲ τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν Θεὸν καὶ ὃν ἀπέστειλας Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν (17:3).

It is in the prayer of Jesus himself that this attitude of union in Christ finds expression, both in chapter 17, and in a request which is a thanksgiving because Jesus knows, and rejoices, in the will of the Father, even in the midst of the anguish of the sadness of his friends: Πάτερ, εὐχαριστῶ σοι ὅτι ἤκουσάς μου· (11:41).

What is, it is to be hoped, a caricature of this attitude reflecting the relationship between God and Jesus, is found in Luke's parable of two men in the Temple, when the Pharisee says: ὁ Θεός, εὐχαριστῶ σοι ὅτι οὐκ εἰμὶ ὥσπερ οἱ λοιποὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων (Lk. 18:11).

With this may be noted Ro. 1:21. In normal conversation (or writing) we find numerous similar examples[6].

We include here a variation which is translated into English in the same way: ἔχω χάριν. Though a stock idiom for "thank you", this compound expression throws into relief an ingredient which the longer word contains - the element of favour, delight, grace, which is the original meaning of χάρις. That this should be so firmly a part of Christian worship brings us close to the heart of creation as we discovered it through the insight of the author of Genesis. Here we note Luke 17:9, 1 Tim. 1:12, 2 Tim. 1:3, and the

occurrence of χάρις .

We note a further Greek variation which again is rendered as thanksgiving in English: ἐξομολογέομαι which occurs in the prayer of Jesus recorded by Matthew and Luke (Mt. 11:25, Lk. 10:21). Another variation is ἀνθομολογέομαι at Luke 2:38; ὁμολογέω Heb. 13:15. This, with its inclusion of an element of testimony in "confess, profess", causes another bright light to be shed on the mood and message of Christian witness.

The language of praise is also expressed by the verb αἰνέω, which occurs nine times, of which seven are in Luke[7]. A compound, ἐπαινέω , is found three times in 2 Cor. 11 - at 2, 17, 22. This is synonymous with εὐλογέω as used in the New Testament, and suggests a feeling of song, which is more clearly contained in ὑμνέω (Acts 16:25, Heb. 2:12).

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Thus far the terms we have collected have, in their Hebrew equivalents, figured as much, or more, in the Old Testament. This is not surprising, considering the greater volume of the Old Testament. It is the more striking, then, to find that the glory of God, δόξα , occurs proportionately more frequently in the New Testament, and the verb associated with it, δοξάζω is rare in the Old Testament, but quite certainly a significant new word in Christian vocabulary, though it is used in two senses, one of which is of greater - or more obviously conscious, at any rate - theological significance than the other. In the synoptics and in various other places we find another synonym for εὐλογέω [8], whereas Romans 8:30 has quite a different sense: οὓς δὲ ἐδικαίωσεν, τούτους καὶ ἐδόξασεν. This is akin to Acts 3:13: ὁ Θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν, ἐδόξασεν τὸν Παῖδα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν.

Similar is 1 Cor. 6:20: δοξάσατε δὴ τὸν Θεὸν ἐν τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν.

But it is in John that the full meaning is developed - every occurrence is with the second meaning, and it is obviously for

John an eschatological term. That is to say, in the synoptics, the noun δόξα is used of the splendour and fullness of the being of God, revealed in the Transfiguration, which is a foretaste of what will, in the end, be revealed. John, however, understands, knows, experiences the fullness of glory through the world as it is; thus he can see glory in the events of Jesus' ministry: 1:14; 11:40, 11:41 - the death of Lazarus is vital to the understanding of the glory, for it is in order that doubts and fears concerning what lies beyond death might be answered that God permits this sign; 7:18 - here the sense is of glorification, but is still linked with the glory seen and recognised in the world. 8:50 makes the same point - any glory is derived from God and is to be received and "handed back" - (as Bach readily acknowledged by his ascriptions S.D.G. - Soli Deo Gloria, "to God alone be praise" and J.J. - Jesu Juva, "Help me, Jesus")[9]. 12:41: Isaiah recognises God's involvement in the sufferings of the world. Chapter 17 gathers to a focus John's understanding from which we learn how to regard our own estate. This Paul understands, as we see in the example above, but as we have previously remarked (pp. 55, 63) Paul does not fully work out the eschatological implication of his belief; his concentration on the relationship revealed in Jesus allows him to accept current ideas of the End.

If the glory of God is revealed through the events of mortal life, then δοξάζω also is an eschatological word - it involves the implicit ascription of honour to God, but the dynamic is the recognition of divine activity, presence, power, transfiguring by the knowledge itself, not necessarily revealed as at the Transfiguration or in the miraculous. This becomes explicit from 12:23 onwards when clearly the glorification is the humiliation - the total absence of outward sign (12:28; 13:31-32; 16:14 and in 17), and so light is shed back to 7:39: ὅτι Ἰησοῦς οὐδέπω ἐδοξάσθη, and 12:16; and also by firmly linking the supreme glory (for us, anyway) with this world, the responsibility which is its challenge is revealed, for what is eternally true must go on being revealed: (15:8), and it is encouraging to see that the writer of the appendix[10] has grasped the point: τοῦτο δὲ εἶπεν σημαίνων ποίῳ θανάτῳ δοξάσει τὸν Θεόν (21:19).

We have found, . . in John, a glory which is present, not future; present, not distant. According to John, then, the Therapeutae seem to be mistaken in removing themselves from the world to seek the glory, for this implies that the glory is detached from the world. We noted earlier (p. 15 ) that in becoming a Community of Law the Israelites became an eschatological community, for they saw the goal of the Law in terms of the world, in the observance of the Law. John shows that their vision was right, their means at fault - for the goal is a matter of revelation of what is given, not an achievement of what is held up as a reward or a target. δοξάζω is then for John a term of worship - worship in truth, of the mind as well as the instinct.

A word denoting worship, προσκυνέω , appears most frequently in Revelation[11] (24 times), Matthew[12], (13 times), and John[13] (9 times). Though the New Testament word is primarily an "abstract" indicating an attitude to God (it is also synonymous with λατρεύειν ), it derives from a blown kiss[14], and in the Old Testament, cultic kissing is still present; . . . in Rabbinic Judaism it denotes one of the gestures of prayer; its use in Revelation frequently indicates a gesture of worship expressing the inward attitude (5:14, 7:11, 11:16, 19:4, 19:10, 22:9). Matthew, in keeping with his use of Jewish ideas and phraseology, makes pointed use of this word - this is indicated by the fact that on two occasions where Mark uses straightforward descriptive language: γονυπετῶν (1:40), πίπτει (5:22) Matthew chooses προσκυνέω , thus indicating a religious significance in the physical attitude. Three more incidents recorded by Mark acquire this word in Matthew: 14:33, 15:25, 20:20. His aim is to indicate the revelation of the God of the Fathers in Jesus, and to stress the continuity of the People of God in this new revelation. This is shown most clearly in the Temptation account (Mt. 4; Lk. 4.) and in the humbling of the Magi (2:2, 11). This has the effect of sharpening the impact of the word where it would seem to be incidental: 8:2, 9:18, (cf. Mk 5:6), of revealing the possibility of misdirected attitudes: 2:8, 18:26 (cf. Ac. 7:43, 10:25) and of stressing the significance of the Resurrection 28:9, 17, cf. Mk 15:19, Lk. 24:52.

But again it is John who brings to the term its rich fullness;

his use is sparing and therefore, one feels, deliberate. Seven of the nine occurrences are in one incident - the conversation at the well (4:5-42) and then concentrated into five verses (20-24). This is in fact both Matthew's understanding of the link between God Almighty and Jesus, and also the visionary ideal of worship conveyed by John the Divine, brought into one in terms of present reality - of spirit and truth. This is not primarily instinctive or reverential, but response to an overwhelming certainty of truth, overwhelming because it is offered to a sinful woman of Samaria, and therefore is, against the social background, not exclusive. This is shown again in 9:38, where the worship comes at the end of the story when the healing has taken place and when Jesus has made his identity clear, and the man has been honest: Σὺ πιστεύεις εἰς τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου; ἀπεκρίθη ἐκεῖνος καὶ εἶπεν Καὶ τίς ἐστιν, Κύριε, ἵνα πιστεύσω εἰς αὐτόν; εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Καὶ ἑώρακας αὐτὸν καὶ ὁ λαλῶν μετὰ σοῦ ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν. ὁ δὲ ἔφη, Πιστεύω, Κύριε· καὶ προσεκύνησεν αὐτῷ.

It is not clear, nor is it important, whether this indicates a physical gesture or an attitude of mind and heart; what matters is that it is a response to revealed, recognised, received truth. John's final use, in the light of this, makes it clear that this is the truth about worship: some Greeks have come to worship at the Temple (12:20) - they ask to see Jesus, and his response is in terms of his coming glorification in humiliation, a moment we noted above (p.88 ) as a turning point in the meaning of δοξάζω.

John has thus taken hold of the idea of worship indicated at the beginning of Romans 12, where Paul makes deliberate use of cultic language in a non-cultic context and with a non-cultic meaning. True worship may find its focus in places of worship, but it is not to be thought to be restricted to them[15]. The argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews shows how the death of Jesus was in effect the culmination and thus termination of the work of sacrifice (10:12, 26); now the whole concept of sacrifice is transformed into something quite different (13:15, 16); this is because, through Jesus, we have a completely different

understanding and vision of God. Humanity does not have to placate, propipiate, or try to please him for fear of his wrath; he is not, as instinctive judgement would hold, against us; his cause is our cause. The truth has been declared by Jesus.

What, then, of the prayer of asking, to which we now turn, and which is the basic meaning of our word "prayer"? What happens, that is to say, to the instinctive prayer of entreaty when the relationship with deity is discovered to be different from the instinctive assumption? The vocabulary is present in the New Testament; we now examine its occurrence.

Words which are translated synonymously as "pray" and are frequently used synonymously (exceptions will receive attention in due course) are προσεύχομαι and δέομαι [16].

But the word προσεύχομαι contains an element of asking, in the sense of seeking; its second translation is "wish"; the instinctive prayer to deity sets out to achieve something. We shall therefore depart from the approach of the first part of this section, and collect occasions of prayer, noting the vocabulary where it merits special comment, rather than, as above, following a word through.

We begin this stage of our exploration of prayer by looking at two instances in Mark which make plain that an "end product" is involved - first, an incident which tells of the failure of the disciples to act for him in his absence; when they ask Jesus afterwards why they had failed, he states clearly Τοῦτο τὸ γένος ἐν οὐδενὶ δύναται ἐξελθεῖν εἰ μὴ ἐν προσευχῇ (Mk. 9:29).

We are not told how they had set about tackling the problem; we are given no direct guidance or instruction as to what this means. We can only look carefully at the way the incident is recorded and the words used (we have established that we can trust Mark to say what he means - see p.41 ), and draw conclusions from what we are given. The father explains to Jesus that he had brought his son πρὸς σέ , that he had asked the disciples ἵνα αὐτὸ ἐκβάλωσιν, καὶ οὐκ ἴσχυσαν [17]. Jesus' response to this is to express disappointment: Ὦ γενεὰ ἄπιστος ... Turning to the father, Jesus enquires into the situation - how long has he been like this? In replying the father concludes ἀλλ' εἴ τι δύνῃ ...

Jesus picks this up: Τὸ Εἰ δύνῃ, πάντα δυνατὰ τῷ πιστεύοντι. The father assumes that he must be ὁ πιστεύων, and in a moving and humble cry responds Πιστεύω· βοήθει μου τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ. At which point, because of the crowd's pressure, Jesus stops talking and deals with the boy. The only other enlightenment is that with which we started - there is no way of dealing with such affairs εἰ μὴ ἐν προσευχῇ.

How do we piece these things together?

1. There is only one way to deal with such affairs; Jesus did cope with the situation, therefore he must have done it ἐν προσευχῇ.
2. The disciples οὐκ ἴσχυσαν; they are ἄπιστοι so the dynamic of prayer must be faith.
3. The man begs Jesus εἴ τι δύνῃ - Jesus replies πάντα δυνατὰ τῷ πιστεύοντι.

   The issue at this point is, who is able to cure the boy? The disciples could not; could Jesus? Yes, he could. If the ability to do so is a matter of faith, then it is Jesus himself who is ὁ πιστεύων, not, as the man understood (and as a good deal of teaching implies) the one making the request.

From this, coupled with Jesus' inquiry into some detail of the situation, we may conclude that faith means insight into the will of God, and prayer is then intelligent and conscious involvement in the working out of that will. (This is entirely consonant with what we have read in Romans; and if the responsibility seems too great, we have the Spirit of God to help us carry out our work).

This understanding is reinforced by the enacted parable of the fig-tree in chapter 11 - a two-stage incident, ingeniously told by Mark with the two parts separated by the violent Temple demonstration, at the centre of which is the well-known quotation ὁ οἶκός μου οἶκος προσευχῆς κληθήσεται πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, thus adding to the main stress of the breaking down of barriers of exclusiveness - a question about what goes on: are we to understand that the ways of prayer are manifest?-or that all

should be welcomed, and then should conform? The Temple should be a power house, for prayer is power; if it is to be such, it cannot afford to divert energy in other directions. Peter is surprised that the fig-tree dies; he probably thought, if indeed he took any particular notice, that Jesus was simply letting off steam in "cursing" it. Jesus responds to Peter: Ἔχετε πίστιν Θεοῦ, and expands this (11:23) implying: "if you are thoroughly convinced of the will of God in a particular instance, then you have authority and power to bring it about, however great, however small, however strange it may seem". Jesus also, by implication, draws attention to the responsibility this involves by using as illustration an act of destruction, the killing of a fig-tree, and an action which is not in itself to any purpose at all. The power must be used, or things will be left undone that ought to be done; but the using of the power must be thoroughly rooted in the will of God. Dare mankind be sure that it perceives the will of God? Very occasionally - see Mt. 18:19, cf. Dorothy Kerin[18], and others who, against all circumstantial indications, have embarked on actions and brought them to fulfilment. In other words (paraphrasing now verse 24), "if you are confident that you know the will of God, then you know that the particular thing you seek is available, and because it is available it is yours already, even though it may be that the working out is not immediate". Our faith is in the ultimate fulfilment of God's triumph, and our hope gives birth to present joy in the knowledge of present involvement in eternity.

Προσεύχομαι, then, in the hands of one whose choice of words merits attention (see p. 41ff), is used in these instances which clearly suggest that prayer is a power, a force, which is to be used responsibly; a means by which the will of God is brought to pass. In this context we note that in Mark 13:18 we have the impression that prayer can constitute a staying force, if not a transformation. This will elicit questions stemming from the basic, oft repeated cry: Why does God let such things happen? - to which Christian faith must reply - for there <u>is</u> no other reply - that life as it is known to us is in every respect, and from the divine angle as well as from the human (cf. Gen. 1 - p. 11f - and the whole meaning of the Incarnation) a matter for co-operation, not independence. Where there is hostility there

cannot be immediate victory, though we know (Ro. 8) there is ultimate victory.

Power such as this is a responsibility more than humanity can cope with; Paul deals with this very point in Romans 8, which we discuss below (p. 95ff.).

Having explored thus far, we find that the path branches into two. Discovering the will of God is not necessarily easy; this is made quite plain by the personal, lonely struggle of Jesus in Gethsemane.

The Gethsemane prayer brings together these two aspects of prayer - the expression of self, and involvement in the working out of the Father's will. Here Jesus expresses his feelings in the face of what is to come; he also expresses doubt that his feelings and the request to which they give rise are in accordance with God's plans: πάντα δυνατά σοι· .... ἀλλ' οὐ τί ἐγὼ θέλω ἀλλὰ τί σύ.
Simon οὐκ ἴσχυσε to fulfil was was needed of him; the injunction is given to them all: γρηγορεῖτε (an echo from the end of chapter 13) καὶ προσεύχεσθε ἵνα μὴ ἔλθητε εἰς πειρασμόν.

"To pray", as we have established, is to do with insight into God's will; "to watch" must mean be alert because other things can appear to be his will, and it is easy to fall into error - to enter εἰς πειρασμόν - the attempt of the "opposition" to disguise truth, and thus lead the people of God astray (cf. p. 53ff.). Anyone other than Jesus with his complete insight into the workings of good and evil, and of heaven and earth, might well have convinced himself that he had been mistaken - that there was no need to continue this terrible course.

This is the central point of the connection we sought earlier (p. 46 ) to establish between Mark and Romans; we move back to Paul to look at his setting of these words. ὅσοι γὰρ πνεύματι θεοῦ ἄγονται, οὗτοι υἱοί εἰσιν θεοῦ. οὐ γὰρ ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα δουλείας πάλιν εἰς φόβον, ἀλλὰ ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα υἱοθεσίας, ἐν ᾧ[19] κράζομεν, Ἀββα ὁ πατήρ.

Because of our firmly established relationship with God, we too may without fear acknowledge and express the turmoil we know.

Here we note that Paul's use of κράζω , used also at Gal. 4:6 - a word used of the evil spirits (Mk 1:23, 5:7, 9:26); by the disciples in fear (Mk 6:49); by the blind man (Mk 10:47-48); by the crowd, on occasions (Mk 11:9; 15:13, 14); by the father of his epileptic boy (Mk 9:24). This is an indication of distress, of wrestling, of the spontaneous outburst of a full heart - this latter, incidentally, is the dominant impression given by the Psalms.

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We digress briefly to note Mark's avoidance of κράζω to introduce the cry of Jesus from the cross: ἐβόησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς φωνῇ μεγάλῃ, Ελωι Ελωι λαμα σαβαχθανει ; words which on the surface are the words of a cry of despair, but which, on deeper reflection, produce the answer to the request in Gethsemane. The avoidance of κράζω here, where it would seem an obvious word to use, has the effect of completely dissociating the cry from demonic shouts, and thereby removing from it any suggestion of Satanic influence on Jesus. Further, this is a recognisable quotation from Psalm 22; αββα is the God of the fathers; the agony Jesus suffers is such that the feeling is of abandonment, but God is there to be thus cried to (another striking impression of the Psalter is that all "ungodly" sentiments are honestly addressed to God), and moreover, he is God, often described by the fathers as ὁ παντοκράτωρ (see p.30ff.). When the trial is at its worst, when the feeling is of utter loneliness, the cry is not, There is no God, but, What is he doing? When man endures the depths, God is there to be called upon, and his presence affirms his ultimate control.

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In his enthusiasm for the Joy of the Spirit Paul then does not forget or overlook human weakness of spirit, and capacity to suffer. Ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα συναντιλαμβάνεται τῇ ἀσθενείᾳ ἡμῶν .... (Ro. 8:26).

Part of human weakness is τὸ γὰρ τί προσευξώμεθα καθὸ δεῖ οὐκ οἴδαμεν, ἀλλὰ αὐτὸ τὸ Πνεῦμα

ὑπερεντυγχάνει στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις·

There is an "ought" about prayer. (J[illegible] "for when we cannot choose words in order to pray properly, the spirit himself expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words): Professor Barrett expresses this as meaning what is appropriate: "We do not even know what are the proper prayers to offer"[20]. The next clause implies that the "ought" is not simply a matter of right form, but of right use of a dynamic force. Why else would αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα ὑπερεντυγχάνει στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις ? What follows carries this further: ὁ δὲ ἐρευνῶν τὰς καρδίας οἶδεν τί τὸ φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος, ὅτι κατὰ θεὸν ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἁγίων.

Prayer is to do with bringing about the will of God; prayer is one of the factors among those which τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν τὸν θεὸν πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς ἀγαθόν.

But having said that, it sounds as though a confidence bordering on arrogance can be assumed; this is not the case; Paul must, in writing this, have in mind the fact that earlier he had had to write to the Galatians because there was an astonishing turning away from the central Gospel truth; he had also the experience of which he speaks in 2 Cor. 12:7-10: ὑπὲρ τούτου τρὶς τὸν κύριον παρεκάλεσα, ἵνα ἀποστῇ ἀπ'ἐμοῦ.

This introduces another term, παρακαλέω, rendered beseech, or beg; this is the only use of it to the risen Lord, though it appears in Matthew 26:53, when Jesus refuses to summon aid; [illegible] it is a word used in persuasion or encouragement (e.g. Ro. 12:1; 15:30; 16:17) and it is used of those who approach Jesus to seek healing (e.g. Mark 1:40; 5:10, 5:12). Two ideas are contained in Paul's use here: a sense of companionship with the Lord - if he means Jesus - which is expressed otherwise than in the language of prayer, which is not to Jesus but to the Father in the name of Jesus; and a sense of striving - he is not certain that the will of God is to rid him of the pain, but he hopes that it is. Comparable with this is his desire to visit Rome (Ro. 1:10). There is a sense of struggle to find

peace in the midst of the striving, to know strength in the midst of weakness. Further still, we call to mind Paul's awareness of the deception of which evil is capable; in 1 Cor. 12:10 one of the gifts of the spirit is διακρίσεις πνευμάτων, and these gifts of the Spirit are shared among the members of the body; in fellowship, then, the will of God is discovered and confirmed. This is expressed by Matthew, in a chapter which deals with mutual responsibility; during the course of it Jesus says Πάλιν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐὰν δύο συμφωνήσωσιν ἐξ ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς περὶ παντὸς πράγματος οὗ ἐὰν αἰτήσωνται, γενήσεται αὐτοῖς παρὰ τοῦ Πατρός μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς οὗ γάρ εἰσιν δύο ἢ τρεῖς συνηγμένοι εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα, ἐκεῖ εἰμι ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν.

(Mt. 18:8).

This could mean either that the fellowship "creates" the body of Christ; or the bond of fellowship and unity of purpose gives free and full rein to the spirit of Christ; or it could refer simply to the companionship of Christ, summoned (though the word is not used) as Paul and Jesus speak in terms of summoning help in the examples mentioned above. Whatever Matthew had in mind, the thrust of the chapter is the activity of God, recognised, and inspiring co-operation.

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We have now - imperceptibly - moved over into the second branch of the responsibility of prayer - our ability to help one another through prayer. This is expressed in the word (already quoted in Ro. 8) ἐντυγχάνω — the ministry of intercession. What this means is at the very heart of the ministry of Jesus, who demonstrated love, compassion, understanding, and ministered healing; Paul must mean in Ro. 8:34.. ὃς ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὃς καὶ ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν - that this ministry of healing love continues; he cannot, in the light of Romans 8, up to this point, mean that Jesus is making requests on our behalf, or that the Father needs to be asked. A similar sentence is found in Hebrews 7:25, where, as we have already seen, the writer uses the terminology

associated with the sacrificial cult to explain how Jesus had brought it to fulfilment; the benefits flow eternally and infinitely, but Jesus stands, in relation to humanity, where the sacrificial offering was thought to be. The relationship is established for us; so we cannot translate, with NEB, "he is always living to plead on their behalf", for this has the effect of limiting the meaning of "intercession" to pleading; that is, asking God to do that which he is not already disposed to do. But intercession is to be understood within the terms of the New Covenant, and its meaning undergoes as radical a change as that of covenant in the New Age. The Old Covenant was in terms of an agreement (see Ex. 19:5; Dt. 7:12, 8:20); it was necessary for both parties to keep their part of the agreement. But the basis of the New Covenant is fundamentally different. Its scope is widened in two ways: in the first place it goes back beyond the Mosaic covenant, to Abraham, who cannot be said to have attained righteousness by keeping the Law, since he lived before the Law came into being (Ro. 4); and it extends to all humanity - as the sin of Adam involved all humanity (Ro. 5:12-17). In the second place its centre is Christ:...ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ· ὃν προέθετο ὁ Θεὸς ἱλαστήριον διὰ πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι ....

(Ro. 3:25).

The translation of this is the subject of debate[21]; we do not engage in the discussion since it is aside from our present line of thought; rather, we note at this point Heb. 7:25: ... πάντοτε ζῶν εἰς τὸ ἐντυγχάνειν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν.

We have already seen (p.75ff.) that the writer of Hebrews uses the terminology associated with the sacrificial cult to explain how Jesus had brought it to fulfilment; the benefits flow eternally and infinitely, but Jesus stands, in relation to God and humanity, where the sacrificial offering was thought to be; moreover he is there at the initiative of the Father (see John 3:16). Thus, if the New Covenant is to be analysed, the human side is not to be seen as meeting the divine, but as embraced within it; it is no longer to be understood as doing but as receiving, or responding. If, then, God himself has done all that needs to be done, intercession cannot involve pleading

with him to do something which is not yet done. Rather, we find that the "activity" of intercession is transferred from changing God to changing those for whom intercession is made. This is borne out by the compound ὑπερεντυγχάνω used at Ro. 8:26 ... αὐτὸ τὸ Πνεῦμα ὑπερεντυγχάνει στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις · the prefix ὑπέρ stresses "for us" (that is, not "instead of us", but "for our sake"). As Jesus worked among us and for us, healing, and changing attitudes, and opening people to the love of God, even now he continues this work in his Spirit working through his Body, the Church. In fact this word is not used of "human prayer"; if we undertake it as the Body of Christ we are indeed shouldering responsibility - as we have already discovered (p.94). So then, "Intercessory prayer, prayer 'in the Name of Jesus', is this. It is not suggesting to God ways of helping: it is not reminding God of things. It is our faith that God is helping: it is our remembrance that God is remembering. It is putting ourselves at the disposal of God that He may use our will power, psychic power, as waves of spiritual love and energy given to Him and made free for Him to use in blessing those whom we are allowed to co-operate with Him in helping, and whom He can only help humanly if we put our humanity at His disposal"[22]. Such a statement opens up limitless possibilities of carrying out this "help"; we cannot, then, translate, with NEB, "he is always living to plead on their behalf". To be preferred is RV: "who also maketh intercession for us", or RSV: "who indeed intercedes for us". But better still would be a rendering which made use of the first meaning of ἐντυγχάνω : "to light upon, fall in with, meet with", since this would convey the fullness of Gospel truth. A possibility might read: "It is Christ who died, who indeed was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of the Father, who indeed is involved with us still".

There are many instances of involvement, or being together through prayer, in the epistles, indicating awareness of both joys and needs of those who are at a distance, awareness of unity in the fellowship. This is very clear in Colossians:

Εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ Θεῷ Πατρὶ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν

Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι,
ἀκούσαντες τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ... (1:3-4).

Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἡμεῖς, ἀφ' ἧς ἡμέρας ἠκούσαμεν,
οὐ παυόμεθα ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι καὶ αἰτούμενοι
ἵνα πληρωθῆτε τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θελήματος
αὐτοῦ ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῇ.. (1:9).

Νῦν χαίρω ἐν τοῖς παθήμασιν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, καὶ
ἀνταναπληρῶ τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν θλίψεων τοῦ Χριστοῦ
ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου ὑπὲρ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ, ὅ ἐστιν
ἡ ἐκκλησία .... (1:24).

.... ἵνα παραστήσωμεν πάντα ἄνθρωπον τέλειον
ἐν Χριστῷ· εἰς ὃ καὶ κοπιῶ ἀγωνιζόμενος κατὰ
τὴν ἐνέργειαν αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐνεργουμένην ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐν
δυνάμει (1:28).

εἰ γὰρ καὶ τῇ σαρκὶ ἄπειμι, ἀλλὰ τῷ
πνεύματι σὺν ὑμῖν εἰμι ... (2:5)

τῇ προσευχῇ προσκαρτερεῖτε, γρηγοροῦντες
ἐν αὐτῇ ἐν εὐχαριστίᾳ, προσευχόμενοι ἅμα καὶ περὶ
ἡμῶν, ἵνα ὁ Θεὸς ἀνοίξῃ ἡμῖν θύραν τοῦ λόγου,
λαλῆσαι τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, δι' ὃ καὶ
δέδεμαι, ἵνα φανερώσω αὐτὸ ὡς δεῖ με λαλῆσαι (4:2-4).

... Ἐπαφρᾶς ... δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, πάντοτε
ἀγωνιζόμενος ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς, ἵνα
σταθῆτε τέλειοι ... (4:12).

From these illustrations we list the following points:

1. Mutual involvement in prayer - intercession - is an involvement in all the affairs of life - intercession is not restricted, or even primarily - to do with need, sorrow, or crisis. Against this we note J.L. Houlden's comment[23], introducing Colossians, that in dealing with the doctrinal errors which have taken hold in Colossae, Paul is "astute"; he uses the terms of Gnosticism "in a way that suits him, thus disarming them (his readers); and by refusing to accept the pagan battleground. So far as ideas are concerned, he appears to be flattering his Gentile Christian readers with perhaps a more thorough Christian formation than they possessed". This suggests that Paul's language of prayer is not to be relied upon, a suggestion which is to be rejected: Paul's life, work, vision, all spring from the Gospel, which proclaims a relationship. His concern for his Colossian brothers is not only that they get their doctrine right, but that they know, and they remain in, the relationship. This is for Paul a spring of warmth and love and joy, fellowship in the Gospel is a matter of joy; when Paul rejoices in fellowship he is rejoicing in brotherhood in Christ, not in ideas held in common. This is a fine distinction, but it is a distinction; we accept 1:3-4 at face value as valuable insight into the work of prayer[24]. Similar sentiments are conveyed in the opening of the letter to Philippians, an intimate letter to close friends: Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ Θεῷ μου ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ μνείᾳ ὑμῶν, πάντοτε ἐν πάσῃ δεήσει μου ὑπὲρ πάντων ὑμῶν μετὰ χαρᾶς τὴν δέησιν ποιούμενος, ἐπὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἀπὸ τῆς πρώτης ἡμέρας ἄχρι τοῦ νῦν (1:3-5).

— .... Καὶ τοῦτο προσεύχομαι, ἵνα ἡ ἀγάπη ὑμῶν ἔτι μᾶλλον καὶ μᾶλλον περισσεύῃ ἐν ἐπιγνώσει καὶ πάσῃ αἰσθήσει ... (1:9).

We notice here the interchangeability of δέησιν ποιοῦμαι and προσεύχομαι ; later Paul puts them together, indicating at any rate an understanding of different aspects of prayer, even though the meanings of the words are not as different as the

words themselves: ἐν παντὶ τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ τῇ δεήσει μετὰ εὐχαριστίας τὰ αἰτήματα ὑμῶν γνωριζέσθω πρὸς τὸν Θεόν

(4:6)

the addition of αἰτήματα can be seen either as strengthening the meaning of δεήσις or, on the other hand, indicating its synonymity with προσεύχομαι by supplying the idea of "making request". We compare also 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 25: ἀδιαλείπτως προσεύχεσθε .... Ἀδελφοί, προσεύχεσθε περὶ ἡμῶν.

The mood of Philippians, as of Colossians, is of genuine warmth and happiness in fellowship and in mutual support (1:19). The same may be said of 1 Thess. 1:2-3;2:13; 3:7-13; 5:25: 2 Thess. 1:3, 11-12; 3:1. 2 Thess. 1:11-12: ..... προσευχόμεθα πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν ἵνα ὑμᾶς ἀξιώσῃ τῆς κλήσεως ὁ Θεὸς - though this is surely rather more of a manner of speaking than a definite request, for Paul knows, and is constantly stressing, that we are "counted worthy", by the grace of God. We add also 2 Thess. 3:1: προσεύχεσθε ... περὶ ἡμῶν, ἵνα ὁ λόγος τοῦ Κυρίου τρέχῃ καὶ δοξάζηται καθὼς καὶ πρὸς ὑμᾶς, καὶ ἵνα ῥυσθῶμεν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀτόπων καὶ πονηρῶν ἀνθρώπων - and 1 Thess. 3:9-10 ... δεόμενοι εἰς τὸ ἰδεῖν ὑμῶν τὸ πρόσωπον...

2. We have instances of ἵνα 1:9, 1:28; 4: 4, 4:12 - Paul and Epaphras know the goal of intercession in these cases - they are confident of the will of God; prayer is a means of bringing this about. To this we add Paul's concern for his fellow Jews: expressed in Ro. 10-11 and Phil. 1:19: οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι τοῦτό μοι ἀποβήσεται εἰς σωτηρίαν διὰ τῆς ὑμῶν δεήσεως καὶ ἐπιχορηγίας τοῦ Πνεύματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ....

3. In 1:24 and 1:28 we do not find the recognised vocabulary of prayer, but these are expressions of an understanding of the working out of the will of God; we are able, then to widen our conception of intercession - it is not an activity which is restricted to occasions which would usually be described as "prayer"[25].

4. 1:28 declares the purpose of the Gospel - that every one should be able to stand confident and alone with God; the privilege of Moses is open to all. This is clearly set forth in Eph. 3:14-21.

5. We note the expressions οὐ παυόμεθα ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι ... τῇ προσευχῇ προσκαρτερεῖτε and the question arises as to how Paul would describe what takes place when this goes on. Whilst recognising the apparent inconsistency of taking some things at face value (cf. above, point 1) and qualifying others, it would seem that here we must recognise figurative speech - to a certain extent. Of course Paul cannot have the Colossians in the forefront of his mind all the time; he has other responsibilities. His readers can be sure of his constant concern for them, and that he will never let them down by failing to do for them anything which is within his power; they can be certain of his love and commitment to them, an involvement which is rooted in their fellowship in Christ. We, from outside the relationship between Paul and the Colossians, and seeing it in the context of his relationship with a number of congregations and individuals, may also interpret this as meaning that Paul is alert and will respond to circumstances, and that response will be maintained while those circumstances prevail. We have found (p.92f.) that prayer is a power requiring responsible use; we now see that prayer may further be described as intelligent response to circumstances which present themselves. We do not, that is, find here any sense of badgering or bludgeoning - an impression of prayer which has undoubtedly become associated with such expressions as these, especially, perhaps, the second, which NEB renders "persevere in prayer", JB - "be persevering in your prayers", RV and RSV - "continue steadfastly in prayer". This perhaps reflects an acquired overtone to the word "persevere", for it gives an impression of being in difficulties or even creating difficulties, as JB continuation of this verse - "be thankful as you stay awake to pray" - suggests, and perseverance implies battling on, whereas "continue steadfast in prayer" without this overtone, may be paraphrased from Eph. 3:14-18, or John 15:3: i.e. live confidently as sons of God; prayer is the communing of humanity

and deity, and therefore is the expression of the nature of the relationship[26].

We note similar expressions in 1 Thess. 1:2: μνείαν ποιούμενοι ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν ἡμῶν, ἀδιαλείπτως μνημονεύοντες ὑμῶν τοῦ ἔργου τῆς πίστεως... (though we note the punctuation here: NEB and RSV take ἀδιαλείπτως with ποιούμενοι cf RV and JB: "remembering without ceasing").

1 Thess. 3:9-10 has νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ δεόμενοι

1 Thess. 5:16 ἀδιαλείπτως προσεύχεσθε

2 Thess. 1:11 Εἰς ὃ καὶ προσευχόμεθα πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν

6. 4:2 γρηγοροῦντες ἐν αὐτῇ εὐχαριστίᾳ. We referred in the preceding paragraph to JB rendering of this, which fails to do justice to the significance of γρηγορέω , a significance which is brought out when we collect its occurrence in the gospels; it appears three times in Mark 13:34, 35, 37 (cf. Mt. 24:42, 43; 25:13; Luke lessens the tension by placing similar parables earlier in his narrative), a chapter of concentrated tension in the prophecy of the trials to come, in the midst of which God is working his purpose out. In such circumstances only alertness to the spirit, the gift of discernment noted above (p.97 ), can enable steadfastness. What this means is elucidated in the next appearance of the word - in Gethsemane[27]. Prayer in this setting, we suggested, is to do with insight into God's will; to "watch" must imply that it is essential to be alert because other things can appear to be his will, and it is easy to discover one is in opposition to God - to enter εἰς πειρασμόν [28], (see p.94 and cf. also 1 Pe. 5:8). To the intelligent response which prayer is, and responsible use of the power that it is, we add the intelligent awareness of the power and wiles of opposition, not in any sense or fear of reducing the power of God, or thwarting his will, but in the cause of bringing to pass the fullness of his kingdom.

7. Finally from Colossians we note the familiar and beautifully concise summary of the fellowship of prayer: εἰ γὰρ καὶ τῇ σαρκὶ ἄπειμι, ἀλλὰ τῷ πνεύματι σὺν ὑμῖν εἰμι

- the incredible, but logical conclusion of sharing in the one body of Christ in the one Father.

*

Thus far we have collected examples of the use of the vocabulary of prayer denoting the activity of prayer, and making clear, implicitly or explicitly, the intention underlying the work of prayer. Worthy of special mention, before proceeding further, is the letter to Philemon, which in a short space, by its very nature, focuses the essence of prayer as have so far discovered it. The fact that Paul writes such a letter is an expression from the heart of his care for Onesimus, and a testimony to his belief in God's care for him; to write is in itself an act of intercession, seeking to bring about something he understands to be the will of God; the matter in question is a real life affair, involving practicalities (18-19) and so it is clear that Paul's gospel is a social as well as a "religious" gospel; the interaction of Paul, Onesimus, and Philemon, and the depth of various feelings indicated by the purport of the letter demonstrates our involvement with one another, and reminds us of our Lord's teaching on forgiveness (Mk. 11:25, Mt. 6:12, 14, 15; see pp.140f.).

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Reading the New Testament in chronological order[29], one is aware of shifts of emphasis; this we have already mentioned above (p.54) in connection with eschatological awareness. We find a shift in understanding of the work of prayer shown very clearly in 1 Timothy 2:1-8: Παρακαλῶ οὖν πρῶτον πάντων ποιεῖσθαι δεήσεις, προσευχάς, ἐντεύξεις, εὐχαριστίας, ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀνθρώπων, ὑπὲρ βασιλέων καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐν ὑπεροχῇ ὄντων, ἵνα ἤρεμον καὶ ἡσύχιον βίον διάγωμεν ἐν πάσῃ εὐσεβείᾳ καὶ σεμνότητι.

Three things are striking here:

1. The piling up of words: δεήσεις, προσευχάς, ἐντεύξεις, εὐχαριστίας, which have hitherto occurred separately and (with the

obvious exception of εὐχαριστίας, synonymously[30].

2. A widening of the sphere of operation: ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀνθρώπων.

3. A goal of tranquility, which contrasts with the militant approach to life which has been dominant so far, an approach which accepts conflict in the faith of Christ crucified, indeed even welcoming it (Col. 1:24).

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Before discussing these points, (as we shall do on pp 110ff) something needs to be said about the epistle itself, and its setting, and it is perhaps helpful to expand further the reference to shifting emphases.

According to Kümmel[31], Colossians and Philemon were written either 56-58 or 58-60; for the Pastorals, he offers as the most likely assumption the beginning of the second century. Between them comes Ephesians (80-100), 1 Peter (90-95), and Jude - about the turn of the century.

In these intervening writings we find ideas which need serious consideration and comparison with the gospel preached by Paul.

In Ephesians we find that God is Creator, humanity his workmanship (2:10). This is startling, for it suggests a development of thought which is retrogressive rather than progressive in that it moves away from the Gospel into "pre-Gospel" ideas. We notice other instances: 2:18 and 3:12 both refer to τὴν προσαγωγήν; 2:19: συμπολῖται τῶν ἁγίων καὶ οἰκεῖοι τοῦ Θεοῦ; this is very different from Romans 8, where Paul joyfully declares that we are υἱοὶ Θεοῦ, συνκληρονόμοι Χριστοῦ (8:14, 17). A sense of distance has crept in, and we recognise something of the Old Testament idea of "Father" (pp 24-36). 4:7 is dangerous - it sounds as though we are not in full union with Christ; 4:9-10 gives a definite sense of distance in comparison with Romans 12 and 1 Cor. 12 where gifts of the one spirit are given. The Church has become an entity - a "thing" rather than an

assembly - (5:23-27). We cannot but feel that, had Paul seen this letter, it would have called forth something in the vein of Galatians or 2 Corinthians. But within the epistle - as though providing for its own need - we find also 3:14-21, 4:1-6, 4:13 - which are in harmony with the radiant faith of Paul and his joy in communion with God and in the spiritual maturity this brings. On the basis of these comments, it could be asked whether Ephesians ought to be in the New Testament. One of the effects of the tradition of holiness surrounding Scripture is that there is a reluctance to seem to tamper, thus revealing an improperly irreverent attitude; the recognition of Pauline teaching perhaps resulted in the undiscriminating acceptance of its setting[32].

Ephesians provides some of the most popular phrases in contemporary use; perhaps its aim is to offer us healthy warning as how dangerously easy it is to slip away from the Gospel, and thus points us back to the centre.

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According to Rhymer[33], a case can be made for holding that 1 Peter was written from Rome in the same year as Mark's gospel. It is purportedly (1:1) from Peter the Apostle, whose personality is so vividly conveyed by Mark. Assuming that this is possible (it is beyond our present scope to investigate this question here, fascinating though it is) it is puzzling that 1 Peter lacks the sense of joy, so clear in Mark/Romans, in the closeness of union we have in Christ, and has a self-conscious air (2:11, 2:15), and even a sense of seeking after righteousness in order to gain reward. But 5:10 gets it right. We can only meet the puzzle with some accompanying facts: we note to whom Peter writes - to scattered Christians, whose lives are under threat. How else could they be encouraged than along the lines Peter takes? Then we note that Silvanus is the scribe - a companion of Paul. Perhaps he was over-confident of his literary skill in what was probably Peter's lack of it, and the attempt to communicate with the intellectual has resulted in the loss of the freshness we found in Mark's gospel. The humility of Peter comes across in his allowing Silvanus to write - as though, having read it, he puts his trust in Silvanus' judgement - "If

that will get the message across, so be it!" The last three verses suggest a personal postscript, and reveal the warmth of fellowship: .... Μᾶρκος ὁ υἱός μου ... ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἀγάπης

- and it is entirely fitting that the last words of all should be as they are: Εἰρήνη ὑμῖν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ.

Having accepted the puzzle, we find the Gospel essentials shining out: 1:1-12 (vv. 3-12 remind us of comparable introductions in Ephesians and 2 Cor.). We find another way, drawn from Scripture, of expressing our union with Christ: Ἅγιοι ἔσεσθε, ὅτι ἐγὼ ἅγιος (1:16). We find in v. 17 the assurance that we should call on God as Father, and at 2:2 we are encouraged to think of ourselves as newborn babes. (cf. Mk. 10:13-16) It is hard to resist bidding Silvanus "physician, heal thyself!" Anything less childlike than his sophisticated style is hard to imagine - though perhaps his evident enjoyment and complete unawareness that he is in fact assuming apostolic authority is itself a demonstration of childlike innocence!) He goes on to indicate that that which we noted in Exodus 19 (see p. 13 ) has come to pass: we are βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα , living in the joy of light. 5:7 shows a glimpse of the simplicity of genuine faith in a momentary slipping of the pompous mask.

Of the use of the vocabulary of prayer: we have already noted Peter's own conclusion to the letter; the categories we find here must be taken in the light of our comments on Silvanus; what we would normally mean by spontaneity is not quite that here! However, we find the usual greeting, with an original touch:

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη πληθυνθείη (1:2)

(1:3-13 has already received comment).

The work of prayer is indicated at

3:7 .... εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐγκόπτεσθαι τὰς προσευχὰς ὑμῶν.

4:7 σωφρονήσατε οὖν καὶ νήψατε εἰς προσευχάς·

- both these are tinged with pomposity, one feels.

5:7 brings, as we have noted, an unveiled touch: here is the combination of self-expression, work of prayer, and communion of life, in utter reliance on God's understanding, goodness, and

work of salvation. Our involvement with one another occupies much space, and the inclusion of the quotation from Psalm 34, with its reference to ὦτα αὐτοῦ εἰς δέησιν αὐτῶν (1 Pe. 3:12) reminds us of the working out of the Lord's will among ourselves.

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When we come to Jude, we again find ourselves using the word "strange" - echoes of the fullness of Gospel mercy are here: 1, 20, 24-25 - but most of the letter is stern - one might even say ranting. We can only assume that the aim of Jude was to get the full attention of his readers, which he could only by shock tactics, if they had been lured into non-Gospel ideas. 20-21 elicit comment: the centre of the sentence is clearly

ἑαυτοὺς ἐν ἀγάπῃ Θεοῦ τηρήσατε,

which expresses Gospel truth; the surrounding phrases are not so straightforward; there are dubious overtones, which perhaps are discerned only from the manifold elaboration and turbulences of Church history, but which nevertheless should not be ignored:

... τῇ ἁγιωτάτῃ ὑμῶν πίστει

has a suggestion of exclusiveness about it; of barriers erected to guard the treasure - attitudes which have arisen and even now exist in the Church of God, denying the accessibility Jesus showed and the outgoing attitude of Acts. προσδεχόμενοι τὸ ἔλεος τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον (21)

has a suggestion of concern for personal safety, and of seeking a reward. In this setting, the only occasion of the language of prayer: ἐν Πνεύματι Ἁγίῳ προσευχόμενοι (20) comes across, though the words are "right", as preoccupied entreaty, rather than the trusting, open "work of prayer" we have come primarily to associate with this word. However, we are perhaps being hard on Jude; we have noted the confidence - and grace - of the concluding verses; it may be that there is a double lesson here: both what Jude actually says about keeping firmly on course, and what he implicitly teaches about teaching: that

only one thing can be dealt with at a time, others can for the moment be taken for granted.

*

After all this, the impression 1 Timothy gives is of fresh air, of a firm grasp of the Gospel. Even if not actually from Paul to Timothy, whoever designated it as such recognised the same spirit at work.

The opening verse, and also 6:15-16, shows the familiar unrestrained enthusiasm of Paul, confident in God, aware of the deep relationship with one another which arises out of our union with God. He is familiar with the constant departures from the simple Gospel truth; these must be dealt with in love (1:5), and as an integral part of ministerial responsibility (4:6). Here again is the wide vision, the missionary spirit (1:15-16 and 4:4-5) and the spirit of communion which shows itself in sudden bursts of praise - 1:17; in the importance of right relationship among the fellowship, in the obvious affection Paul has for Timothy, and his concern for his wellbeing, and in the responsibility of a Christian minister to lead in the ways of righteousness according to sound doctrine.

Perhaps there are examples of unguarded language between colleagues[33]: ὧν ἐστιν Ὑμέναιος καὶ Ἀλέξανδρος, οὓς παρέδωκα τῷ Σατανᾷ, ἵνα παιδευθῶσιν μὴ βλασφημεῖν (1:20). Τὸ δὲ Πνεῦμα ῥητῶς λέγει ὅτι ἐν ὑστέροις καιροῖς ἀποστήσονταί τινες τῆς πίστεως, προσέχοντες πνεύμασιν πλάνοις καὶ διδασκαλίαις δαιμονίων...(4:1).

Timothy would share with Paul a deep trust in God, in whose hands can safely be left those things which lie beyond our earthly capabilities, even though the Spirit of God works among us.

In such a setting, we find this indication of congregational responsibility for the work of prayer; we now discuss the points noted above (pp 105ff) - acknowledging that our interpretation is inevitably influenced by the development of doctrine and practice.

1. The catalogue of words. These are all terms we have already come across, and as we have discovered them, we find the first three, δεήσεις, προσευχάς, ἐντεύξεις, interchangeable in

practice, though each has its distinct root meaning. As we have found them, they have been descriptive words, with the stress on the goal; there is a danger in the way this is put - and it may be that it is a reading back from the fact of later development - that the emphasis is shifted from the objective of prayer to the activity of prayer.

2. The widening of the sphere. In context, this is a welcome return to the generosity of God; in practice - and this perhaps clarifies further the preceding point - it has made the work of prayer of unmanageable proportions, in contrast to Paul's clarity of purpose in real involvement in prayer (Phil. 4:6); and the result, as we often experience it, is that the prayer of the congregation is expressed in generalities, and can be rather more of a "shopping list" than an expression of involvement - and this is because there is no involvement; intercession has become limited to the activity called prayer, again in contrast with Col. 1:24, 28 (see p.101f), and with (on a different scale) the letter to Philemon.

3. We give the benefit of the doubt to the writer of 1 Timothy that he refers to the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God - but in later hands this has become a pious hope - frequently reiterated (see p.20 ). As Revelation vividly shows, the fulfilment of the Kingdom is a goal of which the achievement involves, in the world as it is, a readiness to enter into suffering. The message is that the Christian must keep his attention on the goal, and resist the lure of an easy life[35].

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Before leaving the use of the vocabulary of prayer in terms of a specific aim, we turn to James, where we find a clear understanding of one of the most sought after aspects of the ministry of prayer - the healing of the sick.

In considering James' examples, we move into a new category, in that so far our references to prayer have involved people at a distance; prayer has been a way in which those separated by miles yet meet in fellowship. But James speaks of a ministry of prayer within an actual gathering, though we shall see later that the prayer of healing is not to be thought to be restricted to such occasions.

This is an uncomfortable book. If it belongs, as some think, to an early period of the Christian Church[36], its challenge is still more penetrating. For the implication then is that its thesis, that "doctrine" can easily be assented to because its application can as easily be missed or ignored, is not to be regarded as possibility which crept in once, but as an unfortunate fact of life[37]. James balances the fascinating content of preaching, and interest in the life of Jesus, in an attempt to keep the faith alive, active and contemporary. 1:26-27 is basic! God is "perfect" in action as well as in being - indeed, the two are one[38]. Faith, for the Christian, is the basis of actions. Prayer, in James' understanding, is practicality - part of Christian activity. This "letter", we must remember, is not carefully worked out theology, but a "spiritual address"[39]. We can, for instance, see what James means in 1:5-6, but to analyse too closely would bring us to the conclusion that faith is itself a work! αἰτέω is the verb used here - basically a simple "asking", expressing desire and request (cf. pp.162ff). The same is true of 4:7-8:

ἐγγίσατε τῷ θεῷ is a turn of phrase used to balance
ἀντίστητε δὲ τῷ διαβόλῳ and should not be taken to imply a distance between God and mankind (cf. on Eph. p.106).

The language of prayer as it occurs in 5:13-18 shows the activity of prayer to be a "work" which brings about the will of God. The feeling James conveys is one of confidence - his approach is that of Elijah, whom he recalls, and whom we discussed (p.35). Κακοπαθεῖ τις ἐν ὑμῖν; προσευχέσθω (5:13) - suggests a searching for God's will in the midst of the suffering; εὐθυμεῖ τις; ψαλλέτω balances this, and thus reinforces the interpretation. Sickness, then as now, merits special mention - it is always occasion for heart-searching and questioning. Here it is taken for granted that the patient will recognise his spiritual need as well as his medical need, and will summon help from the fellowship as readily as he will summon the doctor. The indication is that thus healing takes place; but we must state again that "James" is not to be thought of in the same way as Romans, where every word is carefully chosen. However, even having said that, the vocabulary invites comment:

ἀσθενέω - be weak, feeble, sickly; κάμνω - be weary, tired, exhausted, worn out. These translations suggest symptoms rather than causes[40]. The support of the fellowship assists in the enduring of the burden, and perhaps we should add: especially when it is not removed; never in the New Testament do we find any indication that a Christian life should be free of trouble. The liveliness of James' approach testifies to experience - he possibly knows of cases where healing of the spirit enabled physical healing; if pressed to explain further he would doubtless bring in something akin to the faith of Romans 8:18-25. His aim at the present is to prod his readers into the activity of the Kingdom, which is not only their privilege but also their responsibility. Undoubtedly the reconcilation of the opposing forces which produce sickness is a possibility to be taken into account and acted upon - and recognition of this, and of our share in it, is vital to full Christian living. The wide meaning of "sin" which we have discussed elsewhere (p.55 ff) may be understood here, where again we find before us our mutual responsibility for setting one another free from burden (5:15-16, 19-20). The relationship between relief from the burden of sin and praying (in the meaning we have discovered - of penetration into the will of God) is valuable insight - especially in this context. We notice too with interest: ἡ εὐχὴ τῆς πίστεως σώσει τὸν κάμνοντα (5:15), and recall our discussion of Mark 9:9-29 (pp. 91 ff.), also recalled in the next verse by the incidence of ἰσχύω: πολὺ ἰσχύει δέησις δικαίου ἐνεργουμένη (5:16 cf. Mk. 9:18 ... εἶπα τοῖς μαθηταῖς σου ἵνα αὐτὸ ἐκβάλωσιν, καὶ οὐκ ἴσχυσαν).

James' use of δίκαιος here is slightly different from Paul's: for Paul it was a term used to establish the fundamentals of Christian faith - that our relationship with the Father is secure, since by faith in Christ we are counted δίκαιοι. James' emphasis is on the activity which flows from fundamental truth: union with God means union in will with God. Those who are δίκαιοι in God's sight are also instrumental in his work.

James, then, offers most useful insight; as so often the case, the spontaneous reveals the truth, and this letter gives every impression of spontaneity rather than painstaking composition. James is often criticised for not "proclaiming the Gospel"; but this was not his aim. He wrote to those who knew the Gospel, to help them to live the Gospel. He could not do so with the vigour and enthusiasm which he shows were he not himself convinced of and filled with the eternal power of the Spirit of God.

We find further "tangible" references to the ministry of healing in Acts 9:17, 9:40, 28:8. We note (and this may have a bearing on the dating of James) that these are informal occasions compared with the developed rite suggested in James. We note also that Ananias was not, as far as Acts tells us, a leader in the Church; he is described as a disciple; he greets Saul as "brother"; there is no suggestion that Ananias had a particular gift of healing; he was, according to the impression given by the narrative, called upon to minister to Paul at this particular moment of crisis. We also observe that 9:17 does not actually specify that prayer accompanied the laying-on-of-hands. This is true of other acts of healing: the cripple in Acts 3:1-17; and the gift which Peter seems to have possessed - Acts 5:15-16. Similar things are recorded of Paul - Acts 14:8ff and 19:11-12. (Philip also exercised a ministry of healing (8:4-13), but we are told nothing of his "methods"). In 1 Cor. 12:9 Paul distinguishes between "gifts of healing" - χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων - and "miraculous powers" (NEB) ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων. There is no means of fathoming the working of the latter, if we may understand by this the power described in Acts 5:15-16, 19:11-12, for the impression is that Peter and Paul were unaware of the gift (cf. Mark, The Transfiguration, Moses). But the other is consciously and confidently used; perhaps, from the examples we have, we may identify the act of intercession as the using of the gift - focused either by laying-on-of-hands or by word of command (3:6, 14:10). Where prayer precedes, as 9:40, this may be seeking the will of God (for the removal of physical ills is not for all - a fact which is often found puzzling, but is answered by the Cross and Romans 8 - and see above) where it is not immediately known (3:6, or previously established

(9:10-16). A further point of pastoral importance is that in all these cases there is an element of co-operation. Work in hospital or general visiting may well confront the minister with invalids to whom he longs to administer the gifts of healing, but is unable to do so without co-operation. Prayer at a distance may well prove the means by which the preparatory stage of readiness to co-operate is accomplished.

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We pause here to consider (briefly) the healing ministry of Jesus. Only in John is this directly linked with the recognisable activity of prayer, and then the spoken prayer is for the sake of those present (see pp. 153ff ). For the Church of Christ the activity of the Kingdom depends, as we have seen, on seeking the will of God; an insight which Jesus possessed. In looking at his work of healing we recognise that he carried in himself the authority to secure the co-operation needed to bring about the removal of disorder; there was unquestioning compliance with his instructions. We see this most clearly in the case of the paralysed man brought to Jesus by his friends (Mk. 2:1-12 and //s): was the patient unwilling and unco-operative? The implication is that Jesus had to deal with his attitude first, or he would doubtless have refused to pick up his bed and go home! In the words "My son, your sins are forgiven", we find expressed compassionate understanding and insight into the man himself. In other cases this readiness to comply is already there (we remember, by contrast, Naaman's attitude to Elisha, and his reluctance to co-operate - 2 Ki. 5:9-12); for example, the withered arm is stretched out (Mk. 3:5); the blind man goes and washes (Jn. 9:7); the nobleman goes home (Jn. 4:50). We notice further the variety of Jesus' methods; for some, laying-on-of-hands, or a simple touch of friendship for a leper (Mk. 1:41); a word of command from afar can suffice (Mt. 8:13); in some cases a visit to the home is needed (Lk. 8:41ff); sometimes an act of ministry is used (Mk. 7:31-34, 8:22-26). Linked with the knowledge of the concern of Jesus for the person bearing the sickness, we may find here willingness to convey the healing activity in the most

appropriate way for the individual - a demonstration of the humility of the Lord's authority.

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Other examples of this "immediate prayer" are the occasions of laying-on-of-hands as a sign of the giving of the Holy Spirit: Acts 8:15-17; 19:6. Other instances refer to laying-on-of-hands as a sign of commissioning: Acts 6:6, 13:3, 14:23 - this we may surely understand as a formalisation, into a recognised action of the Church, of an instinctive gesture of loving encouragement, which imparts encouragement, which may be described as a "spiritual gift" (cf. Ro.1:11); it is not difficult to understand its further development into the solemn sacramental rite of ordination.

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We conclude our survey of prayer with an explicit aim in view with four instances which stand on their own in Acts and one from 1 John: the first, at 1:24, in connection with the election of Matthias, where we have the actual expression of the prayer, which is of interest, though here not the central interest. Rather, the following observations are to be made:

1. The prayer, as reported, takes place after the decision to elect someone has been taken; the search for God's will (cf. p.92 ff) is therefore within limits set without (according to the narrative) reference to him.

2. The decision was taken before the experience of the Holy Spirit, during the waiting period (Acts 1:4-5).

3. Given the circumstances: two nominations, of which one would be bound to be chosen, short of dramatic divine intervention, there was no way in which it could be indicated that the disciples were on the wrong lines.

There is a strong opinion in the Danish Lutheran Church that this election was a mistake, and reveals an error of judgement. This finds concrete expression in Copenhagen Cathedral in an imposing collection of statues; work by the sculptor Thorvaldsen flanks the nave: these are the twelve apostles, and the twelfth is not Matthias, but Paul. The fact that there is at any rate

a question to be asked draws attention to the points already listed, and offers another aspect of the responsibility of Christians and of a possible meaning of "prayer" in the discovery of its working out: the search for a right judgement, which is by no means to be taken for granted. We think of Peter's treatment of Ananias and Sapphira, which, in the way it is told, seems unaccountably harsh; of Paul's attitude to John Mark (15:37-39); of the dissension between Peter and Paul, reported in Galatians (cf. Ro. 14:19, 15:6); and perhaps especially the eventual complete separation between Jews and Christians. By way of contrast we recall Stephen's attitude (7:59), Ananias' and Barnabas' readiness to accept Paul (9:17ff), and Peter's welcome to Cornelius (10:26ff).

The question of right judgement introduces the second example, 1 John 5:13-17. This is difficult, so we begin by setting out the context.

1 John. The foundation of this "letter"[41] is set out in the first chapter, though not in detailed argument. God was in Christ (1:1-2), our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ (1:3) and this is occasion for joy (1:4). But humanity remains humanity (1:8), and this is within the scope of the gospel (1:9), but the Christian needs to know what is his aim (1:6), and that he has responsibility for his brethren (1:7).

From this summary flows the rest of the epistle, with clarification of some implications. The manifest paradox between the light in which Christians walk and the sin about which they must not deceive themselves arises from the fact that this is an interim period - the last hour (2:18, 28). The result is confusing, and the need for encouragement great, but the need is recognised by God and met (3:23, 5:11). This produces a further paradox: he who has not the Son has not life. The freedom to respond is also the freedom not to respond. This, though John does not work out his thesis, means that there is another side to what we understand about prayer. 5:13-17 is in agreement with our discovery in Paul (see p.95 ff) that prayer is involvement in the working out of the will of God, and means co-operation. Where freedom not to respond to God has been exercised, there is nothing that can be done in prayer. We do not know whether John thus recognises prayer as one means which

co-operates with other means, such as signs, or intellectual arguments. It is possible that something of this kind could have been in his mind - at any rate it is not excluded by what he says. But the emphasis for John is not speculation on what is not certain, but to grasp what is certain - and he concludes with the reiterated οἴδαμεν (5:18, 19, 20) which is not the Gnostic idea of the achievement or gift of the superior and favoured, but rather the Hebrew understanding of knowing, which is thorough, deep, and involves the whole personality.

The language here is the language of asking: ἐάν τι κατὰ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ ἀκούει ἡμῶν and in v. 16 we find the stronger word ἐρωτήσῃ . (Further discussion of these words is found on pp. 162ff ) . The asking is not a begging that God will change his mind, it is the way of expressing the change of circumstances which is brought about by the creative activity of God, in which his people share.

This is the only use John makes of the vocabulary of prayer in this epistle; his basis is the union of Christians with God, which implies the free flow of communication.

The third "isolated" example is at Ac. 12:5: προσευχὴ δὲ ἦν ἐκτενῶς γινομένη ὑπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν περὶ αὐτοῦ (i.e. Peter in prison). This stands on its own in that there is an intention in the prayer - it is for Peter; what this is is not explicitly stated. There are three possibilities:

1. This could mean deep empathy with Peter as he endures such a trial; watching with him, involvement with him, in the way Jesus sought in Gethsemane.

2. It could mean that the prayer was the means by which the release came about.

3. It could mean a slipping back into the idea of persuading God - natural, in the circumstances, but still an expression of doubt, not Gospel faith.

A strong hint that the second of these was not the case comes (12:14-16) in the sheer incredulity of the gathering that Peter was there; this does not exclude the first, but it does suggest that the centre of the prayer was the problem rather than God - his favour, his goodness, and his power.

The fourth instance is in connection with the appointing of

the Seven (Acts 6:4), and indicates a conception of a ministry of prayer, but gives no hint at all of what this means in practice:

ἡμεῖς δὲ τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ τῇ διακονίᾳ τοῦ λόγου προσκαρτερήσομεν

We do not know, for example, whether this means something like the corporate office of the monastic community as it has developed; or whether it means an individual ministry; what is clear, from the overall picture Acts gives of the way of life of the apostles, is that it does not indicate a withdrawal from "the world" akin to the life of the Therapeutae.

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In this last example we find another bridge, into the next collection of examples: references to prayer with no suggestion of purpose - beyond the fact of engaging in "prayer". This collection separates into two:

individuals at prayer Ac. 9:11; 10:2, 10:9 (reported 10:30; 11:5); 22:17;

corporate prayer 1:14; 2:42; 3:1; 4:31; 16:13, 16, 25; 20:36; 21:5 - and cf. 1 Thess.1:2

We deal first with the references to corporate prayer. It is clear that at first the Temple continued to be the natural gathering place for those brought up in its traditions (2:46, 3:1, 21:23-26, 24:11). But a question arises, and it arises when we consider Jesus himself: in view of the new relationship between God and his people, declared by the Gospel, what was the attitude of Christian worshippers as they participated in the Temple rites? There is no clear indication, but we can suggest possibilities:

1. Knowledge of the fulfilment of the promises of Judaism would heighten awareness of belonging, and identity with, all that was brought to a focus in the Temple.

2. Experience of intimacy with God through Christ in no way decreases his glory and majesty; to worship in the splendour of the Temple would be (as it can be within Christian cathedrals) to experience and express response to the majesty of God.

3. (linked with the preceding) - for certain temperaments, art (music, architecture, drama, dance, visual arts, literature) affords this experience of God and is an expression of response to him; liturgy is understood by such in artistic terms and is in itself an art which ascribes to God that spirituality which is in all true art.

4. There must have been an element of missionary spirit (Acts 1:23-26 and Ro. 9:1-5); of hope and desire to spread the Gospel within the Jewish community.

The examples we have collected of corporate Christian prayer suggest something complementary to rather than replacing that offered by the Temple. This is natural, both in the light of the preceding points, and also because there was, of course, only one Temple, and the gathering of the synagogue (the word meant originally the gathering, not the building) could not take the place of the Temple, which remained the goal of pilgrimage for those who lived at a distance; and the synagogue remained a natural "place of prayer" (16:13) for Christian Jews.

However, there is at the same time clear indication of Christian worship comparable with the synagogue and distinct from the smaller prayer meeting. This receives its fullest treatment in 1 Cor. 11-14 (cf. also 1 Thess.5:19-22), and we have already referred to 1 Tim. 2:1, and noted the development of the Church revealed by Ephesians. Having said that, however, we must go on to acknowledge that there is no straightforward account, or description, of congregational worship[42]. The impression is that Paul is struggling to bring order where there is chaos because everyone is ready to contribute - a far cry from the pattern of worship of the majority of Christian assemblies! There is a blend of formality and informality surrounding the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:17-34). It is not clear, from what is actually said here, whether the "Lord's Supper" was integrated into an ordinary meal, whether it was the ordinary meal, or whether it was symbolic within a gathering which, possibly for convenience as well as enjoyment, took its meal together[43]. But merged with the organisation of the supper itself are remarks about the disunity of the gathering; the inner significance of the external symbolism is in danger of being lost (11:18-20). This offers further insight into 10:16-17: the sacrament

proclaims the truth; Gospel truth must therefore be brought to the sacramental partaking. We have seen that the Christian's relationship with God involves a real relationship with the brethren, and we have seen how this is expressed in the ministry of prayer; it is clear in this connection that the Lord's Supper is an outward expression, and thus a focusing, of that brotherhood, which gives responsibility and requires commitment. The Body (11:29) seems to have for Paul a double meaning - the sacrament proclaims the presence of Christ and affirms the Church as the continuing embodiment of his presence; so the Body is both the Lord and the Church[44].

The second outstanding concern of Paul, in dealing with the Corinthians, is the use of the gift of "ecstatic utterance" (NEB). Unless one has identified this experience of oneself or in another, it is not easy to comment on it. It would seem that this is a sign that in Christ the knowledge of God which was the experience of the few (see p.36) under the Old Covenant is now shared by the fellowship, for "ecstatic utterance" suggests the vocalisation of a joyous realisation which transcends normal expression, and is comparable with the prophetic trance. If this is the case, interpretation, without which the utterance has no place in the assembly's worship, must mean identifying that aspect of truth which has gripped the speaker. But Paul gives no examples of what this might be; he does clearly distinguish it from prophecy, and thus emphasises that ecstatic utterance is primarily a gift for individual benefit (14:1-6); having said that, he obviously has no wish to discourage those thus gifted (14:26, 39). Paul stresses that this is a gift to be used and controlled, and not, as often assumed (probably from the accusation thrown at the ecstatic apostles on the day of Pentecost[45], that they were drunk) a matter of uncontrollable spontaneity.

Before leaving this subject, two points of some interest arise: First, we used above the phrase "identify this experience"; the NEB use of the word "ecstatic", coupled with Paul's insistence on self-control in the use of the gift, prompts the question: Is this ecstasy to be identified with the expression thereof - i.e. γλωσσῶν - or is the emphasis on what inspires the utterance, since the interpretation is, for the

congregation, essential? If the latter, then the experience can be identified in countless ways (cf. Diptych : 2).

Secondly, we recall Philo's account of the worship of the Therapeutae as wholesome ecstasy at once comparable with and contrasting with Bacchanalian frenzy; we noted (p.15f.) the lack of eschatological awareness, and withdrawal, of this community; we noted (p.119) that, if the apostles fulfilled their intention to "devote themselves to prayer" this did not involve withdrawal. Paul makes clear that the purpose of the gathering is the building up of the body, it is for this that the gifts of the Spirit are given. Not all the gifts which form the list into which Paul sets that of ecstatic utterance would find a place in a meeting for worship; wise speech, healing, faith, distinguishing between spirits, are surely matters of responding to the general affairs of life. We compare the list in Romans (12:6-8) which includes administration, teaching, giving, helping the distressed; and also the considerable space devoted in 2 Corinthians to the organisation of a collection. All this indicates - and it is borne out by the fact that, comprehensive as Romans is, it does not devote attention to the organisation of worship - that the purpose of the congregation is the work of the Kingdom, it is a "congregation" as a worshipping body - this may be found to be the case even allowing for Paul's eschatological viewpoint (see p.55 ). "The ministry is to do with service, not services"[46]. Congregational worship is the inspiration of the congregation's task; it is not its sole task. A further indication that this is the case is the fact that this list of gifts in Corinthians does not specify a gift of prayer, nor is there, in Ephesians, an item of armour identified with prayer. This strongly suggests that "prayer" should be understood as that which pervades all else.

Acts gives some hints, though no more, concerning the beginning of distinctive Christian worship: 1:14 (this could belong also in the next category - see p.124), 2:42, 20:7; there is little to add by way of comment, except to note that in these cases the emphasis is on learning; the Gospel is still "news", and there is much to be discovered. There are hints in Colossians (3:16) and Ephesians (5:19) of the music of Christian worship, though to take these as references to the assembly is reasonable assumption; it is not explicitly stated that this is

meant. The reference to "psalms" invited brief comment: this must include reference to the Old Testament Psalter; in view of the division of opinion of later generations as to its appropriateness, as a whole, to Christian worship, it would be interesting to know what use was in practice made of the psalms. Also available would be similar new compositions, such as those in the Hymns Scroll in the Qumran literature[47]; and we recall Philo's reference to new hymns in De Vita Contemplativa:

καὶ ἔπειτα ὁ μὲν ἀνασταὰς ὕμνον ᾄδει πεποιημένον εἰς τὸν Θεόν, ἢ καινὸν αὐτὸς πεποιηκὼς ἢ ἀρχαῖόν τινα τῶν πάλαι ποιητῶν –

(80).

"Early Christian Hymns" are identified in The Bible in Order[48] as Col. 1:15-20, Phil. 2:6-11, 1 Peter 1:3-5, 1 Peter 2:22-25a, 1 Peter 3:18-22 - these celebrate the meaning and being of Christ. Cullmann[49] mentions as "The oldest of all Christian songs several from Revelation: 5:9, 12, 13; 12:10-12, 19:1-2, 6 . We also add the hymns in the opening chapters of Luke 1:47-55; 1:68-79; 2:14, 2:29-32.

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On the subject of the beginnings of a distinctively Christian anthology of expression of worship, and by way of leading us back to the main avenue of exploration as we turn to references to the prayer meeting, it is perhaps appropriate at this stage to draw attention to the greetings at the beginnings and endings of epistles, and reference to the kiss of peace (Ro. 16:16). The greetings are sufficiently similar to suggest an accepted formula, but the impression is not of automatic use - the wishes expressed have all the warmth of genuineness. In view of this, we consider, briefly, two words which occur repeatedly, asking why χάρις and εἰρήνη are so fundamental to Christian living that they form a natural and constant Christian greeting.

"The idea of grace more than any other idea binds the two Testaments together into a complete whole, for the Bible is the story of the saving work of God, that is, the grace of God".

So writes N.H. Snaith[50], who distinguishes different uses of "grace" in the two Testaments. In the Old Testament it is one of two words (the other is "favour") used to translate the Hebrew "chen", which means kindness, shown where there is no tie or relationship to call it forth; it is shown by a superior to an inferior, so there is no obligation prompting it.

The New Testament use is connected with God's revelation, and gift, in Jesus, and the joy of the indwelling Spirit of God, joy which is the dominant mood of Paul, and the essence of the Gospel. Here the aspect of meaning indicating pleasure comes out, both the giving and receiving of the "favour" are causes of delight.

We may suggest two possible reasons why χάρις should become a fundamental word in Christian vocabulary, to the extent of its use in everyday greeting: first, that it <u>is</u> the essence of the Gospel, and so it is that which is shared, rejoicingly, by the Christian brotherhood; second (and this is made clear from the Galatian letter, in its contents, and also, particularly, in the comment added to the opening greeting (1:4)), so amazing, so divine is this gift that it is all too easy to slip into the doubt of disbelief; so part of the ministry of the Christian brotherhood is mutual reassurance that it <u>is</u> true - and to be reassured thus leads naturally into the second word - <u>peace</u>.

This again is a word full of richness; it is "almost synonymous with eternal life"[51]. The fruit of the gift of grace is peace: knowledge of ultimate safety and security; knowledge of a depth that has power to sustain through the often painful changes and chances of this fleeting world (e.g. Ro. 5:1, John 14:27, Eph. 3:17-19). Amongst those who share in the life of the world, this would be an expression of mutual understanding, concern and support.

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With these personal greetings we turn to suggestions of shared prayer, distinct from the assembly, and with no implicit objective. In Acts 4:24-31 we find the content of prayer together. This is the response of those who meet with Peter and John when they are discharged; the "prayer" is the spontaneous

expression of common sentiments: οἱ δὲ ἀκούσαντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἦραν φωνὴν πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν . . .

However, allowing for Luke's reporting, which may well involve legitimate licence in giving an impression of the kind of thing said, the language is surprisingly formal: not "Father" but Δέσποτα , not "our Lord Jesus" but τὸν ἅγιον παῖδά σου Ἰησοῦν.

What is said is true to the spirit of the Gospel; there is affirmation (and in the circumstances, perhaps after all the might of the Lord with whom they co-operate, and who is the God of the Fathers, was naturally uppermost in their minds), and the request made is not for ease but for strength that they might be courageous in witness, and faithful instruments of the divine power. The request is immediately "heard" and "answered" (cf. Mt. 18:19, Mk. 11:24); this recalls also our comments on knowing the will of God in connection with intercession (pp.92 ff).

Paul and Silas, imprisoned (Ac. 16:25) προσευχόμενοι ὕμνουν τὸν Θεόν. This is surely the prayer of sharing in the depths, a mixture of mutual encouragement and individual honesty. Though the mood which emerges is confident, imagination suggests triumph over darkness rather than absence of it.

Ac.20:36; 21:5 - Here are two instances of moving farewells: to pray together is natural. This must mean the expression together of that mutual love and concern which we have found in the unity of prayer in separation - it would surely involve (not necessarily expressed in words) thanksgiving to God for a friendship which found its roots in him, thanksgiving for fellowship in him, and mutual blessing.

We mention here also: Εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ Θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ πάντων ὑμῶν, μνείαν ποιούμενοι ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν ἡμῶν (1Thess.1:2). It is not clear whether this indicates that Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy made a practice of praying together, or whether it means that the three were united in concern for their brethren at Colossae (cf. p.103). We do not know, then, whether we are to understand, individually or corporately, a "time of prayer"; (the next section, and the study of our Lord, may offer

suggestions).

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We turn, then to the mention of individuals at prayer. First, Paul: Ananias is told (9:11) ἰδοὺ γὰρ προσεύχεται . This can be no other than response to the experience of Christ he has had: overwhelmed, Paul's whole attention is riveted on God, and one can only guess at what was communicated between them - and turn aside from intruding. Part of it we are told: Paul is prepared for Ananias' visit by a vision (Acts 9:11).

In the account of Cornelius' entry into the fellowship, Cornelius is described as one δεόμενος τοῦ θεοῦ διὰ παντός (Acts 10:2) Peter ἀνέβη ἐπὶ τὸ δῶμα προσεύξασθαι (Acts 10:9). Both experienced visions.

Paul, arrested in Jerusalem, is granted permission to address the crowd; he testifies to his conversion, and in his account: Ἐγένετο δέ μοι ὑποστρέψαντι εἰς Ἰερουσαλὴμ καὶ προσευχομένου μου ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ γενέσθαι με ἐν ἐκστάσει (Acts 22:17) and Paul records a conversation with the Lord.

To these we add Τῇ δὲ ἐπιούσῃ νυκτὶ ἐπιστὰς αὐτῷ ὁ Κύριος εἶπεν, Θάρσει... (23:11);

Ananias' vision and conversation with the Lord (9:10);
Stephen's vision and prayer (7:55, 59, 60).

It is very striking indeed that four references to individual prayer should all involve the experience of vision. We draw from these instances, and those we have added, the following points:

1. In every case the vision is given (not sought), and given unexpectedly.

2. We take knowledge of this testimony to the interaction of visible and invisible.

3. We notice, for Paul and Stephen, the companionship of the Lord, to whom, seeing him, Stephen naturally speaks.

We note these things, , and in doing so, reflect on the naturalness with which they are recorded; there is no doubt as to "validity" or "authenticity"; we perceive a different prevailing attitude in later generations - not least our own.

Consideration of the visionary leads naturally to Revelation - the account of a prolonged vision which, significantly, was experienced on the Lord's Day: ἐγενόμην ἐν Πνεύματι ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ (Rev. 1:10) and the implication is that the Christian gathering for worship is the occasion for the powerful experience of the presence of Christ, which offers encouragement, and vision, both of God himself, and of the fulfilment of his activity, which inspires the will to persevere. The letters to the churches (2,3) show how necessary is such encouragement; there is much to discourage, and many lose the will to persevere, but this God understands, and the way of repentance is available, readily and in welcome.

The Christian gathering for worship is a constant - worship is part of the heavenly realms as well as the earthly (not that we are to think of these as separated)[52]. Worship denotes the right attitude to God, and it is the vocabulary of worship which is dominant in John's use of the vocabulary of prayer.

In the portrayal of scenes of fulfilment hymns of worship predominate. Once (deliberately or not we do not know) a temple word comes in: οἱ δοῦλοι αὐτοῦ λατρεύσουσιν αὐτῷ (22:3).

The sense of mutual involvement and of co-operation is strongly presented: John is sharing in suffering ἐν Ἰησοῦ and with the fellowship (1:9); he is also, by implication, linked with those from whom he is physically separated by the worship on the Lord's Day. The impression is also that he himself is alone - the experience he records is comparable with Teilhard de Chardin's Hymn of the Universe[53].

It is not clear whether John has in mind the presence of Christ through the Eucharist, or the proclamation of the Word - Caird assumes the Eucharist[54], Bultmann would doubtless prefer the proclamation of the word[55], but the language of vision is

universal, and can legitimately be drawn on in support of any expression of Christian worship; the one proviso is that it should not be treated allegorically.

In Revelation, then, we find a vision of perfection, and this perfection is expressed in worship. But this is not to imply an escape from the world; John has a message for the world about the presence of God in the world. Worship and activity are fused in his mind; it is the natural limitation of language that only one thing can be said at a time! Worship is an attitude - such as we found in Genesis 1. We have found that the existence of free individuals is potentially dangerous (p.59 ) - it is therefore a fact of existence that perfect fulfilment means the removal of that is not consonant with worship (cf. Ps. 104:35). There is not room for Gospel truth and "the devil".

The message of John the Divine, if Caird is right[56], is not, as the impression commonly implied or received, that the happening shortly to take place is the dramatic ending of the world's life as we know it when the Son takes the world by surprise and overcomes it with power superior to the combined resources of earthly armed might (an idea taken up and worked upon by, for example, Jehovah's Witnesses); but, with the insight born of a steady confidence in God and resulting in common sense, the fact that Christians would soon find their faith in the invisible realities and the inexhaustible resources of God put to the test when the world sought to destroy them. To understand John thus is to be able to be entirely positive in approaching him; to find a work of art, of imagination, not intended to be allegorised, or taken literally, but to proclaim eternal truth, from heart to heart. This means we do not have to work out a timetable and readjust it when forecast events fail to materialise; it means we are dealing with <u>eternal</u> truth, in the sense that things which took place in John's time, and are recorded in the chronicles of history, are examples, manifestations, of the truth which is re-expressed through history. What matters is "what goes on in what takes place"[57]. It means further that we find the truth ultimately not in events but in a person[58], and since his presence is eternal it means that eschatology is eternally present reality. What is revealed

is that which is eternally true: the omnipotent creativity of God, working redemptively in all that goes on, in ways inevitably hidden from all but the eyes of faith - the eyes who perceive and know God in Jesus.

This means that the prayer μαραναθα (1 Cor. 16:22, Rev. 22:20 - though John does not retain the Aramaic, which need not surprise us, since we have found that he reclothes eternal truth) can indeed make sense in both past and present forms (see C.K. Barrett)[59]; and we can find here a miniature of all we have thus far collected together: address to the ever present Lord, expression of desire to realise his presence, which is the experience of corporate worship and also the experience of the life of faith which is a life of communion; it is a prayer for the fulfilment of God's kingdom, which, as we shall see (p.137f) implies a commitment to it; it expresses the eschatological faith of both Paul and John.

Within an attitude of worship, all things work together for good, and among them is the work of prayer, which is, in toto, a mingling of earth and heaven (5:8, 7:3-5), even as the experience of vision testifies to one co-operation in the Kingdom.

*

At this point we pause to survey our route thus far in exploring the New Testament treatment of "prayer". Our starting point was vocabulary, and from this we have gone on to identify aspects of prayer: expressions of worship and expressions of asking, and this latter has divided, broadly, into two: "asking" with a definite aim in mind, and from the context, anyway, praying with no indication as to objective. We have also discovered the aspect of grappling with the will of God, which is sometimes clear but not always wholly in line with human inclination; sometimes not clear; sometimes perfectly clear, leading to confident and effective action.

## NOTES

1. See C.K. Barrett: The Gospel According to St John (SPCK, 1955) p.237.

2. Whether or not Luke knew Matthew's Gospel is the subject of interest and debate; see, for example, F.C. Grant: The Gospels - Their Origin and Growth (Faber, 1959), B.C. Butler: The Originality of St. Matthew (Cambridge, 1951), A.M. Farrer in Nineham: Studies in the Gospels (Oxford, 1954), W.R. Farmer: The Synoptic Problem (Macmillan Company, New York, 1964), M.D. Goulder: Midrash and Lection in Matthew (SPCK, 1974).

3. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament ed. Gerhard Kittel (Eerdmans, 1964) Vol. IV

4. e.g. 1 Chr. 16:8, 16:41; 23:30; 2 Chr. 5:13; Ps. 6:5, 35:18, 92:1, 95:2 - and many more.

5. Ro. 14:6; 16:4; 1 Cor. 14:16, 17; 2 Cor. 1:11;9:11, 12; Eph. 5:4, 20; Col. 1:3; 2:7; 3:16, 3:17; 4:2 ; 1 Thess 3:9; 5:18; 2 Thess 1:3; 2:13; 1 Tim. 2:1; 4:3, 4; Rev. 4:9; 7:12; 11:17.

6. Ac. 24:3; 27:35; 28:15; Ro. 1:8; 7:25; 16:4; 1 Cor. 1:4, 1:14; 10:30; 2 Cor. 2:14; 8:16; 9:15; [illegible] Phil. 1:3; Col. 1:3, 1:12; 3:17; 1 Thess 1:2; 2:13; 5:18.

7. Lk. 2:13; 20, 19:37, 24:53; Ac. 2:47, 3:8, 3:9; Ro. 15:11, Rev. 19:5.

8. Mk. 2:12; Mt. 5:16, 9:8, 15:31; Lk. 2:20, 4:15, 5:25-26, 7:16, 13:13, 17:15, 18:43, 23:47; Ac. 4:21, 11:18, 13:48, 21:20; Ro. 1:21, 15:6, 9; 2 Cor. 9:13; Gal. 1:24; 1 Pe. 2:12, 4:11, 14, 16; Rev. 15:4, 19:7.

9. See Albert Schweitzer: J.S. Bach (A. & C. Black, 1962 reprint) Vol. I p.166f.

10. See C.K. Barrett: op. cit. (Note 1 above) p.479ff.

11. Rev. 3:9, 4:10, 5:14, 7:11, 9:20, 11:1, 16; 13:4, 8, 12, 15; 14:7, 9, 11; 15:4, 16:2, 19:4, 19:10, 19:20, 20:4, 22:8, 9.

12. Mt. 2:2, 8, 11; 4:9, 10; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 18:26; 20:20; 28:9, 17.

13. Jn. 4:20, 21, 22, 23, 24; 9:38; 12:20.

14. Kittel: op. cit. (Note 3 above) on προσκυνέω.

15. See Käsemann's essay on "The Worship of God in the Everyday life of the World (Ro. 12)" in New Testament Questions of To-day (SCM, 1969).

16. cf. Kittel (op. cit. Note 1 above) who sums it up by saying that προσεύχομαι occurs where the fact of prayer is to be denoted with no indication of content, whereas δέομαι is used of a specific request.

17. ἰσχύω : to be strong, mighty, powerful; to have one's full powers; to be in health and strength. Note: Mt. οὐκ ἠδυνήθησαν αὐτὸν θεραπεῦσαι (17:16); Lk: ... ἵνα ἐκβάλωσιν αὐτό, καὶ οὐκ ἠδυνήθησαν (9:40).

18. For an account of her life and work see, for example, Dorothy Musgrave Arnold: Dorothy Kerin: Called by Christ to Heal (Hodder & Stoughton, 1965).

19. There is a notorious problem here: to what does ἐν ᾧ refer back? Should there be a full stop after υἱοθεσίας? Since these are points of analysis of the relationship which itself is not in dispute, we do not go into detail here. The points are set out by C.E.B. Cranfield: The Epistle to the Romans (I.C.C., T. and T. Clark, 1975) on 8:15.

20. C.K. Barrett: The Epistle to the Romans (A. and C. Black, 1962) p.168.

21. See, for example, C.K. Barrett op. cit. (Note 20 above) p.77ff.

22. Father Andrew in A Gift of Light (Ed. Harry C. Griffith; Mowbrays, 1968) pp.40-41.

23. J.L. Houlden: Paul's Letters from Prison (Pelican New Testament Commentaries, 1970) p.128.

24. Further examples of mutual responsibility and involvement are found at 1 Thess.5:25; 2 Thess.3:1; 2 Cor. 1:10-11, 9:14; Ro. 15:30; Phil. 1:4, 9, 19; Eph. 1:15-18; 3, 6:19; Heb.13:18.

25. cf. John Robinson: Honest to God (SCM, 1963) ch.5.

26. Further examples of this expression are found at 1 Thess.1:2, 5:17; 2 Thess.1:11; Ro. 1:9, 12:12; Eph. 6:18, 2 Tim. 1:3.

27. Mk. 14:34, 37, 38; Mt. 26:38, 40, 41 - cf. also Ac. 20:31; 1 Cor. 16:13; 1 Thess.5:6; 1 Pe. 4:7; Rev. 3:2, 3; 16:15.

28. M.R.Goulder - The Composition of the Lord's Prayer - in J.T.S. n.s. XIV. (1963) pp.32-45 - identifies three meanings of πειρασμός in the New Testament:

1. Man tempts God - see Heb. 3:8 (quoting Ps. 95).
2. Tribulations which test man to the limit - 2 Pe. 2:9; Lk. 8:13; Ac. 2:19; 1 Pe. 1:6, 4:12; Rev. 3:10.
3. The lure of the devil: Lk. 4:13; 1 Cor. 10:13; Gal. 4:14; 1 Tim. 6:9; Jas. 1:2, 12.

29. as suggested in The Bible in Order, and W.G. Kümmel: Introduction to the New Testament (SCM, 1975).

30. e.g. Lk. 21:36 cf. Mk. 14:38; Ac. 8:24 cf. 2 Cor. 13:7.

31. W.G. Kümmel: op. cit. (Note 28 above): see under Biblical headings.

32. cf. Kümmel: op. cit. (Note 28 above) on Ephesians, and by contrast, Rhymer in The Bible in Order.

33. Rhymer: in The Bible in Order; but cf. Kümmel op. cit. (Note 28 above) on 1 Peter.

34. In saying this we note, without going into it in detail, that part of the problem of the Pastorals is that though somehow public property. 1 Timothy is a personal letter; further, though not of Pauline authorship, Paul's influence is strong, to the extent that evidence is sufficient to identify some genuine Pauline material. See C.K. Barrett: The Pastoral Epistles (OUP, 1963).

35. In our day, when the world is open to view, and the "third world" suffers, the Church of the Western world has to ask itself constantly - or reply to the question - whether it is more interested in piety than in the Kingdom.

36. See The Bible in Order p.1489, and L.E. Elliott-Binns in Peake's Commentary on the Bible (Nelson, 1962); and c.f. Kümmel, op. cit. Note 23 above.

37. Sir Thomas More is one who stands out as having resisted his danger, and by doing so shines a searchlight on the many who were absent from his side.

38. 2:22-23: ἐτελειώθη: made perfect, i.e. fulfilled; cf. Mt. 5:48.

39. See L.E. Elliott-Binns: op. cit. Note 26 above.

40. But cf. Jn. 4:46, 5:4; we cannot know whether James intended the distinction we have suggested, we simply indicate the possibility.

41. See Kümmel (op. cit. Note 23 above) for summary of opinions concerning its literary character.

42. Ac. 20:7-12 suggests that Saturday night was the customary time for assembling for the breaking of bread, and offers a vivid picture of this particular occasion; but there is no indication of what usually took place. (One hopes the address did not always have a soporific effect!)

43. For discussion of this point, see C.K. Barrett: The First Epistle to the Corinthians (A. and C. Black, 1968) on this section. Joachim Jeremias: The Eucharistic Words of Jesus (SCM, 1966) and J.E.L. Oulton: Holy Communion and Holy Spirit (SPCK, 1951) ch.3.

44. See C.K. Barrett (op. cit. Note 43 above) and Jeremias (op. cit. Note 32 above) pp.220-225; and words of administration in various Orders for Holy Communion; especially Alternative Services Series 3 cf. Series 2 (SPCK, 1973, 1967). See also J.L. Houlden: Explorations in Theology 3 (SCM, 1978): Essay 6: Sacrifice and the Eucharist; and R.J. Halliburton: The Canon of Series 3 in The Eucharist To-day, ed. R.C.D. Jasper (SPCK, 1974) pp.119-120; and cf. the Didache in Early Christian Writings trans. Maxwell Staniforth (Penguin Classics, 1968) Part 2 para. 9 (p.231): "As this broken bread, once dispersed over the hills, was brought together and became one loaf, so may thy Church be brought together from the ends of the earth into thy kingdom."; c.f. also an experience recorded in my "Canterbury Cathedral - "Our Mother Church" An Exultation (unpublished; 1975): "Here was the Series 3 rite as it is intended to be. It was a great corporate action of the gathered people of God; it was an event which changed us; it was a true balance of Word and Sacrament.....the Communion.....as we went in turn to the shrine, each one aware of the pilgrimage of the others. Yes, we were pilgrims! - We knew it at that moment, and we knew our objective - the shrine of Christ. For me there was a new insight into the meaning of communion with the words, of the administration prayer: "the Body of Christ keep you in eternal life": not only the mystical body of Christ given privately to each individual, but this vast body of which I was a committed member, a fellow pilgrim, and without which there would be no Eucharist; with which I had been united in spirit through the Ministry of the Word, with which I was not united visibly, tangibly, actually, in terms of earthly reality and truth".

45. Whether or not this was a manifestation of glossolalia need not detain us here; for treatment of this see, for example, C.S.C. Williams: The Acts of the Apostles (A. and C. Black, 1964) p.63.

46. The Bishop of Bedford, addressing a diocesan gathering of Accredited Lay Ministers - Verulam House, St. Albans, 27.6.78.

47. See G. Vermes: The Dead See Scrolls in English (Penguin, 1962) ch.8.

48. The Bible in Order, p.1466ff.

49. Oscar Cullmann: Early Christian Worship (SCM, 1953) p.21.

50. A Theological Word Book of the Bible ed. Alan Richardson (SCM, 1950) - on "Grace". See also N.H. Snaith: The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament (Schocken Books, New York, 1964), especially ch.5.

51. C.F. Evans on "Peace", op. cit. Note 45 above.

52. See G.B. Caird: The Revelation of St. John the Divine (A. and C. Black, 1966) pp.24ff, 65, 301.

53. "Puisque, une fois encore, Seigneur, non plus dans les forêts de l'Aisne, mais dans les steppes d'Asie, je n'ai ni pain, ni vin, ni autel, je m'élèverai par-dessus les symboles jusqu'à la pure majesté du Réel, et je vous offrirai, moi votre prêtre, sur l'autel de la Terre entière, le travail et la peine du Monde". Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: Hymne de l'Univers (Éditions du Seuil, 1961).

54. G.B. Caird: op. cit. (Note 45 above), pp.286-7, 301.

55. Rudolf Bultmann: The Theology of the New Testament (SCM, 1955) p.69.

56. op. cit. (Note 51 above) and cf. Kümmel, op. cit. (Note 30 above).

57. John Marsh: Saint John (Pelican Gospel Commentaries, Penguin, 1968) p.48ff.

58. G.B. Caird: op. cit. (Note 51 above) p.301.

59. C.K. Barrett: op. cit. (Note 42 above) p.397f.

## 2. Jesus Praying

We have, since our starting point, dealt mainly with the epistles. We now turn to the gospels and look further at the records of our Lord's teaching on prayer and what we are told of his prayer.

If Mark and Romans are, as we have suggested, a central and essential focus of the Gospel, then - in the light of our inherited tradition - the Lord's Prayer, as a "set prayer" - a form of words - is a striking omission. In looking at the context of the Lord's Prayer, we bear two questions in mind:

1. Does it gather together the discoveries so far collected about prayer, bearing in mind that according to Kümmel's dating[1] (Mt. 80-100, Lk. 70-80), the major Pauline letters, and Hebrews, are in circulation?

2. Does the Lord's Prayer suggest its use as we know it - a form for recitation, corporate or private (though in private its use may be varied)?

We consider first content and vocabulary, phrase by phrase.

Πάτερ ἡμῶν (Matthew) Πάτερ (Luke)

The understanding of "father" has already been discussed (pp.23ff.). This is the Greek equivalent of the Aramaic which is our main point of contact between Mark and Romans, and which we saw as climactic in the construction of each (Mk 14:36, Ro. 8:15, Gal. 4:6). In the passages under discussion it is firmly introduced as a form of address, and thus an attitude to be shared by all disciples. We note that in Matthew Jesus is addressing crowds (Mt. 5:1 the narrative is ambiguous; are we to understand that Jesus withdrew from the crowd, or that a good proportion of them followed him up the mountain? The impression is the latter; why else would the crowd be mentioned at this point? Filson[2] and Fenton[3] both take this view); in Luke (11:1) the implication is that he is speaking to a smaller group. There seems no need to question Matthew's implication, in the light of this, that Jesus freely invites anyone to enter into this relationship; we find, simply, a slightly different setting to the prayer. However, Cyril of Jerusalem's Lectures on the Christian Sacraments[4] reveal a grasp of the privilege which comes close to being an exclusive right, of using this prayer and so this address: Εἶτα μετὰ ταῦτα τὴν εὐχὴν

λέγομεν ἐκείνην, ἣν ὁ σωτὴρ παρέδωκε τοῖς οἰκείοις αὐτοῦ μαθηταῖς μετὰ καθαρᾶς συνειδήσεως πατέρα ἐπιγραφόμενοι τὸν Θεὸν καὶ λέγοντες· Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς...

Jeremias[5], commenting on this, draws attention to the position of this prayer in the liturgy: it immediately precedes the Communion, and thus belongs to that part of the Service in which only those baptised were permitted to participate - from which T.W. Manson draws the conclusion that "knowledge of the Lord's Prayer and the privilege to use it were reserved for full members of the Church"[6]. In view of Matthew's "audience" of Christians of Jewish tradition it is the more striking that Cyril's attitude is not Matthew's suggestion, but Luke's, and this could well be unintentional. We have earlier had occasion to note that Luke does not weigh every word, and exclusiveness is the very opposite of his intention in writing to Theophilus.

A further point here is that it is in Matthew that we find πατέρ ἡμῶν . This is striking for three reasons:

1. It differs from αββα , which, as we have seen in Mark and Romans, conveys powerfully the new relationship with God wrought by Jesus.

2. It contrasts with the overall impression of Matthew's gospel that, compared with that of Mark, Jesus is a somewhat remote figure, identified with the awe-inspiring God of the Fathers, ὁ παντοκράτωρ , for we cannot but understand, in the light of Romans 8, that ἡμῶν includes Jesus; and so implies fundamental and intimate union.

3. Matthew is writing for those of Jewish upbringing; whilst fundamentally Judaism is essentially corporate, the emphasis had come to be on personal holiness, which inevitably resulted in self-consciousness. The firm reminder that πατέρ expresses a shared relation and one given by God's grace, then stands out clearly in Matthew's setting.

ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς (Matthew only). This phrase draws in Old Testament (and mythological) understanding of the dwelling-place of God, i..e. where his being is wholly manifest (e.g. Job 1:6,

Is. 6:1). Its use does not necessarily imply distance from the earthly; Matthew is, after all, a Christian, rejoicing in the presence of the living Christ, and whether or not he has analysed the implication of this faith, to find in this expression that heaven means the state of eternal perfection which is the being of God is not unfair; on the contrary, this is a neat and effective bringing together, from different directions, of truth in the light of Christ (and we may compare Paul's readiness, in Athens, to link his preaching with identifying the "unknown God" - Ac. 17:22-31).

ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου. This clause throws into relief a different aspect of instances previously noted:

in James 5:14 προσευξάσθωσαν ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἀλείψαντες ἐλαίῳ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ Κυρίου.

Acts 3:6 ὃ δὲ ἔχω, τοῦτό σοι δίδωμι· ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου περιπάτει.

Mark 9:38-39 ... εἴδομέν τινα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου ἐκβάλλοντα δαιμόνια, ... οὐδεὶς γάρ ἐστιν ὃς ποιήσει δύναμιν ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου καὶ δυνήσεται ταχὺ κακολογῆσαί με:

Mark 11:9 The acclamation - from the Psalms - at the entry of Jesus: Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου

Phil. 2:10 ..... ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ πᾶν γόνυ κάμψῃ ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων...

John 12:28 Πάτερ, δόξασόν σου τὸ ὄνομα (This last is drawn from rather than gathered into the Lord's Prayer, since it comes from a later work).

We find in bringing together these incidents that God's name is hallowed in the intermingling of "pure worship" (suggested in the reference to the Psalter and the Christian hymn) and the activity of God which is recognised most clearly in healing. In the case of the strange exorcist there is a hint that he might not have been working in co-operation with God and thus to his

glory; we recall further Simon Magus; the question raised by Peter's attitude to Ananias and Sapphira; and Paul's to John Mark; and Jesus' warnings in Mark 13: πολλοὶ ἐλεύσονται ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου λέγοντες ὅτι Ἐγώ εἰμι, καὶ πολλοὺς πλανήσουσιν – and we remarked the fact that evil's disguises are very effective. This prayer, then, in the light of these things, is more than it seems superficially to be: more than a pious sentiment, it is a commitment to involvement in bringing about the vision of God which the God-fearing man sees.

ἐλθάτω ἡ βασιλεία σου This turns the preceding clause round, so that the view is from the opposite angle. The Kingdom is that for which Jesus came: πεπλήρωται ὁ καιρὸς καὶ ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ (Mark 1:15). The coming of the Kingdom depends on the faithfulness of the disciples of Christ, who during his life time were sent on a trial run (Mk 6:7-13) and cf. also John 14:12ff;15:8). Paul is clear (see p.122) that the gifts of the spirit are not restricted to corporate worship but to life in general.

γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς This appears in Matthew's version only; it is another expression of what precedes it; as in the unseen perfection of God, where the Kingdom is fulfilled, so may it be in the affairs of the world. There is no need, again, to interpret this as implying a separation of distance (cf. comment on ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς above) but of kind; indeed the effect is to bring "heaven" and "earth" into one, firmly grounded on earth - naturally, since the Gospel for us now is in terms of flesh and blood.

τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον (Matthew)

. . . . . δίδου ἡμῖν καθ' ἡμέραν (Luke)

Matthew's version means a single action, Luke's a continuous action. This reveals something of eschatological understanding and questions. The single action suggests that the giving is the final act; through Jesus the Kingdom is fulfilled. The

prayer than expresses the desire to receive, in earthly life, the blessings of the life of the Kingdom; the bread is the Messianic feast which is in our midst in the Eucharist; it is ordinary food, the taking of which, for the Jew, is always a matter of thanksgiving and blessing God. Jeremias[7] draws attention to the Aramaic version in the Gospel of the Nazarenes, lost, but referred to by Jerome where the term "mahar" - tomorrow - is used. The "original Aramaic wording in unbroken usage since the days of Jesus, prayed, 'Our bread for tomorrow give us today!'". Tomorrow, in ancient Judaism, meant also the great Tomorrow, the consummation - so we arrive, by a different route, at the same point: the Kingdom is in our midst, but yet we work towards it.

We found earlier, and in contrast to Philo's ideals, that the community of Law was an eschatological community since it saw in the complete fulfilment of the Law the goal of the reign of God, and understood, and therefore strove towards, this as a possibility for the world. This understanding of the fulfilment undergoes a change in Christian terms, but is there in essence: we work towards a goal we see whilst we are already there, for God has put us there; only the knowledge that we are there enables us to continue to work towards it. Therefore the prayer is daily, since tomorrow is the next today and also the final Tomorrow, which to the Christian is transformed into Today because Today he experiences Tomorrow.

We need not find in Luke's δίδου ἡμῖν τὸ καθ'ἡμέραν a contrasting weakening of these ideas; rather the expression of the same truth from a less semitically orientated Christian who is writing for Gentiles. Here the eschatological emphasis is on "bread", for the giving is in terms of simple day-to-day existence which is taken for granted. But the significance of bread, with its eucharistic association, has the same effect for Luke as for Matthew; one may speculate whether perhaps Luke the lover of parables would perhaps have nearer the surface of his mind the recollection of the feeding of the crowds, and also God's providence, in ancient times, in the wilderness. Luke's is a less sophisticated approach; the attitude of utter dependence on God came less easily to the Jewish mind; but both versions reveal a fundamental grasp of the fact that life, in the world and beyond, is a matter of trust in God.

καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν, ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν - Matthew

καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν, καὶ γὰρ αὐτοὶ ἀφίομεν παντὶ ὀφείλοντι ἡμῖν - Luke

We may find here, as above, that difference of vocabulary reflects difference of approach. Central in Jewish religion was the Temple, the place of sacrifice. The practice of sacrifice stems from a conception of separation between humanity and deity (cf. p.67f), sacrifice is a means of bridging the gulf, a gulf not only of relationship but also of being. By keeping the Law, righteousness of being could be achieved; any failure to do so indicated a falling short of the ideal revealed the gap, and meant the incurring of debt in a failure of duty, since the duty of mankind is to obey the Law of God. The burden of the debt is something of which the Gospel declares us free; it is also a gift which human nature finds remarkably difficult to take to itself, so the petition is easily understood. Luke's version speaks of mistakes rather than debts. Mistakes, in the sacrificial set-up, could be dealt with by sacrifice; for Luke it is simpler: a mistake is a mistake; when recognised and acknowledged, freedom from its consequence, or the effect of the consequence, is the gift of God.

With the second clause we fall into difficulties in both versions. Luke continues in a strangely confident and assertive way, which contrasts with his general approach; he sounds as though he is pressing God, on the strength of our right behaviour, to be good to us. This is a dubious attitude, and its presence is an indication that Luke has inserted a text which was to hand - without analysing it thoroughly. It is interesting that having begun with ἁμαρτία this version uses ὀφείλειν in the second half. It reveals the truth that however ready human nature may be to humble itself towards God, it is never so ready to be humble towards its fellows: a "mistake" on the part of another is felt as in some way a "debt" to oneself, and forgiveness is not easily offered. Mark (11:25) has yet another word - παραπτώματα - trespasses - which has a similar 'flavour" to debts. Debts affect the relationships; we have already

commented on forgiveness (see p.140) and found a connection between it and the power of prayer, and the meaning of the Temple, implying that if forgiveness is to be experienced, there must be mutual respect, among the children of the forgiving Father, which results in forgiveness (see also John 20:22-23).

καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν, ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ

Here is a problem. There is surely a link with Mark 14:38: γρηγορεῖτε καὶ προσεύχεσθε, ἵνα μὴ ἔλθητε εἰς πειρασμόν. About this there are two things to say: First, that the "agony" of Jesus implies that this is the πειρασμός, and his prayer to the Father expresses a desire to evade the conflict; it is a prayer under pressure; the expression of what is in the heart. This is rather different from liturgical formulae; the one does not comfortably turn into the other, since, essentially, the one is spontaneous, the other premeditated. Secondly, if Jesus was at this moment facing πειρασμόν, then the victory is won, as Romans 8 declares; so this petition would seem, in a recollected setting, inappropriate. Perhaps this difficulty is an indication of the authenticity of the Lord's Prayer as coming from Jesus himself; what we have said about it so far has strongly implied that it was a Church development; Goulder[8] has said that Matthew in fact wrote it. If it came from Our Lord, then it was given to the disciples before the Cross and Resurrection; this raises another eschatological question: was this request answered by the Cross? - in which case it still seems, unqualified, an inappropriate request for those who are born again in the new life of assurance and joy. James deals with any suspicion of God's responsibility (1:13); Paul, likewise, does not suggest that we are beyond the reach of temptation, but πειρασμὸς ὑμᾶς οὐκ εἴληφεν εἰ μὴ ἀνθρώπινος· πιστὸς δὲ ὁ Θεός, ὃς οὐκ ἐάσει ὑμᾶς πειρασθῆναι ὑπὲρ ὃ δύνασθε, ἀλλὰ ποιήσει σὺν τῷ πειρασμῷ καὶ τὴν ἔκβασιν τοῦ δύνασθαι ὑπενεγκεῖν (1 Cor. 10:13). As we have previously established, there is no evading conflict: "we are engaged in a life and death struggle, in which the ultimate issue is never in doubt"[9]. What we are asking, then, is

that inasmuch as, united with Christ, we, his body in the world, are involved in the struggle with the opposition, we may be faithful as he was faithful, and we ask this since only in his spirit can we be prayerfully alert and able to recognise his will. This clause (in Matthew, both clauses, for the second parallels the first) then reveals the other side of the work of the kingdom: as the preceding petitions demanded of us our involvement in the affairs of the world in bringing them to pass, here we are involved in the ways of the world, and need to realise our dependence on God's infinite grace and power. Taken thus closely with the others, it does not, after all, contradict the Gospel message that the victory is ours, so we shall not, for we cannot, be put in a position comparable with Jesus' experience. Undergirding humanity for all time is the assurance - the peace beyond understanding - of ultimate salvation.

From this examination of the Lord's Prayer, and from our awareness of the ever-changing use of words, and the development of concepts and ideas, we can understand that Mark and Paul would not find it essential to the Christian community to provide formulae for prayer, though to say that is not to say that they would, or did, reject the use of such formulae. The absence of the Lord's Prayer as a formula (for we have found that its contents are present in their "Gospel") would strongly advise caution, and the intelligent use of such material.

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Before we discuss Matthew's and Luke's setting of the Lord's Prayer, we shall collect references to prayer in the synoptics, assess the picture each offers, and in the light of what is found look again at the Lord's Prayer.

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In Mark we have eight occurrences of προσεύχομαι , of which three refer to our Lord praying (1:35, 6:46, 14:33), five are his own use of the word in teaching about prayer (9:29†, 11:11, 11:25, 13:8†, 14:38†, 12:40). (Of these references, those marked † have been discussed elsewhere, there is no need for further detailed treatment). It is striking, in collecting these

references together, that all uses of προσεύχομαι in Mark - and they are few - are of our Lord or by our Lord, and though we have classified them as teaching about prayer, in four cases it seems incidental rather than intentional. The first is connected with the healing ministry (9:29), two occur in dealing with times of trial (13:18, 14:38) the controversies in the Temple (12:40) does not seem to be directed towards teaching on prayer.

We have seen earlier (p.40ff) how Mark builds up his picture, how Jesus is shown to the disciples step by step; we may take it that he would have his readers build up an understanding, and see each new aspect in the light of what has gone before, and what has already been said in the light of the new.

Our first two references to prayer are both occasions of our Lord's withdrawal, alone. There is no indication as to how frequently this happened, or whether it was regular practice (though assumptions have been made concerning this). If Jesus withdrew, it must have been in order to be alone - with God, because God cannot be absent; to "be himself", to be able to be uninhibited. What went on we cannot know; it was private, individual, spontaneous. Our very unknowing is the greatest possible insight; no one can "be alone" for another. Hitherto we have found ourselves speaking of prayer in terms of fellowship; here we find solitude. We recall, in this connection, that Mark makes no attempt to describe what went on in the wilderness (1:12-13); for him this was another occasion of solitude, though Mark does say that angels ministered to him[10]. But - Gethsemane was not solitude but aloneness: which was unalleviated, because the disciples were unable to enter in to the situation; they did not share the experience. Conversely, the solitude of the wilderness, the desert place, the mountain top, were withdrawals in the physical sense, but not in the spiritual. The wilderness wrestling was, in view of what Mark reveals later about wrestling with the Devil, to do with his mission, which was not for himself, not self-fulfilment, but entirely for others. Jesus' response to those who sought him in the desert place almost suggests that he was waiting for them (1:36); the appearance of Jesus on the lake (6:45-52) was because he was aware of their need[11]. These thoughts are borne out by

Jesus' remarks at the conclusion of the fig tree incident: an enacted parable showing the power of prayer, and the need for its responsible use (see p.92ff); action and intercession have already been seen as linked, and the latter as a term with a wide range of understanding. Following this, ὅταν στήκετε προσευχόμενοι emphasises that this is an engagement in what can only be described as prayer - perhaps alone; perhaps from the context, in the Temple (11:25); or in some sense physically withdrawn; but even then this is not disengagement from one's fellows: ἀφίετε εἴ τι ἔχετε κατά τινος, ἵνα καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς ἀφῇ ὑμῖν τὰ παραπτώματα ὑμῶν (11:25).

Not to recognise this is to become like those who are completely mistaken ( πολὺ πλανᾶσθε - 12:27) about their relationship with God, about their own worth, about their fellow beings. For them, life is lived in compartments; prayer is a compartment in which what is said with the lips seems to be believed in the heart for it certainly is not shown forth in their lives. Hence the warning: βλέπετε ἀπὸ τῶν γραμματέων ... προφάσει μακρὰ προσευχόμενοι, οὗτοι λήμψονται περισσότερον κρίμα (12:38-40).

In Mark, then, prayer is not a "subject" to be compartmentalised, or treated separately. There is an aspect of prayer which is withdrawn and solitary; which is prayer and nothing else. No guidance is given on this, for what is alone must be alone. Our indication is, as we have seen above, that in Gethsemane Jesus confided in the Father. The responsibilities of the power of prayer are indicated: its "mechanics" are hidden.

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Matthew has 14 occasions of prayer. Of those five are parallel with Mark (14:23, 21:13, 21:22, 24:20, 26:36-46). This leaves one incident in Mark which is not found in Matthew: the withdrawal to a desert place to pray (Mk. 1:35). However, the principle of withdrawal as we found in Mark is understood in Matthew; as well as the occasion preceding the walking on the water (14:23), Matthew tells us that, on hearing the news of

John's death, ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀνεχώρησεν ἐκεῖθεν ἐν πλοίῳ εἰς ἔρημον τόπον κατ' ἰδίαν (14:13)[12]. The occasion of the walking on the lake as recorded by Matthew would not elicit the comment we made on Mark's account (see p.143), there is no mention that Jesus was aware of their distress (Mk. 6:48); the reference is incorporated into the narrative in a straightforward way (Mt. 14:24) and the emphasis of the incident is in the end different: it is shifted from the presence of Jesus to the test of Peter's faith.

An incident which occurs in Mark (and Luke) is reworded in Matthew and becomes one of his occasions of prayer: this is the occasion when children are brought ἵνα τὰς χεῖρας ἐπιθῇ αὐτοῖς καὶ προσεύξεται (19:13). Such wording reminds us of the ministry of prayer within a gathering which we found in Acts and in connection with healing (see pp.111ff). That this applies to children is a touch of bright light in Matthew, showing not only gentleness (see p.73) but also in the possible interpretation, in one who is of serious intent, of this as a profound insight into life as growth, and progress, but in which each stage is complete in itself: a child is a person, not a potential person, and as such is certainly one to receive the Lord's ministry, and to be in relationship with him.

In reverse, we find that the incident of the epileptic boy on which we dwelt at some length, earlier (see pp.91ff) - (Mark 9:14-29) is told much more briefly by Matthew (17:14-24), almost as though referring the reader to Mark for full treatment of this, for his emphasis is elsewhere.

We turn to Matthew's distinctive contribution. In the "Sermon on the Mount" (Mt. 5-7) we find that which, as we commented, is absent in Mark: a deliberate teaching about prayer (6:5-13) which in fact leads into the Lord's Prayer.

Jesus has been demonstrating that the Law requires more than superficial compliance; it binds us not <u>to</u> God, but together under God; it does not measure our righteousness (e.g. 5:27), for the righteousness to which it points is immeasurable (5:19-20), and therefore whether or not it is seen and recognised by others is immaterial (6:1). So Jesus comes to speak of the chief works of piety: almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. Almsgiving, we

understand, is a matter of natural sharing where there is need (Acts 4:32-35, 6:1, 1 Cor. 16:1-3, 2 Cor. 8-9, and Rev. 5:42) and should be undertaken not as superior bestowing on inferior, but with discretion and respect. Thus prayer, also a matter of involvement with others, is to be generously and humbly undertaken. καὶ ὅταν προσεύχησθε (6:5) would seem to refer back to the previous mention of prayer, which makes this point: ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑμῶν καὶ προσεύχεσθε ὑπὲρ τῶν διωκόντων ὑμᾶς (5:44). If this is the Law of God, and if this is to be the Christian attitude, honesty compels the admission that it could not be paraded (6:5) for it would doubtless require a degree of wrestling to reach such an attitude (cf. Ro. 7:14-20, 8:26-28).

Here Matthew seems to pick up Paul's and Mark's wide and deep understanding of prayer. We have noted that they give no indication of the expression of the work of prayer, only of what it means; and we have noted that Jesus' solitary prayer was solitary - if we knew about it, it would not be solitary! So Matthew is taking hold of Paul's understanding of "spiritual maturity", of the indwelling spirit, of a ministry shared by all Christians, and encourages us to be alone with God. One can see, in the light of experience, what sound counsel this is. To be alone with God is to be oneself with him. One's means of self-expression will be individual, and quite possibly not at all like anyone else's. If it remains hidden and secret, there is no possibility of comparisons, with attendant feelings of guilt, or arrogance. This means that the prayer of two or three, which we know in experience, and which is possibly indicated in Paul (1 Thess. 1:2) is a sharing of solitude, an entering into the secret depths of another: a possibility which can only arise out of a relationship of trust, friendship, and love; a privilege and deep joy which cannot be imposed or enforced.

This leads naturally to Matthew's mention of the gathering of two or three (18:19). We found earlier that it was often necessary to search for the will of God before taking decisive action in his name (see p.116f); here is a clear indication of one of the ways of discovering the answer: by sharing the question, in intimate fellowship. These verses are linked with

the discipline of the Church, which as far as possible is to be exercised privately (18:15-16); but the responsibility is with the Church to judge according to God's law - as Christ teaches it. We recall Jesus' own need of close fellowship - Peter, James, and John shared in the Transfiguration experience, and in Gethsemane - though they were unable to "enter in" on either occasion - and they were with him, (according to Mark; and in shortening the account Matthew does not actually mention the fact) for the raising of Jairus' daughter. Luke recounts the incident; this could well have been for the parents' sake, that they might be supported and ministered to if need be, whilst Jesus focused his attention on the child.

Another point to note in reference to the two or three is a new word - αἰτέω - a simple verb of asking, and used as such in Mark (6:22ff, 10:38); here it appears, clearly, as a term for prayer; at 21:22, as in the Marcan parallel, it was used alongside προσεύχομαι to establish that a definite request was being made. Its occurrence in 6:8 underlines the kind of asking that prayer is: it involves the discovery of God's will; it is not a matter of pious request, or of personal desire, or of making known to God what is not already known: οἶδεν γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὧν χρείαν ἔχετε πρὸ τοῦ ὑμᾶς αἰτῆσαι αὐτόν

This is further emphasised at 7:7-12(see above p. 71 ): Αἰτεῖτε, καὶ δοθήσεται ὑμῖν· ζητεῖτε, καὶ εὑρήσετε· κρούετε, καὶ ἀνοιγήσεται ὑμῖν

- crisp, purposeful words, which express the clarity of the insight into the will of God, which is the privilege and responsibility of Christians, and makes possible decisive action in the spirit of Christ.

δέομαι is another term of asking which went unnoticed in Acts, since it is used synonymously with προσεύχομαι . In Matthew it occurs once only, and appears to be akin to αἰτέω : δεήθητε οὖν τοῦ κυρίου τοῦ θερισμοῦ ὅπως ἐκβάλῃ ἐργάτας εἰς τὸν θερισμὸν αὐτοῦ

(9: 38). This is Jesus' response to his sight of the crowds who needed his ministry: ἰδὼν δὲ τοὺς ὄχλους ἐσπλαγχνίσθη περὶ αὐτῶν (9:36); and immediately precedes

the sending out of the Twelve (10:1). Matthew (and Luke, who also includes this verse (10:2), though in a different setting) would have been familiar with the idea of vocation to ministry, in terms of the inspiration of the individual and the recognition of this and commissioning by the Church (e.g. Acts 13:3), so we may find also an understanding that asking in prayer is intelligent asking, in terms of God's will and commitment to the working out of that will.

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At this point, having noted that Matthew's teaching on prayer came in conjunction with almsgiving and fasting, we digress somewhat to consider fasting as it is presented in the New Testament, since this is something traditionally understood to be linked with the working of the will of God. We note that 17:21, not included in the main texts, includes both prayer and fasting; in Mark 9:29 these are separated, in that the main texts have ἐν προσευχῇ only.

Matthew 6:16-18 assumes that fasting is something which has its place; but Jesus and his disciples obviously do not engage in public fasts, as John and his followers did, and for this are subjected to criticism (Mk. 2:18-20; Mt. 9:14-15; Lk. 5:33-35).

It is such questions as these which reveal the need for our "pivot point". What do Mark and Romans offer on the subject? Romans makes no mention at all, but in Chapters 14 and 15 Paul speaks of Christian unity in terms of diversity of practice in the disciples' working out of Christian living. He suggests that there is no norm; the only criterion of judgement as to what is or what is not permitted is what the Spirit, within the individual and nurtured by the fellowship, directs. Hence ὁ ἐσθίων τὸν μὴ ἐσθίοντα μὴ ἐξουθενείτω, ὁ δὲ μὴ ἐσθίων τὸν ἐσθίοντα μὴ κρινέτω, ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτὸν προσελάβετο (14:3-4).

In fact, Paul's only mention is in 2 Cor. 6:5, 11:27 - the contexts of both instances suggest not so much spiritual exercise as unfortunate circumstances thrust upon him. Paul's silence on fasting as a subject, and in Ro. 14 his use of

μὴ ἐσθίων (translated in NEB as "abstain") rather than νηστεύω [13] draws attention to the changed emphasis which is apparent in Jewish religion as it is presented in the Gospels in contrast to Jesus. Even allowing for exaggeration for the sake of making a point, it is clear that individual piety has come to the fore and has at any rate contributed to a weakening of the corporate sense which characterises the religion of the Torah. Fasts, and feasts, were part of the worship of the People of God, with the aim of expressing an attitude towards God; and such celebrations were "earthed" in events of the life of the people of God (see Ex. 13:1-2, 6-8; 1 Ki. 21:9ff; 2Chr. 20:3.; 2 Chr. 35:1; Ez. 8:21; Joel 1:14, 2:15). Within this framework there was the practice of individual fasting, designed to obtain from God some blessing or favour (e.g. 2 Sam. 12:21-22; 1 Ki. 21:27); but again this is not undertaken for its own sake but is connected with some aspect of life. Abstinence as part of the way of life gave expression to the balance of meaning understood by "holiness" which implied not only "separation from" but at the same time "dedication to" [14]. The prescribed abstinences of the Sabbath were intended to enable celebration of worship, of rest, of the family. It is not unlikely that Paul was anxious to rediscover such a sense of the corporate life of the new People of God under God; in which case he would have no interest in encouraging personal piety at its expense. The only other New Testament references to fastings come in the first three Gospels and in Acts. We look first at Acts, and find that fasting and prayer form the setting of the calling of Barnabas and Saul; further fasting and prayer preceded their commissioning (Acts 13:1-3). Here we notice also λειτουργούντων - a word expressing cultic observance. Similarly, prayer and fasting accompanied the commissioning of elders in the congregation (14:23). Those who came to Christianity from Jewish tradition were not encouraged to break with tradition, but on the contrary to rejoice in its fulfilment. But Gentiles were not expected (though this was the subject of some discussion) to take on the Jewish Law on becoming Christians. The attitude of Acts echoes that expressed by Paul in Romans 14: what is done to the Lord glorifies the Lord; fasting is an available means but not

essential, in discerning and working out the Lord's will (cf. Acts 21:18-26).

Of the Gospel instances, seven refer to the attitude of the Pharisees to fasting as a work of merit[15]: Matthew 6:16, 9:14, Mark 2:18, 19, Luke 5:33, 34; 18:12. According to Matthew 6:16-18, Jesus did not discourage fasting, but encouraged secrecy; Alan Richardson[16] points out that Jesus himself made use of the practice (Mt. 4:2). However, it must further be pointed out that Mark and Luke both say that Jesus was hungry as a result of being in the wilderness, not that his intention in going there was to fast. If we add to this Jesus' comment that "they shall fast in those days when the bridegroom is taken away from them" (Mk 2:20, Mt. 9:15, Lk. 5:35) we find the implication that for the Christian, whose life centres on the Gospel, and who therefore need not - should not! - concern himself with works of merit, "fasting" becomes something not to seek after, but something which the world will sooner or later impose on him, and because of his confidence he will be able to use it to the glory of God (cf. 2 Cor. 6:1-10).

Luke describes Anna, a prophetess, as one who οὐκ ἀφίστατο τοῦ ἱεροῦ νηστείαις καὶ δεήσεσιν λατρεύουσα νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν (Lk. 2:37). This sums up the attitude of waiting, fulfilled when she saw the infant Jesus.

From these observations we can understand Matthew's teaching with its emphasis on secrecy. Fasting is a tool of prayer, to be used, unobstrusively, if one is called by the Spirit to do so, as part of responsibility of prayer in the work of the Kingdom of God.

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There remains the prayer of Jesus recorded at 11:25-27. This means that in Matthew we have three additional prayers of Jesus, for as well as this, we have, as in Mark, the prayer in Gethsemane, and from the Cross the cry of anguish. We have discussed these elsewhere (p.95); here we add the movement Matthew perceives in Jesus' agony: the second prayer moves on from the first, and contains a direct reference to the Lord's

Prayer: Πάτερ μου, εἰ οὐ δύναται τοῦτο παρελθεῖν, ἐὰν μὴ αὐτὸ πίω, γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου (26:42). We have seen (p.69ff) how Matthew's concern is to show Jewish Christians that fulfilment is found in Christ, and how inevitably this creates an impression of sternness and separation; here we see that this is but an impression, for Jesus is one with us all in struggling in the depths of human experience to keep faith in the will of God; the Lord's Prayer is his prayer as it is ours.

But this longer prayer of Jesus is not so easily understood; indeed a number of questions are raised; these cannot be discussed separately from the Lucan parallel (Lk. 10:21-24). J.C. Fenton[17] says that "the passage reads more like a piece of Church writing based on a number of Old Testament quotations and put into the Lord's mouth....than a tradition of Jesus' words spoken during his ministry". It may read thus, but against this is the fact that the settings in Matthew and Luke are markedly different, and Matthew's is less obvious in intention. For Luke these words are Jesus' response to the joyful return of the Seventy, who have discovered that they can share in the activity of Jesus: Ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἠγαλλίσατο τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ (Lk. 10:21). Thus we find again spontaneous outburst but in different mood from that so far collected (from Mark and Matthew) in Gethsemane and on the Cross. In Matthew the prayer immediately follows on the "woes" (11:20-24) which are recorded in Luke (10:13-16), but he places them within the account of the mission of the Seventy, and thus indicates something of the nature of the mission field. Matthew's mood is sombre throughout the chapter, beginning with John's enquiry from prison, and going on to elaborate on the general failure to recognise or receive the message of the Kingdom of Heaven. The close parallel of wording and the difference of context strongly suggest that this was understood to be an authentic prayer of Jesus, and must therefore be included. Its resemblance to Johannine expression should not be taken as indicating a later interpolation, but rather we should conclude with Caird[18]: "If we find a 'Johannine' saying in Q, the oldest strand of the synoptic tradition, the natural inference is, not that Q is untrustworthy, but that John had access to a reliable sayings source".

Thus far, then, it seems that we have an authentic saying of Jesus (but we have already suggested, from John, that "authenticity" need not be limited to the historical Jesus, but may be in the spirit of Jesus (p.54.) with some doubt as to the occasion of its utterance; Luke's seems the more likely setting.

However, looking again at the prayer itself: it is difficult to understand how Jesus could rejoice in the fact that some are unable to see. This goes against Luke's general approach of the generous and welcoming character of Jesus; even Paul's perception that sin reveals the abounding grace of God (Ro. 5:21) does not lead him therefore to rejoice in sin. And Matthew has worked hard to undermine the Jewish tendency to separate righteous and unrighteous (5-7). Jeremias[19] has a satisfactory elucidation of this in terms of structure: the translation should run: "I thank thee....that while thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding, thou hast revealed them to babes". This is to be matched in verse 27 by the rendering "Just as only a father really knows his son, so only a son really knows his father". Thus the emphasis is on the fact that the "babes" see, and this is the gift of the father, in the Father's arrangement of life in which, because of freedom, not all will "know" the Father, since this is the gift of a relationship willingly entered into by those who hear and receive the Gospel.

We do not, with this prayer, in fact learn any more about the nature of prayer itself. Luke's setting accords with our discovery of the spontaneous; Matthew gives no indication as to whether this was said publicly (in which case it would have been (cf. on John, p.162) for the benefit of those who heard) or privately. His addition of verses 28-30 (and we may take these as a Matthean addition, since Luke would surely not have omitted them had they been attached to the prayer - in fact, one might have expected that the verses attached would have been reversed - Luke's μακάριοι οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ ...is as Matthean as "come unto me" is Lucan!) suggests a large audience; and linked with the prayer, these verses suggest, if no more, the possibility of prayer to Jesus. We found in Acts occasions of conversation with "the Lord", whom we understand to mean Jesus, and Stephen made this quite clear. We note this point at this

stage: it will surely come to mind in the next section (p.163f).

Summarising then, our findings in Matthew: he accepts Mark's implications, and enlarges especially the private aspect of prayer, not in terms of spiritual exercise, but of individual relationship with God, which must develop in its own way; in dealing thoroughly with the meaning of the Jewish Law, he makes clear that works of piety are the tools of prayer rather than prayer itself.

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Before collecting Luke's references to prayer, we begin with a sketch of Luke's general approach in his gospel, since in the course of our exploration we have not, thus far, had occasion to look at him as, for varying reasons, has been the case with Matthew, Mark and John.

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Luke's opening chapters are full of humanity, providing answers to questions of loving insight and genuine interest. Luke is as anxious as Matthew to provide a Scriptural foundation and setting for the life of Jesus, but this is something he achieves in a mood of gentleness and reassurance; by way of example, we note that he adds to the preaching of John

ὄψεται πᾶσα σὰρξ τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ Θεοῦ (Luke 3:6).

The characters involved: Mary (not so much Joseph, who is brought to the fore by Matthew), Elizabeth, Zechariah, Anna, Simeon, are all portrayed vividly, with the effect of conveying that it was indeed in our world of people that these things came to pass. The same is true of the concluding chapters: the news of the resurrection was at first received as "so much idle talk" (24:11); something as simple and practical as the arrangement of linen cloths brought home the truth to Peter (24:12); and the Emmaus incident, with its changes of mood, its concluding spontaneous enthusiasm, and the gracious confirmation in Jerusalem (24:36-43) places the Son of Man, the Christ, firmly in our midst, and thus we are opened to hear the sequel - the transformation of the disciples and the empowering of the missionary Church.

Gentleness is conveyed also during the central narrative; especially by the overwhelming of Peter (5:1-11), with the woman who anointed the Lord (7:36-50) and the elaboration in this incident of what we have already learned about forgiveness (see p.140); the attitude of our Lord as he was taken to his execution (23:36); Zacchaeus (19:1-10); incidents with children, and the insight Luke gives into Jesus' own childhood (2:41-52); and the laying-on-of-hands (13:13). None of these things is new in Luke, but they are highlighted by him. Of Luke's own contributions we add Martha and Mary (10:38-42); parables of the Good Samaritan, and the sequence of stories of finding the lost; and the conversation with the thief on the cross. Luke gives extra attention to "death" - an emphasis which further shows the gentle understanding of Jesus. All three synoptics record Jairus' daughter, with the assertion οὐκ ἀπέθανεν ἀλλὰ καθεύδει (Luke 8:52, Mk 5:39, Mt. 9:24): Luke tells of another incident where there was no question of a mistake: the widow of Nain was on her way to her son's funeral when she met Jesus (7:11-17). This emphasis is firmly taken up at the death of Jesus, where his suffering ends with the words Πάτερ, εἰς χεῖράς σου παρατίθεμαι τὸ πνεῦμά μου (23:46). All the evangelists choose their words carefully at this point: the language is <u>not</u> of "death" - of finality - but of transition: ἀφῆκεν τὸ πνεῦμα (Matthew); ἐξέπνευσεν (Mark); παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα (John). Luke takes hold of this, knowing it to be a sensitive subject for all people, and reassures and asserts the truth which is powerfully declared by the Resurrection of Christ.

We find, then, that Luke offers a clear understanding of a loving relationship between Jesus and those with whom he deals; and because of the identify of Jesus, between God and humanity.

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In this setting we find eighteen occasions of prayer, in addition to those occurrences of the language of praise collected earlier (p.82ff). Of these, only four are closely

paralleled in the other gospels and need no further comment: the withdrawal of Jesus (5:16); in the discourse on attitudes and the Kingdom, the exhortation προσεύχεσθε περὶ τῶν ἐπηρεαζόντων ὑμᾶς (6:28); the need for "missionaries" (10:2); the reference to the Temple as οἶκος προσευχῆς (19:46).

There are five incidents, all of which occur elsewhere, to which Luke gives a new understanding by linking them with prayer.

1. The actual baptism of Jesus is recorded almost as a casual afterthought (3:21). Luke seems to want to put the emphasis on the Spirit and the fruit of baptism rather than the action of baptism. When Jesus was praying the heaven was opened and the Spirit came upon him, both empowering, and testifying to his vocation. This demonstrates concisely, and powerfully, that prayer expresses the relationship which Baptism actualises, and that the relationship and the activity of prayer are concerned with insight into God's will.

The introduction to the Transfiguration states that Jesus went up to the mountain to pray (9:28). That he took with him Peter, James, and John picks up our suggestion, in view of Matthew's insistence on the secrecy of prayer, that the shared prayer of two or three is a sharing in the secrecy (cf. p.146). The Transfiguration itself defies comment - it has been taken as the goal of contemplation[20], but here there is a danger of self-consciousness, or, as we noticed in the case of the Therapeutae, a withdrawal from the world rather than in order to work within it, always conscious of it, as Jesus was. We remember (and Paul draws attention to the reference (2 Cor. 3:7) whilst making a different point), how Moses was quite unaware of the effect his mountain-top experience had on him (Ex. 34:29). The link with prayer may be seen as a demonstration of the hidden glory to be revealed; as an affirmation of the identity of Jesus; as a demonstration of his union with the all-glorious Godhead - a union into which Christians are brought, and for the fulfilment of which we work, with our Lord, and await, in faith.

Our exploration into prayer is centred on the point of contact between Mark and Romans in their use of ἀββα - the term that sums up the Christian relationship with God, an address known to us from the Gethsemane scene. This, in Luke, is told with added intensity - the suffering of Jesus is

emphasised, but also the ministry to him. The disciples are unable to offer the support Jesus needs; but God does not leave him comfortless: when there is no human help, there is an angel from heaven strengthening him[21]. (Strangely, Matthew and Mark make the same point in connection with the wilderness; Luke does not). We draw in here Luke's quite different emphasis at the Cross, where Jesus speaks, not of anguish, but of forgiveness (23:34) and trust (23:46), giving us another perfect miniature, as in the case of Baptism, of the relationship with God and with others as a result, showing its truth in its expression under such pressure.

Compared with Matthew and Mark, prayer in solitude receives uneven treatment. In addition to the occasion already noted, and corresponding to similar occasions in Mark and Matthew (see pp. 143, 144), there is mention of a whole night spent out on a mountain, alone, in prayer (6:28). This precedes the choosing of the Twelve, and the implication of this association is that it was in some sense a preparation for this, but we are given no indication of what kind of preparation this was - was it seeking for guidance for himself, or was it intercession for those about to be commissioned? - nor do we know what actually went on.

Then there are two occasions when Jesus is praying but is not alone: the introduction to the Lord's Prayer (11:1-2 to which we shall return later), and the introduction to Peter's declaration of belief at Caesarea Philippi (9:18). The somewhat naive statement - Καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ εἶναι αὐτὸν προσευχόμενον κατὰ μόνας συνῆσαν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταί - suggests that Luke's intention was to associate this moment of climax with prayer, as he does with Baptism and Transfiguration, and the choosing of the Twelve.

From Luke's treatment, it would be difficult to conclude that we have by now discovered that for Luke prayer is primarily pious exercise. An incident which further emphasises his realistic grasp of it, at the same time draws attention to a word which has occurred previously, but has not invited independent comment: δέομαι has hitherto not been distinguishable in its use from προσεύχομαι. But its appearance in our Lord's prayer for Peter (22:31-34) reveals its distinctive shade of meaning, which offers possible light on other instances of its

occurrence. Here is a demonstration of the love and care and concern for a friend. Despite what will happen (22:34), for Peter's sake Jesus wishes it will not, and this is his expressed desire - no more, for Peter's strength did fail, and to live through and recover from such failure is hard indeed. This then is a "prayer" which is the expression of desire, quite apart from any sense of bringing things to pass, for Jesus knows what is to come to pass.

Of the five other uses of this term, three are in "pre-Gospel" settings. Zacharias is told by the angel: εἰσηκούσθη ἡ δέησίς σου (1:13). Anna the prophetess is constantly in the Temple νηστείαις καὶ δεήσεσιν λατρεύουσα νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν. John's disciples, in the question about fasting, νηστεύουσιν πυκνὰ καὶ δεήσεις ποιοῦνται. Is there a suggestion that there is an essential distinction about Christian prayer, an insight into the will of God, through relationship with Christ? In support of the possibility that Luke sought to demonstrate this by the use of δέομαι is the description of Cornelius: δεόμενος τοῦ Θεοῦ διὰ παντός (Acts 10:2); and its use in connection with Simon Magus (Acts 8:22, 24). Weakening the suggestion (or at any rate making it clear that Luke does not make an issue of it by seeing it through) are:

1. the fact that in the Temple at the time of Zacharias' vision πᾶν τὸ πλῆθος ἦν τοῦ λαοῦ προσευχόμενον ἔξω τῇ ὥρᾳ τοῦ θυμιάματος.

2. the prayer for "missionaries" which we understood in Matthew to be connected with the discernment of the will of God; both Luke and Matthew use δέομαι (Luke 10:2).

3. the conclusion to Luke's apocalypse would seem strange if the meaning suggested above were applied here: ἀγρυπνεῖτε δὲ ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ δεόμενοι ἵνα κατισχύσητε ἐκφυγεῖν ταῦτα πάντα τὰ μέλλοντα γίνεσθαι, καὶ σταθῆναι ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου — strange, that is, in comparison with the Marcan parallel (13:33) where we understood this as a warning of the difficulty of recognising the will of God in such circumstances, but in no

sense seeking to evade trials. However, in the rest of the sentence δέομαι fits according to its use above. This is puzzling; but it does not undermine our confidence in Luke's insight; rather, it reaffirms our impression that he does not order his material or choose his words with the constant vigilance of the other gospel writers.

We have already considered the prayer of Jesus (p.150ff); there remains in Luke his sections of teaching on prayer - for him, in parable form.

The first section follows immediately on from the Lord's prayer (11:5-13). Parables are seldom to be taken at face value - rather, they are like the clues of a crossword puzzle - and they are not necessarily allegorical. Superficially, it seems (to Western minds) that the request (11:5-8) is granted because of the badgering of the seeker. But Luke has shown a far deeper understanding of prayer than such an idea will satisfy: rather, the intention is that the reader should discover the Palestinian principle of hospitality and learn that despite all appearances the principle of the Gospel is constant.

The next parable, elucidating the confident approach Christians are called to exercise, must be a cartoon-style story, emphasising the goodness of God. εἰ οὖν ὑμεῖς πονηροὶ ὑπάρχοντες ... but the Gospel says that the people of God are τέκνα θεοῦ (Ro. 8:16) who are δικαιωθέντες ἐκ πίστεως (Ro. 5:1). Luke reinforces this (unconsciously?) with his conclusion to the paragraph: ὁ πατὴρ ... δώσει πνεῦμα ἅγιον τοῖς αἰτοῦσιν αὐτόν (In the narrative we have not yet reached Crucifixion-Resurrection, but we have established (p.39) that the Gospels are written in the light of Resurrection truth, and allow the parable to be interpreted accordingly - cf. Jn. 16:12-13). Cf. Mt. 7:11 ὁ πατὴρ ... δώσει ἀγαθὰ τοῖς αἰτοῦσιν αὐτόν). As we have seen (Ro. 8:26-28), prayer is to do with the Holy Spirit dwelling and working in us.

These parables follow a section which begins Εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ, Ἀνένδεκτόν ἐστιν τοῦ τὰ σκάνδαλα μὴ ἐλθεῖν... (17:1), and which dwells on the difficulty of identifying the

Kingdom. Our only hope of keeping sight of the Kingdom is by keeping hold of the Gospel facts and living in constant communion with God, lest we lose heart and fall away (cf. Gal. 1:6-7). These parables, then, should be seen primarily in terms of relationship with God; the language of prayer thus indicates Luke's understanding that our communing with God depends on what we understand of our relationship with him ...πρὸς τὸ δεῖν πάντοτε προσεύχεσθαι αὐτοὺς καὶ μὴ ἐνκακεῖν (18:1), in the light of what precedes, and of the question which follows: πλὴν ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐλθὼν ἆρα εὑρήσει τὴν πίστιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς (18.8). All things work together for good; the Christian learns to distinguish between his desire, and God's will, and the militancy of opposition which can easily discourage him. The unjust judge eventually responds; Christian faith, by contrast, knows that God is always responding, and is in co-operation with him, not in opposition to him. The caricature reveals the truth; Christian prayer is not badgering, Christian prayer is co-operation. The second parable flows on from this to speak of the unity of fellow humans (cf. Luke 10:25-37, Mk. 12:28-34, Mt. 5:21-28, Mt. 22:34-40). It is by grace that we are what we are, and so we are constantly humbly dependent on God. Christian prayer is not a work of piety; it is the response of love to love - and the outcast is nearer to the truth than the Pharisee.

In Luke we find a fresh approach to prayer, in comparison with Matthew and Mark. Luke comes across, strongly, as a man of prayer who is sharing his experience as he composes his gospel.

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We are now ready to return to the Lord's Prayer, and in the light of these investigations to comment on its setting.

Matthew, as we have already observed, sets the Lord's Prayer in (a not unexpected place!) the course of teaching about traditional works of piety, works which are not to be discarded by Jewish Christians, but to be thought out again, and recognised as equipment, and not as the "spirituality" itself,

nor as signs of "spirituality". Jews are used to formulae of prayer, so it is understandable that they should be given one in Christian terms. Bultmann points out[22] that "the Lord's Prayer is not distinguished from Jewish prayers by any original matter, but by its brevity and simplicity". What use would Matthew expect his readers to make of this? What use did he make of it? Our exegesis of the content suggests that it is not something of which the meaning is immediately obvious, but (like poetry) it has overtones, and needs pondering.

Matthew has made much of the privacy of prayer, suggesting that the people of God must think of themselves as individuals, not as units in a pattern; they must develop individuality. Further, they must use words sensibly: μὴ βατταλογήσητε ὥσπερ οἱ ἐθνικοι (6:7). Perhaps there are two things indicated here: οἱ ἐθνικοι would be those who had no knowledge of the true and living God, so their approach to deity would be frantic and demanding - as on Mount Carmel (1 Ki. 18:26-29). Secondly, Jews themselves were used to using set prayers, so the implication must be of warning against the use of these as the prayer itself, rather than the available, though not essential, tools of prayer. The foundation of our communing with God is that he knows the facts; in prayer, then, we "let go", in relieving our pent-up emotions; or we seek to co-operate in co-ordinating the facts. In presenting this prayer, is Matthew falling into the very trap he has indicated? His words of immediate introduction suggest not; in comparison with Luke the point stands out:

Luke: ὅταν προσεύχησθε λέγετε·

Matthew: Οὕτως οὖν προσεύχεσθε ὑμεῖς·

Matthew avoids λέγετε , which strongly suggests, since it is an obvious way of introduction if it is what he meant, that he presents a summary of the meaning of Christian prayer; a summary to be used - how? Possibly as a checkpoint for traditional material. Once prayer is found to be more than the recitation of words, when words are used they begin to matter; they must focus the intention of the pray-ers; and they must be in accord with the Gospel. We remarked that Mark and Paul had

not included the Lord's Prayer, and suggested that this was because they did not want to imply that prayer should become limited in the way that contemporary Judaism had tended to limit it. We find that Matthew, in view of those for whom he writes, sees this as setting free, in its contrast to the tradition his readers would know.

We have already compared the immediate introductory sentences. We note further that Jesus is himself praying when the request is made; and we note that this is not the first time, according to Luke, that the disciples have seen him at prayer, and heard him, for in Luke the prayer of Jesus comes before the Lord's prayer; in Matthew it comes much later. We have found a greater warmth and intensity in Luke's treatment of the subject; where, then, does the Lord's Prayer fit in Luke? Perhaps we may find that its use is the opposite of Matthew's. Matthew seeks to bring his readers to the warmth that is obvious in Luke; Luke, writing for Gentiles, would not have, nor would his readers have, a background of use of Jewish prayers, even though Luke shows familiarity with Jewish practices. So they would not have a ready anthology of words on which to draw to help clothe their prayer in words; perhaps Luke presents the Lord's Prayer as meeting this gap; for him, then, it would be something to be "said", not in the way the Didache requires[23], but to draw on when occasion required; and also a summary, of prayer and of belief, since prayer is rooted in belief.

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In the latter part of our exploration to date we have more than once referred to the words of prayer as the tools of prayer; we find, as we now turn to John, that this is his understanding of prayer. There are no parallels with any of the occasions of prayer in the synoptic gospels; John does not record the agony in Gethsemane, nor the Transfiguration, nor any teaching on prayer, nor the Lord's Prayer; the words spoken from the Cross are not addressed to God. John does not actually say that Jesus was baptised, though he puts into the mouth of John the Baptist an account of the descent of the dove; this is in the context of baptism, but not directly related, nor is it, with Luke,

directly associated with prayer. And most of the vocabulary of prayer, as we have found it elsewhere, is missing. John uses ἐρωτάω and αἰτέω - the former occurs elsewhere but not in connection with address to God; the latter we have already collected. John uses them interchangeably, though αἰτέω occurs less often as a straightforward word of asking, where ἐρωτάω occurs thus twelve times[24]. In conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well, what began as a simple enquiry: πῶς σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὢν παρ' ἐμοῦ πεῖν αἰτεῖς γυναικὸς Σαμαρείτιδος οὔσης; becomes on Jesus' lips of more profound significance: Εἰ ἤδεις τὴν δωρεὰν τοῦ Θεοῦ ... σὺ ἂν ἤτησας αὐτὸν καὶ ἔδωκεν ἂν σοι ὕδωρ ζῶν.
This illustrates John's use of the words - in every case, (except one, Martha's assertion Καὶ νῦν οἶδα ὅτι ὅσα ἂν αἰτήσῃ τὸν Θεὸν δώσει σοι ὁ Θεός ), where Jesus speaks it is in the sense of prayer; for anyone else it is a word of request or enquiry.

What then does John offer of insight into prayer? We look first at the spoken prayers of Jesus. These all have a purpose beyond themselves. That is to say, they are not understood by John as the dynamic of prayer, but the verbal expression, or explanation, of what is going on, and this is provided for the sake of those around Jesus. This is clearly stated: διὰ τὸν ὄχλον τὸν περιεστῶτα εἶπον, ἵνα πιστεύσωσιν ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας (11:42); Ταῦτα λαλῶ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἵνα ἔχωσιν τὴν χαρὰν τὴν ἐμὴν πεπληρωμένην ἐν ἑαυτοῖς (17:13).

Though 12:27 speaks of turmoil - νῦν ἡ ψυχή μου τετάρακται - John conveys an impression of a man not overwhelmed but in control; that is not to imply that the anguish is not real, but that John seeks not to produce a tele-recording of what actually happened, but from the standpoint of faith in the eternally present Christ who is the way, the truth, and the life itself, to show how his incarnation is part of this, and not in spite of, or in opposition to it. Everything that takes place is

capable of incorporation into the divine will - capable of redemption - so even the anguish of Jesus is made the occasion of a heavenly voice for the sake of the bystanders: Καὶ ἐδόξασα καὶ πάλιν δοξάσω (12:28).

This truth is clear in the Lazarus event; to everyone else the situation was desperate; Jesus, however, could see more. He had to ask nothing; he declared what was happening: πάτερ, εὐχαριστῶ σοι ὅτι ἤκουσάς μου. ἐγὼ δὲ ἤδειν ὅτι πάντοτέ μου ἀκούεις (11:41). (This is the faith also of Jesus in the storm on the lake, and as discussed in connection with the epileptic boy - pp.91ff). Seeing, for John, is more than physical seeing[25]; knowing is more than intellectual knowledge; believing is the fullness of union with the Father which makes life glorious and gives birth to joy.

In John 17, then, we find a summary of the meaning of Jesus' life and work. His purpose was to give the joy of eternal life; to share his life with all who would receive him as himself, accepting the miracle, accepting the paradox of his difference from them, as the Christ; his union with them, as born of the flesh and subject to its limitations. At this point, the eve of the passion, they are in no doubt of his authority and identity, but have not yet grasped the implications for themselves, their potential, their own mission. What that is, is stated in this prayer: they are to stay in the world, and live the life of Christ in the midst of the world's conflicts; they are to be the means by which others come to know and see and experience the truth. They are to be sure, as they hear this put into words, that they matter for their own sake - they are not the machinery by which the Gospel is proclaimed, they are people who need to be cherished, and are cherished, and given joy, offered protection, and loved; and their fulfilment is in a union of love which is a union of heaven and earth, a union which may be manifest in heaven or on earth; for the love of God, as demonstrated in Christ, is neither confined nor restricted.

The mission of Jesus was to bring others with him into union with the Father to share in his work. This chapter picks up what Jesus has earlier taught about this: ὅ τι ἂν αἰτήσητε

ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου, τοῦτο ποιήσω, ἵνα δοξασθῇ ὁ Πατὴρ ἐν τῷ Υἱῷ (14:13ff).

This is because they are to receive, in place of himself (as they know him) ἄλλον Παράκλητον (14:16). ἐὰν μείνητε ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ τὰ ῥήματά μου ἐν ὑμῖν μείνῃ, ὃ ἐὰν θέλητε αἰτήσασθε, καὶ γενήσεται ὑμῖν (15:7). This is further emphasised as Jesus speaks of his departure (16:23, 24, 26), its meaning and implications.

We suggested that John's gospel points forward into the future. We find no systematic teaching on prayer; that is not to say that all our discoveries to date are rejected; on the contrary, they are taken in and transformed into the language of eternity and everyman, since for John there is no male or female, no bond or free, Jew or Gentile - but all are one in Christ. So we find from beginning to end of his gospel a portrayal of life in the world centred on the fact of Christ, and rooted in the relationship he gives us with the Father. John cannot divide life into sacred and secular; the things of the world were the things through which Christ revealed himself - wine, bread, water, sickness, death. It is John's supreme insight that the summary of Jesus' life and ministry should be in the form of a prayer - for such a form expresses more eloquently than any dissertation that life in Christ is communion with God.

NOTES.

1. W.G. Kümmel: Introduction to the New Testament (SCM, 1975).

2. Floyd V. Filson: The Gospel According to St. Matthew.

3. J.C. Fenton: Saint Matthew (Pelican Gospel Commentaries, 1963.)

4. St. Cyril of Jerusalem: Lectures on the Christian Sacraments ed. F.L. Cross (SPCK, 1956) Lecture V: The Eucharistic Rite:11.

5. Joachim Jeremias: The Prayers of Jesus (SCM, 1967) p.82ff.

6. See T.W. Manson: The Lord's Prayer in BJRL 38 (Manchester, 1955-6) pp. 99-113, 436-48.

7. op. cit. (above Note 5) p.100.

8. M.D. Goulder: The Composition of the Lord's Prayer in J.T.S. n.s. XIV (1963) pp. 32-45.

9. H.E.W. Turner: The Pattern of Christian Truth (Mowbrays, 1954) p.122.

10. cf. the vision of Revelation, that heaven and earth are one;: pp. 127 ff and references in that section.

11. This was interpreted - movingly - by a member of a Bible Study group as indicating the power of intercession: so deep was Jesus' involvement with the disciples that he could "see" them even when they were apart from him; and his presence, through such involvement, could become reality.

12. We note that both Mark and Luke speak of a withdrawal preceding the feeding of 5,000, but this is not in solitude, but with the disciples on their return from their mission; in Luke it is "away from" where they were rather than "to a desert place", for they go to Bethsaida!

13. See Kittel: Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Eerdmans, 1964).

14. See Isidore Epstein: Judaism (Penguin 1959 ) pp. and M.D. Goulder: Midrash and Lection in Matthew (SPCK, 1974) pp. 298-300.

15. See Alan Richardson in A Theological Word Book of the Bible (SCM, 1950) on "Fasting".

16. op. cit. (above Note 15).

17. J.C. Fenton: Saint Matthew (Pelican Gospel Commentaries, 1963) p.186.

18. G.B. Caird: Saint Luke (Pelican Gospel Commentaries, 1963) p.146.

19. op. cit. (above Note 5) pp. 49-50.

20. See, for example, Herbert Slade: Exploration into Contemplative Prayer (Darton, Longman and Todd, 1975).

21. There is some textual evidence for the omission of 22:43-44; see G.B. Caird (op. cit. Note 14 above) p.243.

22. Rudolf Bultmann: Primitive Christianity (Fontana, 1956) p.91.

23. The Didache in Early Christian Writings, trans. Maxwell Staniforth (Penguin Classics, 1968) Part 2: para. 8, p.231.

24. 1:19, 21, 25; 5:12; 8:7; 9:2, 15, 19, 21, 23; 16:5, 18:19.

25. See Rudolf Bultmann: Theology of the New Testament 2 (SCM, 1955) pp. 70-74.

## III

### ON TEACHING PRAYER

This has been a long and winding exploration, and now it is time to try to assess the implications of the findings we have gathered.

Two things stand out: first, in the epistles, the naturalness with which the writers - especially Paul - move in and out of "prayer", if we may thus express it, in the way we noted of Jeremiah. This strongly indicates that the Christian attitude to life is that in its entirety it is a matter of communion with God; prayer, then, is not identified by the vocabulary of religion, but by a general attitude and response.

Second, the lack of systematic teaching on prayer. But the whole of the New Testament is concerned with the Christian understanding of our relationship with God; indeed, this is the purpose of all the Scriptures.

It is clearly indicated that the main missionary task of the Church is to preach that relationship; when the message is received, response is inevitable. This response is prayer. To try to teach it is to make it self-conscious, artificial and limited, for there <u>is</u> no subject of prayer, for prayer is communion with God, and God is life. There is indeed an <u>aspect</u> of prayer which we call "prayer" and which is identifiable. This should be regarded as prayer within prayer - and the way to introduce the experience is not to describe it but to identify or illustrate it; or best of all, to share it.

At the risk, then, of discouraging the sales of many books, we suggest that the New Testament itself is the source of light on Christian prayer: mingling with those who walked and talked with the Lord, and those who first experienced the presence of the risen Lord and knew his spirit, it is possible to enter into their experience, and thus enriched, discover our own.

But does this not sound too vague? Is a possible reason for the lack of specific teaching in the New Testament that the Jewish heritage was taken for granted? Certainly it was the background in which most of the writers grew up, and it was familiar to those who, like Luke, were not part of it.

But we have seen that "prayer" depends on relationship, and

that Christianity, born within Judaism, proclaimed a relationship radically different from that understood by the Jews. Just as there was no need to impose the Law on Gentile converts, we may justifably assume that neither would there have been found any reason to impose a pattern of "spirituality" - since the Law was spiritual, and piety part of the Law.

We have seen, in considering its setting and meaning, the possibility that the Lord's Prayer was viewed differently in the different circumstances in which it was intended to be received - as we find it set in Matthew and Luke.

But there is more to Jewish tradition than its forms of prayer for use in the home, or privately. There is throughout the Old Testament and in the New Testament a sense of the cultic - a sense of common purpose and mission. Jewish spirituality is essentially practical, and this is true to-day[1] as it is found, for example, in Leviticus. It is also essentially humanitarian. There is in human nature an instinct of pilgrimage, whether in ultimate terms of life as a journey towards a goal, or in a feeling for holy things and holy places - a need for symbols. In the Old Testament the presence of God was focused: we read of Horeb the mountain of God; the Ark of the Presence; the Tent of Meeting; the Temple, and within it the Holy of Holies. This instinct finds expression in all religions - is there a place for it in Christianity? Is it right to encourage pilgrimage, to develop shrines, to make available "aids to devotion" such as votive candles, rosaries, crosses, crucifixes? Such things certainly continue to capture imagination, as they have done throughout the Church's history, and they have been abused and become targets of protest and dissension. Such conflicts were also part of the Jewish heritage, yet the principle of organised cultic activity persisted; the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD was an event of history; not, as previously, of theological significance - except in so far as its absence symbolises that life for the Jew is lived in terms of waiting for Messianic deliverance which will recreate the homeland, where once more the Temple will symbolise the presence of God and the fulfilment of hope.

Strangely, we find that a complete change of emphasis has come about. When the Jewish nation became a community of Law,

we noted that they were an eschatological community in that they understood the goal of the Law to be within humanity's reach. The first Christians understood the fulfilment to be within reach in terms of time, and for them life was lived in waiting for that deliverance from the effect of opposition to God; waiting for the City of God.

But in John's Gospel, and in Revelation, we find that the Kingdom of God is once again within time, in that eternal life is to know the Father, which through the Son is the privilege and gift of the disciple.

So then the tools of prayer must be fashioned eschatologically, and as we looked to Mark and Romans for a point of balance in understanding Gospel truth, it is to John that we look for guidance on the clothing of prayer, for John reclothes the Gospel in terms of new life now, new creation now.

He does this by using a new vocabulary, but also by the remarkable and extraordinary achievement of re-telling the story of Jesus in terms of its significance without removing it from reality. He demonstrates the eternal in the present, and both his method and his achievement provide the guidelines needed by those who need to be able to analyse "spirituality" in order to enable its development in others.

John sees that God provides for the human instinctive searching for sign and shrine in the supreme Sign of the incarnate Lord: "We beheld his glory"; "our hands have handled.." By Christ's presence the things of the world are sanctified; since his presence is eternal, all things are sanctified. Therefore cultic signs and symbols are symbolic of the whole, not apart from them. They are then not to be regarded as indispensable. Perhaps the shrines associated with healing most clearly show this. John shows signs which demonstrate not a pattern but a truth. The truth about shrines of healing is that they <u>enable</u> the response of co-operation, which is part of the healing process, to take place: "Go and wash seven times in the Jordan", "Go and wash in the pool of Siloam", "Go and show yourself to the priest"; - (this is slightly different, but it is as they go on their way that they discover the healing has taken place - Lk. 17) - they do not <u>create</u> it. What has happened is that as the shrines have become established, they are

used at a much earlier stage, frantically and superstitiously; hence they have come to be regarded by many with suspicion, and the true signs, which undoubtedly - mysteriously but joyfully - are manifest, are lost to sight in a deluge of tourism.

In like manner, it seems, should be regarded the words which draw to a focus humanity's response to God. It has always been true of Judaism, as it was of the first Christian congregations, that individuals drew their life and inspiration from the gathering. Individual piety derives from the cult; if honesty and integrity are asked of the individual, they must be found in the assembly. John clothed the Gospel in words of faith carefully selected, carefully arranged; this he could do because he knew - in every sense and shade of meaning - the Gospel. Congregations - and their leaders - all too frequently under-estimate this fact; the enquiring mind is unsatisfied, and either abandons the Church and goes his own way, or else to some extent "switches off", so that he does not pay attention to the words, which eventually, as a consequence, lack precision and artistry.

Perhaps this last word indicates an aspect of the worship of the gathering which, again, is under-estimated. A Christian assembly is a manifestation of the Church - in the Spirit it becomes a community; each member contributes - there are no "passengers". All then are involved in the action of the Spirit in bringing this to pass. It was this which caused Paul difficulty in Corinth, in unifying the high spirits of that congregation. But that was a small group in comparison with the large gatherings to which we are accustomed. The house-fellowship-size meeting should be able to be informal and resemble the (tidied up) Corinthian suggestions; for the larger gatherings the ministers have the task of creating, through the material they select, the conditions in which individuals may become a fellowship, a community; and in which an assembly may be aware of the persons who make it up. In other words, at the heart of the "liturgy" must be the Gospel of communion - union with God, which involves union with one another. This requires great sensitivity, for all temperaments must somehow be enabled to relax and thus to worship; and also the materials chosen must evidently represent the world which is sanctified. That is to

say, symbolism must not be allowed to develop on its own, or it becomes so remote that it is no longer symbolic.

Individual piety derives from the cult: if the cult is remote, then "prayer" will be remote; if the cult is reality, "prayer" will be reality.

We remarked on the fact that prayer was, for Paul, realistic and manageable, but that 1 Timothy (2:1-3) showed a widening into unreality; we observe that the generalisation of 1 Timothy and the formula of the Lord's Prayer are the things which have most widely "caught on"; yet, if the groupings of the churches would rediscover a sense of responsibility in prayer, the work would be shared, in the Spirit, and there would be no need for generalisations.

We have suggested that the Lord's Prayer is a summary of the life of prayer; as such it is also a summary of belief - in the same way that we suggested that the prayer of Jesus in John 17 is a resume of the purpose of his life and ministry. Seen in this way, it would be possible to avoid the all too frequent and thoughtless use of the prayer, stemming, perhaps, from the Didache's injunction that it must be said three times a day, and the restricted and hidden (from outsiders) use only by communicants.

For prayer is practical, real, and in the Spirit of Jesus - who was always practical, and readily accessible.

What, then, of Philo? The Therapeutae resemble a number of similar Christian communities. Is this way of life, the "life of prayer", to be rejected? We have suggested that Christian faith does not alter the world all at once, but transforms it through the new attitude to all things which flows from the Gospel. We found in De Vita Contemplativa a goal which was apart from the world, the search for and attainment of which were only in withdrawal from the world; practically, we find that such cases, where the activity of prayer is central, have a place in the world; we suggested that Philo appreciated this. Jesus could withdraw to the mountains; not all are thus placed. So if such communities are conscious of a mission in the world and discard firmly all aspirations of personal holiness for its own sake, they exercise a wide ministry - to individuals who visit them, to the world, in the concentrated effort of intercession.

They need the world as the world needs them; they provide an example in that what is found, as in liturgy, concentrated there must, as we said of "liturgy", be recognised as representative of the world. The need of the world is to discover the calm in the midst of its storms, not to evade the conflicts. The ideal is not that the world becomes a community comparable with the Therapeutae; rather, that the affairs of the world are found to be the tools of "prayer".

It is intriguing to speculate on how Philo would have received the Christian Gospel had he known it. We remarked earlier that he seems to have known the Therapeutae from personal experience, but he was not one of them; and that he was a man of integrity and fearless for his soul; it is therefore tempting to suggest that he would have responded wholeheartedly to Jesus, had he met him; that he would have been able to contribute much to the life of the Church by having the clarity of vision that could distinguish essential from non-essential, and thus carry out the hard pruning that brings about abundant growth. One might even hazard a guess at the way the final paragraph of De Vita Contemplativa might read if the Therapeutae were a Christian community: "So much then for the Thereapeutae, who have identified the secret of the mysteries of life, and have learned to live in the perspective of eternity, citizens of heaven and the world, presented to the Father and Maker of all by their Lord, and brother, the Christ, who has procured for them the knowledge of God's friendship and added a gift going hand in hand with it, true joy in life, a boon better than all good fortune and rising to the very summit of felicity".

## NOTES

1. For an exposition of contemporary Jewish spiritulaity, see Lionel Blue: To Heaven with Scribes and Pharisees (Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1975).

# R E R E D O S

## DISCOVERIES

I have made a Discovery about Time. It is not
a New Discovery,
For Time has always been thought to be
Mysterious, giving rise to
Thought and Comment.

The Discovery I have made
is simply this:

A little Time, theoretically, can
at the same time be
a great deal of Time, in truth;
and
a great deal of Time, theoretically, can
at the same time be
a very little Time, in truth.

I have made a Discovery about Space. It is not
a New Discovery,
for Space has always been thought of as
Mysterious, giving rise to
Thought and Exploration.

The Discovery I have made
is simply this:

Many hundreds of miles cannot
separate those who love, in truth;
and
no distance at all is
a Great Gulf fixed
betwixt
those who love not, in truth.

And I have made an Observation about Prayer,
which is, in truth
simply mysterious, giving rise to
Agony and Ecstasy.

I have observed that
the more I Know God
the less I Do Prayer.

This Observation is, I believe, a New Discovery: that

Prayer, in truth, is a very simple mystery of
Life, which is another Word for
God, which is a Word embracing
Love, which involves
Living in Time and Space and lovingly
Transforming them in
Truth.

For myself, I take Great Joy from these Discoveries.

Margaret Musk
(unpub. 1977)

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