

## HALLOWED BE THY NAME . . .

BY R. H. J. STEUART, S.J.

**H**ALLOWED be thy name. Hallowed—a Saxon word meaning ‘Blessed, honourable, held holy’. May thy name then be blessed: may it be held holy: may it be adored. Our prayer should not be all prayer of petition, all self-regarding; we should have some prayer of adoration, prayer just about God. The book of the Apocalypse gives us a description of this kind of prayer where it says, ‘And there was silence in heaven for about the space of half-an-hour’. Is there enough of this prayer in my life? This is the one thing necessary.

‘Be still and know that I am God.’

God commends Mary because she had chosen the better part—silent adoration at her Master’s feet, with her mind full of him. We must realise that the prayer which brings us closest to God is that in which we forget, for the time being, all except God. I should season my prayer every now and again with this; the best form of prayer, just silent adoration; hallowing his holy name, his holiness.

‘Adoro te devote, latens deitas.’

We know God most when we know it least. I want God not for something that *I* want, but for something that he wants, i.e. for himself. I want to aim at so adoring him; to ask nothing for self, but just to know that I am adoring him. God is supremely adorable; God is supremely to be admired, appreciated.

It is so simple to say, ‘Hallowed be thy name’. Repeat it often. Thus therefore shalt thou pray—thus think of God; just simple adoration. Try it. Think, then stop for a moment. Hold yourself in adoration before God. Say: ‘I know that God is my God’, and then stay adoring him.

So I pray that God’s will should be done; and his will is that his name should be hallowed.  
triumphant.

‘Thy kingdom come’—that the law of God should be

I am to pray for this?—but it is here already, whether I pray for it or not. God is *the* autocrat, *the* absolute monarch,

our King. God is in every sense absolute, so absolute that we have no words with which to express it. 'Thy will be done'—it is done; and yet I am to ask that it may be done. 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done': nothing in the Our Father so accentuates God's attitude towards us, and ours to him. We pray that he may be recognised as King by us and by all men; we pray that his kingdom may be established, that he should triumph, that he should reign.

Our Lord wants me in this petition to state my desire for the extension of his kingdom; thus I pray that God will make me more and more his real subject. It means that I want God's will to be done more and more; I want this over and above everything else, no matter what it costs. To live the Christian scheme of life the attitude needed demands heroism. We must keep the ideal before us and work steadily to it; the ideal is that God may reign in your heart. 'Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is fit for the kingdom of heaven.'

'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' What is his will? There is no sign, no indication. When I say I want God's will to be done, I mean I want to know for myself what God's will is for me. Silence! Utter silence! And yet I have to ask for the grace always to do God's will. What is his will?

Is there anything in Christ's life that will enlighten us? When God became man, what sort of man did he become? Had we been asked beforehand what sort of man he would be, we should have made some magnificent sort of concoction. But God does the infinitely perfect thing: and what did he do? He became an ordinary average man. There is nothing in the Gospels to say that the Holy Family were very poor. I think the whole point is lost if we try to represent Nazareth in that way. Jesus could not be everything. He belonged to one particular class, an artisan. God became man and remained so for thirty years, making no sort of mark or trace on human history. He was God upon earth, living as a man, really man but really God, for thirty years, and no one did anything about it, nothing happened. True God of true God, for thirty years! At the end of thirty years,

God the Father spoke from heaven at the baptism by John the Baptist and said, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased'.

What was he pleased with? What had God the Son done to satisfy God in this life of his, which was just like everybody else's life? Well, what did our Lord say? 'My meat—that by which I live—is to do the will of him who sent me.' And again, 'I do always the things that please him'. It means that nothing in itself is of any value, but all the value of anything and everything is that degree of our will to do his will that it contains. My accomplishments may be distinguished or not; it doesn't matter, if only I mean to do God's will.

Christ has shown us that he did the ordinary things of life and did them in that light. There was not a thing that Christ did that did not collate with God's will, and he was truly man as he was truly God, and therefore it was a real man who was doing it. He was our model.

So here we are, in the Lord's Prayer, instructed, advised, induced by Christ to aim at and ask from God one thing, namely, devotion to his will, even now in this life, as perfect as it will be in heaven. How am I going to do that? It is so easy to talk! Is there a catch somewhere? It seems to me that that is the real significance of 'Thy will be done'—that God should give us grace to want to do his will. If an angel asked you if you wanted God's will to be done, you would say, 'Of course I do!' But do you want it as an artist wants success in his art? Is it a sort of passion with you? That is what our Lord puts before us, to put it above all things. How are we going to arrive at that?

Supposing you want something—say a watch; you have plenty of money and you ask how much it is, but you find it is twice as much as you intended to pay. You don't want it all that much. You go to a certain length in pursuit of some object, but no further because you don't want it as much as that. Now, what we pray is that God will give us such a desire to do his will that we will submit to anything for it. 'As it is in heaven.' We ought to ask of God as the first thing, before all things, that he would give us grace, that he will inspire us to want what he wants just because he

wants it and for no other reason. The difficulty is that we have all sorts of wants and desires, all good ones, maybe, none of them opposed to God. 'Holy' comes from the same root as 'whole-ly'. A holy person is a complete person, and that is what a saint is, one who is 'wholly' given to God. Not that everybody is bound to reach heroic sanctity; but everyone is equipped to be a saint. There is all the apparatus ready.

*Behind will is love.* Will is the extent of love. I want to go for a walk because I love going for a walk; I want to read or play because I love it. Therefore this adherence of my will to God's will is simply another way of putting my love of God. I shall never bring myself to an overmastering desire that God's will should be done by meditating about his omnipotence, power, authority; I can't attain it that way. Will is a function of love, as sight is to the eye, and therefore we must begin by *loving* God. Our Lord gives us the first and greatest commandment: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, mind, soul and strength'—with the whole of yourself. That is why you are made as you are made, with all the faculties you have. The end of them all is that you may love God.

So St Paul on charity—*caritas*—love of God. 'Though I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy, and should know all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.' I'm making a noise, a blare, a jangle, but that is all, just like someone banging a tin can about. There we are brought up standing with the downright declaration of St Paul, that no matter what you do, nothing is any use to God unless it is the expression of our love of him. We have got to face that fact, there is no getting away from it. So far from being exceptional, it is the first step which is going to give any meaning, value, significance to what we do.

Only through love of God are we going to reach that

desire which will overwhelm us, to the exclusion of everything else, that God's will shall be done. It is within the reach of us all. If it were not, God would not be just to us.

How is it possible for us to love God before all things? How can I honestly say I am going to? I say, 'I love God', but do I mean it? Perhaps it does not mean 'love' in the ordinary sense of the word, but just putting his interests first, and not an emotional love, giving out from the heart? Is there any escape that way? No, because when our Lord said, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart', etc., he added, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'. So it is the same love, and therefore all of us are created for it, and therefore it must be possible for us.

But how am I going to say I love God as well as I love my friends? It is not a fair question, because I mustn't bring God down to earth and compare him with creatures. What is quite certain is that the more I love God the more I love everything else. God is not another person competing for my love. We've all got to love God, and I will add that we all *can* love God, and we all *do* love God—more than we know.

*We all can.* In baptism the three theological virtues are infused into our souls: Faith, Hope, Charity. So because I am baptised I am able, at will, to make an act of love of God which in God's eyes is really an act of love, even though to me it is accompanied by no emotional reaction. St Paul said, whatever you do, however noble, is nothing, nothing, nothing, and less than nothing, if the love of God does not lie in you. And he meant the absolute necessity of the love of God.

But then I want to *know* the love of God—not merely as speculative fact. I don't believe I shall be able to live a Christian life, to keep that going, merely on the intellectual assurance that I love God. But if I keep on making acts of love—a habit of it—doesn't it seem reasonably likely that I shall grow to a real sensible love of God?

People pick up things by constant repetition; so shall we. 'I love you.' It begins to react and I begin to feel it is more than a few words and I recognise it as a thing essentially my own. I think that we all love God vastly more than we

dare to give ourselves credit for. Are you going to tell me that we submit to the discipline of our religion, that we give ourselves endless labour to do things we don't like—are you going to tell me that you do that simply because of the fear of hell? I think it would be an impossibility. Then why do you do it? If I have the love of God, the desire that his will shall be done, then all things flow from it. It must be a sort of passion.

We have the experience of the saints—the furnace of the love of God. If only I will have faith and trust and persevere in acts of love, it must turn back to myself, flow back into my soul as a warmth, reflecting God's love into my own consciousness, filling the whole of me, giving me a closer union, a sort of identification with the One loved. This act of the love of God is in the hands of everybody. It is not a sort of museum-piece as so many people think. It is in the hands of every little child. If we want to give all we can give, he will make it possible for us to do so.

### NOTICE

The first reactions to *LIFE AND WORK OF MOTHER M. ST IGNATIUS* by a Religious of Jesus and Mary (Clonmore and Reynolds; 15s.) may lead one to exclaim on the multiplicity of educational congregations founded by holy Frenchwomen of the last century. The reader may turn to the chapter that describes how attempts were made in 1834 to amalgamate the new institution formed by Mdlle Claudin Thevenet with the religious of the Sacred Heart who seemed to have already the same ideals and the same kind of life. He may at first heartily sympathise with the desire to obviate unnecessary multiplicity. Yet as he reads of the great work of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary as it gradually spread to India, Canada, the United States, England, he will begin to understand that all these congregations have their own character and together form an Order after the pattern of the Monastic Order which is comprised of separate, independent monastic institutions, formed by the same general monastic inspiration. No sensible man would insist that Downside and Ampleforth should be run by a single organisation. The Church gains by the individuality of these independent foundations, and the desire for amalgamation may sometimes be inspired by a hankering for uniformity which is only a mechanical form of unity. May these nineteenth-century French foundresses of educational establishments prosper, progress and reign in the success of their holy lives and their holy institutions.