

THRU' my kitchen WINDOW

by Irene Arden

We do not simply doubt; we doubt because. David began to envy others and pity himself. He questioned God's justice and infinite wisdom. This course leads ultimately to disbelief in the very God of Holy Scriptures.

The doubt which led to Eve's disobedience followed another course. Each of us has experienced the dilemma which she faced when God's revealed will cut across desire for personal gratification. Like Eve, we find it easy to re-create a god to our own liking. We yield so willingly to the suggestion, "Ye shall not surely die." God is too good to damn anyone. In the words of the popular song, "Though it grieves His heart to see the way we live, He'll understand and say, 'I forgive'." A great Creator, an all-wise and powerful One, an indulgent Father and a Johnny-on-the-spot all rolled into one—how nice a God!

We would like to think that all our problems with doubt stem from our reason—the irrational element in God that does not conform to our understanding. In truth, our problem is more often with our will—there is a selfish unwillingness to submit to the moral responsibility which belief in God implies. Experiencing stubborn resistance to the revelation of God in Christ and Holy Scripture, we either say with the fool, "There is no God," or we create a God with whom we can live comfortably.

We need to watch our doubts. Why are we doubting? Could it be that we do not want to believe?

The Pattern Prayer

(Matt. 6: 9-13)

by Rev. M. W. Bagley

Although this pattern prayer which Jesus has taught us is comparatively brief yet it is wonderfully comprehensive.

There are seven major aspects of this prayer which we wish to bring to your attention.

First we observe the proper term to use when we address and approach God. "Our Father which Art in Heaven."

Second there is the voicing of praise and the acknowledgment of His Holiness. "Hallowed be thy name."

Thirdly there is the recognition of his sovereignty and also a submission to his perfect will. "Thy Kingdom Come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven."

Fourth there is a request for the supplying of the immediate needs. "Give us this day our daily bread."

Fifth there is the penitents petition and his promise to practice Christian principles. "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

Sixth there is a request for guidance and deliverance

from evil. "Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil."

The seventh aspect of the prayer turns again to praise and acknowledgment of the power and ability to meet the needs of man, both physical and spiritual. We must attribute the eloquence and sublimity of this prayer to its simplicity. There is the avenue of approach to God. "Our father which art in Heaven." Though a simple statement yet included in it are the recognition of his omnipresence, His majesty and dominion of his creatures, His power and might. His omniscience and his purity and Holiness. The statement which recognizes all these attributes of God also acknowledges an intimate relationship of the person praying to God. A relationship of child to parent. It is to such an intimate relationship with God that prayer brings us.

God is praised by the lips of men also by the living of righteous lives. Here by lips the name of God is exalted and praised. There is nothing to me which will inspire faith such as voicing praise to God for his goodness to us as the children of men.

Now that our faith is inspired it is well to be reminded of his sovereignty and to submit to his will. God cannot tolerate sin and consequently we see the necessity of submitting ourselves to his pattern of righteous and holy conduct. Praying is indeed a practical experience. We certainly desire God's will to be accomplished in our living. Then this prayer suggests that we will seek to fulfil his will on earth as it is in Heaven. One famous celebrity in the United States who conducts a question-answer column in a national magazine was asked what things we could ask God's help for when we pray. Apparently from the answer given, the writer was not familiar with this pattern prayer, for the answer given was that God is not interested in our daily personal needs. Nevertheless Jesus taught us to present our daily personal needs to him when he said "give us this day our daily bread." Moreover the Bible reminds us that we have no promise of the morrow; thus we see that the proper needs to present to him when we pray are our present personal problems. He is interested in your needs. He desires to aid you in that which is right and good.

In this prayer Jesus speaks of sin as debts. He teaches us to pray for forgiveness. Not only does he teach us to ask for forgiveness but he has paved the way for us to be forgiven of our sins by God. There is no virtue in natural sinful man whereby he could pay the debt of his sin. But through the merit of the death of Jesus Christ man can be forgiven of his sin. No wonder the hymn writer said "Jesus paid it all, All to him I owe." But again the prayer brings us to the place of meeting God's condition. To be forgiven of God we must be willing to forgive those who may have wronged us.

Now that we have sought and found forgiveness it is in order to ask for direction and guidance. "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Oh that the professed followers of Christ would allow him to fulfil this in their life! One of the reasons why some who call themselves Christians find no joy in their salvation is that they still try to look, act and talk like the world. Christian conduct is on a higher plane. It is a life which is delivered from sinful practice.

The closing strains of the prayer are what I like to call faith clinchers. When we think of the grandeur of God's Kingdom, His omnipotence and glorious splendor, it builds up our faith. This is essential if the prayer is to produce; for as a saint of an earlier generation said "Faith alone attracts and receives the energetic influence of God at all times."

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