

## 'Hallowed be Thy Name.'

A JOHANNINE INTERPRETATION.

'Glorify thy name.'—Jn 12<sup>28</sup>.

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IN any investigation of this first petition of the Lord's Prayer we have no need to perplex ourselves with questions of textual criticism, for both Matthew and Luke record the words in a precisely identical form. Further, we may also allow that with regard to its interpretation there is no reason why this petition should not be the first of those which we address to God, for just as in the invocation we call upon God by His Name 'Father,' so here we pray that the Divine Name, as thus revealed, may everywhere be sanctified, recognized as holy.

The connexion, however, between the title of the invocation and the meaning of this clause has, perhaps, not always been sufficiently realized by expositors of the Lord's Prayer. It is, no doubt, true that the expression 'Let thy name be hallowed' has a general significance, that it is a prayer for the growth and spread of true religion: 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom' (Pr 9<sup>10</sup>), and 'Unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise' (Mal 4<sup>2</sup>). In this same sense also we may say that the first petition of the Lord's Prayer is a true 'Missionary Prayer,' a prayer for the expansion of the knowledge of the Lord, as is further exemplified by the language of the Apocalypse: 'Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy righteous acts have been made manifest' (Rev 15<sup>4</sup>).

Yet we may surely see a more particular meaning in this prayer for the sanctification of the Divine Name. The expression, of course, has its roots in the past, is illustrated by prophet, lawgiver, and psalmist, but in the model prayer for the followers of Christ it has also a further implication: 'May Thy Name Father be hallowed and revered by those who must become as little children before they can enter the Kingdom of Heaven.' The simple and spontaneous address 'Father' of the invocation may indeed be said to influence every word of the prayer thus directed to Him. 'They that know thy name,' says the Psalmist, 'will put

their trust in thee,' and those who call upon God as Father, and have a true faith in His fatherly love, may well pray that this one, great, and all-important fact of the Fatherhood of God may be realized, that all the implications of the supreme revelation, the Name *Father*, may come to be fully recognized by the whole human race. There is thus something deeper, more personal and more vital, in such a prayer than a mere pious aspiration for the furtherance of religion. It is not a conventional liturgical formula, as in the Jewish petition, 'Let His great Name be blessed for ever, and to all eternity,' but the fervent expression of an earnest desire that each and all of God's children may find their true home 'in the kingdom of their Father' (Mt 13<sup>48</sup>).

It would, perhaps, be difficult to find a more familiar Jewish term than the expression 'the name of the Lord.' In the Decalogue the command is given, 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain' (Ex 20<sup>7</sup>); and in the Levitical Code speaking against God is described as 'blaspheming the name' (Lv 24<sup>11</sup>). Further, the House of God is described in Deuteronomy as 'the place which the Lord shall choose to cause his name to dwell there' (Dt 12<sup>11</sup>). In the prophecies of Ezekiel we read, 'And I will sanctify my great name, which hath been profaned among the nations, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes' (Ezk 36<sup>28</sup>). It cannot be said that there is not good authority in the Scriptures of the Old Testament for the 'hallowing' of the Divine Name.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, however, gives a plainer meaning and a more definite content to the expression, 'the name of the Lord.' It is no longer an equivalent for the gradual and partial revelation of the character of God, whether to the Gentiles amongst whom He 'left not himself without witness' (Ac. 14<sup>17</sup>), or even to the Jews to whom He was known as 'Jehovah, the God of Israel.'

For Jesus the Divine Name is simply 'Father,' and it is for the hallowing of that Name, in some sense 'a new name,' that He bids His disciples pray. We do not, if we pray in the spirit of Christ, address our prayers to Jehovah, 'the glorious and fearful name' (Dt 28<sup>58</sup>), nor do we pray that the nations of the world may praise His 'great and terrible name: holy is he' (Ps 99<sup>9</sup>), but rather we make petition to our Heavenly Father that 'thy name may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations' (Ps 67<sup>2</sup>).

It may seem strange that in the life and words of our Lord as recorded by the first three Evangelists there should be no further mention of the hallowing of 'the Name.' Other clauses of the Lord's Prayer have their counterpart in sayings of our Lord spoken on other occasions, but in this case, apparently, there is no exact parallel to be found in these Gospels to this prayer for the sanctification, the devout recognition of the Divine Name *Father*. Possibly this is due to the fact that our Lord deliberately refused to employ the expression 'the Name' as a periphrasis for God, and chose to speak of Him directly as 'Father,' 'my Father,' or 'your Father.' The phrase, therefore, has here a special significance as employing a term which in itself was not customary to our Lord. At the same time, however, a prayer which was definitely and immediately addressed to God as Father could safely and rightly include a petition for the worship of His Holy Name, a fervent prayer that others may come to join their prayers with those who call upon God as the Father of all. The Lord's Prayer is the great 'Family Prayer.' We are bidden to pray for the advent of the Kingdom, for the fulfilment of the Divine Will, but first and foremost, as including all else, we pray that the whole Household of God may be led to realize their birthright, 'the right to become children of God' (Jn 1<sup>11</sup>).

When we turn to the Gospel according to St. John we find that, in contrast to the Synoptists, 'the Name' of God is repeatedly mentioned, and there is much that serves to illustrate our Lord's use of the expression 'May thy name be hallowed' in His pattern prayer. We have already remarked that the clause is no mere liturgical formula, or an ascription of praise inserted in accordance with the Rabbinic principle, 'A benediction that does not mention the Name is no benediction at all.' It must be noticed, however, that although in the

Fourth Gospel God's Name is not infrequently spoken of, yet it is always in a direct personal relation, 'thy name,' or else with immediate reference to the Divine Fatherhood, 'the name of the Father' or 'of my Father.' The prayer of our Lord which is given in chapter 17 of the Gospel makes mention of the Name of the Father no fewer than four times. 'I manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world' (v. 6). 'Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me' (v. 11). 'While I was with them, I kept them in thy name which thou hast given me' (v. 12). 'I made known unto them thy name, and will make it known' (v. 26). These passages make it clear that here, at any rate, the 'Name' of God is not a vague generalization, or a convenient alternative, it is rather 'a new name' given to the Son that He may reveal it to His followers and keep them in it, making all one in the one great Family of God their Father.

It is interesting also to notice that in this prayer we have the term 'hallow' or 'sanctify' used, however, not in connexion with the Name of the Father, but with reference to the Son and His disciples. 'For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth' (v. 19). So also our Lord prays, 'Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth' (v. 17). Such sanctification is, no doubt, primarily personal, but it is also altruistic and progressive. We can thus see that the petition, 'May thy name be sanctified,' as taught by our Lord, is meant to be something more than a prayer merely for personal holiness in the heart of the individual. The more we desire and pray for our own growth in holiness, our own 'consecration,' the more we realize the far-reaching nature of this prayer with its sublime unselfishness. Our holiness before God is not merely our own private concern, it is of infinite value for its wider social aspects, as promoting the progress of the Kingdom. Thus in the Sermon on the Mount our Lord enjoins upon His followers, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven' (Mt 5<sup>16</sup>).

In this connexion it is worth remembering that not only is the Name of the Divine Father glorified by men in expressions of worship and thanksgiving, but God Himself is said to 'glorify' His Name. Thus in the Fourth Gospel our Lord prays to His

Father in the words 'Glorify thy name' (Jn 12<sup>28</sup>). The answer to this prayer was given, we are told, by 'a voice out of heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.' It is difficult not to see here a reference to the Divine Fatherhood. The glory of God consists in giving to men the filial spirit, the Spirit of the Son, whereby they feel God to be their Father. The Fourth Gospel is most emphatic in maintaining that the glory of the Father and of the Son is one and mutual, the Father glorifies the Son by His loving care, and the Son glorifies the Father by His loving obedience. The most glorious act of Sonship is the death upon the cross, whereby He was made 'perfect through sufferings' (He 2<sup>10</sup>). In the account of the Betrayal of our Lord, as given in the Fourth Gospel, we are told that, after the departure of Judas from the upper room, 'Jesus saith, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him' (Jn 13<sup>31</sup>). It is in times of great distress and mental conflict, when His 'soul is troubled,' that the Son of God glorifies the name of the Divine Father by His obedience. Thus we find that in this Gospel our Lord prays in the words, 'Father, the hour is come: glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee' (17<sup>1</sup>), and again, 'I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do' (17<sup>4</sup>). Further, when making supplication for His disciples, He prays, 'Keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are' (v. 11). 'The glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them (v. 22). The prayer ends

with the words, 'O righteous Father, the world knew thee not, but I knew thee; and these know that thou didst send me; and I made known unto them thy name, and will make it known; that the love wherewith thou lovedst me may be in them, and I in them' (vv. 25, 26).

These quotations have here been given at length in order to show how this long intercessory prayer of our Lord which is recorded in the Fourth Gospel expounds and illuminates the brief petition which He bade His disciples pray, 'Hallowed be thy name.' The example of the Son of Man is valid for all mankind. His life and death were a complete 'hallowing' of the Divine Name, a most sacred revelation of the Fatherhood of God. To the precept, 'Ye shall be holy, for I am holy' (Lv 11<sup>45</sup>), is added the pattern of the sinless Christ, whereby we may be perfect even as the 'heavenly Father is perfect' (Mt 5<sup>48</sup>).

The first petition of the Lord's Prayer is thus universal and all-inclusive, a true missionary prayer that the Name of God may be made known to all men; for wherever the love of the Father is proclaimed and known, the Kingdom is come, and whenever the message of the Divine Fatherhood is received into the hearts of men and realized, 'glorified,' in a life of loving obedience, the Will of God is done. It is therefore evident that it is not in the conventional language of devout aspiration, but in the truest filial piety that we pray, 'Hallowed be thy name,' believing that our Lord Himself in His own prayers to His heavenly Father used the words, 'Glorify thy name.'

## Literature.

### HERBERT SPENCER.

IF an editor has to choose between an author who knows the subject well and an author who can write well, what should his choice be? Fortunately, the choice has rarely to be made. When the editor of the series entitled 'Makers of the Nineteenth Century' selected Mr. Hugh Elliot for the biography of *Herbert Spencer* (Constable; 6s. net), he selected one who could write with force and with finish, and one who had read the whole of Spencer's works right through twice.

But that is not the end of an editor's duty. He must find a man who is in sympathy with his subject. For we have no longer any pleasure in the slashing review, or in any other slashing thing. We know now that nothing is done well that is not done sympathetically. Is Mr. Hugh Elliot a Spencerian?

He is. But just because he is a Spencerian he criticizes Spencer. Raising the question at the end of the book as to the right of Herbert Spencer to a place among the Makers of the Nineteenth Century, he says this: