

[R468 : page 5]

"LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY."

In Luke 11:1,2 we are told that as Jesus "was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father who art in heaven."

Before we ever saw the plan of God in the orders of salvation (1 Cor. 15:23), we often found ourselves confused in our manner of addressing the Diety; and, since we saw the plan, it was a long time before we were able to get the subject clear in our mind as to the proper form of address.

We have noticed that others, apparently, have the same difficulty, for we have heard them address the Father and the Son, indiscriminately, in the same prayer. While we recognize the fact that "God hath made this same Jesus...both LORD and Christ" (Acts 2:36), we see the importance of discriminating between the FATHER and the SON, and of addressing a throne of grace, not only in the spirit, but with the understanding also.

Some may think it unimportant, but, if this were so, Jesus would evidently have told the disciples so when they made the request quoted above; but, [R469 : page 5] instead of making such a statement, he answered the question in the manner referred to. We have earnestly desired that God would be pleased to teach us how to address him, for we did not wish to dishonor the Father nor the Son, nor to grieve the Holy Spirit in our addresses at the throne. We hardly think we should have arrived at the conclusion which we have, had it not been for the understanding of the plan. Jesus says, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). There is a significance in the words, so often sung, which perhaps are not as often understood: "Come to Jesus." "Come, ye sinners, poor and

needy." God (the Father) heareth not sinners (John 9:31), but Jesus does. He says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden [with sin], and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28).

Then, before justification, while getting a sight of our sin and corruption, we cry unto Jesus – he is our way unto God. The faith of the repentant soul hears him say, "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more." After being justified, but before sanctification (consecration of the justified nature), we are reckoned sons of God on the earthly plane, but candidates for heirship with Christ. Now we are reckoned perfect human beings, like Adam before he sinned, and like Jesus before baptism.

We understand that Jesus was a perfect human being from his birth, having a body "prepared" for him (Heb. 10:5); while we, from the moment of forgiveness, are reckoned so in honor of our faith in the sacrifice which he made, which sacrifice was for the purpose of redeeming the lost race; of placing in the prison house a "representative" – a "substitute" – that the represented might go free, the forfeit being paid, the penalty met in the person of Christ, and the demands of God's holy law vindicated.

Because we have repented of our sins and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who "taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), on him who is "the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 2:2), and, as our desire is to be perfect, we are so reckoned on his account, i.e., "for Jesus' sake;" and the beseeching invitation comes to us who are now "brethren" (of Jesus, before his consecration to death) to present our "bodies (plural) a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God" (Rom. 12:1). We are told that if we do this, and "suffer with him, we shall also reign with him," we shall be made possessors of immortality, shall be made like unto Christ's glorious body, be made partakers of the divine nature. And when we make this covenant of death with Jesus, we are reckoned as partaking of the divine nature – "begotten

again" (not again spiritually, i.e., twice spiritually, as some have said that we say). We had been begotten of the flesh, now we are begotten again, but this time of the Spirit, adopted into the divine family, legally becoming divine sons, having an "elder brother." He was the "first begotten," and of course at that time the only begotten (God gave his only begotten Son to die for us); but the seed has multiplied, many have believed into him, and with him sacrificed the human, "for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren (Heb. 2:11), but would hardly have called them brethren before, or for any other reason.

We now belong to the royal household, and are permitted to approach God by the ordinary name, "Our Father," "Abba Father," i.e., Father, Father, having been legally justified in the flesh, and, after consecrating it, "received up into glory." Coming by this "new and living way" into the holy place, opened up for us by Jesus, we approach with humble boldness "unto a throne of grace" (Heb. 4:16; 10:20).

From these considerations we conclude that the man of the world, when first getting a view of his lost condition, should "come to Jesus."

After his justification he comes to the Father in Jesus' name. A reckoned son on the plane of the restored Adam, he antedates "the restoration" of the race to the Adamic condition.

If he accepts of the invitation to the higher life, and consecrates himself to death with Christ, he is still a reckoned son (though begotten of the Spirit) on the divine plane.

While a reckoned son on either plane, we understand that it is proper to address the Father in Jesus' name; "and in that day (when he sees us again [John 16:22] and we see him and are like him) ye

shall ask me nothing." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you" (Jno. 16:23.)

Now, the betrothed asks in the name of him to whom she is betrothed; "in that day" she will ask in the same name, but, lo! it will be her name.

"Precious name, O how sweet!
Hope of earth and joy of heaven."

Perhaps some one is ready to ask, "But is that promise (John 16:23) to be fulfilled before the resurrection"?

We think not in its fullness, but is so far as we "ask anything according to his will" (1 John 5:14); but, it is evidently impossible, "seeing through a glass darkly" (1 Cor. 13:12); to always "ask according to his will;" but then, being "like him," there will be no mistake. "Whatsoever ye shall ask" will be granted. "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24). It is evident that our imperfect prayers now have to be revised by our Advocate (1 John 2:1), and the revised prayer might not always contain all the things asked for, but would contain all that is good for us; but this need not be any cause for discouragement, but rather for encouragement. God help us to pray more, praying "with the Spirit and with the understanding also." (1 Cor. 14:15.)

"Were half the time that's vainly spent,
To heaven in supplication sent;
Our cheerful songs would oftener be,
Hear what the Lord has done for me."

J. C. SUNDERLIN.
