

Input....

"IF GOD SHOULD SPEAK"

[Prepared by the Program Service of the Salvation Army, Eastern Territory, USA. 1980.]

CHRISTIAN: **"Our Father in heaven ..."**

GOD: Yes?

CHRISTIAN: Don't interrupt me. I'm praying.

GOD: But you called me.

CHRISTIAN: Called you? I didn't call you. I'm praying.

"Our Father heaven "

GOD: There ... you did it again.

CHRISTIAN: Did what?

GOD: Called me. You said, "Our Father in heaven." Here I am. What's on your mind?

CHRISTIAN: But I didn't mean anything by it. I was, you know, just saying my prayers for the day. I always say the Lord's Prayer. It makes me feel good, kind of like getting a duty done.

GOD: All right. Go on.

CHRISTIAN: **"Hallowed be your name ..."**

GOD: Hold it! What do you mean by that?

CHRISTIAN: By what?

GOD: By 'hallowed be your name'?

CHRISTIAN: It means ... it means ... good grief! I don't know what it means. How should I know? It's just a part of the prayer. (... pause...)

By the way, what does it mean?

GOD: It means honoured ... holy ... wonderful.

CHRISTIAN: Hey, that makes sense. I never thought about what 'hallowed' meant before. **"Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."**

GOD: Do you really mean that?

CHRISTIAN: Sure, why not?

GOD: What are you doing about it?

CHRISTIAN: Doing? Nothing, I guess! I just think it would be a beautiful thing if you got control of everything down here like you have up there.

GOD: Have I got control of you?

CHRISTIAN: Well ... I go to church.

GOD: That isn't what I asked you. What about your bad temper? You've really got a problem there, you know. And then there's the way you spend your money ... all on yourself. And what about the kind of books you read?

CHRISTIAN: Stop picking on me! I'm just as good as some of the rest of those people at the church.

GOD: Excuse me. I thought you were praying for my will to be done. If that is to happen, it will have to start with the ones who are praying for it ... like you, for example.

CHRISTIAN: Oh, all right. I guess I do have some hang-ups. Now that you mention it, I could probably name some others.

GOD: So could I.

CHRISTIAN: I haven't thought about it very much until now, but I really would like to cut out some of those things. I would like to ... you know ... be really free.

GOD: Good ... now we're getting somewhere! We'll work together, you and I. Some victories can truly be won. I'm proud of you.

CHRISTIAN: Look, Lord, I need to finish up here. This is taking a lot longer than it usually does. **"Give us today, our daily bread."**

GOD: You need to cut out the bread. You're overweight as it is.

CHRISTIAN: Hey, wait a minute! What is this ... 'Criticize Me Day?' Here I was doing my religious duty, and all of a sudden you break in and remind me of all my hang-ups.

GOD: Praying is a dangerous thing. You could wind up changed, you know. That's what I'm trying to get across to you. You called me, and here I am. It's too late to stop now. Keep praying. I'm interested in the next part of your prayer ... (pause). Well ... go on!"

CHRISTIAN: I'm scared to.

GOD: Scared? Of what?

CHRISTIAN: I know what You'll say.

GOD: Try me and see.

CHRISTIAN: **"Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us."**

GOD: What about Ann?

CHRISTIAN: See? I knew it! I knew you would bring her up! Why Lord, she's told lies about me, spread stories about my family. She never paid back the debt she owes me. I've sworn to get even with her!

GOD: But your prayer? What about your prayer?

CHRISTIAN: I didn't mean it.

GOD: Well, at least you're honest. But it's not much fun carrying that load of bitterness around inside, is it?

CHRISTIAN: No, but I'll feel better as soon as I get even. Boy, have I got some plans for that Ann. She'll wish she never did me any harm!

GOD: You won't feel any better. You'll feel worse. Revenge isn't sweet.

Think of how unhappy you already are. But I can change all that.

CHRISTIAN: You can? How?

GOD: Forgive Ann. Then I'll forgive you. Then the hate and sin will be Ann's problem and not yours. You may lose the money but you will have settled your heart.

CHRISTIAN: Oh, you're right. You always are. And more than I want revenge, I want to be right with you. (pause) ... (sigh). Alright! Alright! I forgive her! Help her to find the right road in life, Lord. She's bound to be awfully miserable now that I think about it. Anybody who goes around doing the things she does to others has to be out of it. Someway, somehow, show her the right way."

GOD: There now! Wonderful! How do you feel?

CHRISTIAN: Hmm ... well, not bad. Not bad at all. In fact, I feel pretty great! You know, I don't think I'll have to go to bed uptight tonight for the first time since I can remember. Maybe I won't be so tired from now on because I'm not getting enough rest.

GOD: You're not through with your prayer. Go on.

CHRISTIAN: Oh, all right. **"Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil."**

GOD: Good! Good! I'll do that. Just don't put yourself in a place where you can be tempted.

CHRISTIAN: What do you mean by that?

GOD: Quit hanging around with that one group which is always getting into trouble. Change some of your friendships. Some of your so-called friends are beginning to get to you. They'll have you completely involved in wrong things before long. Don't be fooled. They advertise they're having fun, but for you, it would be ruin. Don't use Me for an escape hatch.

CHRISTIAN: I don't understand the last part.

GOD: Sure you do. You've done it a lot of times. You get caught in a bad situation. You get into trouble and then you come running to me. 'Lord, help me out of this mess, and I promise you I'll never do it again.' You remember some of those bargains you tried to make with me?

CHRISTIAN: Yes and I'm ashamed, Lord. I really am.

GOD: Which bargain are you remembering?

CHRISTIAN: Well, the time I almost got caught for cheating on a test. I remember telling you, "Oh, Lord, don't let her tell the teacher. If she doesn't, I promise I'll be in church every Sunday and do anything You want me to do."

GOD: Go ahead and finish your prayer.

CHRISTIAN: **"For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. AMEN."**

GOD: Do you know what would bring me glory? What would really make me happy?

CHRISTIAN: No, but I'd like to know. I now want to please you. I can see what a mess I've made of my life. And I can see how great it would be to really be one of your followers.

GOD: You just answered the question.

CHRISTIAN: I did?

GOD: Yes. The thing that would bring me glory is to have people like you truly love and obey me. And I see that happening between us. Now that some of these old sins are exposed and out of the way, well, there is no telling what we can do together.

CHRISTIAN: Lord, let's see what we can make of me, okay?

GOD: Yes, let's see.