

THE LORD'S PRAYER, PART TWO

THE LORD IS YOUR KEEPER

The Lord is my Keeper. John 17:14-16, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil. THEY ARE NOT OF THE WORLD, EVEN AS I AM NOT OF THE WORLD."

A. "They are not of the world, I am not of the world."

B. "I pray, not take them out of the world, but keep them from evil."

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We have here a petition imbedded in a reiterated statement of the disciples isolated position when left in a hostile world without Christ's sheltering presence. HE LEFT THEM BUT HE DIDN'T LEAVE THEM ALONE.

We cannot fathom the depth of the praying Christ, but we may be sure of this, that **His prayers were always in harmony with the Father's will, and were, in fact, the expression of the Father's will, and were therefore promises and prophecies.** CHRIST'S PRAYERS, PROMISES, AND PROPHECIES. What He prays the Father for His disciples He gives to His disciples. Once only had He to say, "If it be possible." **At all other times He prayed as sure that "Thou hearest Me always," and in this very Lord's prayer He speaks in a tone of strange authority, when He prays for all believers in the future ages and says, "I WILL THAT, WHERE I AM THEY ALSO MAY BE WITH ME."**

In His High Priestly prayer, offered when Gethsemane was almost in sight, and the judgment hall and Calvary were near, **our Lord's tender interest in His disciples fills His mind,** and even in its earlier portion, which is in form a series of petitions for Himself, it is in essence a prayer for them, while this central section

which concerns the apostles, and the closing section, which casts the mantle of His love and care over all who hereafter shall "Believe on Me, through their word," **witnesses to the sublime completeness of His self-oblivion.**

Gethsemane hears His prayer for Himself. Here He prays for His people, and the calm serenity and confident assurance of this prayer, set against the agitation of that other, receives and gives emphasis by the contrast. Our verse falls into two parts, THE ENCLOSING CIRCLE OF THE REPEATED STATEMENT OF THE DISCIPLES' ISOLATION IN AN ALIEN WORLD, AND THE ENCLOSED JEWEL OF THE ALL SUFFICIENT PRAYER WHICH GUARANTEES THEIR PROTECTION.

First of all the disciples' isolation. We have to use the word "world" as it is used in Scripture. The word "world" is COSMOS in the Greek, which is **Satan's world system.** He is the ruler of this world, the prince and the power of this world, Satan's world system. **And it comes to mean the aggregate of mankind considered as apart from and alien to God.** With that order of things, COSMOS DIABOLICUS, Christians are not in accord. **The want of accord depends upon our accord with Christ.**

Every Christian has the "mind of Christ" in him, in the measure of his own personal Christianity. "It is enough that the disciples be as his master." But Christian discipleship has a better guarantee for the assimilation of the disciple to his Lord than the ordinary forms of relation of teacher and taught ever present.

There is a participation in the Lord's life, an implantation in the scholar's spirit of the Teacher's Spirit. "Christ in us" is not only the "hope of glory." but the power which makes possible and actual the present possession of

a life kindred with, because derived from and essentially one with, His life.

We whose spirits have been touched by the indwelling Christ to the "fine issues" of compassion with the law of His earthly life cannot but live in the world as aliens, and wander amid the pitfalls with "blank misgivings" and a chill sense that this is not their rest. We are knit to One whose "meat and drink" it was to do the will of the Father in Heaven, who "pleased not Himself," whose life was all one long service and sacrifice for men, whose joys were not fed by earthly possessions or delights. How should they have a sense of community of aims with groveling hearts that cling to wealth or ambition, that are not at peace with God? And have no holdfasts beyond this "bank and shoal of time?"

A man who has drunk into the Spirit of Christ's life is thereby necessarily thrown out of gear with the world. HAPPY IS HE IF HIS UNION WITH CHRIST IS SO DEEP AND CLOSE THAT IT IS BUT DEEPENED BY THE EXPERIENCE OF THE LACK OF COMPASSION BETWEEN THE WORLD AND HIMSELF. Happy is his consciousness of not being "of the world," but quickens his desire to help the world and glorify his Lord, by bringing His all sufficiency into its emptiness and leading it, too, to discern His GRACE and beauty.

YOU CAN ONLY HELP THE WORLD IF YOU ARE NOT OF THE WORLD because the world cannot help the world. God can help the world, and "Christ in you is the hope of glory." Give every man an answer of the hope that is in you. "Lights in the world," not darkness in the world. **The world is in darkness. It needs light. You, as the light which is Christ in you, light up the world.**

But how little the life of the average Christian corresponds to the reiterated utterance of our Lord. Who of us dare venture to take it on our lips and to say that we are "not of this world, even as He is not of this world?" Is not our relation to that world of which Jesus Christ here speaks a contrast rather than a parallel to His?

The "prince of this world" had nothing in Christ, as himself declared. But he has much in each of us. There are stored up heaps of combustibles in everyone of us which catch fire only too swiftly, and burn but too fiercely, when the "fiery darts of the wicked fall among them."

INSTEAD OF AN INSTRUCTIVE RECOIL FROM THE VIEW OF LIFE CHARACTERIZED BY THE "WORLD," WE MUST CONFESS, IF WE ARE HONEST, THAT IT DRAWS US STRONGLY, AND MANY OF US ARE GUILTY OF BEING QUITE AT HOME WITH IT. "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." Why is this but simply because we do not habitually live near enough to our Lord to drink in His Spirit. The measure of our discord with the world is the measure of our accord with our Saviour. It is in the degree in which we possess His life that we come to be alien's here, and it is in the degree in which we keep in touch with Jesus Christ, and keep our minds wide open for the entrance of His Spirit, that we possess His life.

A worldly Christian, no uncommon character, is a Christian who has all but shut himself off from the life which Christ breathes into the expectant soul.

Secondly, in our passage we have the DISCIPLES' GUARDED SECURITY. "Because Christ is not of this world and we are not of this world," **this shows us our separation unto Him and our so great salvation and our eternal security. "The world is passing away, but He that doeth the will of God abideth forever." The world is temporary, but we are permanent.**

Jesus Christ encloses His prayer between the two parts of that repeated statement of the disciples' isolation. It is like some lovely, peaceful, plain circles by grim mountains. The isolation is a necessary consequence of the disciples' previous union with the Saviour. **It involves much that is painful in the unrenowned part of their natures, but their Lord's prayer is more than enough for their security and their peace.** The Lord's prayer here is

our security and our peace in this world. "In this world you will have trouble, but I have overcome the world."

"I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world." We are in the world by God's great appointment for His great purpose, affecting their own characters and affecting the world, with which Christ will not interfere. It is our training ground, our school. **The world is our school.** The sense of belonging to another order is to be intensified by their experience in it, and these are to make more vivid the hopes that yearn towards the true home, and to develop the "wrestling thews that throw the world." The disciple of life is too precious to be tampered with even by a Saviour prayer, and **He loves His people too wisely to seek to shelter them from its roughness, and to procure for them exemption which would impoverish their character.**

So let us learn the lesson and shape our desires after the pattern of the Lord's prayer, the Lord's prayer for us, **not blindly seek for that ease which He would not ask for us. False asceticism that shrinks from contact with an alien world, weak running from trials and temptations, selfish desires for exemption from sorrows, are all rebuked by the Lord's prayer here.** CHRIST'S RELATION TO THE WORLD IS OUR PATTERN, and we are not to seek for pillows in an order of things where He "had not where to lay His head." He had no place to lay His head in this world and neither do we. But we try. **But the Lord's prayer and the Lord do ask for us as believers, that we might be kept from evil, literally the Evil One.**

THAT PRAYER IS A PROMISE AND A PROPHECY.

But the fulfillment of it, in each individual disciple, hinges on the disciple's keeping him-

self in touch with Jesus Christ, whereby the "much virtue" of His prayer will encompass him and keep him safe. The evil of which the believer is guarded is the Evil One, Satan, personal, and the source of all evil.

Here, then in the Lord's prayer, is Christ's intercession, in which we have the firm ground of our confidence that we may be "more than conquerors," in this life long fight which we have to wage on this Earth. The sweet, strong old Psalm is valid in its assurance today for every soul which puts itself under the shadow of Christ's protecting intercession, "The Lord shall keep thee from evil." He shall keep thy soul. We have not to "lift up our eyes unto the hills," for vainly is help hoped for from the multitudes of the mountains, but "Our help cometh from the Lord which made Heaven and Earth."

Therefore we dwell at peace in the midst of an alien world, having the Father for our Keeper, and the Son, who overcame the world, for our Intercessor, which is our pattern and our hope.

The parallel between Christ and His people applies to their relations to the present order of things. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." It applies to us in our mission here. "As Thou didst send Me into the world, even so sent I them into the world." It applies to the future, "I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee."

In that "coming" lies the guarantee that His servants will each in his due time, come out from this alien world and pass into the state which is home, because He is there. The prayer that they might be kept from the evil, while remaining on the scene where evil is rampant, is crowned by the prayer, "I will that where I am, they also may be with Me, that they may behold My glory."