

the Creator of the universe to us...in a personal, family way. While we cannot say this is strictly new (Israel thought of God as father to the nation, etc.) its personal application is surely fresh. God was not to be thought of in a distant way, as was the gods of the heathen, nor in an inanimate sense as the idols round about the land, but in an emotive sense whereby he was immediately responsible and immediately concerned for the one offering the prayer.

We read in Matthew 11:27 that this knowledge of the Father comes only as it is given by the Son and we remember that in John 14:6 it is only through the Son that one comes to the Father. In effect the Lord is acquainting us with the fact that through him we are adopted into the family of God.

The concept of "father" is used in the sense of superiority...one over us as well as that of propagator, one from whom life has sprung. It takes on a fuller dignity in that light and does not have the limited connotations of our culture. It is the relating word of those who follow the Lord Jesus when, as in Luke 11, they ask to be taught to pray.

2. Discussion

a. A Matter of Identification: Our Father.

(1) There is a sense in which God, as Creator, is Father to all. But that is not the sense used in this prayer. In these words he is addressed as the responsible head of the family of believers. Hence he is "ours". By "ours" the Lord indicates the family of the faithful identifying himself with them (not "your Father" but "our Father"). We are identified directly with the Lord Jesus Christ and then with God the Father through him. It is this union that gives us both privilege and right in prayer and it is by it we come hopeful and assured. One only says "our Father" when united with Christ and then, through that union is able to say with even greater meaning, "my Father".