

THE PATER NOSTER AS AN ESCHATOLOGICAL PRAYER

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IN RECENT years there has been a great deal written on the Pater Noster (henceforth PN).¹ Much of this literature has stressed the eschatological interpretation of the prayer as its more original meaning in the early Church. We wish to present here the case that can be made for such an interpretation.

At the outset we should make clear that by "eschatological" we refer to the period of the last days, involving the return of Christ, the destruction of the forces of evil, and the definite establishment of God's rule. We are defining the limits of our use of the word because in a broader sense the whole Christian period can be called eschatological, since God's kingdom has already been partially established in this world through Jesus, who by His death and resurrection has won a victory over Satan. In this broader sense, the PN could be interpreted of the everyday aspirations and needs of the Christian and still be called eschatological.² What we hope to show, however, is that the petitions of the PN do not refer to daily circumstances but to the final times.

Also, our interest is confined to the meaning that the PN had for the early Church (as witnessed, in particular, in Mt) after the resurrection of Jesus. What shades of meaning the prayer had when Jesus first spoke it before His death,³ or what the disciples understood at that time, lies beyond the scope of our investigation.

¹ The most valuable work is that of Ernst Lohmeyer, *Das Vater-unser* (2d ed.; Göttingen, 1947). For a Catholic treatment, Josef Hensler, *Das Vaterunser (NT Abhandlungen 4/5; 1914)*, is still the most complete, especially in textual problems, but it is dated in its interpretations. More recent works include: J. Alonso Díaz, "El problema literario del Padre Nuestro," *Estudios bíblicos* 18 (1959) 63-75; Heinrich Schürmann, *Das Gebet des Herrn* (Freiburg, 1958); H. Van den Bussche, *Le Notre Père* (Brussels, 1960); A. Hamman, *La prière 1: Le Nouveau Testament* (Tournai, 1959) Part 3 of chap. 1; J. Jeremias, "The Lord's Prayer in Modern Research," *Expository Times* 71 (1960) 141-46.

² Thus there is no distortion, but merely a broadening of scope, if, in the Christian use of the PN, the petitions which originally referred to the coming of the last days were soon adapted to daily life.

³ Van den Bussche, *op. cit.*, has done some investigation along this line. For instance, the petition "May your name be sanctified," uttered during the lifetime of Jesus, may

	MATTHEW 6:9-13	LUKE 11:2-4	DIDACHE 8:2
Title	πάτερ ἡμῶν ὃ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς	πάτερ	πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ
Petition 1	ἀγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου	ἀγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομα σου	ἀγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομα σου
Petition 2	ἐθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου	ἐλθάτω ἡ βασιλεία σου	ἐθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου
Petition 3	γενήθω τὸ θέλημά σου ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς	γενήθω τὸ θέλημά σου ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς	γενήθω τὸ θέλημά σου ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς
Petition 4	τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δοῦς ἡμῖν σήμερον	τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δοῦναι ἡμῖν τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν	τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δοῦς ἡμῖν σήμερον
Petition 5	καὶ ἄφεσις ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν	καὶ ἄφεσις ἡμῖν τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν καὶ γὰρ αὐτοὶ ἀφήκαμεν πάντας ὀφειλόντας ἡμῶν	καὶ ἄφεσις ἡμῖν τὴν ὀφειλὴν ἡμῶν καὶ ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν
Petition 6	καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμῖς εἰς πειρασμόν ἐλλὰ ῥύσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ	καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν	καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν ἐλλὰ ῥύσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ
Doxology			ὅτι σοῦ ἐστὶν ἡ δόξα καὶ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας

NOTE.—In the versions of Luke and the *Didache*, the accents are supplied only where the words differ from the version of Matthew, omitted where they agree with Matthew.

There are certain introductory problems to be treated briefly before we can discuss the petitions themselves. We may begin with the question of the different forms of the PN. Of the two forms of the prayer found in the Gospels, Lk's is considerably shorter than Mt's. The form found in the *Didache*⁴ is longer than Mt's by a doxology at the end. Recent scholars have come surprisingly close to agreement on the origin of the different forms. It is generally held that the short Lucan form most closely represents in the number of its petitions the form of the prayer as historically spoken by Jesus.⁵ The principle behind this solution is that it would be very difficult to conceive that the Lucan tradition would have dared to excise petitions from a longer form, for the prayer, being Jesus' own, took on a sacred character which would have discouraged such omissions. It is much more likely that the Matthean tradition represents a prayer to whose original petitions have been joined other sayings of Jesus.⁶ This is a well-attested phenomenon in Mt, for Mt's eight Beatitudes (as compared to Lk's four) and Mt's long Sermon on the Mount (as compared to Lk's shorter Sermon on the Plain) represent conflation of material.

However, we now recognize that the case of the PN was probably

have referred to the glorification to be achieved in His death and resurrection (see Jn 12:28). The viewpoint would naturally be changed after these events.—This confining of our interest to the early Church's understanding of the PN applies also, of course, to the question of eschatology. We shall cite texts that the early Church applied to the final coming of Christ, without necessarily implying that Jesus Himself was referring to His final coming when He uttered those statements. John A. T. Robinson, A. Feuillet, and others maintain that many of Jesus' statements about His return referred originally to the destruction of Jerusalem, but in the early Church they came to be applied to the final Parousia.

⁴ Because of its antiquity, the *Didache* must be considered an important witness to first-century Christian usage. J. P. Audet has given us the most recent and comprehensive work on the *Didache* (*La Didachè: Instructions des apôtres*; Paris, 1958), and he would date it (p. 199) somewhere between 50–70 A.D., as a contemporary of the earlier Gospels. This may be too early, but a date much later than the beginning of the second century seems unlikely.

⁵ Any theory that the PN was spoken by Jesus twice, once as in Lk, and once as in Mt, is not worthy of serious consideration (even though it was held by Origen). Besides exemplifying an impossible solution to the relation between the Synoptic Gospels, it would imply that the disciples forgot what Jesus told them and had to learn the prayer over again.

⁶ Actually, as we shall see, the Matthean petitions not found in Lk (3 and the second part of 6) have parallels elsewhere in the Gospels.

not a simple question of literary editing. We are dealing with a prayer that was recited frequently by the early Christians⁷ and thus became a part of the Christian liturgy. Therefore, what Mt may well be giving us is the Greek form of the PN recited in the churches of Syria (it is with this area that the first Gospel is usually associated). Here the Aramaic tongue of Jesus was the spoken language, and it is of importance that Mt's PN can be rendered back into good Aramaic poetry.⁸ Thus, the addition of other petitions of Jesus to an originally shorter PN may have been the work of the liturgy.

On the other hand, while Lk's tradition preserves the shorter and more original outline,⁹ the Gentile churches whose tradition Lk represents have also had their influence. The wording of the Lucan petitions has been adapted to their use, understanding, and outlook, and consequently is further away from the original Aramaic words of Jesus than is Mt's wording. And so, while modern scholarship favors the Lucan number of petitions as more original, it generally favors the Matthean wording of the petitions. The theory of liturgical influence would also explain the addition of the doxology in the *Didache*. No one doubts that this work contains liturgical instructions and descriptions; and if Audet is correct in locating its origins at Antioch,¹⁰ it is another example of the Syrian liturgy, whence its closeness to Mt. Now Jewish prayer formulae generally end in a doxology, and this Jewish usage would have had its influence on the large number of Jewish Christians in the Syrian churches. Consequently, the PN of the *Didache* may represent a liturgical adaptation to a familiar prayer pattern.

The liturgical use of the PN has, in fact, colored its whole history.¹¹

⁷ *Did* 8, 3 instructs the Christians to say the PN three times a day.

⁸ As given in Lohmeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 15, and Jeremias, *art. cit.*, p. 143. For Lohmeyer, there is a title and five two-line units in the Aramaic.

⁹ Lk's form can also be rendered in Aramaic (if we make allowance for Lk's Grecisms), but with a different poetic pattern consisting of a title and seven one-line units; cf. Lohmeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, pp. 208-9. The introduction to the PN in *Did* 8, 2 tells the Christians to pray as the Lord has asked "in His Gospel"; thus the *Didache* may represent the same general church as Mt's Gospel.

¹¹ We draw heavily here on T. W. Manson, "The Lord's Prayer," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 38 (1956) 99-113, 436-48, who gives a history of the liturgical usage of the PN. He suggests that the rarity of references to it in the early writers may be explained by the feeling that it was a Christian prayer not to be shared indiscriminately. In the Roman Mass we still approach it warily: "Praeceptis salutaribus moniti et divina institutione formati, *audemus* dicere."

It is found in that part of the *Didache* directed to those who are already church members, coming after the baptismal ceremony of chap. 7 and before the Eucharistic ceremony of chap. 9. In Africa it was taught to baptismal candidates eight days after the Creed; and Tertullian, who gives us our earliest commentary on the PN,¹² may in part be giving us a baptismal explanation. Cyril of Jerusalem¹³ approached the prayer as part of a commentary on the Eucharistic liturgy for those who had been baptized. This liturgical usage is important, not only in explaining the evolution of different ancient forms of the prayer, but also in understanding forms in use today. As we discuss the petitions, we shall see that the standard English form of the PN scarcely renders justice to the Greek of Mt. These observations may tend to produce in the reader the type of reaction so common in regard to the modern advances in Scripture studies: "Don't tell us they want to change the Our Father now!" But the reader should remember that not one of the traditional versions of the PN in English,¹⁴ French,¹⁵ German,¹⁶ or for that matter in Latin,¹⁷ is a real translation from a critical Greek text. These versions are liturgically hallowed prayer forms, and the liturgies have exercised a certain freedom in relation to the Gospel text.¹⁸ In suggesting a more accurate translation of the Greek text, then, we have no intention of suggesting a change in the prayer formula.

In regard to the freedom exercised in treating the PN, we might now turn to the context of the prayer in Lk and Mt, for this context bears on the question of prayer formula. Lk (11:2-4) situates the PN in the journey to Jerusalem,¹⁹ shortly after the Mary-Martha story. Jesus told Martha, "One thing is needful." Perhaps in the Lucan schema the PN is to be the example of the "one thing," namely, prayer. The dis-

¹² *De oratione* (PL 1, 1149 ff.).

¹³ *Catechesis* 23 (= *Mystagogica* 5), "De sacra liturgia et communione" (PG 23, 1117 ff.).

¹⁴ The standard English form employs the concluding doxology; cf. n. 134 below.

¹⁵ Cf. n. 120 below.

¹⁶ Cf. n. 55 below.

¹⁷ Our Latin formula does not entirely agree with the Vulgate of Mt, for we use *quotidianum* instead of the Vulgate *supersubstantialem*; cf. the discussion of *epiousios* under Petition 4.

¹⁸ For other examples see nn. 64 and 70 below.

¹⁹ This Peraan section of Lk is a collection of miscellaneous material; and Lk 11:1-13 gathers together several separate sayings pertaining to prayer and petition. There is a ninth-century tradition that identifies the site where the PN was said with the Garden of Olives. For the probable reason see Petition 3.

ciples ask Jesus: "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." Jesus says, "When you pray, say. . . ." Is He giving them a fixed prayer formula such as the Jews had?²⁰ The very fact that there appear two variant forms of the PN in the Gospels suggests that He was not. All that Jesus may have intended was that the PN, with its brevity and complete dependence on God, serve as a model for the spirit of Christian prayer. Of course, the Christian liturgies soon turned it into a formula.

Mt (6:9-13) places the PN in that great collection of material which constitutes the Sermon on the Mount. The original outline of the section can be traced through the sayings on alms, on prayer, and on fasting in 6:2, 5, 16, all three attacking hypocrisy. The saying on prayer (6:5-6) served as a magnet to attract other sayings on prayer, including the criticism of Gentile prayer (6:7-8) and the PN, thus giving us a small collection of Jesus' thoughts on prayer. The immediate introduction to the PN is "Pray then like this. . .," which again is not to be interpreted as referring to a fixed formula.

What is interesting is the fact that the disciples felt the need of asking Jesus how to pray, or that Jesus gave them a model of prayer.²¹ This indicates a realization that the traditional Jewish prayer formulae were no longer adequate for the followers of Jesus. From the time of His introduction by John the Baptist, Jesus had stood for a certain newness in religion. When His observances were compared to those of the Pharisees, He had said that one should not put new wine into old wineskins (Mk 2:22). In the very Sermon on the Mount which frames the PN, He had shown His freedom with regard to the Torah by repeating over and over, "You have heard it said, but I say. . ." Now, if Jesus presented Himself as the representative (and, indeed, the in-

²⁰ In treating the PN we shall have occasion to refer to these Jewish prayers. Hamman, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-99, has a convenient table of them, and our citations may be found there unless otherwise indicated. Two of these prayers deserve special mention: (1) The *Qaddish*; Jewish tradition connects this doxology with Johanan ben Zakkai and Aqiba; this would mean that its primitive form was in use in first-century Judaism. (2) The *Shemoneh 'Esreh* or eighteen benedictions; this obtained its final form after the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D., but had its origins earlier.

²¹ In both Mt and Lk the PN is directed, not to the crowd, but to the intimate followers of Christ, a group that the Matthean setting characterizes as the salt of the earth and the light of the world (5:13-14), a group separated from the scribes and Pharisees (5:20) and from the Gentiles (5:47).

carnation) of a new way of approaching God, it was only logical that He would have a new way to pray to God. Thus, while many of the phrases of the PN may be found in contemporary Jewish prayers,²² there is a new spirit that invests the "Lord's Prayer." The Jewish prayer formulae, depending heavily on the *OT*, were for the community of Israel, which regarded God's manifestation of Himself to their fathers as the definitive way of approaching God. The PN is a prayer for the Christian community,²³ for those who believe that Jesus is the way to God and that the new and final dispensation has come.

This concept of the PN as a prayer of the Christian community is essential to our interpretation. Even after Jesus left His followers and returned to His Father, His image remained, not only as a model, but as the object of all hope. He had spoken frequently of His return and of its suddenness, and that return occupied the imagination of the Christian communities, as 1 and 2 Th and 1 Pt attest. On their lips, we believe, the prayer given them by Jesus was an expression of their yearning for His return and for the ultimate fulfilment of the things He had promised.²⁴ Let us now turn to this prayer as it was repeated in the early Christian community whose traditions find their voice in Mt. For our study we shall divide the PN into a title and six petitions (two sets of three each).²⁵

²² In general, however, the petitions of the PN are shorter than those of the more wordy Jewish prayers, and its title is simpler ("Father").

²³ That it is a community prayer is obvious from the first person plural which appears throughout. When an individual prays it, he prays it in the name of the community. And it is a Christian prayer; for, despite the vague modern use of "the fatherhood of God," it is the *NT* outlook that only those have God as a Father who recognize Jesus as His Son. Therefore, the PN must be interpreted more through parallel ideas found in the Gospels than through the *OT* or through Jewish writings. Tertullian is right when he calls it "breviarium totius evangelii."

²⁴ As Lohmeyer (*op. cit.*, p. 11) phrases it, the PN serves as "the basic prayer for the eschatological community of disciples, not a prayer. . . for the necessities of everyday life, but for the needs of a disciple's life in the eschatological period." And, as he adds, the present period when the community of disciples is hidden and inconspicuous will soon pass and the eschatological light of the last times will dawn. In Mt's setting of the PN, we hear (6:6) that we should pray in secret, and then will come the Father's reward. The PN is the prayer for that reward.

²⁵ The traditional (e.g., Luther) division into seven petitions is not satisfactory, for the two parts of 6 belong together. For the reconstructed divisions of the original Aramaic, see nn. 7 and 8 above.

TITLE

Mt: *Our Father who are in heaven* (pl.)

Lk: *Father*

Did: *Our Father who are in heaven* (sing.)

Jesus' use of *abba* (the Aramaic word for "father"²⁶), without modifier, in addressing God is distinctive.²⁷ It was so distinctive that it was remembered in the early Church, so that Paul could write to the Galatians and to the Romans and cite the Aramaic term to these Greek-speaking communities.²⁸ The use of "Father" for God was, of course, known both to pagan ("Father Zeus") and Jew. However, the contemporary Jewish prayers tend to use the Hebrew term *ab* and to accompany it by a possessive such as "our"—thus, "Our Father," *abimū*.²⁹ They do not use the Aramaic *abba* without qualification.

From this we may suspect that in "Our Father"³⁰ Mt is giving us an adaptation of the more original Lucan "Father" to the standard Jewish prayer formula.³¹ Besides the employment of the Aramaic term, there

²⁶ Jeremias, *art. cit.*, p. 144, claims a diminutive and caritative force for *abba*, almost equivalent to "daddy." Nevertheless, *abba* is the normal word for "father," and the philological efforts to explain it as a diminutive are not convincing.

²⁷ E.g., Mk 14:36: "*Abba*, Father, all things are possible for you" (the parallel in Mt 26:39 reads "My Father"); Mt 11:25-26 (= Lk 10:21): "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth." Also, "Father" is found in Lk 23:34 and 46, and *passim* in Jn.

²⁸ Gal 4:6: "God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying, 'Abba! Father!'" Also, Rom 8:15.

²⁹ *Shemoneh 'Esreh* 6: "Forgive us, our Father, for we have sinned." *Seder Elij* 7 (33): "Our Father, who are in heaven." When the Aramaic is used, it is also in the form "Our Father," *abnan*.

³⁰ The term "our Father" is not too frequent in the rest of the *NT*, except for the opening addresses of the Pauline Epistles, e.g., 1 Cor 1:3.

³¹ This is not certain, however, for there are several other factors to be considered: (1) While Mk does not record the PN, Mk 11:25 is reminiscent of it: "And whenever you stand praying, forgive . . . so that *your Father who is in heaven* may also forgive you your trespasses." This verse in Mk is closer to Mt's form of the PN than to Lk's. (2) The Lucan form of the title, besides having no "our," has no "who are in heaven." Yet a few verses later, Lk 11:13 seems to recall the latter phrase: ". . . how much more will the *heavenly* Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him." By a type of inclusion, this verse might be considered an indication that the word "heavenly" was originally in the title of the PN. (3) In Jewish Aramaic *abba* means both "father" and "my father." Lohmeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 20, cites a case where it seems to stand for "our father." Thus, a case might be made for the idea that Lk and Mt are giving us variant translations of the same Aramaic substratum; however, this is quite unlikely, and Lohmeyer himself rejects the suggestion.

was something distinctive about the very connotation of Jesus' use of "Father." In the *OT*, God was thought of as the Father of the people Israel, and Israel (as long as it remained faithful) as God's child.³² In the *NT*, God's Fatherhood is not put on the basis of a national covenant, but on the basis of union with Jesus, who is God's Son in a special way.³³ He alone can call God "my Father" in the proper sense; those who unite themselves to Him share His power to do so through God's gift.

This *NT* concept of God's Fatherhood and Christian sonship gives an eschatological tone to the title of the PN;³⁴ for if we examine the Synoptic Gospels carefully, we find the becoming sons of God is something that happens in the last days and in the heavenly kingdom.³⁵ Lk 20:36 says that there will be no marriage in the next age because those who are worthy to attain that age "cannot die any more, since they are equal to angels and are *sons of God*." Again, Lk 6:35 promises a heavenly reward to those who love their enemies: "Your reward will

³² Nm 11:12; Dt 32:6; Is 63:16. At times this sonship is especially centered on the king, but as the representative of the people (Ps 2:7). Ps 89(88):26 promises an intensification of this Davidic sonship in the final days of Israel's history. In the last books of the Bible and in the intertestamental literature, the concept of divine sonship becomes more eschatological and is on the verge of breaking its national barriers: e.g., Wis 5:5; Ps Sol 17:30; Jub 1:23-25.

³³ This is implicit in the whole *NT* view of the redemption. Explicitly, we may quote 1 Jn 5:1: "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God"; and Gal 3:26: "For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith."

³⁴ It has been objected that the title "our Father" should not be considered reciprocal, and that, therefore, in studying it we should not consider texts dealing with divine sonship, but only those dealing with God's Fatherhood. Such a division, however, is foreign to *NT* mentality; e.g., Rom 8:14-15 clearly connects sonship and Fatherhood.

³⁵ Here there is a certain divergence in *NT* thought; for, on the other hand, Paul and John treat sonship as a gift already conferred (in Paul's thought, by adoption [Gal 4:5]; in John's thought, by divine begetting [Jn 1:12-13; 3:5; 1 Jn 3:9; also 1 Pt 1:23]). This is an aspect of "realized eschatology." We believe that both views of divine sonship stem from the mind of Christ. The Synoptic view (which dominates our interpretation of the PN, since that prayer is found in the Synoptic Gospels) would represent an emphasis more popular when the hope of the Second Coming was more vivid and imminent; the other view is more sophisticated and would be better appreciated when the concept of the Second Coming began to play a less dominating role. Both views are true: we are God's sons now through sanctifying grace; but this sonship will be perfected in ultimate union with God. And both Paul and John recognized this: cf. Rom 8:23: "We ourselves who have the first fruits of the Spirit groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies"; 1 Jn 3:2: "We are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him."

be great, and you will be *sons of the Most High*." The Beatitudes promise heavenly rewards³⁶ to various groups among the followers of Jesus; the peacemakers are blessed, "for they shall be called sons of God" (Mt 5:9). In the explanation of the parable of the weeds in the field (Mt 13:37-43), we find that at the close of the age, when the angels are sent forth, there is a separation between the sons who enter the kingdom of their Father (vv. 38, 43) and the sons of the Evil One.

And so, if in the PN the Christians can address God as "Father," it is because they are anticipating their state of perfection, which will come at the close of this age. They are anticipating the coming of God's eschatological kingdom, which is already incipient in the preaching of Jesus.³⁷ It is no accident that in the Beatitudes mentioned above, the parallel to the promise that the peacemakers shall be called the sons of God is the promise that the poor in spirit shall inherit the kingdom of God. And so, the community that says the Our Father is not the Jewish nation but the poor, the sick, and the needy who accept Jesus' preaching of the kingdom, a kingdom prepared by the Father through Jesus (Lk 22:29-30).

In Mt's title there is a second qualification of "Father," i.e., "who are in heaven."³⁸ Here again Mt is close to Jewish prayer formulae which use "heavenly"³⁹ as an honorific qualitative to give God His

³⁶ It may be objected that these rewards belong to the afterlife, but not to the end of the world. However, it should be remembered that in Jesus' preaching there is virtually no emphasis on the next life as distinct from the final coming of God's kingdom; He constantly pictures judgment, not in terms of a particular judgment, but in terms of a general judgment. That an equation between heavenly reward and the Second Coming persisted in the early Church is seen in 1 Th 4:13, where the Thessalonians are troubled because Christians are dying and yet Christ has not come back—what happens to them? The notion of a particular judgment and heavenly reward immediately after death is a solution to this problem.

³⁷ Johannine realized eschatology carries the relation between Jesus' ministry and the coming of the kingdom almost to the point of identity. Jn has no parables of the kingdom, only parables of Jesus (the living bread, the vine, the shepherd, the seed in the ground). In a way, for Jn, Jesus represents the kingdom or dominion of God; and so reaction to Jesus constitutes judgment (Jn 3:19-21; 5:24), just as, for the Synoptic Gospels, judgment is connected with the ultimate coming of God's kingdom.

³⁸ Mt uses the plural *ouranois*, which is closer to Semitic usage, for in Hebrew the word for "heaven" is plural. *Didache's ouranō* is less original.

³⁹ This adjective and the phrase "in heaven" are simply variant translations. Semitic is deficient in adjectives, and there is no Aramaic adjective for "heavenly"; a phrase must be employed.

proper place and to distinguish Him from "our father Abraham." Lohmeyer,⁴⁰ however, suggests that in Mt this is no mere formalism, but rather a sign of the eschatological times when God's presence is no longer localized in a place like Sinai, Sion, or Gerizim. As Jesus said to the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:21), "The hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain [Gerizim] nor in Jerusalem."

Having now seen that the title of the PN already places us in the anticipation of the last days, let us turn to the first group of three petitions.

FIRST PETITION

Mt, Lk, Did: *May your name be sanctified*

As a preface, we should notice that grammar itself unites these first three petitions. The verb that stands at the head of each is in the third person aorist imperative (passive in 1 and 3). The interpretation of this Greek form involves two important notes. First, the aorist in Greek is not normally used for a continuing process (e.g., a day-by-day sanctification). It has a once-and-for-all aspect, an *Einmaligkeit*, as the Germans call it. Secondly, this peculiar passive form in NT Greek does not necessarily convey a passive meaning, for it is frequently used as a surrogate for the divine name.⁴¹ We remember that out of a sense of reverence the Jews avoided the divine name, so that in the NT, instead of "May God do something to somebody," we often find "May something be done to somebody." This seems to be especially common in sayings dealing with divine eschatological activity.⁴²

Coming now to the first petition, we find that it is not a new concept; for the Qaddish resembles it very closely: "May His great name be magnified [and sanctified] in the world." But when we try to un-

⁴⁰ Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40. We are somewhat doubtful whether this should be pressed.

⁴¹ A more frequent surrogate in Aramaic is to use the third person pl. for the divine name, but there are few examples of this in the NT. Lk 6:38 has an example of both surrogates: "Give, and it will be given [passive] to you; they will put [third pl.] into your lap a good measure." Another example of the third pl. may be Lk 16:9.

⁴² Schürmann, *op. cit.*, p. 122, n. 88, points this out, but without examples. We find this usage in the parables in the general statements on divine rewards and punishments (at judgment), e.g., Mt 25:29 (= Lk 19:26): "To everyone who has, more will be given; . . . from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away." Also, Lk 10:20; 12:48b; 18:14b; Mt 22:14.

cover the exact meaning of this petition of the PN, we are faced with a problem: Is the primary agent in the sanctification man or God? Many writers, including St. Augustine and Luther, have understood it as a prayer that men would come to bless God's name.⁴⁵ Yet the fact that this petition is a prayer addressed to God suggests that it concerns divine action, a request for God to make manifest the sanctity of His own name. A study of the *OT* background and the *NT* parallels makes the latter interpretation, we believe, virtually certain.⁴⁴

As is well known, the name in Hebrew thought is virtually equivalent to the thing itself. The divine name, then, reflects what God is (with the special aspect of intelligibility to man).⁴⁵ When we turn to sanctity, the other term in our petition, we find that only God is holy in Himself. For the Hebrew mind, all other things are holy only because they have been set aside for worshiping God (e.g., the cultic holiness of the Temple) or because they are connected to God's holiness in a special way. Thus, Israel is holy because God has chosen Israel as His people; or, as Lv 11:45 puts it, "You are holy because I am holy." God has engaged His sanctity in the protection of Israel and is thus the Holy One of Israel (Ps 89:18 and Is *passim*). By manifesting His power through action in Israel's history,⁴⁶ God may be said to sanctify His name or vindicate His holiness.⁴⁷ Now at times Israel proved itself unworthy and profaned God's name. In face of this, God promised through the prophets that He would renew Israel, giving it a new spirit, and would thus "vindicate the holiness of His great name" (Ez 36:22-27). Thus, there is good background in the *OT* for seeing the sanctifying of God's name as a divine action.

In the *NT*, God manifests His holiness and sanctifies His name in

⁴⁴ There is backing for this notion in the Bible, of course. The second commandment concerns keeping holy God's name. Also, Is 29:23; Mt 23:39.

⁴⁵ It is held by Lohmeyer, Van den Bussche, Schürmann, Hamman, Jeremias, etc.

⁴⁶ If we interpret the basic divine name "Yahweh" as "He who causes to be," this name is related to the creation of the universe and man.

⁴⁷ The initial sanctification of the divine name is in creation; providence, especially in sacred history, is its continuation; and the end of the world will be its culmination. All of these have as a counterpart that acknowledgment of sanctity which is God's glory. As Lohmeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 48, phrases it, God's glory is His revealed holiness; His holiness is His hidden glory.

⁴⁸ Ex 33:19; Ez 20:41; 39:27.

Jesus, who is the Holy One of God (Mk 1:24; Jn 6:69)⁴⁸ who comes in the name of the Lord (Mk 11:9). He was sanctified and sent into the world (Jn 10:36), and He makes God's name known (Jn 17:26).^{48a} The most revealing text in this regard is found at the end of Jesus' public ministry (Jn 12:28). Feeling that His hour is at hand—the culminating hour of return to the Father in passion, death, resurrection, and ascension—Jesus cries out, "Father, glorify your name." (This verse is the closest parallel in the Gospels to our petition,⁴⁹ and we see that it concerns God's glorifying His own name.) The answer comes back from the Father: "I have glorified it and will glorify it again." We should notice the past and future tenses. The past (aorist) tense seems to cover the glorification of the divine name through Jesus' earthly work; the future seems to cover the glorification that will be effected in Jesus' return to the Father and the sending of the Spirit (see Jn 16:14).⁵⁰ Thus, the ultimate sanctification of the divine name is still to come: the glorification accomplished by the Spirit will include the guidance of the Church toward the last times and the final struggle with Satan (as the whole of 1 Jn makes clear, especially chap. 5).

With this background we can now understand the petition "May your name be sanctified." The passive is a surrogate for the divine name, and the *Einmaligkeit* of the aorist is to be given its full force.⁵¹ It is a prayer that God accomplish the ultimate sanctification of His name, the complete manifestation of His holiness, the last of His salvific acts. As we shall see in Petitions 2 and 3, this sanctification consists in the final coming of God's kingdom and the perfection of the plan that God has willed. Only the last days will see that vindication of the holiness of God's name promised by Ezechiel to the new Israel.⁵²

⁴⁸ Also, Acts 3:14; Ap 3:7; and perhaps 1 Jn 2:20.

^{48a} *Did* 10,2: "We give you thanks, O holy Father, for your holy name which you have made dwell in our hearts, and for the knowledge. . . which you have revealed to us through Jesus."

⁴⁹ "Sanctify" (*hagiosein*) and "glorify" (*doxasein*) are synonyms. Cf. Lv 10:3: "I will show myself holy (*eqqādēsh-hagiasithēsomai*) among those near me; and before all people will I be glorified (*ekkābēd-doxasthēsomai*)." Also, Is 6:3: "Holy, holy, holy (*hagios*), Lord of Hosts; the earth is full of your glory (*doxa*)."

⁵⁰ So Wilhelm Thüsing, *Die Erhöhung und Verherrlichung Jesu im Johannesevangelium* (Münster, 1960) pp. 193–98.

⁵¹ Cf. Hamman, *op. cit.*, p. 107: this is the one historic act that affects all history.

⁵² In holding that this petition refers primarily to God's work, not man's, we do not wish to exclude human co-operation. God's manifestation of the sanctity of His name and

By way of addenda, we might mention that it has been suggested that there is an immediate connection between the title "Father" and this first petition, and that the particular aspect of the divine name involved here is that of Father.⁵³ In other words, the Christians are praying that God will manifest His holiness as Father and hasten the perfection of their sonship which is to come in His kingdom. This suggestion is very hard to prove, but it would have some interesting corollaries. First, it would explain why the petition concerning the divine name is the first petition, coming right after the title.⁵⁴ Normally, we would have expected the petition on the coming of the kingdom (Petition 2) to have had priority, for the notion of the kingdom is of far greater importance in the Synoptic tradition than is that of the divine name. Second, this suggestion would cement the first and second petitions even closer together. We have mentioned, in treating the term "Father," that the Fatherhood of God is closely connected to the coming of God's eschatological kingdom. If, then, "Father" and all its implications constitute the divine name to be sanctified in the first petition, we have a very close parallel to the second petition, which concerns the coming of the kingdom. This parallelism is already foreshadowed in Za 14:9:

And the Lord will become *King* over all the earth;
on that day, Yahweh will be one, and His *name* will be one.

SECOND PETITION

Mt, Lk, Did: *May your kingdom come*⁵⁵

man's recognition of this sanctity are two sides of the coin. This Christian community that prays for God to sanctify His name consists of the elect who have been called through Jesus Christ "from ignorance to the full knowledge of the glory of His [God's] name" (1 Clem. ad Cor. 59, 2). They are exhorted "to be obedient to His most holy and glorious name" (*ibid.* 58, 1). Yet it should not be forgotten that the *metanoia* which produces such obedience is the work of God as well as of man.

⁵³ Cf. Lohmeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 55; Manson, *art. cit.*, pp. 437-38. But Schürmann, *op. cit.*, p. 31, denies it on the grounds that *abba* is not really a divine name. There is, however, a close association of *abba* and "name" in "Father, glorify your name" (Jn 12:28).

⁵⁴ Schürmann, *op. cit.*, p. 36, explains the sequence between Petitions 1 and 2 thus: the first is wider than the second and should logically come first.

⁵⁵ The only valid variant is that the *Didache* and some MSS read *elthetō* in place of *elthetō*, thus correcting the Koine form with its second aorist base and first aorist ending; there is no difference in meaning. Codex Bezae of Lk (followed by German church use) reads: "May your kingdom come *upon us*." This is probably dictated by a feeling that

This petition, too, has its echo in the *Qaddish* (following the petition on the divine name cited above): "May He establish His kingdom in your days." There is little doubt here that God is the primary agent in causing the kingdom to come. The real problem is whether this petition of the PN deals primarily with a question of everyday growth of the kingdom⁵⁶ or with the definitive reign of God at the end of the world.⁵⁷ On a purely grammatical basis, the aorist is more favorable to the latter.⁵⁸

The *OT* does not precisely speak of the coming of God's kingdom, but it does promise a universal kingship to God (Jer 10:7, 10; Mal 1:14). Is 24:23 connects the signs of the last times, like the darkening of the sun and moon, with the reign of the Lord of Hosts on Mt. Sion and the manifesting of His glory. Dn 7:18 has the saints of the Most High receiving the kingdom after all the earthly kingdoms have passed away. Thus, already in the *OT*, divine kingship has eschatological overtones.

In the *NT*, the establishment of God's kingdom⁵⁹ is to a certain extent identical with Jesus' coming, for His ministry opens with the announcement that the kingdom of God is at hand.⁶⁰ Yet, if Jesus through His word and work established God's dominion on this earth, the fulness of that kingdom cannot come until Jesus return again to destroy the prince of this world.⁶¹ As long as Satan has power in this world, God's dominion is not perfected (Lk 4:6; 1 Jn 5:19).

dithatō is too abrupt without a complement. The same difficulty is witnessed in the Latin, where some of the Old Latin MSS read *veniat* and the Vulgate reads *adveniat*.

⁵⁶ Either in terms of increased numbers through missionary efforts or in terms of individual growth in grace.

⁵⁷ Tertullian chose this eschatological view, as did many Latin Fathers under the influence of the translation *adveniat*. Chrysostom and some later interpreters, like Luther and Calvin, applied the petition to a twofold coming, in time and in eternity. Lohmeyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70, gives a good refutation of this view.

⁵⁸ The *Didache* (10,5) gives the eschatological aspect when it asks that the Church be gathered from the four corners into the kingdom, "for yours is the power and the glory." The last clause shows a connection of this verse with the PN.

⁵⁹ It is well known that the Gospel notion of "kingdom" has different aspects. Frequently the word means "dominion, sovereignty, rule," something more dynamic than static. Yet at other times it refers to a place or state which one can enter into (Mt 5:20), which can be shut (Mt 23:14), of which one can have the keys (Mt 16:19).

⁶⁰ Mk 1:15; Mt 4:17; 10:7; 12:28.

⁶¹ There is a continuity between the two stages of the kingdom. As Hamman, *op. cit.*, p. 111, remarks, "Christian eschatology does not come after Christ's coming, but begins with it." Also, see Van den Bussche, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-66.

We believe that the petition "May your kingdom come" concerns this final coming of God's kingdom. Actually, the expression "kingdom come" does not occur frequently in the Gospels; but when it does, it refers primarily to the eschatological coming.⁶² We have "coming" and "kingdom" joined in Mk 9:1: "There are some standing here who will not die before they see the kingdom of God come with power" (the parallel in Mt 16:28 interprets this eschatologically: ". . . before they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom"). At the Last Supper (Lk 22:18) Jesus says: "I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."⁶³ While not using *erchesthai*, Lk 21:31 is interesting; in speaking of the signs of the last days, it says: "When you see these things take place, you know that the kingdom of God is near."

When the Christian community utters the second petition of the PN, it is identifying itself with the divine plan. The Christians are not primarily asking that God's dominion come into their own hearts (as the variant in footnote 55 suggests), but that God's universal reign be established—that destiny toward which the whole of time is directed.

Again by way of addenda, we might mention a Lucan variant of this petition. In place of "May your kingdom come," some MSS⁶⁴ read "May your [Holy] Spirit come upon us and purify us." This equivalence between the Spirit and the kingdom is not un-Lucan. In Acts 1:6-8, when the disciples ask about the coming of the kingdom, Jesus answers them in terms of the coming of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁵ Yet this Eastern variant reading in the PN is almost certainly a development from the use of the PN at baptism, the sacrament of the giving of

⁶² The same verb "to come," *erchesthai*, is part of such eschatological time indications as "The days are coming" (Amos 4:2; Lk 17:22; 21:6; 23:29) and "The hour is coming" (Jn 4:21, 23; 5:25; 16:25). Lohmeyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-64, has an excellent treatment of the Hebrew concept of "coming." It is not simply a question of coming about, but implies the divine action of bringing about, of realizing something in the realm of time.

⁶³ Other examples of "kingdom" and "coming" are Mk 11:10 and Lk 17:20. The prayer of the bandit crucified with Jesus (Lk 23:42) should probably be read: "Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingdom."

⁶⁴ 162, 700, Gregory of Nyssa, Maximus the Confessor, Marcion. In a famous controversy Harnack supported this reading, while von Soden rejected it. More recently, R. Leaney, "The Lucan Text of the Lord's Prayer," *Novum Testamentum* 1 (1956) 103-11, defended the reading again.

⁶⁵ Also, compare Mt 7:11, "How much more will your Father who is heaven give good things to those who ask Him" with Lk 11:13, "How much more will the heavenly Father give the *Holy Spirit* to those who ask Him."

the Spirit and of purifying. It is a good example of the freedom felt in the liturgical employment of the prayer, and of the gradual loss of eschatological import.

THIRD PETITION

Mt, Did: *May your will come about
on earth as in heaven*

The verb is *genēthētō*, an aorist passive. The English translation "be done" is too restrictive, for again the passive can be a surrogate for the divine subject. The Latin *fiat* is much more satisfactory. And again the *Einmaligkeit* of the aorist favors one supreme moment rather than a gradual process.

The petition is not found in Lk; indeed, the vocabulary is distinctively Matthean.⁶⁶ The same petition appears again in Mt's version of the Agony in the Garden⁶⁷ and forms Christ's prayer when He withdraws from the sleepy disciples a second time (Mt 26:42). Since in the Marcan parallel to this verse (Mk 14:39) we have only the general statement, "He prayed, saying the same words," we may suspect that Mt is using the petition to fill in the actual words of the prayer.⁶⁸ Thus, the stray logion "May your will come about" is employed twice in Mt to fill out sequences.

The problem in interpreting this petition concerns its subject. Is this a request that men will come to obey, i.e., to do, God's will?⁶⁹ Tertullian thought so, as did many of the Latin Fathers. And it may be pointed out logically that, if the second petition concerns the es-

⁶⁶ The aorist passive of *ginesthai* is not found in Jn, and only once in Mk and Lk (and there it is a quotation from the LXX shared by Mt). Mt has seven other occurrences.

⁶⁷ The closest parallel to the Synoptic agony scene in Jn is 12:23, 27-30, and it is curious that it is there we have the Johannine parallel to the first petition of the PN ("Father, glorify your name"). Cf. our article, "Incidents That Are Units in the Synoptic Gospels but Dispersed in St. John," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 23 (April, 1961).

⁶⁸ As Schürmann, *op. cit.*, p. 127, n. 189, points out, the theory that the author has borrowed the logion from the Gethsemane scene and introduced it into the PN is to be rejected; there is as much evidence for its being secondary in the one place as in the other.

⁶⁹ As Lohmeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 79, points out, if we are going to speak in biblical terms, we should speak of doing God's will rather than of conforming our wills to God's. That men must do God's will is found all throughout the Bible, e.g., 2 Mac 1:3; Jn 9:31; Mt 7:21; Heb 13:21; and in the rabbinic writings, e.g., R. Eliezer (ca. 90 A.D.) prayed to God: "Do your will in heaven on high, and give a patient disposition to those on earth who fear you."

establishment of God's kingdom, this petition concerns the preparation of man's heart for that kingdom.⁷⁰ On the other hand, we may ask if in this petition, as in the previous petitions, it is not primarily a question of God's action, of God bringing about His own will on earth and in heaven.

In deciding the question, we must recognize that God's "will" has several meanings.⁷¹ We usually think of it in terms of commandments to be obeyed, but it also covers God's plan for the universe.⁷² *NT* writers use the term God's "will" for God's design of salvation effected through Jesus and extended to men through the apostles. Eph 1:5-12 lays this plan out before our eyes and speaks of it as the choice (*eudokia*) of the divine will (v. 5), the mystery of the divine will⁷³ (v. 9), the plan (*boulē*) of the divine will (v. 11).

In this plan Jesus is the primary instrument of God's will. "I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me" (Jn 6:38; also, Heb 10:7-10). The Agony in the Garden represents a great crisis in the implementation of the divine will. The words we hear there cannot be interpreted simply in terms of the obedience of the human will of Christ to the divine will. "Abba, Father, . . . not what I will, but what you will" (Mk 14:36) concerns the salvific plan of God. It was necessary that Jesus should suffer and enter into His glory (Lk 24:26-27).

God's will also concerned the selection of men to spread the effects of Jesus' salvific death and resurrection to all men. If Jn 6:38 says that Jesus has come to do God's will, the next verse explains this will: it is that Jesus should not lose those whom the Father has entrusted to Him.⁷⁴ Thus, later on, the choice of men like Paul is part of the divine

⁷⁰ Tertullian is even more logical in inverting the order of the petitions to have the will done on earth before the kingdom comes.

⁷¹ The Greek *thelēma*, being a substantive in *-ma*, tends toward a passive meaning, i.e., "what is wished, the object of the will." Aramaic *r'ullā* and Hebrew *rāṣōn* are more active, including the notion of desire, good pleasure, that is found in the Greek *eudokia*.

⁷² This includes both creation (Ap 4:11) and providence (Mt 10:29).

⁷³ This is an echo of Jesus' own words in Mt 11:25-26: "You have hidden these things from the wise and the clever, and revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for this was your will (*eudokia*)."

⁷⁴ Besides phrasing the mission of Jesus in terms of doing God's will, Jn also reports it in terms of manifesting God's name (17:6) and of establishing the kingdom (18:37)—thus, the terms of the first three petitions of the PN. And just as the preservation of the disciples is connected to doing God's will in 6:38-39, so it is connected to manifesting His name in 17:6.

will: "Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Jesus Christ."⁷⁵ The apostles know God's salvific will (Acts 22:14) and have the duty of putting it into effect.

The ultimate goal of this plan is the redemption of the universe, the subjecting of all things to the Father's will in the Person of Jesus Christ (Eph 1:20-22), for it is to Jesus that all power in heaven and on earth has been given (Mt 28:18). We may now see the full impact of the third petition of the PN: "May your will come about *on earth as in heaven.*" If God created heaven and earth according to His will (Gn 1:1; Ap 4:11), that will concerns the ultimate perfection of heaven and earth.⁷⁶ As Col 1:20 phrases it, it is God's pleasure to reconcile to Himself all things whether on earth or in heaven, through Jesus Christ. God's will will have come about when there is a new heaven and a new earth, when the heavenly city comes down and weds itself to the people of God (Ap 21:1-3).⁷⁷

And so, in uttering this petition of the PN, the Christian community is praying that God will bring about the eschatological completion of His salvific plan.⁷⁸ The coming about of God's will is basically the same as the establishment of His kingdom, and, indeed, as the sanctification

⁷⁵ 1 Cor 1:1 and the opening of many of the Epistles. From this we may suspect that many of Paul's statements about doing God's will do not refer simply to obedience but to furthering God's salvific plan, e.g., Acts 21:14, where he says "The will of the Lord be done" in reference to his trip to Jerusalem.

⁷⁶ "Heaven and earth" is a Hebrew expression for "world" or "universe" (there was no single Hebrew noun for world until a relatively late period). The suggestion that this petition of the PN means that men are to obey God's will as the fixed planets of heaven is to be rejected. We might note that in Petition 3 "heaven" is in the singular and not in the plural as in the title. The singular is a Septuagint usage, not a Hebrew one; but it may have been preferred here as a better combination with the singular "earth," to give the impression of parts of a whole.

⁷⁷ We have been avoiding a difficulty in the last clause of the petition. In place of "on earth *as* in heaven," some MSS omit the "as" and read "in heaven *and* on earth" (Bezae, Old Latin, and Old Syriac; Tert.). There is a difference of meaning. In the former, heaven seems to be held up as a model for earth, i.e., God's will is already done in heaven, and may it now come about on earth in similar manner; so Schürmann, *op. cit.*, p. 128, n. 191. (See Ap 12:7-12, where Satan has been thrown out of heaven, and now only his power on earth remains.) In the latter, and in some interpretations of the former, God's will is to come to completion both in heaven and on earth. The context is really insufficient for a decision, but the totality idea does seem to dominate the *NT* eschatological expectation.

⁷⁸ Again, while putting the primary emphasis in the petition on God's action, we do not mean to exclude man's co-operation with God's plan. The one implies the other to a certain extent.

of His name.⁷⁹ The first three petitions are really expressing only different aspects of the same basic thought, namely, the eschatological glory of God. Petition 1 on the name emphasizes more the internal aspect of this glory; Petition 2 on the kingdom emphasizes more its external aspect; and Petition 3 on the coming about of God's will on earth as in heaven emphasizes the universality of the divine glory.⁸⁰

FOURTH PETITION

Mt, Did: *Give us today our future* [?] *bread*

Lk: *Keep on giving us daily our future* [?] *bread*

With the fourth petition we begin the second half of the PN. The predominant verbal person in the last three petitions in Mt shifts to the second person of the aorist imperative active; and whereas "your" dominated the first three petitions, the last three are dominated by "our" and "us." The last three petitions are longer than the first three.

Up to this point there has been reasonable agreement among recent Catholic writers on the eschatological interpretation of the PN. Here, however, most⁸¹ change over to interpreting the PN in terms of daily needs, pointing out that the end of the third petition has brought us down to earth. This would have a logically compelling force if all of the last three petitions dealt with the daily situation rather than with the eschatological. However, as we shall see, the sixth and final petition is certainly eschatological (as most of these same writers admit), and the fifth is very likely eschatological. A noneschatological interpretation would leave the fourth isolated among all the other petitions.⁸² But, in our opinion, a good case can be made for interpreting this petition eschatologically.

⁷⁹ A close study of Phil 2:9-10, Mk 3:35, Mt 21:31 and 18:14 will show how the ideas we encountered in the PN (Fatherhood, sonship, name, kingdom, will) are closely intertwined in NT thought.

⁸⁰ Schürmann, *op. cit.*, p. 128, n. 191, is probably correct in rejecting the suggestion that the phrase "on earth as in heaven" modifies all three petitions, in idea if not grammatically.

⁸¹ Van den Bussche, Schürmann, Hamman, Schmid (*Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* [4th. ed.; Regensburg, 1959]). They point out, however, that the daily needs are eschatological in the broad sense we mentioned at the beginning of this paper. Lohmeyer really blends both interpretations. Jeremias is the closest to our view, but without our Eucharistic emphasis.

⁸² The fact that the fifth and sixth petitions are connected to one another and to the fourth by "and" is a sign that they have common interests.

When we speak henceforth of the fourth petition, we are confining ourselves to the Matthean wording. Lk's present imperative is definitely continuative and noneschatological. Mt's aorist imperative receives its justification from its parallelism with the aorist imperatives of Petitions 5 and 6.⁸³ In like manner, Lk's "daily" (*to kath' hēmeran*) is distributive and noneschatological.⁸⁴ The best interpretation of the Lucan rendering is that, with the passing of the tension about the Second Coming (or in communities where such tension was not overly prominent), the eschatological interpretation of the PN yielded to the more pressing daily outlook. The Lucan emphasis on the poor of this world as the recipients of the Gospel message is well known; and among such, the eschatological aspect of the prayer for bread could soon lose its primacy.

The real key to the meaning of this petition lies in the adjective that modifies "bread,"⁸⁵ the word *epiousios*. In the third century the word puzzled Origen (*De oratione* 27,7), who could find no example of it in other Greek writers. Seventeen centuries later we are not much better off.⁸⁶ Our only real help is etymology, and even here we are faced with two basic possibilities:

1) To derive the word from *epi* plus *einai* (the verb "to be").⁸⁷ (a) This could mean bread for the existing day, therefore "daily," as in the phrase *epi tēn ousan* (*hēmeran*). The *quotidianus* of the Old Latin (Itala) represents this.⁸⁸ (b) Or it could give the meaning of bread for

⁸³ The difference of meaning exists in the Greek; the presumed Aramaic original (*hab*) would have no such definite time implications.

⁸⁴ It is a Lucan expression, found in Lk 19:47 and Acts 17:11, but not in Mt, Mk, or Jn. A good example of Lk's preference for "daily" is found in the logion on taking up the cross (Mt 16:24; Mk 8:34; Lk 9:23); only Lk has the expression "to take up the cross daily (*kath' hēmeran*)."

⁸⁵ The importance of "bread" in this petition is highlighted by the fact that it comes first in the sentence; in all the other petitions the verb comes first.

⁸⁶ The appearance of *epiousios* in the Lindos inscription (22 A.D.) from Rhodes has now been disproved; cf. B. Metzger, in *Expository Times* 69 (1957) 52-54. The only other serious contender is the Hawara papyrus (5th cent. A.D.), where in a list of distributions *epious*. . . appears. The broken word might be the equivalent of *diaria* in Latin lists, and refer to the day's provisions. However, the papyrus is very late; and the reading cannot be checked, for the papyrus is now missing. Its editor, Sayce, was not a particularly meticulous workman.

⁸⁷ As Hensler, *op. cit.*, p. 11, points out, however, this combination should not result in the hiatus we find in *epiousios*.

⁸⁸ Matthew Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospel and Acts* (2d ed.; Oxford, 1954) p. 153, maintains that the Aramaic original read "Give us our bread day by day."

being, for existence (*epi ousia*), i.e., the bread needed to live. The Peshitta translates it "for our need." And St. Jerome's *supersubstantialis* in Mt (he gave *quotidianus* in Lk) may have this derivation as a basis—*epi* = *super*; *ousia* = *substantia*.

2) To derive the word from *epi* plus *ienai* (the verb "to go, come"). This would mean the bread for the coming day, for the future. The phrase *hē epiousa* (*hēmera*) means "the morrow." St. Jerome (*In Matth.* 6, 11) says that in the Gospel of the Hebrews (an apocryphal Semitic gospel) he read "*Māhār, quod dicitur crastinum, id est futurum.*"⁸⁹ The Bohairic and Sahidic and Marcion seem to agree with this derivation.⁹⁰

Now those who interpret the petition noneschatologically follow the former derivation. They make this a prayer of *daily need* on the part of the Christian community. Christ had instructed His followers not to worry about the morrow (Mt 6:34) but to throw themselves on divine providence. His closest followers had been told to travel without provisions (Mk 6:8). He had thus created a community of poor who depended on God for their needs. In this petition they turn to their Father for their bread, the basic necessities of life.⁹¹ Schürmann⁹² thinks of this petition especially on the lips of those whose preaching of the kingdom allowed them no time to earn even the basic necessities. One OT passage always cited in favor of the noneschatological interpretation is Prv 30:8, which in Hebrew reads: "Feed me with the bread which is needful for me (*lehem huqqî*)." But it should be noted

⁸⁹ The value of the Gospel of the Hebrews in this connection is disputed. In general, it was probably a retroversion of Greek into Semitic, and therefore worth no more than the original author's guess on the meaning of the Greek. But Jeremias, *art. cit.*, p. 145, claims that in the case of a prayer like this the author may not have translated, but simply have given the Aramaic form used in the liturgy of his church. This would give *māhār* independent value.

⁹⁰ The Curetonian Syriac may have worked from this derivation too, but in a different sense: it reads "continual," which might stem from a derivation of "always coming." Lohmeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 99, suggests another derivation which would connect it with "daily." D. Y. Hadidan, in *New Testament Studies* 5 (1958) 75–81, shows that there is Armenian support for this Old Syriac reading.

⁹¹ Hebrew *lehem* can mean "bread" or can refer to food in general. The Greek *artos* is not really as general. Where *lehem* means "food" rather than just "bread," the LXX frequently translates it, not by *artos*, but by *trophē*, e.g., Ps 136(135):25. Therefore, we should be cautious in generalizing the meaning of "bread" in the PN.

⁹² *Op. cit.*, p. 67.

that in the LXX this verse offers no parallel to the PN at all: "Prescribe for me what is necessary and what is sufficient"; it does not even mention bread.

Those who favor the eschatological interpretation of this petition prefer the second derivation of *epiousios*, which makes the petition a request for the bread of tomorrow, the bread of the future. We may agree that the Christian community was marked with poverty; but we believe that in this need the Christians yearned, not for the bread of this world, but for God's final intervention and for that bread which would be given at the heavenly table. In the Gospels, God's supplying men with food is frequently in terms of an eschatological banquet:

Lk 14:15: "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God."

Lk 6:21: "Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be satisfied"; as mentioned, the rewards of the Beatitudes are heavenly ones.

Mt 8:11: "Many shall come from East and West and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven."

Lk 22:29-30: "As my Father appointed a kingdom for me, so I appoint for you to eat and drink at my table in the kingdom."

Ap 7:16: a picture of heaven in which the saints hunger no more. We notice that the bread of the kingdom is promised to the Christians; therefore they could petition for it as "*our bread*." The request for it "today" expresses the urgency of the eschatological yearning of the persecuted and impoverished Christians.⁹⁸ And their prayer is phrased in terms of the *Einmaligkeit* of the aorist: Give us this once and final time.

The OT background for this interpretation is interesting. The real parallel for "Give us today our bread for tomorrow" is the description of the manna in Ex 16:4: "I will rain *bread* from heaven for you . . . a *day's portion* every day," and in Ps 78(77):24: "And he *gave* them the *bread* of heaven." Remember that Moses told the people that the manna would come on the *morrow*: "At twilight you shall eat flesh,

⁹⁸ As Lohmeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 105, puts it, in the light of God's eternity "today" is the short period of time before man's eschatological future.

and in the morning you shall be filled with bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord your God." That the manna was heavenly bread, the bread of angels, would make it a good figure of the bread of the heavenly future for which the Christians yearned.

And Jesus Himself made this connection. When the Jews asked Him for a miraculous earthly bread for which they would not have to work, Jesus answered them by citing the manna text of Ps 78: "It was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven; my *Father* gives you the *bread* from heaven" (Jn 6:32). This is very close to the fourth petition, which asks the Father to give us bread.⁹⁴ And we see clearly that Jesus is speaking of no material bread, for He Himself is the bread: "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger" (Jn 6:35). As the discourse that follows shows, He is the bread in a twofold sense:⁹⁵ as the incarnate teaching (Word) of the Father⁹⁶ and as the Eucharist. In the latter sense, as the Eucharistic bread from heaven, He promises that whoever eats of His flesh will be raised up on *the last day* (v. 54; Vulgate, 55). Thus, Jn joins with Paul (1 Cor 11:26) in seeing the Eucharistic bread as an eschatological pledge.

There is good reason, then, for connecting the *OT* manna and the *NT* Eucharistic bread with the petition of the PN. Just as the Jews of the *OT* received in the desert bread from heaven every day, so the Christians in the brief "today" which separates them from eternity are given by their Father a bread from heaven which is pledge of their future bread in the kingdom. To confirm this connection between our petition and the Eucharist, we might remember that the expression "to give bread (*arton didonai*)" is a rare one in the Gospels.⁹⁷ It occurs in the Bread of Life discourse in Jn, as just mentioned, and in two other important places: the multiplication of the loaves and the Last Supper. At the Last Supper, Mk 14:22 reports, "Taking *bread*, He blessed and

⁹⁴ There is another echo of the PN in this section of Jn; see the discussion of 6:38 in relation to Petition 3.

⁹⁵ See the discussion in our pamphlet commentary on Jn, No. 13 in the *New Testament Reading Guide* (Collegeville, Minn., 1960) pp. 40-42.

⁹⁶ Notice that Is 55:10 already connects the descent of God's word with the giving of bread.

⁹⁷ Lohmeyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-94, gives a history of the phrase. In the early historical books of the *OT* it is used secularly; but in the prophetic and wisdom books it takes on a religious sense: God giving bread to men (Ps 146[145]:7) and men giving it to their fellow men by divine command (Prv 22:9).

broke and *gave* it to them." The multiplication scene in Mk 6:41 (8:6) has virtually the same words, probably by way of pointing out the multiplication as a Eucharistic anticipation (Jn 6 makes this explicit).⁹⁸ Thus, in asking the Father "Give us our bread," the community was employing words directly connected with the Eucharist. And so our Roman Liturgy may not be too far from the original sense of the petition in having the PN introduce the Communion of the Mass.

In our interpretation of this fourth petition, therefore, it is just as eschatological as the first three. Only, where the first three petitions dealt with God's role in the last times, this petition deals with our role. This change of emphasis carries into the fifth petition; and while the fourth deals with the positive aspect of our role (participation in the heavenly banquet), the fifth treats the negative aspect (pardon before God's judgment).

FIFTH PETITION

Mt: *And forgive us our debts as we have forgiven our debtors*

Did: *And forgive us our debt as we forgive our debtors*

Lk: *And forgive us our sins, for, indeed, we ourselves forgive our every debtor*

An introductory "and" assures the connection with the fourth petition. In all three forms the petition begins with the aorist, which again, if we wish to be consistent, bears the note of *Einmaligkeit*, "Forgive us this once." And Mt continues in the aorist, "as we have forgiven." We translate in the past, but it is not the tense that we mean to emphasize,⁹⁹ only the singleness of the action. It covers the summation of a lifetime, treated as one action before God's judgment seat. Both Lk and the *Didache* use a present tense.¹⁰⁰ This is probably the same tendency away from eschatology which we encountered in the

⁹⁸ The expression occurs again in the postresurrectional meal of Jn 21:13; in the Lucan postresurrectional meal (24:30) we have *epididonai* with *arton*.

⁹⁹ Jeremias, *art. cit.*, p. 146, suggests a present tense which renders the aorist equally well: "as we herewith forgive our debtors."

¹⁰⁰ The *aphiomen* (a present form as if from an -ō verb) of Lk appears in certain MSS of Mt.: Bezae, Wash., Korideth; the more classical present of the *Didache*, *aphiomen*, appears in the Koine MSS of Mt. The Sahidic, Bohairic, Vulgate (*dimittimus*), and Curetonian Syriac have a present tense for Mt. The reading in L is *aphiōmen*, which seems to be a futuristic use of the subjunctive (and seems to have support in the Syriac of Aphraates): "as we will forgive."

Lucan version of the fourth petition. (Below we shall see a further reason for their present tense.)

The Matthean use of "debts"¹⁰¹ has a Semitic flavor; for, while in secular Greek "debt" has no religious coloring, in Aramaic *ḥōbā* is a financial and commercial term that has been caught up into the religious vocabulary. Perhaps it served to point up the personal nature of the offense involved in sin, as compared with the impersonal notion of trespass or transgression against divine law. Lk's "sins" might be an adaptation to a Gentile audience.¹⁰² The idea of remitting (*aphienai*)¹⁰³ debts which appears in our petition is also more Semitic than Greek, for "remission" has a religious sense only in the Greek of the LXX, which is under Hebrew influence.

The prayer to God for forgiveness is in itself, of course, nothing new. The author of Ps 25(24):18 cries out: "Forgive all my sins." Sir 28:2 instructs: "Forgive your neighbor's injustice; then when you pray, your own sins will be forgiven." The sixth blessing of the *Shemoneh 'Esreh* reads: "Forgive us, our Father, for we have sinned."¹⁰⁴ However, as we shall see, this petition does take on a certain newness in the light of Christianity.

The urgency that we encountered in the fourth petition ("today") is transmitted to the aorists of the fifth petition, for the Christians lived in expectancy of imminent divine judgment. The return of Christ to make reckoning had been pictured to them as something sudden.¹⁰⁵ In this anticipation of judgment, they utter a petition for a complete forgiveness of sin. And it is interesting to see how often in the Gospels forgiveness of debts or sins is connected with the judgment. In the

¹⁰¹ Mt. has the pl. of *opheilēma*; the *Didache* uses the sing. of *opheilē*. The words have the same meaning; both are found in Koine Greek; the latter especially in the papyri and ostraca; the former also in Hellenistic literature (so Lohmeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 111). *Opheilē* appears in the parable of the king forgiving his servants, Mt 18:23-35.

¹⁰² Yet Lk uses the word "debtor" in the second clause of the petition (thus favoring the originality of "debts" in the first clause) and also in 7:41.

¹⁰³ The whole religious background of the petition points to a real forgiveness, a real remission, of debts, and not a simple overlooking of them; for what the petitioner asks is a restitution of the original state of God's favor. The Latin *dimittē* is not too precise a translation.

¹⁰⁴ Also, the rabbinic sources quote Gamaliel II (*ca.* 90 A.D.) to the effect that God is merciful to men when men are merciful to others (Strack-Billerbeck 1, 425).

¹⁰⁵ The master returns suddenly to his servants (Lk 12:37, 46); the Lord requires the rich barn builder to hand over his soul "this very night" (Lk 12:20).

Sermon on the Mount, which is also Mt's setting for the PN, we hear (5:23-25) that the Christian should be reconciled to his brother who has something against him, ". . . lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. Truly, I say to you, you will never get out till you have paid the last cent." Again, Lk 6:37 has a parallelism between judgment and forgiveness: "Judge not and you will not be judged; . . . forgive, and you will be forgiven." The best illustration of our petition is the parable of the unforgiving servant (Mt 18:23-35). The king who wishes to settle debts with his servants is obviously God, and the atmosphere is that of judgment. The parable points out that God's forgiveness of the servant has a connection to that servant's forgiveness of his fellow servant. When this brotherly forgiveness fails, he is given to the torturers till he pay his debt.¹⁰⁶

This leads us to the second clause of our petition, "as we have forgiven our debtors" (or "as we now forgive our debtors"—one action).¹⁰⁷ Once more, the Gospel background of fraternal obligations favors an eschatological interpretation, for the failure to deal properly with one's brother is frequently spoken of in terms of judgment. The description par excellence of the Last Judgment is Mt 25:31-46, which describes the sentence being passed before the throne of the Son of Man. The criterion of judgment is precisely our dealings with one another. In the same mood, Mt 5:21-22 lists faults against one's brother which make one liable to judgment and hell-fire. In the Lazarus story (Lk 16:19-31), the eternal judgment against the rich man is based on his enjoyment of wealth, instead of employing it in what Lucan theology emphasizes is the only proper way: giving it to the poor.

For a deeper appreciation of the eschatological nature of the fifth petition, however, we must investigate further the whole concept of forgiveness. The reason that the Christian can even pose this petition is his consciousness of the Fatherhood of God. Even in the *OT* the

¹⁰⁶ Perhaps we could cite here the parable of the talents; for, while the servants are not judged on failure to pay debts, they are judged on obligations in the broad sense. Mt 25:30 points to an interpretation of the judgment as spiritual. We remind the reader of what was said in n. 36 about particular judgment.

¹⁰⁷ This is the only instance in the whole PN of action on the Christian's part; its anomalous nature must mean that it is really integral to the petition.

picture of a forgiving and merciful God is that of a Father (Ps 103[102]:13). But this is brought to the fore in the *NT*, as we see in the Lucan parable of the prodigal son (Lk 15:11–32). The son has sinned and is not worthy to be called a son; but the father forgives him and rejoices that his son, who was dead, is alive again. In the Matthean parable of the unforgiving servant, already cited, we should notice the moral at the end: “So also my heavenly *Father* will do to everyone of you, if you do not forgive your *brother* from your heart” (18:35). Here the Fatherhood of God is invoked against the lack of forgiveness.

It is, then, to the Father, addressed at the beginning of the PN, that the Christian directs his call for forgiveness. But, as we have pointed out, in the Synoptic view the fulness of God’s Fatherhood and the status of sonship is not realized until the kingdom has come. And so it is by anticipation of his eschatological state that the Christian can confidently beseech God for the final pardon of debts.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, it is only at the judgment that all his debts will be apparent. He will sin many times a day until the moment of his death; and if we take “debt” in a wider sense than sin (as we probably should), his dependence on God for all that he is and has will continue to the last day. Then he will come before his Father like the servant of Mt 18:24–25, without the means to pay.¹⁰⁹

And the clause on forgiving one’s own debtors also gains meaning in the light of the Fatherhood of God. Any man can speak of “sins” or “offenses” against his fellow man, but how can he call these “debts”? As Lohmeyer¹¹⁰ has so ably pointed out, it is really only in a society of brothers, where there is a right to brotherly love, that offenses are properly debts. And this is especially true in the Christian society, where brotherly love is the charter commandment which distinguishes it from other groups, and marks its affiliation to its Founder (Jn

¹⁰⁸ The same Father who will give bread to His children in the heavenly banquet will forgive them.

¹⁰⁹ Naturally, we do not exclude divine forgiveness in this life; but to communities expecting an imminent return of the Son of Man, forgiveness at that moment would be the vital issue. Even in our less eschatologically-minded theology, we recognize that ultimate pardon is not given in this life, but when the soul comes before God’s judgment seat. There are punishments due to sin that are left when the sin is forgiven here below.

¹¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, pp. 128 ff.

13:35). No wonder that Mt 18:15 discusses a Christian's sin in these terms: "If your *brother* sins against you. . . ." In the second half of our petition, then, the forgiveness of our "debtors" refers to the forgiveness of those bound to us as brothers under the Fatherhood of God; and it too anticipates the eschatological state of divine sonship.

This understanding obviates a famous difficulty. The Matthean version, "Forgive us our debts as we have forgiven our debtors," sounds like a *do ut des* clause, a type of bargain with God (especially if we put too much emphasis on the time value of the second clause). The Lucan form of the petition may be an attempt both at better Greek and at avoiding this difficulty: "Forgive us our sins, for, indeed, we ourselves forgive our every debtor."¹¹¹ Perhaps, too, the variant forms mentioned in n. 100 above are prompted by this difficulty. But when the petition is properly understood, there is no *quid pro quo*, nor is there a question of the priority of human forgiveness.¹¹² The Matthean "as" simply means that the human forgiveness is the counterpart of the divine.¹¹³ In the last days the followers of Christ will receive the fulness of divine sonship. Their forgiveness of one another as brothers and their forgiveness by their Father are both parts of this great gift.¹¹⁴ In the fifth petition of the PN they stand by anticipation before the throne of God,¹¹⁵ and they request the supreme and final act of fatherly forgiveness, even as they extend the complete and final act of brotherly forgiveness. This forgiveness in both directions removes all obstacles to the perfect community of the heavenly banquet table for which they have asked in Petition 4. The fifth

¹¹¹ Actually the *hōs* of Mt and the *kai gar* of Lk may be variant translations of Aramaic *kd̄t*, which is vague. Lk's "every" is an example of the Lucan tendency toward totality found elsewhere; e.g., Mt 5:42 has: "Give to him who begs from you," while Lk 6:30 has: "Give to *everyone* who begs from you."

¹¹² Mt 5:23 insists that we are to be reconciled with our brother *before* making our offering to God. But in Mt 18:29 the test of forgiving a fellow servant is put on the servant who has been *already* forgiven by his master.

¹¹³ 1 Jn 4:20 catches this nuance: "He who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen."

¹¹⁴ The correlativity of the two actions is nicely expressed by Mt's aorist tense in both clauses. In part, the correlativity is based on the fact that a sin against the brother is a sin against the Father.

¹¹⁵ It must be remembered that in the first three petitions the Christians have asked for the last days (which include the divine judgment); they are now prayerfully dealing with the consequences of their own request.

petition is the acting out of the Last Judgment as described in Mt 25:34: "Come, O blessed of my *Father*, and inherit the *kingdom* prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was hungry and you gave me food."¹¹⁶

SIXTH PETITION

Mt, Lk, Did: *And do not lead us into trial*
 Mt, Did: *but free us from the evil one*

Thus far in the PN, the Christians have urgently petitioned God's triumph and have dealt with their own role in that triumph, both positive and negative. Now the only remaining object of eschatological prayer is the terrible obstacle that separates the Christian from that triumph, namely, the titanic struggle between God and Satan which must introduce the last days.

Once again, the aorist tenses¹¹⁷ do not favor the interpretation of this petition in terms of daily deliverance from temptation. And, indeed, such an interpretation has produced a theological difficulty, for the prayer would then seem to imply that it is God who is responsible for temptation. It is true that the *OT* speaks of God tempting people, but normally in the sense of testing.¹¹⁸ In a late book like Sir (15:12) there is a reaction against the inference that God is responsible for human failing. In the *NT*, Jas 1:13 is lucid: "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God.' . . . He Himself tempts no one." Why, then, do we have the Christians asking their Father not to lead them into temptation? We see in the patristic phrasings of this petition attempts to avoid the difficulty. Tertullian says it means: Do not allow us to be led into temptation by him who tempts.¹¹⁹ He thus makes Satan the tempter, not God. Other Fathers add an

¹¹⁶ Notice all the connections to the PN in this verse: the title (*Father*); Petition 2 (the kingdom); Petition 3 (the divine will: prepared from the foundation of the world); and the present petition (a favorable judgment based on dealings with our brothers).

¹¹⁷ The verb "lead" is aorist subjunctive; in Koine the prohibitive subjunctive is frequently used for the negative imperative, and consequently this verb is the equivalent of the aorist imperatives which surround it.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Gn 22:1; Ex 15:25; 2 Chr 32:31. Hebrew *nissâ* has a connotation of "test"; Greek *peirazein* can also have this connotation.

¹¹⁹ Codex Bobiensis and the Itala show this influence: "ne passus fueris induci nos in temptationem." Also, Marcion and Dionysius of Alex. (cf. Lohmeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 135).

explanatory clause based on 1 Cor 10:13: Do not lead us into temptation which we cannot overcome.¹²⁰

We can avoid these desperate explanations,¹²¹ however, if we realize that we are not dealing with a question of daily temptation (which, after all, is the lot of the Christian and must be endured: Jas 1:2, 12) but with the final battle between God and Satan.¹²² The word for "trial, temptation" here is *peirasmos*. While this word can refer to ordinary temptation,¹²³ it also has a specialized reference to the final onslaught of Satan.¹²⁴ Ap 3:10 contains a promise of Christ: "Because you have kept my command and stood fast, I will keep you from the hour of trial (*peirasmos*) which is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on earth." We see another instance of this in the Gethsemane scene (where we have already found parallels to the PN). Christ has accepted the chalice of suffering; the face-to-face battle between Him and Satan has begun. In the person of Judas,¹²⁵ Satan is entering the garden; and it is the hour of the power of darkness (Lk 22:53; Jn 14:30). At this moment Jesus tells His disciples: "Pray that you may not enter into trial (*peirasmos*)" (Mk 14:38; par.). He would spare them this great crisis in the struggle with Satan (Jn 18:8). It was only natural that the Christian community should take this instruction to pray and apply it to the final trial.

Are we, then, to think that the Christian community, which suffered so much for Christ, was not willing to face the final battle with Satan?

¹²⁰ Cf. Chromatius of Aquila (*PL* 20, 362); Jerome (*PL* 25, 485); Augustine (*PL* 34, 1284); and various Eastern liturgies. The French version of the PN shows these tendencies: "ne nous laissez pas succomber à la tentation."

¹²¹ No real justification can be found for them. Some would justify the translation "allow us to be led" on the grounds that the original was an Aramaic *aphel* (= Hebrew *hiphil*) of *ʾalā*, and that the *aphel*, while normally causative ("cause to go"), can be permissive (very rarely). This is desperate; and, in any case, the Greek shows that the Evangelists did not understand the Aramaic in a permissive sense. See Lohmeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

¹²² So Lohmeyer, Van den Bussche, Schürmann, Hamman, Jeremias. Some stress the special peril of apostasy in this final trial.

¹²³ E.g., Lk 8:13 as a parallel to Mk 4:17; also, Gal 6:1. Of course, the everyday *peirasmos* is already a part of the struggle which will climax in the final *peirasmos*, just as Christ met the *peirasmos* by Satan after forty days in the desert as the first step in the struggle which was to lead to Gethsemane.

¹²⁴ Satan is the "tempter" in the NT: Mt 4:3; Lk 22:31; 1 Cor 7:5. The emergence of the devil in the later period of OT theology solved the problem of who did the tempting.

¹²⁵ Lk 22:3; Jn 13:2, 27.

Reflection shows us that there is no question of timidity here, but real insight into the nature of this terrible struggle to come. Paul warned the Ephesians (6:12-13) that they were not fighting against flesh and blood, but against a whole array of superhuman powers, and that it would take the whole armor of God to withstand them. True, Christ defeated Satan in principle on the cross; but before Satan would release his hold on this earth, there would come such tribulation as has not been seen since the world's creation. As Christ Himself admitted, if the Lord had not shortened the days of this tribulation, no human being would be saved.¹²⁶ But He added by way of encouragement that the days have been shortened for the sake of the elect (Mk 13:19-20). And the text of Ap 3:10, cited above, shows Christ promising to keep His faithful Christians from the trial. Therefore, asking for preservation from the final diabolic onslaught is simply following Christ's directions.

The eschatological interpretation of our petition becomes all the more likely now that the Qumrân literature has thrown some light on the theological views of the Jewish world in which Jesus lived.¹²⁷ We find the Essene community living in fearful anticipation of the attack of the forces of Satan. Sons of light themselves, and under the aegis of the spirit of truth, they have already drawn up their battle plans for meeting the sons of darkness under Belial, the spirit of perversion. This angel of darkness is already trying to lead them astray by persecution and affliction (1QS 3:22-25), but God is on their side. He has set a time limit to Satan's activities in the world (1QS 4:16-19). When it is up, the battle will be engaged, and Belial's authority will be destroyed (1QS 4:20). The Christian community had an eschatological outlook not too far from that of the Essenes.

The second part of the sixth petition (in Mt and the *Didache*) offers a perfect parallel to our interpretation of the first part. The reader is familiar with the translation "Deliver us from *evil*." The Greek *apo tou ponērou*, however, while it could mean "from evil," could also mean "from the Evil One." In general, the Western Fathers

¹²⁶ Is this the fear of Lk 18:8: "When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?"

¹²⁷ See Karl G. Kuhn, "New Light on Temptation, Sin and Flesh in the New Testament," in *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, ed. K. Stendhal (New York, 1957) pp. 94-113.

support the former translation,¹²⁸ and the Greek Fathers, along with Tertullian, support the latter.

In *NT* usage, when *ponēros* means "evil" in the abstract, the word "all" usually appears before it.¹²⁹ On the other hand, *ho ponēros* is definitely a title for Satan.¹³⁰ In the parable of the sower and the seed, Mt 13:19 speaks of "the Evil One" who comes and snatches the seed from man's heart. And in Mt 13:38 the weeds of the darnel parable are "the sons of the Evil One, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil." 1 Jn 5:18 assures us that the Evil One does not touch him who is born of God. In reference to the Parousia, 2 Th 3:3 says: "The Lord is faithful: He will strengthen you and guard you from the Evil One." This is like Jesus' prayer to His Father in Jn 17:15: "I ask that you keep them from the Evil One."¹³¹

One of the main reasons for translating *ponēros* as "evil" in the abstract has been its parallelism with *peirasmos*, thought to mean "temptation." Yet, once we realize that *peirasmos* means the final trial brought on by Satan's attack, a personal interpretation of *ponēros* is most fitting. The introductory "but" suggests that this last clause is climactic: if the Satanic trial is mentioned in the first clause, the Prince of Darkness makes his entrance in the second clause. Also, the verb *ruesthai* (once more in the aorist), in the sense of "tear free from," fits well with a personal interpretation.¹³² The

¹²⁸ This is under the influence of the very ambiguous Latin translation "a malo," which suffers from Latin's lack of an article.

¹²⁹ E.g., Mt 5:11: "... when men utter all kinds of evil (*pan ponēron*) against you." Also, 1 Th 5:22; 2 Tim 4:18; *Did* 10,5. In other cases the context clearly implies the abstract, e.g., Acts 28:21 and Rom 12:9.

¹³⁰ This concept of Satan is the product of a dualistic tendency. The term is not used in the *OT*, but we come close to it in the dualistic Qumrān world, where Satan is the spirit of deceit and wickedness. The title "Evil One" for Satan is the counterpart of Mt 19:17, where we hear of God as the "one alone who is good."

¹³¹ The Greek is *īerein ek tou ponērou*. The expression *īerein ek* is found in only one other place in the *NT*, namely, Ap 3:10, the very passage we have been quoting in relation to *peirasmos*: "I will keep you from the hour of trial." Thus, we have two Johannine clauses which form a nearly perfect parallel to the two clauses of our petition. Other passages that might be quoted for *ponēros* as "Evil One" are Mt 5:37, 39 (see Lohmeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 151); 1 Jn 2:13-14; 3:12; Eph 6:16. While one or the other of our examples might be challenged (since in some of them it is not impossible that *ponēros* is abstract), their overall effect is conclusive.

¹³² It implies a certain motion of deliverance and is a good contrast for the "lead us into" of the first clause.

whole world is in the power of Satan (1 Jn 5:19); but the Christian has the promise that through God's begetting he will be protected from the Evil One (5:18), and this is what prompts him to utter the petition of the PN. Faced with the awesome power of the strong one, the Christian begs for the help of a stronger (Mt 12:28-29). He has asked for the coming of his Father's kingdom, but he knows that in that decisive moment the sons of the Evil One will be drawn up against the sons of the kingdom (Mt 13:38). And so he begs his Father, not only to spare him the trial of that terrible struggle, but also to wrench him free from the power of Satan.¹³³

As we come to the end of our interpretation of the PN,¹³⁴ we can see how coherently the eschatological viewpoint binds together the petitions into one picture. The Christian community of the first century, anxiously expecting the Second Coming, prays that God will completely glorify His name by establishing His kingdom, which represents the fulfilment of the plan He has willed for both earth and heaven. For its portion in this consummation of time, the community asks a place at the heavenly banquet table to break bread with Christ, and a forgiveness of its sins. A titanic struggle with Satan stands between the community and the realization of its prayer, and from this it asks to be delivered.

Already in the Lucan form of the PN, as we have said, the intensity of eschatological aspiration has begun to yield to the hard facts of daily Christian living. It is a sign of the genius of this prayer, taught by the divine Master, that it could serve to express such different aspirations. Nevertheless, as we say the prayer nineteen centuries later, now completely enmeshed in the temporal aspect of the Christian life, it would, perhaps, profit us to revive in part some of its original eschatological yearning. Even if we choose to relegate the last things to a minor tract in theology, the return of Christ comes persistently closer each day. The PN, said as a fervent maranatha, would not be an inappropriate welcome.

¹³³ Paul sees this already partially realized (Col 1:13): "He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son."

¹³⁴ We do not intend to treat the doxology found in the *Didache*: "For yours is the power and glory forever." With the addition of "kingdom," this doxology is found in certain MSS and versions of Mt (Wash., Korideth, Ferrar group, Koine, Curetonian Syriac, Peshitta, Sahidic—there are slight variations). This early liturgical addition, patterned on the Jewish doxologies, has 1 Chr 29:11, 30 as one of its sources.