THE COMPOSITION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE accepted history of the Lord's Prayer might be set out in five propositions:[1] (*a*) the Prayer was composed by Jesus, incorporating phrases from the synagogue liturgy, but in a unique combination and meaning; (*b*) the Prayer was universally used in the primitive Church, but a number of slightly different versions of it became current, either in the Palestinian churches, in Aramaic, or later when it was translated into Greek; (*c*) St. Mark does not include the Prayer in his gospel for reasons best known to himself; but in general St. Mark felt at liberty to include only a proportion of the teaching of Jesus known to him, seeing the gospel as primarily the acts of Jesus; (*d*) of the two versions preserved in our gospels St. Luke's is likely to be nearer the original, as it is shorter, and liturgical forms tend to grow more elaborate in time; (*e*) St. Matthew's version shows strong traces of Matthaean vocabulary and style, and is an embroidery upon the Prayer as received by him in the tradition.

None of these propositions can be called satisfactory, and some of them are in fact highly odd. To take them in order:

(*a*) If the Prayer was composed by Jesus and taught to his disciples, then it is the only thing of the kind he ever did. Jesus did not commit his teaching to writing because he believed that his disciples were, like St. Paul's, his epistle written in fleshy tables of the heart, and that the Holy Spirit would guide them into all truth. To teach something by heart is the same in principle as to write it down, and there is no statement in the gospels that Jesus ever taught his disciples by heart any other thing than the Lord's Prayer. Jesus might have made an exception in favour of a single prayer, but there is no very obvious reason why he should so have done.

(*b*) The variant-versions hypothesis is very tenuous. If Jesus composed the Prayer and taught it them, surely the Twelve knew it by heart; and

[1] T. W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus* (1949), pp. 167–71, 265–6; H. E. W. Turner, *Jesus, Master and Lord* (1953), pp. 133 ff.; G. D. Kilpatrick, *The Origins of the Gospel according to St. Matthew* (1946), p. 21; commentaries on Matthew by A. H. McNeile (1916), T. H. Robinson (1927), F. W. Green (1936), F. V. Filson (1960); commentaries on Luke by J. M. Creed (1930), A. R. C. Leaney (1958): all state some of the five propositions, and most seem to assume the others. Cp. also A. M. Farrer, *St. Matthew and St. Mark* (1954), pp. 169 ff. Roman Catholic scholars tend to accept the first three propositions while holding out for Matthaean priority: H. Leclerq in *Dict. Arch. Chr. Lit.* xii (pt. 2, 1936), 2244–55; A. Jones, *Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (1951), ad loc.; G. Stano, in *Encicl. Catt.* ix (1952), 943–6.

surely they will have seen that their converts knew it by heart, and that it was said accurately in church services. This is (*ex hypothesi*) the only thing that Jesus had asked them to learn, and they will have honoured his memory thus far. Where then is it to be supposed that the apostolic writ did not run? Peter and the sons of Zebedee were certainly very early in Jerusalem; Barnabas was their disciple in Jerusalem and their apostle at Antioch; Paul was Barnabas' colleague, and accepted Peter's authority on matters of fact;[1] the churches of the Diaspora were Paul's foundation. Where are the variant versions to have originated? It is hard to believe that a dominically composed Prayer should have been corrupted anywhere without authority immediately objecting.

(*c*) The theory that St. Mark might have felt at liberty to leave out the Prayer, along with other of Jesus' teachings, is at variance with (*a*), which maintains that Jesus thought it to be the most important piece of teaching he ever gave. If Jesus thought this, it is hardly likely that St. Mark thought otherwise; and it is especially difficult to maintain that he did when he records teaching very close to the Lord's Prayer at xi. 25 f., where we should have expected the Prayer to follow.

(*d*) Just as the Matthaean version of the Prayer shows strong traces of Matthaean style, so the Lucan version, in so far as it differs from the Matthaean, shows strong traces of Lucan style, which we shall be noting in detail. πάτερ, for example, is a characteristically Lucan address to God. πᾶς with a participle is found four times in Luke outside the Prayer. καθ' ἡμέραν occurs four times in Luke–Acts, and nowhere else in the N.T. The clumsiness of having ἁμαρτίας in place of ὀφειλήματα when ὀφείλοντι comes in the next clause can be compared with a number of similar things in St. Luke's handling of Mark. This means (what is generally conceded, often on different grounds) that the Lucan version is not likely to be a Greek translation of the original Lord's Prayer; and we have a highly elaborate hypothesis on our hands in consequence. Matthew on the one hand goes back to the 'Q' version of the Prayer, of which it is an embroidery; while Luke on the other hand is connected with a shorter 'L' version of the Prayer, with which however, on the stylistic evidence, it is not identical either. Both the 'Q' and the 'L' versions are descended from an Aramaic original, at which, Manson concedes,[2] we cannot do more than guess. To have arrived at the stage of juggling with three unknowns is generally a sign that we ought to sit down and start again.

(*e*) The most remarkable assumption of all is that two generations

[1] Gal. i. 18, expounded by G. D. Kilpatrick in *New Testament Essays: Studies in memory of T. W. Manson* (1959).

[2] Op. cit., p. 266.

after the Prayer had been committed to the Apostles St. Matthew should have been at liberty to expand and improve it at will.[1] Are we truly to believe that any Christian had the effrontery to elaborate and improve the one piece of liturgy composed by the Lord himself, or that any church would have accepted his amendments, when the Prayer had been part of every Christian's catechism, and had been used (on a conservative estimate) for forty-five years? To what purpose have credal scholars laboured to show how rapidly the newly composed creeds were accepted and reverenced verbatim in the fourth century?[2] The assumption is incredible, and would never have been made but for a simple fallacy over the doxology. If, the argument runs, the scribes who added the doxology, and different versions of the doxology, to the Matthaean Prayer were at liberty to improve the Paternoster, and the author of the Didache likewise, why should not the same licence be accorded to the evangelist? It is not for the first time that reverence for tradition has inspired false argument. A sound argument must run: it is impossible that St. Matthew should have had licence to amend a Prayer composed by Jesus, and it is *a fortiori* impossible that his scribes, or the author of the Didache, should have had this licence. Therefore Jesus did not compose the Lord's Prayer.

The force of these objections is cumulative, and must be fatal to the theory that Jesus composed the Prayer. Not only is that in itself not very likely, but it must be sustained by a series of hypotheses, each of which is either improbable or impossible. Neither the weakness of the theory itself, nor that of the chain of supplementary hypotheses, has been adequately considered, because it has always seemed axiomatic that the Lord's Prayer was the Lord's prayer. But we are not compelled to believe this. Suppose that it is not: then who did write it, and how did it

[1] This whole view is too elaborate, and too unlikely, to have been the creation of one mind, and it is in fact the jumbled deposit of fifty years of criticism—and the lack of it. In the hey-day of source-criticism it seemed reasonable to argue, 'Two versions, two sources', and Streeter apportioned them to M and L (*The Four Gospels*, p. 277). Creed noted the Lucan character of all the Lucan differences of phrasing in 1930, and concluded correctly that Luke and Matthew go back to one source, which St. Luke has altered; and which he naturally took to be Q. Kilpatrick noted the Matthaean character of the Prayer in Matthew in 1946, and concluded falsely that Luke and Matthew go back to one source which St. Matthew has altered, and which he also took to be Q. Manson reissued his 1937 *Sayings of Jesus* in 1948 without reference to either Creed or Kilpatrick, attributing the two versions to Q and L. The false comparison between the effect of liturgical use on the Lord's Prayer and on other prayers was obscured by the Didache and the variant readings. But Creed and Kilpatrick could not both be right; and deliberate changes to a dominical Prayer in A.D. 80–90 are remarkable phenomena to have escaped all notice.

[2] See J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, passim.

come to be in its present forms? We shall find that a simple hypothesis satisfies all the evidence. *Jesus gave certain teaching on prayer by precept and example, which was recorded for the most part by St. Mark. This was written up into a formal Prayer by St. Matthew, including certain explanations and additions in Matthaean language and manner. St. Matthew's Prayer was then abbreviated and amended by St. Luke.*[1]

The text of the Lord's Prayer is now generally agreed to be as follows:

	Matthew vi	Luke xi
(1)	πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς,	πάτερ,
(2)	ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου,	ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου,
(3)	ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου,	ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου·
(4)	γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς·	
(5)	τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον,	τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δίδου ἡμῖν τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν,
(6)	καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν,	καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν
(7)	ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν,	καὶ γὰρ αὐτοὶ ἀφίομεν παντὶ ὀφείλοντι ἡμῖν,
(8)	καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν,	καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν.
(9)	ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ.	

This is the text printed by Souter and Nestle and translated by R.S.V. and N.E.B. The differences between the two versions have been indicated by underlining. The clauses are numbered without prejudgement of the Prayer's structure. It will be convenient to take the Prayer clause by clause to show the Marcan content and inspiration, and the manner in which the two later evangelists have dealt, in characteristic ways, with the words that lay before each of them.

The only direct teaching on prayer in Mark comes after the Cursing of the Fig Tree in Mark xi. 22–25.[2] There Jesus teaches the need of faith

[1] It is the writer's belief that St. Luke had Matthew before him as he wrote, and that there never was any such document as Q. It is impossible to enter into controversy on this point here. It should only be borne in mind that 'Q' is a hypothetical document on whose existence some doubt has been thrown in recent years; and that the thesis here set out ought not to be found wanting for incompatibility with it. Our argument rests upon, and therefore tends to bear out, the simpler and prima facie preferable hypothesis that St. Luke knew Matthew: cp. B. C. Butler, *The Originality of St. Matthew* (1952), pp. 1–61; A. M. Farrer, 'On Dispensing with Q' in *Studies in the Gospels in memory of R. H. Lightfoot* (ed. D. E. Nineham, 1955).

[2] It is generally agreed that Mark xi. 26 is spurious. H. F. D. Sparks argues in *Studies in the Gospels*, pp. 243–5, that xi. 25 should also be rejected, as (*a*) the

in prayer, a need which must be expressed in the mood rather than in the words of the suppliant. He ends his instruction:

> And when ye stand praying (*προσευχόμενοι*), forgive (*ἀφίετε*) if ye have ought against any, that your Father also which is in heaven (*ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς*) may forgive (*ἀφῇ*) you your trespasses.

Now St. Matthew, in his narrative of the Passion, shows a strong propensity for turning the indirect words of Jesus in Mark into *oratio recta*. So here it seemed good to him to turn Jesus' command into direct speech, and to compose a prayer which should contain as a principal ingredient this teaching. He could (and does) omit the sentence when the Fig Tree is reached, and include the matter with his other teaching on Alms, Prayer, and Fasting in the Great Sermon. This gives him an outline of the Prayer:

> After this manner therefore pray ye (*οὕτως οὖν προσεύχεσθε ὑμεῖς*), Our Father which art in heaven . . . . Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. . . . (For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.)

It is to be noted that St. Matthew's introduction is vague. *οὕτως* does not specify that this is the dominical form of words which must be used.[1] St. Matthew does not insist on the words (which are but his own): the substance is the thing. *οὕτως* on the other hand can mean 'in these words', and that was how St. Luke understood them; and he therefore begins, 'When ye pray, say . . .'.

We begin then with clauses (6) and (7). In Mark, Jesus had given

two verses belong together, and suspicion of one tars the other, (*b*) Matt. xxi. 20–27 follows Mark xi. 20–33 exactly, apart from the omission of Mark xi. 25–26, (*c*) there is a break in subject-matter between xi. 24 and 25, one verse being on faith in prayer, and the other on forgiveness in prayer, and (*d*) the style is Matthaean. Of these points (*a*) is not weighty since even Dr. Sparks posits two independent interpolations, so that it is not the same suspicion which is against xi. 25 as is against xi. 26. For (*b*), it would be natural for St. Matthew to omit xi. 25 in his xxi if he has already included it in vi. (*c*) is a point in favour of, not against, the verse: St. Mark constantly leaps from subject to subject in teaching-sections, cp. iv. 21–25, ix. 38–50. For (*d*), of the four stylistic points given by Dr. Sparks as Matthaean, two are only found once in Matt., and one only twice; so it is only the commonness of 'Your Father which is in heaven' in Matt., only found here in Mark, which is serious evidence against the verse. *Per contra* we should almost certainly read *οταν στηκετε* with A C D, &c., since there would be a strong tendency to assimilate the rare indicative to the usual subjunctive and read *στηκητε*; and *ὅταν* with the indicative is found in Mark and never in Matthew, cp. R. H. Lightfoot, *History and Interpretation in the Gospels* (1935), p. 70 n. So the stylistic evidence is ambivalent. As there is not a manuscript in which the verse is missing, we must conclude that it is a part of the true text.

[1] So McNeile, op. cit., p. 77.

a command 'Forgive', followed by a final clause which is both a promise and a warning, 'that your Father may forgive'. The command is transposed simply, 'Pray thus, Forgive us as we forgive'. St. Matthew has thus included the notion of reciprocal forgiveness, which is the point. However, he has hardly done justice to the promise and the warning latent in the words, 'that your Father may forgive'; and since this is the only direct teaching on prayer in the Marcan tradition, he feels himself justified in adding an appendix to his Prayer, one verse, vi. 14, for the promise, and its converse, vi. 15, for the warning. The only change that he makes in the Marcan language is to substitute 'debts' and 'debtors' for 'trespasses'. The reason for this is obvious: he could not write '. . . as we have forgiven our trespassers' because the last word would make no more sense in Greek than in English. But the notion of offences being debts is deep in the Aramaic thought of St. Matthew, and receives a full exposition later in the gospel (Matt. xviii. 21 ff.):

> Lord, how often shall my brother sin (ἁμαρτήσει) against me and I forgive (ἀφήσω) him? Jesus saith unto him . . . . Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king which would take account of his servants. And one owed (ὀφειλέτης) him ten thousand talents. . . . Then the Lord loosed him, and forgave (ἀφῆκεν) him the debt . . . . So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive (ἀφῆτε) not everyone his brother.

The moral is the same. The words ἁμαρτία, ὀφείλημα, παραπτῶμα are interchangeable. ὀφείλημα, ὀφειλέτης are the most convenient to use in an epigrammatic prayer.[1]

St. Luke's changes to this are not very significant, but they are typical. He prefers the word ἁμαρτίας in the first clause as being more general and meaningful, and a favourite Lucan word (7 times in Matt., 6 in Mark, 11 in Luke), but this drives him back into a clumsy periphrasis in the second. St. Luke often makes small changes in his original, only to find himself in the end back where he started. In the parable of the Sower, for example, he omits the rootlessness of the second class of seed, merely saying that it dried up for want of moisture; but in the interpretation of the parable the Marcan phrase, 'they have not root', creeps back again. Or in the healing of the Paralytic, he omits the

[1] Cp. M. Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts* (2nd ed., 1954), pp. 102, 270 n.: 'We are perpetuating an Aramaic idiom, for it is in Aramaic, and not in Greek or Hebrew, that sin or guilt towards God is regularly conceived in terms of debt.' St. Matthew's Aramaisms are not to be taken as evidence that he stands close to an Aramaic tradition of Jesus' words, for St. Matthew lived in 'Aramaea' (see G. D. Kilpatrick, op. cit., pp. 124 ff.) and Aramaic thinking and phrasing are natural to him. It would be wrong here, for example, to argue from an Aramaic phrase that we have the dominical words put into Greek. We can only argue from Aramaic when the Aramaic is given us—see below.

Marcan 'take up thy bed' from Jesus' words to the scribes, only to include them when Jesus addresses the sick man. If it be asked how St. Luke could have borne to destroy the epigrammatic balance of the Matthaean Prayer, we must answer that St. Luke had not quite the ear for Semitic epigram possessed by his two predecessors. Compare his changes to Mark:

Mark iv. 20	Luke viii. 15
And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty and some an hundred.	But that on the good ground are they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.
viii. 36	ix. 25
For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and forfeit his own soul?	For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world and lose or forfeit himself?

The Lucan version is generally conceded to be inferior to the Matthaean in most 'Q' passages if we allowed ourselves to argue on the assumption that St. Luke had Matthew before him throughout his gospel.

The change from *ὡς ἀφήκαμεν* to *καὶ γὰρ αὐτοὶ ἀφίομεν* in clause (7) merely shows St. Luke at work improving the Greek style. St. Matthew's aorist is an Aramaic idiom, which his successor correctly transposes into the present.[1] St. Luke's *αὐτοί* has to bear the weight of the whole of the Matthaean appendix, vi. 14–15, which he omits. *παντὶ ὀφείλοντι* is a Lucanism: cp. Luke vi. 30, 40, xiv. 11, xviii. 14.

Clause (1). Given the Mark xi. 25 origin for part of the Prayer, it is evident that the first Matthaean clause comes from the same source; for *πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς* is, *mutatis mutandis*, identical with *ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς* in the earlier gospel. St. Matthew has merely transposed the words into the vocative, and it is otiose to seek for any further explanation of them. That the phrase is a favourite one with him is not adequate as an account of the exordium of the pattern Prayer, unless he had authority for it in the texts he was using.

However, the word 'Father' had been on Jesus' lips on a famous occasion of his praying, and other clauses in St. Matthew's Prayer make it certain that Gethsemane was in his mind as he wrote it. Since Jesus had left so little *instruction* on prayer, so far as the Marcan tradition went, it is natural to draw on his *example*, and the only prayers recorded in Mark are those in Gethsemane. At Mark xiv. 36 Jesus is recorded as

[1] M. Black, op. cit., p. 276.

beginning his prayer, *ἀββᾶ ὁ πατήρ*, the Aramaic word being original, and the Greek words a translation. We know that the primitive Church took over the use of this address, because St. Paul twice tells us so:

> And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying *ἀββᾶ ὁ πατήρ* (Gal. iv. 6).
>
> When we cry *ἀββᾶ ὁ πατήρ*, it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God (Rom. viii. 15).

St. Mark's gloss then is pre-Marcan; and the words were in such wide use in ecstatic prayer in the early Church (*πνεῦμα, κράζει*) that St. Paul was able to appeal to them as evidence for his doctrine that Christians are sons of God.[1] As Aramaic dropped out of use, his successors felt the need to amend these words:

Matt.	Mark	Luke
xxvi. 39 *πάτερ μου*	xiv. 36 *ἀββᾶ ὁ πατήρ*	xxii. 42 *πάτερ*
xxvi. 42 *πάτερ μου*		

St. Luke's translation is briefer than St. Matthew's, and is typical. Two of his words from the cross use the same address: '*πάτερ*, forgive them . . .', '*πάτερ*, into thy hands I commend my spirit' (xxiii. 34, 46). He makes the Prodigal Son use this form three times: '*πάτερ*, give me the portion' (xv. 12), and twice '*πάτερ*, I have sinned . . .' (xv. 18, 21). And so with his version of the Lord's Prayer: he cuts the long Marcan phrase which St. Matthew adopted to a single word—*πάτερ*.

The influence of Gethsemane is most plainly seen in clause (4). Here the Synoptists wrote as follows:

Matt.	Mark	Luke
xxvi. 39 *πλὴν οὐχ ὡς ἐγὼ θέλω ἀλλ' ὡς σύ.*	xiv. 36 *ἀλλ' οὐ τί ἐγὼ θέλω ἀλλὰ τί σύ.*	xxii. 42 *πλὴν μὴ τὸ θέλημά μου ἀλλὰ τὸ σὸν*
xxvi. 42 . . . *γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου.*		*γενέσθω.*

It is not hard here to see St. Matthew's mind at work. In the Prayer he paraphrases Mark xiv. 36, 'But not what I will but what thou wilt', into a more pithy form, 'Thy will be done'. When he comes to Gethsemane he reproduces the Marcan petition twice. This was the crisis of the Lord's life, and he had prayed three times; it would be good to give his words in *oratio recta* more than once. The first time he adheres fairly closely to Mark: 'Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.' The second time he returns to his earlier paraphrase, giving the same words which he has composed in the Prayer: 'Thy will be done.' Both here and

[1] The repeated use of *πνεῦμα* and *κράζειν* makes it very unlikely that these words refer to a full Lord's Prayer.

in the Prayer his vocabulary is typical. θέλημα appears only once in Mark (iii. 35), four times in Luke (xxii. 42 alone being of God's will), and six times in Matthew (five of them referring to God's will). The association of heaven and earth comes thirteen times in Matt., compared with twice in Mark and five times in Luke.[1]

Why should St. Luke have omitted this clause, upon which, perhaps above all others, the mind of Christ is imprinted? St. Matthew wrote the words with his eye on Gethsemane, but that is not to say that St. Luke interpreted them so, even if he associated other parts of the Prayer with that scene. Taken as they stand, they do not appear to add very much to the substance of the two preceding petitions. We are praying for God's name to be hallowed here, and for his kingdom to come: what is added by appending, 'Thy will be done, as in heaven so on earth'? Nothing, St. Luke might well have felt; and as is his custom when transcribing both Mark and Matthew, he omits the inessential.[2] That this is what he has done is shown by the way in which he divides the Matthaean Prayer, shortening it as he goes:

1. (Our) Father (which art in heaven), Hallowed be thy name,
2. Thy Kingdom come, (Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven)
3. Give us this day our daily bread, (amended)
4. And forgive us our trespasses. . . . (amended)
5. And lead us not into temptation (but deliver us from evil).

The third and fourth petitions (as he saw them) he merely amends; 1, 2, and 5 he prunes, each in the same sort of way, removing the slightly obvious heaven–earth–hell contrasts which had been so dear to St. Matthew. If we are to be pithy, pithy let us be. The heaven–earth motif is omitted from the address, which is reduced to a word; it is omitted from the second petition, which is reduced to a phrase. The hallowing of the Father's name, the coming of his kingdom, the doing of his will, are three aspects of the same thing, already begun, to be complete at the End.

The influence of Gethsemane is felt not only in clauses (1) and (4) of the Prayer, but also in (8)–(9). There, when Jesus had taught his disciples to pray by his example, he found them asleep, and having rebuked them he spoke these words:

[1] G. D. Kilpatrick, op. cit., p. 21.

[2] This clause may mean, 'May thy will be obeyed by men as it is by angels', but it is as easy to read it, 'May thy will be done on earth as it is laid down in heaven' (cp. ὡς δ' ἂν ᾖ τὸ θέλημα ἐν οὐρανῷ, οὕτως ποιήσει, 1 Macc. iii. 60). If St. Luke read it so, it is an even closer periphrasis of the first two petitions. I owe this suggestion, and the comparison of St. Luke's abbreviation of the first two petitions, to Dr. A. M. Farrer.

Matt. xxvi. 41	Mark xiv. 38	Luke xxii. 46
γρηγορεῖτε καὶ προσεύχεσθε ἵνα μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς πειρασμόν.	γρηγορεῖτε καὶ προσεύχεσθε ἵνα μὴ ἔλθητε εἰς πειρασμόν.	προσεύχεσθε ἵνα μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς πειρασμόν.

The command in Luke is here given for the second time, as it is also found in Luke xxii. 40, in the form *προσεύχεσθε μὴ εἰσελθεῖν εἰς πειρασμόν*.

The word *πειρασμός* has three meanings in the New Testament. Once it is found in the sense of man tempting God (Heb. iii. 8, quoting the *Venite*). Of the remainder, in six cases it has the clear meaning of tribulations which test a man to the limit, e.g. 'The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations'—as he did Noah and Lot, just referred to (2 Pet. ii. 9, also Luke viii. 13, Acts xx. 19, 1 Pet. i. 6, iv. 12, Rev. iii. 10). In seven others it certainly or probably means the lure of the devil, e.g. 'The devil, having finished every temptation' (Luke iv. 13, also 1 Cor. x. 13, Gal. iv. 14, 1 Tim. vi. 9, Jas. i. 2, 12). The remaining instances are in the Prayer, and at Gethsemane. Now it is by no means clear which of the last two meanings is intended in Gethsemane. Luke xxii. 40 makes it plain that 'not to enter into temptation' was to be the subject of the disciples' prayer as well as its object. But does it mean, 'Pray that you do not fall into the devil's lure, and so deny me when the crisis comes', the traditional interpretation: or does it mean, 'Pray that you do not come into tribulation (like crucifixion) which will put you to the ultimate test'? In favour of the traditional interpretation may be urged the irony of the command. Jesus says, Watch, and they sleep; they do not pray not to come into temptation, and then when it comes they fall. But it is not evident that this is right. Jesus' own prayer is that the cup may pass from him, i.e. that he may not enter into *πειρασμός*; it would be natural for him to tell his disciples to pray in the same sense. *πειρασμός* will then be the equivalent of 'this cup', and will mean tribulation. Furthermore, Mark xiii, immediately preceding Jesus' Passion, is given to describing the ultimate trials of the Church, in such a way as to recall Jesus' own ultimate trials. The saints are to be handed over, like their Lord, to Sanhedrins, to be flogged and stood before governors; Christ's Holy Spirit will make answer for them when the hour comes; their nearest will betray them as Judas is to betray him; yet by endurance like his they will attain salvation. For them, as for him, at the end the sun will be turned into darkness. They must watch for their Lord's coming, late or at midnight, or at cockcrow or early. In the first two watches Jesus is arrested and tried by the Sanhedrin; at cockcrow Peter denies him; early, he is handed over to Pilate. St. Mark has made

it plain that the Passion of Jesus is to be continued in the later passion of his Church: and the repeated warning γρηγορεῖτε, watch, to the disciples in Gethsemane makes it more likely that the 'temptation' they are to pray not to enter into is the refining tribulation, beginning with the cross. It is no answer to this to say that Jesus knew that he must die and that they would run away, and so would not have meant the words in this sense; for with the traditional interpretation he still prayed that he should not die and that their faith should not fail, and he told them to pray not to fall into a temptation to which he knew they would succumb. Thus, although the meaning cannot be said to be certain, it seems more likely that Jesus meant, 'Pray that you do not come to the utter test' than 'Pray that you do not fall'.

St. Matthew, however, certainly understood the words in this sense, because he so altered them in the Prayer. He adds an εἰσ- to Mark's ἔλθητε in Gethsemane, and his μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς is merely an active form of this. The theological problem of God bringing men into temptation in the traditional sense was overwhelming to St. James as well as Origen, and can hardly have failed to strike St. Matthew. His gloss ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ rounds off the second half of the Prayer as (4b) rounds off the first. 'Do not bring us to the ultimate test', he concludes, 'but deliver us from the power of the devil.' St. Luke follows St. Matthew's (8), but he drops the gloss. He knew it to be a gloss and so unnecessary, and it is his habit to abbreviate, and to cut the inessential. πονηρός occurs twenty-four times in Matthew against twice in Mark and eleven times in Luke.

We have thus found that more than two-thirds of St. Matthew's Prayer can be traced back to dominical teaching and example recorded in Mark. There was, however, no reason why he should confine himself to Marcan tradition, and for the three remaining clauses we must turn elsewhere. Clause (3) has a clear origin. T. W. Manson writes, 'In the primitive church this hope [sc. of the coming Kingdom] is bound up with the expectation of the return of the risen Lord: and the early Christian equivalent of "thy kingdom come" is "*marana tha*—Come our Lord".'[1] What is difficult is to imagine how, if 'thy kingdom come' is

[1] *The Sayings of Jesus*, p. 169. C. F. D. Moule, in 'A Reconsideration of the Context of Maranatha' (*N.T.S.* vi (1960), pp. 307–10), argues that Maranatha is not an invocation of Christ at the Eucharist, but a sanction on an anathema. While it is quite possible to read 1 Cor. xvi. 22 in this sense—'If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema—come, Lord (soon, and smite the man at Judgement Day)'—it is much harder to see this sense for Did. x. 6, 'If any is holy, let him come. If any is not, let him repent. Come Lord.' Here there is no ban for Maranatha to sanction. The unholy is not to stay away and repent, he is to repent and come. It is harder still to take Rev. xxii. 20 in this

dominical, the primitive Church came to change it to 'Come our Lord'. If Aramaic words were to be taught to Greek-speaking Christians across Christendom, surely they would be Jesus' words for preference. In fact the derivation is the other way. In the same way that the Church's ecstatic prayer Abba finds place in St. Luke's Prayer and gives inspiration to St. Matthew's, so does the other prayer which was handed down to the Pauline churches in Aramaic, *Marana tha*. This prayer was current during the whole extent of the New Testament period. St. Paul closes the first Corinthian letter with it, and St. John closes the Revelation with it. As an Aramaic prayer it must have enjoyed a specially privileged place in the hearts of all Christians, for whom it was a link with the very earliest Church; and it expressed the hope they, and particularly St. Matthew, fervently shared. It was natural therefore for him to feel that it should be incorporated in his Prayer. Since the Prayer is addressed to 'Our Father', he rephrases it, not writing, 'Let our Lord come', which might seem rather indirect, but 'Let thy kingdom come'. That the two expressions were regarded by him as identical is shown by the change that he makes in the opposite sense to Mark ix. 1:

Matt. xvi. 28	Mark ix. 1
There be some of them which stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.	There be some here of them that stand by, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Kingdom of God come with power.

St. Luke follows him without alteration.

Apart from the pre-Matthaean sources which are known to us, there was also teaching which St. Matthew derived from oral tradition to which we have no access, but which was equally authoritative for him. Much of this he incorporates in the Great Sermon (vii. 7–11):

> Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find . . . . Or what man of you, if his son asks him for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him?

Jesus, then, had given as the basic illustration of prayer for our needs the child asking his father for bread (ἄρτος). It would be right then to include in the ideal Prayer a petition for bread, as our basic physical

way. The words ἔρχου κύριε Ἰησοῦ come after the curse of 18–19, but they must be taken as parallel to 'The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth let him say, Come . . .' which precedes the curse, and cannot refer to it. The support Prof. Moule draws from the inscription *C.I.G.*, iv. 9303, ἀνάθεμα ἤτω μαρὰν ἀθάν, seems frail. With the mis-spelling the words are evidently a blind quotation from 1 Cor. xvi.

need from our heavenly Father. But the bread we ask for must not be bread for the indefinite future. The second half of Matt. vi is to be devoted to God's care to provide for us. We are not to be anxious about what we are to eat, and especially we are not to be anxious about tomorrow. St. Matthew therefore phrases his petition carefully. 'Give us today our bread', he writes; he will not dare to put a petition for tomorrow. The experience of Israel in the desert was an obvious precedent, when manna was provided daily for the day ahead, and he adds the adjective *ἐπιούσιος*, 'for the coming day'.

St. Luke makes two small changes in the petition. The word *ἐπιούσιος* is good, but it is rare—even the Fathers were in doubt as to its meaning. He therefore glosses it with the explanatory phrase *τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν*, words which occur at Exod. xvi. 5 and are direct evidence that the evangelists had the story of the daily manna in mind. The day-to-day note of the petition is retained, but the idea of the immediate future only is lost, and he must suppress St. Matthew's *σήμερον*. Now, where St. Matthew had a once-for-all petition requiring an aorist imperative, St. Luke has a general petition requiring a present imperative. He therefore changes *δός* to *δίδου*.[1]

There remains clause (2)—and also the arrangement of the Prayer. It is a commonplace of exposition that nearly half of the Lord's Prayer is devoted to thought about God, and only the later portion to prayer for ourselves. This takes our minds back to the Decalogue, of which the first four commandments concern man's duty to God; and the more so since the Decalogue is so evidently in St. Matthew's mind in the Great Sermon. Chapter v has seen the restatement of Commandments VI, VII, and IX; but, our appetites having been whetted so far, we are led to ask, What about the rest? The VIIIth and Xth Commandments are concerned with grasping after things, and are carried to a higher level, without their being quoted in Matt. vi. 19 ff.: 'Lay not up for yourselves . . .'. When St. Luke comes to transcribe this passage, he expressly puts it in a context beginning, 'Beware of all *covetousness* . . .' (Luke xii. 15).

[1] The word *ἐπιούσιος* is a standing vexation. The only papyrus on which it occurs has been lost, and it is otherwise only found in certain texts of 2 Macc. i. 8. Dr. H. Y. Hadidian, in 'The Meaning of *ἐπιούσιος* and the Codices Sergii' (*N.T.S.* v (1958), p. 75), argues that A. H. Sayce, who edited Petrie's papyri, was an unreliable man and misread the lost papyrus, which seems rather hard; and that the phrase means 'our continual bread'. In this he is supported by R. F. Cyster in 'The Lord's Prayer and the Exodus Tradition' (*Theology*, lxiv (1961), p. 495), who quotes St. Luke's gloss as evidence. But the papyrus evidence, such as it is, remains in favour of 'bread for the coming day'; the word means that more naturally by derivation; the context in Matt. vi. 19 ff. is dead against an indefinite prayer; and the echo of Exodus xvi really tells more in favour of this than of Cyster and Hadidian's translation.

The matter of most of the first five Commandments finds fulfilment elsewhere in the gospel. 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve' (Matt. iv. 10) covers the substance of I and II. 'The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath' (xii. 8), and the Sabbath controversies in general, lift IV to the level of the gospel. V is quoted and expounded in contradistinction to Rabbinic exegesis in xv. 4 ff. And what of III, 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord thy God will not cleanse him that taketh His name in vain' (LXX)? The IVth Commandment continues, 'Remember the Sabbath day to hallow (ἁγιάζειν) it'. Here is the source of clause (2). The Prayer, like the Sermon, like the gospel, like everything in the New Testament, should be an exposition of the Torah in a new light. Having addressed the Prayer to the Christian God, St. Matthew makes his first petition the substance of the IIIrd Commandment, using the verb from the IVth, 'Thy name be hallowed'. In this way the Prayer begins, like so much else in the Sermon, from the Decalogue, which is to govern its general structure besides. Clause (2) concerns God without regard to ourselves; clauses (3)–(4) concern God, with our own well-being in the background. The rest of the Prayer is concerned with our own needs, physical and spiritual.

The background of the Lord's Prayer is the synagogue liturgy, as has always been asserted by commentators. For the greater part this will be due to Jesus' attendance at the synagogue; for the lesser part to St. Matthew's. But we have seen that, in every other respect, of the five propositions in which we originally set out the accepted view of the development of the Prayer, the exact opposite is in every case true. The substance of the Prayer was drawn from Jesus' teaching on prayer, but the form was not Jesus' but (primarily) St. Matthew's. The Prayer was in consequence not in use at all in the primitive Church, and the teachings it embodies have come down to us in virtually a single version. St. Mark did not include the Prayer in his gospel because it had not yet been composed; but he did include the greater part of the teaching on which it was based. Of the two versions in our gospels St. Luke's is the later, and the motives for which he has altered and abbreviated his predecessor are those which lead him to alter and abbreviate elsewhere. And finally St. Matthew's version shows strong traces of Matthaean style because the Prayer is St. Matthew's own composition. Formal and epigrammatic syntheses of dominical teaching are the genius of the first evangelist, as mythography is the genius of the third. The Church is in St. Matthew's eternal debt for the Prayer she not improperly calls the Lord's.

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