

GODLY MEDITATIONS
UPON THE
LORD'S PRAYER



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Godly Meditations upon the Lord's Prayer

by John Bradford

POST TENEBRAS LUX

AFTER DARKNESS, LIGHT.

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**Instructions to be Observed Concerning
Prayer.**

There are nine things that pertain to the knowledge of true prayer. First, to know what prayer is. Secondly, how many sorts of prayer there are. Thirdly, the necessity of prayer. Fourthly, to whom we ought to pray. By whom we must pray. Where to pray, and what to pray. The excellency of prayer. What we must do that our prayers may be heard.

What prayer is.

Prayer is a simple, unfeigned, humble, and ardent opening of the heart before God, wherein we either ask for things needful, or give thanks for benefits received. Paul, in the first to Timothy, 2nd chapter, calls it by four sundry names in one sentence, to wit, prayer, supplication, intercession, and thanksgiving. In Latin, Deprecatio, Obsecratio, Intercessio, et Gratiarum Actio. Whereof the first is for the avoiding and preventing of evil, the second is an earnest and fervent calling upon God for anything, the third is an intercession for others, the fourth is a praising of God for things received.

There are two ways how we should pray.

First, publicly, and that is called common prayer: and privately, as when men pray alone, and that is called private prayer: and how both these two are allowed before God, the scripture bears testimony by the example of all the holy men and women before and after Christ.

Of the necessity of prayer.

There are four things that provoke us to pray: first, the commandment of God; secondly, sin in us, which drives us of necessity to God for succour, life, and mercy; thirdly, our weak nature, being unable to do any good, requires prayer to strengthen it, even as a house requires principal pillars for the upholding of it; fourthly, the subtlety of the enemy (who privily lurks in the inward

parts, waiting to overthrow us even in those things which we think to be best done) stirs us vehemently thereunto.

To whom we ought to pray.

Three things pertain to him that must be prayed unto: first, that he has such ears as may hear all the world at once; secondly, that he be in all places at once; thirdly, that he has such power that he may be able to help, and such mercy that he will deliver.

By whom we should pray.

Christ only is the way by whom we have free access unto the Father, and for whom our prayers are accepted (our infirmities notwithstanding), without whom all our prayers are abominable.

Where to pray and what to pray.

As touching the place where we should pray, seeing all places are one, there is none forbidden: only the common prayer must be made in whatever place the congregation of Christ assembles.

What to pray lies in the necessity of every man: and for as much as we need both spiritual and corporal things, we may boldly ask them both. For as to ask for spiritual gifts is profitable and commanded, so to ask for corporal, it is necessary and allowed.

Of the excellency of prayer.

The worthiness of prayer consists in two things: in the dignity of the commander who is God, the fountain of all goodness, who also commands only good things, and in the effect that follows it, which is the obtaining of whatsoever we desire faithfully, according to the will of God.

What to do that we may be heard.

First, we must put off our own righteousness, pride, and estimation

of ourselves, and put on Christ with his righteousness: secondly, an earnest faith and fervent love, with the putting off of all rancour, malice, and envy, is required: finally, true repentance knits up the knot, for in it are contained all the virtues afore-named.

I. Bradford.

A Meditation on the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father.

Thou good Lord, which madest heaven and earth, the sea and all that is therein, together with thy dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, and with thy Holy Spirit: Thou the same God, which opened thyself to Adam by thy promise: Thou the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: Thou which brought thy people of Israel forth of Egypt with a mighty hand and a stretched out power: Thou which gavest thy law upon Mount Sinai: Thou which spakest by thy prophets, and last of all in these latter days by thy dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, whom ye wouldest should be made a second Adam, that as by the first we are children of wrath, carnal and full of concupiscence, so by him we might be made children of grace and spiritual, by communicating with him the quality, merits, virtues, and grace of his flesh, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, as he communicated with us the substance of our flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary, by the operation of the same Holy Spirit, being that blessed seed which was promised to Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, which should bruise the Serpent's head, which should bring the blessing on all

nations, which should reign over thy house forever, and mightily overcome thine and our enemies, as indeed he did by his incarnation, nativity, circumcision, exile, baptism, fasting, temptation, doctrine, deeds, miracles, workings, agonies, bloody prayer, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension, and yet he still doth by his mediation and intercession for us, and at the length he will on all parts fully accomplish by his coming to judgment, which will be suddenly in the twinkling of an eye, in the blast of a trumpet and shout of an Archangel, when he shall be seen with thousands of saints and innumerable thousands of angels, all the whole world being on fire, and all people that ever were, are, or shall be then standing before his tribunal or judgment seat to render an account of what they have done in this body, be it good or bad: Thou, I say, this God which art holy, righteous, true, wise, pure, chaste, mighty, merciful, good, gracious, a hater of sin, an avenger of unrighteousness, etc., wouldest that I, which am born in sin and conceived in iniquity, which by nature am a child of wrath (for my heart is so unsearchably evil that out of it springeth corrupt concupiscence, so that the inclination thereof is prone to evil always even from my youth up: as is my understanding and mind so darkened, that I cannot perceive those things that be of God of myself, and all the wisdom which I receive from Adam naturally or otherwise attain by labour or study before regeneration: I cannot think a good thought, much less wish it or consent unto it and least of all do it), thou I say yet wouldest that I, being such a one, in whom dwelleth continual enmity against thee, that I which am nothing but sin and one that doeth evil always before thee, should call thee and believe thee this God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to be in very deed my Father. That is, thou wouldest I should be most assured that thou of thine own good will, which thou barest to me-wards before I was, yea, before the world was, hast in Christ chosen me to be thy child, and through him art become my most loving Father, from whom I should look for all

good things, and be most certainly persuaded, that look how much thou art more than man, so much thy love and fatherly providence towards me passeth the love and providence of any father towards his child, in loving me, caring how to help me, providing for me, nurturing me, and helping me in all my needs.

So certain ye wouldest have me to be of this, that to doubt of it, doth most displease thee and dishonour thee, as either thou were not true, or not able to do these things, or else becamest not my father in respect of thine own goodness in Christ only, but also in respect of my worthiness and deserts. And that I should not waver or doubt of this that thou art my dear Father and I thy child forever through Jesus Christ, it is required in the first commandment, which saith I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have none other gods but me: again, thy Son doth here command me to call thee by the name of Father: moreover in the first article of my belief I profess the same in saying, I believe in God the Father Almighty: besides this there are many other things to confirm me herein, as the creation and government of the world generally, and of every creature particularly, for all is made and kept for man and so for me, to serve me for my commodity, necessity and admonition. Again, the creation of me, in that thou hast made me after thy image, having a reasonable soul, body, shape, etc., where thou mightest have made me a toad, a serpent, a swine, deformed, frantic, etc. Moreover, thy wonderful conservation, nourishing, and keeping of me hitherto in my infancy, childhood, youth, etc. All these I say, should confirm my faith of thy fatherly love. But of all things the opening of thyself by thy word and promise of grace, made after man's fall, first to Adam, then to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and so to others, being published by the prophets from time to time, and last of all accomplished by thy dear Son Jesus Christ, in whom thy promises are yea and Amen: The opening of thyself thus, I say, in and by Christ, is the most chief and sure

certificate, that thou art my Father for his sake, and I thy dear child, although of myself I am most unworthy. For thou, according to thy promises, hast not spared thy dear Son Jesus Christ, but given him to the death of the cross for my sins. Thou wouldest he should be made flesh of our flesh, and blood of our blood in the womb of the Virgin Mary, by the operation of the Holy Spirit that we, by the working of the same Spirit, through the merits of his flesh and blood, might be made flesh of his flesh and blood of his blood, that is, as he hath the substance of our flesh and blood, even so we might have and forever enjoy in him and through him, the qualities, virtues and gifts of righteousness, holiness, innocence, immortality, and glory, wherewith he hath endued our nature in his own person for us all; that as now in faith and hope we have the same, so in his coming we might fully enjoy them in very deed, for then shall our bodies now vile, be like to his glorious body. Herein appeareth thy love, not that we loved thee but that ye loved us, and hast given thy Son for us: herein doest thou commend unto us thy love, that when we were yet sinners, Christ thy dear Son died for us, so that nothing should separate us from thy love in Christ Jesus, neither death nor hunger etc. For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled unto thee by the death of thy Son, much more we being reconciled shall be saved by his life. And that I should not doubt hereof, but certainly be persuaded all this to pertain to me, where I might have been born of Turks, lo thou wouldest I should be born of Christian parents, brought into thy church by baptism, which is the Sacrament of Adoption, and requireth faith as well of remission of my sins, as of sanctification and holiness, to be wrought of thee in me by thy grace and Holy Spirit. Where I might have been born in an ignorant time and region, thou wouldest I should be born in this time and region, wherein is more knowledge revealed, than ever was here or in many places is. Where I might have been of a corrupt judgment, and entangled with many errors, lo thou of thy goodness, as thou hast

reformed my judgment, so doest thou keep it, and now for the same judgment's sake doest vouchsafe somewhat by the cross to try me. By all which things I should confirm my faith of this, that thou always hast been, art and wilt be forever my dear Father: in respect whereof I should be as certain of salvation and of the inheritance of heaven forever: be thankful, cast my whole care on thee, trust in thee, and call on thee, with comfort and certain hope for all things that I want. For in that thou hast given to me this benefit to be thy child undeserved, undeserved on my behalf, and only in respect of thine own goodness and grace in Christ, lest at any time I should doubt of it: how should I but hope certainly that nothing profitable to me can be denied, in that thy power is infinite? For as thy goodwill is declared in adopting me, so nothing can be finally wanting me, which may make for my weal (for that should improve thy power to be almighty) in that thy will is so bounteously already declared: whereas my belief requireth to believe in thee the Father Almighty, in consideration whereof I should in all things behave myself as a child, rejoice in thee, praise thee, trust in thee, fear thee, serve thee, love thee, call upon thee, etc.

But alas how heavy hearted am I? How unthankful am I? How full of unbelief, and doubting of this thy rich mercy? How little do I love thee, fear thee, call upon thee, etc.

Oh, be merciful unto me, forgive me, good Father, for thine own sake, and grant me the spirit of thy children, to reveal thyself unto me, and Jesus Christ thy dear Son, our Lord, by whom we are made thy children, that I may truly know thee, heartily love thee, faithfully hang upon thee in all my needs, with good hope call upon thee, render faithfully this honour to thee, that thou art my God and Father, and I thy dear child through thy grace in Christ, and so always be endued with an assured hope of thy goodness, and a

faithful obedient heart in all things to thy holy will. At thy hands and from thee as I must look for all things, so come I unto thee and pray thee to give me these things which thy dear children have, and thou requirest of me, that I might come and ask them of thee, as now I do through Jesus Christ our Lord.

As by this word (Father) I am taught to glory of thee and in thee, and all that ever thou hast (for thou art wholly mine, my Lord, my God, my Father) so by this word (Our) I am taught to glory of all the good, that all and every one of thy servants that ever were, are, or shall be, had, have, and shall have. For now I am taught to believe, that thou hast called me into the communion of thy church and people, whom hereby I perceive thou hast commanded, to be careful for me, as for themselves, and in all their prayers to be as mindful of me, as of themselves. Again, as by this word (Father) I am taught to remember and render my duty I owe to thee, faith, love, fear, obedience, etc., so by this word (Our) I am taught my duty towards thy people to be careful for them and to take their sorrow, poverty, and affliction, etc., as mine own: and therefore to labour to help them in heart and hand, after my vocation and ability, utterly abhorring all pride, self-love, arrogance, and contempt of any. By reason whereof I have great cause to lament and to rejoice. To lament because I am so far from consideration, much more from doing my duty to thy people in thoughts, words, or deeds. To rejoice because I am called of thee, and placed in the blessed society of thy saints, and made a member and citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem, and because thou hast given in commandment to all thy church to be as careful for me, as for themselves.

But alas, how far am I herefrom? As I am guilty of unthankfulness for this thy calling me into the blessed communion of thy dear Son, and church, yea of thyself: so am I guilty of self-love, unmercifulness,

pride, arrogance, forgetfulness, contempt of thy children: for else I could not but be otherwise affected and otherwise labour than I do. Oh, be merciful unto me, good Father, forgive me, and grant for Christ's sake, that as my tongue soundeth this word (Our) so I may in heart feel the true joy of thy blessed communion, and the true love and compassion which thy children have and feel towards their brethren, that I may rejoice in all trouble, in respect of that joyful communion: that I may deny myself to honour thy children upon earth, and endeavour myself to do them good for thy sake through Jesus Christ our Lord. I come only to thee to give me that which I cannot nor must not elsewhere have, and thou requirest it of me, that therefore I should as thy child come and crave it to thy glory.

Which art in heaven.

As by these words (Our Father) I am taught to glory and rejoice for the blessed communion which I am called to with thee, dear Father, with thy Christ, and with thy holy church: so also am I here taught by these words (Which art in heaven) to rejoice in respect of the place and blessed joys, whereunto at the length in thy good time I shall come. For now I may perceive, that as heaven is thy home, so is it mine also, being (as I am) thy child through Christ, although here for a time I am bodily on earth and in misery.

Again, by these words (Which art in heaven) I am admonished, not only to discern thee from earthly fathers, and to know how that thou art almighty, present in all places, and of most purity, to confirm thereby my faith, to be provoked the more to fear thee, to reverence

thee, etc., but also I am admonished to judge of thy fatherly love by heavenly benefits, and not by corporal simply and alone, for often times the wicked prosper more in the world, and have more worldly benefits, than thy children. So that by this I see thou wouldest pull up my mind from earth and earthly things, to heaven and heavenly things; and that I should see further by corporal benefits, thy heavenly providence for me. For if thou place me thus on earth and thus bless me as thou doest and hitherto hast done from my youth up, in that thou art nothing so careful for my body as for my soul, how should I but think much of thy providence for it in thy home, where is such glory, as that eye hath not seen, etc., of which things, these corporal benefits of thine, given me on earth, should be as it were inductions, and the taking of them away, admonitions to be more mindful of permanent things, and less mindful of transitory things.

By reason hereof I have great cause to lament, and to rejoice. To lament because I am so earthly-minded, so little desirous of my home, so unthankful for thy providence, and fatherly correction here on earth. To rejoice because of my home, and the great glory thereof, because thou doest so provide for me here, because thou doest so correct and chasten me, etc. But alas, I am altogether a wretch, earthly and unthankful, not only for these corporal benefits, health, riches, friends, fame, wisdom, etc.: for thy fatherly correction, sickness, temptation, etc.: but also for thy heavenly benefits, for Christ Jesus, for the promise of thy Spirit, for thy gospel, etc. Yea, even for heaven itself and thy whole glory, as the Israelites were for the land of Canaan, and therefore never enjoyed it but perished in the wilderness. I am proud in prosperity and forget thee, waxing secure and careless, etc. I am impatient in the cross, and too much consider worldly discommodity. Oh dear Father, forgive me, for thy Christ's sake, all mine unthankfulness, love of this world, contempt

and oblivion of thy heavenly benefits, and grant me thy Holy Spirit, to illuminate the eyes of my mind with the light and lively knowledge of thy presence, power, wisdom, and goodness in thy creatures, but specially in Christ Jesus thy Son, and so by the same Spirit enflame mine affections, that I may desire nothing in earth but thee, and to be present with thee, that my conversation may be in heaven continually. From whence grant me still to look for the Lord Jesus, to make this my vile body like unto his own glorious and immortal body, according to his own power by which he is able to do all things. As thou hast given me to be thy child: so I pray thee give me these things which be the properties of thy children given from thee in thy good time.

Hallowed be thy name.

Thy name is that whereby thou art known: for names serve to discern and know one thing from another. Now though thou art known by thy creatures, yet in this our corrupt estate, they serve but to make us inexcusable. Therefore, properly, most lively, and comfortably, thou art known by thy holy word, and specially by thy promise of grace, and freely pardoning and receiving us into thy favour for Christ Jesus' sake. For this goodness in Christ, thou art praised and magnified, according to thy name, that is, as much as men know thee in Christ, they magnify thee and praise thee, which here thou callest hallowing or sanctifying: not that thou art the more holy in respect of thyself, but in respect of men: who, the more they know thee, the more they cannot but sanctify thee, that is, they cannot but esteem themselves by true faith, love, fear, and spiritual service, and honour

thee: so also in their outward behaviour and words, they cannot but live in such sort, as others seeing them, may in and by their holiness and godly conversation, be occasioned, as to know thee, so to sanctify thy name accordingly. And therefore thou settest forth here unto me what is the chief and principal wish and desire of thy children and people, namely, that thou in Christ mightest be truly known and honoured both of themselves, and of others inwardly and outwardly. By reason whereof easily a man may perceive by the contrary, that the greatest sorrow and grief thy people have, is ignorance of thee, false service or religion, and wicked conversation. Against which they pray and labour diligently after their vocations, as they, for the obtaining of the others, both to others and to themselves, do take no small pain in prayer, study, and godly exercise. By reason hereof I see that I am far from this desire and lamentation which is in thy children: I see my ignorance of the true knowledge of thee and thy name, for else it had not needed thee so by thy word to have revealed thyself: I see also my ignorance of the excellency of the same. For else wouldst thou not have told me, that the sanctifying of thy name is the chiefest thing thou requirest of every man. Again, I see my great want of holiness, for else thou needest not to teach me, to seek and pray for what I lack not. Moreover, I see my great perversity, which would not seek at thy hands for sanctification, although I see my need thereof. For else thou wouldest not have commanded me to pray for it, if I, seeing my want, would have prayed unto thee therefore. Last of all I see thy wonderful goodness, which will undoubtedly give unto me sanctification and holiness: for thou wouldest not that I should ask for that thing that thou wilt not give me. So that I have great cause to lament and rejoice. To lament, because I am so far from this desire and lamentation, which thy children have: also because of my ignorance, poverty, perversity, unthankfulness, etc. but most of all because thy holy name, word, and religion is so blasphemed both in doctrine and in living by many,

especially in this realm. To rejoice I have great cause, for thy exceeding goodness and mercy, which wouldest so disclose thyself by thy works, word, and gospel: which wouldest open these things thus unto me and also give unto me and others sanctification in thy sight by faith; and in the sight of men by pureness of life and godly conversation. But alas, I do heartily neither the one nor the other, that is, lament nor rejoice: as thou, Father, who searchest my heart, dost right well know. Oh, be merciful unto me and forgive me, yea give me, of thine own pity, thy Holy Spirit, to reveal and open to my mind effectually my miserable estate and condition, my ignorance, perversity, and my carelessness for thy true honour and dishonour in such sort, that I may heartily lament these evils, and have them pardoned and taken from me through Jesus Christ our Lord. Again, good Father, give me the same thy Holy Spirit to reveal to me thy name, word, and gospel, that I may lively know thee, unfeignedly love thee, heartily obey thee, and above all things desire and labour by all means lawful that all godliness in doctrine and conversation may be exercised both in me and in all others, for whom thou wouldest I should pray.

Here think upon the state of religion, and the life of the professors of the gospel, that you may lament some, pray for some, and give thanks for some.

Let thy kingdom come.

Thy kingdom is in two sorts to be considered, universally and particularly. Universally according to thy power, wherewith thou

governest all things everywhere, in earth, heaven, hell, devils, angels, men, beasts, fowls, fishes, and all creatures animate and inanimate, sensible and insensible. Of this kingdom spake David when he said: thy kingdom ruleth over all. Particularly thy kingdom is to be considered according to thy grace wherewith thou reignest only in thy church and elect people, ruling and governing all and every member of thy church to thy glory and their eternal comfort: not that out of this church I exclude thy power (for as therewith thou defendest thy people, so thou punishest thy enemies) but because thy grace is specially considered, being (as it were) the very keeper that keepeth and guideth thy people. The time will be when this kingdom of grace and power, now being as distinct, shall be united and made one kingdom of glory: which will be when Christ shall give up his kingdom into thine hands, that is in the resurrection, when death the last enemy shall be subdued, and thou shalt be all in all. In the meantime, this kingdom of grace is miraculously and mightily propagated, enlarged, and governed by the true ministry of thy word and sacraments, through the working of thy Holy Spirit. And this is the mean and way, whereby as thou didst first plant, so dost thou enlarge, amplify and preserve the same. This kingdom of grace begun, continued, and enlarged by the true preaching of thy gospel and ministration of thy sacraments, is the thing which Christ teacheth here thy children to pray for, that it might come, that is to say, that thy gospel might so mightily, purely, and plenteously be preached (maugre the head of all thine enemies) that the number of thine elect might be brought in, and so the kingdom of thy glory might appear. So that as I see thy children desire, pray, and labour, that thy gospel might be truly preached, heard, and lived in themselves, and in others: so they lament the not preaching and refusing, the not living and unbelieving thy gospel: yea, they lament the lingering of the coming of thy Christ, for in his coming they know

they shall be like unto him, and having this hope they purify themselves as he is pure.

By reason hereof I see first that I am far from this desire and lamenting, which thy children have. I see my ignorance of thy kingdom and power everywhere, of thy grace only in thy church, and of thy glory, when all the enemies of thy grace shall be cast down, and thy glory and power shall embrace each other. I see my ignorance of how acceptable a service to thee is the true preaching and the hearing of thy gospel: for else thou hadst not needed to have placed this petition next to the petition of the sanctifying of thy name. Again, I see here my inability to enter into thy kingdom, and to attain to it. For else what need should I have to pray for that to come from thee, which otherwise may be achieved. Thirdly, I see also my perversity and contempt of thy kingdom and grace. For although I see my want, yet I would not desire thy kingdom to come, if thou didst not command me to pray so: for if I would have prayed for it, thou wouldst not have commanded me. Last of all I see thy goodness, which will bring thy kingdom, and that as generally by sending forth ministers to preach truly: so particularly by regenerating me more and more, and by giving me as grace here, so glory elsewhere: for thou wouldest not I should pray for that, which thou wilt deny. So that I have great cause to lament and rejoice. To lament because of my miserable estate and condition, because of my sin, ignorance, rebellion, perversity, Satan's power, contempt of thy grace, thy gospel and ministry, here or elsewhere. To rejoice because of thy goodness and great mercy, which hast brought me into thy church, keepest me in it, and wilt do so still: also because of the ministry of thy word and sacraments, by which the Holy Ghost is and will be effectual: and finally because of the great glory, whereunto thou hast called me, and now wilt give unto me, asking the same. But alas, how unthankful I am and sorrowless, Lord, thou knowest, for my heart is

not hid from thee, etc. Oh, be merciful unto me and forgive me, good Father, and grant the Spirit of thy children, to reveal unto me my ignorance of thy kingdom, my poverty and perversity, that I may lament the same, and daily labour for thy help and thy Holy Spirit, to suppress the kingdom of sin in myself and in others. Again, grant me that same thy Holy Spirit to reveal to me thy kingdom of power, grace, and glory, to kindle mine affections, to regenerate me more and more, to reign in me, as in a piece of thy kingdom, to give to me to desire, to pray, and to labour for thy kingdom, both to myself and to others effectually, to thy glory, and to assure my conscience of thy goodness, that thou wilt give me grace, and glory, etc.

Here call to mind the state of the ministry and ministers, the light and life of gospellers, the errors and heresies which men be entangled withal.

Thy will be done.

As thy power is infinite, so is thy wisdom accordingly. Whereby as we may perceive, that nothing is or can be done against thy power, or otherwise than by it: so is there not nor cannot be anything done against, or otherwise than by thy omnipotent and secret will, which is always, as thou art, good, holy, and just, however far it may seem otherwise to our foolish reason and judgment. And therefore here we are taught to pray that thy will may be done here without sin on man's behalf, as it is on the angels' behalf in heaven.

Again, forasmuch as thou art incomprehensible of thyself as well concerning thy power as concerning thy wisdom, we may not accordingly search thee, but rather adore and worship thy majesty, and tremble at thy judgments and works, and therefore pray always, that we may be content with thy will, and be borne thereto. And forasmuch as thou hast revealed to us so much of thy will in thy word written as is necessary for us in this life to know, yea as we can attain unto, and a little further: we ought to take all things done thereagainst as sin and transgression, although thou canst use the same sin to serve thy providence. Of the which providence we cannot nor may not judge further than thou hast and shalt open it unto us. So that this petition (Thy will be done) is not simply to be understood concerning thy omnipotent will unrevealed, against which nothing is nor can be done, but rather concerning thy will revealed in thy law and gospel, the which thou here teachest me that we should desire, not only to know it, but also to do it, and that in such perfection and willingness, as it is in heaven. The which thing I perceive hereby that thy children do desire daily in and for themselves and others, and do lament the contrary, in whomsoever it be, so that often their eyes gush out with rivers of tears because men keep not thy laws.

By reason hereof I see that I am far from the sighs and tears of thy people. I see my ignorance of thy will if thou hadst not opened the same by thine own mouth. I see my ignorance, how acceptable a service obedience to thy will is, and therefore dost thou place this petition amongst the first and continual desires of thy children. Again, I see my poverty in godly obedience, which had need to be taught to pray for it, thereby to signify unto me my want and inability to attain it, but by thy gift. Thirdly, I see my disobedience: for else never wouldst thou have commanded me to have prayed for the doing of thy will, if I seeing my want, would have prayed so.

Last of all, I see thy goodness, which will give to me and others to obey thy will: that is, to love thee with all our hearts, to love our neighbour as ourselves, to die to ourselves, to live to thee, to take up our cross and to follow thee, to believe, to repent, etc.: for else thou wouldest never have bidden us to pray for a thing which we should not look for.

So that I have great cause to lament and rejoice. To lament, because of my miserable state and condition, because of my sin, ignorance, poverty, and perversity, also because thy will is everywhere either not known, or contemned, and Satan's will, the will of the world, and of the flesh readily obeyed. To rejoice I have great cause, for that thou hast opened thyself and will unto mankind, for that also thou peculiarly hast taught me these things, and because also thou wilt grant me grace to do the same. But alas how unthankful I am, and how hard-hearted, thou Lord dost know. Oh be merciful unto me and forgive me. I pray thee, gracious God, grant me thy Holy Spirit, to reveal to me my ignorance of thy will, my poverty and perversity, that I may heartily bewail it, etc., and by thy help and working of the same Spirit may suppress the will of the flesh. Again, grant me thy Holy Spirit, to reveal to me thy will declared in thy law and gospel, that I may truly know the same, and inflame so my affections, that I may will and love the same, in such sort, that it may be my meat and drink to do thy will.

Here call to mind the ten commandments of God particularly or generally, what therein he requireth, and pray for the same particularly as you see your need, and that not only for yourself but also for others.

Pray for patience to suffer whatever cross God shall lay upon you, and pray for them that be under the cross that they may be patient:

pray for spiritual wisdom in every cross peculiarly, or publicly, that you may see and love God's will.

Give us this day our daily bread.

By bread, the food of the body, is understood all things necessary for this corporal life, such as meat, drink, health, success in vocation, etc. By this word give, we should understand that not only spiritual things but also corporal benefits are God's free gifts, and come not for our worthiness or travail taken about the same, although our travails are often the means by which God gives corporal things.

By daily is understood the contented minds of thy children with that which is sufficient for the present time, as having hope in thee, that they shall not want, but daily shall receive at thy hands plenty and enough of all things. By this word our, is as well understood public benefits, such as peace in the common weal, good magistrates, seasonable weather, good laws, etc., as particular benefits, such as children, health, name, success in the works of our vocation, etc. And besides this, by it we should see the care even for corporal things, which thy children have for others as well as for themselves.

So that here I may learn how far I am from what I should be, and I see thy children have come unto. I see my ignorance also, how that as spiritual things do come from thee, so do temporal things: and as they come from thee, so are they conserved and kept by thee. And therefore thy children are thankful and look for them as thy mere gifts, notwithstanding the means which they use if they have them.

However, they use them but as means, for except thou work therewith, all is in vain.

Again, here I am taught to be content with sufficient for the present time, as thy children are who have the shortness of this life always before their eyes, and therefore they ask but for daily sustenance, knowing this life to be compared to a day, yea a watch, a sound, a shadow, etc. Moreover, I may learn to see the compassion and brotherly care, thy children have one for another. Last of all, here I may see thy goodness, which as thou wilt give me all things necessary for this life (or else thou wouldest not bid me ask, etc.) so thou commandest all men to pray and care for me, and that bodily, much more than if they be able, they are commanded to help me both in body and soul. By reason whereof I have great cause to lament and rejoice. To lament because I am not so affected, as thy children are, because of my ignorance, my ingratitude, my perversity and contempt of thy goodness, and of the necessity of thy people, who alas are in great misery, some in exile, some in prison, some in poverty, sickness, etc. To rejoice I have great cause, because of thy goodness, in teaching me these things, in commanding me to ask whatsoever I want, in giving me so many things unasked, in keeping the benefits given me, in commanding men to care for me, to pray for me, to help me, etc. But alas, how far I am from true lamentation and rejoicing, Lord thou knowest. Oh be merciful unto me, and help me, forgive me, and grant me thy Holy Spirit, to reveal to me my need, ignorance, great ingratitude, and contempt of thy mercies and thy people, and that in such sort, that I might heartily lament and bewail my misery, and through thy goodness be altered with thy people, to mourn for the miseries of thy children, as for mine own.

Again reveal to me thy goodness (dear Father) even in corporal things that I may see thy mercy, thy presence, power, wisdom, and

righteousness in every creature, and corporal benefits, and that in such sort, that I may be thoroughly affected, truly to reverence, fear, love, obey thee, hang upon thee, to be thankful to thee, and in all my need to come unto thee, not only when I have ordinary means by which thou commonly workest, but also when I have none, yea when all means and helps are clean against me.

Here remember the state of your children, and family, also your parents, neighbours, kinfolks, also your friends, country, and magistrates, etc.: as you shall have time thereto and by God's good Spirit shall be provoked.

Forgive us our debts, as we forgive them that are debtors unto us.

By our debts are understood, not only things we have done, but the omission and leaving undone of the good things we ought to do.

By our, is not only understood the particular sins of one, but also generally the sins of all and every one of thy church.

By forgiveness, is understood free pardon and remission of sins, by the merits and deserts of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, who gave himself a ransom for us.

By our forgiving of other men's offenses toward us, is understood thy goodwill, not only that it pleases thee that we should live in love and amity, but also that thou wouldest have us to be certain of thy

pardoning us of our sins. For as certain as we are that we pardon them that offend us, so certain should we be that thou dost pardon us: whereof the forgiving our trespassers is (as it were) a sacrament unto us.

So that by this petition I am taught to see that thy children, although by imputation they be pure from sin, yet they acknowledge sin to be and remain in them, and therefore do they pray for the remission and forgiveness of the same.

Again, I am taught hereby to see how thy children do consider and take to heart, not only the evils they do, but also the good they leave undone. And therefore they pray thee heartily for pardon.

Moreover, I am here taught to see that thy children are careful for other men, and for their trespasses, and therefore pray, that they might be pardoned in saying, our sins, and not my sins.

Besides this, I am taught here to see how thy children not only forgive all that offend them, but also pray for the pardoning of the offenses of their enemies, and such as offend them. So far are they from maliciousness, pride, revengefulness, etc. Last of all I am taught to see how merciful thou art, which wilt have me to ask pardon: whereof thou wouldest that we should in no point doubt, but be most assured, that for Christ's sake thou hearest us, and that not only for ourselves, but also for many others, for thou dost not command us to ask for anything thou wilt not give us.

By reason whereof I have great cause to lament, and rejoice. To lament because of my miserable estate, which am so far from these affections, that are in thy children: which am so ignorant and careless of sin, not only in leaving good undone, but also in doing evil, and that daily in thought, word, and deed, etc. I speak not of my

carelessness for other folks' sins, as of my parents, children, family, magistrates, etc., neither of the sins of them, to whom I have given occasion to sin.

To rejoice I have great cause, because of thy mercy in opening to me these things, in commanding me to pray for pardon, in promising me pardon, and in commanding others to pray for me. I ought surely to be persuaded of thy mercy, though my sins be innumerable. For I see not only in this but in every petition how that everyone of thy church prayeth for me: yea, Christ thy Son who sitteth on thy right hand, prayeth for me, etc. Oh dear Father, be merciful unto me, and forgive me all my sins, and of thy goodness give me thy Holy Spirit to open mine eyes, that I may see sin, the better to know it, the more truly to hate it, and most earnestly to strive against it, and that effectually both in myself, and others.

Again, grant me the same thy Holy Spirit to reveal unto me the remedy of sin by Christ only, and to work in me faith, to embrace the same thy Christ and mercies in him, that I may henceforth be endued with thy Holy Spirit more and more to begin and obey thy good will continually, and to increase in the same forever.

Here call to mind the special sins you have committed heretofore. Remember, if you have occasioned any to sin, to pray for them by name: remember that God's law should be so dear unto us that the breaking thereof in others, should be an occasion to make us lament with tears, etc.

Lead us not into temptation.

Because of our continual and great infirmities, because of the great diligence and subtleties of our enemies, and because thou art wont to punish sin with sin (which of all punishments is the greatest and most to be feared) in this petition thou wouldest have thy children to have the same in remembrance, and for a remedy hereof thou hast appointed prayer. So that the only cause why any are overcome and led into temptation, is because they forget what they desire in the petition going before this: which should be never out of their memory, to provoke them to be more thankful to thee, and more vigilant and heedful hereafter for falling into like perils. For which to be avoided, thou dost most graciously set forth a remedy, in commanding us to pray after pardon for our sins past, for thy grace to guide us, so that we be not led into temptation, but might be delivered from evil. And because thou wouldest have all thy children to hang wholly upon thee, to fear thee only, and only to love thee, thou dost not teach them to pray, "suffer us not to be led," but "lead us not into temptation," that they might only fear thee, and certainly know that Satan hath no power over so much as a pig, but whatsoever thou givest unto him, and of thy secret but most just judgment dost appoint him to use, not as he will (for then we were all lost) but as thou wilt, which canst will nothing but that which is most just. As to give them to the guiding of Satan, which will not be guided by thy grace, as thou didst Saul, etc.

Occasions to evil are in two sorts. One by prosperity and success, another by adversity and the cross, etc. The evils coming of success commonly are unthankfulness, pride, security, and forgetting ourselves, forgetting of others, forgetfulness of God, of our mortality, etc. The evils coming of adversity commonly are impatience,

murmuring, grudging, despairing, contemning of God, flattering of men, stealing, lying, etc., with many other evils, whereto temptations will entice a man that is left to himself: whereas to one that is guided with God's Spirit, temptations are but trials to the glory of God, comfort of the tempted, and edifying of thy church. But as I said, if a man be left alone, temptations entice even to the devil himself. And therefore thy children pray to be delivered from evil, understanding thereby Satan himself, the sower and supporter of all evil. And this thy children do as well for others, as for themselves. So that I may learn herefrom many good things.

First, to remember often our infirmity and weakness, and the dangerous estate we stand in in respect of our flesh, of the world which is full of evil, of Satan who seeketh to sift us and as a roaring lion to destroy us, and of our sins, which deserve all kinds of punishments and correction: that I might with thy children fear thee, watch, pray, and desire the day of redemption from all evils.

Again, I may learn here that to avoid all dangers and evil, is not in the power of man, but only thy work. By reason whereof I should consider thy great goodness, which hitherto hast kept me from so many evils, both of soul and body, yea of name, goods, etc.: as thou hast done in my infancy, childhood, youth, middle age, etc.

Thirdly, I may learn here that I should be careful for others, both that they might be delivered from their evils, and that they might be preserved from temptation, and from being overcome in the same, and therefore thou teachest me to pray, not "deliver me from evil" simply, but "deliver us from evil."

Last of all I am taught hereby to see thy goodness towards me, which wilt deliver me from evil, and from being overcome in temptations. For thou wouldst not have me to ask for that which I should not look

for at thy hands certainly. By reason whereof thou wouldest have me to be in a certainty of salvation, forever. For else I cannot believe my prayer to be heard, if that finally I should not be delivered from evil.

And therefore thou joinest hereto a giving of thanks, which with thy church I should say (For thine is the kingdom, thine is the power, thine is the glory forever).

By reason whereof I have great cause to lament and to rejoice. To lament because of my corruption, infirmity, weakness, oblivion, and carelessness for thy people, ingratitude, etc.: because of Satan's power, vigilance, and prudence, which hath overcome the most grave, wise, and holy men, whereof some never recovered: as Cain, Ham, Ahithophel, Saul, Judas, etc. To rejoice because of thy goodness, which teachest me this, and showest me the remedy, commandest all thy Church to pray for me, and wilt at length deliver me from all evil, and give me glory. But alas, I am altogether careless and miserable. Oh be merciful unto me, dear Father, and for Christ's sake forgive me all my sins. Grant me thy Holy Spirit to reveal to me mine infirmities, weakness, perils, dangers, etc., in such sort, that as I may heartily lament my miseries, so I may ask and obtain thy grace to guide me from all evil forever more.

Again, grant me the same thy Holy Spirit, to reveal to me thy love and kindness towards me (and that in eternity) in such sort, that I may be thoroughly persuaded of the same, become thankful unto thee, and daily expect and look for the revelation of thy kingdom, power, and glory, as one that forever shall have the fruition of the same, through thine own goodness and mercy in Christ, prepared for me before the beginning and foundation of the world was laid.

Here call to mind our security, Satan's vigilance, our negligence, his diligence, our infirmity, his ability, our ignorance, his craft and

subtlety, etc.

Item, call to mind how that he hath overthrown for a time many of the dear saints of God, to whom we are to be compared in nothing: as Adam, Eve, Lot, Judah, Tamar, Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Samson, Gideon, Eli, David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Josiah, Peter, Thomas, and innumerable more.

Item, call to mind the goodness of God, and of our Shepherd Christ, which hath kept us hitherto, keepeth us still, and teacheth us here to know that he will keep us forever. For he would not have us to ask for deliverance from evil, if he would not we should certainly look for the same. If thou doubt of final perseverance, thou dishonourest God. Be certain therefore, rest in hope, be still in his word. See also how he hath commanded his whole church and every member thereof, to pray for thee as well as for themselves, in these and all other things.

Now and then go about to reckon how many and diverse kinds of evils there be, that thereby, as you may know you are delivered from none but by God's great goodness: so you may see that the number of evils that you have, are nothing to be compared to the multitude of evils wherewith (if your Christ were not) the devil would all to beray and daub you.

But what are all the miseries and evils that can be, to be compared to the least joy, prepared for us in heaven? Oh think of those joys, and pray that when the tide of death cometh, we may hail forth of the haven of this flesh and this world joyfully. In praying this petition call to mind the evils you have been in, the evils you are in, and the evils you may fall in, if God should not preserve you, that you might be stirred up the more to thankfulness, to prayer, to trust in God, to modesty, etc.

For thine is the kingdom, thine is the power, thine is the glory forever.

As in the beginning of this prayer by these words (Our Father which art in heaven) thy children are excited and stirred up to a full confidence of obtaining the petitions following and all things necessary: So in the latter end thou hast added for the same purpose, these words (For thine is the kingdom, thine is the power, thine is the glory forever). Wherein I am taught these many things: First, that in prayer I should have such consideration of thy kingdom, power, glory, and eternity, that my mind should be stricken with admiration of the same. Secondly, that I should so consider them, especially in prayer, that I should not doubt, but that thou workest, rulest, and governest all things everywhere in all persons and creatures, most wisely, justly, and mercifully. Thirdly, that in prayer all my petitions should tend to the setting forth of thy power, of thy kingdom, and of thy glory. Last of all, that in prayer I should in no wise doubt of being heard, but be assured, that thou who hast commanded me to pray, and hast promised to hear me, dost most graciously for thy mercy's sake and truth's sake hear my petitions, according to thy good will through Jesus Christ thy dear Son, our Lord and only Saviour.

By reason whereof I have great cause to lament and rejoice. To lament, because I consider not these things in prayer, in such sort as should move me to admiration and gratitude: because I consider not thy power and wisdom generally in all things: because I am so careless for thy kingdom: and because I am so full of doubt and

doubting of thy goodness. To rejoice I have great cause, because thou revealest these things unto me in this sort: because of thy power, kingdom, and glory, which make for the hearing of my prayers, and helping of me: because thou wilt use me as thine instrument to set forth thy kingdom, power, and glory: and because it pleases thee to hear my prayers and assuredly wilt save me forever.

But alas, how far am I from these lamentations and rejoicings? By reason whereof I deserve damnation. Oh be merciful unto me, forgive me, and of thy goodness grant me thy Holy Spirit to reveal to me my blindness, oblivion, and contempt of thy kingdom, power, and glory, with the greatness of my doubtings: that I may heartily lament them, and have them pardoned, and taken from me through the merits of Jesus Christ thy Son.

Again, give me thy Holy Spirit, to reveal to me in such sort thy kingdom, power, glory, and eternity, that I may always have the same before mine eyes, be moved with admiration thereof, labor effectually to set forth the same, and finally as to have the fruition thereof after this life: so increase an assured, certain, and lively expectation of the same, that I may always and in all things rejoice in thee through Christ, and give lauds, thanks, and praises perpetually unto thy most holy name, oh blessed Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three persons and one God, to whom be all honour and glory world without end.

Here think, that if the kingdom, power, glory, and eternity be God's, who is our Father, what our dignity is, who are his children: if the power be our Father's, of whom should we be afraid? If the devil be subject to the Lord's power and kingdom (as he is) how can the subject have power over us, who are sons and heirs, in that he hath not power over swine without the providence and permission of

God? Therefore full well should we pray, "Lead us not into temptation," rather than "Let us not be led into temptation." For power is the Lord's, and the devil hath none, but that he hath of God's gift. No, he were not of capacity, to receive power, if God did not make him of capacity, although the execution of it, is rather of God's permission.

Give all thanks, praise, and glory, to God our Father through Christ our Lord and Saviour. So be it.

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