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(Matthew 6.13)

The concluding doxology of the Lord's prayer has been read and used by millions of readers of the Holy Scriptures for nearly two thousand years but modern translations of the Bible almost invariably omit these words or insert a note casting doubt upon their authenticity. The Revised Standard Version omits the words from the text and states in a footnote that 'Other authorities, some ancient, add, in some form, *For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever. Amen*'. The New Scofield Reference

Bible preserves the words in the text, but a footnote questions their authenticity: 'This doxology does not appear in the oldest and best Greek manuscripts, and in those which do include it, there are considerable variations. The account by Luke omits it altogether. Eminent textual authorities believe that it was added by later hands, probably to make the prayer more suitable for public worship'. This note continues with the suggestion that the words were drawn from David's prayer in 1 Chronicles 29.11: 'Thine, O LORD, is...the power, and the glory...thine is the kingdom'.

Suggestions of this kind, often repeated in the classroom, in the Bible college, in popular books, in magazine articles, and in the footnotes of the modern versions,

The Power and the Glory

are designed to undermine the authenticity of the disputed passages and to accomplish their ultimate rejection from the Bibles in general use.

Overwhelming evidence

In fact, there is overwhelming documentary evidence for the retention of these words in the text, just as they stand in the Authorised Version. Some ancient manuscripts omit the words, but these documents are a comparatively small, unrepresentative and unreliable minority. Those who dismiss the words as an interpolation cannot adequately explain how the alleged interpolation established itself without appreciable variation in nearly all the manuscripts, found its way into every part of Christendom from the earliest times, established itself in the Greek copies used in public worship, the 'Lectionaries' and 'Liturgies', and has for long ages formed a part of the private and public devotions of many of the Lord's people all over the world.

Those who would reject the words suggest that they were added in early liturgical worship and were later wrongly recognised as authentic Scripture. This suggestion appeared as early as the Complutensian Polyglot of AD1514, a parallel version

produced at Alcalá ('Complutum') in Spain by Stunica and his associates, under the direction of Cardinal Ximenes. A note in this version alleges that the use of the 'doxology' in the Greek Church implies that the words were a liturgical addition to the inspired text. Notwithstanding the lack of adequate evidence, this charge has been repeated by critics for more than five hundred years.

The explanation

The true explanation is that the prayer delivered by our Lord included the closing doxology, and was correctly recorded by Matthew. When it became customary to use the prayer as part of the liturgical worship of the Greek Church, it was common practice for the congregation to repeat the prayer aloud up to 'deliver us from evil', and the minister then uttered the solemn doxology alone. This usage influenced some of the early copyists, who were so accustomed to leaving the final words to the minister that they assumed that these words were of the 'Church' rather than of the Scripture. For this reason some copyists did not include these words in their copies, but regarded them as a pious but uninspired addition. This corruption of the text arose from a misunderstanding of these scribes, and affected only a small minority of the ancient manuscripts,

including some which have survived to the present time and are wrongly held in high repute by modern critical scholars. To this unrepresentative and unreliable class belong the Codex Vaticanus, Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Bezae, usually referred to as B, Aleph and D.

If it were true that the doxology as it stands in the Received Text was borrowed from ancient Greek liturgical use, it should be possible to find it in the copies of the Greek liturgies which have survived. There is no shortage of documents, but it is of interest to notice that a very large number of the Greek liturgies have the doxology in some other form than Matthew 6.13 and conclude with a Trinitarian formula which is not found in Matthew. Many of the Greek liturgical copies differ from each other, but they agree in testifying that there was a doxology in Matthew, that it began with 'Thine', that it mentioned *kingdom*, *power* and *glory*, and contained a reference to eternity.

It is plainly evident that the ancient Greek Church embellished the comparatively simple form set forth in the Gospel, but it is quite inconceivable that the brief formula now in Matthew could have been derived from the elaborate and ornate conclusion of the prayer developed in the liturgies. Our

Bible sets forth the prayer just as Matthew recorded it.

The Prayer in Luke's Gospel

The critics also attack the authenticity of the closing doxology on the ground that Luke did not record it. This may be simply answered in the words of Dr. W. B. Jones in his commentary on this Gospel [London: *Speaker's Commentary*, 1878], 'Nothing is more conceivable than that the Lord's prayer may have been delivered by Christ to His disciples more than once. There may have been special reasons why it should be delivered a second time, in answer to a request preferred to Him by one of the new disciples, who came to Him in a part of the country where He had not previously been teaching'. He was at liberty to give the pattern in fuller form on one occasion and without the doxology on another.

Those who confidently quote 'the oldest and best manuscripts' are often found to be relying upon some of the oldest but least trustworthy documents. It is instructive to observe the extent of the disagreement between the documents of this now popular group in setting forth the prayer in the Gospel according to Luke. The *oldest* (but not necessarily *best*) manuscripts are those referred to as Aleph ABCD of the 4th, 5th and

The Power and the Glory

6th centuries. Of these A and C are not able to testify with reference to Matthew 6.13, and in Luke 11 there is chaotic disagreement among the whole group. Codex Bezae, D, inserts in Luke a paraphrase of Matthew 6.7. Codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, Aleph and B, omit 'Our', and 'which art in heaven'. D omits the Greek article before 'name', adds 'upon us', and transposes the Greek words for 'Thy kingdom'. B omits 'Thy will be done, as in heaven, also on the earth'. Aleph includes these words, but adds 'so' before 'also', and omits a Greek article. Aleph and D replace DIDOU with DOS, from Matthew. Aleph omits the article before 'day by day'. D has 'this day', from Matthew, and from the same source 'debts' for 'sins', and 'as also we' in place of 'as also (we) ourselves'. D has 'our debtors' for 'every one that is indebted to us'. B and Aleph omit the last petition, 'but deliver us from evil'.

Defective manuscripts

This lack of harmony is exhibited by the manuscripts which modern scholars use as the basis of their reconstruction of the Greek text. They corrupt the prayer in forty-five words. They do not agree together on any single variation. Only on one point do more than two of the five documents agree with each other, and in this instance they

agree in the erroneous omission of an article. In 32 out of the 45 words these manuscripts bear in turn solitary evidence against the rest.

Modern versions, and modern Biblical criticism, on both sides of the Atlantic, have been powerfully influenced by the judgment of the 19th century scholars, Westcott and Hort, from the time of the English Revised Version which set the standard for the proliferation of unreliable modern versions which have so confused readers of the present century. In Luke 11 Westcott and Hort omitted eleven words on the testimony of the two documents Aleph and B, and another eleven words omitted only by B, the Codex Vaticanus.

The fact that the prayer was given and recorded in a shorter form in the Gospel according to Luke led some early copyists of Matthew to shorten his version in order to make it harmonise with Luke. Those early manuscripts of Matthew which omit the doxology belong to this defective class. Among the earliest witnesses for the inclusion of the doxology in Matthew are the Syriac versions and the *Didache*, the 'teaching of the Apostles'. The latter preserves evidence from the first half of the second century. This document contains a number of liturgical prayers which are not authentic

Scripture, and they all end with a reference to the Name of Jesus, but the doxology at the end of the Lord's Prayer as written in the *Didache* does not contain any reference to His Name. This very strongly implies that this part of the *Didache* was copied from a yet older manuscript of Matthew which contained the doxology as it stands in the Greek underlying the Authorised Version.

Groundless assumptions of modern textual criticism

Westcott and Hort's 'Introduction' suggests that the concluding words of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew originated in liturgical use in Syria and were adopted into the Greek and Syrian copies of the New Testament. In their opinion the doxology was derived from I Chronicles 29. Professor Tasker's edition of the Greek text underlying the New English Bible New Testament gives a very brief and partial review of the evidence and concludes that the doxology must be 'regarded as an early liturgical addition'. It is to be deplored that in their determination to impose the pattern of the Vatican Codex, B, upon the text and translation of the New Testament, modern critics have leapt with unscholarly agility from assumption to assumption to heights of speculation where the evangelical Christian should not

feel under any obligation to follow. There are most substantial grounds for retaining these disputed words in our Bibles with full confidence that they came from the lips of our Lord Himself and were faithfully recorded by Matthew, preserved through the ages and correctly reproduced by Tyndale and his successors as an integral part of the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The evidence for the authenticity of the disputed words may be listed as follows:—

1st century—
Paul's allusion in 2 Timothy 4.18.

2nd century—
Didache, *Diatessaron* of Tatian, the old Syriac version.

3rd century—
Coptic and Sahidic.

4th century—
Apostolic Constitutions A.D.380; Old Latin, k; Gothic, Armenian.

5th century—
Uncial ms. W; Chrysostom; Georgian version.

6th century—
Uncials Σ, Φ, Ethiopic version; three Syriac versions.

8th century—
Uncials E, L.

The Power and the Glory

9th century–

Uncials G, K, M, U, V, Δ, Θ, Π: Old Latin f, g. Minuscules 33, 565, 892.

10th century–

Minuscule 1079.

11th century–

Minuscules 28, 124, 174, 230, 700, 788, 1216.

12th century–

Minuscules 346, 543, 1010, 1071, 1195, 1230, 1241, 1365, 1646.

13th century–

Minuscules 13, 1009, 1242, 1546.

14th century–

Minuscules 2148, 2174.

15th century–

Minuscules 69, 1253 (with additional Trinitarian formula).

To these may be added the majority of the very numerous ‘Byzantine’ copies, including most of the Byzantine lectionaries.

The evidence against the authenticity of the doxology in Matthew includes some Coptic manuscripts, a version probably of 3rd century, Tertullian, Origen and Cyprian of the same century; Aleph, B, Old Latin a, Hilary, Caesarius Naz., Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory Nyss. of 4th century; D, Old Latin b, h, Chromatius, Augustine of 5th century; Uncials Z and 0170 of the 6th century; Old Latin 1, Max. Conf. of 7th century; Old Latin g² of 9th century; ff of 10-11th century; c of 12-13th century; Minuscule 1 of 12th century; 118 and Lectionary 547 of 13th; Minuscules 131, 209 of 14th; 17 and 130 of 15th century; to which may be added the Latin Vulgate. It should be borne in mind that the fact that some early writers comment on the prayer without referring to the doxology is no *proof* that the doxology was not in their manuscripts. It may have been their purpose to comment only on the petitions. In such matters the ‘*argument from silence*’ is weak.

The aims of the Society

- To publish and distribute the Holy Scriptures throughout the world in many languages.
- To promote Bible translations which are accurate and trustworthy, conforming to the Hebrew Masoretic Text of the Old Testament, and the Greek Textus Receptus of the New Testament, upon which texts the English Authorised Version is based.
- To be instrumental in bringing light and life, through the Gospel of Christ, to those who are lost in sin and in the darkness of false religion and unbelief.
- To uphold the doctrines of reformed Christianity, bearing witness to the equal and eternal deity of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, One God in three Persons.
- To uphold the Bible as the inspired, inerrant Word of God.
- **For the Glory of God and the increase of His Kingdom through the circulation of Protestant or uncorrupted versions of the Word of God.**

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