

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

TEXT: *Matthew 6:9: After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name.*

I think there is room for very great doubt whether our Saviour intended the prayer, of which our text forms a part, to be used in the manner in which it is commonly employed among professing Christians. It is the custom of many persons to repeat it as their morning prayer, and they think that when they have repeated these sacred words, they have done enough. I believe that this prayer was never intended for universal use. Jesus taught it not to all men, but to His disciples. It is a prayer adapted only to those who are His followers, truly converted souls. On the lips of the ungodly man, it is entirely out of place.

Did not Jesus say **in:**

John 8:44: Ye are of your father the devil, for his works ye do.

Why, then, should anyone mock God by saying: *Our Father?* For how can He be your Father? Have we two Fathers? And if He be the Father, where is His honor? Where is His love?

We neither honor nor love Him, and yet we presumptuously and blasphemously approach Him, and say: ***Our Father*** when our heart is attached still to sin, and our life is opposed to His law. We, therefore, prove ourselves to be an heir of wrath, and not a child of grace.

Oh, I beseech you, leave off sacrilegiously employing these sacred words; and until you can in harmony with the saints sincerely and truthfully say: ***Our Father,*** seeking holiness. Do not offer the language of a hypocrite, which is an abomination to Him.

I feel that I cannot use this prayer to the omission of others. Great as it is, it does not express all I desire to say to my Father which is in Heaven. There are many sins which I must confess separately and distinctly.

The various other petitions which this prayer contains require, I feel, to be expanded when I come to God in private. I must pour out my heart in the language which His Spirit gives me. Then, more than that, I must trust in the Spirit to speak the unutterable groaning of my spirit when my lips cannot actually express all the

emotions of my heart. Let none despise this prayer; it is matchless; and if we must have forms of prayer, let us have this first, foremost, and chief. Let none think that Christ would tie His disciples to the constant and only use of this model. Let us, rather, draw near to the throne of Heavenly grace with boldness as children coming to their Father, and let us tell our heart's yearnings as the Holy Spirit teaches us.

“Our Father” implies sonship. Having adopted us to be His children, He has, in the next place, regenerated us by the Spirit of the Living God. He has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. No man hath a right to claim God as his Father unless he feels it in his soul. We are to believe solemnly through the faith of the Son of God that we have been adopted into the family of God which is in Heaven.



The second tie is brotherhood. It does not say “My” Father, but **“Our” Father**. Then, it seems, there are a great many in the family. **Our Father** — that, then, includes those of God’s children who differ from us in their doctrine. Oh, there are some who differ from us as wide as the poles; but yet they are God’s children. Come, Mr. Bigot, do not kneel down and say “My Father” but **“Our Father”**. It is remarkable how very much alike all God’s people are upon their knees.

Some time ago at a prayer meeting, I called upon two brothers in Christ to pray one after another, one a Wesleyan and the other a Baptist; and I could not tell whether they had ever been of different faiths. I listened to see if I could see some peculiarity in their phraseology, but there was none.

Saints in prayer appear as one. For, when they get on their knees, they are all compelled to say **Our Father**, and all their language afterwards is of the same.



Since He is my Father, He will, He *must* hear my prayers, and answer the voice of crying. He will supply all my needs out of the riches of His fullness in Christ Jesus the Lord.

Has your Father treated you badly lately? I have this word to you, then. Your Father loves you just as much when He treats you roughly as when He treats you kindly.

There is often more love in an angry father's heart than there is in the heart of the father who is too kind.

I will expose a case to the remote part of the earth where idolatry is still practiced.

There is often more love in an angry father's heart than there is in the heart of the father who is too kind.

Suppose these two sons were decoyed and deluded into idolatry. The news comes to America, and the first father is very angry. His son, his own son, has forsaken the religion of Christ and become an idolater. The second father says, "Well, if it will help him in trade, I don't care if he gets a better social standing. I am for it." Now, which father loves most — the angry father or the father who treats the matter with complacency? Why, the angry father is the best. He loves his son; therefore, he cannot give away his son's soul for gold.

Give me a father that is angry with my sins and that seeks to bring me back, even though it be my chastisement.

Thank God you have a Father that can be angry, but that loves you as much when He is angry, as when He smiles upon you.

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