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and if, as he also says, "in the whole history of religions there is probably no second example of such a transformation, extension, demoralization, and narrowing of a simple and sacred institution" (*History of Dogma*, Vol. IV, ch. iv), we who have inherited doctrine and ritual which have been reformed in the light of the Word of God, and who hold in trust a eucharistic worship which the Bishop of Rochester has described as "the purest, the most Scriptural, and the most Catholic in Christendom" (*op. cit.*, p. 11), must constantly submit our thoughts and ways, and not least our symbolism, to the same searching and reforming ray of God's Word. Not till she enters into the eternal reality of the heavenly glory will the Church of Christ be able to dispense with symbolism; but meanwhile the responsibility rests upon us to ensure, as far as in us lies, that the simplicity and comprehensibility of the scriptural pattern are not again obscured.

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## Ways of Prayer— Catholic and Protestant—I

BY THE REV. DOUGLAS WEBSTER, M.A.<sup>1</sup>

**I**N the Bible we are confronted constantly with the practice of prayer: we are never presented with a discussion of prayer or that which the modern mind so restlessly seeks—a rationale of prayer. We see and hear men and women at prayer, usually during moments of special significance in their lives. Mostly these prayers are dominated by one thought only, though sometimes, as in certain of the psalms, there is a progression from bitterness and complaint to acceptance and trust and peace. On a number of occasions there is an element of apparent rudeness in the manner of address some of the psalmists use to the Almighty, "Up, Lord, why sleepest thou?" They do not hesitate to argue with God and to challenge Him: "Lord, how long shall the ungodly, how long shall the ungodly triumph?" (Psalm xciv. 3). Psalm lxxxix goes so far as to accuse God of breaking His covenant promises. Whatever may be said about the psalms being a treasury of devotion, we do well to remember that they are also an unrivalled example of utterly uninhibited talk with God.

In the New Testament we are given certain prayers of our Lord, all very brief except that in St. John xvii. The epistles of St. Paul provide a fair measure of material illustrating the content of the apostle's own prayers, mostly of intercession for the Churches. There is no passage of any considerable length which treats of prayer, but there are some warnings and promises, assertions and injunctions. It is not within the scope of this paper to discuss the Biblical data, except in so far as it affects ways of prayer which have developed subsequently. We may note, however—and this is to quote from Raymond George—

<sup>1</sup> Condensed from a paper read at the 1957 Conference of the Evangelical Fellowship of Theological Literature.

that "the New Testament as a whole presents a picture of a rich and intimate communion with God which is not the peculiar privilege of the few, but the normal life of the Christian".<sup>1</sup> This communion with God is not identical with prayer but it is maintained and deepened by prayer. The Bible as a whole, including the New Testament, encourages simplicity and directness in prayer, characteristic of a child talking to a father, for we are taught to pray, Our Father. The power to pray is given by the Holy Spirit ; in the Words of Père Grou, "God alone teaches us to pray". Prayer is both individual and corporate. It is to be a continuous activity. There are many promises about the efficacy of prayer, some of them raising hard questions about the will of God to which we shall have to turn later. But most important of all, we have the example of Jesus Himself and His own prayers.

This last quotation has introduced us abruptly to Heiler's celebrated distinction between mystical and prophetic prayer. Roughly, though certainly not absolutely, this describes the main differentiation of the ways and ideals of prayer in the Catholic and Protestant traditions. But before noting differences we should be fully conscious of the great area of common ground. For prayer is the most ecumenical of all experiences. Every branch of Christendom prays and gives prayer a high place. Any good anthology of prayers will illustrate the unity of aspiration and the shared wealth of devotion throughout all the Churches, especially in the non-Roman West. Thus, the *English Hymnal* contains many hymns by Non-conformists, and Dr. Graham Scroggie, a veteran Baptist of Keswick fame, regards Bishop Lancelot Andrewes as a writer of model prayers and quotes these at generous length in the main chapters of his book, *Method in Prayer*. Likewise there are few serious differences of view in the theology of prayer, and there is a surprising unanimity between many Catholic and Protestant writers in the answers they suggest to certain well-known problems in prayer. But the wide general differences of doctrinal emphasis between Catholics and Protestants do account for considerable variations in the ways of prayer, in certain of its contents, in the whole concept of spiritual progress and growth, and the means of measuring and achieving this, and in the relation of prayer to the will of God.

All study of this subject is indebted to Heiler for his analysis and comparison of mysticism and prophetic religion. He has suggested that the psychic experiences of the mystic tend to arise in times when a highly developed civilization is in a state of decay, "as in ancient India, the Græco-Roman world, medieval Germany, and France of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries".<sup>2</sup> It begins as a reactionary dislike of the world and civilization, and leads on to the notion of the body as a prison, fettering the soul which yearns for freedom and for God. Redemption can only be found by turning inward, "to withdraw oneself into oneself," as Albertus Magnus puts it, to plunge into the lowest depths of the soul. The next stage is the great negative process of stifling imagination, emotion and desire, according to Eckhart "a ceasing to be", according to Suso, "ceasing to be a creature," the denuding of the psychic life of feeling, thinking, knowing anything but God.<sup>3</sup> The final aim of all this is an experience, which

may be either ecstasy or Nirvana, the difference between the two (in Heiler's phrase) being that "ecstasy is boiling point, Nirvana is freezing point".<sup>4</sup> The Christian mystic has been more keen to boil than to freeze and has therefore concentrated on ecstasy. This state, if deliberately pursued, seems to indicate something selfish and egotistical, for in the words of Plotinus it is the experience of pure "I", the unity and simplicity of which swallows up all sense of otherness. The ecstatic "has become God, nay, rather he is God". St. Catherine of Genoa makes the same claim: "My 'I' is God, and I have no other 'I' but this my God". Other less advanced Christian mystics describe the union of the soul with God not as a union of essence but as a union of married love. But they have often tended to forget that the vision of God, as Kirk points out, is finally a corporate one, and that in the image of St. Paul in Ephesians v it is the Church, not the individual soul, that is to be the bride of Christ.

We may notice certain other contrasts between the mystic and the prophetic modes, which Heiler enumerates. Mysticism is interested in metaphysics, reflection, speculation and the psychological analysis of the soul and its various states. Mortification and asceticism are necessary preliminaries to mystic experience. Everything has to be simplified. Prophetic religion, on the other hand, is more vigorous and masculine. The mystics sit loose to history and regard Biblical history chiefly as a source of symbols and eternal truths to be transposed into mental states. The prophet regards history as the special sphere of God's self-revelation and therefore takes it most seriously. Sin for the mystical type is non-being and privation, but for the prophet it is a terrible obstacle creating distance between man and God. There is one other very significant contrast we should notice, quoting Heiler again. "The mystical experience consumes the devout man, holds him prisoner within his own soul; hence he has no impulse to preach, to carry on a missionary propaganda, or to effect a reformation of men and their surroundings."<sup>5</sup> So the mystics can describe their experiences only to intimates. But the prophets *must* speak; they are driven out into the world by the power of God after their communion with Him; their faith burns within them; they address the crowds and round themselves they build a fellowship.

With such deep differences of temper and background we shall hardly be surprised to find the Catholic way of prayer, nourished on the ideal of the mystic, at considerable variance with the Protestant way of prayer, rooted as it is for the most part in the tradition of the prophet. We must now examine these in turn.

For the Catholic the life of prayer is all important. It is not a means to anything else; it is an end in itself, for prayer is the ascent of the mind to God. It may be likened to a great continent whose exciting hinterland invites exploration. Prayer is the venture to the interior. For the explorer a wide range of maps has been provided by those of former ages who went that way and got there. This life of prayer is something on which he embarks at the very outset of his Christian pilgrimage and it becomes the centre of his whole spiritual experience. To this end he will be subject to a spiritual director whose task it will be not only to absolve his sins and help him to overcome them, but also

to lead him further on in his prayer-life and to guide him into each new phase. All good books on spiritual direction deal as much with prayer as with sin.

The chief characteristic of the Catholic way of prayer is that it is highly systematic. The spiritual novice is not left to grope in the dark; perfectly clear instruction is available for him and he will learn to pray almost by syllabus. Nothing is left to chance and little to choice. The way is open; the early stages are the same for everyone; various regions of country have to be passed through, but further inland there are alternative routes. The goal is the vision of God, a vision offered by God to man in this world, an anticipation of the full and final vision of God in heaven. "Christianity," says Kirk, "had come into the world with a double purpose, to offer men the vision of God, and to call them to the pursuit of that vision".<sup>6</sup> Some of us might question the adequacy of this as a definition of the Christian mission; but it is certainly an admirable definition of what the Catholic means and intends by spiritual life.

There is a massive literature on prayer from the Catholic angle but there is also some confusion of terms among Catholic writers. They tend to draw the prayer map in different colours and perspectives and to mark in different frontiers and divisions. Their main diversity from Protestant writers is in the firm distinction they all make between vocal prayer and mental prayer, a distinction which most Protestants do not make in this way, if at all. Protestant writers assume that all prayer will be vocal even if silent, whereas Catholic writers usually urge their readers to leave behind vocal prayer as something rather elementary and to pass on into mental prayer, which is the real thing. So far as vocal prayer is concerned all writers alike agree that it should consist of five parts: adoration, thanksgiving, confession, intercession and petition. This is affirmed as strongly by Graham Scroggie as by F. P. Harton, with only the slightest variations in sequence and terminology.

The divergence then begins at the point where the Catholic advances beyond vocal prayer into mental prayer, as he is always encouraged to do. His psychological disposition does not determine whether or not he attempts this advance but only what kind of mental prayer he goes in for. Mental prayer is said to be what the New Testament means by "pray without ceasing". Père Grou writes: "It is a silent prayer, a prayer which is wholly interior. . . . How greatly are you to be pitied if you know nothing of this interior prayer and never practise it." He points out that the rosary with its rhythm of repeated vocal prayers was introduced during a very ignorant century when the faithful for the most part knew nothing of mental prayer. So he advises that for most people "it is a good thing to relax the practice of vocal prayer gradually, and replace it by mental prayer, either in the form of meditation or the prayer of silence."<sup>8</sup> Grou gives three main reasons for people's strong attachment to vocal prayer and their reluctance to move on: first their overmuch concentration on sensible things, second their wish to be quite certain that they are praying, and third their fear of distraction once they leave the phrases of a book. But

for all this, he would still lead them on, as this kind of prayer is more pleasing to God and more useful to the soul.<sup>9</sup>

First, then, we must glance again at the Catholic prayer map. It is here that we find a confusing array of projections and a variation of terms. For instance, Evelyn Underhill makes five divisions : vocal prayer, meditation, the prayer of immediate acts, the prayer of simplicity, the prayer of quiet.<sup>10</sup> Fr. S. C. Hughson, however, gives four modes of ordinary prayer : vocal, mental, affective, contemplative.<sup>11</sup> For our purpose it will be sufficient if we consider three of these stages : affective prayer, meditation, and contemplative prayer.

Affective prayer is the prayer of the affections. Sometimes it is called the prayer of loving desire. It is perhaps the easiest form of mental prayer for the beginner to practise because it is a simple concentration and pouring out of love to God. For this reason it can be regarded as a bridge between vocal and mental prayer, as it is a bit of each. Hughson, however, puts it at the next stage and suggests it is a transition between meditation and contemplation. It starts with a phrase but tries to leave behind the actual words. The Christian repeats the words of love until the feeling of love charges his whole being. Harton describes its advanced form like this : " It is simple attention, a memory, a look, an intuition, always accompanied by love. We look because we love, and our love is inflamed by looking."<sup>12</sup> This affective prayer can thus be carried to such a pitch of simplicity that it becomes contemplative, the prayer of loving regard. Again, Fr. Andrew describes his own experience of this kind of prayer in one of his letters : " I think one's time of prayer becomes more and more a quiet, trustful rest in God. The soul knows there is no need of words and just goes on making murmurings of love in answer to the overwhelming comfort of the sense of the Presence of God."<sup>13</sup> But it should be emphasized that the prayer of affection, whether in its simplest and earliest phase, or its most advanced, is essentially a prayer of the will, for the love of God is centred in the will rather than the feelings. Probably the best help in embarking upon affective prayer is to be found in *A Pilgrim's Book of Prayers*, by Fr. Gilbert Shaw, with its valuable introduction and its detailed exercises. But this kind of prayer need not depend on elaborate patterns or books of devotion. It is enough to say and to repeat and to mean such a phrase as : " Lord, let me love Thee increasingly until I love Thee supremely ". Or a verse from the psalms such as, " I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength ". There is an abundance of material ready for use.

Evelyn Underhill calls this type of prayer the prayer of immediate acts. Like most other writers she would put it after meditation in the realm of spiritual growth and order. In this kind of prayer, as distinct from meditation, the self does less thinking and more loving ; it uses and responds to phrases of aspiration, such as " Thou, O Lord God, art the thing that I long for " (Psalm lxxi. 4), or, " Thou, O Christ, art all I want, More than all in Thee I find ". People are expected to enter this stage of prayer, with its tendency to contemplation, once they tire of discursive prayer and feel disinclined to reason or meditate.

Meditation, which we will now consider, is the more normal gateway to mental prayer. Evelyn Underhill calls it the first degree of mental prayer, "that is to say, prayer in which we do not repeat set forms, but do something on our own account. Meditation is a word which covers a considerable range of devotional states. It is perhaps most simply defined as thinking in the presence of God."<sup>14</sup> It is important to remember, as Hughson points out, "that meditation as we commonly think of it to-day, i.e. a formal method, involving a set subject, points for consideration, a set time and duration, etc., was unknown to the Church for 1,500 years. As practised to-day it seems to have had its beginnings among the Brothers of the Common Life in the Low Countries at the end of the fifteenth century. None of the old religious Orders provide for it in their Rules."<sup>15</sup> Primarily meditation is the activity of the intellect and so includes all the processes of the mind. The set methods of meditation, mostly deriving from the *Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius Loyola*, are outlined in the text-books. Some writers lament that in the Anglican Communion the most widely known method is the Ignatian, which is itself one of the most complex, involving nine stages of preparation, remote, proximate and immediate, each sub-dividing into three, before the meditation proper begins. The schemes offered by St. Francis de Sales or St. Peter of Alcantara certainly seem to be simpler and therefore preferable. Most of these exercises in planned meditation involve a series of acts of preparation, a reading and consideration of some text or passage, using both the imagination and the intellect, leading into acts of affection and resolution and dedication, and concluding with other prayerful acts such as intercession and thanksgiving and what St. Francis de Sales calls "a spiritual nosegay". By this he means that just as those who have been walking in a beautiful garden do not leave it without taking away with them four or five flowers in order to enjoy their beauty and their perfume during the day, so likewise the Christian who has meditated in the morning will have with him what Bishop Taylor Smith was wont to call "a best thought for the day", though he had probably not read St. Francis de Sales.

The weakness in all these schemes of meditation would seem to be, first, that to so great an extent they are concerned with truths in propositional form rather than with the Person of Jesus Christ, and secondly that the use of the Scriptures is limited almost entirely to the Gospels because only there is such an exercise as "composition of place" possible. One is left regretting that the rest of the Bible, apart from the Gospels and the psalms, can have so little place in the spiritual life and particularly in the practice of meditation of this very stereotyped kind.

So we turn to contemplation. It is in this inmost region of spiritual adventure that clarity of thought and description seem most hard to come by. We must begin by recognizing first the difference between meditation and contemplation, and secondly that there are at least two types of contemplative prayer. Whereas meditation is primarily an exercise of the intellect acquiring further knowledge of God, contemplation is an exercise of love which seeks to augment the love of God in our hearts. Contemplation reduces everything, thought, feeling

and desire to a rare simplicity. Evelyn Underhill puts it like this : " Gradually one act of will, affection or aspiration comes more and more to dominate the whole prayer, say of half an hour's duration or more : and is used merely to true up that state of attention which is the very heart of prayer." And again, " Its whole impulse is to wait on (God) rather than to speak to Him."<sup>10</sup> In doing this it employs both the will and the affections, but never the intellect ; all thought processes are abhorrent and distracting to the prayer of the contemplative. Clement of Alexandria said that " contemplation, when perfect, embraces all in a single glance". St. Bernard distinguished between the two when he wrote : " Contemplation is concerned with the certainty of things, meditation with the investigation of them."<sup>11</sup> Kirk quotes a beautiful passage from Richard of St. Victor : " Reflection wanders up and down with leisurely pace through every byway, heedless of any goal to its journey. Meditation seeks the heights, rugged though they may often be ; and presses on to its destination with intense concentration of purpose. But contemplation rises up with wings in free flight, and flies down the wind with a speed to make men marvel. Reflection can only creep ; meditation walks and often runs withal ; contemplation soars throughout the heavens. . . . Reflection wanders from one disconnected impression to another ; meditation concentrates on a single subject ; contemplation from its place of vantage sees all things in a single glance."<sup>12</sup> Some words in one of Abbot Chapman's letters give as helpful a description of contemplation as we are likely to find. He writes : " Remember that the proper result of contemplative prayer is *simplicity* in the whole of life ; so that a contemplative is always doing the same thing all day and all night. He is praying, or having breakfast, or talking, or working, or amusing himself ; but he is principally conscious that he is *doing God's Will*."<sup>13</sup> Most Catholic writers agree that meditation and contemplation are mutually exclusive ; we can either do one or the other but not both. For instance, Chapman admits that even among monks probably not more than one in five are capable of getting very far with contemplative prayer. He says, " Some of the most saintly are not ' mystics ' at all. It seems to me that most people can get to very extraordinary sanctity, and wonderful love of God and familiarity with Him, by the loftier kinds of Meditation."<sup>14</sup> In another letter he writes : " The nuns here are very good. All are contemplatives, of course. How extraordinarily rare it is to find an enclosed nun who can meditate ! And can one find (except by accident) a Little Sister of the poor who can ' contemplate ' ? "<sup>15</sup> At the same time there are no short cuts to contemplative prayer. Most begin with long years of meditation and only gradually—if ever—pass into the other. Nevertheless, for the majority of Catholics contemplation is the aim of their life and the goal of all their spiritual exercises. Meditation is a means ; contemplation an end.

The second distinction we must notice is that between active and passive contemplation. The first of these Evelyn Underhill calls the Prayer of Simplicity, the second the Prayer of Quiet. The difference is that the first is voluntary, the second is wholly involuntary. I quote Evelyn Underhill : " None can produce it of themselves ; and it seems

always to come as a distinct and irresistible experience from without. In technical terms, it is 'infused' or the work of grace."<sup>22</sup> In this state the soul is intensely aware of the divine Presence; here only does all real mystical experience begin. The essential character of this Prayer of Quiet is what has been called 'alert passivity'. The entrance to this stage is usually extremely painful. St. John of the Cross describes it as 'the night of the senses', by which he means a period of distress and aridity in which all that satisfies the sensual and sensitive part of man, his imagination, intellect, feelings and emotions, cannot be used at all. He cannot meditate, however hard he tries, and his only possible course is to take to 'simple prayer', that of 'loving attention to God'. Chapman writes: "There are not other possibilities. Either the imagination works or it doesn't. If it does, you can meditate; if it won't, you can't. The stoppage is the night of the senses, and the night of the senses is *nothing more* than this stoppage, and *nothing else*."<sup>23</sup>

It is at this stage that many Catholics turn eagerly to St. Teresa or St. John of the Cross. It is interesting to observe that just as people either like the novels of Scott or Dickens, but seldom both, so many Catholics either like Teresa or John, but seldom both at the same time. Chapman in two successive letters writes: "I get more and more to the view that St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross are *absolute opposites*. Are they therefore irreconcilable? Of course I always follow the latter, and discard St. Teresa as dangerous." And in the second letter: "For fifteen years or so, I hated St. John of the Cross and called him a Buddhist. I loved St. Teresa, and read her over and over again. She is first a Christian; only secondarily a mystic! Then I found I had wasted fifteen years, so far as prayer was concerned. Naturally I had a gradual revulsion against St. Teresa!" He explains that St. Teresa is too concerned with visions and external concomitants, whereas St. John of the Cross cares only for the divine union and rejects everything else. Despite the weight of opinion in the Roman Church, Chapman approves the severity of St. John of the Cross about visions, locutions, revelations and the like, because, to use his own words, "one's experience is so much against them. Even in this Protestant country, where there are so few nuns, there are so many futile revelations, inside and outside convents. I confess to being prejudiced against them. St. John of the Cross's teaching saves so much trouble: 'Don't waste time discovering whether they are from God, or from yourself, or from the devil—simply detach yourself from them; want God alone and not His gifts'."<sup>24</sup> Yet, neither St. Teresa nor St. John of the Cross are easily understood. As Kirk remarks, "they were mystics first, psychologists second, and logicians only third. . . . No two commentators interpret them alike."<sup>25</sup> They both taught that meditation was for the beginning of the soul's approach to God, but that contemplation was the atmosphere in which the mature Christian should move, and that contemplation is partly infused by God's grace and partly acquired by the soul's own activity and endeavour. We cannot examine this state in detail; we can only note that it is a condition of intense quiet, an experience of obscurity and darkness combined with a sense of longing for and oneness with the

Divine Being, even in the darkness. It results in refreshment and certitude of a quality which the other degrees of prayer cannot give. It is when some of the mystics describe in detail their experience of union that doubts arise in the minds of those who cannot leave the New Testament behind in their times of devotion. And one is still left with a sense of profound uneasiness about the sanity and the orthodoxy, not to mention the spiritual condition, of any who can utter the great mystical prayer : " I am Thou and Thou art I ". And it is difficult not to be nauseated and repelled by the extremely erotic language in which so many mystics have indulged. As Raymond George remarks, " the most striking metaphors drawn from human relationships, those of erotic and nuptial mysticism, have been most frequently employed by those who have never experienced the corresponding human relationships."<sup>15</sup> Even the gentlest and most sympathetic psycho-analysis would reveal some of them in a very different light.

We have not so far mentioned the celebrated Three Ways. This provides yet another angle of looking at the Catholic map of the spiritual life : the purgative, illuminative and unitive ways. Most writers admit the possibility of overlapping but there is a general assurance that it is possible to gauge with fair accuracy which " way " a soul is in. The primary purpose of the purgative way is purification. Real penitence must be produced and the soul established in virtue. This is achieved by the practice of meditation and the making of considerable moral effort. In this " way " vocal prayer is the normal thing.

In the illuminative way the Christian begins to understand the meaning of the words, " No longer do I call you servants . . . but I have called you friends ". Here is the beginning of the interior life and the growth of habitual love. In this " way " affective prayer is the expected method to be encouraged, meditation becomes less necessary, and according to some teachers gradually impossible. But vocal prayer should not be abandoned and the daily office is recommended. Our own part in the Lord's Passion is meant to become a growing preoccupation, and in Harton's words, " Evil is no longer resisted merely because it is evil, but hated because it hurts Him ".<sup>16</sup>

The unitive way is the way of Christ's lovers, the climax of Christian perfection in this life. It should not be desired or even prayed for by ordinary Christians. It is a special gift of God to some, but nevertheless the " way " is open to all. It is marked by a considerable degree of self mastery and complete detachment from creatures in themselves, leading to abandonment to the will of God and a state of habitual recollection. The most radical change is in the life of prayer, now wholly contemplative, an indication of which is the soul's condition of aridity.

Perhaps we may conclude this section by remarking that the Catholic way of prayer is a systematized attempt to love the Lord our God—with all our strength, in vocal prayer ; with all our mind, in mental prayer or meditation ; with all our heart, in affective prayer ; and with all our soul, in contemplative prayer.

We are now in a position to ask some questions, but before doing

this we must look more briefly at the Protestant way of prayer, and more particularly that familiar to most of us in the evangelical tradition. For the Evangelical, would it not be true to say that the Christian life primarily means witness? His basic spiritual experience is that of salvation, whether his actual conversion has been sudden or, as is far more frequently the case, gradual. His dominant desire is to lead men one by one to a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. He is encouraged to develop a passion for souls. Evangelism is an absolute priority second to none. Prayer is a means to this end; what he refers to as his "quiet time" is absolutely essential, and without it his whole spiritual life falls to pieces. But it is chiefly to keep him spiritually up to the mark, in close touch with our Lord, and fully equipped for the life of witness and service.

It is hardly necessary here to describe in any detail the Evangelical quiet time. It has a simple pattern and does not use a series of semi-technical terms to describe the various stages. Normally it begins with a moment of recollection and preparation for entering the presence of God and approaching His Word. Some prayer of invocation for the help of the Holy Spirit is invariably prescribed. No instructed reader of the Scripture Union would begin his portion without such a prayer. There follows a reading of a passage of the Bible, accompanied very often by a real study of it with the various helps available, leading to what the Catholic would call meditation and application. The reading of Scripture is absolutely central, for the Evangelical believes that He meets the Lord and communes with Him by means of the sacred page. When the Evangelical has encountered the living Lord in the written Word and received His message for the day, he then turns to prayer. If he has been well-instructed he will see that his prayer includes the five great ingredients, adoration, thanksgiving, confession, intercession, petition. He may very well transpose what he has learnt from his Bible reading into a prayer; if he is an Anglican he may be disposed to seek help from the Prayer Book, especially the collects, or from some devotional manual; he will very probably keep a careful prayer list of subjects for his intercessions. His prayers completed he goes out into the day to witness for Christ.

It will be seen at once that there is system here, but it is more flexible than in the case of the Catholics. And it is riveted to Scripture and to the whole range of Scripture. On the whole, Protestant praying is more primitive and even more naïve than that of the Catholic. This is brought out by Heiler in his chapter on "Prayer in Prophetic Religion". Protestant prayer is often a discharge of emotion rather than a carefully controlled and devised intercourse. It is based on a sense of dependence upon God and a realization by faith of His nearness. Luther insists that "right prayer must flow from such faith and trust". Protestant prayer need not necessarily be verbose. Luther's rule was "the fewer the words, the better the prayer, the more the words, the worse the prayer . . . one should pray briefly but often and fervently." One special mark of Protestant prayer over against Catholic is the strong emphasis on petition which the Catholic soft-pedals. Undoubtedly Jesus not only allows but encourages petitionary prayer. In speaking of the great tribulation at

the end of the world, He says, " Pray ye that it be not in the winter ". There is neither stoicism nor quietism here. St. Paul says to the Philippians : " In everything . . . let your requests be made known unto God ". In all prophetic prayer the petitioner, like the psalmists, may pass through changes of mood. According to Heiler, " Everything which struggles and conquers in the soul of the petitioner is revealed and poured out before God ".<sup>1</sup> On any showing this is psychologically more healthy than the Catholic tendency to repress petition. Forsyth goes so far as to say that the prayer of petition may in fact be more real than the prayer for union with God. I quote : " The prayer for deliverance from personal trouble or national calamity may bring us nearer to Him than mere devout aspiration to be lost in Him. The poor woman's prayer to find her lost sovereign may mean more than the prayer of many a cloister. Such distress is often meant by God as the initial means and exercise to His constant end of reunion with Him. His patience is so long and kind that He is willing to begin with us when we are not farther on than to use Him as a means of escape or relief."<sup>2</sup> The Protestant, then, is far less timid about petitionary prayer than the Catholic. The aim of the Catholic mystic is to get beyond petition. Heiler quotes St. Catherine of Genoa who in her later years could pray : " Never, O my God, for about thirty-five years have I asked anything for myself ".<sup>3</sup> It would perhaps be unkind to call this pharisaical, but it does seem to have passed a long way beyond the New Testament. The Quietists, such as Madame Guyon, would push this attitude further still ; not only are they not allowed to ask God for anything, but neither may they thank Him for anything, as both are acts of one's own will.<sup>4</sup> We may with relief listen to the eminent good sense of Forsyth, saying, " To cease asking is to cease to be grateful. And what kills petition kills praise."<sup>5</sup> Forsyth, this time more questionably, actually defines prayer as " not mere wishing. It is asking—with a will. Our will goes into it. It is energy."<sup>6</sup> In thinking of the rightful place of petition in all our earthly prayers we do well to remember our Lord's words : " Verily, verily, I say unto you, If ye shall ask anything of the Father, He will give it you in My name. . . . Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." To outgrow dependence on this promise is to become a somewhat sophisticated and rarefied Christian.

(to be continued)

<sup>1</sup> A. Raymond George : *Communion with God in the New Testament*, p. 242.  
<sup>2</sup> F. Heiler : *Prayer*, p. 137. <sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p. 138. <sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p. 140. <sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, p. 161.  
<sup>6</sup> K. E. Kirk : *The Vision of God*, p. 1. <sup>7</sup> J.-N. Grou : *How to Pray*, p. 66. <sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, p. 67. <sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, p. 68. <sup>10</sup> Evelyn Underhill : *Collected Papers*, p. 42. <sup>11</sup> S. C. Hughson : *Contemplative Prayer*, p. 23. <sup>12</sup> F. P. Harton : *The Elements of the Spiritual Life*, p. 264. <sup>13</sup> *Life and Letters of Father Andrew*, p. 90. <sup>14</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 43. <sup>15</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 42 (footnote). <sup>16</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 46. <sup>17</sup> Quoted Hughson, p. 47, 48. <sup>18</sup> Kirk, p. 375. <sup>19</sup> Don John Chapman : *Spiritual Letters*, p. 38. <sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, p. 113.  
<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, p. 258. <sup>22</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 47. <sup>23</sup> Chapman, pp. 281, 268, 269, 272. <sup>24</sup> Kirk, p. 433f. <sup>25</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 117. <sup>26</sup> Harton, p. 322. <sup>27</sup> Heiler, pp. 232, 237, 242, 260.  
<sup>28</sup> P. T. Forsyth, *The Soul of Prayer*, p. 17. <sup>29</sup> Heiler, p. 193. <sup>30</sup> Heiler, p. 223.  
<sup>31</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 64. <sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, p. 12.