

PART IV: THE LORD'S PRAYER

Haggerston Catechism



H. A. WILSON

HAGGERSTON CATECHISM

PART FOUR
THE LORD'S PRAYER

BY
H. A. WILSON

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CONTENTS

		PAGE
74.	HOW MANY COUPONS FOR SUCH A NIGHTIE? - -	190
75.	GRACE-NOTE - - - - -	192
76.	GRACIOUS ME! - - - - -	194
77.	R.A.F. - - - - -	196
78.	"I SENT A LETTER TO MY LOVE" - - - - -	198
79.	"GOD STILL GIVETH HIS BELOVED SLEEP" - - - - -	200
80.	HANDS OFF! - - - - -	202
81.	'SH - - - - -	204
82.	AMBER LIGHT - - - - -	206
83.	SUBMARINE - - - - -	208
84.	CHRONOMETER - - - - -	210
85.	TEMPLET - - - - -	212
86.	EVERYMAN - - - - -	214
87.	AIR MAIL - - - - -	216
88.	HENPECKED HARRY - - - - -	218
89.	HUNDRED PER CENT. - - - - -	220
90.	MICE AND MEN - - - - -	222
91.	POINTERS - - - - -	224
92.	FYLFOT - - - - -	226
93.	"MARKS OF ANGELS' FEET" - - - - -	228
94.	RATION BOOK - - - - -	230
95.	STAFF OF LIFE - - - - -	232
96.	BLOT ON THE LANDSCAPE - - - - -	234
97.	"BUT ONLY GOD COULD MAKE A TREE" - - - - -	236
98.	SKY SIGNS - - - - -	238
99.	BETWEEN YOU AND ME AND THE GATE-POST - - - - -	240
100.	"WHO'S AFRAID OF THE BIG BAD WOLF?" - - - - -	242
101.	LOOK OUT! - - - - -	244
102.	GLORIOLE - - - - -	246
103.	OKYDOKE - - - - -	248
104.	SPECIAL INTENTION - - - - -	250
105.	"MORE THAN THIS WORLD DREAMS OF" - - - - -	252

HAGGERSTON CATECHISM

COMPENSATION

SUNDAY mornings see me in the local church, where we have an English service of Morning Prayer, hymns, etc. There is Holy Communion every Sunday at 8.0; but these last weeks I have either been night-flying, or on early morning duty which starts at 7.0. However, I get there when I can, and made my communion this morning.

Last week I had a terrific argument. I started it, by discussing my particular form of religion; though I don't really like arguments of this nature. I tried not to say the wrong things. I was hard pressed explaining why we have such cheerful and decorative, though honestly simple, services, to a bunch of sensible but not very Christian air-crew. Feeling rather on my own didn't help any; and I felt more than ever the need for the explanations and enlightenment you used to give us at Catechism. The old points came up: about hypocrites in the Church, the Church being too wealthy when the poor could do with it, that people need not go to church to pray. I said something about every man to his own religion and beliefs, and that to do what he knows is right is the best way for himself. But it spoiled our game of billiards; and I felt depressed by such ignorance on the part of others, and my own lack of knowledge. I wish I had my old Catechism notes, even those postcard drawings of mine, with me.

Last night I was over the sea (5,000 feet), and watched the sun set. I can't describe it. It was a great merge of colours from the blue-green sea, the purple mountains, a crimson gash above the horizon, a gradual change from gold to yellow, the blue of the night-sky. There were no clouds. All was perfectly still. There were just us five in an ugly kite, our minds probably far away from the war. I suddenly remembered you saying something years ago about being able to pray anywhere;

and as the sun sank I began to say my night-prayers; for St. Augustine's, you, Mum and Dad, Florrie, others. I remembered Ted Watts dying in the London Hospital (probably the sunset made me think of his red hair), Ed. Smith in his burning bomber; others I have grown up with, Jim and Stan Hummerston at sea, Les Watkins, Vic and Bert in the Eighth Army, Bob Palmer in Malta. The navigator digging me in the ribs rather shook me. He gave me my last course to base. I felt suddenly sleepy. So I took a last look at the sunset and the first stars; then I yoicked the kite about to wake myself up, for things can happen when you get like that.

See you soon.

* * *

I have fixed up my leave and now write to ask definitely if you can marry us. For it is largely through you and St. Augustine's that I am as happy to-day as I always hope to be. When I first came to the church I felt hostile to everybody. I was terribly shy, and for the first few weeks I thought no one cared about a little boy who used to sit all alone at eleven o'clock Mass on Sundays. Then came the Bethlehem Play of that year, and you asked me to join the Catechism; and I said to myself that, no matter if I had no friends, I could at least try and have God for one, because I then began to know how much he loves me. I can't explain how it happened, but I did find God, and I also found my girl and my friends; and the day on which I was confirmed seemed to me to be God's answer to one of his Haggerston children.

Our church is a mission hut. I went to communion on Sunday, and of course to confession the night before. The services are quite simple, but at least one can gather the atmosphere of the glory of God. St. A's and you are never out of my prayers, so please always remember this man who loves his old church dearly.

* * *

In answer to your enquiry the harmonica (alias mouth-organ) still functions pretty well, but needs cleaning more often than it used to. Strangely enough the sand of the Western

Desert seems to do it good. A week or two ago I borrowed a magazine from a chap, and was surprised to find in it an article about our St. Augustine's, and a photo of the window in the church showing children playing cricket in the street. It made me feel quite homesick; for I don't think I realized till then how much I was missing the old church, or how grateful I am for all I learned in it. It only seems the other day that I was a kid playing cricket against a lamp-post; and yet, in a way, it seems hundreds of years.

The other day a few of the chaps and I had a bit of an adventure in a village called Littoria, or something like that, which is on the coast of Tripolitania and near Benghazi. We had been travelling all day along the coast-road, through rain and sand-storms, and reached the place just after dark. It was raining hard, so we started to look round for a building to sleep in. We found a place which from the outside looked like a large empty bungalow; and, after trying the doors and finding them locked, broke open a window and thankfully climbed in out of the rain. Imagine our surprise on striking a match to find that we were in a hospital operating-theatre. We explored further and found that the remaining rooms were empty, apart from a buckshee table and chair here and there: in fact the operating-theatre was the only place which was at all comfortable. We lost no time in getting our blankets off the truck and indoors; and I made up quite a comfortable bed on the operating-table and spent a very good night. I was woken in the morning by the door crashing open, and looked up to find an exceedingly fat and ancient Italian woman going off the deep end in no uncertain manner. Of course we couldn't understand what she was saying, but it was not difficult to realize that we were very unwelcome visitors. After shouting for about ten minutes without apparently drawing breath she went away, but reappeared with the village priest. He could speak a fair amount of English; and informed us that the hospital was still in use (though for the life of me I'm hanged if I know where they kept their patients, as there were no beds); and would we mind clearing up after us? Thanks to St. Augustine's I have never been shy of clergy anywhere (are you still playing snooker?); so I said to him that of

course we would. After that he took me to see his church. It was built entirely of white concrete, and looked so lovely that I can't describe it. It wasn't a bit like St. A's; and yet it was. You had the same feeling directly you went inside that, who ever you were, you were welcome. You felt at home. But it hadn't any Catechism Corner like ours; with pictures and diagrams and charts and Holy Catholic Church Railway and Scout and Guide Flags and all. That afternoon we left with his blessing; and forty eggs, and as many bread rolls—real luxuries after Army grub.

* * *

I cannot tell you how pleased I was to be back again in St. Augustine's. It was indeed a joy, and made my embarkation-leave a memorable one. I find, as must do many others in the forces, that in no part does my military life compare or tally with my civilian life, least of all in religion. I go to a strange church. The service is different to what I have been brought up to; I don't feel at home; somehow, it doesn't feel the same. Then I come on leave and serve at the altar in the old church at the Mass I have always known. What does it matter if the church is dirtier and darker, that there aren't enough servers, probably no choir, and only a small congregation? I am at home in my own church. You will never know the thankfulness of all of us who are away from E.2 (especially perhaps those who used to be in the Catechism) that you are keeping the services going in the church we love so well. I know it hasn't been easy to say the daily Mass after nights spent among bombs and fires, when the church has been freezing cold and there is no assistant priest. But perhaps you may find some consolation in the knowledge that the thoughts of many of your old Catechism-members now in the forces often turn to St. A's, and that it encourages us to know that at certain hours of the week you are walking to the altar and will be remembering each of us there by name. For us who are fortunate enough to be still in England there is always the thought: Well! In so many weeks at this time I shall be serving there. For those abroad there must always be the thought that, when it is all over and they are back again, they will find

everything going on just as it was the last time they went to Mass before they sailed. Perhaps, for you whose duty it has been to stand by your and our church, it may be difficult to appreciate these sentiments; but to us who are sometimes hundreds of miles or more from Haggerston the knowledge that all is going on as usual in our church acts as an anchorage, is something we can hold on to in this rather mad and topsy-turvy world.

* * *

“Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.” “What’s lost upon the roundabouts we pulls up on the swings.” For all things there is recompense. “Give a little love to a child, and you get a great deal back.” I have no doubt that there are many parish-priests, who would give all they have to be with their boys in the forces but know it is their duty to remain at home, and are finding compensation in these days by the receipt of such letters. It is a great reward for very many Sunday afternoons spent with an apparently not always receptive succession of small boys and girls. It is also sufficient answer to those who allege that a priest can spend too much time, or be at too great pains, in teaching Christianity to children.

I am grateful to those who have written to me about this method of teaching the Prayer Book Catechism. There may, however, be others who chance to pick up this small book; and know nothing of Greta Garbo June Elizabeth Margaret Rose Luvaduck, Sarah Susannah Snatchpiece (who blotted her identity card), Uncle Percy’s astonishing moustache, and the not at all Reluctant Dragon. So it seems advisable to mention that in the introduction to Part One I detailed at length what were my customs and usages when St. Augustine’s Catechism was by no means (as, alas, it still is) a memory, and it was my fortune to be every Sunday afternoon in the cheerful and lively company of that Peggy who wished to “knif” Hitler, and her hundred companions. And I repeat that:

(a) These instructions are intended not only for those who conduct Catechisms, but also for boys and girls who for

one reason or another (like Peggy) have no Catechism to go to.

(b) Numbers in brackets refer to other instructions.

(c) Since it is good for both catechists and catechised to know their way about the Bible, such references (in italics and brackets) are frequent. Verse numbers are inclusive.

(d) Words in instructions printed in capitals are those written on the second blackboard; though these are not to be found in every instruction, since "variety is the spice of" Catechism also.

(e) The table of contents I have only drawn up for fun. It is not to be taken seriously, and may well be ignored.

H. A. WILSON

ST. AUGUSTINE'S CLERGY HOUSE
YORKTON STREET, HACKNEY ROAD
LONDON, E.2

September, 1943

74

Marjorie May and Christopher Charles are going to bed.

I don't know (how should I, an ageing bachelor who lives in a childless clergy-house?) whether you wear such posh pyjamas or so elegant a nightie; though they remind me of some of the delightful clothes sent to me in 1940 by kind children in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., when we were having a bad time in air-raids (as I carried the large parcel round to the shelter under the old brewery, bombs were falling and guns were firing; but we had such fun dividing them among the more than sixty children that we almost forgot there were such things as Germans).

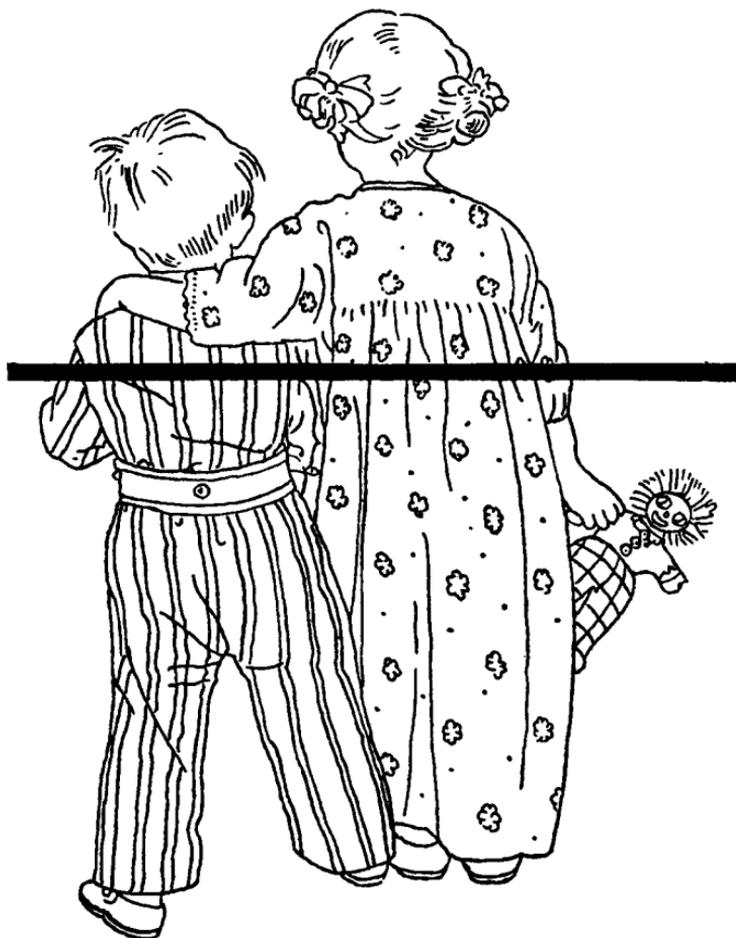
If you find the picture a bit difficult, take the advice of King Solomon (1 *Kings* 3, 24 and 25), cut the pair in half and only draw their heads and shoulders (above the line). I had to draw them in full, because Marjorie particularly asked me not to leave out George.

She and Chris have learned in this queer catechism about Holy Baptism (Part One), the Apostles' Creed (Part Two), The Commandments (Part Three): so they know what they ought to do. But this is not enough, for them or you or any one. They must learn how to get the strength to do it; as must you.

That is why after the commandments comes this paragraph (which always reminds me of a maiden-aunt with a slight moustache, or a school-teacher "ticking me off"): *My good child* (don't you simply loathe any one who calls you Good Child? I did), *know this, that thou art not able to do these things of (by) thyself, nor to walk in the commandments of God, and to serve him, without his special grace.*

Marjorie May and Christopher Charles (but not George) are ON THEIR WAY TO NIGHT-PRAYERS, for prayer is one way by which grace comes. But first we had better learn what grace is.

74



75

On the teak panelling at the west end of our St. Augustine's Church, near to the door and black marble holy-water stoup, is a notice-board. Soon after the war began in 1939 I pinned to it three pieces of paper. On one I wrote "How you could help some one seriously injured in an air-raid." The second I found lying on the church floor one night when German bombers were over Haggerston, I thought our church would be set alight by a nearby burning building, and so was on my way to the tabernacle to take the Blessed Sacrament to a place of greater safety: it was a printed prayer "For the preservation of a church during air-raids," and I expect had fallen out of somebody's prayer-book. The third was a printed notice sent to all churches: "It all depends on me, and I depend on God." "It" meant, of course, the winning of the war against Hitler and Co., in which (since it is what is called a Total War) everybody had to take part. But the words are equally true of the winning of the longer and harder war against evil (also a Total War), and the gaining of heaven after it is over: "It all depends on me (and you), and I (and you) depend on God."

You have learned the duties of a Christian; the promises and vows made in your name at your baptism and undertaken by you yourself at confirmation, what the creed says you must believe, things that the commandments teach you to do and not to do. But this is not enough. You know already—and the older you grow the more clearly you will realise—that you are unable to carry out these duties by yourself. Certainly, "it all depends on me," since I have free will: equally certainly, "I depend on God" to give me the strength and power to be a good Christian. This strength and power is called Grace. Grace is God's help given to human beings. It is God's free gift, given to all who ask for it.

Our Lord said (*St. John* 15, 5). Grace is the source of life, power, strength. As electricity in a live battery; blood in your veins; sap in a tree, without which new leaves could neither grow nor remain alive; so is GRACE IN A SOUL. See (6).

75



AS SAP IN A TREE,
SO IS

76

In these instructions I try not to use long or strange words. But you ought to understand about Habitual and Actual Grace.

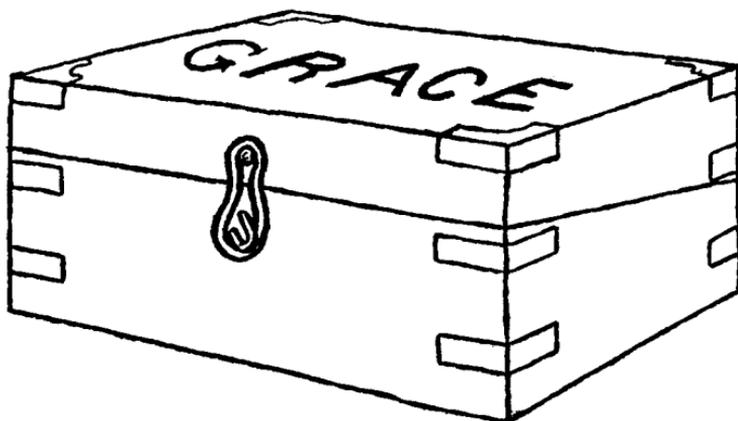
Suppose you go into Mr. Forecast's shop in Dunloe Street (where the fierce brown dog lives) to buy sweets. Nobody is there. On the counter is a tanner. You are tempted to knock it off, put it in your pocket, scrounge it. But you say a little ejaculatory (83) prayer ("O God, I should love to pinch this sixpence; help me not to"). You do not steal it. That is Actual Grace; God giving you help and strength for that one special good "act." It is his passing help (like his finger touching your soul); giving you good thoughts and wishes to do right "acts," perhaps different "acts" on different days; coming to you in different ways (for example, by hearing a fine sermon, reading a good book, talking to a true friend, hearing beautiful music, seeing a glorious sunset). "I think I'll slip into church for a few minutes, and say some prayers"; "Mrs. Snodgrass, you do look tired! Can I carry your bundle of bedding round to the air-raid shelter?"; "What a lovely tune Mr. Sayer is playing on the organ: it makes me feel good":—Actual Grace.

Habitual Grace is not passing but lasting. It is God's help and strength with you always ("a habit"), because you have been baptised and have the Holy Spirit (22, 38); increased in you by your prayers and good use of the other sacraments; so that, unless you choose to live in unforgiven sin, you are always in "a state of grace" (as you are always in a state of being English or a Londoner).

I hope this is not too difficult to understand. Think of a box, in which is all the grace and help of God you will ever need to take you from Haggerston to heaven. The box is not locked (grace is "gratis," "free"); it is fastened by a hasp, metal clasp over a staple; you only have to lift the hasp.

HABITUAL GRACE	}	GIVEN THROUGH
ACTUAL GRACE		
SACRAMENTS AND PRAYER		

76



THE HASP

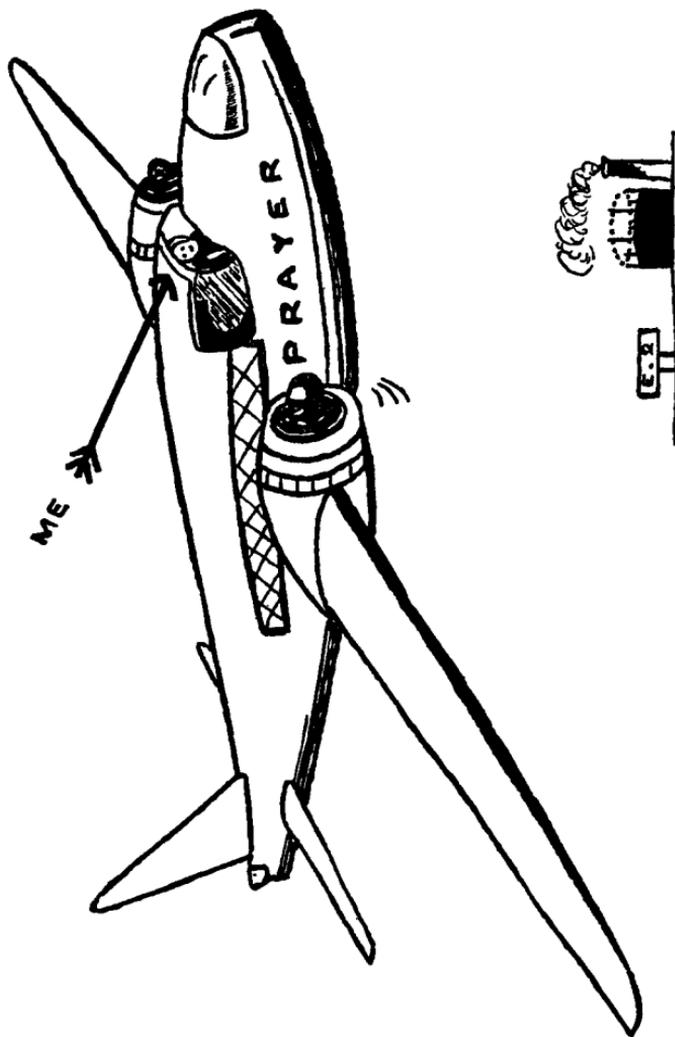
77

All through the journey of life each of us needs grace, habitual and actual (76). How many milestones (birthdays) have you passed on the road from Haggerston to heaven? Eleven? Thirteen? The older you are, the more you realise that, although you want to live the Christian life, you cannot do so "on your own." The three enemies (10, 11, 12) have to be renounced all the while; they do not become less powerful or attractive. When you leave school and go to work, you find new temptations; when you are drawing your Old Age Pension, perhaps a grandfather or grandmother, you will find it no easier to be good than you do now. All through this life we must have grace (*Romans* 7, 18 and 19). *Thou art not able to do these things of thyself*, says the wise old Church through your Prayer-Book Catechism, *nor to walk in the commandments of God, and to serve him, without his special grace; which thou must learn at all times to call for by diligent prayer* ("call for" means "ask"; "diligent" means "careful, painstaking," from a Latin word meaning "loving"—it is easier to do good work for those we love).

Many Christians fail because they do not understand what prayer is, think it is only "asking for something." PRAYER IS LIFTING UP THE MIND AND HEART TO GOD.

"Lifting up"; away from earthly things, such as smelly gas-works in Whiston Road, E.2: "the mind" (the part of you which knows people and things; God has given you the power to know him (1 *Corinthians* 14, 15); you are meant to use that power; the more you pray, the more you will understand both him and his ways here and in heaven): "and heart" (the part of you which loves; it was the poet Coleridge who wrote "He prayeth best who loveth best") (*St. Luke* 10, 25 to 28): "to God" (*Colossians* 3, 1) (always begin your prayers by putting yourself in God's presence; "Thou God seest me" (*Genesis* 16, 13))

77



78

When you pray you can use a book, or not, as you please. There are many good books to help you in your prayers, and they are not expensive:—St. Swithun's Prayer-Book, The Anglo-Catholic Prayer-Book, Catholic Prayers, etc. Sometimes I use a book; sometimes I do not. But I think it is a good idea to use one now and then, in order to get fresh ideas for prayers. (There was an old lady who told me that she still prayed "God bless father and mother, and make me a good girl"). If you do not know them already, you should certainly learn by heart from a book The Apostles' Creed, The Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary, Anima Christi, The Divine Praises and The Confession. But as a general rule, you may please yourself about using a book or not. All that matters is that in your prayers you do your best to "lift up mind and heart to God" (77).

When you talk to your mum and dad, you do not use a dictionary or say long unnatural words; you talk easily, as you think. It is in the same way that God, our heavenly Father, wishes you to talk to him in your prayer-times; not in great long words out of a book the meaning of which perhaps you do not understand (and prayers in books, however good, are other people's, not your own), but in the same simple language with which you speak to those who love and understand you, with whom you feel at ease.

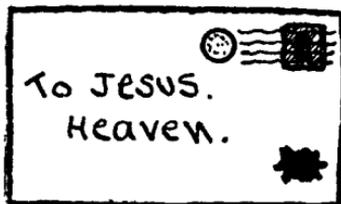
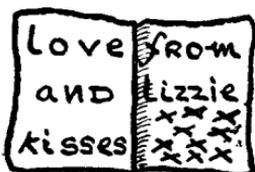
There was a small girl who wrote and posted the letter on this week's blackboard. The postman could not deliver it (it was returned to her, marked "insufficiently addressed"); but she **KNEW HOW TO PRAY**, and I have no doubt at all that the Lord Jesus received her message. For all good prayers are simple and natural; and the best of them all, The Lord's Prayer, is the simplest.

Once there was a small boy who, with his mother, was lost in a wilderness. They had no water. His mother gave up hope; but the boy said his prayers (though only God knows what words he used). You might like to read (*Genesis* 21, 11 to 19) about what happened.

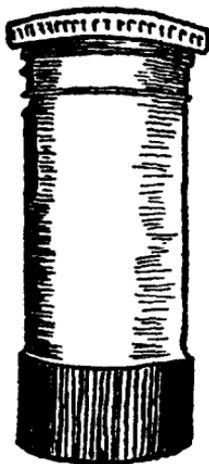
78

THERE WAS A CHILD WHO

PUT
THESE



IN THIS



BUT SHE

79

The pilot climbs into the cockpit, starts up the engines ; but before the machine can move, the chocks (large wooden wedges) must be taken away from the wheels. If prayer is like an aeroplane "lifting up mind and heart to God" (77), things that make prayer difficult are chocks. It may help you to know what some of them are.

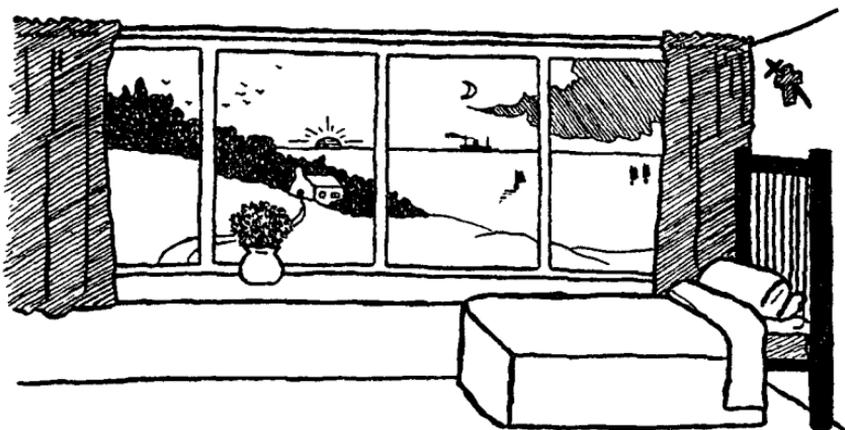
Your mind and heart are in your body. Through your body reach you sights, sounds, scents of Haggerston which may hinder your prayers. (As I write these words there come to me sounds of children playing in the street beneath my window, Gip and Peter barking at each other through gaps in the nearby garden-fences, traffic in Hackney Road; and I am conscious of the sweet sickly smell from Bush's scent-factory across the canal). To pray well you must remove, so far as you can, all chocks.

What wonderful things your eyes are ! Tiny perfect cameras ceaselessly (so long as they are open) taking photographs which are sent to your brain for immediate or future use. Delicate lashes protect them from dust and dirt ; ridges of bone, above and below, shield them from injury ; lids cover them when your brain gives the order. What your eyes see, you think of ; you must ; that is what eyes are for. So, when you wish to pray, make sure that your eyes do not hinder you.

If your bed was by windows through which there was a grand view of the country-side, sunset, moonrise, ships, birds, a house in the woods, you would want to keep on looking at them (I should) ; and would find it easier to go to sleep if you drew the curtains. If your eyes are looking about you in church, your brain is bound to think of earthly things (Mrs. Podsnap's strange hat, a restless choirboy, Sam Snooks' dirty collar, Fanny Finkelstein's smart dress). Draw the curtains, let down your eye-lids : your mind and heart will rise to God more easily. In your prayer-times at home, keep your eyes on your book, your good picture, the cross over your bed with its palm-cross from last Palm Sunday ; or shut them. You can't take photographs and pray at the same time.

YOU MAY PRAY BETTER IF YOUR EYES ARE CLOSED.

79



YOU MAY SLEEP BETTER IF THE CURTAINS ARE DRAWN

80

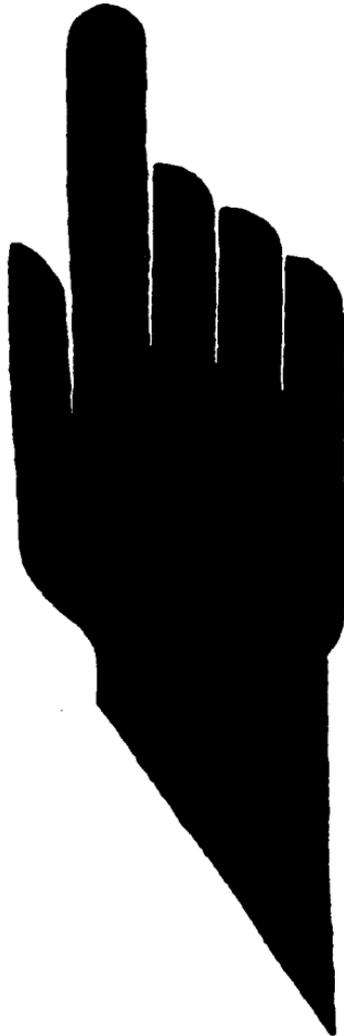
One of the bombs that fell in Hackney Road put out of action all the telephones in the neighbourhood : for more than a week no one could ring up Bishopsgate 5187 (me) and ask if I was The Lost Dog's Home, The Young Women's Christian Association, The Victoria Wine Stores, or Abraham Levinskovich. Day and night men in the service of the General Post Office sat in a small black tent on the pavement mending thin insulated wires wrapped in coloured dry paper. Night-raids continued : the men paid them no attention : they and I drank tea round my kitchen-fire at queer hours of the night. At length the work was done : the wires, thin as threads, were mended : again people could ring me up.

In every part of your body are nerves (Latin "nerva," "cord, bow-string"). Thin threads, hollow like tubes, white or grey ; each connected with your brain, to send it messages (as the telephone system or telegraph wires). There are more nerves in some parts of your body than in others ; so these parts are more "sensitive," "able to feel." One of the most sensitive parts is a hand ; your fingers and thumbs are full of nerves.

What you touch, you think of. From your finger-tips a message or picture (as in television) of the thing touched is telegraphed over your nervous system to your brain. At this moment, if you are taking notes of this instruction, you are thinking of a pencil, a block of paper, perhaps your knee on which you write. I knew a blind man who could tell by feeling it whether a linen collar was clean or dirty : he had lost his sight through damage to the nerves of his eyes ; his sense of touch became more sensitive, as if God wanted to make it up to him for his blindness.

So, if you would pray well, take care that your fingers and thumbs are not chocks, touching earthly things, hindering the aeroplane from rising (the blanket on your bed, your forehead or chin, the back of a church-pew, a coat-button). Put your hands together, fingers and thumbs pointing upwards as a sign of prayer ; or hold a crucifix or rosary. You will find it easier to pray.

80



PERHAPS
FIVE
CHOCKS

81

Things that your body sees or touches are earthly (not necessarily bad, of course; but of this world). They may hinder your mind and heart from rising to God in prayer. The same is true of much that your body hears.

In Haggerston it is not possible to shut off all noise when you wish to pray; buses continue to pass the horse-trough at the end of Yorkton Street, long lean London cats go on fighting and making blood-curdling shrieks as if half the babies in East London were having their throats cut outside your window, and the people next door who are having a party will not cease to dance and sing for you or me or any one else. But, having put your eyes and hands right, close your ears as far as possible to earthly sounds: perhaps put your hands over them. Wait until your sailor brother, home on leave from the Middle-East, has finished telling the family what he thinks of the Italian Navy; the nine o'clock news is over; the mouse-hunt has ended; and the bombers going to Germany have passed. (*St. Matthew* 6, 6: "closet" meaning "small room"). It is difficult not to think of what you hear: hear as little as possible: for

NOISE HINDERS PRAYER

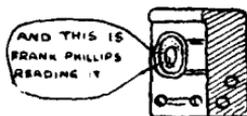
St. Augustine's Church is always open, day and night (I run the risk of burglaries, and we don't have many). It may be easier to say morning or night prayers there, on your way to and from school or work (some do). It is quiet, and has holy and beautiful things to look at.

Often grown-up people go into retreat once a year for a week-end or longer, away from home, in a special building or church. They do not talk, have letters, read the papers, listen to the radio; because they are being quiet in body and mind, to be alone with God and say better prayers.

Never make the prayers of other people more difficult by interrupting them, talking in church, making a noise in the porch. Don't be a chock.

There are good sounds to help you in prayer (music, church-bells if they are not cracked and out of tune like ours, perhaps a human voice): but there are many to hinder you. Do all you can to shut them out.

81



82

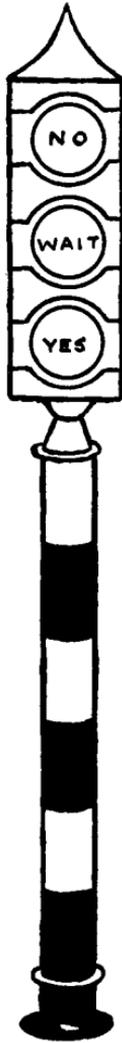
{ Every right prayer (1 *St. John* 5, 14)
 of every one who tries to be good, (1 *St. John* 3, 22)
 loves our Lord, (*St. John* 15, 7)
 and is kind to his fellow-men, (*St. Mark* 11, 25)
 is heard and answered.

So says the Bible. But there are some who say "That is untrue. I don't believe it. I am honestly doing my best to live the Christian life. For years I have been praying for this or that right thing for some one else, or for myself. But I have no answer at all." Poor dears! They forget that God has three (not two) ANSWERS TO PRAYER. Don't you make their mistake!

God is "Our Father." He is perfect wisdom. He alone knows what is best for his children. Sometimes his answer to your prayers will be "No, my child. I do not think you should have that." Sometimes he says, "Yes, child; you may have it." But very often his reply is the third answer, the one which many forget, "Wait, child. That for which you ask, for another or for yourself, is right and good. But I know that it will be better, for the other or for you, if I do not grant it at once." When I was your age I used to ask my mother such questions as "Why can't I stay up late at night? Why must there always be milk-puddings for dinner? How are babies born?" "You will understand," she told me, "when you are older." She was right and wise; God is more right, and wiser, than any one. Remember his three answers to prayer when you see the red, amber, green traffic-lights: trust him to know what is best for you and those you love; and go on praying. At any moment the amber light may change to green; for our Lord himself said (*St. Matthew* 7, 7 and 8).

Two men planted apple-trees in their gardens. One tree grew and bore fruit; the other failed and died. The man whose tree died said, "I asked God to send it rain, sunshine, frost: he sent them all: yet the tree failed. What did you ask for?" The other answered, "I left it to God. Only asked that he would send what he knew was best."

82



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M M M I I —

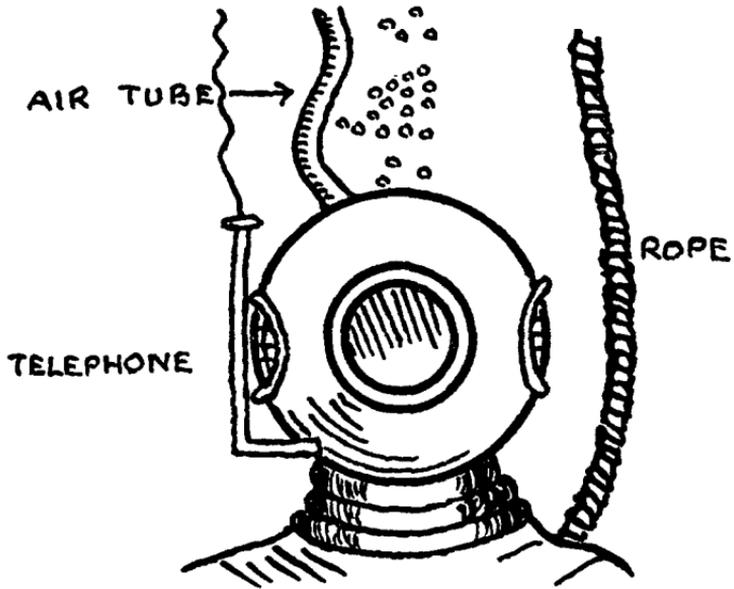
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On the dark dangerous sea-bed the diver works. He could not, unless he kept in touch with the men in the boat on the waves in the sunlight. Air is pumped down to him; by means of his telephone he speaks to his mates, they speak to him; by the rope fastened to him he can be pulled to the surface, and (should the telephone fail) signal to the boat by tugs and jerks. MORNING PRAYERS (telephone), NIGHT PRAYERS (rope), AND GRACE (air through tube), keep you in touch with God; though in fact he is not even so far from you as the diver's friends (*Psalm* 139, 9 to 12).

In the morning, after you have washed, dressed, brushed your hair, cleaned your teeth (do you? I hope so: dentists hurt!), begin the day on your knees in touch with God; at night, before you curl up in your welcoming bed, end it as you began it, on your knees. If you can get into these good habits while you are young, you will never regret it.

And because God is always so near, you can pray to him at any time of day or night as well as in your regular prayer-times: little sudden prayers (the long word for them is "ejaculatory," meaning "thrown out"), like bubbles of air rising from the diver's helmet. At times, even in Haggerston, I have to go and see people who don't want to see me; as I knock at the front door I often "ejaculate" in my heart "O God, enter with me." When I hear a bomb falling, coming nearer and nearer, I say, "God keep us safe." When you are in sudden temptation or danger, unexpectedly have something hard to do, say a little prayer in your heart—out in the street, on a crowded bus, in school or workshop: God will hear and answer (though remember there are three answers): he will send the special grace you need. In the London Hospital I sat one night by the bed of an old Haggerston lady, until she was taken to the operating-theatre. Her last words were, "O Gord, I've known an' luvved yer all me life. Don't let me dahn now." She died, without recovering consciousness. When she woke up in Paradise, I am sure she knew that all her prayers, including the last "ejaculatory" one, had been worth while. And I am sure that you will know it too—one day (*Psalm* 55, 17).

83



84

I hope they teach you at school Tennyson's "Idylls of the King" (about King Arthur, Sir Lancelot and the other Knights of the Round Table, The Holy Grail). When I was at school in Sussex (generally with a grubby collar and a cap too small) I learned some lines out of them which I have not forgotten. They are almost the last words King Arthur says before he leaves this world.

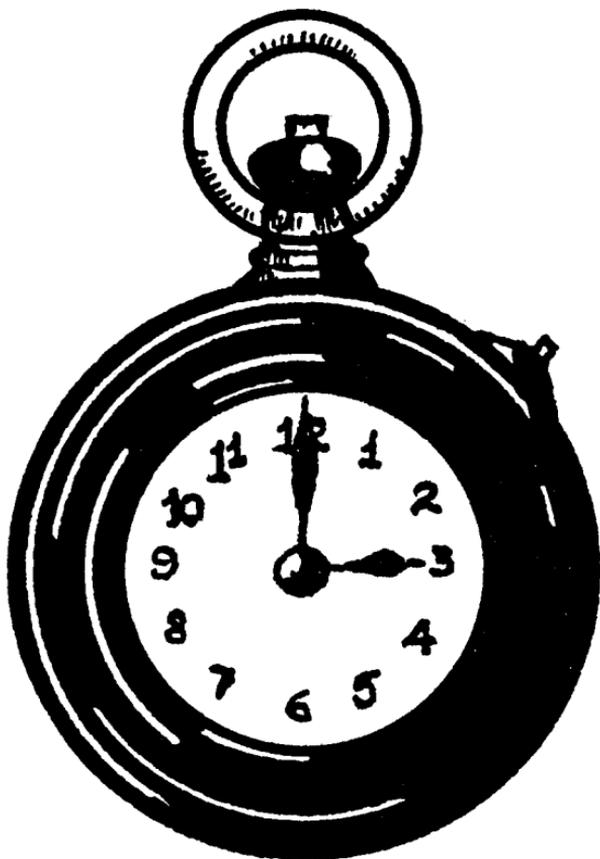
More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round world is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

You say your prayers because none of us can get on without God (*St. John* 15, 5); because, although God knows all our needs before we ask, he wills to wait for us to ask for them (prayer is the key that unlocks his treasures, the battery of the wireless-set through which we speak to him and he speaks to us, the refill of the electric torch that shows us the way to him); because we have wonderful promises to right prayers (*St. Matthew* 7, 7 and 8; *St. John* 14, 13 and 14); because we want to help other people.

But the chief reason why you, and I, pray is because our Lord tells us to (*St. Matthew* 26, 41): "Watch," he says (forgive my little joke on the blackboard), "AND PRAY." "Two things," he says, "are necessary. First: never think you have defeated those three enemies (10, 11, 12): be always alert, on the watch against them. Second, be a person who prays." **And he himself teaches us how to pray.**

84

OUR LORD SAID



85

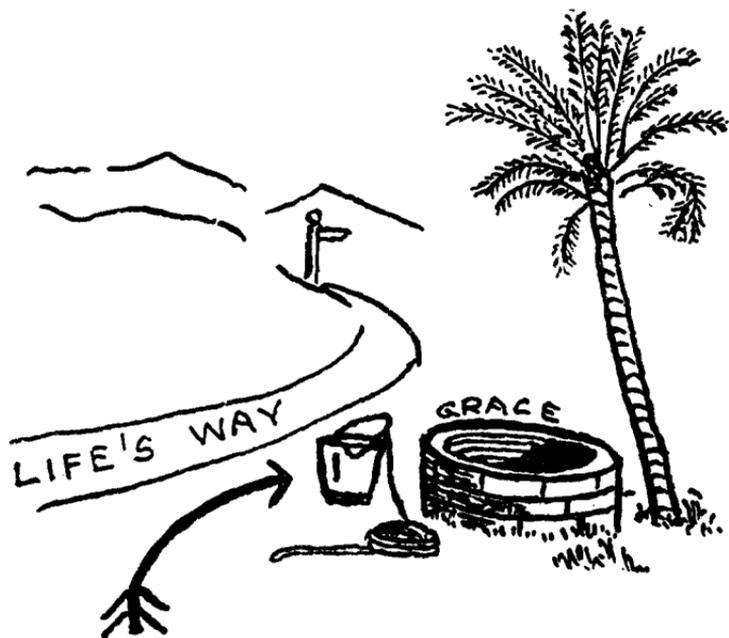
If you decide to save money and coupons by making your own dress, you buy or borrow a paper pattern. If you work in an East London factory which makes, for mugs in West London, antique furniture, and your job is to turn out twisted "oak" table-legs; the foreman gives you a templet, a specimen leg, for your guide and model. One day (*St. Luke* 11, 1), after he had watched our Lord praying, a disciple asked him for a pattern-prayer. Our Lord replied by giving all his disciples (and you, and me)—as he gave those who listened to his sermon on the mountain (*St. Matthew* 6, 9)—The Lord's Prayer.

This is the model, templet, pattern-prayer; the best of all prayers; the prayer that should be most often on your lips; the prayer that is your guide how to pray (it teaches us, as God's children, to care for our Father's glory and will; as members of God's family to remember the needs of other people as well as ourselves).

This is the first prayer that a Christian child learns by heart; it is the last prayer on a dying Christian's lips. Although it is short and simple, it should never be hurried or gabbled; each word in it is sacred, full of meaning, and comes from our Lord himself. When Fr. Edward Burrows (for many years Vicar of St. Stephen's, Haggerston—by the Cat and Mutton Bridge over our canal at the end of Goldsmith Row) was dying, I remember listening to him saying the Lord's Prayer: he took many minutes over it, he said it so slowly and carefully.

For travellers through deserts there are oases of palm-trees and wells of water. All prayer brings grace, to refresh and strengthen you as you journey through life. The Lord's Prayer is the best bucket to lower into the well, the model on which all other such buckets are made.

85



THE LORD'S PRAYER

86

OUR FATHER; FOR THERE IS ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL
(*Ephesians* 4, 6).

The pattern-prayer begins with the name of the Person to whom it is said (it wouldn't be much use your sending me, as many of you so kindly do, a picture-postcard when you are on holiday, if you didn't put my name on it).

God has other names (Lord, King, Creator); titles of majesty and awe. But Father is the highest and most lovely name; for a father is one who loves and protects his children, gives them all they need, and by baptism we are all God's children (7) (*Galatians* 3, 26 and 27). In St. John's Gospel the Fatherhood of God is mentioned more than seventy times, and in the rest of the New Testament you will often find it: but in the Old Testament it is very seldom written about. For it was not until our Lord came to this world to shew us in himself what God is like, that people began to think of God as a loving Father. Every time you begin your prayer, you remind yourself that you are *the* (not a) Child of God; and that he loves you as dearly as if you were his only child (7).

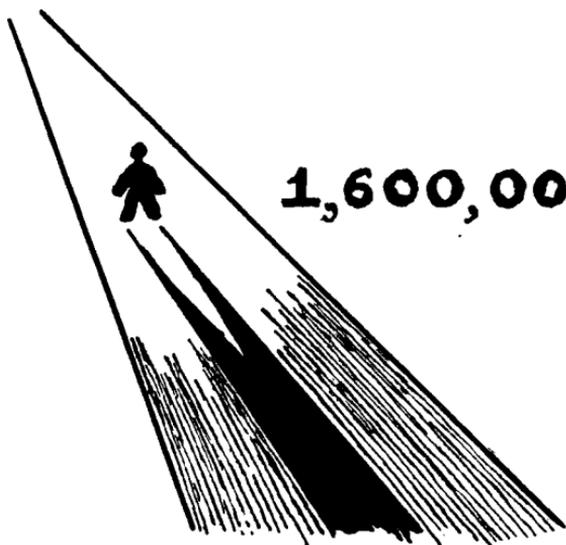
But he is Our Father (not "Your," or "My"). Every good prayer is unselfish; the pattern-prayer is the most unselfish of them all. So far as I can discover, there are about 1,600,000,000 people in the world; God is no more, and no less, the Father of any one of them than he is of all the rest, in whatever land they live, however good or bad they are, even if they are heathens and have never heard of him. You do not pray only as Rudolph Romulus Rumpelstiltskin or Rosamund Rosemary Rubenstein (or whatever your names may be); but, if you are praying according to the templet of perfect prayer, as a member of God's family (1 *Corinthians* 12, 27) for all your 1,599,999,999 brothers and sisters, as well as for yourself.

It is a good thing to say the two words slowly, carefully, thinking of all that they mean.

86



1



1,600,000,000

87

I have just had an Air Mail Letter Card from a soldier in Ceylon whose home is above a shop in Dunloe Street. He writes, "I still remember looking up into your beaming face when you woke me at some unearthly hour to take my turn of fire-watching." That was during the blitz on London in 1940 and 1941, when Will Stephens was one of the many who slept in our hall; but I don't believe I really beamed at two in the morning. He ends his letter, "I like to think of you at home." The letter card was read and passed by the censor; and had on it far too beautiful a stamp (picture of a Cingalese lady) for you or me to draw.

Your Prayer Mail is not read by the censor, or any one else. It is your private affair between you and God alone. And of course, like the whole of religion, it is free, needing no stamp or payment. But it must bear the address, as well as the name, of the Person to whom it is said.

God is everywhere, with Will in Ceylon as well as with his mother and father in Haggerston; but the address which will always find him is "Which art in heaven," HIS HOME AND OUR HOME (*St. Matthew* 23, 9).

Somebody said that these four words "send us on our knees"; because they remind us of our Father's glory and majesty (*Revelation* 21, 22 and 23), and of our weakness and helplessness without him. But when I say them they remind me of home (*Hebrews* 13, 14) ["I like to think of you at home"].

Say the address slowly; and, as you say it, think. The words are our Lord's very own; all his sayings we too are meant to keep in our hearts (*St. Luke* 2, 51), especially perhaps his words about prayer.

87

Prayer

~~AIR MAIL~~
LETTER CARD

PASSED BY CENSOR

NAME *Our Father*

ADDRESS . . *Which art.*

. *in*

. *heaven*

88

After the name and address, come the petitions ("things prayed for," from Latin "petere," "to ask"). In this pattern-prayer the first three petitions are to do with God. He comes first. All good prayer is unselfish, like every good and happy Christian [J.O.Y = Jesus first, Others next, Yourself last = The Christian Rule = the only real happy life, at least the only one I know].

The easiest way of understanding the first three petitions is by putting after each of them the words that come after the third. HALLOWED BE THY NAME IN EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN. "Hallowed" means "kept holy" (a churchyard is sometimes called "the hallowed acre"; All Saints' Day, "All Hallows").

You can imagine how God's name is hallowed in heaven (*Isaiah* 6, 1 to 3). The chief purpose of every Christian's life is the glory of God (1 *Corinthians* 10, 31); so our Lord, who in his human life here knew and carried this out absolutely perfectly (*St. John* 17, 4), tells us that this is to come first in our prayers.

You hallow God's name by your reverence in worship (like Henpecked Harry entering church—if you don't know what "henpecked" means ask your father, preferably when your mother is somewhere else; but I expect that you do know). "Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven," you sing at Mass; your praise and honour of God's holy name can then be very near to theirs, for at the altar Haggerston (and anywhere else) and heaven are exceedingly close to each other (though I don't think they are ever far apart).

You hallow God's name by being always most careful how you use it (26).

Best of all, you hallow God's name by the whole of your life; for others may see in you what a glorious and happy thing is Christianity, and so become Christians themselves. Have a special look at *St. Matthew* 5, 16; and let your first prayer always be "May God's name be kept as holy by me, a person of earth, as it is by the saints and angels in heaven."

88



89

THY KINGDOM COME IN EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

God's kingdom is The One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church (39); militant on earth (41), triumphant in heaven (43); but one and the same kingdom, though imperfect here as perfect there (*Ephesians* 4, 13) [as a saint in heaven is the same man as he was when he was imperfect here, though now he is perfected—"made perfect by God"]. "Thy" (singular), because there is only one God (22), and he is the only king of all things (*Revelation* 19, 16).

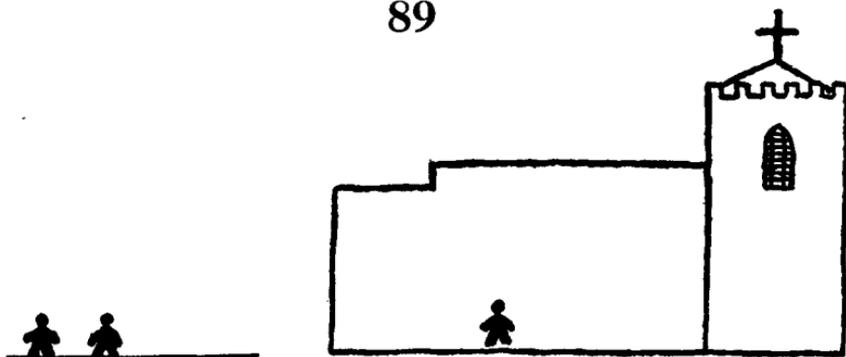
You begin the pattern-prayer by thinking of God's name. You go on to pray for the growth in this world of his kingdom. About one person in every three in the world is, at least in name, a Christian:¹ you pray that there may be three out of every three, a hundred per cent. How many in your family go to church? When you say these words, you pray that they may all go.

Because you have been baptised, your heart is a part of God's kingdom (*St. Luke* 17, 21). There are others who want to reign over that heart. But at your baptism you promised, through your godparents, to have nothing to do with them; in your confirmation you took this promise upon yourself. Every time you are tempted to sin, and don't give way to the temptation, you are enthroning God, your true king, in your heart. That is by far the best way of spreading his kingdom, and bringing other people into it. (I had prepared a soldier for confirmation. Just before his first confession I said, "Are you sure you understand how to make it, Bill?" He answered, "Yes, thank you, father. I wasn't clear about one or two points; but Iris put me right." Iris was his daughter aged eleven.)

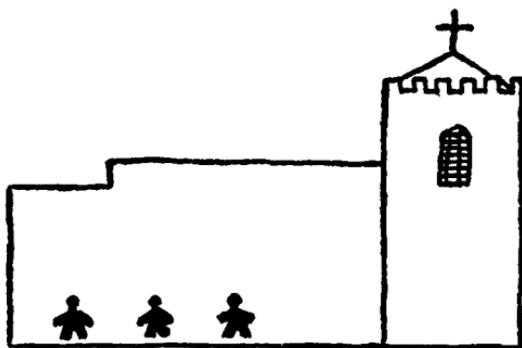
Your second petition is, "May everybody be a Christian; and may I help this to happen, by being a good Christian myself."

¹ According to Haydn's Dictionary of Dates (1906) the percentages of the leading religions of the world's population are:—Jews, .7; Christians, 34.6; Mahometans, 11.4; Brahmins, 13.8; Buddhists, 7.8; Confucians, 19.4; other religions, 12.3.

89



NOT THIS



BUT THIS

IS WHAT I PRAY FOR
WHEN I SAY

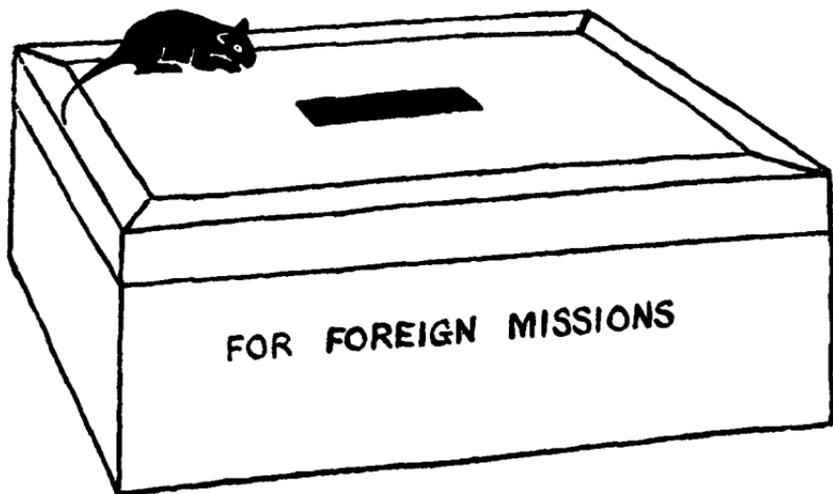
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One night in a church (not St. Augustine's) two mice met. "Hullo!" said Marmaduke; "haven't seen you for ages! How are you getting on?" "Rotten," answered Montmorency: "you know I've lived for years in the pulpit. Well, this new vicar makes such a row when he preaches, shouts and stamps and thumps to such an extent, and preaches such interminable sermons, that I can scarcely get any proper sleep. In fact my nerves are in such a state, that my doctor says that I must move at once. Can you tell me any quiet and peaceful place in which I could live?" "Yes, rather!" Marmaduke replied: "you come and live with me in the Missionary Box. I never get disturbed."

When you pray "Thy kingdom come, in earth as it is in heaven," you are also praying for The Church Abroad, The Church's Foreign Missions; that God's kingdom may spread all over the world, as our Lord said that it should (*St. Matthew* 13, 31 and 32); for the heathen who, through no fault of their own, do not yet know God; for the bishops, priests, sisters and others, who have heard God's call (*St. Matthew* 18, 19), and have gone abroad to teach them, as, long ago, our St. Augustine came to this land to teach those who then lived in it. You can also help to spread The Kingdom by giving pennies (or pounds!) for the work of Foreign Missions. Here, on one Sunday in each year all our church collections are for the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, on another Sunday for The Church in Accra (also in Africa, but on the opposite side); and many of us keep especially in our prayers Fr. F. W. J. Boatwright, a missionary-priest in Lourenço Marques, Portuguese East Africa, who once lived in Haggerston and began to learn his religion here.

EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD HELP THE CHURCH ABROAD (and make Marmaduke move too!).

90



91

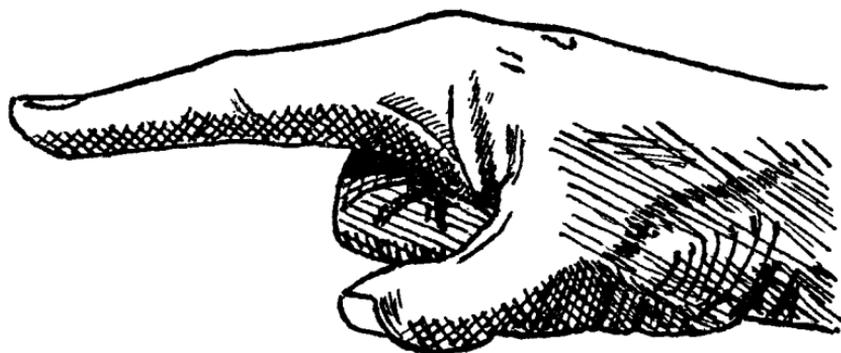
Still you think of God. You have prayed that his name may be kept holy, and that the Church may spread all over the world; now you pray "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," that his perfect plans and wishes may be carried out by you and every one else as they are by angels and saints. (Since God is perfect, his will must be perfect too: he does not make mistakes, as we do).

There are five ways—like fingers and thumb of a pointing hand—in which God makes known to you his will. Conscience (20): the commandments (48) (*St. Matthew* 19, 17): the Church's laws (*St. Luke* 10, 16): parents, priests, teachers, etc. (*Romans* 13, 1), so long as they do not tell you to sin; and ordinary everyday things of life. Quite often, sometimes when you are not expecting it, it is by this fifth means that God points the way: I have known grown-up people brought back to confession and communion by our Haggerston Bethlehem Play; and there was a small boy asleep in bed, when God talked to him (1 *Samuel* 13). When I was fifteen, my father came to see me at my public school in Sussex; after he had watched me play football, and given me a most enormous tea in the village, I walked along College Lane with him to see him off at the station. He said, "You are growing up. Have you any idea what you want to be?" I answered, "Yes, I want to be a priest." I had scarcely thought about it before: boys don't, football and enormous teas take up much of their thoughts. Of course the lovely School Chapel, and my mother's and father's prayers (for years they had prayed that their eldest child might be a priest; but they were wise parents, and I did not know this then), had helped to make up my mind for me. But it was not until that minute, under the stars and the good Sussex oak-trees, that I suddenly knew God's will for me. (And, incidentally, I have been just as sure about it ever since.)

You have free-will (2). God points the way; but drives no one along it. Your prayer now is **MAY I GO THAT WAY** (*St. John* 4, 34).

91

GOD POINTS THE WAY



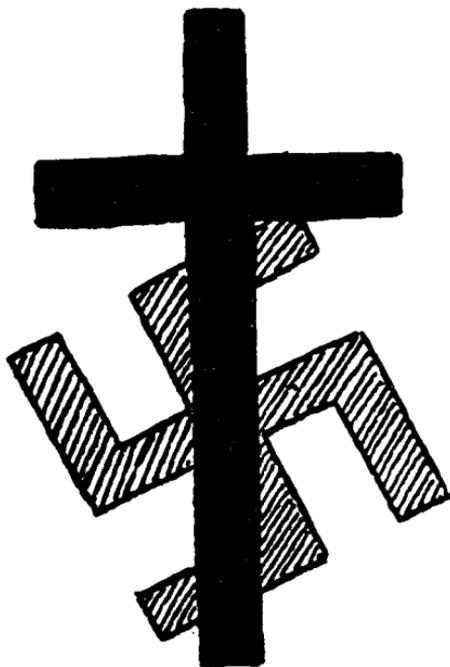
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“Thy will be done,” you pray in our Lord’s own words (*St. Matthew* 26, 42), “by me, at present a person of earth, as it is done by those with whom I hope to be in heaven.” But, more often than not, this is far from easy; as I have no doubt you have already discovered. There are things forbidden to a Christian, which he wants to do; a Christian has duties to perform which often he does not at all want to do. To everybody comes illness, sorrow, failure, disappointment, the death of loved ones (*Job* 5, 7); but a Christian tries to look at them as, for some reason perhaps not yet known, God’s will. In all things—at work or at play, in sickness or sorrow as well as on the happy days when everything goes right, in church and out of it—a Christian tries to be as, in his heart, he knows God wills him to be. From the first our Lord warned us all that this is difficult (*St. Matthew* 7, 13 and 14); and two things in particular do not make it easier, our free power to choose, and the way our friends (often those at home we love dearly) sometimes hinder and laugh at us.

It is, in fact, the choice between two crosses, the swastika and the cross of Christ; and YOU CAN’T HAVE BOTH. The swastika, Germany’s present symbol (sign), was originally the sign of sun-worshippers: the word means “well-being, comfort, ease,” lazing along through life, doing what you wish when you wish, caring nothing for any body else so long as you are comfortable and warm: it is the sign of selfishness. The cross of Christ, the symbol of Christians, stands for the exact opposites: it means a life of discipline, obedience, self-control, self-sacrifice; of trying to do what God wants, what ever anyone says, and whatever you want; a hard life (*St. Matthew* 10, 34 and 38). In this petition, you pray that you may choose the true cross.

But don’t think that the Christian life is unhappy. It isn’t. I will tell you about that next week.

92



WHICH ?

93

No. Trying to do God's will does not make a person unhappy. Quite the opposite.

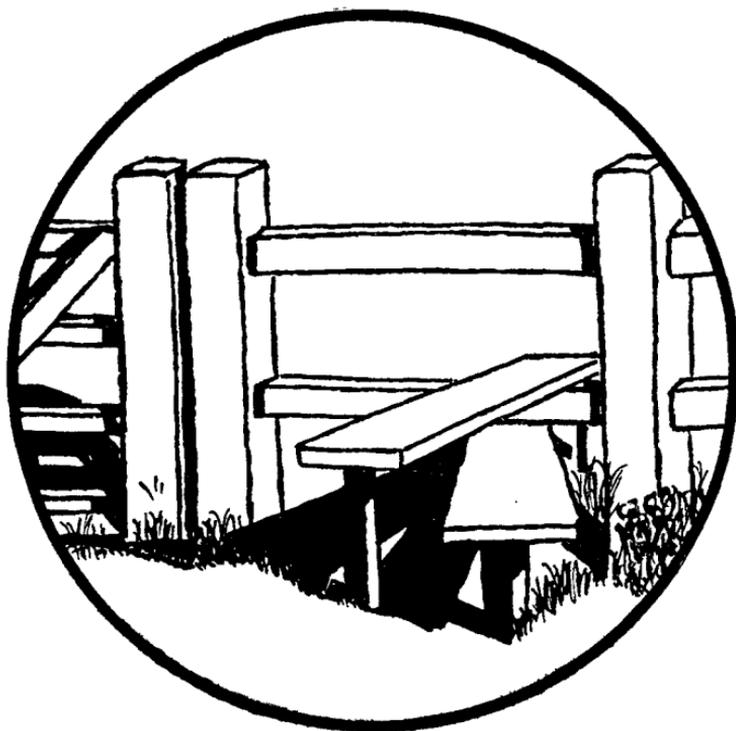
God has a plan for your life, a vocation (Latin, "calling"); he is Love (1 *St. John* 4, 8); he does not want any one to be unhappy. In time you will discover what is his plan for you. It may be to marry so-and-so, and have children; or to be unmarried. It may be to be a priest, doctor, teacher, sister; or something else. Whatever it is, you do your best to find out if it is God's will for you—by your conscience, by saying your prayers and making your communion about it, by asking the advice of good people you can trust—and then do it. Everybody may think you mad, and say so: "fancy marrying so-and-so, must be potty"; "just think of teaching school-kids all your life." (Many of my friends think me a fool to be a priest in Haggerston, think I must be most unhappy). But what others think and say matters nothing at all. In your heart you will know that you are living your life as God wills you to; I believe there is no greater earthly happiness than that. (Few, if any, live harder lives than the Sisters of St. Saviour's Priory. But have you ever known an unhappy Priory Sister? I haven't).

And when you live the sort of life God planned for you, what ever it may be, it always happens that you become the kind of person to whom people go when they are in trouble. That will make you very happy. The really fortunate people are those who serve others; those who are "wanted" (provided that it isn't the coppers who "want" them), are of use, are needed; who, as the proverb says, *HELP LAME DOGS OVER STILES* (and, at least in Haggerston, it isn't difficult to find "lame dogs" with two, not four, legs). Charles Kingsley, who wrote *Westward Ho!* and *The Water Babies*, both of which I hope you have read, also wrote:

Do the work that's nearest,
Though it's dull at whiles,
Helping, when you meet them,
Lame dogs over stiles;

See in every hedgerow
Marks of angels' feet,
Epics in each pebble
Underneath our feet.

93



94

Give us this day our daily bread.

In the Lord's Prayer are seven petitions ("askings," little prayers). The first three are to do with God. Now, in the fourth, you come to human needs. "Give us this day our daily bread," you pray; "in order that we may keep God's name holy, spread his kingdom, do his will."

"Give." It is of God that you ask it. He only is the giver of all good things (*St. James* 1, 17); who gave you body and soul (1), and who alone keeps you alive in this world (*Psalms* 100, 3): though one of the rules of life is that "God helps those who help themselves" (2 *Thessalonians* 3, 10) [if a farmer wants to reap corn, he must plough and sow the seed; if your mum wants food for you, she must go to the shops to get it—and take your ration-book].

"Us" and "our." The unselfish prayer. We ask it for others, as well as for ourselves. Especially you ask it for others who depend on you: children, in time to come: parents, when they are old and tired. Darby and Joan (not their real names) lived together in Hackney Road in their old age; their children grown up, married, living elsewhere. Joan died of cancer in Bethnal Green Hospital. Not one of the four children would give their old father a home. But they were not Christians, had no right to say the Lord's Prayer, were not doing God's will (1 *Timothy* 5, 8).

"This day." Because (*S. James* 4, 13 and 14) you do not know if to-morrow will come; and it is wise not to be over-anxious or worrying (*St. Matthew* 6, 34).

I will tell you next week about "daily bread." This week you draw the cover of the ration-book of the lady who had an Identity Card (3)—I am sorry that she has made another blot, and seems a trifle uncertain about the letter S. Then you cross it out; because there is no need to "safeguard your food supply" from God. Have a look at (*St. Matthew* 6, 25 to 33); and see what our Lord says about birds, flowers, and you.

OF HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE



Your Ration Book

Issued to safeguard your food supply

HOLDER'S NAME AND REGISTERED ADDRESS

Surname...? ..ch piece ..! ..

Other Names? ..ATAH ..UZAMMAH ..

Address 18 ..Talavera Place ..

Y ..kton ..Street ..A ..ckney ..

..road ..London ..E ..



NAT. REG. NO.

ATNT

60

NO NEED FOR THIS WITH GOD

95

Give us this day our daily bread.

“Daily bread” means much more than The Standard Loaf you buy in war-time from Wazem’s in Hackney Road (I’ve drawn a proper cottage-loaf of good white bread, because the war won’t last for ever). It means all that you need for soul and body. For soul [Christian teaching; a church to worship in; grace (75) (2 *Corinthians* 12, 9); and especially Holy Communion (*St. John* 6, 58)—I will be teaching you about that soon]. For body [food, clothes, shelter, education: a doctor, when you are ill: Scouts, Guides: games—and every right thing your body needs]. But “bread” is the word used. You do not ask for luxuries, since you are a soldier of the Cross. Long ago a wise man prayed what you mean by these words, “Give me neither poverty nor riches: feed me with food convenient for me” (*Proverbs* 30, 8).

I was not very old, under twelve, when I went away from home to that school in Sussex (91). My father wrote out for me a rhyming-prayer (easy to learn) to say each morning. You may like to have it too; for “Give us this day our daily bread” is what it says.

Lord, for to-morrow and its needs,
I do not pray:
Keep me, my God, from stain of sin,
Just for to-day.

Let me both diligently work,
And duly pray:
Let me be kind in word and deed,
Just for to-day.

Let me be slow to do my will,
Prompt to obey:
Help me to mortify my flesh,¹
Just for to-day.

Let me no wrong or idle word,
Unthinking say:
Set thou a seal upon my lips,
Just for to-day.

Let me in season, Lord, be grave,
In season gay;
Let me be faithful to thy grace,
Just for to-day.

And if to-day my tide of life
Should ebb away:
Give me thy sacraments divine,
Sweet Lord to-day.

So for to-morrow and all its needs,
I do not pray:
But keep me, guide me, love me, Lord,
Just for to-day.

¹ This means saying No to your body (69).

95

DAILY BREAD



FOR SOUL AND BODY

96

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.

When you draw a picture every stroke of the pencil or pen is important; one too few or too many may spoil it. In our Lord's picture of perfect prayer every word is there for a purpose. "And" joins together the fourth and fifth petitions; human bodies need, not only food, but also washing; human souls need cleansing and forgiveness, as well as Holy Communion, etc. (95).

"Trespass" means "going where you know you ought not" [like Tom Tickletrout (24)]: in one word "Sin." Before I make these blackboard-pictures for you—which I do in the clergy-house, while Rab and Mick look on with some amusement—I draw them first in pencil, then in Black Indian Ink, in my own catechism-book; because I want to see what they look like, and be sure they are not too difficult for you. The other day I knocked the bottle over; there was a horrid black mess; my picture was spoiled. Sin is a horrid black mess on our souls: it spoils them: and **ONLY GOD CAN CLEAN IT UP.**

Later, when I am teaching you about the sacraments, I will explain Confession ("owning up our sins") and Absolution ("forgiveness, washing their stains away"). Now you—and I—must know and never forget that sin cannot come where God is (*Isaiah* 59, 2): that unforgiven sin, the black mess spreading and spoiling everything, is the chief cause of both unhappy lives and feeble prayers: that we cannot forgive ourselves.

So you are always praying, morning and night, every time you use the model-prayer:—"Give me, God, all I need for soul and body: give it to everybody else as well: and forgive each one of us our daily sins." He will. Forgiveness is God's free gift (*Romans* 6, 23), which he loves to make to all who ask for it. He will always forgive—if . . . But the "if" had better wait a week.

96



97

And forgive us . . . as we forgive them that trespass against us.

“And” is important (96). So is “as.” It is the “if” (96) [*St. Matthew* 6, 14 and 15]. God is always ready to forgive (*St. Luke* 15, 20; in our Lord’s lovely parable about forgiveness, 11 to 32). But he makes a condition; says “Yes, I will; if you will” (*St. Luke* 6, 37).

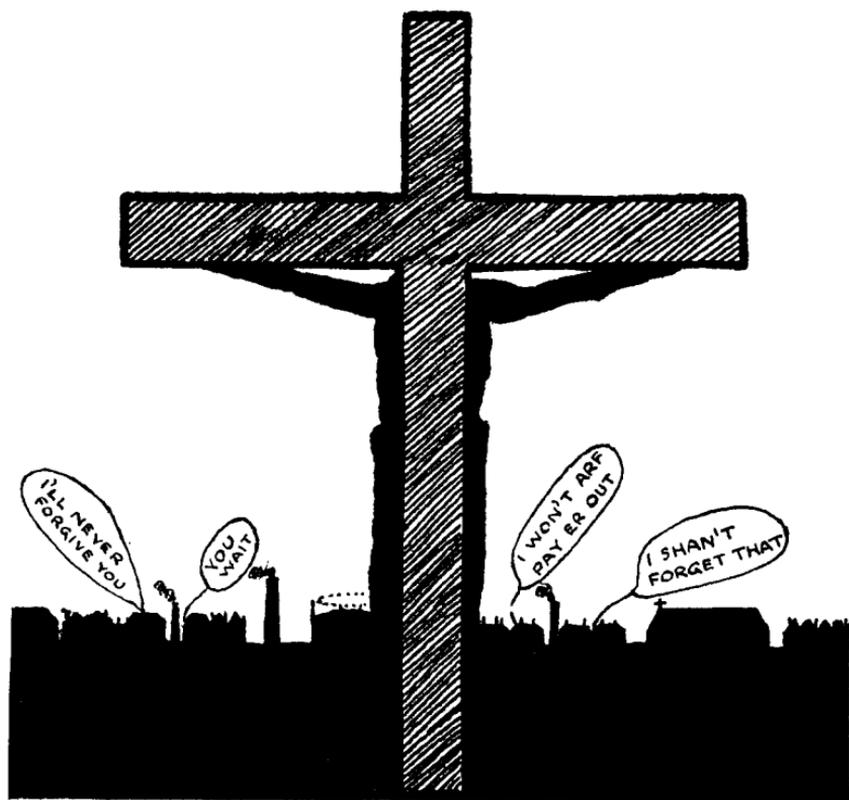
The windows of my room in the clergy-house look on to Yorkton Street. This morning it is cold and raining; they are shut. Few are in the street. The sirens have sounded; I can only hear distant gun-fire (hope it won’t come any nearer), the swish of trolley-buses, the usual screaming circular-saw in the woodyard opposite. But when it is warm and sunny, I can not help hearing what people say as they pass up and down our little street under my open windows. Sometimes “the dead-end kids,” who live next door to the woodyard, are having a row: I hear “Alright, Elbert, I’ll pay you out for that.” Sometimes women, on their way to shops in Hackney Road, stand and chat: “Well I sez to ’er, I sez, quite calm and collected-like, ’oldin’ meself in as you might say, but meanin’ every word; I sey, *Orl Right*, Misses Snatchabit, I’ll remember that; an’ I give yer my word, I’ll get even with yer; or me name ain’t Lizer.” On the cross our Lord forgave even his murderers (*St. Luke* 23, 34). It is only through that cross that we can hope for forgiveness. I often wonder what he thinks as he listens to and looks at, as of course he does, his Haggerston.

Often it is hard to forgive those who hurt us, harder to forgive those who hurt our loved ones. But it is possible, if we want to. (One good thing to do is to mention by name in your daily prayers those whom you *don’t* like; as well as those whom you do). And this is certain; that if you have hatred, malice, an unforgiving and revengeful heart, it isn’t the slightest use expecting or asking God to forgive you. Never forget the “as.” It is because men do forget it, that there are wars and air-raids (thank goodness, the “all clear” has just sounded after London’s 596th alert).¹

¹ October 26th, 1942.

97

HE WON'T



IF WE DON'T

98

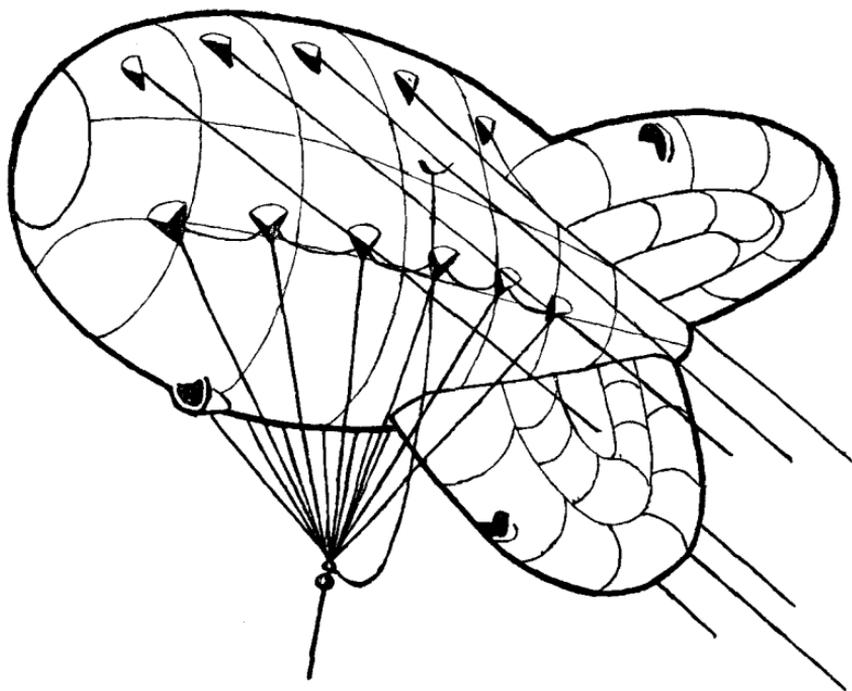
You have just asked for forgiveness for the past. But the future is always round the next corner. If you say the Lord's Prayer in the morning, a new day is beginning; if at night, to-morrow will come almost as soon as you put your head on the pillow (at least that is what always happens to me). Temptations will meet you, as they did yesterday; perhaps the same, perhaps new, perhaps old ones you thought you had conquered. So, as you pass from the fifth to the sixth petition, naturally you pray:—"And" (the word that links yesterday with the future) "LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION."

When barrage-balloons first flew over London, there was an old lady who said that she wasn't frightened, even though Germans were watching her from them day and night. But you, who have seen them go up and come down so often (do you remember the day when one broke away, and fell on houses in Haggerston?), know what they are for. They protect us from low-flying Heinkels and Messerschmitts. (When you copy this picture, don't bother—unless you like—about all the ears and nostrils and whiskers and things. I haven't the least idea what they are for; though I expect that Florrie and Lily, Waafs who used to be small girls in this Catechism, know all about them).

This is a prayer for God's protection; asking him to guard and defend us in all coming dangers to soul and body: soul, temptations to sin, to grow cold and careless about religion, to forget him altogether during the busy day: body, illness (plenty of germs and microbes about everywhere), accidents, sudden unprepared death. It is a prayer that God will hold back the devil; that he will not allow us to have too great temptations; that he will give us strength to overcome them.

Barrage-balloons are not always flying. But the protecting hand of Our Father is always over us (*Isaiah* 51, 16). Do you remember the three men in the furnace, unhurt because a fourth was with them, "and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God" (*Daniel* 3).

98



FOR OUR PROTECTION

LIKE THE PRAYER

99

And lead us not into temptation.

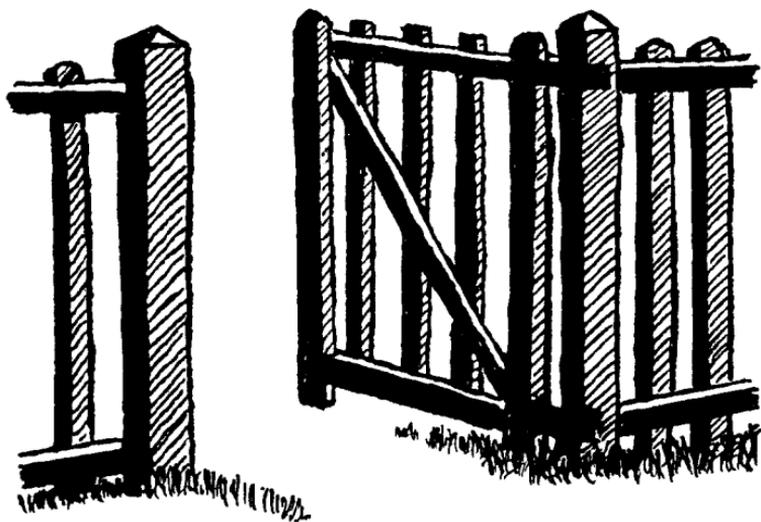
It is a good thing to know what "temptation" is. It means no more than "trial, testing." It is not sin, as I will tell you next week. (*St. James 1, 12 to 14; Genesis 22, 1*). You are doing sums in school. There is a difficult one. (You know the maddening kind of thing. If a tap drips a pint of water an hour, how long will it take to fill the emergency supply tank in Dove Row? Or, if a train travels at sixty miles an hour, an old woman is crossing the lines at one mile an hour, what is the name of the engine-driver?) You can't get it right: happen to turn your head: see the answer on Kenneth Knowall's sheet of paper. You are tempted to copy it. Conscience says No. But still you wish to. There is a fight between your conscience and your wish. That is temptation; "trial, test" of your will-power.

When the devil tempts you, it is to make you sin (*St. Luke 22, 31*). But he is not almighty, can force no one to sin. For every one has free will, can always choose between right and wrong.

But sometimes God tempts. This, of course, is not to try to make you sin; but is a "trial, testing," for your good. All fine Christian men and women have known temptation; that is what makes them fine, makes some of them now saints in heaven. Frost and snow strengthen seeds: steel is hardened in fire: St. Peter after his temptations (*St. Matthew 26, 69 to 75*) was a finer man than before. What's the use of a man on a desert island where there are no pubs, boasting that he never has "one over the eight"?

And, in every temptation you may have, never forget that THERE'S ALWAYS A WAY OUT. Of all that St. Paul wrote, I think (*1 Corinthians 10, 13*) helps me most. Do read and remember it. ("Common to man" = "everybody else is tempted too," which we often forget. "Suffer" = "allow".)

99



100

And lead us not into temptation.

But (99) TEMPTATION IS NOT SIN. Our Lord was tempted (*St. Matthew 4, 1 to 11*). St. James says (*St. James 1, 12*). There is nothing to be ashamed of in being tempted. All your life on earth you will be tempted; never will the devil let you alone; but always you will be able, if you wish, to keep your baptism-vow (10) to refuse to follow or be led by him, to say with our Lord in his temptations "Get thee hence, Satan."

I am the master of my fate;
I am the captain of my soul.¹

You need not cheat from Kenneth Knowall (99). So, "Who's afraid of the big bad wolf?"; even if he is disguised as a dragon, or—perhaps—as a human being?

But it will be a long hard fight. You may lose it if you leave off your prayers (*St. Matthew 26, 41*), or grow careless about the sacraments and churchgoing (*2 Corinthians 12, 9*). And: don't have bad friends who "lead you into temptation"; don't be idle, if you can help it (a wise old proverb says, "The devil finds mischief for idle hands to do"); when you smell a temptation to sin (as you always can in your conscience), run away from it at once—never make the great mistake of playing with fire, of thinking about the suggested sin, of saying "I will go so far, and no farther"; turn your back on it, do something different, make the sign of the cross. Best of all, in temptation pray the pattern-prayer: you will not do so in vain (*Psalms 91, 11*).

How happy you feel when you have beaten the temptation! That is a taste of heaven in Haggerston. One of the greatest of its joys will be, not only that there is no more sin, but also not even any temptation or wish to sin.

¹ W. E. Henley

100



101

But, although the past is past and you have prayed for forgiveness, and although you have the power to conquer all temptations which may in the future attack you, you are always in danger. So the last petition in the Lord's Prayer is "But deliver us from evil."

Because man misuses his free-will, there are many evils in God's fair world. Unemployment: unfair wages: bad housing (people in Haggerston living below the level of the street, and in bug-infested rooms): cruelty (in word as well as in deed, and the first often hurts most): famine (as in Europe under Germany): loveless homes. But none of these can separate us from God (*Romans* 8, 35). There is only one real and lasting evil; the only one of all the bad things in the world which can cut you and me off from God; that is sin (*St. Matthew* 16, 26) [45].

Elisha had a servant who was afraid; then the servant saw the good spirits in the world, who are always around the people of God (*2 Kings* 6, 15 to 17). But around them too, near you always while you are in this life, are mighty hosts of bad spirits (*Ephesians* 6, 11 and 12). They are very powerful, most cunning and active, extremely clever, far too strong for you or me to overcome alone (*1 St. Peter* 5, 8). Perhaps you will never see them: I hope you won't: "their eyes are turned inwards, and however grand and grave they may look, they are always hiding a small, mad smile."¹ But they are there, always, close to you, never-sleeping, ever-watching for you to be off your guard, for you to be so silly as to think they don't exist. Sometimes in Haggerston I can almost smell them, as I enter a house which feels evil (I can smell bugs, too, when I go in through a street-door; though I may not see them either).

But God and the good angels are stronger (*1 Corinthians* 10, 13; as I have said before). So your, and my, frequent prayer is "Deliver us from evil"; and at times I also say *English Hymnal* 72 (*Ancient and Modern* 91), even if it isn't Lent.

¹ G. K. Chesterton.

101



SO

"DELIVER US FROM EVIL"

102

Pictures of holy people (as those of angels in the north and south aisles, above the Stations of the Cross, in our St. Augustine's) often have round their heads golden haloes, circles of light. The large crucifix in our Holy Souls' Chapel is backed by four gilded wood carvings representing the sun's rays: one of our altar-servers, who fighting against Germany lost the use of three fingers, made them for love of his church; each carving took over forty hours to make, in his spare time after the day's work.

These are called Glories. Beautiful though they are, they are not necessary. This last part of the Lord's Prayer which you have copied from the blackboard is like them. It is good and beautiful; but it is not necessary, is often left out. Of the four evangelists ("Gospel-writers"), only St. Matthew and St. Luke give the Lord's Prayer; the former ends it with these words (*St. Matthew* 6, 13), but the latter does not give them (*St. Luke* 11, 4). You may say them, or not, as you like; as you can say a psalm with or without a Gloria at the end ("Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end").

It is not a petition, or prayer, at all. It is called The Doxology (Greek, "words of praise"); and is like what David once said (*1 Chronicles* 29, 11).

If you say it, you mean:

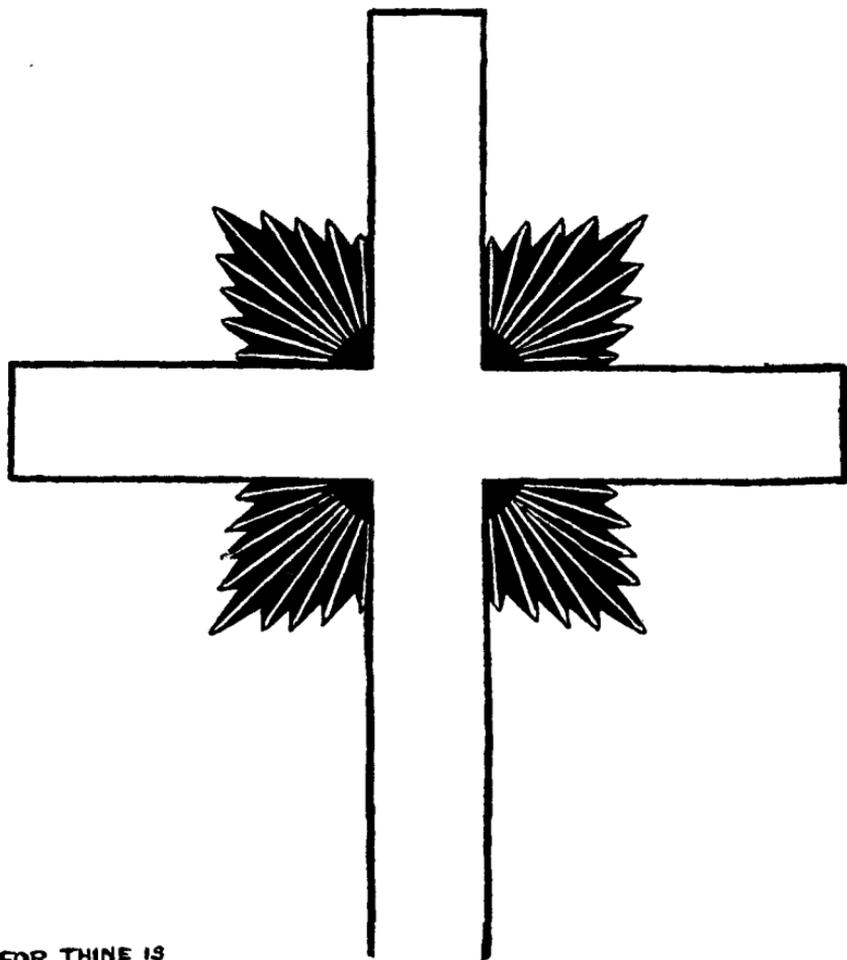
I believe that God is king over every person and thing (so I need never be frightened);

I believe that he has power to grant all that I have prayed for (so if it is not granted, it must be because he does not wish me to have it);

I believe that to him alone is due the glory of all that ever has been or ever will be (so I must never be stuck-up or proud);

and I believe that God's majesty and God's power and God's glory will never come to an end.

102



FOR THINE IS
THE KINGDOM,
THE POWER,
AND THE

GLORY,

FOR EVER
AND EVER

103

But whether you say or omit the doxology, you end the pattern-prayer as you end hymns, creeds, other prayers. You say, "Amen."

This is an old Hebrew and Greek word which has become English. It means "truly, certainly, surely." Our Lord used it (*St. John* 3, 3): in the Greek in which the saint wrote his gospel, "verily, verily" ("truly, truly") is "Amen, Amen." When, years later, the same evangelist wrote, in his old age on a prison-island, his description of heaven, he called our Lord "the Amen," that is "the truth" (*Revelation* 3, 14).

I imagine bald-headed old Percy Puddefoot had not read "The Pickwick Papers."¹ But there is no doubt that Elspeth Elphinstone (I hope you like her fringe) was delighted by his question. "Amen," she replied; "so be it: I agree" (or, as you would say, "O.K.")

Your meaning is the same as hers. "For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory; for ever and ever. I agree. THAT IS TRUE. SO BE IT. Amen."

¹ If ever you gets to up'ards o' fifty, and feels disposed to go a marryin' anybody—no matter who—jist you shut yourself up in your own room, if you've got one, and pison yourself offhand. Hangin's wulgar, so don't you have nothin' to say to that. Pison yourself, Samivel my boy, pison yourself, and you'll be glad on it arterwards.

103



104

This, then, is the pattern and mould, given to us by our Lord himself, on which all good prayers are made. It was one of the first things you learned: every Christian knows it by heart. You are frequently saying it. Get into the habit, common to Christians through the ages, of saying it now and then for a special purpose.

For example, when you are lying comfortably in bed waiting for sleep to come, you hear the drone of aero-engines and picture the planes high above you in the cold night sky. Easily you say the Lord's Prayer, especially for the R.A.F. Perhaps like this:—

Our Father: to whom all airmen, like everybody else, belong.

Which art in heaven: I wonder if, up there nearer the stars, they think of you: I hope so.

Hallowed be thy name: may they always honour you in speech, thought, deed.

Thy kingdom come: and be such brave Christians, that all their friends may be good Christians too.

Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven: may they be as honourable, true, upright gentlemen of land and air as you, God, want them to be.

Give us this day our daily bread: give them all they need for souls and bodies, especially Holy Communion.

Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us: pardon them any wrong which they may have done, against you or their fellow-men; and may they be as forgiving as you.

Lead us not into temptation: protect them in all dangers to-night and at any time.

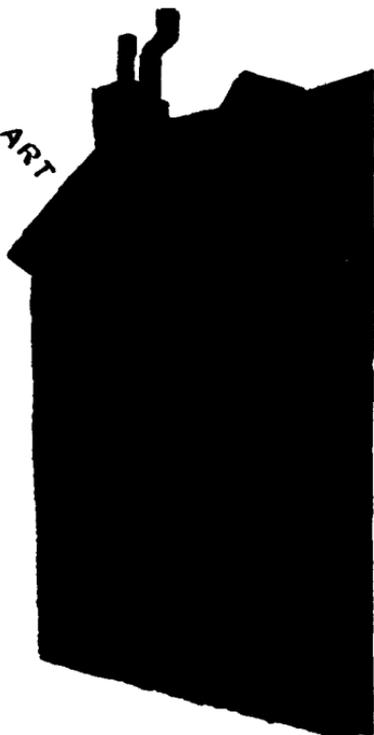
Deliver us from evil: and when they die, keep them safe from the devil, grant them rest and happiness.

Amen: this is my true and earnest prayer, because I think the R.A.F. is fine. (Can't keep awake any longer!) [*Snores.*]

104



OUR FATHER, WHICH ART



105

Or to continue what I said last week, you go to see Aunt Matilda ill in hospital with the Eukisupus, or something equally unpleasant. As you return along Vallance Road, under that long dark railway-bridge, you say in your heart:—

Our Father: who loves all, and so must be sorry for people who are ill (especially if it isn't their fault).

Which art in heaven: where there are no more aches and pains, and nobody ever cries.

Hallowed be thy name: may all in the white beds in the long wards know that you love them, and so love and bless you even in their illness.

Thy kingdom come: may the Christians there, like Aunt Matilda, be so brave and patient that others in their wards may wish to be Christians too.

Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven: bless the doctors, surgeons, sisters, nurses; like the holy angels in their lives spent in serving others.

Give us this day our daily bread: may the hospital have all the money it needs to go on with its fine work.

Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us: forgive everybody in that ward in which I have been any harm they may have done, and may they be forgiving too.

Lead us not into temptation: guard them from all danger, and let them not sin at least in hospital.

But deliver us from evil: if, and when, Aunt Matilda dies, keep her still safe, and let her reach heaven soon.

Amen. So be all that I have prayed for, even if I haven't prayed it very well; because I love Aunt Matilda, and I think the London Hospital is grand.

After the Lord's Prayer in the Prayer-Book Catechism comes The Desire ("What desirest thou of God in this prayer?"). In these instructions on that prayer I have tried to include all that it says. So we will now begin to learn about the sacraments.

105

