

STAND FAST.

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Gal. 5:1. To stand, is to adhere to fixed principles; or in other words, to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. 1 Cor. 15:58. We are frequently exhorted to stand; to be steadfast; to continue, etc. Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. 1 Cor. 16:13. Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving for the faith of the gospel. Phil. 1:27.

But no one can stand in his own strength; so we are admonished to stand fast in the Lord. Phil. 4:1. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. Heb. 3:12,14.

Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist steadfast in faith. 2 Pet. 5:8-9.

Stand fast therefore, in the liberty, wherewith Christ hath made you free. But what is the liberty, or freedom, which we have in Christ? But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end – not beginning – everlasting life. Rom. 6:22. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world, through lust.

And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue or fortitude; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance – or self-control, Godliness; and to Godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love; for if these things be in you and abound, they shall make you neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Pet. 1:4-8. Therefore has reference to something previously stated; so we read in Gal. 4.: When we were children, (under the law,) we were in bondage under the elements of the world; but when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a Son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. How be it then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are not Gods; but now after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

And you, that were some time alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight; if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard. Col. 1:21-23.

As ye therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him; rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. Col. 2:6-8. Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as

though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, after the commandments and doctrines of men? Touch not; taste not; handle not; which (ordinances) are all to perish with their using. Col. 2:20-22.

Again, in Gal. 4., freedom in Christ is illustrated by an allegory. Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bond-woman was born after the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise. (They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. Rom. 9:8).

Which things are an allegory; for these are the two covenants; the one from Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is, or signifies, Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. Now we brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bond-woman and her son; for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free.

Stand fast therefore in the liberty or freedom, wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. In this condition, we are exempt from the works of the old law, and are under a new law. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made us free from the law of sin and death. Rom. 8:2. Behold, I, Paul, say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is

circumcised, that he is debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you is justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we, through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.

Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

There are many things to overcome, requiring constant effort; a continual putting off the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new man; being renewed in the inner man, day by day; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. There is a warfare between the flesh and the spirit, but if ye be led of the spirit, ye are not under law. The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: fornication, impurity, debauchery, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, quarrels, jealousies, resentments, altercations, factions, sects, envyings, inebrieties, revelings, and things similar to these; respecting which I tell you before, even as I previously told you; that those who practice such things, shall not inherit the kingdom **page 4** of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us walk also in the Spirit [Diaglott].

B. W. K.

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Thoughts on the Lord's Prayer.

Matt. 6:9-13

The 17 chapter of John is more properly the Lord's prayer, the earnest expression of his own heart. This, usually so called, is rather the disciple's prayer, learned from the Lord in answer to the request, "Lord teach us to pray."

Coming from His lips it can not be unimportant. We are impressed with its simplicity, brevity, and comprehensiveness. It contains no "vain repetitions." Christians should follow Christ rather than the heathen, who "think they shall" be heard for much speaking." Ver. 7. Prayer is not designed as a lecture of suggestion or instruction to the Lord, for he knoweth what things we need before we ask. Ver. 8. And yet he teaches us to pray. It seems important that we should feel our need, and dependence on the Lord as the Giver. **[R90 : page 4]**

To express our wants makes a deeper impression on our own hearts. Even vocal prayer has thus an important use, though we are glad our Father recognizes even our thoughts, and "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Eph. 3:20.

We do not regard this as designed for a stereotyped form of prayer. There may be as much danger of mere formalism in repeating this as any other form of prayer.

It is the manner of the prayer on which Christ lays the stress. "After this manner, therefore, pray ye." It is clear, childlike and pointed; and it is in harmony with God's plan. We should know what we want, and ask expecting to receive. Prayer must be intelligent in order to be of faith, for faith is not feeling, but a depending on God's promises; it is taking him at his word.

It is interesting to observe the divisions of this prayer. It has three parts. The first relates to God, the second to others, or the general cause, and the third to ourselves. This is important. True prayer is [R91 : page 4] humble worshipful and unselfish – "Our Father" first, ourselves last. He should be recognized first because of what he is and what he deserves. Let his sacred Name be spoken with reverence. A careless use of God's name is profanity. Morality relates to human relations Christianity includes both human and Divine. A proper recognition of our relations to God will best secure the performance of our duty to humanity. As God in man is man's hope, so to realize God, is the mainspring of life. For this reason doubtless God is placed first in the arrangement of the prayer. [R91 : page 5]

The prayer recognizes the plan of the ages, and the dispensational steps of advancement; and to lose sight of God's order of development is as unreasonable as to expect harvest without seedtime, or fruit before the tree is grown. "Our Father" savors of the Gospel dispensation, which was dawning when Christ taught his disciples. Former dispensations revealed God as Creator, Lawgiver and Judge, and the terrors of Sinai were characteristic of the effect produced on the minds of the people. The gospel reveals him as a Father, and we as brethren. That was bondage; but God hath not given us the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba – Father. Rom. 8:15.

The former church were mere servants and to them Christ came, but to as many as received him he gave power to become sons. Jno. 1:12. This new name brings new and exalted privileges, even fellowship or unity with God and his Son Jesus Christ. This gives a new basis for action, love instead of fear and leads to certain success. The complete realization of this unity, is the prime element of our Blessed Hope. For this the Saviour prayed – the marriage –

"That they all may be one," "even as we are one," "made perfect in one" "that the world may believe." Jno. 17:20-23. This unity is thus shown to be not only the Christian's life and hope, but also the basis of the world's hope. Certain it is that the world cannot be saved until after the church is glorified.

Do we, when we say "Our Father" realize how much it means. He that does not receive Christ as his Saviour and elder Brother cannot consistently or truthfully say "Our Father." This is the prayer of the disciples of Christ, or the son of God, not by Adam but by the Divine Nature.

The prayer is prophetic. The second part shows this. In this it resembles the 17th of John. The fact that they were taught to pray "Thy Kingdom come" is an indication of God's plan, and the assurance of its success. Prayer moved by the spirit will be answered. "Thy will be done in Earth" finds its assurance in the promise. "The Earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord," and its many kindred statements. The coming of the kingdom must precede the state of holiness referred to. In "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done," the relation of cause and effect between the two parts of the sentence is too often lost sight of. The prayer, "Thy will be done," is certainly appropriate to cases where, as individuals, we are subjected, in God's arrangements, to trying circumstances, as when Jesus said, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." But is it not too often applied where the circumstances are not of God, but of our own arrangement? That this second phase of the prayer is for others, more than for ourselves, will be most appreciated by those who know the glorious truth that the object for which Christ and the saints will reign is to bless the nations. With this in view, the Christian's hope is unselfish. As the joy set before Christ was the well-being of others, for which he endured the cross, and despised the shame, so for the same joy we can endure hardness as good

soldiers of Jesus Christ; and as now in part, by and by to the full extent, we shall "enter into the joy of our Lord." Whoever can appreciate this fact concerning the coming kingdom, must of necessity appreciate the gospel dispensation and its privileges. As we are being nourished for Christ and His work, all personal benefits are given by Our Father, and received by us as a means to a great end, and we can, for this reason, pray, "Father, give us" – to use for Thee.

J. H. P.
