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POPE DESIRES TO CHANGE THE LORD'S PRAYER



It was recently reported that the Pope has issued a call to change the wording of the Lord's Prayer. He objected to a line in the prayer that asks God to 'lead us not into temptation.' Speaking to the media in Italy, the 80-year-old cleric said the wording should be changed to reflect that it is not God who leads humans to sin. "It is not a good translation because it speaks of a God who induces temptation," he said. "I am the one who falls. It's not him pushing me into temptation to then see how I have fallen. A father doesn't do that, a father helps you to get up immediately. It's Satan who leads us into temptation - that's his department."

He noted that the Catholic Church in France had already adapted the prayer to say 'do not let us fall into temptation'.

Church of Ireland Bishop Harold Miller supported the change. "I agree entirely with the Pope that 'Lead us not into temptation' is both a poor and confusing translation of that particular part of the Lord's Prayer," he said.

Of course we would expect such a response from a Church of Ireland Romanising Bishop!!!

REJECTION

Rejecting any change was the reaction of Free Presbyterian Church moderator, the Rev Thomas Murray. "I disagree with the Pope on most things," he said. "What he's saying here is the Lord's prayer isn't clear. I disagree with that. It's very clear and God doesn't tempt any man. I don't see any need to change because the context of the verse shows it's the devil we don't want to lead us into temptation."

NO NEED FOR CHANGE

The prayer, which is a prayer given to disciples by the Saviour to be used as a pattern, is found in Matthew 6 and in Luke 11. Matthew 6:13 reads: "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." The word 'temptation' may also be translated 'trial' or 'testing'. The Greek word in the original is 'peirasmos.' When James used it in James 1:2, we see the other shade of meaning that the word carries. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." It is clear from what James is saying that he is not speaking of a temptation to sin since that would not be something to count as a joyful or gladsome thing!

James is referring to a time of trial. His next words make that very plain. "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing," verses 3-4.

A trial can produce very beneficial results when it is endured by the grace of God. It teaches us patience. As fire hardens and strengthens iron and transforms it into steel, so the fire of a trial strengthens the faith of the believer. James goes on to elaborate on the benefits of trials or temptations. "Blessed is the man that endureth (take patiently) temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him," verse 12.

Notice that the inspired word shows us that 'temptation' is indeed a trial for James says: "For when he is tried . . ." He makes it clear moreover that when 'temptation' is successfully endured it is rewarded with 'the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.' Enduring such trials is a sure evidence of our love for and faith in Christ.

Peter teaches the same meaning of this word 'temptation. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you," 1 Peter 4:12. The word 'try' is the same word 'peirasmos.'



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Peter, in his second epistle, endorses the thought of the Saviour in the prayer He teaches His disciples. Here is what Peter says in 2 Peter 2:9. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."

Is this not an endorsement of the Saviour's words in Matthew 6:13? We should ask in prayer to be delivered from trials for "the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations."

The Saviour's promise to the Church in Philadelphia in Asia is again a reiteration of the thought which lies behind Matthew 6:13. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth," Revelation 3:10. Note the word 'try' explains the meaning of 'temptation'!

We need to be kept from trials mounted by the enemies of God and haters of His gospel against those who believe it and receive it. For this 'keeping' we need to pray and use the words taught us by the Saviour.

The Lord is all-wise and in His providence orders our steps in ways that are good for us. He shelters us from that which would overwhelm us. The Lord's leading of His people out of Egypt is a wonderful example of wise supervision of the paths we take. "And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt," Exodus 13:17. The children of Israel were but recently organised as a nation, having been under servitude for many, many years. Therefore it would have been too severe a test for them were they to encounter the war-like Philistines, who were a notably fierce people.

On the other hand, there are times when the Lord permits us to encounter trials and tests. As James says: "The trying of your faith worketh patience." The word "worketh" carries the meaning of "rendering one fit for a purpose." Hear what Paul said the Corinthians. "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God," 2 Corinthians 1:3-4. Here then is a 'trial' which benefitted the Christians in Corinth for they learned to comfort others by the comfort that they had received from the Lord in the midst of their tribulations. Without that experience of the tribulation they passed through they would not have been able to comfort others. Thus it was a mercy from the Lord for them to endure such a trial.

In a time of trial, the words of one who has passed through a similar experience is more beneficial to us than the well meaning words of many other friends. That certainly has been the experience of many, many people during the recent years of terrorism here in Ulster.

IGNORANCE

The Pope's call for a change in the wording of the Saviour's prayer displays not just ignorance but a total lack of reverence for the Word of God. Such a display is not surprising in the least in the person of one who claims to be "Christ's Vicar on earth"! His demand for change shows how fraudulent such a claim is. Were he Christ's 'Vicar', one who is in the place of Christ, he would not be in conflict with the Word of Christ!

Neither would he show such ignorance of God's Word as he does for were he not in ignorance of the Bible, he would have been able to see that God makes plain just what is meant by 'temptation' in the prayer the Saviour gave to His disciples.

Understanding the meaning of the words in the Bible requires not the use of a dictionary but rather a seeking of God's enlightenment and a consulting of the Bible itself. "Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself," Luke 24:25-27. Consider the word 'expounded'. The Greek word diermeneuo is translated in other places by the English word, 'interpret'. Thus it is Christ Who imparts an



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understanding of God's Word. The disciples later explained what the Lord Jesus did for them on the road to Emmaus. "And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" Luke 24:32. The word 'opened' means to 'divide asunder'. That is what every child of God needs to do. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth," 2 Timothy 2:15.

Please note how the Saviour did this. He used 'all the scriptures'. He employed Scripture to give the meaning of Scripture. This is "comparing spiritual things with spiritual," 1 Corinthians 2:13, the only means we should employ to gain an understanding of God's Word.

THE POPE - A 'NATURAL MAN'

Such a searching of the Scriptures the Pope is not capable of doing for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Corinthians 2:14. It can be said to the Pope what was said by Christ to the Pope's antecedents: "Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?" Mark 12:24.

Challenging and changing the Word of God is one of the final subjects Christ spoke of at the close of the Canon of Holy Scripture.

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book," Revelation 22:18-19.

This the succession of Popes has been guilty of with their rejection of gospel truth by their substituting the message of salvation by faith alone, by grace alone, through Christ alone and seeking to replace these glorious truths by their gospel of salvation by works, by the merits of Mary and the saints etc.

The Pope's criticism of the Saviour's Words in Matthew 6:13 and how they are translated is but his revealing his true nature. He desires to undermine our faith and trust in God's Word and in our revered and God-honoured English translation, the King James Version of the Scriptures, which has done much harm to his cause!

Like the pig, he can but give a grunt and 'grunt' he has!

Rev Ivan Foster (Retired).

12th December, 2017.