

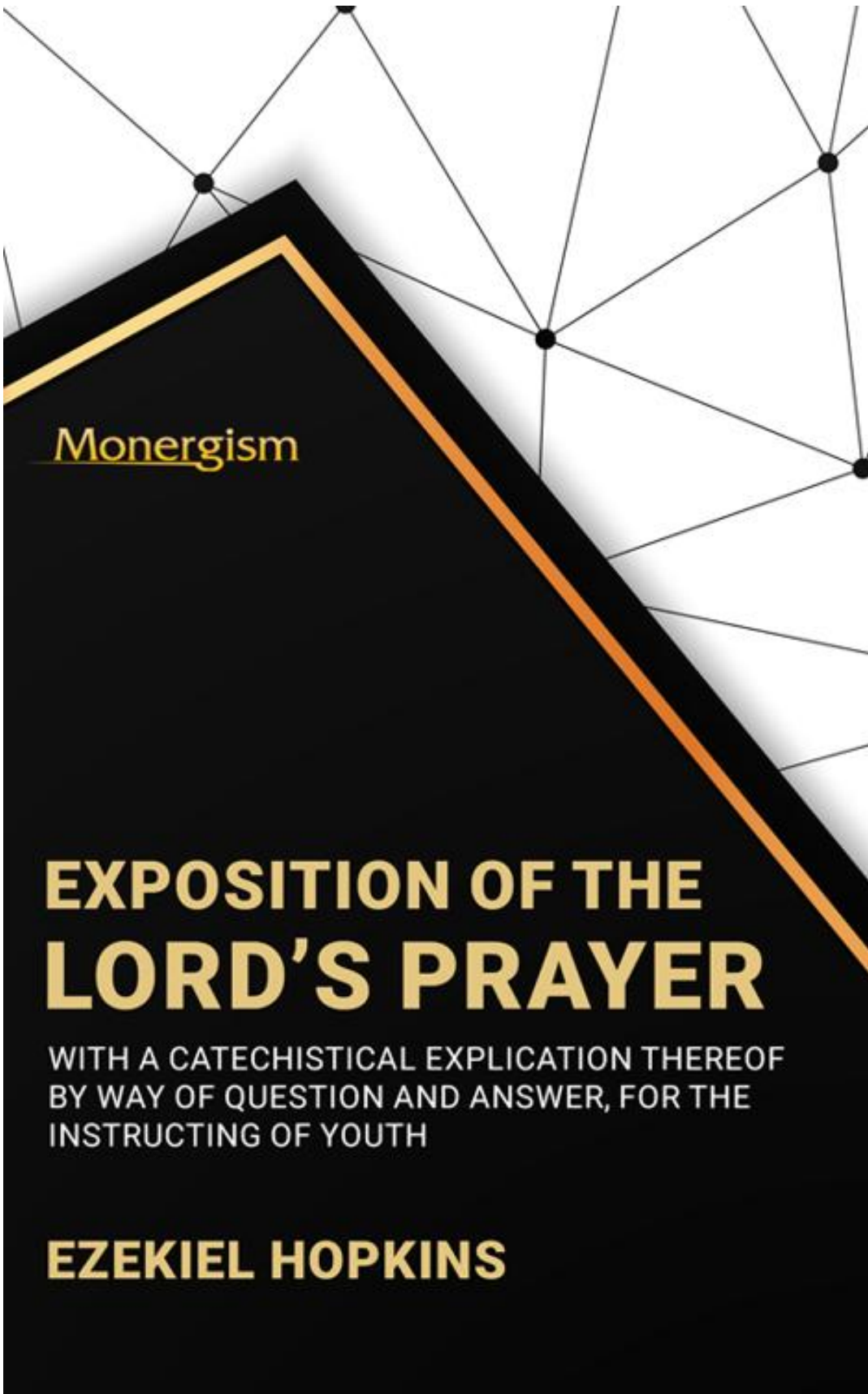


Monergism

**EXPOSITION OF THE
LORD'S PRAYER**

WITH A CATECHISTICAL EXPLICATION THEREOF
BY WAY OF QUESTION AND ANSWER, FOR THE
INSTRUCTING OF YOUTH

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A CATECHISTICAL EXPOSITION ON THE LORD'S PRAYER

PREFACE TO THE READER

CHRISTIAN READER:

THE following Discourses upon that Excellent and Divine Prayer of our Blessed Saviour contain so much of Practical Divinity necessary to be known by all Christians, and are so solidly and judiciously handled, that they need no Epistle Recommendatory unto the world; having the stamp of the Divine Authority upon the truths contained in them.

But if any shall curiously enquire, whether this Reverend and Learned Prelate designed and finished them for the press, I may truly return the same answer that is given in print by the present Bishop of Cork and Ross to the same question, in his Epistle to the Reader before this Author's "Exposition on the Ten Commandments;" namely, That they were transcribed by himself, and by him deposited in the hands of a Minister whom he could entrust, to be made public after his decease; whose Epistle should have been prefixed hereunto, but that he is far distant in another

nation, and the press cannot tarry so long for it, the book being just finished.

And, as a further confirmation that his Lordship intended it should be made public, appears by his so often quoting this his Discourse on the Lord's Prayer, in his Treatise on the Commandments; which could not be seen or read by others, but by the printing of it. Upon which, many persons have been very desirous and inquisitive after it[†].

Unto this large and general "Exposition on the Lord's Prayer," there is added a brief and short "Catechistical Explication" thereof by way of Question and Answer, made use of by his Lordship for the instructing of the younger and more ignorant Christians in the knowledge and understanding of those divine and heavenly truths contained in this most excellent prayer.

And, for a Conclusion of all, there are added several Sermons preached by this learned Prelate, upon the "Providence of God," and on the "Excellency and Usefulness of Reading and Studying the Holy Scriptures[†]." All which have been diligently and carefully perused by several persons of the Author's acquaintance, both of the Clergy and others, with very good acceptance and satisfaction; and the whole is now, with approbation, exposed unto public view.

And, that the present publication of them may tend much to the promoting of the honour and glory of God, and the edification of many souls in grace and holiness, is the hearty prayer of the publisher. Farewell.

A PRACTICAL EXPOSITION ON THE LORD'S PRAYER

After this manner, therefore, pray ye: Our Father, which art in heaven: Hallowed be thy name: Thy kingdom come: Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven: Give us this day our daily bread: And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors: And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. MATTH. 6:9, 10

INTRODUCTION

HAVING often seriously considered with myself of the great use that is made of this most excellent Form of Prayer, composed by our Blessed Lord and Saviour himself; as also of the great benefit and advantage, that might accrue unto all those, that with understanding make a due use of it in their daily devotions; I thought it might be very necessary for your instruction, and greatly conducive unto your salvation, to lay before your consideration, as brief and succinct an Exposition thereof, as the large extent and various copiousness of the matter contained therein will permit.

The Blessed Apostle, St. Paul, in 1 Cor. 14:15 tells us, that he would pray with the spirit, and he would pray with understanding also. And, indeed, when we pray, to pray with understanding what we pray, is one great requisite to make our prayer spiritual; and, through the prevailing intercession of Jesus Christ, to become acceptable unto God the Father. But to mutter over a round of words only, as the Papists are taught and as multitudes of many ignorant persons among us do also, without understanding what they signify, or being duly affected with those wants and necessities which we beg of God the supplies of, is not to offer up a prayer unto the Almighty, but only to make a charm.

Now, because there is no Form of Prayer, that ever we have heard or read of, that is deservedly so much in use, as this of our Lord's is, I shall endeavour, in some Discourses thereupon, to unfold to you

those Voluminous Requests which we offer up unto God, when we thus pray, as our Saviour here teacheth us: wherein, as I doubt not but as I may greatly instruct the ignorance of many, so possibly I may bring very much to the remembrance of those who have attained to great understanding in religion, those things, which may provoke their zeal and excite their affections: and both these undertakings, through the blessing of God upon it, may be very usefully profitable to enable them to pray with understanding and with the spirit also, when they approach the Throne of Grace, to present their petitions unto the Great God, as by the intercession, so in the words of his Dear Son.

In this chapter, which contains in it a great part of our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, our lord lays before his hearers several directions concerning two necessary duties in a Christian's practice; and they are Almsgiving and Prayer: the former, a duty relating more immediately unto men; the latter, a duty in a more especial manner respecting God himself: in both which he not only cautions us against, but strictly forbids all ostentation and vain-glory. Therefore, says he, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee: for this is the practice of hypocrites, that they may have glory of men: verse 2. And, when thou prayest, be not as the hypocrites: for they love to pray in the Synagogues and corners of the streets; that they may be seen of men: verse 5. Thus must we not do in either of these cases: for, as we must not give alms that we may be seen of men, so neither must we pray that we may be heard and observed of men: for what can be more absurd and ridiculous, as well as wicked and impious, than to be begging applause from some, when we are giving alms to others; or, whilst we are praying to the Great God of Heaven and Earth, to make frail mortal men, like ourselves, our idols? which we do, whensoever we pray, rather that we may be heard and admired by men, than that God should hear us and accept us.

In the next words our Saviour proceeds in laying down some other directions concerning the duty of prayer: and therein he forbids his

hearers to use vain repetitions in prayer: verse 7. When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathens do. Not that all repetitions in prayer are vain babblings, in the sight of God: for our Lord himself prayed thrice, using the same words; for so we read Mat. 26:44. For, doubtless, as copiousness and variety of fluent expressions, in any, usually flow from raised affections; so, when those affections are heightened and raised to an ecstasy and agony of soul in our wrestlings with God in prayer, ingeminations are then the most proper and most elegant way of expressing them, doubling and redoubling the same petitions again and again: not allowing God, if I may so speak with holy reverence, so much time, nor ourselves so much leisure, as to form in our minds, much more with our lips to offer up, any new requests; till, by a holy violence in wrestling with God, we have extorted out of his hands those mercies and blessings our hearts are set upon the suing to him for. Vain repetitions, therefore, are such as are made use of by any, without new and lively stirrings and motions of the heart and affections at the same time. And that, which makes a prayer vain, makes a repetition in prayer to be vain also. Now that is a vain prayer, and we shall certainly find it so, when the requests we offer up to God therein are heartless and lifeless. For we must know, God hath commanded us to pray; not that he might be excited and moved by hearing the voice of our cries in prayer, to give unto us those mercies and blessings, which he himself was not resolved beforehand to bestow upon us; but that we ourselves might be fitted and prepared to receive from him, what he is always ready and willing to confer upon us. He requires prayer from us, not that he might be affected therewith; for, as the Apostle St. James tells us, with him there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning: James 1:17: but that we ourselves might have our hearts raised and affected therewith. And, therefore, the chiefest effect of prayer being to affect ourselves, if prayer itself be not vain, neither are repetitions in prayer vain, if, whilst we are spreading the same requests before God, we do it with new affections and desires. No prayer, therefore, ought to be accused of idle babbling and vain repetitions; but those, that pray, may, I fear, too often be charged with it. And here, by the way, I desire all those, who are offended at

or refuse to join with the stated Forms of Prayer that the Church hath appointed to be made use of either in public or private because the same requests do many times occur therein, to keep a strict eye upon their hearts and affections; and then the scruples and objections, that they make, will presently be removed: for it is much in their own power to make them to be, either vain repetitions, or the most fervent ingeminations of their most affectionate desires unto God, and the most spiritual and forcible part of all their prayers and supplications they offer up unto him.

But, then, further: as our Saviour forbids vain repetitions in prayer, so he likewise forbids much-speaking: For they think, says our Saviour, Mat. 6:7 that they shall be heard for their much-speaking. Now, as the former prohibition doth not exclude all repetitions in prayer, so neither doth this latter exclude (as some ignorant persons, perhaps, who are soon wearied out with the service of God, may be apt to think) long prayers: for this would be a flat contradiction to his own practice; for it is said, in St. Luke 6:12 that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer unto God.

Some, indeed, take the word προσευχη prayer, to signify the House of Prayer: as if our Saviour continued only in such a dedicated House or Chapel all night; according as Juvenal useth the word, in *quâ te quæro proseuchâ*. Yet, as it will be hard to prove that the Jews had any such houses for prayer, besides their Synagogues, which were not seated in desolate (whither our Saviour went then to pray) but in populous cities and frequented places: so it will be more hard to imagine, that our Saviour would continue all night in the House of Prayer, if he had not been taken up in the performance of the Duty of Prayer.

There is, therefore, a great deal of difference between much-speaking in prayer, and speaking much in prayer: for, certainly, a man may speak much to God in prayer, when yet he may not be guilty of much-speaking: for there is a compendious way of speaking, to speak much in a little; and there is a babbling way of speaking, when, by

many tedious ambages and long impertinencies, men pour out a sea of words, and scarce one drop of sense or matter.

Now it is this last way of speaking unto God which our Saviour here condemns. And condemns it justly: for it shews either folly or irreverence. Folly, in that it is a sign we do not sufficiently consider what we ask: Irreverence, in that it is a sign we do not consider of whom we ask. And such men are rather to be esteemed talkative, than devout.

But when a man's soul is full fraught with matter (of which, if he duly weighs either his spiritual wants or his temporal sorrows and afflictions, he can never be unfurnished) to pour out his soul, and with a torrent of holy rhetorick lay open his case before God, begging seasonable supplies in suitable expressions, certainly he cannot fall under the reproof of much-speaking, although he may speak much and long: for such an one hath much to say; and, whilst matter and affections last, let his prayer be an hour long, yea a day long, yea an eternity long, as our praises shall be in heaven, he is not to be censured for a babbler, but hath still spoken much in a little.

It is true, the Wise Man hath commanded, that our words be few in our addresses to God: Eccl. 5:2: and he gives a most forcible reason; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth. His Infinite Majesty should, therefore, over-awe thee from using any rash and vain loquacity. But yet this makes not against long prayers: for many words may be but a few to express the sentiments of our souls; and none can be too many, while the heart keeps pace with the tongue, and every petition is filled with matter and winged with affections.

And, whereas our Saviour condemns the Pharisees, who devoured widows' houses, and for a pretence made long prayers: Mat. 23:14 yet, certain it is, that it was not their long prayers that he condemns, but their pretence and hypocrisy.

Thus much I thought fit to observe from the context.

Our Saviour, having thus cautioned his Disciples against the sins of the Pharisees and Heathens in their prayers, comes, in the words I have read, to instruct them how to pray. After this manner, therefore, pray ye, Our Father, &c.

Some taking advantage from these words, deny this to be used as a prayer itself; but only as a model and platform, to direct us how to pray.

But, if we consult, not only the practice of the Church of Christ in all ages, but the Scripture itself, we shall find it to be both the one and the other: for it is our Saviour's express injunction, Luke 11:2. When ye pray, say; and what should they say, but the words immediately following, Our Father, which art in heaven, &c? One Evangelist says, pray after this manner: the other saith, when ye pray, say: from both which, compared together, it is easy to collect, that it is both a pattern for us to form our prayers by, and that it is a prayer itself, which our Saviour, in condescension to our infirmities, hath framed for us; putting words into our mouths, to beg of God those blessings, which, through his most prevalent intercession, shall not be denied us.

And, indeed, of all prayers, this is the most absolute and comprehensive; containing in it, not so many words as petitions: for there is not any one thing that we can pray for, according to the will of God, but it is summarily couched in this.

And yet this comprehensiveness, which is the admirable excellency of this prayer, hath been the only reason why some of late have scrupled and refused to use it; because they cannot pierce through all that is signified by these substantial expressions. They think they should take God's Name in vain, in uttering that before him, which they do not understand the utmost extent of.

But, if they did but consider their own prayers, the same doubts would still remain. When they pray that God's Name may be

glorified, can they comprehend in that short time, while they are uttering those words, the infinite latitude of that request? Is it unlawful, at the close of our prayers, to desire that God would give us all good things, which we have not mentioned before him? And yet who of us can conceive how large an extent that request may have? May we not say, Amen, and seal up our prayers with a So be it; though, while we are speaking it, we cannot presently recollect all that hath been mentioned before God in prayer?

And, for any to say, that the Lord's Prayer is a morsel too big for their mouths, as some have done, I have always accounted it a most unworthy and unsavory speech. Certainly, Christ thought it not too big for his Disciples: whose capacities, at that time, were, possibly, none of the largest; as appears in many instances, particularly in the nature of Christ's Kingdom, which he taught them to pray that it might come, which they thought to be temporal and earthly. And those, who refuse the use of the Lord's Prayer as too big for them, would yet think themselves much wronged, if we should but suspect them as ignorant in that, and in many other points of Christian: Doctrine, as the Disciples were when our Saviour instructed them thus to pray.

It being, therefore, as I hope, clear and evident, that we may often pray in these words, and that we must always pray after this manner; let us now proceed to consider the Prayer itself. In which there are these Four Parts.

I. The PREFACE, or INTRODUCTION, to it.

II. The PETITIONS, or REQUESTS, we present to God; in which the greatest part of it consists.

III. The DOXOLOGY, or PRAISE-GIVING: for praise is a necessary part of prayer.

IV. The CONCLUSION, or RATIFICATION of all, in the sealing particle, Amen.

I shall speak somewhat of these briefly, in the general; and, then, more particularly of each, as my text directs me.

FIRST. For the Introduction or Preface unto the prayer: and that is contained in these words Our Father, which art in heaven.

This is used as a preparative to prayer. And what greater inducement can there be to dispose us into a holy awe and reverence of God, than to set before us the greatness and glory of that Majesty, before whom we prostrate ourselves?

And, therefore, we find that the Saints in Scripture, in all their approaches to the Throne of Grace, were wont, in the beginning of their prayers, to affect and over-awe their hearts with the humble mention of God's glorious attributes. Thus Solomon: 1 Kings 8:23. O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like unto thee, in heaven above or in the earth beneath; who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants. Thus Jehoshaphat: 2 Chron. 20:6. O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? And rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathens? And in thy hand is there not power and might? So Hezekiah: 2 Kings 19:15. O Lord God of Israel, who dwellest between the cherubims, thou art God, even thou alone, who hast made heaven and earth. And so the Prophet: Jer. 32:17, 18, 19. Ah Lord God, behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth, by thy great power and stretched-out arm; and there is nothing too hard for thee. The Great, the Mighty God, the Lord of Hosts, is his name, great in counsel, and mighty in working. And thus our Saviour himself: Mat. 11:25. I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth. And so the Apostle: Acts 4:24. Lord, thou art God, that hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.

And, thus to consider seriously of and reverently to express the infinitely glorious attributes of God, is an excellent means to compose us into a holy fear and awe of God; such as becomes vile dust and ashes to be affected with, when it stands in the presence of its great Lord and Creator. Only here let us remember, that we dwell

not so long upon the titles and attributes of God, nor run so much out into preface, as to forget our errand unto him.

SECONDLY. Next after the Preface, we have the Petitions following in their order. Of these, some reckon six, others seven: but which soever we take, the matter is not great. They may all be reduced under two general heads.

First, Such as respect God's glory.

Secondly, Such as respect ourselves and others. The three first respect God's glory; and the three or four last our own good: and that either temporal or spiritual. Temporal, in begging at God's hands our daily bread: spiritual, in desiring both the pardon of and deliverance from sin.

And here again we may observe the admirable order and method of this prayer; in that our Saviour hath placed the petition, which refers to our temporal good, as it were in the very midst and centre of it, it being encompassed round about with petitions for heavenly and spiritual blessings. And this may intimate to us, that we are only to bait at the world, in our passage and journey to heaven; that we ought to begin with spirituals and end with spirituals: but only to take up and refresh ourselves a little with our daily bread in our way.

THIRDLY. In the Doxology, or Praise, there are four things contained.

First, God's Sovereignty: Thine is the kingdom.

Secondly, God's Omnipotency: and the power.

Thirdly, God's Excellency: and the glory.

Fourthly, The Eternity and Unchangeableness of them, and of all God's other attributes, noted to us in that expression, for ever.

FOURTHLY. Here is the ratifying particle, Amen, added as a seal to the whole prayer: and it importeth a desire to have that confirmed or granted, which we have prayed for.

And thus Benaiah, when he had received instructions from David concerning the establishing of Solomon in the kingdom, answereth thereto Amen; and explains it; 1 Kings 1:36. The Lord God of my lord the king say so too.

So that when we add this word, Amen, at the end and close of our prayers, it is as much as if we had said, The Lord God say so too; or the Lord grant these requests: for the proper signification of Amen, is, so be it, or so it is, or so it shall be: the former notes our desires; the latter, our confidence and assurance of being heard.

Now of all these four parts, of which this Prayer is composed, I shall speak in their order.

PREFACE

I. Let us consider the PREFACE, in these words, Our Father, which art in heaven.

And here God is described by two of his most eminent attributes, his Grace and Glory, his Goodness and his Greatness: by the one, in that he is styled, Our Father; by the other, in that he is said to be in heaven. And both these are most sweetly tempered together, to beget in us a holy mixture of filial boldness and awful reverence, which are so necessary to the sanctifying of God's name in all our addresses to him.

We are commanded to come to the Throne of Grace with boldness: Heb. 4:16: and, yet, to serve God acceptably, with reverence and with fear: Heb. 12:28. Yea, and indeed the very calling of it a Throne of Grace, intimates both these affections at once. It is a Throne, and

therefore requires awe and reverence; but it is a Throne of Grace too, and therefore permits holy freedom and confidence.

And so we find all along in the prayers of the saints, how they mix the consideration of God's mercy and his majesty together, in the very prefaces and preparations to their prayers. So Neh. 1:5. Lord God of Heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him. So Dan. 9:4. O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping covenant and mercy for them that love him.

Now this excellent mixture of awful and encouraging attributes will keep us from both the extremes, of despair on the one hand, and of presumption on the other. He is our Father: and this may correct the despairing fear, which might otherwise seize us upon the consideration of his majesty and glory. And he is likewise infinitely glorious, a God whose throne is in the highest heavens, and the earth his footstool: and this may correct the presumptuous irreverence, which else the consideration of God, as our Father, might perhaps embolden us unto.

Now here I shall, first, speak of the relation of God unto us as a Father; and, then, of the place of his glory and residence, in heaven: and of both but briefly; for I must not dwell upon every particular.

i. To begin with THE RELATION OF GOD TO US, AS A FATHER.

1. Now God is a Father three ways.

(1) God is a Father by Eternal Generation.

(2) By Temporal Creation and Providence.

(3) By Spiritual Regeneration and Adoption.

(1) God is a Father by Eternal Generation: having, by an inconceivable and ineffable way, begotten his Son, God co-equal, co-eternal with himself; and therefore called, the only begotten Son of

God: John 3:16. Thus God is a Father, only to our Lord Jesus Christ according to his Divine Nature. And whensoever this title, Father, is given to God, with relation to the Eternal Sonship of our Lord Jesus Christ, it denotes only the First Person in the ever Blessed Trinity; who is, therefore, chiefly and especially called the Father.

(2) God is a Father by temporal Creation, as he gives a being and existence to his creatures; creating those whom he made rational after his own image and similitude. And, therefore, God is said to be a Father of spirits: Heb. 12:9. And the angels are called the sons of God: Job 1:6. There was a day, when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord. And so, Adam, upon the account of his creation, is called the son of God: Luke 3:38 where the Evangelist runs up the genealogy of mankind till it terminates in God, who was the son of Adam, who was the son of God.

(3) God is said to be a Father by Spiritual Regeneration and Adoption. And so all true believers are said to be the sons of God, and to be born of God: John 1:12, 13. To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed on his name: Which were born, not of the will of man, but of God. So, Rom. 8:15, 16 we are said to receive the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. For the Spirit itself witnesseth with our spirits, that we are the children of God.

Now in these two last significations, this expression, Our Father which art in heaven, is to be understood: and so they denote, not any one particular Person of the Blessed Trinity; but it is a relative attribute, belonging equally to all the Three Persons. God is the Father of all men, by Creation and Providence; and he is especially the Father of the faithful, by Regeneration and Adoption. Now, as these actions of creation, regeneration, and adoption, are common to the whole Trinity, so likewise is the title of Father. God, the First Person in the Blessed Trinity, is indeed eminently called the Father, but not in respect of us, but in respect of Christ, his Only Begotten Son from all eternity. In respect of us, the whole Trinity is our Father

which is in heaven, both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: and, in praying to our Father, we pray to them all jointly; for Christ, the Second Person in the Trinity, is expressly called the Father: Isa. 9:6. Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father. And we are said to be born of the Spirit: John 3:5. Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit.

Now that God should be pleased to take this into his glorious style, even to be called Our Father, it may teach us,

First. To admire his infinite condescension, and our own unspeakable privilege and dignity: 1 John 3:1. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.

Indeed, for God to be a Father by Creation and Providence, though it be a mercy, yet is no privilege: for, in that sense, he is *parens rerum*, "The common parent of all things;" yea, the Father of Devils themselves, and of those wretches who are as wicked and shall be as miserable as Devils. But, that God should be thy Father by Regeneration and Adoption, that he should make thee his son through his Only Begotten Son; that he should rake up such dirt and filth as thou art, and lay it in his bosom; that he should take aliens and strangers near unto himself, and adopt enemies and rebels into his family, register their names in the book of life, make them heirs of glory, co-heirs with Jesus Christ his Eternal Son, as the Apostle admiringly recounts it, Rom. 8:17 this is both mercy and miracle together.

Secondly. It should teach us to walk worthy of this high and honourable relation into which we are taken; and to demean ourselves as children ought to do, in all holy obedience to his commands; with fear and reverence to his authority, and an humble submission to his will.

This God challengeth at our hands, as being our Father: Mal. 1:6. If I be a Father, where is mine honour? and, 1 Pet. 1:17. If ye call on the Father, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. And, likewise, by giving thee leave to style him by this name of Father, he puts thee in remembrance, that thou shouldest endeavour, by a holy life and conversation, to be like thy Father; and so approve it to thine own conscience and to all others, that thou art indeed a child, a son of God.

Thirdly. Is God thy Father? This then may give us abundance of assurance, that we shall receive at his hands what we ask, if it be good for us; and, if it be not, we have no reason to complain, that we are not heard, unless he should turn our prayers into curses.

And this very consideration seems to be the reason, why our Saviour chooseth this among all God's titles and attributes to prefix before this prayer. And, indeed, it is the most proper name by which we can style God in our prayers unto him: for this name of Father emboldens faith; and is as a pledge and pawn beforehand, that our requests shall be heard and granted: and, therefore, our Saviour, for the confirmation of our faith, argues very strongly from this very title of Father: Mat. 7:9, 10, 11. What man is there of you, whom if his son ask him for bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good things when your children ask them, how much more shall my Father give good things to them that ask him? Indeed, it is a most encouraging argument: for, if the bowels of an earthly parent, who yet many times is humorous, and whose tenderest mercies are but cruelties in respect of God, if his compassions will not suffer his children to be defeated in their reasonable and necessary requests; how much less will God, who is love and goodness itself, and who hath inspired all parental affections into other fathers, suffer his children to return ashamed, when they beg of him those things which are most agreeable to his will and to their wants!

What dost thou then, O Christian, complaining of thy wants, and sighing under thy burthens? Is not God thy Father? Go and boldly lay open thy case unto him: his bowels will certainly roll and yearn towards thee. Is it Spiritual Blessings thou wantest? Spread thy requests before him: for, as he is thy Father, so he is the God of all Grace, and will give unto thee of his fulness; for God loves that his children should be like him. Or is it Temporal Mercies thou wantest? why, he is thy Father, and he is the father of mercies and the God of all comfort: and why shouldest thou go so dejected and disconsolate, who hast a Father so able and so willing to relieve and supply thee? Only beware, that thou askest not stones for bread, nor scorpions for fish; and then ask what thou wilt for thy good, and thou shalt receive it.

Fourthly. Is God thy Father? This then may encourage us against despair, under the sense of our manifold sins against God, and departures from him: for he will certainly receive us upon our repentance and returning to him.

This very apprehension was that, which wrought upon the Prodigal: Luke 15:18. I will arise, and go to my father. The consideration of our own guilt and vileness, without the consideration of God's infinite mercy, tends only to widen the breach between him and us: for those, that are altogether hopeless, will sin the more implacably and bitterly against God; like those the prophet mentions, Jer. 2:25 that said there was no hope, and therefore they would persist in their wickedness. But, now, to consider that God is our Father; and that, though we have cast off the duty and obedience of children, yet, upon our submission, he will bid us welcome and instate us again in his favour; this, to the ingenuous spirit of a Christian, is a sweet and powerful motive, to reduce him from his wandering and straying. For it will work, both upon his shame and upon his hope: upon his shame, that ever he should offend so gracious a Father; and upon his hope, that those offences shall be forgiven him through that very mercy, that he hath abused. Thus we read, Jer. 3:4, 5. Wilt thou not henceforth cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth?

Will he reserve his anger for ever? will he keep it unto the end? noting, that, when we plead with God under the winning name of Father, his anger cannot long last; but his bowels of mercy will, at last, overcome the sentiments of his wrath and justice.

And thus much concerning the endearing title of Father, which our Saviour directs us to use in our prayers unto God.

2. The next thing observable, is the particle Our, Our Father: which notes to us, that God is not only the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, but he is the Father of all men. He is the Father of all by Creation and Providence. And, therefore, we have the interrogation, Mal. 2:10. Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? But he is especially the Father of the faithful, by Regeneration and Adoption: who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God: John 1:13.

This, therefore should teach us,

(1) To esteem one another as brethren.

Outward respects, the grandeur and earthly privileges and advantages of the world, make no disparity, in God's love to us, or in our relation to him: and, therefore, howsoever thou mayest be advanced in wealth, or honour, or parts above others; yes, still, remember that they are thy brethren, as they partake of the same common nature, and much more if they partake of the same special grace. Yea, Christ himself, who is the Lord of All, is not ashamed to call them brethren: Heb. 2:11: and shalt thou, who art but an adopted son, no otherwise than the meanest saint, be ashamed of the relation? especially considering there is no eldership, nor right of first-born in the family; for they are all first-born, all kings and heirs with Christ Jesus himself.

(2) If thou art mean and low in the world, this should teach thee to be well content with thy present state and condition; for God is thy Father, and a Father to thee equally with the greatest.

There is not the highest person upon earth, but, if he belong to God, prefers that relation above all his other titles: if he can write Prince, King, or Emperor, and can afterwards subjoin a Child of God, all his other titles stand but for a cypher with him. This, O Christian, how mean, how despised soever thou art, this is thy privilege; and a privilege it is that equals thee with David, with Solomon, and with all the great ones of the earth, that ever laid down their diadems and sceptres at the feet of God. What says the Apostle? Gal. 3:28. There is neither bond nor free, but all are one in Christ Jesus.

(3) Since when we pray we must say, Our Father, this teacheth us, to interest one another in our prayers.

Our Father would not have us selfish, so much as in our prayers; but, in the very entrance into them, we are put in mind of the communion of saints, to beg those blessings for all that belong to God, which we ask for ourselves. For, as Christ hath made us all Kings, so he hath made all Priests to God and his Father: now the office of a priest is intercession; and, therefore, when we go to God, we should bear upon our breasts the name of our brethren, and present them before God, through the intercession and mediation of Jesus Christ our great High-Priest, that both we and they may be accepted of God.

And this we ought to do, both in public and private. It is true, in our secret prayers we may pray particularly for ourselves; and we have frequent instances for it in Scripture: yet ought we, in every prayer that we make to God, to be mindful of the state and condition of our brethren. Yea, and it is very lawful and commendable, even in secret between God and our own souls, in those cases that are common to us with the rest of God's saints and people, to join them in our prayers; and, although we are all alone, yet to say Our Father: for we find Daniel praying, Dan. 9:17. O our God, when yet he was in secret; O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant. And this is to shew that near and entire communion, which ought to be between all the saints; praying with and praying for all the members of the body of Jesus Christ, and esteeming their interest as our own.

(4) This shews us likewise the high privilege of the children of God, that they have a stock of prayers going to heaven for them, from all their fellow-saints throughout the world; yea, from those whom they never knew, whom they never heard of, yet are they continually appearing before the Throne of Grace on their behalf.

And thou, who wouldst think it a great favour if thou wert interested in the prayers of some who are mighty in prayer, and whom thou hast begged to recommend thy condition to God, mayest here have abundant comfort, in that thou art nearly concerned and interested in all the prayers that are put up to God throughout the whole world, by all those that are most prevalent at the Throne of Grace: yea, which is more, thou hast an interest in all the prayers, that have ever been preferred to heaven by all the saints from the beginning of the world unto this very day; for not only this present Church, but the Church in all ages is the body of Christ, and every member of it imitates the pattern of Christ's intercession: John 17:20. Neither pray I for these alone, but for all those that shall believe in me. The difference is, that Christ's intercession was authoritative; theirs, only charitable.

And thus much shall suffice to be spoken concerning God's goodness and mercy, expressed in those words, Our Father.

ii. The next expression SETS FORTH HIS GLORY AND GREATNESS: which art in heaven.

"But is not God every where present? Doth he not fill heaven and earth, and all things? Yea, is it not said, that the heaven of heavens cannot contain him? How then are our prayers, to be directed to God in heaven only, since he is as well on earth as in heaven? And were he only in heaven, and not every where present on earth, it would be in vain for us to pray, because our prayers could never reach his ears, nor arrive to his notice."

I answer, It is true, God is every where present; and all that we think, we think in him; and all that we speak, we speak unto him: he understands the silent motion of our lips, when we whisper a prayer to him in our closets; yea, the secret motions of our hearts, when we only think a prayer. Therefore, when our Saviour bids us direct our prayers to our Father in heaven, this doth not imply, that God is no where present, or that he no where bears prayer, but only in heaven.

But this expression is used,

1. Because Heaven is the most glorious place of God's residence, where he hath more especially established his Throne of Grace, and there sits upon it.

Now, because it is a most glorious and majestic thing to hear the suits and receive the petitions that are tendered to him; therefore the Scripture ascribes it to the most glorious and majestic place, and that is to heaven. And, therefore, we are commanded to pray to our Father which is in Heaven, to keep alive a due sense of his Majesty upon our hearts. He would not have us think it a mean and trivial thing to have our prayers heard; and, therefore, he represents himself to us arrayed in all his glory, and sitting upon his throne in the highest heavens; willing to be thought a God never more glorious, than when he is a God hearing prayer.

2. Our prayers are directed to our Father in Heaven, because, though he hears them wheresoever they are uttered, yet he no where hears them with acceptance but only in heaven.

And the reason is, because our prayers are acceptable, only as they are presented before God through the intercession of Christ. Now Christ performs his mediatory office only in heaven: for he performs it in both natures, as he is God and Man; and so he is only in heaven. And, therefore, we are still concerned to pray to our Father in Heaven. God, indeed, hears us upon earth; for there is not a word in our tongue, but, behold, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether: but this

will not avail us, unless God hears our prayers a second time, as repeated over in the intercession of Jesus Christ, and perfumed with the much incense which he offers up with the prayers of all the saints.

Since then we are directed to pray to our Father, which is in Heaven, this,

(1) May inform us, that there is no circumstance of time or place, that can hinder us from praying.

For heaven is over thee, and open to thee, wheresoever thou art. There is no clime so remote, which is not overspread with that pavilion: and thou art in all places equally near to heaven; and God is in it, sitting upon his Throne of Grace, to receive and answer thy requests, wheresoever thou offerest them up unto him. And, therefore, we find, in the Scripture, some praying in God's House of Prayer, some making their houses houses of prayer: St. Peter prayed on the house-top, when he fell into his trance; Isaac, in the open fields; our Saviour, on a mountain; Jonah, in a whale's belly; Abraham's servant, in his journey; and Asa, in the midst of a tumultuous and bloody battle. Yea, whatsoever thou art doing thou mayest pray, so long as heaven is over thee and God in it: whatsoever company thou art in, whatsoever employment thou art about, thou mayest still pray; for thy Father, that is in Heaven, still hears thee. He hears thy thoughts and thy desires, when either they are too big, or when it is not expedient, to articulate them into words.

Indeed, the voice in prayer is not always necessary; nay, sometimes it is not convenient: yea, it is never necessary, but only upon three accounts:

[1] As that, which God requires should be employed in his service: for this was a great end why it was given us, that therewith we might bless and praise God. With the tongue, saith the Apostle, we bless God, even the Father: Jam. 3:9. Or,

[2] When, in secret, it may be a means to help to raise up our affections; keeping it still within the bounds of decency and privacy.
Or,

[3] In our joining with others, it helps likewise to raise and quicken their affections.

Otherwise, were it not for these three reasons, the voice is no more necessary to make our wants and desires known unto God, than it is to make them known to our own hearts. For thy Father, which is in Heaven, is not certainly excluded from any part of the earth: he is with thee, and lays his ear to thy very heart, and hears the voice of thy thoughts when thy tongue is silent: and thou mayest, whatsoever work or business thou art doing, dart up a prayer and a winged desire unto him; which shall be as acceptable and effectual, as the more solemn performance of this duty at stated times.

(2) Is thy Father in Heaven? Thy prayers then should be made so as to pierce the heavens where God is.

But how can this be done, since the distance between heaven and us is so infinite?

This is not to be done by the intension of raising thy voice, but by the intension of raising thy zeal and spirit, for zeal and affection is a strong bow, that will shoot a petition through heaven itself. Let all thy petitions therefore be ardent, and carry fire in them; and this will cause them to ascend to the element of pure celestial fire, from whence thy breast was at first inflamed.

It is a most remarkable place, Exod. 14:15. When the Red Sea was before the Israelites, and the Egyptians pursuing them behind, and unpassable mountains on each side, the people murmuring, and Moses their captain and guide in an unextricable streight, we read not of any vocal prayer that Moses then put up; and yet God calls to him, Why criest thou unto me? A prayer it was, not so much as accented, not so much as whispered; and yet so strong and powerful,

that it pierced heaven, and was louder in the ears of God than the voice of thunder.

And thus much shall suffice to be spoken concerning the Preface of this Prayer, Our Father which art in Heaven.

PETITIONS

II. Let us now proceed unto the PETITIONS themselves: the first three of which relate unto God's Glory; the other, to our Temporal and Spiritual Good.

Of those, which relate to God's glory, the first desireth the advancement of this glory itself; Hallowed be thy Name: the second, the means of effecting it; Thy Kingdom come: the third, the manifestation of it; Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven.

FIRST PETITION

i. I begin with the FIRST of these, Hallowed be thy Name.

In the explication of which, we shall enquire,

1. What is to be understood by the Name of God.
2. What it is to Hallow this name of God.
3. What is contained in this petition, and what we pray for when we say, Hallowed be thy Name.

1. What is meant by the Name of God?

To this I answer, that the Name of God is any perfection ascribed to him, whereby he hath been pleased to make himself known to the

sons of men. For names are given to this very intent, that they might declare what the thing is, to which that name doth belong. Thus, when God had created Adam and made him lord of this visible world, he caused the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air to pass before him, as It were to do homage to their new sovereign, and to receive names from him; which, according to the plenitude and perfection of his knowledge, did then aptly serve to express their several natures, and were not only names but definitions too. So, when mention is made in Scripture of the Name of God, it signifies some expression of his Infinite Essence: in which he is pleased graciously to condescend to the weakness of our capacity, and to spell out himself to us, sometimes by one perfection, and sometimes by another; since it is utterly impossible for us finite creatures, to have a full and comprehensive knowledge of that being which is infinite: for so, God is only known to himself; being, as infinite to all others, so finite to his own knowledge and understanding. And, therefore, he hath displayed before us his Name, to give us some help and advantage to conceive somewhat of him; though his nature and essence are in themselves incomprehensible to us, and shall be so for ever, even in heaven itself.

Now this Name of God may well be distinguished into two sorts: his Titles, and his Attributes.

(1) His Titles are his name.

And so he is in Scripture frequently called Jehovah, God, Lord, Creator, and the like. And most, of these his titles are relative, respecting us: so his name of Creator denotes his infinite power, giving being to all things: Lord and King signify his dominion and authority, in disposing and governing all that he hath made: Father signifies his care and goodness, in providing for his creatures; Redeemer, his mercy and grace, in delivering them from temporal evils and calamities, or especially from eternal death and destruction.

Now these Relative Titles, though they properly belong unto God, yet are they not absolutely essential to him; but connote a respect unto the creatures. And, therefore, though, before the creation of the world, God was for ever the same Infinitely Blessed Being that he now is, and by the creation of it no accession was made to his infinitely perfect nature, (for in him there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning; but he is yesterday, and to-day, and: the same for ever): yet could he not be called by the name of Creator, or Lord, or Redeemer, or Father (unless in respect of his Eternal Son); but all these titles result from the relations wherein we stand unto God, of creatures, subjects, and children.

These names, therefore, had their beginning, some in the beginning of time, and some since; and yet they do very properly signify unto us that God, who is without beginning or end.

(2) As his titles, so his Attributes are his name.

And these are of two sorts, either Incommunicable or Communicable.

[1] The Incommunicable Attributes of God.

And these are those, which are so proper to the Divine Essence, that there is scarce the least foot-steps or resemblance of them to be found in any of the creatures.

And such are his Eternity: which denotes a duration, as well without beginning as without end: for, though there are some creatures, whose beings shall never have a period set to them, as angels and men; yet there is no creature, that never had no beginning of its existence.

And so God's Infiniteness and Immensity, filling all places and exceeding all: which was most excellently set forth in that most significant, yet unintelligible paradox of the Heathen Philosopher,

That God was a circle, whose centre was every where, but its circumference no where.

His Simplicity also, excluding all composition and mixture; which no creature doth: for take the most simple of them, as angels and the separate souls of men, yet they are at least compounded in their essences, and powers, and acts; for the power of understanding is not the soul, nor the act of understanding the power: therefore, in these, there is one thing and another. But it is not so in God: but whatsoever is in God is God himself, being one most pure and simple act.

Hence follows his Immutability and Unchangeableness; there being nothing in God, which was not from all eternity.

And, in the same rank, are his Omnipotency and All-sufficiency, his Omniscience and Independency, and the like: which are incommunicable attributes; and cannot, without blasphemy, be ascribed unto any of the creatures.

[2] There are other Attributes of God, that are Communicable; and are so called, because they may, in some analogy and resemblance, be found in the creatures also.

So, to be Holy, Just, Merciful, True, Powerful, and the like, are the names of God; and yet may be ascribed to the creatures. So, in that most triumphant declaration of his name to Moses, Exod. 34:5, 6, 7 we find that the most of the letters that compose it may be found, in some degrees, even among men. The Lord proclaimed his name, The Lord God; merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. Now this name of God merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness, which he seems so much to delight and glory in, and which he adorns with such fair flourishes, he himself would have us to own and imitate: Luke 6:36, Be ye merciful as your Father is merciful. To aspire to a resemblance with God in his

incommunicable attributes and name, is a most horrid and blasphemous presumption; a pride, that cast the devils from heaven to hell: but to aspire to a resemblance unto God in his communicable name, is the tendency of grace, and the effect of the Spirit of God, conforming us in some measure to his purity, and making us partakers in this sense of the divine nature. And, therefore, it is pressed upon us, Levit. 19:2. You shall be holy: for I, the Lord your God, am holy: and, Mat. 5:48. Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father, which is in heaven, is perfect.

Now these Communicable Attributes of God, though they may in some respects be found in the creatures, yet then are they properly the Names of God, when they are applied to him free from all those imperfections with which they are necessarily attended in the creatures. Abstract them from all imperfections, and we may apply them to God as his Name.

Now these imperfections are of two sorts, either privative or negative.

A creature is then said to be Privatively imperfect, when he falls short of what he ought to be. And so are the best of men imperfect in this life. Merciful they are; but still retain a mixture of cruelty: patient they are; but still they have impatience mixed with it: holy they are; but yet not spotless as the Law requires them to be. And, therefore, in ascribing holiness, mercy, and patience unto God, we must be sure to separate from them all such imperfections as are found in us, through the mixture of the contrary corruptions with those graces; otherwise they will be so far from being the name of God, that they will prove blasphemous derogatives from him.

Neither is this enough, but we must remove all negative imperfections also. Now a creature is said to be Negatively imperfect, when, though it hath all the perfections that are due unto it or required from it, yet it hath not all perfection that is possible or imaginable. Thus, the holy angels and the spirits of just men in

heaven, although they are made perfect so as to exclude all privative imperfection, their holiness and their graces there being as perfect as they should be, and as God requires from them: yet have they a negative imperfection; that is, there is some perfection of those graces and of that holiness further possible, which they have not, nor is it within the sphere of their natures to attain unto. In which sense it is said, Job 4:18. He charged his angels with folly: that is, not as if they wanted any wisdom or righteousness that was due unto their natures; but they had not all that wisdom that was possible, and so were at least negatively imperfect.

In all perfections of the creatures, whether angels or men, be they never so great or excellent, there are three imperfections that will necessarily attend them.

1st. That they have them not originally from themselves; but derivatively from another, who is the Author and Embellisher of their Natures.

2dly. That they have them not Unchangeably; but may not only increase but decrease, yea or utterly lose them.

3dly. That they have them not Infinitely; but in a stinted and limited measure.

Now in all the communicable attributes of the Divine Nature, remove from them these three negative imperfections, and then apply them to God, and they become his proper name. God is holy, wise, powerful, just, merciful, true, &c. and so are likewise some of his most excellent creatures, whom he hath made like unto himself. But then the difference between God and them consists in this, that his wisdom and the rest of his attributes are originally from him; theirs, derivatively from him: his, infinite and boundless; theirs, limited and stinted: his, invariable and unchangeable; theirs, subject to mutations, and decays, and total abolition. So that, in these three respects, even the communicable attributes of God are themselves

incommunicable: and so they are his Name, whereby he is known and differenced from all other beings whatsoever.

But may it not be here said to me, as it was to Manoah, Judges 13:18. Why askest thou after my name, seeing it is secret and wonderful?

Indeed, we can no more find out the name of God to perfection, than we can his nature and essence; for both are infinite and unsearchable. And there are two expressions in Scripture, that make this knowledge impossible; the one of them quite contrary to the other. One is, that God dwelleth in that light, to which no man can approach: 1 Tim. 6:16. *Scrutator, majestatis opprimatur à gloriâ:* "He, that will too busily pry into majesty, shall be oppressed and dazzled with glory." And the other is, that he dwells in thick darkness: 2 Chron. 6:1. Both implying the same impossibility of searching out the Almighty to perfection; as Job speaks, ch. 11:7.

But, though this comprehensive knowledge be impossible, yet God hath given us hints and traces of himself, by which we may discover enough for our adoration, though not perhaps for our satisfaction.

And there are two ways, whereby God hath made known himself and his name unto us: and they are by his works, and by, his word.

(1st.) We may spell out God's name by his Works.

And to this end serve those two great capital letters of Heaven and Earth, the Air and Sea: yea, there is no one creature, how vile and contemptible soever it be, but it reads us lectures of the power, wisdom and goodness of the great Creator. In which sense the Apostle tells us, Rom. 1:20. The invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.

(2dly.) More expressly and distinctly by his Word: for the Scriptures are *Nomenclatura Dei*.

By these we come to a more clear and evident knowledge of these attributes of God, which the works of nature held forth to us in a more obscure and confused manner. And by this, likewise, we attain to the knowledge of those perfections of God, which the works of Creation and Providence could never have instructed us in: as of a Trinity in Unity, of the Eternal Generation, and Temporal Incarnation of the Son of God, of the whole Mystery of Religion, and the tenor of the Covenant of Grace; which are things, that could never have been known but by Divine Revelation.

Indeed we may, from the works of God alone, gather knowledge enough of him to make us inexcusable, if we worship him not as God: for so did the heathens, as the Apostle speaks, in the forecited place; Rom. 1:20. But it is only from the word, that we know so much of God, as to make us eternally blessed and happy. Here, he hath displayed his name, the Lord God, gracious and merciful; pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin. Here, alone, hath he made known himself to be our Father in Jesus Christ; and appointed the spiritual worship of himself, that might prepare us for the eternal enjoyment of him in glory.

So that now we see what is meant by the Name of God; his titles as King, Lord, Creator, Father, Redeemer, and the like. And his attributes, both communicable, as Justice, Holiness, Wisdom, Mercy and Truth, &c. and incommunicable, as Infinite, Eternal, Unchangeable, Omnipotent, Independent, and such like: and that both this name, both of Titles and Attributes, are made known to us, either by the Works of God or by his Word.

2. Let us, in the next place, enquire what it is to hallow this Name of God.

To hallow, is nothing else but to sanctify or make holy: so that hallowed be thy name, is no other than, Let thy Name be made Holy.

But here may be a question.

"How can creatures be said to make God holy, whereas it is God that makes them holy?"

I answer, there is a three fold way of hallowing or sanctifying a thing or person. One by dedication: a second, by infusion: and a third, by declaration.

(1) A thing may be hallowed or made holy, by Dedication; setting them a part for holy uses and services.

So the first-born are said to be sanctified to the Lord; Exod. 13:2: and that, because, among men, the first-born were to be priests unto the Lord; and, among beasts, they were to be sacrificed. And, thus, Aaron and his sons and the whole tribe of Levi, whom God took in exchange for the first-born, are said to be consecrated and sanctified, Exod. 28:41: and many more instances might be given to the same purpose, were it needful. And, thus, at least, we are said to be sanctified by baptism; Eph. 5:26: that is, we are, by that holy ordinance, set apart and consecrated to the service of God. Thus one creature may sanctify and make another holy; namely, by dedication or separation to some sacred use and service: and so the Ministers of Christ do sanctify and hallow the elements in the Holy Communion; setting them apart from common and ordinary use to that Blessed Mystery.

(2) There is a sanctification or hallowing, by Infusion or Implanting the real principles and habits of holiness into that which is hallowed.

And, thus, God sanctifies his elect, by infusing of his grace into them; and making them holy, in some measure and similitude like himself. So our Saviour prays, John 17:17. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. And the Apostle, 1 Thess. 5:23 prays, The very God of Peace sanctify you wholly.

In neither of these two senses is God's name to be sanctified or hallowed by us; for, thus to pray, were to blaspheme.

(3) There is a sanctifying, by Declaration; when we acknowledge and reverence that as holy, that is indeed so.

And thus only it is, that creatures may sanctify the name of God the Creator. So we have it used, Isa. 29:23. They shall sanctify my Name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel.

Now, thus to sanctify the name of God, is the very same with that other expression that commonly occurs in Scripture, of glorifying God. We can add nothing to his infinite perfections, nor to the lustre and brightness of his crown: yet then are we said to sanctify and glorify God, when, in our most reverend thoughts, we observe and admire his holiness, and the bright coruscations of his attributes; and when we endeavour, by all holy ways, to declare them unto others, that they may observe and admire them with us, and give unto God that holy veneration which is due unto him.

Thus we see what the name of God is, and what it is to sanctify or hallow this name.

3. Let us now consider what is contained in this petition, "Hallowed be thy Name."

And, here,

(1) In that Christ hath taught us to make this the first petition in our prayer to God, we may learn that the glory of God is to be preferred by us before all other things whatsoever.

And, indeed, that, which God hath made the last and utmost of all his ends, and hath appointed to be the highest and utmost of ours, should be the first of all our thoughts and endeavours; and preferred before whatsoever else is dearest unto us, yea before our very lives themselves.

This was our Saviour's practice: John 12:27, 28. Father, save me from this hour; but, for this cause, came I unto this hour. Father,

glorify thy Name. As if he had said, "Though life be naturally dear; and the cup, which I am to drink, very bitter; and the wrath, that I am to undergo, heavy and infinite: yet all these things are not so considerable to me as thy glory; and, therefore, though it be by agonies, by death, by the cross, yet, Father, glorify thy Name."

The same mind should dwell in us, likewise: and we should hereby be instructed, to desire and pray for other things, with limitations and restrictions; but for the glory of God, absolutely and simply. "Father, glorify thy Name; and if, in the counsel of thy will and the course of thy providence, it cannot be otherwise than by my suffering or sorrow, yea or death itself: yet, Father, even in this, glorify thy Name; and, out of my very ruins, erect thou a trophy and monument to thy praise. Be thou hallowed and sanctified, although at my cost, and with the loss of all."

(2) In that this petition is placed in the beginning of the Lord's Prayer, it intimates to us, that, in the very beginning and entrance of our prayers, we ought to beg assistance from God, so to perform holy duties that God may be glorified, and his name sanctified by us in it. It is a good and needful request, to beg of God the aid and help of his Spirit, to enable us to hallow his name in the succeeding requests we are to make.

(3) Observe, that when we present this petition before God, we beg three things of him.

First. Such grace for ourselves, as may enable us to sanctify and glorify him.

Secondly. Graces likewise for others, to enable them thereunto.

Thirdly. That God would, by his Almighty Providence, direct and overrule all things, both good and evil, to the advancement of his own glory.

[1] We beg of God, that he would bestow upon us such graces, as are requisite to glorify him in the world.

We beg knowledge and understanding of him, of his nature, of his will, and of his works: for we cannot glorify that God, whom we are ignorant of.

We beg likewise patience and contentment in all estates, thankfulness for every providence; graces, that do highly tend to the promoting of God's honour and glory.

We beg faith, likewise; whereby we give the highest and greatest glory to God, that mortal men are able to ascribe: for, to trust upon his word, and to build upon his promises, is to honour his truth and faithfulness. And, therefore, we have that expression, Rom. 4:20 that Abraham was strong in faith, giving glory to God.

We beg also, that our speech may be savoury, and such as may minister grace to the hearers.

And, lastly, an humble, blameless, and exemplary life: for, by our good works, we are to glorify our Heavenly Father.

I cannot stand to insist upon these things, particularly; because my design is only to give you, briefly and summarily, an account of what is contained in this most excellent prayer, that you may understand what you pray for, when you present these petitions before God.

[2] We herein beg of God, that he would so overrule all things whatsoever, that his glory may be secured; nay, promoted by them: and, therefore, whatsoever falls out, we ought to say, Hallowed be thy Name by it.

Hereby we pray

That the gifts and eminent graces of God's children may redound unto his glory; that they may not be puffed up with them, nor ascribe

the credit of them to themselves:

That the peace and prosperity of the Church of Christ may turn to the glory of God; that outward mercies may not make them careless and forgetful of his service and honour:

That the sins and failings of God's people may eventually turn to the glory of God, which seem directly to blot and stain it; and that, by their repentance and confessions, they may give glory to him whom they have offended, and satisfaction to them whom they have scandalized:

That all the afflictions and troubles of his people may, in the end, tend unto his glory as well as their good; by declaring his power in supporting them, and his goodness and mercy in delivering them:

That all the devices and conspiracies, the rage and fury, of the enemies of his Church, may, contrary to their intentions, be overswayed to advance his honour; and that the wrath of man may praise him, by shewing forth his power, wisdom, and goodness, either in restraining or overturning it:

And, finally, That all creatures both in heaven and in earth, yea, all the works of God's hands, should glorify God in the several stations in which he hath set them: some, by being the manifestations of his attributes; and some, the manifesters of them: brutes and senseless creatures passively declaring the glory of their great Creator; and rational and intelligent creatures shewing it forth actively; and all concurring in this great work, for which all were made, even the glory and praise of God.

Thus we see what a large and copious request we present before God, when we pray that his Name should be Hallowed.

Which that it may be, let us ourselves endeavour to be holy: for it is impossible that an unholy heart or life should sanctify a holy God. Whilst we persevere in our wicked conversations, we do but mock

God and ourselves, when we desire to sanctify that name of his, which we daily profane and pollute: nay, indeed, we do but pray for our own destruction; even that God would sanctify his name, part whereof is his just and dreadful severity upon all those, and consequently upon ourselves, who defile and profane it.

And thus I have finished the First Petition, Hallowed be thy name.

SECOND PETITION

ii. The SECOND petition follows: Thy kingdom come.

This now very aptly succeeds upon the former, because this is the best way and means to hallow God's Name, by enlarging his kingdom, and bringing in many to submit to his sceptre and government. For, praise waiteth for God in Sion: Ps. 65:1 and, his Name is great in Israel: Ps. 76:1.

Now, here, for our clearer proceeding, we must distinguish of God's kingdom: and then shew you how this kingdom comes: and, lastly, what we pray for in presenting this petition to God, thy kingdom come.

1. We must distinguish of God's kingdom.

Now the kingdom of God is two-fold; either universal, or more particular and peculiar: the one is his Kingdom of Power; the other is his Kingdom of Grace.

(1) His Universal Kingdom, which extends over all things in heaven and earth, yea and hell itself.

And, so, he is the sole monarch of the whole world: and all the princes and potentates of the earth are but his viceroys and vicegerents, that govern under and should govern for him: for he is that Blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, as the Apostle stiles him, 1 Tim. 6:15 and his kingdom ruleth over all, Ps. 103:19. It is true, in this Universal Kingdom there are many rebels, that would not have him to reign over them: many, that daily rise up in arms, break his laws, defy his justice, and reject his mercy; many, that, were their power equal to their malice, would dethrone and depose him from his sovereignty. Whole legions of Infernal Spirits are continually mustering up all their forces, and

drawing wretched sinful men into the conspiracy: and their quarrel is for no less than dominion and empire; who shall be king, God or Satan: yet all their attempts are but vain and frustrate; and, in spite of all their impotent rage, God's kingdom shall stand; and, as it was from everlasting, so shall it be to everlasting, for thine is the Kingdom, and Power, for ever and ever.

And, therefore, the most wicked of all God's creatures are still his subjects; not subject indeed to his laws, for so they break his bonds asunder, and cast away his cords from them: but they are subject to his power and providence; and that, in three respects: as it grants permission, as it imposeth restraints, and as it inflicts punishments.

[1] All are God's subjects, in that they can do nothing without his Permission.

Neither the Devil, that arch-creature, nor the worst of his instruments, can so much as touch a hair of our head, unless leave be granted them. Yea, we find that a whole legion of devils, after they were dispossessed of their usurped abode, durst not so much as house themselves in a herd of swine, without first craving leave of our Saviour: Mark 5:12. And all the villanies and outrages, that have ever been committed in the world, have had their pass from God's permission; without which, the lusts of men, as furious and eager as they are, must needs have miscarrying wombs and dry breasts. Nor is it any taint at all to the pure holiness of God, that he doth thus permit the wickedness of men, which, if he pleased, he might prevent: for, though we are obliged to keep others from sin when it lies in our power to do it, yet no such obligation lies upon God: though he can keep the wickedest wretch on earth from ever sinning any more; yet he permits wisely for the greater advancement of his own glory and the exercise of his peoples' graces, and at the last he punishes justly.

[2] His kingdom is over all, in that he can Bend in and Restrain his rebellious subjects as he pleaseth.

Sometimes he doth it, by cutting short their power of doing mischief: he chains up those madmen; and takes from them those swords, arrows, and fire-brands, which otherwise they might hurl abroad, both to their own and others' hurt. Sometimes, he raiseth up an opposite power against them, that they cannot break through to the commission of their sins: so the Jews would often have taken Christ and put him to death, but they feared the people, whom his miracles and cures had obliged unto him. Sometimes, Providence casts in some seasonable diversion: and thus he overruled Joseph's brethren; restraining them from killing him, by the providential passing by of merchants that way. And, sometimes, by removing the objects, against which they intended to sin: so Herod intended to put Peter to death; but, that very night, God sent his angel to work his escape, and prevented that wickedness. Many other ways there may be, of his exercising his sovereignty and dominion over his most rebellious creatures: who, though they are slaves to their lusts, yet God holds their chain in his own hand; slacking it by his permission, and sometimes straitening it by his powerful restraints. And, therefore, we find in Scripture, that God hath a certain measure for men's sins, beyond which they shall not exceed. Zech. 5 there is mention made of an Ephah of Wickedness: and this signifies to us, that, though wicked men break the bounds of his laws, yet they cannot break the bounds of his providence: God hath set them their measure, which they can neither fill, without his permission; nor exceed, because of his restraint.

[3] God declares his kingdom to be over all, by inflicting deserved Punishments on the most stubborn and rebellious sinners.

Though they transgress his laws, and provoke his holiness; yet they shall never out-brave his justice: but he will certainly humble them; if not to repentance, yet to hell and perdition: Luke 19:27. Those mine enemies, that would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me. And, therefore, we see how God hath erected trophies and monuments to the praise of his dread power and severe justice, out of the ruins of the most proud and

insolent sinners. Pharaoh, who was both the great type and instrument of the Devil, how did God break that stubborn wretch with plague upon plague, and one misery after another! for, to this very purpose, God set him up, that he might shew his signs and wonders upon him. And thus God deals with many others, in this life, by some signal and remarkable punishments; making them examples to deter others from the like crimes. But thus he deals with all his rebels in hell; for even that is one, and a large part of his kingdom: it is his prison, wherein he hath shut up all his malefactors, whom his grim serjeant, death, hath arrested: it is the great slaughter-house of souls, and the shop of justice. Devils are there his executioners; and fire and rack and torments, the due guerdon of those impenitent rebels, who, shaking off his yoke and casting off his cords from them, are crushed for ever under the insupportable load of his wrath, and bound in chains of massy darkness, reserved for the Judgment of the Great Day.

Thus we see God's Universal Kingdom consists of three great provinces; Heaven, Earth, and Hell. In heaven, only grace and mercy reigns: on earth, both mercy and justice; in the various dispensations of them towards the sons of men: in hell, pure and unmixed justice triumphs; in the eternal damnation of his apostate creatures. This is God's Universal Kingdom.

But,

(2) Besides this, God hath a Peculiar Kingdom; and that is his Kingdom of Grace: which though it be not so large and extensive as the former, yet is it far more excellent; and the royalty of it is God's singular delight.

Now this Kingdom of Grace is his Church, and may be considered two ways.

[1] In its Growth and Progress.

[2] In its Perfection and Consummation.

In the former respect, it is the Church Militant here upon earth; and, in the latter, it is the Church Triumphant in heaven: for both make up but one kingdom, under divers respects.

[1] Let us a little consider God's Kingdom here upon Earth, or the Church Militant.

And that is twofold, Visible and Invisible.

1st. The Visible Kingdom of God upon earth, are a company of people openly professing the fundamentals of religion; and those truths necessary to salvation, which God hath made known unto the world; and joining together in the external communion of ordinances.

2dly. The Invisible Kingdom, are a company of true believers, who have internal and invisible communion with God, by his Spirit and their faith.

The Visible Church is of a much larger extent than the Invisible: for it comprehends hypocrites and formalists; and all those, who have given up their names to Christ, and listed themselves under his banner, and make an outward profession of the truth, although by their lives and practices they contradict and deny what they own and profess with their lips. These belong to the kingdom of God's grace, as to the external dispensation and regiment of it: because they profess obedience to his laws, and live under the means of grace; by which many of them, through the efficacious concurrence of the Spirit of God, are translated into the Invisible Kingdom of his dear Son.

Now this Visible Kingdom of God upon earth, is but an imperfect state and condition: for, though all that are members of it are selected and taken out of the world, yet there is a great deal of mixture and dross, and many things that do offend.

For,

(1st.) There is in it a mixture of wicked persons, with those that are really holy.

Many are of this kingdom, only because their consciences are convinced of the truth of the Christian Religion, although their lives are not subject to the power of it: and these are taken out of the world, only as they are brought into the pale of the Church; and profess the name of Christ and his religion, as distinct from all other religions in the world. And therefore we find the Church, or the Kingdom of Heaven, in Scripture, frequently compared to a Net cast into the sea, gathering every kind of fish, both good and bad; Matth. 13:47: both sorts are embraced in the bosom of this net; and no perfect separation can be made, until it be drawn to shore, at the Day of Judgment; and then the good will be gathered into vessels, and the bad cast away, as it is there expressed. Again, it is compared to a Floor, wherein is both chaff and wheat; Luke 3:17: and these will be mixed together until the last discriminating day; and then shall the wheat be gathered into the garner, and the chaff burnt up with unquenchable fire. Again, it is compared to a Field, wherein there grows tares as well as corn; Mat. 13:24: which must grow together until the harvest; and then shall the tares be bound in bundles to be burnt, and the profitable grain be gathered into the barn. This hath still been and will be the mixed condition of God's Church on earth; wherein, through hypocrisy and gross dissimulation, many, that are enemies to the cross of Christ, will yet go under that cognizance, and keep up a form of godliness, though they deny and hate the power of it.

(2dly.) There is, even in the Invisible Church here on earth, a great mixture too.

Those, who have a real and vital union to Christ, and maintain a spiritual communion with him; yet even they have a sad mixture of evil with all their good, of sin with all their grace and holiness: so that the Church is still imperfect, not only from a mixture of persons, but from a mixture in persons. As we know but in part, so we love but

in part; we fear, we obey God but in part. And, with our profession, of faith, we had need also to prefer that humble petition, Mark 9:24: Lord, I believe: help thou mine unbelief.

[2] The kingdom of God may be considered in its Perfection and Consummation; and so, it is Triumphant in Heaven.

And this consists of such Glorious Angels, as never fell; and of such Glorified Saints, who are raised from their fall, and restored to a far better condition than what they lost.

This is the most glorious part of God's kingdom. Here is his throne especially established: and here it is, that he displays himself in the splendour of his majesty; being surrounded by innumerable hosts of holy angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, who continually worship before him, with a most prostrate veneration, and give honour, and glory, and praise to Him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.

Now this kingdom is altogether free from those former imperfections and mixtures. There is no mixture of good and bad together; neither is there any mixture of bad in the good: but all are holy; and all as completely holy, as creatures can be: for into the New Jerusalem shall no unclean thing ever enter. There are neither temptations to try us, nor sins to defile us, nor sorrows to afflict us; but perfect joy and perfect purity: where all tears shall be wiped from our eyes; and all sin, the cause of those tears, rooted out of our hearts.

And, yet, if heaven itself may be liable to any defects, or capable of any additions, there seems at present to be wanting in it these two things.

1st. The Kingdom of Glory is not yet full: nor shall it be till the whole number of the elect shall be called; and the whole number of the called, glorified.

Many, as yet, are conflicting here below; and fitting themselves for their eternal reward. Many yet lie sleeping in their causes, unborn; whom God hath foreknown and predestinated unto eternal life: all of whom he will, in his due time, bring unto the possession of his heavenly kingdom, to complete the number of his glorious subjects. And therefore it is said, concerning the saints that are already in heaven, that white robes were given to every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled: Rev. 6:11.

2dly. Those glorified saints, that are now in heaven, though their joys be perfect, yet their persons are not; but one part of them, their bodies, continue still under the arrest of death and the power of the grave: but yet they sleep in hope; and, through that Mystical Union that there is between Jesus Christ and every scattered dust of a believer, they shall obtain a glorious and joyful resurrection. And then shall this heavenly kingdom be every way perfect: perfect in the full number of its subjects, and every subject perfect in his entire and complete reward: his soul made for ever blessed in the beatifical vision of God, and his body made unconceivably glorious by the redundancy of that glory that fills his soul; and both shall remain for ever with the Lord.

And thus you see what the Kingdom of God is; both universal and peculiar, the Kingdom of his Power, and the Kingdom of his Grace: and that, as it is Militant here on earth, both Visible and Invisible; and as it is Triumphant in heaven.

2. The next thing in order is, to shew How this Kingdom of God is said to come.

This word, come, implies that we pray for a Kingdom, that is yet in its progress; and hath not yet attained the highest pitch of that perfection, which is expected and desired: for that, which is yet to come, is not as yet arrived to that state in which it is to be. And,

therefore, we do not so properly pray, that the Universal Kingdom of God should come; for his dominion over the creatures is actually the same, and shall be so for ever: but, more especially, we pray that the Peculiar Kingdom of God should come; and that, as to both parts of it, Militant and Triumphant.

Now this Peculiar Kingdom is said to come in three respects.

(1) In respect of the Means of Grace and Salvation: for where these are rightly dispensed, (I mean the Holy Word and Sacraments) there is the Kingdom of God begun and erected; and therefore we find it called the word of the kingdom: Matth. 13:19.

(2) In respect of the Efficacy of those Means: when all ready and cordial obedience is yielded to the laws of God, then doth this Kingdom come, and the glory of it is advanced and increased.

(3) In respect of Perfection: and so it comes when the graces of the saints are strengthened and increased; when the souls of the godly, departing this life, are received into heaven; and when the whole number of them shall have their perfect consummation and bliss, in the glorification both of soul and body, after the General Resurrection.

And thus we have seen how the kingdom of God may come.

3. In the next place, we must enquire, What it is we pray for when we say "Thy kingdom come."

(1) I answer, there are various things lie couched under this petition: as,

[1] We pray that God would be pleased to Plant his Church, where it is not: according to his promise, giving all the nations of the world to his Son for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession:

That the dark places and corners of the earth, that are yet the habitations of cruelty, may be illustrated with the glorious light of the Gospel shining into them: that God would reveal his Son to those poor wretched people, that sit in darkness and in the region of the shadow of death; and would rescue them from their blind superstitions and idolatries, and from the power of the Devil, who strongly works in the children of disobedience, and would translate them into the kingdom of his dear Son; especially, that he would remove the veil from the heart of the Jew, upon whom a sad judicial hardness hath long lain; that they, at length, may be brought into the unity and fulness of Christ's body: we pray that all the world, both Jews and Gentiles, may be gathered into one sheepfold, under Christ Jesus the great Pastor and Shepherd of Souls; so that, as God is one, so his name and service may be one throughout all the earth.

And thus we pray that Christ's Kingdom may come, in respect of the means of grace and salvation.

[2] This petition, Thy kingdom come, intimates our earnest desire that the Churches of Christ, where they are planted, may be Increased in the Numbers* of the Faithful: that those, who are as yet enemies to the name and profession of Christ, may be brought into the Visible Church: and that those in it, who are yet strangers to a powerful work of grace, may, by the effectual operation of the Holy Ghost, be brought in to be members of the Invisible Church.

And thus we pray that God's Kingdom may come, in respect of the efficacy of the means of grace.

[3] We pray that all the Church of Christ, throughout the world, may be kept from ruin. That they may not be overrun with superstition or idolatry: that God would not, in his wrath, remove his candlestick from them; as he hath, in his righteous judgment, done from other Churches, which were once glorious and splendid: we pray, likewise, that God would make up all breaches, and compose all differences, and silence all controversies; and cut off all those, who trouble the

peace and rend the unity of the Church, breaking it into factions and schisms, which are the most fatal symptoms and portenders of God's withdrawing himself, and carrying away his gospel, and giving of it to another people, who will better bring forth the fruits of it, which are peace, meekness, and love; and, if in any thing Christians be diversely minded, that God would be pleased to reveal it unto them; and that whereunto they have attained, they may walk by the same rule, and mind the same things.

And thus we pray that Christ's Kingdom may come, in respect of its perfection and entireness.

[4] It intimates our humble requests to God, that his ordinances may be purely and powerfully dispensed.

Hence, as I noted before, the Word is called the word of the kingdom: Matth. 13:19 that is, the Word, whereby we are brought into the Kingdom of Christ here on earth, and fitted for his Triumphant Kingdom in heaven. It is the means of our new birth; the seed of our spiritual life. And, as a kingdom cannot be well established or governed without good laws; so, for the government of his kingdom, Christ hath established laws, which are contained in the records of the Holy Scriptures. And, as his word is the law, so his sacraments are the seals of his kingdom; for, to every believing partaker, God doth, under his seal, confirm the grant of heaven and eternal salvation.

And, therefore, in this petition we pray also,

That God would give his Church able Ministers of the New Testament, that may know how rightly to divide the word of truth, and to give every one his portion in due season: and that he would be pleased to accompany the outward administration of his ordinances with the inward operations of his Spirit, which alone can make them effectual to turn men from darkness to light, and to bring them from the power of Satan unto God: that the whole number of God's elect

may, in his due time, be brought in by the means, which he hath appointed and sanctified for their conversion and salvation.

These are the chief and principal things, that we beg of God for the Church Militant, when we say, Thy kingdom come, viz. that it may attain a perfection of extent: and be planted, where it is not, to a perfection of number: and may gain more proselytes and converts, where it is planted to a perfection of establishment; that they may not be rooted out by the violence of men, nor abandoned through the judgment of God: and to a perfection of purity and holiness, by the powerful dispensation of gospel-ordinances, attended by the efficacious concurrence of the Holy Spirit. But,

(2) This petition likewise respects the Church Triumphant in heaven.

Nor is this praying for the dead; a thing, justly condemned of superstition and folly: for we pray not for them to alter their state, which is impious and ridiculous, and a foppish consequent upon the figment of purgatory; but we pray for the Church Triumphant only in general, that those things, which are as yet defective in it, may be supplied: for, certainly, wheresoever there is any kind of imperfection, we have ground to pray for the removal of it; especially, when God hath encouraged us to it by promise that he will remove it.

And, therefore,

[1] We may well pray, that the whole Body Mystical of Jesus Christ, and every member of it, may be brought to the full fruition of heaven and happiness; that daily more may be admitted into the heavenly fellowship, till their numbers as well as their joys be consummate.

And,

[2] We may pray, that the bodies of all the Saints, that have slept in their beds of earth from the beginning of the world, may be raised

again out of the dust, and united to their souls, and for ever made glorious in the kingdom of heaven.

For both these things are absolutely promised: the one Rom. 8:29, 30. that those, whom God hath called and justified, he will likewise glorify: and the other is, 1 Thessal. 4:16 the dead in Christ shall arise. And, certainly, whatsoever may be the object of our faith and hope may be the subject of our prayers. And this every true Christian longs and breathes after, that these days of sin and misery may be shortened; that Christ would come in his glory; that, his Mediatory Kingdom being fulfilled, it might be delivered up unto the Father; and that we all might be one, as the Father is in him, and he in the Father. Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

And thus I have finished the Second Petition, Thy kingdom come.

THIRD PETITION

iii. The THIRD follows: Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

This now follows upon the former, in a most rational and admirable method: for, as, before, we pray that the Kingdom of God might come, as the best adapted means to Hallow his Name; so, now, we pray that his will may be done by us, as the clearest declaration that we are the subjects of his kingdom.

Now here are considerable,

1. The petition itself: thy will be done in earth.

2. The measure and proportion of it: as it is in heaven.

1. I shall begin with the Petition, in which every word carries great weight and moment.

And, therefore, in the explication of it I shall shew you,

(1) What this will of God is.

(2) How his will may be said to be done.

(3) What force this particule thy, thy will, carries in it, and what it denotes.

(4) What is meant by God's will being done in earth.

And all these with all perspicuity and brevity.

(1) What this will of God is.

Now the will of God is commonly and very well distinguished, into the will of his purpose, and into the will of his precept; his decrees, or his commands: the former respect what shall be done by him; the latter, what ought to be done by us. Both these, in Scripture, are frequently called the will of God.

[1] God's Purpose is his will.

Yea, it is more properly his will than his precepts are: for by this God doth absolutely determine, what shall be, and what shall not be; and all things in the world take their place and are ranged in their several stations, and the whole series of causes and effects are governed, by the ordination and appointment of this his Sovereign Will. And, therefore, it is said, Eph. 1:11 that God worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will. And, Ps. 135:6 whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, in earth, in the sea, and in all deep places. This is God's will of purpose, whereby he guides and governs all events whatsoever; so that there is not the most inconsiderable occurrence that happens, not the least flight of a sparrow, nor the falling off of a hair, nor the motion of an atom in the air, or a dust or a sand on the earth, but, as it is effected by his power and providence, so it was determined by his will and counsel.

[2] The Precepts and Commands are likewise the will of God.

But they are improperly so called; because these concern not, neither do they determine, the event of things, but only our duty; not what shall be, but what ought to be: and it is called, Rom. 12:2 the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. This is all contained in the Holy Scriptures, which are a perfect system of precepts given us for the government of our lives here, and for the attaining of eternal life hereafter: and, therefore, it is likewise called his Revealed Will; whereas, the other, namely, the will of purpose, is God's Secret Will, until it be manifested unto us by the events and effects of it.

[3] Now concerning this distinction of God's will of purpose and precept, we may note,

1st. That though there be a great deal of difference, yet there is no contrariety or opposition between them.

(1st.) They differ the one from the other, not in respect of God; for his will is one infinitely pure and uncompounded act: but only in respect of the Object.

For there are many things, which God wills by his Will of Purpose, which he has not willed by his Will of Precept. His Precepts are all holy, and command nothing but what is holy and acceptable: This is the will of God, saith the apostle, even your sanctification; 1 Thess. 4:3: it is the highest degree of blasphemy, to impute unto God, that he hath commanded us any thing but what is holy, just, and good: this were to make him the author of sin, who hath declared himself the punisher of it. But his Will of Purpose is not restrained within bounds and limits; but extendeth itself to all events whatsoever, whether good or evil.

And, as evils are of two sorts, either the evil of punishment or the evil of sin; so is God's Will of Purpose twofold: effective of the one, and permissive of the other: but in both most certain and infallible.

[1st.] God's Will of Purpose doth effect and bring to pass the evil of punishment: Amos 3:6. Shall there be any evil in the city, and the

Lord hath not done it? For he doth, both in heaven and in earth, whatsoever pleaseth him. Were it not the will of God, the world had never groaned under so many miseries and calamities, as have in all ages befallen it. Now God never enjoins us this as our duty, although he lays them upon us as our burden.

[2dly.] God's Will of Purpose permits the evil of sin, for wise and gracious ends; that he may bring good out of evil. Even those very sins and wickedness, which his Will of Precept forbids, his Will of Purpose permits: for, if God did not will to permit them, there would be no such thing as sin in the world.

(2dly.) Hence ariseth another very remarkable difference:

That we may effectually resist God's Will of Precept, so as to hinder the accomplishment of it: but whatsoever we do so it is our sin; and will, without repentance, be our condemnation. So Stephen accuseth the Jews: Acts 7:51 you do always resist the Holy Ghost; that is, by your practices you do always go contrary to the commands of God, revealed by his Spirit in his word. And, were it not for this resisting of the will of God, we should be perfectly holy and blameless.

But we cannot resist the Will of God's Purpose, so as to hinder the execution of it; although sometimes to endeavour it, may be so far from sin, as to be our necessary and indispensable duty. For, though it may be the will of God to bring us into poverty or into prison, or to lay sore diseases upon us: yet, it is not only lawful for us, but we are obliged as far as lies in us, to hinder these evils of punishment from befalling us; and to preserve our estates, our liberty, our health, and all our outward comforts, by all lawful and allowed ways and means. Much more, if God should will to permit a sin in others or in ourselves, are we bound to hinder the commission of it: for, for us to be willing to permit, because God is, though it be a conformity of our wills to God's Will of Purpose, yet this is not our rule to walk by; and it is a wretched rebellion against his Will of Precept, which alone we are to respect in all our actions, and endeavour to conform ourselves

unto. Doubtless, it was God's Will of Purpose, that Christ, the Lord of Life and Glory, should be crucified; but yet the Jews, conforming themselves according to this will, were guilty of the most horrid wickedness that ever was committed in the world: for both these we have confirmed to us, Acts 2:23. Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. Although it was by the determinate counsel and will of God, that Christ should be taken and slain; yet, nevertheless, they were wicked hands that were imbrued in that precious and inestimable blood.

And thus I have shewn how the Will of God's Purpose and Precept do differ.

But, yet,

2dly. Although there be this great difference, yet is there no contrariety or repugnance, but a perfect harmony and uniformity between them.

Some have thought, that if God wills such a thing should be done, as, for instance, the crucifying of our Lord and Saviour, by his Will of Purpose; and yet wills that it should not be done, by his Will of Precept; that these two wills must needs contradict one another: and this argument some do make no small use of, to explode the distinction of the will of God.

But the solution is most easy.

For when wills are contrary to each other, there must be a willing and a nilling of the same thing. But it is not so here: for the object of God's Will of Purpose is event; but of his Will of Precept, duty. Now it is far enough from having any shadow of a contradiction, for God to will or permit that to be, which he hath willed or commanded us not to do. Indeed, to will such an event to be and not to be, that such a thing shall be my duty and shall not be my duty, are contradictions, and not to be imputed unto God: but to will that such a thing shall

eventually be, and yet to will that it shall be my duty to endeavour to hinder it, is so far from being a contradiction, that it is most apparent and evident, and falls out most frequently in our ordinary converse in the world. So, in the forementioned famous instance of the death of Christ: God willed, by his Will of Purpose, that it should so come to pass in all the circumstances of it as it was perpetrated; but then he willed, by his Will of Precept, that it should be their duty not to do it. Now, certainly, there is no contradiction or absurdity, that duty and event may be quite contrary one to the other: unless we could take away all sin, and authorize all the greatest villainies that ever were committed under the sun.

And thus much for the first head.

(2) And, having thus seen what the will of God is, the next general is to enquire, what will it is we pray may be done, when we say, Thy will be done.

And, here,

[1] It is clear, that we especially and absolutely pray that the Will of God's Precept may be done, and that, not only by us, but by all men: for this will of God is the rule of our obedience, and according to it we ought to conform all our actions.

And, because we are not sufficient of ourselves so much as to think any thing of ourselves, much less to perform all those various and weighty duties of holiness which God hath enjoined us in his word, therefore our Saviour hath taught us to beg of God grace and assistance to enable us to fulfil his will; giving us, not only commands of obedience, but promises for our relief and encouragement; instructing us, in the word, to crave supplies of grace from him, who hath required duty from us.

And, indeed, there is a great deal of reason we should pray that his Will of Precept should be done on earth, if we consider,

1st. The great reluctancy and opposition of corrupt nature against it.

The Law is spiritual; but we are carnal, and sold under sin: Rom. 7:14 and, in the best of men, there is a law in their members, warring against the law of their minds; that, when they would do good, evil is present with them: and therefore we have need to pray, that God would incline our hearts to his commandments, and then strengthen us to obey them; that, as our will to good is the effect of his grace, so the effect of our wills may be the performance of his will.

2dly. God's glory is deeply concerned in the doing of his will.

For it is the glory of a king to have his laws obeyed. And so is it God's. When we profess ourselves to be his subjects, and pray that his Kingdom may come, it is but fit and rational, that we should pray likewise, thy will be done, without which this his Kingdom of Grace would be but merely titular: for his word is the sceptre and law of his kingdom: and, if we yield not obedience to it, we do tacitly condemn it, and the law-maker also, of injustice; and thereby reflect a most intolerable disparagement upon God, preferring the will of Satan and of our own lusts, before his most holy and righteous will. But when we endeavour to yield obedience to his commands, and pray that we may be able to do it with more diligence and constancy, this, as it pleaseth, so it glorifieth God: for, by so doing, we acknowledge both his sovereignty and his equity; his sovereignty, in that he may require of us what he pleaseth; and his equity, in that he requireth of us nothing but what is most just and fit: and therefore our Saviour tells us, John 15:8. Herein is my Father glorified, that you bring forth much fruit.

3dly. Our own interest is deeply concerned in it.

For, through obedience and doing the will of God, it is, that we come to inherit the promises: Rev. 22:14. Blessed are they, that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. And therefore to pray, that

God's will may be done by us, is but to pray, that we ourselves may be fitted and prepared for eternal life and glory, unto which we can no otherwise attain, but by holiness and obedience.

Oh, think but to what an excellency doth grace advance the soul even in this life; and makes Christians as much above other men, as other men are above beasts: that when they are employed about the foul and nasty offices of sin, hurried by their vile passions unto vile and base actions, raking in the mire and filth of all manner of uncleanness, and defiling their soul with those sins which will hereafter damn them; thy work should be all spiritual, consisting of the same pure employments that the holy angels and glorified saints in heaven spend their eternity in. Consider what a high honour and privilege it is, that you should be admitted to attend immediately upon the service of the King of Kings: you are called to wait about his throne, his Throne of Grace, to which you have always free access to converse and commune with God, by maintaining fellowship with him in the performance of holy duties; which is a dignity so high, that human nature is capable but of one preferment more, and that is of being removed from one throne to the other, from attending on the Throne of Grace to attend on the Throne of Glory. And then think, O soul, if it be possible to think, what neither eye hath seen, nor ear hath heard, neither hath it, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive: think how transcendently blessed thy estate shall be, when the will of thy God, which was here thy duty, shall there be thy nature; when thy obligation to do it, shall be turned into a happy necessity of doing it; when all thy thoughts and affections shall be centered in God for ever, and not the least motion of thy soul shall so much as twinkle or waver from the eternal contemplation and fruition of the Infinite Deity. And, therefore, this our eternal happiness being wrapt up in doing the will of God, it highly concerns us to pray, that it may be done; and to endeavour to do it on earth, so as that at length we may attain to the perfection, of doing it in heaven.

And this is the first thing, that, in this petition, we especially and absolutely pray for, viz. that God's Will of Precept may be done by us on earth.

[2] It is more doubtful, whether we are simply to pray that God's Will of Purpose should be done.

And that,

1st. Because the Will of God's Purpose is secret and unknown, and therefore cannot so immediately concern us in point of duty: for secret things belong to God, but revealed things belong to us and to our children: Deut. 29:29.

2dly. Because this Will of God shall, within the periods set by his eternal decrees, have its most perfect and full accomplishment. For, though his Revealed Will may be resisted and hindered, yet neither men nor devils can hinder his secret will and the purposes of his counsels: these shall take place, maugre all their spite and oppositions; and therefore it seems not altogether so proper matter for our prayers.

3dly. Many things come to pass by the Will of God's Purpose, which we ought not to pray for; yea, which we ought to pray against.

As, not to instance in God's Will of permitting the sins and wickednesses of men, which, beyond all exceptions, we ought to deprecate: let us but consider, common charity obligeth us not to pray for any evil of suffering to befall either ourselves or others: and yet we know that it is oftentimes the Will of God's Purpose, to bring great and sore judgments upon kingdoms, and upon families and persons. And if we may indefinitely pray that this will should be done, this would be nothing else but to pray for the death and ruin of many thousands, whom yet the Revealed Will of God commands us to pray for, and to desire all good and prosperity to them.

But yet, notwithstanding all this, we may doubtless pray, that the Will of God's Purpose may be done, so far as it brings to pass those things, which we are obliged to pray for by the Will of his Precept. We may pray, that God's will may be fulfilled, in giving peace and prosperity and good things, both temporal and spiritual, unto others and to ourselves; but simply and absolutely to pray, that this will should be done in whatsoever it respects, would be as often a curse as a prayer: since, as I told you before, there is no evil comes to pass, whether of sin or punishment, but it is by God's Will permitting the one and effecting the other.

But you will say, "Do we not find frequent examples in Scripture, of holy men who have prayed that God's will might be done, even in the bringing to pass that which was evil?" Thus Eli, when Samuel had denounced fearful judgments both against himself and against his house, It is the Lord, says he: let him do what seems good unto him: 1 Sam. 3:18. And so David, when persecuted by the unnatural rebellion of his son Absalom: If he say thus, behold, I have no delight in him, let him do as seems good unto him: 2 Sam. 15:26. And thus the disciples, when, upon Agabus's prophecy what afflictions should happen unto St. Paul at Jerusalem, they would have persuaded him from going thither, but could not prevail, conclude all with this, The will of the Lord be done: Acts 21:14. And thus likewise our great example, the Lord Jesus Christ himself, when he had prayed that the bitter cup of his passion might pass away from him, he seems to correct himself and make another prayer, Not my will, but thine, be done: Luke 22:42. Although he knew this will of God could not be done without his own most extreme sufferings, nor without the horrid sin and wickedness of his murderers.

But to all these instances I answer, That they are not so much prayers, as declarations of a ready submission and obedience to the will of God. For by this expression, The will of the Lord be done, we do not desire that those things should come to pass, which will be grievous and afflicting to us; but only testify our ready subjection to the sovereign will of God, and a patient resignation of ourselves and

of all our concerns unto his disposal. When we pray, we ought to beg of God, that he would be pleased to avert from us those plagues and judgments which our sins justly expose us unto: but if it shall seem good to him to inflict any of them upon us, The will of the Lord be done: that is, we desire with patience to submit unto his providence, and contentedly to bear those burthens which he shall impose upon us.

The sum, therefore, of all this is: when we pray Thy will be done; if it be the Will of God's Precept, we pray absolutely that it may be done by us, as being obliged thereunto by his express word and command; and if it be the Will of God's Purpose, intending any temporal or spiritual good unto us, we pray, that his will may be done upon us; but if it be the Will of his Purpose to inflict any evil, then our saying, Thy will be done, is not so much a prayer, as a testimony of our submission to his will without murmuring or repining at his Providence.

Thus have we seen what this will of God is, that we pray may be done in this petition, Thy will be done.

(3) The next thing to be taken notice of, is the particle, thy: THY will be done:

And this carries in it, both an emphasis and an exclusion.

[1] Thy will, Emphatically to signify unto us, that God's will ought to be preferred above and before all others'; not to regard the fancies and humours of men, when the will of God is clear before us; nor to be careful to please them, but our Lord Christ: and, if they will quarrel with us upon any such account, we know whither to appeal for our justification and for our safety. For our justification, to their consciences: Whether we ought to obey men rather than God, judge ye: Acts 4:19. And for our protection and safety, to God's power and providence, with those three heroic persons, Dan. 3:16, 17. We are not careful, O King, to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God,

whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thine hand.

And there is great reason for this preference of God's will before all others.

1st. Because God's will is most Sovereign.

He is the Supreme Lord of the Whole World: the greatest of men are but his subjects and vassals. Now it is infinitely more reason, that we should conform ourselves to the will of him who is both our Lord and theirs, than to the will of our fellow-servants; and that we should seek to please him who is able to destroy both our souls and theirs, than that we should please them, who, when their rage reacheth highest, can destroy only this body and vile carcase.

2dly. Because God's will is the most Holy and Perfect: and there is nothing, that he hath commanded us to do, but it hath a native goodness and excellency in it; and therefore it is called, the good, the acceptable, and perfect will of God: Rom. 12:2. To be governed by our own or other men's wills, is usually to be led by passion, and blind, headlong affections; but, to give up ourselves wholly to the will of God, is to be governed by the highest reason in the world: for his will cannot but be good, since it is the measure and rule of goodness itself; for therefore things are said to be good, because God wills them. And whatsoever he requires of us, is pure, and equitable, and most agreeable to the dictates of right and illuminated reason: so that we act most like men, when we act most like Christians; and shew ourselves most rational, when we shew ourselves most religious.

And therefore we have a great deal of reason to say, Thy will be done.

[2] As this particle, thy, may be taken emphatically, thy will before all others; so likewise it may be taken Exclusively, thy will and not our own be done: to teach us that hard lesson of self-denial.

Indeed, when we consider the rebellions of our corrupt appetites and desires, and all those tumults and uproars they raise in our souls against the holy and perfect will of God; the perverse disputings of our reason against his authority, and those strong propensions that are in us towards that which is displeasing to him, and destructive to ourselves; we shall find abundant need, with our greatest fervency to pray, Thy Will, and not our own, be done.

And thus I have finished the three first enquiries, what this will, of God is, how it may be said to be done, and what is imported in this particle, thy.

(4) The last thing to be enquired into, is, what is meant by God's will being done on earth.

And here, briefly to resolve this, that the will of God should be done on earth, signifies, that it be done by men living on the earth; the place here being put for the persons in it. And, although there be several other creatures besides man, who do all of them serve him and fulfil his will, according to the rank and station which they all hold; and therefore we have it expressed, Ps. 148:8. Fire and hail, snow and vapour, stormy wind fulfilling his word: yet this his Will and Word is only the ordinance of their creation; and the Will of his Purpose, to the effecting of which they are often employed as instruments: it is not the Will of God's Precept obliging them to duty; for this can be fulfilled by none but by rational and intelligent creatures. This petition therefore, especially, if not only, respects us men, whom God hath made lords of this earth, putting all other creatures in subjection under us.

Now here we pray,

[1] That all men in the world, renouncing the will of Satan and their own corrupt wills, may readily subject themselves unto the will of God.

For this expression, on earth, suffers us not to limit our prayers to this or that particular place or region; but, wheresoever God hath spread abroad all nations upon the face of the earth, we are to desire of God for them grace to enable them to do his will: Ps. 67:2. Let thy way be known upon earth, and thy saving health unto all nations.

[2] We pray, that we may employ and improve the few and short days of this mortal life to the best advantage.

For this is that day, wherein we may work the works of God: and, if we neglect to do the will of God while we are here on earth, it will be too late for ever; for there is no work, nor operation, nor device in the grave whither we are going.

And, certainly, if ever we would do the will of God in heaven, we must accustom ourselves to do it here on earth. Here, we are as apprentices, that must learn the trade of holiness; that, when our time is out, we may be fit to be made free denizens of the New Jerusalem. Here, we are to tune our voices to the praises of God, before we come to join with the heavenly choir. Here, we are to learn, what we must there for ever practise.

And thus I have done with the Petition itself: Thy will be done in earth.

2. The next thing observable, is the proportion of it: as it is in heaven.

But you will say, "Is it not utterly impossible, while we are here on earth, and clogged with earthly bodies, and encompassed about with manifold infirmities; is it not impossible, ever to attain unto a celestial and heavenly perfection in our obedience?"

I answer, true, it is so: but yet this prayer is not in vain; for it teacheth and engageth us, to aim at and endeavour after the perfect holiness of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect. We are commanded to be holy as God is holy, and to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect, whose perfection is impossible for us to

equalize: yet these excessive commands have their use, to raise up our endeavours to a higher strain and pitch, than if we were commanded somewhat within our own power: as he, that aims at a star, is likely to shoot much higher than he, that aims at a turf.

Thus, though it be a thing altogether impossible for us in this life to attain to an angelical perfection in our obedience: yet the command that obligeth us to it and our prayers for it, are not in vain; because, by our utmost endeavours after further measures and degrees of holiness, we may very much assimilate our obedience to that obedience, that is yielded to God's will in heaven itself: and therefore this particle, as, is rather a note of similitude than of equality. But, though our obedience on earth cannot be equal to the obedience, that is yielded to God in heaven; yet we pray that it may bear as much similitude, proportion, and conformity unto it, as it is possible for us to attain unto while we are here in the body.

And, therefore, that we may the more fully understand what it is we pray for, when we present this petition to God, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven, we shall briefly enquire, how the holy angels and blessed spirits do the will of God in heaven. And,

(1) Their obedience is absolutely Perfect; and that, both with a perfection of parts and degrees.

They do all that God enjoins them; not failing in the least tittle of observance: and therefore they are said, to follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes: Rev. 14:4. Hence it is ascribed to them, as their proper and peculiar character, Ps. 103:20. Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word. And, again, they do the whole will of God with all their might, with all their mind, with the greatest intention that is possible even to an angelical nature: never are they remiss in their service, or slack in their attendance; but are continually blessing and praising of God, standing ready to receive and execute his commands and commissions.

Now when we pray that we may do the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven, we pray for this heavenly temper; that we may bear an universal respect unto all God's commandments: no more sticking or pausing at any thing that God requires of us, than an angel or a glorified saint would do; but, enfolding all our interest and concerns in God's glory, might respect nor value nothing but what tends to the promotion of that. This is to do God's will, as the angels do it in heaven.

(2) Their obedience is Cheerful: not extorted from them by violent constraints of fear or of suffering; but it is their eternal delight, and their service is their felicity.

And thus should we pray and endeavour to do the will of God with alacrity and cheerfulness: not being hauled to it, as our task; but esteeming the commands of God to be, as the angels do, our glory and our great reward.

But, alas, how infinitely short do we fall of our pattern! We think the Sabbath long, and ordinances long and tedious, and are secretly glad when they are over: and what should such as we are do in heaven, where there is a sabbath as long as eternity, and nothing but holiness there? And, therefore, we had need pray earnestly, that God would now fit and prepare us for the work of heaven, while we are here on earth; for else heaven will not be heaven, or a place of happiness unto us.

(3) The will of God is done in heaven with Zeal and Ardency.

And therefore it is said, Ps. 104:4 that God maketh his angels and messengers a flame of fire.

And have not we abundance of need to pray for conformity with them, in this respect also? We do the will of God so coldly and indifferently, that we ourselves scarce take notice of what we are doing. We often bring sacrifices to God, and either bring no fire with us, but are frozen and dull; or else offer them up with strange wild-

fire, and usually are heated more with passion and irregular affections, than with holy and pious zeal, And,

(4) The will of God is done in heaven with Celerity and Ready Dispatch.

They are quick in executing the commands of the great God and their Lord; and therefore are said to have wings, and to fly: Is. 6:2. And this expression of wings, and the flying of cherubims and angels, is frequently mentioned in Scripture, only to intimate to us the expedition they use in the service of God.

But, alas, how dull and slow are we! How long do we consult with flesh and blood; and are disputing the will of our Sovereign Lord, when we should be obeying it! When we are clearly convinced that such a duty is necessary to be done, how many delays, and excuses, and procrastinations do we make; being willing to stay the leisure of every vile lust and vain impertinency; thinking it then time enough to serve God, when we have nothing else to do! Certainly, this is not to do the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven; where, upon the first intimations of God's will, they take wings and execute it speedily.

(5) The will of God is done in heaven with all possible Prostration, Reverence, and Humility.

And therefore it is said, Rev. 4:10 that the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat upon the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne. Crowns are themselves ensigns of majesty: but here they cast their very crowns, all their dignity and glory, at the feet of God; and make their chiefest excellency itself do homage to him, that is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

And so should we, in all our serving of God, do it with reverence and godly fear; preserving upon our hearts an awful sense and regard of the Dreadful Majesty, before whom we appear.

(6) The will of God is done in heaven with Constancy and Perseverance.

They serve God day and night: Rev. 7:15 and are never weary of his work, no more than they are of their own happiness; for his service is their happiness, and their obedience their glory.

And thus should we pray and endeavour that we might do the will of God, constantly and perseveringly: for it is perseverance, that crowns all other graces; and God hath promised to crown our perseverance with glory and eternal life.

And thus we see briefly in these Six Particulars, how the will of God is done in heaven.

To conclude this: is there no other nor lower pattern set us, than the perfect obedience of angels and glorified spirits? Let us not then content ourselves with a comparative obedience; and, by measuring ourselves with those that are worse, think highly of our own perfections. Let us not applaud ourselves with the boasting Pharisee, with a Lord, I thank thee, I am not as other men are; extortioners, unjust, adulterers. What is this to the pattern, that God hath set us for our imitation? Perhaps, thou dost but all this while compare thyself with those that are in hell, and dost God's will not much better than such have done, if this be all that thou canst plead for thyself: whereas God hath set thee examples, for thy imitation, in heaven. Dost thou endeavour to do his will as Seraphims and Cherubims, and the whole host of blessed Spirits? Thou livest, it may be, not so like a devil as others do; but dost thou live like an angel? Dost thou serve God with the same proportionable Zeal, Ardency, Delight, and Constancy, as those holy spirits do, who always stand in the presence of God, ready pressed to do his will: if not, neither endeavourest after so high a degree of obedience and purity, know, that thy imitation of any lower example than that of heaven, can never suffice to bring thee to heaven.

And thus I have finished the Three First Petitions of this Excellent Prayer: namely, those that relate unto God; for the petitions contained herein, as I said in the beginning, were such as immediately concerned God's glory, or such as immediately concerned our good. The first I have already considered.

I now come to treat of those petitions, which immediately concern our own good: and that is either our temporal or our spiritual good:

Our Temporal Good, in praying for our daily bread:

Our Spiritual Good in the two last petitions, wherein we pray for the forgiveness of our sins past, and for deliverance from sin for time to come.

FOURTH PETITION

iv. I begin with the first of these our requests or petitions for temporal blessings, contained in the FOURTH petition: Give us this day our daily bread.

And here I shall consider,

First, the order; and, then, the petition itself.

1. The Order.

And that is remarkable upon two accounts.

(1) Whereas this petition is placed in the midst, and encompassed about with others that relate unto spiritual blessings; so that, after we have prayed for the glory of God, our Saviour teacheth us to make mention of our temporal wants, and so to pass on again to beg spiritual mercies for our souls: this may instruct us, in the government of our lives, to use worldly comforts as here we pray for them.

Spiritual and heavenly things are our greatest concernments, and should be our greatest care. With these we should begin, and with these we should end. Only God allows us the world as an inn: we may call in at it, and refresh ourselves with the comforts and accommodations that we find; but we must not dwell nor set up our rest there. We are all strangers and pilgrims upon earth: heaven is our country, and thither we are travelling; only, in our journey, we may call and bait at the world, and take what we find provided for us with sobriety and thankfulness. And therefore this bread, that we here pray for, is elsewhere called the staff of bread: Ps. 105:16. He brake the staff of bread: Ezek. 5:16. I will break your staff of bread. And all this is to put us in mind, that we are to ask for and to use these earthly enjoyments only as travellers, that make use of a staff for their help and support, whilst they are in their passage home. And we are hereby also taught, to crave no more than will suffice for our convenient supplies: otherwise we make our staff our burden, and our support itself a load and pressure.

(2) It is observable, that, though we are commanded, to seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, with a promise that all other earthly things shall be added to us; yet here our Saviour places the petition for temporal blessings, before the two petitions we present to God for spiritual blessings. And this order hath seemed so strange and incongruous to some, that, hereupon alone, they have been moved to affirm that this bread, which we here ask, is not any temporal good thing, but the Bread of Life, even Jesus Christ himself: as shall be shewn more, by and by.

Now this order doth not intimate to us, that earthly blessings are better and more considerable than heavenly; or that they should have the preference in our esteem or desires: (I hope there are none of us so brutish, nor so far degenerated into beasts, as to account the poor enjoyments of this life, more valuable than the pardon of sin, and those spiritual mercies that are in a tendency to eternal life and happiness:)

But,

[1] Our Saviour useth this method in his prayer, in conformity to the method of Divine Providence towards us, which first gives us life and the necessities of it, and then orders us spiritual and heavenly blessings, as an accession and happy addition to those natural good things he bestows upon us.

[2] Because we are usually more sensible of our temporal than of our spiritual wants, our Saviour therefore doth by degrees raise up our desires by the one to the other: for, seeing we are commanded to pray for the supply even of our temporal necessities, which are but trivial in regard of the necessities of our souls; we cannot but be convinced, that we ought to be much more earnest and importunate with God for spiritual mercies than for temporal, by how much our spiritual wants are more important and of vaster consequence than our temporal.

When, therefore, thou comest to this petition, think with thyself, O Christian, If I must pray fervently and affectionately for my daily bread, which can only nourish my vile carcase for a few short years; a carcase, that must, notwithstanding all these recruits, shortly moulder into dust, and itself become meat for worms: how much more importunate ought I to be, for the pardon of my sins, and those spiritual mercies and blessings without which my precious and immortal soul must eternally perish! since Christ hath commanded us not to labour, and by consequence not to pray for that meat which perisheth, with any comparative industry and earnestness, to our labouring and praying for that which endureth to eternal life.

And thus much concerning the Order of this petition.

2. In the Petition itself we have,

(1) The Matter of it, or that which we pray for: give us BREAD.

(2) The Kind, or Quality of it: called here, DAILY bread.

(3) Our Right and Property in it: OUR daily bread.

(4) The Limitation of it in respect of Time: give it us THIS DAY.

Of all these briefly.

(1) The Matter of this petition, or that which we pray for, and that is bread: Give us our bread.

By Bread here is meant all temporal and earthly blessings, that contribute either to our being or to our well-being in this life. And, because we have need of very many things for our present subsistence, as food, raiment, habitation, and each of these comprehend many other necessaries in them; all which would have been too long particularly to enumerate in this compendious prayer: therefore our Saviour hath summed them up in the word bread; figuratively denoting all kinds of provisions necessary for this natural life, whereof bread is the most usual and the most useful. And, therefore, as when God speaks of a famine, he calls it a famine of bread: Amos 8:11 not as if a scarcity of bread were the only dearth intended by it, but that there should be likewise a want of all things requisite to the sustentation of life: so here, when Christ teacheth us to pray for our daily bread, this phrase extendeth to all things conducive to maintain health, or to recover it; to preserve life, or to prolong it.

Some, indeed, think this too mean and sordid a request to be preferred to God; and would not have any of the low conveniences of this present life to have any place in a prayer, all whose other parts are so spiritual and heavenly, and the whole so short and compendious. Where the petitions are so few, they will not believe any of them should be spent so trivially, as to beg that, which, though they might not attain, yet they might be eternally blessed and happy: and therefore they interpret this word, bread, in a spiritual sense; and take it for the food of the soul, whereby it is nourished unto eternal life; and especially for our Lord Jesus Christ, who is called

the bread of life: John 6:35 and living bread, which came down from heaven: verse 51.

But here seemeth no place for any such mystical interpretation; the word bread being put without any addition or like circumstance, that might refer it to Christ or to spiritual things; and, therefore, ought to be understood according to the words literally, and in their ordinary signification: although, indeed, it be here used by way of synechdoche, one part of temporal good things being put for the whole accession of them.

Now from this we are taught these three things.

[1] That temporal mercies and blessings may lawfully be prayed for.

And, although we ought not to be most earnest and importunate, nor to enlarge and expatiate most upon these requests; but more earnestly to covet the best gifts: yet neither is it unworthy of a Christian, whose affections and conversation is in heaven, to beg at God's hands those mercies, that he knows needful for the support and comfort of this present life. Yea, we read of nothing more frequent, than the saints praying either for the removal of some temporal evil or punishment, or the receiving of some temporal blessing or favour. If I should quote the Scriptures, I might transcribe a great part of the Bible. Nay, so far were they from looking upon it as below them, that we find Jacob putting it into his Indentures, when he bound himself to God; and made it, as it were, the condition of his obligation to God's service: Gen. 28:20, 21 then Jacob vowed a vow saying, If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God.

And, indeed, there is a great deal of reason and ground to pray for these things; for they are both needful for us, and God hath promised to give them to us.

1st. They are Needful for us, as the means, that God hath appointed for the preservation of our temporal life and being; in which we have so many opportunities to serve and glorify him, and so many advantages to secure heaven and glory to our souls.

And, therefore, as we tender either the obtaining of heaven, or the additional degrees of glory and happiness there: so we stand obliged to pray, that God would afford us those necessaries, that may conduce to the prolonging of our natural life; till, having finished our work, we are made fit to receive our wages and reward. Your Heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things, says our Saviour: Mat. 6:32. And therefore, though miracles be a kind of non-obstante to the law of nature, and a suspension of the ordinary course of providence; yet we often find God working a miracle to supply these wants of his people; whereas, it had been alike easy, by another miracle, to have caused them not to want; for it had been no more difficult, for God to have kept Elijah from hungering, than it was to make the ravens his purveyors, or to make a barrel of meal become a whole harvest, or to open a spring and fountain in the cruse of oil: but he chooseth rather to supply these wants than to cease them; to keep us in a continual dependence upon him, that the sense of our necessities might engage us to have continual recourse unto God for relief.

2dly. As temporal good things are needful for us, so God hath Promised to give them to us.

Ps. 50:15. Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee. And, my God, says the Apostle, shall supply all your wants: Phil. 4:19. The Lord will give grace and glory; and no good thing will he withhold from them, that walk uprightly: Ps. 84:11.

Thus we see temporal good things may be prayed for, both because they are needful for us, and because God hath promised them to us.

Yet,

[2] They must be prayed for only conditionally; for they are only conditionally promised.

And these conditions are twofold: if they be consistent with God's pleasure, and if they be conducive to our good: for, without the observing the one, we should not so much seem to petition as to invade; and, without observing the other, we should but beg a curse instead of a blessing.

[3] We may learn, likewise, that God is the giver of every temporal mercy and good thing.

Whatever thou enjoyest, it is from his mere free bounty. He spreads thy table, fills thy cup, makes thy bed, puts on thy garments, is the God of thy health and strength, and loadeth thee daily with his benefits. If thou hast riches, it is the blessing of God, that maketh rich: Prov. 10:22. It is God, that giveth thee power to get wealth: Deut. 8:18. Hast thou credit and reputation? It is God, that hideth thee from the scourge of tongues: Job 5:21. Hast thou friends? It is God, that giveth thee favour in their sight. Hast thou gifts and parts? It is the Almighty, that giveth thee understanding: Job 32:8. And hast thou joy and comfort in all these? It is God, who not only filleth thy mouth with food, but thy heart with gladness.

Now God is said to give us our daily bread, and all the necessaries of life, especially two ways.

1st. By Producing them and Bringing them to us.

He is the great Lord and Proprietor both of Heaven and Earth. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; and he gives it to whom he will. He maketh it bring forth abundantly all its stores, for the use and service of man: for, be the chain of Second Causes never so long, yet the first link of them is held in his hand. And, therefore, we have it expressed, Hosea 2:21, 22. I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens; and they shall hear the earth; And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel.

2dly. God gives them, by Blessing them to us.

Without which blessing, our daily bread would no more nourish us than so much chaff: for, had we all the abundance that the earth could yield, and the blessing of God withheld from it, the very air would stifle us, and our very food would famish us: for it is not so much by these things that we live; not so much by our daily bread, as by every word; that is, by every word of blessing upon them, which proceedeth out of the mouth of God: Deut. 8:3. And, concerning those to whom he denies this his blessing, he tells us, Job 20:22. In the fullness of their sufficiency, they shall be in straits. And, therefore, when we pray that God would give us our daily bread, we pray, not only that God would give us the possession and enjoyment of earthly comforts, but that he would put virtue and efficacy into them, by his blessing upon them, to be subservient to our relief and support, without which the staff of bread would break under us, and the stay of water roll away from us.

And, thus much, for the first thing, Give us bread.

(2) Let us consider, the specification of this blessing, or the Kind and Quality of it, our DAILY bread.

This word $\alpha\rho\tau\omicron\nu$, is variously rendered. I shall not trouble you with the particular notions of it: let it suffice, that here by the word bread, is meant our ordinary and usual bread, or whatsoever is necessary for our subsistence in the world from day to day. And it is the same with what is expressed in that excellent prayer of Agur: Prov. 30:8. Give me neither poverty nor riches: feed me with food convenient for me. So do we pray here, that he would bestow upon us daily, that which is sufficient for the day.

And by this we are taught to moderate our desires, and to beg of God no more than is needful for us. We beg not delicacies: we beg daily bread; not superfluities, nor goods laid up for many years.

But now, because the measures of necessities are divers, and that may be but daily bread to one, which to another is superfluity, it will be requisite to shew you by what necessities our prayers are to be bounded.

I answer,

[1] We may pray for the supply of all our natural necessities. And to this the sovereign principle of self-preservation strongly obligeth us: and he, that prays not nor endeavours for this, is a self-murderer; in withholding from himself, what is simply and absolutely necessary for the maintenance of his life.

[2] Besides things that are naturally necessary, there are things that are civilly necessary; which are not so absolutely imperious as the other: yet these also oblige us to pray for supplies and relief.

I account those things civilly necessary, which, though they are not simply necessary to the preservation of our life, yet are necessary to the state and condition in which Divine Providence hath set us. As, for men of high birth, of public note, or public employment; more is necessary for them, than for others, whom God hath placed to take up a narrower room in the world: for cedars require more sap than shrubs. And, for such as these to pray against poverty, is possibly to pray for much more than would make private persons rich. We are allowed to pray for such a competent measure of earthly blessings, as is suitable to our station, and commensurate to our charge and burthens; and, according to the judgment of Christian prudence, apparently needful, for those whom we are bound to provide for, that they may live honestly and decently. All these are necessaries, that we are to pray for in this petition, Give us our daily bread.

But we must take heed, that neither covetousness nor ambition impose upon us; and make us measure necessaries, by our inordinate desires, rather than by our real wants; for whatsoever is more than enough for our present state and comfortable subsistence, is not our

daily bread, but the bread of the poor, out of whose mouths we snatch it: and whatsoever we lay up, with great designs of enlarging ourselves or our posterity beyond our lawful measure, are but treasures of wickedness, whose rust will witness against us at the Last Day.

And thus much for the second observable.

(3) In the words of this petition, are designed our Right and Propriety to this daily bread: Give us OUR daily bread.

[1] Now right to a temporal enjoyment is threefold, either natural, or spiritual, or civil. Natural, by creation: spiritual, by regeneration: and civil, by human and legal constitution.

1st. As for the Natural Right by creation, that was once found in Adam, who was made the visible Lord of the universe, and all things put under his feet.

We may read his patent and charter, Gen. 1:28. And God said unto him, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

But this right we have lost, and can call nothing ours upon this account. Only, as princes allow traitors and malefactors provision in their prison, till they come to execution: so God allows many wicked men many earthly enjoyments, out of the mere bounty of prison-provision, to keep them alive, till they are brought forth to their execution.

This natural right therefore being lost, there succeeds in the room of it,

2dly. A Spiritual Right to earthly comforts.

And this belongs unto all those, who themselves do belong to Christ: for he is made the heir of all things: and all things, both in heaven and earth, are consigned over unto him by a deed of gift from God his Father; and they, being united unto Christ, and his spiritual offspring, are heirs with Christ and co-heirs of all that ample dominion which Christ himself possesseth. And, upon this ground, the Apostle tells the Corinthians, in 1 Cor. 3:21, 22, 23. All things are yours: the world; things present, and things to come; all are yours: and he subjoins this reason for it, for ye are Christ's.

But yet this spiritual right is not to be extended to an usurpation upon the temporal enjoyments of others: for grace and holiness, being a thing wholly inward and invisible, cannot confer any outward title.

For this,

3dly. Is given by another right, which is Civil according to the constitution of human laws, and the process in courts of human judicature.

For law is the only distributer of meum and tuum. And we can call nothing ours, which is not so, or ought not to be so, by the sentence of the law under which we live; and he, that detaineth any thing which the sentence of the law adjudgeth to another, is guilty of theft and robbery.

[2] Now when we pray for our daily bread, we pray,

1st. That God would give us the good things of this life, to be obtained by us in a lawful regular manner.

2dly. That he would bless and increase those good things, that are rightfully our own.

3dly. That he would bestow upon us a spiritual right in whatsoever we enjoy, through Jesus Christ, who is the heir and possessor of all

things. And,

4thly. We pray, that we may not desire nor covet that, which is another's: for we are taught to pray only for that, which we may justly call ours; to which we have, as well a civil, as a spiritual right and title.

And thus much for the third particular.

(4) We have in the words the Limitation of the petition, in respect of Time. Give us THIS DAY our daily bread.

And, indeed, there is great reason why we should pray for it this day; for we every day stand in need of relief and supplies from God. Our wants and our troubles grow up thick about us; and, unless God make daily provisions for us, we shall be overrun by them. Food nourishes but a day; and that, which we receive this day, will not suffice us to-morrow. There is a continual spring and fountain of necessities within us; and, therefore, we must have continual recourse unto God by prayer, that he would daily satisfy and supply our wants, as they daily rise up about us.

Again, by teaching us to pray for our temporal comforts this day, our Saviour tacitly intimates to us, that we should be content with our daily allowance. It is enough, if we have our dimensum, our appointed food for the day. To-morrow is in God's hand, and the care of it is his and not ours; and therefore he bids us, take no thought for to-morrow; that is, with no tormenting, carking, and desponding thoughts: Mat. 6:34. And, indeed, if we are provided for this day, we may well rest content and satisfied in the Providence of God; since he hath engaged his word of promise, that he will never leave us nor forsake us.

Now, in this part of the petition, there are sundry things we pray for.
As,

[1] We pray for life itself; that it may be prolonged whilst God hath any service for us to do in the world. To this very end we pray for daily bread, that life may be maintained and preserved by it.

[2] Health and strength of body, which is indeed the greatest of temporal blessings, and the salt to all the rest, without which they are unsavoury and tasteless.

[3] All the means, that God's Providence hath appointed to preserve life and health, and to recover health when it is decayed and impaired.

[4] Success in our lawful calling, and endeavours for the procuring any conveniences and comforts of life. For, in this prayer, we beg a blessing upon our callings and industry, that God would prosper us in them, and by them increase our temporal enjoyments, so far forth as is needful to his own glory and our good.

[5] We beg a blessing from heaven upon whatsoever we enjoy, that it may indeed prove good and comfortable to us; without which all that we possess may prove a great heap of things, but none of them will be comforts or enjoyments.

And thus I have finished the First of those Petitions, that immediately concern ourselves, wherein we beg of God the supply of all our Temporal Wants.

FIFTH PETITION

v. The Two, which remain, respect Spiritual Blessings: of which the former, which is the FIFTH petition in order of this most excellent Prayer, is for the Pardon of Sin: Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. Of which I now come to treat.

1. And here before we come to the petition itself, let us briefly take notice of the connection and dependence, that it hath upon what went before. Having prayed for our daily bread, we are next taught to pray for pardon.

And this method is, indeed, most wise and most rational.

For,

(1) The guilt of sin many times withholdeth from us those earthly comforts we stand in need of.

We have forfeited all into the hands of God's justice; and he is pleased to make us know our obnoxiousness to his power and wrath, by denying or taking from us those temporal good things, as a due though the least punishment of our deserts: Is. 59:2. Your iniquities have separated between you and your God; and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear you. And, therefore, when we have prayed for our daily bread, we are to pray likewise for the Pardon of our Sins: that the partition between God and us may be removed; and his blessing, being no longer obstructed by our guilt, may descend down freely and plentifully upon us.

(2) Without pardon of sin, all our temporal enjoyments are but snares and curses unto us.

Though God doth sometimes bestow abundance of this world's good things upon impenitent and unpardoned sinners, yet they have not so many enjoyments as curses. Their bread is kneaded up with a curse, and their wine tempered and mingled with a curse: there is poison in their meat, and death in their physic: their table is their snare, their estate their fetters; and whatsoever should have been for their welfare, proves only a gin and a trap unto them: for the wrath of God is one direful ingredient among all that they possess. And, therefore, if we would have our daily bread given us, or comfort and blessing with it, we ought earnestly to beg the pardon of our sins;

which are like the worm in Jonah's gourd, which will wither and devour all our enjoyments.

And, thus much, for the Method and Order.

2. In the words themselves we have,

The petition, Forgive us our debts.

The condition or proportion, or plea and argument, call it which you will, for the obtaining of this forgiveness: as we forgive our debtors.

(1) In the Petition we may observe,

[1] That the same, which our Evangelist calls debts, is by St. Luke 11:4 called sins: forgive us our sins.

We stand indebted to God, both as we are his creatures, and as we are offenders. By the one, we owe him the Debt of Obedience; and, by the other, the Debt of Punishment.

1st. As we are creatures, we owe the Debt of Obedience.

And to the payment of this debt we stand bound, both to the absolute sovereignty of God, who is the Supreme Lord of all his creatures, and therefore may oblige them to what he pleaseth; and, likewise, by his manifold favours and mercies conferred upon us. From him we have received our beings and all our comforts: he maintains us at his own cost and charge: he enlargeth us when we are in straits, relieves us when we are in wants, counsels us when we are in doubts, comforts us when we are in sorrows, delivers us in our dangers; and, besides the manifold temporal mercies we daily receive from him, gives us the means, the hopes, and promises of obtaining far better things at his hands, even eternal life and glory: and, therefore, certainly, upon these accounts we owe him all possible service and obedience. And, indeed, it is but reason we should employ all for him, from whom we receive all: and give up ourselves to his service, who are what we are

by his bounty; and hope to be infinitely better, than now we are, through his mercy.

Now this Debt of Obedience is irremissible; and we are eternally and indispensably bound unto it: for it is altogether inconsistent with the notion and being of a creature, to be discharged from its obligation to the laws and commands of its Creator; for this would exempt it from the dominion of God, and make it absolute and independent; that is, it would make the creature to be no longer a creature but a deity. We do not therefore pray, that God would forgive us this debt: no; he cannot so far deny himself, and it is our happiness and glory to pay it. To this his sovereignty obligeth our subject condition; and his mercy and goodness, our ingenuity.

2dly. As we are transgressors, so we owe God a Debt of Punishment; to be suffered by us, to make God some reparation to his honour and satisfaction to his justice, for our transgressing his law, which sentenceth all offenders to eternal death and damnation.

This debt, now, is that, which we pray God would forgive us; a debt, which, if we pay, we are eternally ruined and undone: and there is no way possible to escape the payment of it, but by the free grace and mercy of God remitting of it unto us. And thus sin is called a debt: not indeed properly, as if we owed it; but by a metonymy, as it is the meritorious cause of this punishment, the suffering of which we owe to divine justice.

Hence, by the way, we may observe that every sin makes us liable to eternal death: for death and damnation is the debt, which we must pay to the justice of God; and sin is that which exposeth us unto it, by the sentence of the Law which we have transgressed. For as, against other debtors, is brought forth some bond or obligation to exact payment from them; so, against us, is produced the hand-writing of the Law: and we, not having performed the condition of the bond, stand liable to the forfeiture and penalty; which is no less than curses, and woes, and torments, and everlasting death. Cursed is

every one, that continueth not in all things, written in the book of the Law, to do them: Gal. 3:10. And, the wages of sin is death: Rom. 6:23. And, the soul that sinneth, it shall die: Ezek. 18:4.

[2] Now here to excite thee to a fervency in praying for the forgiveness of thy debts, consider,

1st. The infinite multitudes of thy debts.

God's book is full of them; and there they stand on account against us, under every one of our names. We were born debtors to God. Our original sin and guilt obligeth us to punishment: and, although we did not personally contract the debt; yet, as being the wretched heirs and executors of fallen Adam, the debt is legally devolved upon us and become ours. And, ever since we came into the world, we have run upon the score with God: our debts are more than our moments have been: for whatsoever we have thought or done hath been sin; either in the matter, or at least in the circumstances of it.

God sets all our sins down in order in his debt-book: some, as Talents; and some, as Pence.

Our flagitious crimes and heinous impieties; our presumptuous sins, committed against light, knowledge, conscience, convictions, mercies, and judgments; each of these God sets down as a Talent: and how many thousands of these may we have been guilty of!

Our sins of ignorance, surreption, and daily infirmity are much more innumerable: and though they may be but as Pence, in comparison with the other; yet the unaccountable numbers of them will make the debt desperate, and the payment impossible.

And yet, notwithstanding our debts are so many, and very many of them such great sums too; yet we daily run ourselves farther in arrears; not considering that a day of accounts will come, when both our talents and our pence shall be punctually reckoned up against us, not omitting the least item; when every vain thought and foolish

passion that hath flushed up in us, with every idle and superfluous word that we have unadvisedly spoken, as well as the more gross and scandalous passages of our sinful lives, shall be then audited: all which will make the total sum infinite, and us desperate.

2dly. That God, who is thy creditor, is strict and impartial.

His patience hath trusted and forborne thee long; but his justice will, at last, demand the debt severely; and every particular shall be charged upon thee, even to the utmost farthing: for he hath booked down all in his remembrance, and will bring all to thine: and, therefore, we have it expressed concerning the Last Judgment, that the books were opened: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works: Rev. 20:12. What now are these books, but the two great volumes of God's Remembrance, and our own Consciences? These are two tallies evenly struck, that shall justly represent the same sum and debt: and God's strict justice will not then abate thee anything of its utmost due; for he will by no means acquit the guilty. Indeed, we are apt to think, that, because God so long forbears us, he will never call us to make up and adjust accounts with him: our present impunity tempts us to question his omniscience, and to suspect his threatenings: and, because he winks at us, we are ready to conclude that he is blind: we are of that wretched temper, described, Ps. 50:21. Because God keeps silence, we think he is altogether such a one as ourselves; as careless in requiring his debts, as we are in contracting them: but he will reprove us, and set them in order before our faces, to our everlasting shame and confusion.

3dly. That the least of all these thy debts make thee liable to be cast into the prison of hell, and to be adjudged to eternal death and punishments.

Not only thy impudent and scandalous sins, which make thee detested of men as well as hated of God; but the least shadow of a thought that gives but an umbrage of vanity to thy mind, the least

motion and heaving of thy heart towards a sinful object, the exhaling but of one sinful desire, the wavering of thy fancy, a glance of thine eye, is a debt contracted with the Infinite Justice of God; and a debt, that, without forgiveness, must be paid in the infernal prison of hell. So says our Saviour, Mat. 5:26. Verily, thou shalt not come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

Beware therefore, then, that you do not entertain any slight thoughts of sin: nor think, with the Papists, that there are some sorts of sins, that do not deserve death; which they call Venial Sins, in opposition to other more gross and heinous sins, which they allow to be Mortal. Believe it, the least prick at the heart is deadly; and so is the least sin to the soul. And, indeed, it is a contradiction to call any sin venial, in their sense, who hold it is not worthy of damnation: for if it be a sin, it is worthy of damnation; for the wages of sin is death: if it be not, how is it venial?

There is but one mortal sin, simply and absolutely, such as God hath revealed in his word that it shall never be pardoned, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come: and that is the Sin against the Holy Ghost; which St. John therefore calls a sin unto death: 1 John 5:16. And so far are they, who are guilty of it, excluded from God's mercy, that they are excluded from the charity of our prayers: for we are not so much as to pray for such; as it is there expressed.

Again, all the sins of finally impenitent and unbelieving wretches are eventually mortal, and shall certainly be punished at last with eternal death and damnation: for the wrath of God abideth on him, that believeth not: John 3:36. And God will render indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil: Rom. 2:6, 8, 9.

All sins whatsoever are mortal, meritoriously; both in the penitent and in the impenitent. The Law hath condemned all alike. Though all sins are not alike heinous, nor shall be equally punished; but with some it shall be far more intolerable than with others: yet all are

alike mortal, and deserve death and the same hell; though not the same place, nor the same degree of torments in hell: for those sins, which are accounted most trivial and venial, are in themselves violations of the holy Law of God, and the penalty that his laws threaten is no less than death.

The Law is accurate, and reacheth to the least things; yea, to the least circumstances of those things: and every transgression against it shall receive its due recompense of reward. Nay, had we no other guilt left upon our souls, from the first moment of our lives to this present day, but only the guilt of the least sin that the holy Law condemns; be it only the wrenching aside of a thought or desire, only a bye and sinister end in the performance of holy duties, nay let it be but the first rudiment and imperfect draught of a thought not yet finished, without a full satisfaction and expiation, this small debt would cast us into prison; this little sin would sink us irrecoverably into hell, and lay us under the revenges of the Almighty God for ever.

Oh, then, with what horror and amazement, may sinners reflect upon their past sins! With what dread and trembling, may they expect their future state: since as many thousand sins as they have committed of all sizes and aggravations, so many deaths and hells heaped up one upon another have they deserved; and, without intervention of a full payment and satisfaction, must they be adjudged to undergo! For, though the least degree of divine wrath be a tormenting hell: yet God will inflame his wrath to as many degrees of acrimony and sharpness, as they have committed sins; till their punishment be equal to their offences, and become infinitely intolerable.

4thly. Consider, thou canst never pay God, nor discharge the least of thy debts for ever.

For,

(1st) Thou canst not possibly do it, by any Duties or Services in this life.

For, whatsoever thou dost is either required or not required. If it be not required, it will be so far from being a satisfaction for thy sins, that it will be an addition to them; and a piece of will-worship, which will meet with that sad greeting at the Last Day, Who hath required these things at your hands? If it be required, it is no more than thou owest to God before; and, if thou hadst never sinned, wert obliged to pay it: to think to satisfy for thy sins by thy duties, is but to rob one attribute of God to pay another; for, whatsoever obedience thou canst perform, thou owest it to the sovereignty and holiness of God, and his justice will never accept of that which belongs to his authority: besides, it is absurd to think to pay one duty, by another; to discharge the debt of sin, by paying the debt of duty.

(2dly) Thou canst not pay off thy debts, by any Sufferings hereafter.

It is true, sinners shall lie eternally in prison, and be eternally satisfying the offended justice of God: but, in all that eternity, there shall never be that moment, wherein they may say, as Christ did in his making satisfaction, "It is finished: the debt is paid; and justice hath received as much as was due from me." No: that satisfaction must be eternally making: and therefore the punishment must be eternally lasting. For every sin, even the least sin, is committed against an Infinite God; and therefore the punishment of it must be infinite: for offences take their measures, as well from the dignity of the person against whom they are committed, as from the heinousness of the fact in itself considered: as a reviling word against the king is treasonable; against our equals, but actionable: and, therefore, by the same proportion, the same offence against the Infinite Majesty of the Great God, must needs carry infinite guilt in it; that is, exposeth to infinite punishment.

Now then, O Sinner, think with thyself, what satisfaction thou canst make to God, that can bear a proportion to thy infinite offences.

Thou canst not, at once, undergo an infinite measure of punishment; for thy nature is but finite. Couldst thou do this, then indeed there were hope, yea certainty of relief for thee; for divine justice will not exact more than its due: but because this is impossible, thy woes and torments in hell must be eternal, that they may be some way infinite as the justice is which thou hast offended; infinite, if not in degrees, yet in duration and continuance.

And, oh, what dreadful despair will this cause in thee, when thou shalt have been in hell under most acute and insufferable torments millions of years; and yet the payment of all that sum of plagues and woes shall not be of value enough to satisfy for the least of thy sins, nor to cross out of God's book the least and smallest of thy debts: but thy account shall still be as great and as full as it was at thy first plunging into hell, and still an eternity of torments remains to be paid by thee!

And now, wretched creatures that we are, whither shall we turn ourselves? What hope, what relief can we find? Shall we flatter ourselves that God will not require our sins at our hands? no: they are debts, and therefore he may; and he is a just God, just to himself and to the interest of his own glory, and therefore he will. God hath beforehand told us, at what rate we must expect to take up our sins, and what we must pay for them at the last. He hath told us as plainly as the mouth of truth can utter it, that the wages of sin is death; and the ways sinners choose, lead down to the chambers of hell and destruction. Our own misery is our own choice. He hath, in his word, set life and death before us; and declared to us the means, how we might escape the one and obtain the other. He hath represented to us the unconceivableness of both: and, if we will be so obstinate, as, after these manifest representations, to choose hell and death, it is but reason and justice that we should have our own choice; for it is our choice interpretatively, when we choose those ways and actions that expose to them.

And thus much concerning the acknowledgment we make in this petition, our debts; debts, vast and infinite, which the justice of God will strictly require of sinners in their eternal condemnation: debts, the least of which makes us liable to be cast into prison, into hell; and, for the least of which, we can never satisfy.

But, what! is there no hope? Is there no possibility to cross the book; to cancel the obligation, whereby we stand bound to the revenging justice of God, and everlasting sufferings?

Truly none, by our own personal satisfaction: but, yet, there is abundant hope, yea full assurance of it, through the free mercy of our God. And, therefore, as our Saviour hath taught us to acknowledge our debts; so he hath likewise taught us to pray, Father, forgive us our debts.

[3] And, now that I have shewed you our misery by reason of our debts; and you have seen the black side of the cloud, which interposeth between God and us: so give me leave to represent to you our hopes and consolation, in God's free grace and the divine mercy, in dissolving this black cloud, that it may never more appear.

Add here let us,

1st. Consider what the Pardon of Sin is.

And this we cannot better discover, than by looking into the nature of sin. Sin, therefore, as St. John describes it, 1 John 3:4 is a transgression of the Law of God. And to the validity of all laws, it is necessary that there be a penalty annexed; either literally expressed, or tacitly implied. The guilt, that we contract, by transgressing the law, is nothing else, but our liableness to undergo this penalty.

And this guilt is twofold.

The intrinsical and formal: and that is the desert of punishment, which sin always necessarily carries in it, as it is a violation of a holy

and righteous commandment.

The other is extrinsical and adventitious; and consists in the appointment and designation of the sinner unto punishment. This now doth not formally flow from sin; but from the will of God, constituting and willing to punish sin with death.

Now pardon is nothing else, but the removal of the guilt of sin.

But now the question is, which guilt it removeth.

I answer,

It doth not remove the intrinsical guilt of sin, or the desert of punishment. For the sins of those, who are justified and pardoned, do yet, in their own nature, deserve death and eternal damnation. As a pardon, vouchsafed to a traitor, doth not cause his actions not to have been treasonable and worthy of death: for this doth necessarily follow immediately upon the transgressing of the law, to which the penalty is annexed. So neither is it in the power of pardoning grace, to make that our sins should not deserve death, according to their own demerit: for that were a contradiction; since this demerit is necessary and essential unto sin as such.

Therefore, pardon of sin removes that guilt, which consists in the adventitious appointment or ordination of the sinner unto punishment, flowing from the will of God, who hath, in his Law, threatened to inflict eternal death as the reward and wages of sin.

Now this designation of the sinner unto punishment is two-fold; either Personal or Mystical. One of these two ways God will certainly punish every soul that sins.

Either by appointing the sinner Personally to undergo the punishment of his iniquities: and thus he deals with unbelievers, whom he will punish, in their own persons, for their transgressions,

Or else he appoints them to undergo the punishment of their sins Mystically; as being by faith made one with the Lord Jesus Christ, who himself hath borne our sins in his own body on the tree.

Now pardon of sin doth not remove the mystical appointment of a believer unto punishment; for he hath suffered it: for Christ hath suffered it; and Christ and he are one mystical person by faith. God never pardons, but he likewise punishes the very sin that he pardons: he punisheth it in our surety and undertaker, when he forgives it to a believer.

Pardon of sin, therefore, removes only that guilt, which consists in our own personal appointment and designation to punishment: though the sin doth always in itself necessarily deserve death, though that death hath been inflicted upon Christ, and therefore upon believers in him, as members of him.

But yet, notwithstanding that God thus takes vengeance on our sins, he doth graciously pardon them, when he releaseth our personal obligation unto punishment; and reckons that we have suffered the penalty, in Christ suffering it, and therefore ought to be discharged from any farther liableness unto it.

This now is that pardon of sin, which we pray for, when we say, Forgive us our debts.

And for the more full explication of it, I shall lay down these following positions.

(1st) The pardoning grace of God, in respect of us, is altogether free and undeserved.

We can of ourselves scarce so much as ask forgiveness; but even this comes from the grace of God: therefore, much less can we do any thing to merit it. Far be it from us to affirm, as the Papists do, that good works proceeding from grace are meritorious of pardon and salvation. Alas! what are our prayers, our sighs, our tears, yea our

very blood, should we spend it for Christ? They are but poor, imperfect things; and are so far from having in them any infinite worth and value to counterbalance our sins, that the defects of them add to the number of our other transgressions. They cannot all of them make one blot in the book of God's remembrance: but may well make more items there against us. Had it been possible for men to have quitted scores with divine justice by what they could do or suffer, heaven would not have been so needlessly lavish, as to send Christ into the world, to lead an afflicted life and to die an accursed death, only for our redemption and salvation.

(2dly) The pardoning grace of God is not free, in respect of Christ; but it cost him the price of blood.

It is the blood of the lamb, slain from the foundation of the world, that crosseth the debt-book. Without shedding of blood, there is no remission, says the Apostle: Heb. 9:22. And, this is my blood, which is shed for the remission of sins: Mat. 26:28. And although, possibly, God might, according to his absolute sovereignty, have freely remitted all the sins of all the world, without any kind of satisfaction, only by a free and gracious act of mercy: yet, considering that he had otherwise declared in his unalterable word of truth, that there must be a recompense made him for all our offences, it had been a wrong to his veracity, if not to his justice, to have granted the pardon of any one sin without the intervention of a full price and satisfaction. No satisfaction could be made correspondent to the wrong done to an Infinite God, but by an Infinite Person who was God himself: for, had the person been finite, the sufferings must have been eternal; otherwise, they could not have been proportionable to the offence, which requires an infinite satisfaction. But, if the sufferings had been eternal, satisfaction could never have been made, but would for ever have been making unto the justice of God; and, consequently, our sins could never have been pardoned. And therefore God appointed to this work of reconciling himself to fallen man, his Only Begotten Son, God co-equal and co-eternal with himself, and every way infinite as himself: that he might be able to bear the whole wrath of

God, at once, and, at one bitter draught, drink off the whole cup of fury, which we should have been draining by little drops to all eternity. So that, justice being satisfied in the sufferings of Christ, for the sins of those, whose persons and whose guilt he sustained upon the cross; mercy hath now a way opened to glorify its riches, in their pardon and salvation.

Thus, in these two positions, it appears, that, though the remitting of our sins be an act of God's free grace and mercy, in respect of us; yet it is the effect of purchase, in respect of Christ. God pardons sins to them who committed them, upon their faith and repentance: but he pardons not those very sins to Christ, to whom they were imputed; but exacted satisfaction from him, to the very utmost rigour of justice.

Hence it follows,

(3dly) That the pardon of sin is not only an act of mere free grace and mercy; but, according to the terms of the Covenant of Grace, it is also an act of justice in God.

Indeed both mercy and justice are concurrent in it: for since by the union of faith we are made one mystical body with Christ, it could not consist with the equity of God to punish the sins of believers in their own persons; for this would be no other than to punish them twice for the same offence, once in their surety, and again in themselves.

Now what abundant cause of comfort may this be to all true believers, that God's justice as well as his mercy shall acquit them! that that attribute of God, at the apprehension of which they were wont to tremble, should interpose on their behalf, and plead for them! Yet, through the all-sufficient expiation and atonement that Christ hath made for our sins, this mystery is effected; and justice itself brought over, from being a formidable adversary, to be of our party and to plead for us. Therefore the Apostle tells us, 1 John 1:9

that God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. And St. Paul, 2 Thess. 1:6, 7. It is a righteous thing with God, to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you: and, to you who are troubled, rest with us; when the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.

(4thly) When God pardons, he doth no longer account of us sinners.

Indeed, after pardon, we still retain sinful and corrupt natures; and there is that original pollution in us, that can never be totally dislodged in this life. But, yet, when God pardons, he looks not upon us as sinners, but as just. The malefactor, that is legally discharged, either by satisfying the law or by his prince's grace and favour towards him, is no more reputed a malefactor; but as just and righteous, as if he had never offended. So is it with us: we are both ways discharged of our guilt: both by satisfying the penalty of the Law in Christ our Surety; and by the free grace and mercy of God, who hath sealed to us a gracious act of pardon: and therefore we are just in the sight of God, as if we had never sinned.

(5thly) Pardon of sin is one great part of our Justification.

Justification consists of these two parts, Remission and Acceptance. We have them both joined together, Eph. 1:6, 7. He hath made us accepted in the Beloved: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Remission of sins takes away our liableness to death: acceptation of our persons gives us a title unto life. Now to be free from our obnoxiousness to death, and instated in a right to eternal life; these two constitute a perfect Justification. For, to be accepted of God in Christ, is no other than for God, through the righteousness and obedience of Christ imputed to us, to own and acknowledge us to have a right to heaven. And, therefore, we have mention of pardon and an inheritance together, in St. Paul's commission to his ministry: Acts 26:18 that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified.

It is not, therefore, O Soul, a bare negative righteousness, that God intends thee, in the pardon of thy sins. It is not merely to remove the curse and wrath thy sins have deserved; though that alone can never sufficiently be admired: but the same hand, that plucks thee out of hell by pardon, lifts thee up to heaven, by what he gives thee together with thy pardon, even a right and title to a blessed and glorious inheritance. Thy pardon, thou hast from the Passive Obedience of Christ in his sufferings: a right to heaven, thou hast through the Active Obedience of Christ in fulfilling all righteousness: and, through both, hast thou obtained a complete Justification; God looking upon thee as innocent through the satisfaction of his Son, and as worthy through his obedience, both which are made thine by faith.

Now this pardon of sin is, in Scripture, set forth by very sweet and full expressions. It is called, a blotting out of transgression: a metaphor taken from a creditor's crossing the debt-book, signifying thereby a discharge of the debt. And, lest we might possibly fear God will implead us for them without book, the prophet adds forgetting unto blotting out: Is. 43:25. I, even I, am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions for my name's sake; and I will not remember thy sins. It is called, a covering of our sins: Ps. 32:1. Blessed is the man, whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered. Yea, we have a farther ground of comfort, for it is not only a covering of our sins, but it is a covering of God's face from them: Ps. 51:9. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. It is a casting of them behind God's back, as a thing that he will never more regard: Is. 38:17. Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back. And, lest we should suspect he should turn again to behold them, it is called, a casting of them into the bottom of the sea: Mic. 7:19 as we do with things we would have irrecoverably lost and gone. It is a scattering them as a thick cloud: Is. 44:22 when the vapours of it are so dissipated, that there shall not remain the least spot, to obstruct the shining of God's face and favour upon our souls. Yea, and so perfect an abolition shall be made of all our iniquities, that, though divine justice should enter into a strict search and scrutiny after them, they

shall not be found against us: so the prophet Jeremiah tells us, Jer. 50:20. In those days, shall the iniquity of Israel be sought for; and there shall be none: and the sins of Judah; and they shall not be found. How hath God heaped up expressions of his grace and mercy one upon another! and studied words, as it were, to assure us of the validity of our pardon; giving to us abounding consolations, as our sins have been abounding!

And thus much shall suffice to shew the nature of pardoning grace and mercy, as expressed in these words, Forgive us our debts.

2dly. Let us consider unto Whom this petition for pardon is directed.

And that is, as all the rest are, to our Father: whose laws we have violated, whose justice we have offended, whose displeasure we have incurred, and to whose vengeance we have made ourselves liable and obnoxious, to him we sue for pardon and remission.

Hence we may collect this note: That it is the high prerogative of God alone to forgive sins.

God assumes this particularly to himself, and seems to triumph in the glory of this attribute. I, even I, am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions. And, therefore, when Christ cured the Paralytic, the Scribes and Pharisees stormed at him for a blasphemer, for saying, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee. Thou blasphemest, say they: for who can forgive sins, but God alone? Mark 2:7*. And this charge of blasphemy, which they laid against Christ, had he not been the True God, had been unanswerable. And therefore our Saviour denies not their principle, which is most certain and infallible: but, to convince them that they themselves were blasphemers, in applying it to him, proves his deity, by a miracle; and demonstrates his authority to forgive sins, by his power in healing diseases.

But, you will say, "If it be the incommunicable prerogative of God only to forgive sins, how is it that we find this privilege and power ascribed unto men also: John 20:23. Whose soever sins ye remit,

they are remitted? It seems, therefore, that the Apostles, and Ministers of Jesus Christ their successors, stand invested by Christ with a power to forgive sins."

I answer: Remission of sins is twofold, either authoritatively and judicially; or, secondly, ministerial and declarative.

The Former belongs only to God: who, by the mere authority of his grace and mercy, doth freely and fully acquit us of our guilt; without requiring anything at our hands, by way of recompense or punishment. Now for any creature, either in heaven or earth, to assume this to himself, is a most insolent and blasphemous pride; which while the Pope of Rome doth, he hath given us the strongest argument that can be, to assert and prove him to be the Antichrist, and that Son of Perdition; for, among the many characters that are given of Antichrist, all of which do more than sufficiently belong unto him, this is one, that he exalteth himself above all that is called God: 2 Thess. 2:4.

Not only above Titular Gods, as Kings and Magistrates are (for it is notoriously known what power he arrogates unto himself, in disposing crowns and transferring states, making princes themselves far more inferior to him, than their subjects are to them): but also above the only living and true God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, in pretending to a judicial authority to forgive sins and offences committed against God. For it is clear and evident, whosoever can pardon the offences of one person against another must himself be superior to both, and have authority and jurisdiction over both; but chiefly over the person offended, to make him cease the prosecution of his right, and sit down by the wrong received: for if a prince should pardon the injury that one subject doth the other, he must command the person grieved not to molest or prosecute him that hath done the wrong, and so disable him from taking revenge. Now what a wretched and damnable insolence is it for any vile sinful man to pretend to such a power of forgiving sins committed against God; as if, by his authority, he could command God to surcease his suit,

and to require no farther recompense, but to rest himself contented that it is the Pope's will and pleasure to have it so! What is this, but to exalt himself above all that is called God, not only on earth, but in heaven itself? a most horrid blasphemy! and so proper a character of Antichrist, that there needs no other to describe him by.

There is a Ministerial, declarative remission of sins: and this is either internal, in the Court of Conscience; or external, in the Court of the Church of Christ here upon earth. The former remission is the office or ministry of the Holy Ghost, sealing of us up unto the day of redemption; by his silent and most comfortable testimony, witnessing unto us that our sins are pardoned and our persons accepted. The external declaration of remission of sins, is an open publication to all humble penitent sinners of the absolution and pardon of their offences, according to the tenor of God's faithful promises. And, in this sense alone, the ministers of Jesus Christ have power to pardon and remit sins. Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted; that is, whose sins you declare that God hath remitted, they are remitted: not absolutely, but conditionally; in case men come up to the performance of those conditions, upon which God hath promised pardon and forgiveness, which are faith and repentance. And, therefore, in our Public Prayers, where the whole congregation hath made an humble confession of their sins, the Minister, according to his office and power given him by Christ, declares to them, that God "pardons and absolves all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel." Or if, on any other occasion, the Minister say, "I absolve thee from thy sins;" yet the meaning is the same: he absolves him officially, not judicially: he absolves, by declaring him absolved and pardoned upon his sincere faith and repentance: which if people did but better understand, they would not be so forward to carp at, lest they carp at the very Gospel itself. Nor doth this at all intrench upon God's prerogative: for the Minister, only as the officer and messenger of God, declares that it is he alone who pardons and absolves penitent sinners: a practice, as far from bordering upon the intolerable arrogance of Antichrist; as it is, on the other side, from yielding enough to the express authority of

Christ to adjudge it vain and fruitless. As it is the prince that pardons, the herald only proclaims it: so here, it is God only who pardons sinners: the Minister's part, is, in a solemn and official manner, to pronounce and proclaim this pardon, to all that shall accept it upon the terms on which it is offered by God.

And this may suffice in answer to that objection.

But then again it may be objected: "How is it God alone who forgives sins, whereas we likewise are bound to forgive those that trespass against us?"

To this I answer: Every trespass against man is also an offence against God: for, so merciful is our God unto us, that he hath taken his creatures under the protection of his law, and fenced us round with the authority of his commands; so that no injury can reach us, but it must commit a trespass upon the divine law, and break through those bounds that God hath set about every man's propriety and right to defend it against unjust invaders. But, yet, if any shall dare to violate this, we must forgive them so far forth as it is a wrong to us; as I shall shew more largely hereafter: but we cannot pretend to forgive the wrong that they have done to God, in wronging us; but this must be left between him and their own souls, to his mercy and their repentance.

If, then, it be the prerogative of God alone to pardon sin, hence we may, for our abundant comfort, be informed,

(1st) That our pardon is free and gratuitous.

For whatsoever God doth he doth it freely; for his own sake; without respect to any former deserts, or expectations of any future recompence. It is infinitely below the sovereignty of his grace, to admit of any other motive for his mercy, but his mercy: and therefore he hath told us, I will be gracious, to whom I will be gracious; and I will shew mercy, on whom I will shew mercy: Exod. 33:19. Since it is a God, that pardons, it is infinitely unworthy of his glory and

majesty, to sell his pardons and indulgencies, and to make his mercy merchandize.

But yet this pardoning Grace of God, though it be free in respect of purchase, yet is it limited to conditions in respect of application; which conditions are faith and repentance. Whosoever believeth in him shall obtain remission of sins: Acts 10:43. Repent, says the Apostle, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come: Acts 3:19.

Think not therefore, O Soul, when thy conscience is oppressed with the guilt of sin, think not what expiation thou must make, what ransom thou must pay to God. Say not, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, or bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? as the prophet speaks: Micah 6:6, 7. What shall I do, or what shall I offer, to make amends and recompence for my offences?" This is to be injurious to the free grace of God, which requires no satisfaction from thee: only thy present acceptance and future reformation. This is that, indeed, which God requires from thee: but, to think to purchase his favour and to buy his mercy, is infinitely to disparage it: and they only judge rightly of it, who judge it invaluable.

(2dly) It is God, that pardons; therefore our pardon is full and complete.

Indeed those acts, that God works within us, are in this life imperfect. The illumination of our minds, the sanctification of our hearts, are God's works within us: and these are defective; not as they come from God, but as they are received in us. As we know but in part, so we are sanctified but in part.

But those acts of God, that he doth not work in us, but only terminate upon us, of which we are the objects, but not the subjects, they are all as perfect here as they shall be to all eternity. Thus God justifies, adopts, and pardons fully and completely: for these are acts of God residing in his own breast, where they meet with no opposition or allay; nor do they increase by any small degrees as our sanctification doth, but are at once as perfect as ever they shall be.

I do not mean, though some have so thought and taught, that God doth at once pardon all the sins of a true believer; as well those which for the future he shall commit, as those which he hath already committed: which is an absurd and dangerous tenet; as if sin could be pardoned before it were, or guilt removed before it be contracted. But only whatsoever sins God pardons, he doth it not gradually. Nothing of guilt is left upon the soul, when God pardons it; though still there be something of filth left in it, when God sanctifies it.

And, therefore, as it is the great grief of God's children, that their inherent holiness is so imperfect, affronted by temptations, foiled by corruptions, oppressed and almost stifled to death by a body of sin that lies heavy upon it; yet this, on the other hand, may be their exceeding great comfort and rejoicing, that God's pardoning grace is not as his sanctifying grace is, nor granted to them by the same stint and measure. A sin, truly repented of, is not pardoned to us by halves; half the guilt remitted and half retained, (as the Papists fancy, to establish their purgatory:) no, O Sinner, there is not any guilt left for thee to satisfy for, not any reserve of punishment for thee to undergo; but all thy sins are so pardoned, that they are in God's account as if they had never been committed against him. And, therefore, be thy comforts never so strong and flowing, and thy sense of God's pardoning grace never so clear; yet know that thy pardon is still infinitely more perfect, than thy joy in it can be satisfactory: for assurance, and the sense of pardon, is a work of God's Spirit wrought in us, and is commonly mixed with some hesitation and misgiving doubts; but our pardon is an act of God in himself, where it meets

with nothing contrary, and therefore with no abatement, but is as perfect and absolute as ever it shall be in heaven itself.

(3dly) Is it God, that pardons? Then, for thy comfort, know, that he can as easily forgive great and many sins, as few and small.

For the greatness and multitudes of thy sins can make no odds in infinite grace and mercy: only repent and believe. God proclaims his name: Exod. 34:6, 7, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin: that is, all sorts and sizes of sins. The greatest sins repented of are no more without the extent of his mercy, than the least unrepented of are without the cognizance of his justice. And that there is any one, though but one, sin unpardonable, ariseth not so much from the atrociousness of the fact, as if it exceeded mercy; but only from the malignity of its nature, hardening the heart against God, and making it incapable of repentance: otherwise, could they who commit this sin repent, even they also should obtain pardon.

Say not, therefore, "Mine iniquity is greater than can be forgiven: I have out-sinned mercy; and there is no portion for me in God: his fiery indignation will eternally devour me." This is to be injurious unto God; and to stint that grace and mercy, which he hath made infinite. And thou mayest, with as much truth and reason say, that thou art greater than God, as that thy sins are greater than his mercy.

Yet, here, before I leave this, let me caution you, that you do not abuse this comfortable doctrine of God's pardoning sin; and turn that into presumption, that was intended only to arm you against despair.

Indeed both presumption and despair tend, in a diverse manner, to encourage and harden men in sin.

The despairing sinner argues: "If I must not be saved, if my sins be so many and great that there is no pardon for them, to what purpose

then should I live strictly? To what purpose should I cross and vex myself by an unprofitable severity? It is too great niceness to scruple farther sinning, when I am already sure of damnation; and, therefore, if I must go to hell, I will make my way thither as pleasant as I can." This is a kind of despair that produceth, not horror, as it doth in some; but a most wretched carelessness what becomes of them.

On the other hand, presumptuous men argue: God is able to pardon the greatest and vilest sinners: they cannot sin beyond the reach and extent of his grace and mercy; and, therefore, what need they yet trouble themselves to repent and reform? They will yet indulge themselves a little longer in their sins; for it is as easy for God to pardon them at the last moment of their lives, as upon many years' preparation.

We see iniquity every where most fearfully to abound in the world; and, doubtless, both despair and presumption have too great an influence, both upon the minds and lives of men, to make them careless in their eternal concernments.

Enough hath been spoken to the despairing, which are but few; but, to the presumptuous, let me add a word.

It is the most unworthy and disingenuous use they can make of the mercy of God, to press it to serve against its authority: Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid! Shall we sin licentiously, because God pardons freely? No: the grace of God obligeth otherwise the love of Christ constraineth otherwise: the filial disposition of the new creature inclineth otherwise: gratitude and retribution engage otherwise. But if these motives be too refined and ingenuous for thy sordid and slavish spirit; and if thou wilt still go on in the presumption of thy heart, crying Peace, Peace to thyself, although thou continuest adding one iniquity to another; know, O vile wretch, that the Lord will not spare thee; but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against thee; and all the

curses, that are written in his book shall come upon thee, and the Lord will blot out thy name from under heaven: Deut. 29:19.

And thus I have done with the general consideration of God's pardoning sin, held forth to us in this petition: Forgive us our debts, or trespasses.

[4] Now, in this petition, we pray not only for the pardon of sin: but, likewise, for all things that are antecedently necessary to obtain it.

As,

1st. We pray, that God would discover to us the horrid odious nature of sin: that he would convince us of the woeful, miserable estate, that we are in by nature; and how much more wretched and miserable we have made ourselves by our sinful lives: that he would set home the terrors of sin upon our consciences, to our humiliation; and make us despair in ourselves, that we might fly unto Christ, and lay hold on that help and refuge he hath set before us.

2dly. We pray, that God would humble us under the sight and sense of our manifold transgressions; that, as our sins have made us vile in God's eyes, so they may make us vile in our own, to loath ourselves in dust and ashes for them.

3dly. We pray, that God would give us his Spirit, to enable us to confess our sins cordially, and sincerely to pour forth our hearts before him, and to acknowledge our manifold provocations with shame and godly sorrow, upon which God promised to grant us pardon and forgiveness: Prov. 28:13. He, that covereth his sins, shall not prosper; but he, that confesseth and forsaketh them, shall find mercy. And the Apostle tells us: If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness: 1 John 1:9.

4thly. We beg a more clear understanding of the sacrifice and atonement made by Jesus Christ, through which alone all pardon is

purchased and procured; to know both what it is and why ordained: and, likewise, the knowledge of God's rich and free mercy: and the conjunction of this sacrifice and mercy together, in the great mystery of the freeness of divine grace, and the satisfaction of Jesus concurring to the remission of our sins and the salvation of our souls.

5thly. We pray, that we may have a high esteem of Christ, and may hunger and thirst more after him and his righteousness, through whom alone pardon of our sins is to be obtained.

6thly. We pray that we may be brought over to close with the Lord Jesus Christ by a lively faith: that his righteousness thereby may be made ours; and we, by that righteousness, may obtain pardon of our sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified. For, though pardon be procured by the death of Christ, yet the application of it to the soul is only by faith, uniting us unto him, and making us one with him: for all, that Christ hath either done or suffered for the redemption of the world, would be altogether in vain as to our particular benefit and advantage, were it not that faith entitles us unto it; and makes that satisfaction, which he hath given to divine justice, to be mystically our act, as it was personally his.

And thus I have considered the Petition itself, Forgive us our debts.

(2) I now proceed to the Condition or Plea annexed: as we forgive our debtors.

And here we have,

The act: forgive.

The object: debtors.

The limitation of this object: OUR debtors.

The proportion or resemblance, in the particle as: AS we forgive our debtors.

[1] I shall begin with the object: debtors.

As all men stand indebted to God in a twofold debt; a Debt of Obedience, and a Debt of Punishment: so one man may be a debtor to another two ways; either by owing to him a Debt of Duty, or else a Debt of Satisfaction.

1st. Some men stand indebted to others in a Debt of Duty.

And, indeed, I might well have said, this debt is reciprocal between man and man. Thus children owe parents reverence and obedience; and parents their children, provision and education. Subjects owe their magistrates honour and tribute; and magistrates owe their subjects justice and protection. Servants owe their masters fear, diligence, and faithfulness; and masters owe their servants maintenance and encouragement. And, generally, all men owe one another, love, respect, and kindness.

Now these debts cannot balance one another: that as much as is left unpaid me by any person; so much again I may refuse to pay him. If a father pay not his debt to his child, or a magistrate to his subject, or a master to his servants, they are not hereby acquitted of their obligations; but, still, duty, obedience, and faithfulness is required from inferiors to their superiors. And so, on the contrary, love, protection, and maintenance is required from superiors to their inferiors, although peccant, as long as the relation shall continue between them, And the reason is, because we are bound to these duties, not only by the obligations that mutual offices lay upon us, but by God's express will and command, and the performance of the relation that is betwixt us. And, therefore, though it be lawful for two persons, that owe one another an equal debt of money, or other such like things, to cross out one debt by the other, and so discount it between them; yet it is not so, where the duties that God requires are the debts they owe to each other: for, although others may fail in the performance of what belongs to their part, yet thou oughtest not to

fail in thine; for, thus to be even with men is to run in debt with God, and to make him thy creditor who will certainly be thy revenger.

And from hence it appears, that this is not the debt, that we are to forgive our debtors, for we have no power to release them from their obligation to duty, whilst the relation between us continues, no more than we have to rescind the laws of God and of nature.

2dly. Some men may stand indebted to others in a Debt of Satisfaction; as they owe them reparation, on good grounds, for wrongs and injuries done against them: and this is the debt, which we are to forgive others.

Now, as wrongs and injuries are of divers sorts, so many divers ways may others become debtors to us.

And they are chiefly these Six that follow.

(1st) By wronging us in our persons, either by unjust violence, or by unjust restraints. Thus the persecuting Jews were debtors to the apostles and disciples of Christ, for often scourging and imprisoning them.

(2dly) By wronging us in our place and dignity; and in the office, to which, by God's Providence, we are called. And so also those, that vilify the persons, and detract from the authority of those that are set over them, become their debtors. Thus Aaron and Miriam were debtors unto Moses, for traducing the authority that God had committed unto him: Num. 12:2.

(3dly) By wronging us in our friends and relations, either by corrupting them:—thus Sechem became a debtor to Jacob and his sons, for violating his daughter and their sister: or else by destroying them:—so Herod, to the Bethlemitish mothers, by murdering their children.

(4thly) By wronging us in our right and title; withholding from us what is our due.

(5thly) In our possessions; when, either by force or fraud, they take from us what of right belongs to us.

(6thly) In our reputation and good name; unjustly defaming us for those crimes, which only their malice hath invented and published against us.

To all these wrongs we are subject; God permitting the wickedness of men a large scope to vent itself, and affording us a large field to exercise our meekness and forgiving temper in each of these.

But, withal, if those, who, in any of these, or any other particulars do wrong their brethren, are, by the sentence of our Saviour, here pronounced Debtors, this should teach them to look upon themselves as obliged to make satisfaction, according to the utmost of their power and ability.

Thou, therefore, who art conscious to thyself of wronging any, either in their persons, or dignities, or relations, or rights, or possessions, or reputations; though it be thy duty to confess it before God, and humble thyself to him for it, begging mercy and pardon at his hands: yet this is not enough; for, by one single offence, thou hast contracted a double debt. Thou standest indebted to the justice of God, for the violation of his law: but this is not all; but thou standest in debt unto man likewise, by injuries done against him. And both thy creditors must be satisfied: God, by the righteousness of Christ, through thy faith and repentance; and man, by an acknowledgment, reparation, and restitution. The Apostle hath commanded us: Rom. 13:8 to owe no man any thing, but to love one another. And, indeed, satisfaction for wrongs is a necessary part of repentance; for he, that truly repents, doth really and from his heart wish that the wrong had never been done; and therefore will be sure to do his utmost to annihilate the fault, by giving the abused party a compensation fully

answerable to the injury, and to the utmost of his ability restore him into the same or a better condition than that in which he was before he received the wrong.

Therefore,

[1st] Art thou conscious to thyself, that thou hast wronged any man in his credit and reputation, either by raising or divulging false and slanderous reports?

Know, that thou art his Debtor; and justice obligeth thee to make him satisfaction for that injury, by wiping away those aspersions, and licking away the dirt with the same tongue with which thou didst bespatter him: for, if thou sufferest the same reports to run on which thou hast set on foot, all, that shall relate them after thee, multiply thy guilt; and all the numerous offspring of lies, which, through a certain itch that men have of speaking ill, will be soon propagated, shall all be charged upon thee; for, of them all, thou and the Devil art the Father.

[2dly] Art thou conscious thou hast wronged thy superiors, as Magistrates, Ministers, Parents, or Masters, in that authority and power that God hath given them over thee, by any disobedient demeanour towards them?

Know, that thou art their Debtor; and it lies upon thy conscience to give them due satisfaction: which because it cannot be done by recalling the offences past, it must be done by an humble acknowledgment to them; desiring their pardon, and promising and endeavouring more ready submission for the future. So was the case of Aaron and Miriam, when they had affronted Moses, and were convinced of the wrong they had done him: Aaron makes his humble acknowledgment and begs forgiveness: Num. 12:11. Alas! my Lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned. And so the Prodigal, when he returned to his father, confessed his disobedience: Luke 15:21.

Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: which, though it be a parable, yet teacheth us real and literal duties in parallel cases.

[3dly] Art thou conscious to thyself, that thou hast wronged any one in their right; either in withholding or taking from them, what, in law and equity, belonged to them?

Thou art their Debtor; and, as such, art bound to make them satisfaction, by making them a full and plenary restitution: and that, though the thing, wherein thou hast wronged them, be great or small, more or less; yea, though it should seemingly tend to the loss of thy credit to acknowledge such a wrong, or visibly tend to thy impoverishing and undoing to restore it. Nor is it enough, when thy conscience checks thee for it, that thou confess the sin to God, and prayest for pardon at his hands: but it behoveth thee to render unto man what is his, and what thou unjustly keepest from him; whether it be his, by thy promise and engagement, or by his former title and possession. As thou lovest thy soul, and hopest for pardon and salvation, thou must make restitution. And the reason is, because, as long as thou detainest it, so long thou continuest in the commission of the same sin; for an unjust detainure and possession is a continued and prolonged theft. And, certainly, our repentance, be it what it will, can never be true and sincere, while we continue in the sin we seem to repent of: and, this repentance not being true, pardon shall never be granted thee; but, as thou remainest a debtor to man, so thy debt to God remains uncanceled; and, though men may not sue thee to recover their right, because this sin sometimes is so secretly carried on that it may not come to their knowledge, yet divine justice will sue thee for it, and pursue thee to eternal condemnation.

But, you may say, "What if those, whom we have wronged, be since dead: how can any restitution be made to them, or any recompence reach them?"

I answer: In this case, thou art bound to find out their children or relations, in whom they still live; and to whom, it is to be supposed, that, which thou hast detained, should have descended: and to restore it unto them; with ample satisfaction, likewise, for all the prejudice they have sustained, in the mean time, for want of it. But, in case none can be found to whom of right it may belong, then God's right takes place, as he is the Universal Proprietor of all things: and thou oughtest, besides what thou art obliged to give of thine own, to bestow it in works of charity and piety, which may promote his glory; still bewailing, that thou hast so long deferred the restitution of it to the immediate owners, till thou hast made thyself now incapable of doing it.

This, perhaps, will seem a very hard lesson to many; and, doubtless, it is so to a world so full of rapine and injustice: but I cannot, I dare not make God's commands lighter nor easier, than he hath made them. And let this seem as hard as it will, yet this is the Rule of Christianity: this is the inflexible law of justice; and, without observing it, you keep yourselves from all hopes of obtaining pardon by continuing in your sin, which is utterly inconsistent with repentance, and without repentance there can be no remission nor salvation.

And thus much for the word Debtors, and what it intimates to us; namely, that we are bound to make satisfaction for all the wrongs and injuries we have done to any others.

[2] But, then, as there lies this debt on the part of the debtor, so doth there likewise one great and important duty on the part of the creditor: and that is, Forgiveness: as we forgive our debtors.

Now all pardon and forgiveness, is a removing of the liableness unto punishment, under which we formerly lay: and, therefore, as when God pardons, he frees us from the punishment due to our offences; so, when we pardon and forgive others, it must be by a meek forbearing to punish others who have offended us.

And this consists in two things.

1st. In abstaining from the Outward Acts of private and personal revenge; whether by word, or by deed: for both are expressly forbidden us.

If others have bent their tongues against us, and shot forth their arrows even cruel words, Christianity obligeth us not to return them back again; much less, as is the common but wicked practice of the most, with double measure and advantage: for, if they have wronged us by their actions as well as by their speeches, we may not assume to ourselves a liberty of retribution; nor think that the iniquity of their proceeding will justify the equity of ours. For both of these, see what the Apostle saith: 1 Pet. 3:8, 9. Be pitiful, be courteous; not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing; but, contrarywise, blessing: knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. And, indeed, there is nothing, that the Gospel and Laws of Christ do more instantly press upon us, than that we would not requite injuries with injuries. This prohibition is the proper character of his doctrine, and this the practice of his disciples. Revenge is a wild, untamed passion, that knows no bounds nor measures. And, if we were permitted to carve it out for ourselves, we should certainly exceed all limits and moderation: for selflove, which is an immoderate affection, would be made the whole rule of our vengeance; and, because we love ourselves abundantly too well, we should revenge every imaginary wrong done us with too much bitterness and severity: and, therefore, God would not trust the righting of ourselves in our own hands, knowing we would be too partial to our own interest and concerns; but hath assumed it to himself, as the prerogative of his own crown: Rom. 12:19. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves; but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.

But, you will say, "How, then! must we sit down under every petulant wrong, that is done us; and, by a stupid patience, invite injuries, and tempt others to the sport and recreation of abusing us? for every one

will be ready to shoot his arrows against a soft butt, where they will stick; but who will care to shoot them against a stone-wall, that will rebound them back in their faces again?"

I answer: It is, indeed, well worth the most serious and critical consideration, rightly to state how far we are bound to forgive injuries and wrongs, without requiring any satisfaction for them.

And, because the resolution of this seems to be of great difficulty, as also of great importance for the regulating of our consciences, I shall, first, lay down some Distinctions; and, then, some Conclusions drawn from them, for our more full satisfaction in this case.

First Distinction. Those wrongs, that are done thee, may either be forgiven by thee without doing any wrong to others, or not.

Second Distinction. Those wrongs, which thou mayest forgive without doing any wrong to any other, are either light and tolerable offences, or of great concern and consequence.

Now these distinctions being premised, I say,

First Conclusion. In no case whatsoever, be the injury greater or less, is private revenge to be allowed; but, so far forth art thou bound to forgive it, as not to be both judge and executioner thyself. This, I suppose, is clear and indubitable, that all revenge is to be committed to the magistrate's sword; whom God hath armed with authority and commission, to be the avenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

Second Conclusion. Therefore, if the wrong thou hast received be insupportable, and tends either to the ruin of thy estate and necessary subsistence, or to the irreparable loss of thy good name, or it may be of thy life; I know no precept of forgiveness, that doth in this case forbid thee to seek satisfaction; but it must be only in a public and legal way: otherwise, in forgiving others, we should vastly injure ourselves; and so pervert the rule, which commands us to love

our neighbours as ourselves, and therefore ourselves primarily as the standard and measure of our love to them. Now if any one should attempt to take away that, which is necessary to my livelihood; or, by false accusations, should go about to take away my credit or my life; certainly, I owe so much charity to myself, as to resist him in it, and to require satisfaction and recompence for it: but, still, this must be observed, that we ought not to right ourselves according to our own private discretion, but by the sentence of the law and by the authority of the magistrate; for the law is good, says the Apostle, if a man use it lawfully.

And, therefore, briefly, in our seeking for our right at law, there are these three things requisite to make it a lawful and allowable action.

(1st) When that we sue for, is a matter of moment.

(2dly) When we have to do with obstinate and stubborn persons, who will yield to nothing but what they are forced and compelled to, and will not stand to the award and arbitration of private Christians.

(3dly) When we have, beforehand, used all likely and probable means to prevail with those who have done us wrong, to make us necessary and fitting satisfaction.

These three things must always concur to make our suing, even for public revenge, a thing lawful.

And, then, in all such processes, we must be sure to observe these two things.

[1st] That we have right on our side, or at least be verily persuaded that we have it; and that the person, whom we prosecute, doth us wrong. To seek for reasonable satisfaction in this case, is so far from being charged with rancour and malice, that it is rather an effect of love to bring them to do us right, whereby indeed they do greater right to themselves.

[2dly] We must be sure to maintain love to them; being willing and ready to do them any kind offices, whatsoever lies in our power. We must, therefore, seek our right with much meekness and compassion. And, when a controversy depends between us and any other, we should not make it a matter of strife and variance; but only put it to the decision of the law, to whom the right belongs: and, if it be found to belong to the other and not to thyself, thou oughtest to be glad that right is done, and to prefer the interest of justice before thine own; otherwise, thou seekest victory, and not equity. And this is the Second Conclusion, that, for a great important wrong, thou mayest lawfully seek for satisfaction.

Third Conclusion. If the wrong done thee cannot be passed by without the wronging of others, thou mayest and oughtest in this case to require satisfaction. As, for instance: the laws of the land have ordained death, as the punishment of robberies and theft upon the highway in the day, and breaking open of houses in the night; not so much for revenge upon the guilty, as for example to others, and for security to the innocent. In this case, we ought not to pass by any who have been deprehended, thus unjustly invading our possessions; especially if we have just cause to suspect, as commonly it so happens, that our suffering them to escape will but embolden them to farther outrages: for this were a wrong done to the nation and community in which we live; and, by such an indiscreet pity and compassion, we bring upon ourselves the guilt of all the crimes that they afterwards commit.

Fourth Conclusion. If the wrongs that are done thee be tolerable, and thou mayest forgive them without wronging of others, the laws of Christianity oblige thee so to do, without standing upon any satisfaction and reparation for them. Our Saviour hath given us our rule in this case: Mat. 5:40. If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also: which teacheth us, that, about small matters, things which we may easily be without or easily procure, such as a cloak or a coat, we should not be contentious; but rather recede from our right, than vigorously pursue

it with strifes and quarrels. And we ought to be so far from seeking revenge for such petty injuries, as are not destructive nor greatly prejudicial to us, as to be willing rather to suffer a second, than to revenge the first: for if all, that can be called our due and our right, must be exacted to the very utmost, what debt is there that we are bound to forgive? Those, therefore, are justly to be condemned, that take every advantage against their neighbours; and although the offence be but trivial, a passionate word, or a sudden and light blow, that proceedeth not from any propense and intended malice, or the like, presently pursue such advantages with rigour and extremity; and, because they may do it according to the law of man, regard not the law of God, which commands us to forgive such debtors.

And this is the first thing, wherein forgiveness doth consist, in abstaining from the outward acts of revenge, and exacting satisfaction from those who have wronged us: where we have seen how it is limited, and how to be observed.

2dly. Forgiving our debtors consists in the Inward Frame and Temper of our Hearts towards them: that we bear them no malice, no ill-will; but be as much in charity with them, as though they never had offended us.

And this forgiveness we are bound always to exercise, even in those cases in which we may seek for satisfaction: yea, although we could never prosecute them for satisfaction, yet if we retain secret grudgings and animosities in our hearts against them, this is not an entire forgiveness, and such as will be acceptable to God; for he estimates the heart, and not only the outward actions, which may have many bye ends to sway and direct them.

And thus I have as briefly as I could, shewn you what forgiving of our debtors is, and how far we are bound to do it.

[3] And now, Christians, I know you cannot but reflect seriously upon it, how hard and difficult a duty this of forgiveness is. It is that,

which the whole interest of flesh and blood, and all the party that passions and affections can muster up within us, will certainly rebel against.

And, alas, how seldom is it, that men can conquer themselves so, as to yield obedience unto it really and cordially! Whence is it, that all places are so full of railing and reviling, quarrels and challenges, vexatious contentions and endless suits, warrants, arrests, actions, and imprisonments, and that upon slight injuries and provocations; but only, that they have not learned this necessary duty, of forgiving one another?

Nay, many think it the part of a high spirit and generous nature, to make themselves terrible to those, who, they suppose, have in the least wronged and affronted them; and, upon the least disgust, fly out into all extremities of threatenings and revenge: whereas, in truth, this is but the effect of a mean and sordid spirit. It is a disposition breathed into men's souls by the Devil; and demonstrates, as a great deal of pride, so a great deal of vileness and baseness.

The truest gallantry and generousness is, to imitate the Great God, in being patient and longsuffering, and ready to pardon and forgive. This is that height of spirit, the true magnanimity and greatness: and, if we would be perfect, we must stoop: stoop, did I say? rather we must aspire to this heavenly temper.

And, to excite unto this, consider,

1st. That it is infinitely more honourable, to forgive a wrong than to revenge it.

For,

(1st) The one makes thee like to God: the other makes thee like the Devil.

Yea, it is the chiefest excellency, by which God delights to be set forth. I, even I, am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions: Is. 43:25. And, Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity? Micah 7:18. Now, how glorious is it to imitate God, in that, which he himself counts his chiefest glory! The great ones of the earth imitate him, in power and authority; and are some kind of glimmering types of his majesty, who daunts and dazzles all approaches: but a poor contemptible Christian, whose meanness lays him open and exposed to all the wrongs and injuries of abusive and insulting wretches, may represent a far greater glory of God, than that wherein princes and monarchs shine; even his forbearance, pity, longsuffering, and pardon: he may represent God sitting upon his Throne of Grace; whereas the other represents him only sitting upon his Throne of Power. Now God never triumphs more in any attribute, than that of his mercy. See with what fair flourishes he writes his name: Exod. 34:6. The Lord, the Lord God: infinite in power; that spreads forth the heavens, and rangeth all the host of them; that hangs up the earth in the midst of the air, and the whole world in the midst of a vast and boundless nothing; that pours out the great deep, and measures it in the hollow of his hand; that rides upon the wings of the wind, and makes the clouds the dust of his feet! No: but, when he would display himself in his greatest glory, he doth it in a still voice: The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands; forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin. Now, O Christian, by forgiving those who have wronged thee, thou makest thyself as a God unto them; and imitatest him, in that, wherein he doth chiefly glory.

(2dly) It is more honourable, because to pardon is always the act of a superior: it is a prerogative of royalty; and highly becomes the majesty of those, whom Christ hath made Kings as well as Priests; and, certainly, they cannot better declare themselves such, than by issuing out pardons.

Think, therefore, with thyself, O Christian, when thou art wronged and affronted, think what an advantage the petulancies of froward

men do give thee to make thyself their superior: it is but pardoning them, and thou ascendest the throne. And, certainly, they can never so much triumph over thee by their injuries, as thou mayest over them by forgiveness.

And so much for the First Motive.

2dly. Consider how many offences God hath forgiven thee, and this will be an effectual motive to engage thee to forgive others.

And here consider who it is that hath forgiven thee, and what it is he hath forgiven thee.

(1st) Consider who it is that hath forgiven thee.

And, here, consider the infinite distance, that is between thee and him. He is the Sovereign Lord and Creator of All; in comparison with whom thou art nothing, yea less than nothing. He stands in no need of thee, but whether thou live or die, perish or art saved, he is the same God, for ever blessed in himself. He is able to destroy thee every moment, able to breathe thee back into thy dust, to look thee into hell and destruction. They perish at the rebuke of thy countenance: Ps. 80:16. And yet this High and Absolute Lord at thy entreaty, freely forgives thee all thy debts; although he might have gotten himself a great renown in thy everlasting perdition, and might have set thee up as a flaming monument of his wrath, and inscribed on thee victory and triumph to the glory of his everlasting vengeance. And shouldst not thou then, O Man, O Worm, forgive thy fellow-servant; one, of the same mold and materials with thyself; one, to whom perhaps thou art no way superior, unless that he hath now given thee an opportunity of pardoning him; one, who possibly may hereafter be helpful unto thee, and in agreement and peace with whom thou mayest find much comfort and good to thyself; shouldst thou not much more forgive him? Certainly, God may very well think thee unworthy of his pardon, who art infinitely his inferior, if thou

canst not think those worthy of thy pardon, who in nature are thy equals.

(2dly) Consider, the wrongs and debts, that God hath forgiven thee, are infinitely greater than those thou art to forgive unto men. Their offences against thee are but pence; but thine against God are talents. And, as there is a vast disproportion in the nature of the offences, so is there likewise in the number of them: the servant in the parable, whom his lord forgave, owed him ten thousand talents; but his fellow-servant, whom this wretch would not forgive, owed him but a hundred pence: Mat. 18. So is it with us: our sins against God, for the greatness of them are talents, for the number of them are ten thousand. In every thing we do we wrong the glory of God, and are continually offending him: but men do not always wrong us; or, if they did, yet the least of our offences against God is far more heinous, than the greatest of men's can be against us. We cannot speak of him, nor to him, but that by our unworthy and low conceptions we revile him far more, than any man can do us by the most studied and bitter invectives. The least irreverend thought of God is a greater injury against him, than it would be against us if men should wound or stab us.

And yet, although thy deeds be as great as talents, and so numerous as many thousand talents, yet thy Lord and Master frankly forgave thee all. And this should, by all the obligations of ingenuity, constrain thee to forgive thy fellow-servant so small debts as a hundred pence, when he hath not wherewithal to make thee satisfaction. See how our Saviour presseth this in the fore-cited place: Matt. 18:32. I forgave thee all that debt, thou owedst me, because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? Certainly, if ever thou accountedst the pardoning grace and mercy of God sweet and precious, I will not say thou shouldst be glad of wrongs that thou mightest have occasion to pardon them: but yet certainly thou shouldst most cordially embrace all such occasions, if it were but only to recommend the excellency of

thy charity unto others; as divine love hath recommended its fulness and riches to thy dearest esteem.

And that is the Second Motive.

But,

3dly. Consider the binding particle in the text: Forgive us our debts, AS we forgive our debtors.

And now think with thyself, that thou dost but bind and seal the guilt of thy sins upon thy own soul, unless thou art willing and ready to forgive others. Thou, who art revengeful and implacable, instead of praying, pronoucest the most direful and dreadful curse that can be against thyself; and beggest of God, no more to forgive thee, than thou dost forgive those that have offended thee: and so thy prayer is not only turned into sin, but into a snare and curse; and thou passest upon thyself the tremendous sentence of thine own eternal damnation: for, if thou prayest that God would forgive thee as thou forgivest others, thou either cursest thyself, or else thou must forgive them.

[4] Now this forgiving of others must have these qualifications.

1st. It must be unfeigned and cordial from thy very heart and soul: for so thou wouldst have God forgive thee.

It is not enough to forbear outward revenge; but thou must not harbour in thy breast the least grudge or prejudice against them. God forgives so as to forget: but if thou keepest malice raked up in thy heart, till thou canst find a fit opportunity to vent it in revenges; how canst thou but expect that God likewise should take his advantage against thee; and, when it would make most for the glory of his justice, break forth upon thee and exercise his vengeance in thy everlasting destruction?

2dly. Thou art obliged likewise to forgive freely, without any recompence or satisfaction from others.

If the injury be supportable, we ought not so much as expect or desire satisfaction: if it be otherwise, and yet the persons offending unable to make satisfaction, we ought to forgive them without taking any unmerciful revenge upon them: which is the wicked custom of many, who will cast their insufficient debtors into prison, and there let them starve and rot; though by this cruelty they cannot satisfy their debt, but their malice and revenge.

3dly. We must forgive others fully and completely: for God doth so.

He pardons our sins so fully, that they are in his account as if they had never been committed; and so must we pardon injuries wholly and fully, as if there had never been any done us. This the Apostle observes towards the Galatians, who were a people as injurious to his ministry and authority as any could be; and yet he forgives it so fully, that he tells them, Gal. 4:12. Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all. And, to express all this, we must blot out the remembrance of all wrongs, and be ready cheerfully to take all occasions to do good unto them: yea, not only to take them, but to seek them: this will be a plain evidence, that no leaven of malice or revenge hath soured our spirits.

Well, then, to sum and close up all: what is it thou canst plead for revenge, which the consideration of God's pardoning thee will not abundantly answer? Is it, that the wrongs, that others have done thee, are great and insupportable? what! are they more intolerable, than thy sins against God? Is it, that he is a vile and inferior person unto thee? how much more art thou so unto God! Is it, that he hath often wronged thee? are they not ten thousand talents, that God hath forgiven thee? Is it, that he will be emboldened to wrong and injure thee again? possibly so: but thou art not certain of it: however, consider how often thou hast abused the mercy of God, to encourage thee in sinning against him. Is it, that men will think thee base and

cowardly, if thou puttest up such wrongs and injuries? seek thou the honour that cometh from God, and not the vain foolish repute of men. But is God indeed accounted faithful, in pardoning thee? or doth he spare thee, because he dare not strike thee? Certainly, there is no offence, nor an aggravation of any offence, that can be pleaded as a reason for revenge, but the same may, in a greater measure and in a higher proportion, be pleaded why God should revenge himself upon thee: and yet, if, notwithstanding this, thou hopest for pardon and forgiveness from him, go then to thy brother and do likewise.

And thus I have finished the Fifth Petition: the matter of which being of such vast and important consequence, I have expatiated beyond what my first intended method would allow. I shall contract myself in what remains, and keep myself within the limits of an Exposition.

SIXTH PETITION

vi. We are now come unto the SIXTH and Last Petition of this most Excellent and Divine Prayer: which some divide into two; making the one negative, Lead us not into temptation; and the other positive, but deliver us from evil. But the matter being not great, whether they be one or two, I shall not contend about it.

1. And here, before I come to speak of the petition itself, I shall, as I have done in the former, speak something concerning the reason and wisdom of its Order and Method.

And the only thing that I shall remark, is, that, whereas it immediately follows upon that petition wherein we beg the pardon of our sins, that we may not be led into temptation; this ought to teach us, that it should be our care, not only to seek for the pardon of our past sins, but to endeavour the prevention of sin for the future.

And, therefore, as, when our Saviour cured the impotent man that had lain a long time at the pool of Bethesda without relief, he gives

him this caution, John 5:14. Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee: so, when God hath healed those mortal wounds that sin hath made in our souls by his pardoning grace, it highly concerns us, with our most exact circumspection to beware that we be not again entangled in guilt, and with our most fervent affections to pray that we may not be exposed to the fiery darts of the Devil to wound us anew: for relapses and recidivations are always most dangerous and fatal; and new wounds received upon old scars, most difficult to be healed.

And, indeed, without this preventing grace of God, all his pardoning grace would be but in vain. It would be fruitless to forgive sins, if God did not withal secure us for the future from running upon the score with his justice: for, such is the force and fraud of the tempter, and the corruption of our own natures so prone to comply with whatsoever he offers and suggests to us, that did not God as well give us a stock to live upon, as forgive us our former debts, we should soon run ourselves as deep in arrears as ever, and make ourselves liable to be seized on by justice and condemned to the infernal prison.

And, therefore, that God's grace in forgiving our trespasses may not be in vain, our Saviour hath taught us to subjoin this request, Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. And, thus much, for the connection of this petition with the foregoing.

2. The Petition itself contains in it two branches: the one, against temptations; the other, against the prevalency of them. Lead us not into temptation: suffer us not to be assaulted and buffeted by the Wicked One. Or if, O Lord, thou shalt, in thy all-wise counsel and purpose, permit us to be tempted, yet deliver us from the evil to which we are tempted: let us endure temptations as our affliction; but let us not consent to them, and make them our sins.

(1) It is the former of these, that I shall first speak to: and, therein I shall endeavour to shew:

What Temptations are. And,

How God may be said to lead us into temptation: for that is supposed, when we pray he would not do so.

[1] What Temptations are.

Temptation, according to the proper signification of the word, is no other but a Trial or Probation.

And this may be of two kinds: exploratory, or suasory.

There is an Exploratory Temptation; to search out and to discover what is in man, what his graces and corruptions are.

There is a Suasory or Enticing Temptation, that inclines the will and affections to close with what is presented to them.

1st. Now, in general, we may observe Five several sorts of temptations: whereof some are of the former, others of the latter kind.

Some, whereby one man tempts another.

Some, whereby we tempt ourselves.

Some, whereby we tempt God.

Some, whereby God tempts us. And,

Some, whereby the Devil tempts us.

(1st) There are some temptations, whereby one man tempts another.

And such temptations may be faultless, when they come only by Exploration: either to find out men's great excellencies; thus the Queen of Sheba came to tempt or to prove Solomon with hard questions: 2 Chron. 9:1 to know whether his wisdom was answerable

to the fame that went of it: or else to find out and discover their rottenness and hypocrisy; and thus the Church of Ephesus is commended, for tempting or trying those who said they were apostles and were not, finding them to be liars. But it is devilish: when it is either by Suasion unto that which is evil; thus the whorish woman tempted the young fool, Prov. 7:18: or with a design to entrap or draw any into danger; thus the old prophet tempted the young prophet, being vexed that God should honour him with so important a message, whilst he was passed by, and knowing that God would not suffer his disobedience to go unpunished, in 1 Kings 13:18 and such was the wicked plot laid by the Pharisees, Luke 20:22 when they came and asked our Saviour, whether it was lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar or not; which, if he had affirmed, would have lessened his repute among the people, and made them to fall off from him, because they looked upon Cæsar but as an usurper, and groaned for deliverance from the Roman yoke of bondage, yea, and many of them hoped and expected that this would have been, effected by our Saviour; or, if he had denied, it would have brought him into danger of his life as an enemy unto Cæsar, as afterwards he was accused to be.

(2dly) There is a way of temptation, whereby a man tempts himself.

And that is praiseworthy, when it is only by Exploration and Trial of his own heart, to find out what graces and what corruptions lodge there. Thus we find the Saints in Scripture often examining and proving themselves: and every Christian is commanded expressly so to do: 2 Cor. 13:5. Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves.

But it is wicked and sinful, in two cases.

[1st] Then a man wickedly and sinfully tempts himself, when, by presuming upon his own strength, he unnecessarily runs into danger, and ventures upon the next occasions of sinning.

For this is to come within the Devil's purlieus; and, if any such be made his prey, they must thank their own venturousness and folly. Thus we tempt ourselves to the commission of those sins, which we beforehand know such company, or such employments, or other like circumstances will prompt us to commit.

[2dly] A man is said to tempt himself, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed: James 1:14.

For, whensoever any particular sinful object is propounded, it is this lust, that excites the heart to close with it and embrace it. This is, indeed, the great tempter, without which other temptations to evil would be but weak and ineffectual. And though possibly they might prevail, through the innate liberty of our wills; yet, were it not for our corruptions that cleave unto us, temptations would have no more advantage upon us than our own free choice, and we might as easily reject as consent unto them.

(3dly) There is a temptation, by which we are said to tempt God.

For the Scripture frequently witnesseth that God is tempted by us: Exod. 17:2. Moses, chiding the people of Israel, expostulates with them: Wherefore do ye tempt the Lord? And God himself complains of it: Num. 14:22 that they had tempted him ten times. Mal. 3:15; Acts 15:10 and divers other places.

God is therefore tempted by us; not, as we are, unto evil: for this the Apostle expressly denies; James 1:13. God cannot be tempted with evil.

But,

[1st] Tempting of God, is sometimes taken for a presumptuous trying of the Providence of God, when we have no warrant nor necessity to cast ourselves upon the extraordinary effects of it.

Thus Christ answers the Devil, tempting him to precipitate himself from the pinnacle of the temple, upon confidence of an extraordinary and miraculous support from God: It is written, says he, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God: Matt. 4:7: that is, we must not put God upon working of miracles for our deliverance, when we may keep ourselves from the danger in an ordinary providential way.

[2dly] Tempting of God, is oftentimes the same with provoking him.

And therefore we find them put together, Ps. 95:8. As in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness. And, therefore, look how God may be said to be provoked, so he may be said to be tempted: that is, both in condescension to our capacities, and in reference to the effects of it: for, as a man, that is provoked, is tempted to take revenge upon him, that hath done him the injury; so God expresseth himself as provoked by our sins, and tempted thereby to inflict wrath and vengeance upon us for them. But this is only figuratively. As for any proper temptation, by any new motion or inclination wrought in the Divine Will by the presence of any new object, so God cannot without blasphemy be said to be tempted.

(4thly) There is a temptation, whereby God is said to tempt us.

Now this is always holy and just; and it is only a temptation of trial and probation. Sometimes, it is to discover his people's graces: and so he tempted Abraham, that his obedience might be conspicuous: Gen. 22:1. And, sometimes, to discover their corruptions: so he tempted Hezekiah: 2 Chron. 32:31 it is said, that God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart: not but that God knew it before, for he is the Searcher of the Heart and the Trier of the Reins: but that hereby it might be discovered and made apparent; and that Hezekiah, by the discovery of his pride and corruption, might take occasion to humble himself the more deeply before God.

(5thly) There is a temptation, whereby Satan tempts us.

Yea, it is his proper work, and that from which he hath his name ὁ πειρωζων, the tempter: 1 Thess. 3:5. Lest by some means, the tempter have tempted you. Now as God tempts only by Exploration and Trial: so the Devil always tempts by Suasion; inducing us by all possible arguments and motives to the commission of sin, that he may have advantage to accuse us of it, and hereafter to torment us for it.

Now among these many various kinds of temptations which have been reckoned up, those temptations, which we are to pray against, are of three sorts: such as proceed from our own lusts and corruptions; such as proceed from other men's persuading us, either by motives or examples unto that which is evil; or, lastly, such as proceed from the Devil.

Or, else, they may be reduced to these two heads: the temptations, which proceed from our own inbred lusts and corruptions; and those, which proceed from the Devil: for, indeed, wicked men are but his agents and instruments, when they tempt us to that which is evil.

2dly. Now, that our Saviour Christ should make it the great matter and object of our prayers to beg of God that we may not be led into temptation, we may observe, that it is a Christian's Duty, not only to keep himself from sin, but also to endeavour to keep himself from temptation to sin.

For,

(1st) It is a very ill sign of a rotten and carnal heart, to be content to lie under a temptation, although it doth not consent to the commission of sin.

It speaks some kind of contentment and complacency that we take in the sin, when, though we do not commit it, yet we are very well pleased to hear of it, and to entertain motions and solicitations to it. This argues the soul is not chaste towards God, that, though we cannot enjoy it in commission; yet we will make some recompence to

ourselves for the scrupulousness of our consciences, by enjoying it in the temptation.

(2dly) If you suffer a temptation to lodge in your hearts, you are in imminent danger of being prevailed upon by it.

The temptation will be continually gathering strength: and your opposition against it may, in some time, flag and grow remiss; and objects and opportunities and such like advantages may add such a force to the temptation, as may hurry you away into the commission of the sin, contrary to your former resolutions. You can promise yourself no safety, no not from the commission of the vilest sins, as long as you suffer the temptation to abide upon you. Puddles, that stand long unmoved, will, at last, breed filthy and venomous creatures: so a temptation, that lies long unmoved and undisturbed upon you, will form some filthy and loathsome sin or other. The only secure way, is, to strike at the temptation itself; to cut that off: and then there is no danger to be feared from the sin. This is the course St. Paul took: 2 Cor. 12:8 when he was buffeted by a Messenger from Satan; that is, assaulted by a temptation: he not only takes care that he might not yield to it; that was not altogether enough for a truly gracious soul to do; but he labours to be rid of the temptation itself: For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that is often, that it might depart from me. He prays, not only that he may be kept from the sin, to which he was tempted; but that he might be freed also from the temptation itself.

(3dly) Consider, that, as all temptations are dangerous; and that we have great reason to fear, lest, in the end, they should prevail upon us to commit the sin, to which we are tempted: so most of them are not only temptations, but sins also.

Indeed, there is a temptation to sin, which is a temptation only, and no sin: for so Christ himself was tempted: Mat. 4:1. He was led into the wilderness, to be tempted of the Devil. And we read there with what horrid temptations he was assaulted, even to worship the Devil,

to distrust God, and to destroy himself. And yet, as black as these temptations were, they were only temptations, and no sins: for so the Apostle tells us, Heb. 4:15, he was tempted in all things like unto us, sin only excepted. And, such, sometimes, are the temptations, wherewith the Devil assaults the children of God, horrid and hellish temptations; even to deny the very being of God, the truth of the Scriptures, the immortality of the soul, heaven and hell; and such bubblings of blasphemies against the very fundamentals and ground-works of religion: and yet if we be watchful presently to abhor and reject these injections of Satan, and to cast back into his face these fiery darts which he shoots into our souls; they are not our sins, though they are our troubles; but they shall be charged upon Satan to whom of right they do belong we being but only passive and sufferers in them.

But, truly, the most of our temptations are sins themselves; and, therefore, we have great reason and need to pray against them: for they are sins unto sins: sins, as they are irregular and inordinate motions of our passions and affections; and unto sin, as they tend to the bringing forth of farther evil.

And such are all the temptations of our inbred lusts and corruptions, when our desires and affections strongly incline us to those objects, which God by his express law hath forbidden us.

Were it not for these sinful temptations, the others, which are immediately injected by the Devil, would not have any great advantage to prevail over us: for by reason of our lusts and corruptions, our hearts always stand open to let in the Devil; and, were it not that these have seized on the soul, the Devil must have stood without, and, though he had knocked, yet would he have knocked in vain.

And therefore we see, in his First Temptation, he deals all without doors. There was no natural lust in our first parents, to befriend him, or to betray the soul unto him. He shuts up himself, therefore, in the

body of a serpent; questioning with Eve about God's commands; persuades her of the desirableness of the forbidden fruit; tells her that God's threatening was rather to fright them, than to hurt them. But, in all these methods of tempting, Satan had no admission into the soul, because lust as yet had taken no possession of it; but, ever since the corruption of our natures contracted by the commission of the first offence, the Devil doth not stand to tempt us without doors, but he enters boldly as into the house of his old friend Concupiscence: nay, as into his own house; for the souls of wicked men are so called, Mat. 12:29. He is, by lust, let into the very inmost recesses and retirements of the heart: and can now propound objects immediately to our fancies; and, by our fancies, darken our understanding and affections, and incline our wills.

Again, our natural corruption, as it admits, so it entertains and cherisheth the temptations of the Devil. A spark of fire, if there were no fuel prepared for it to seize on, would presently die and vanish: and so, truly, would Satan's temptations, that are like so many sparks of hell-fire struck by the Devil into our souls: were it not for the prepared fuel, the catching tinder of our lusts and corruptions, these temptations would soon go out and expire; and be like a flash of lightning, that might possibly startle us, but could not burn us. And thus, though our Saviour Christ was grievously tempted; yet it is said, John 14:30. The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me; that is, the Devil could find no sin or corruption in him, and therefore could fasten none of his temptations upon him.

Thus we see what abundant reason there is for us to pray earnestly against temptations, whether they proceed from Satan, or from our own corruptions; the one sort being always sins of themselves, and both sorts inclining and inducing us unto sin.

3dly. But, since Satan and our own hearts prove tempters unto us, some may possibly ask, "How shall we know when it is Satan that tempts us, and when the temptation ariseth from our own corruptions?"

The question is nice and difficult: yet, because it may tend to the satisfaction of some who are curious in observing the workings of their own souls, I answer:

(1st) There is but one kind of temptations to sin, which have not their rise and original usually from lust: and those are temptations to sin against the light and law of nature; as to the denying those truths that are clear and evident by natural reason and strong impressions on the minds of men; as the being of a God, the immortality of the soul, future rewards and punishments, and the like: or, else, the doing of those things, which are repugnant to the dictates of the law of nature; as for a man to be tempted to offer violence to himself, and to destroy himself.

It is very probable, that such temptations have not their first rise and original from our natural corruptions; but are immediately darted into the soul by the Devil: though, indeed, our corruptions too often catch at them and brood upon them, till they have, from such horrid temptations as these, conceived some horrid and monstrous sin in the soul. Such injections as these are balls of wildfire kindled in hell, and cast into the soul by the Devil; and are not our sins, any farther than they are entertained by us and consented unto.

(2dly) As for those temptations, which have a greater compliance to the corrupt tendency and inclinations of our sinful natures, which are not to such unnatural sins as the other, it is very hard if not impossible to judge, whether they originally proceed from Satan, or from our own inbred corruptions. Usually, they both join together. If Satan first inject them, usually our lusts nurse and foster them: or, if our wicked hearts be the first parents of them, usually Satan enforceth them; and, by additional recruits of temptations, makes them more prevalent and permanent; and, by fair and specious colours, makes them more plausible and taking.

And, certainly, there being such an innumerable company of evil spirits, that, notwithstanding the great work and employment they

have to do in the world, yet hell could spare a whole legion of them to garrison in one possessed man; we may not doubt, but that they are continually busy, prying into every one of our tempers. And, as long experience hath made them very sagacious in guessing at the first motions of our hearts, by the alterations they find in our fancies, or the humours of our bodies, of which they have an exact intuitive knowledge: so when, by such visible symptoms, they perceive corruption stirring in us, they presently join issue with it; and, by all their art and policy, inflame our lusts by adding new fuel to them; improving the first motions and imperfect embryos of wickedness, till they arrive to their full strength and stature.

Thus, if, by any symptoms, the Devil can perceive wrath and malice boiling within our breast, he will presently move the tongue to give it vent in opprobrious and reviling speeches; and these he will second with injurious and violent actions. So St. James tells us: James 3:6 the tongue setteth on fire the course of nature; and is itself set on fire of hell.

But as a holy man, I think St. Austin, being demanded by a curious questionist concerning the origin of evil, how sin first got into the world, replied, It was not so necessary to discourse how it came into the world, as to consider how we might get it out again: so, truly, it is not so necessary critically to enquire, whence temptations come into the heart, as how they may be got out of it. And to this I may give the same answer, that Christ did to his Disciples; Mat. 17:21. This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting. We ought fervently to pray, that God would rebuke the Wicked One, and cause him to depart from us: that he would, by his grace, suppress all the tumultuous rebellions of our own lusts and passions; and neither lead us into temptation, nor leave us under temptation.

And thus I have done with the First General in this petition, shewing you what temptations are.

[2] The Second is, To shew you how God may be said to lead men into temptation.

For it may seem very strange, that the Holy and Righteous God should have a hand in tempting of men; which is so proper a work of the Devil, and of our own corruptions.

1st. But the different manner of God's leading us into temptations, and Satan's tempting us, will sufficiently justify him from the least aspersion or suspicion of being the author of sin.

And, therefore,

(1st) God is said to lead us into temptation, when he providentially presents outward objects and occasions, which do solicit and draw forth our inward corruptions.

When the temptations of our inward lusts meet with external inducements, that are cast in a man's way by God's Providence; then, as we may be said to tempt him, so God may be said to lead us into temptation. Thus Achan and Judas were, no doubt of it, covetous wretches, before the one stole the wedge of gold, and the other betrayed his master: but the temptations of those lusts were not as yet come to their strength, till the glittering of the wedge of gold and the proffered reward of the high-priest raised their covetousness to its full height. Indeed, we find the propensions of our wicked hearts strongly bent towards sin, at all times; even then, when we have no external objects propounded to excite them: but when these inward inclinations do meet with outward enforcements, as alluring objects, fit opportunities, strong persuasions from others, inducing examples, or the like, the temptation then grows headstrong and wild to purpose; and if grace doth not rein it in with a hard hand, it will certainly hurry us into the commission of that sin, which hath so many advantages to commend it to the soul. Now all these objective temptations, God may most righteously administer to our lusts, in the common course of his Providence: and we often see he doth so:

for there is no outward act of sin committed in the world, but the sinner took occasion from some Providence of God to perpetrate it. A thief steals not any thing, but what God's Providence brings in his way. The murderer slays not any man, but whom Providence offers to his sword and violence. And all the villainy, that ever was acted in the world, was by a Providence; tendering the lusts of men objects and opportunities, without which sin conceived in us could not be brought to light.

And, therefore, when we pray that God would not lead us into temptation, we pray that God, by his Providence, would so order and dispose all the occurrences of our lives, so as not to lay before us those objects, nor proffer us those occasions, which might either excite or draw forth our inbred corruptions. And, indeed, this is a most necessary petition to be preferred to the Throne of Grace: for we cannot but be conscious to ourselves, how hard a thing it is, to keep our hearts from sinful desires, when we encounter objects to excite them; and how hard a thing it is, to keep ourselves from sinful actions, when once sinful desires are excited in us.

(2dly) God is said to lead us into temptation, when he withdraws the influences of his grace and Spirit from us, and leaves us under the power of a temptation.

Those very temptations, which, when assisted by divine grace, we could easily resist and subdue, will, when God withdraws himself from us, sadly prevail over us, and shamefully foil us. Thus, it is said, that God left Hezekiah, to try, or to tempt him: 2 Chron. 32:31. And, indeed, since our corrupt natures are of themselves prone only unto evil, if God withdraw the auxiliaries of his grace, as for many righteous causes he often doth, every temptation, that assaults us, will ravish our consciences and captivate our souls: for all the security, that we have from the committing of the most flagitious crimes, is wholly from God's grace, either restraining or renewing us; the former holding us back from the outward act of sin, the latter weakening and destroying the inward habit and principle of sin.

And, therefore, when we pray that God would not lead us into temptation, we beg that he would still continue the influences of his grace unto us, and by them excite and quicken our graces; that his grace may not forsake us, nor our grace fail us: that we may not be exposed to the assaults of spiritual enemies, naked and defenceless, to become a sure and easy prey unto them.

(3dly) God is said to lead men into temptation, when he permits Satan and wicked men his instruments to tempt us: yea, sometimes he gives them commission, as well as permission; and appoints and sends them to do it.

Thus we find, in the case of Ahab: 1 Kings 22:20. Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead? and an evil spirit steps forth, and very officiously accepts of the employment, as most congruous to so malicious a nature: and God sends him with his commission in the 22nd verse, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth and do so: and so he did. And, as God doth sometimes thus send the tempter, and give him commission to assault and prevail over wicked and ungodly persons; their former sins provoking him to punish them with farther impieties: so, whensoever any of us are tempted, God doth at least permit Satan to sift and winnow us; sometimes to his own defeat, but too often to ours. And, in this sense, there is no temptation that befalls us, but God leads us into it. And therefore it is very observable, that, whereas in 1 Chron. 21:1 it is said, that Satan provoked David to number Israel; yet, in 2 Sam. 24:1 it is said, The Lord moved David against Israel to say, Go, number Israel and Judah: here, one and the same temptation is attributed both to God and to the Devil; but it must be understood under a diverse habitude and respect; Satan tempted him effectively, God only permissively. And, thus, God may be said to lead every man into temptation, whom he suffers to be tempted.

When, therefore, we pray that God would not lead us into temptation, we pray that he would not permit the Devil to approach near unto us, nor to cast his fiery darts at us: but that he would put a

hook into the nose of that great Leviathan; and so bridle and restrain his fury, that he may not be able to assault us.

These now are all the ways that I know of, how God may be said to lead men into temptation: either by offering them objects and opportunities by his Providence, which may correspond with their inward lusts and corruptions, and as it were entice and call them forth: or, else, by permitting Satan and wicked men to tempt us: or, lastly, by withdrawing from us the influences of his grace and Holy Spirit, and leaving us under the power of temptations when they do assault us. But for any proper, effective, or persuasive tempting of men to sin; this is infinitely abhorrent to his pure and holy nature: in which sense St. James tells us, James 1:13. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. But though God cannot thus tempt any man without a stain to his infinite purity and holiness; yet he may lead men into temptation: either providentially, or permissively, or by subtracting his grace, whereby they should stand; and yet, at last, justly punisheth them for sinning. And this is no unrighteous thing with God: for he lays no constraint upon the freedom of our wills; but we sin freely, and of our own accord.

2dly. Now, although God can easily keep us from all assaults and attempts of our spiritual enemies; yet he permits us to be tempted by them, for most wise and holy ends:

As,

(1st) He leaves these Canaanites to molest us, to teach us the wars of the Lord; to make us continually watchful; to breathe and exercise our graces; to administer matter for our conquest, and occasion for our crown and triumph.

(2dly) To convince us of our own utter inability to stand of ourselves, without his help and assistance; thereby engaging us to depend upon his arm, and to call for divine supplies and succours.

(3dly) To glorify both his justice and mercy.

His justice, in giving up wicked men to the rage of temptations; to be hurried by them from sin to sin, till at last they put an end to the succession of their sins in eternal damnation.

And his mercy, in succouring of and supporting and delivering his children out of all their temptations. And, therefore, when St. Paul prayed to be freed from the buffetings of the messenger of Satan, God answers him, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness: 2 Cor. 12:9. When the Devil presumes he hath so well laid his temptations, that it is impossible for the people of God to escape his snares; yet God finds a way for their deliverance out of them all: for God holds the great Tempter under a powerful restraint, so that he cannot touch us beyond permission and commission. And therefore that place in Rev. 2:10 is very remarkable to this purpose: Fear none of those things, which thou shalt suffer: behold, the Devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. How many restraints are here mentioned to be put upon that malicious spirit! He shall cast into prison; whereas he would willingly cast into hell, or at least into the grave: it shall be but some of you; whereas his spite and rage is against all the children of God: and it shall be but for ten days; but for a short time, neither: the place, the number, the time, all limited; and that, with such a restraint, that all the pride and rage of the Devil shall not be able to exceed it.

(4thly) God permits his own children to be tempted, that, by their victory over temptations, he may confound the malice of Satan, and commend the excellency of his own ways and service.

This highly honours God, and shames the malice of the Devil, when we are neither terrified by sufferings, nor induced by the pleasures of sin from the course of our obedience: for this evidently declares, that we are true and loyal to our Great Sovereign; that we more fear his eternal wrath and displeasure, than those light afflictions that are

but for a moment; and that we find more true joy and solid delight in his service, than in the ways of sin and vanity. And therefore God calls us forth as his champions, puts his cause in our hands, and bids us resist manfully for the credit and honour of piety; and then lets loose Satan upon us, whom if we can but conquer, which certainly we shall do if we but seriously resolve it, God and angels, who from the theatre of heaven are spectators of the combat, give us their applause, and will hereafter give us our crown.

See how God glories over this baffled Devil, and upbraids him with the victorious constancy of his servant Job. God had before commended the integrity of Job: Chap. 1:8. Hast thou considered my servant Job: that there is none like him in the earth; a perfect and an upright man; one, that feareth God and escheweth evil? To this that Malicious Spirit sullenly replies, "Doth Job fear God for nought? Thou needest not glory in his ready service and obedience, when he is so well paid for it. No wonder he is so pious and devout, when he gets so well by it: but leave him a while to me, to take from him those inducements that make him so pious and holy, and I will undertake, that even this perfect and upright man shall curse thee even to thy face." God accepts the challenge on his servant's behalf. Satan and Job enter the list. The Devil buffets him sore, destroys all his cattle, ruins his house, kills his children: yet Job shrinks not, for all this; but wrestles naked with his adversary, and foils him. See now how God rejoices at his champion's victory, and upbraids the Devil with his shameful overthrow; Chap. 2:3. Hast thou considered my servant Job: that there is none like him in the earth; a perfect and an upright man; one, that feareth God and escheweth evil? God repeats the same character and commendation, which he had before given him; glorying, as it were, over Satan, that Job had made his words good: yea, and still he holdeth fast his integrity; although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.

So, truly, whensoever God suffers us to be tempted, it is, that, by our conquest, he might bring honour to himself, and credit to piety and religion: for this makes it appear, that we see so much of excellency

in the ways of God, that nothing in the world, whether crosses or crowns, thorns or thrones, pains or pleasures, loss or profit, can in the least persuade us to baulk or forsake them. And, in such a heroic champion as this, God himself glories and triumphs.

And thus I have finished the former part of this petition, Lead us not into temptation.

(2) The next follows, But deliver us from evil.

[1] Now here, before I come to speak of the words themselves, let us observe their connexion with and dependence upon the foregoing words.

For, whereas our Saviour hath taught us to pray with this adversative particle, BUT: Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; this may instruct us, that the best security against sin, is to be secured against temptations unto sin: for, though it be no excuse that we are violently tempted to sin when we yield to the commission of it; yet, withal, it too oftens happens, that those, whom God leads into temptation, and engageth amidst the press of their enemies, it too often happens that they come off bleeding and wounded.

Yet,

1st. It is no excuse for sinning, because no temptation is a compulsion.

The Devil can only persuade, he cannot constrain us to sin. God may let him into the fancy, and suffer him to paint upon that the most alluring images that vice can be represented in; but, when he hath done all this, it is still our own choice, that makes us like what his pencil hath drawn there.

And, in this, lies a great difference between God's operations upon us by his grace, and Satan's by his suggestions. In that God hath an immediate access to the very elicited acts of our wills and

understandings; and can and doth, by his Spirit, actuate them by an immediate energy; and call them forth not only by, but to their objects, But now these are such sacred apartments of the soul, that the Devil hath no key to them: and, therefore, his method is, to bribe the attendants on these chief powers of the soul, the fancy and the passions, to which he hath admission through the near dependence they have upon material organs, and by these to send in messages and offer proposals to it; which, yet, if it be not basely false and treacherous to its God, it may reject and disdain.

If the Devil could force men, he would likewise justify them: for that can be no sin where there is no liberty. The same temptation, which compels to any action, would likewise make that action to be no transgression; because laws are not given, but upon supposition of freedom. And, therefore, whosoever sins upon a temptation, sins not merely because he was tempted, but because he would sin: and though the sin had not been committed without the temptation, yet the Devil can be no farther chargeable with it, than only because his malice prompts him to persuade us.

Our own wills are the most dangerous devils, freely embracing the proffers of Satan, and consenting to our own destruction, whilst we consent to that upon which God hath threatened and entailed it.

And, therefore, when thou sinnest, think not to lay the fault upon Satan, or his evil instruments whom he makes use of in tempting: for, though it be their fault and guilt to tempt, yet it is only thine to yield: and God will not condemn thee for being tempted, which thou couldst not help; but for yielding and consenting, which is thine own free act and thine own sin also. Thou, who art drawn away by thy lewd companions, to abuse thyself and dishonour thy body by riot and luxury, or to break God's laws and man's by theft, or any other condemned crimes, though thou hast a great deal of reason to hate them, yet hast thou infinitely more reason to hate and abhor thyself. They can but persuade; they cannot compel thee: yea, if they should threaten thee with death itself unless thou consentest, yet thou liest

under no force, but sinnest freely; and, upon very weak motives, dost destroy and damn thy own soul: since all motives inducing to sin must be accounted weak, when God hath overbalanced them with the promise of everlasting life, and the threatening of everlasting death.

And therefore we find God, as justly, as frequently, in Scripture, charging men's perdition upon themselves; and laying the blood of their souls upon the stubborn resolvedness of their own wills: Hosea 13:9. O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself: John 5:40. Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life: Mat. 23:37. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

And, therefore, let your temptations be what they will, yet the sin and guilt is still your own; if, as you are led into temptations, so temptations lead you into sin.

2dly. Though it be no excuse for sinning, yet it is too seldom seen, that those, who are brought into temptation, are brought off again without contracting some guilt on their consciences by it.

For, since there is so great a correspondence between temptations and our corruptions, it would be as strange for a man, that hath been hotly assaulted by them, to have no impression made upon him, as to carry fire in his bosom and his cloaths not be burnt; yea, almost as miraculous, as to walk secure in the midst of a fiery furnace untouched by the flames. There is a strong sympathy between our corrupt hearts and Satan's temptations: and, as it is with strings tuned to unisons, upon the motion of the one, the other also will move and vibrate; so is it here: the heart vibrates and is secretly affected, upon the first motion of a temptation, with some passion of delight and complacency towards that sinful object. And there is a kind of liking and approbation of it in the very first conception of our thoughts, before they are yet deliberated and digested; so that it is almost as impossible for temptations to assault us, without leaving some guilt and pollution behind them, as it is for objects rightly

presented to a mirror, to make no impression of their image upon it. For, though the temptation should produce nothing but hovering and fleeting ideas, and some imperfect shadows of desires and affections in us, which yet are checked and scattered, as soon as ever they begin to form themselves: yet there is not the thinnest film of a sinful thought, nor the least breathing of a sinful desire, but the Holy Law of God and his Word, which reacheth to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and is a judge and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, doth strictly prohibit and condemn these callow, unfledged motions of our hearts, to be concupiscence, the sad effects of original sin, and the fruitful cause of all actual.

And, therefore, if we would be delivered from evil, we have very great cause first to pray, that we be not led into temptation: for some temptations do almost so inseparably follow one upon another, that this will be our best security against those secret desires and wouldings, and first smatterings and rudiments of wickedness, which else the compliance of our corrupt hearts with Satan's temptations will certainly betray us unto.

Hence it is, that, when God, in Scripture, frequently dehorts us from sin, he extends the prohibition to all temptations and occasions of sinning. Yea, those things, which, in themselves considered, may be lawfully and innocently done by us, yet because they may prove snares and temptations to us, we must as carefully refrain from them, as we earnestly desire to keep ourselves far from sin. And therefore it sufficeth not the Wise Man to command, If sinners entice, consent thou not: Prov. 1:10 but, that thou mayest be sure not to consent, thou must order thy actions and converse so, as that thou mayest not be enticed by them. In the 15th verse says he, Walk not thou in the way with them: refrain thy foot from their path. And so we have the same counsel given us by him in another chapter: that we may not be inveigled by the allurements of a strange woman, be sure to avoid all occasions thereof: Prov. 5:8. Remove thy way far from her: come not nigh the door of her house. And, again, Prov. 4:14, 15. Enter not into the path of the wicked; and go not in the way

of evil men. Avoid it: pass not by it: turn from it, and pass away. Here is earnestness, even to tautology, as some may prophanelly think: but Sacred Writ can admit of no such thing: but there are so many expressions heaped up, signifying the same thing only, to denote how great the necessity of avoiding temptations and occasions to evil is, to those, who desire to avoid the sin.

We have treacherous and deceitful hearts within us, that have often betrayed us when we have trusted them. And, I beseech you, call to mind, when you have emboldened yourselves to venture upon temptations and sinful occasions, being confident and fully resolved not to yield to them, have you not often been surprised and led away captive, contrary to your hopes, contrary to your intentions, contrary to your resolutions, contrary to the vain confidences with which you were before possessed? Methinks, former experience should make you cautious, never again to trust those hearts with such opportunities and advantages for wickedness, since they have been so often already treacherous and deceitful to us. Venture them not, therefore, upon temptations: for what security have you, that a sinful heart will not sin; yea, and betray you to commit those great abominations, which possibly you cannot now think of, without horror and shivering?

And thus much I thought fit to note to you from the connexion of this part of the petition with the former, Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

[2] In the words themselves, we have two things chiefly considerable: the thing, that we pray against; and the person, to whom we pray. That, which we pray against, is evil; that we may be delivered from it: the person, to whom we pray, is God our Heavenly Father.

1st. That, which we pray against, is Evil.

Some limit this word, Evil, only unto Satan, making the sense to be, Deliver us from the Evil One: founding this interpretation upon that

article that is joined with the original word πονηρος: but this is not always discrete, but sometimes indefinite; as, for instance, Mat. 12:35 and many other places.

And, therefore, considering the comprehensiveness of this prayer, we ought to allow the word a large extent, and to comprehend under it.

(1st) Satan: whose proper style and epithet it is to be called, The Evil One.

And so we find this black title given him in Scripture: Mat. 13:19. The Wicked One cometh, and catcheth away that which was sown. And, 1 John 2:13, 14. Ye have overcome the Wicked One. He is the Wicked One, eminently and singularly. He is the chief author of evil: his temptations are all unto evil: his delight is only in evil: he is the father of all those, that do evil. And, therefore, this is the most proper and significant character of the Devil. But, yet, it is also ascribed unto men, according to their resemblance of him.

(2dly) All other evils are here meant; whether they be of sin, or sorrow; whether they be transgressions, or punishments: and that, either temporal punishments, in those judgments which God inflicts upon sinners, here; or eternal judgments, such as he hath threatened to inflict upon them, hereafter.

From all these we pray to be delivered: but the greatest of all these is Sin.

For,

[1st] It is greatest in the nature of it; as being the only thing that is contrary to the greatest good, even God.

For in all other things else in the world there is something of good, even as much as derived and participated of God: and so the very devils themselves have a metaphysical goodness in them, as they are creatures, and have received their beings and powers from God, who

is the author of nothing that is evil. But sin hath not the least ray or footsteps of goodness in it: but is only defect and irregularity; and that alone, which, as his soul always hates, so his hands never made.

[2dly] It is the greatest evil, in the effects and consequences of it.

It once turned glorious angels into hideous devils, and tumbled them down from heaven to hell; filled the world with woes and plagues; brought death and diseases, and a vast and endless sum of miseries into it: it torments and terrifies the conscience, kindles hell-flames, exposes the soul to the eternal and direful revenges of the Great God; and is so perfectly and only evil, that the worst of things here, were they free from the contagion of sin, would be excellent and amiable.

To pray, therefore, against the evil of Sin, is to pray against all other evils whatsoever: for the Devil, the Evil One, cannot hurt us but by sin; and no other evil can befall us but for sin, God inflicting them as the due guerdon and reward of our transgressions. Sin, therefore, being the chief and principal Evil, and all others but retainers to it, I shall at present speak only of God's delivering us from Sin.

Now, as there are two things in sin, which make it so exceeding evil; the guilt of it whereby it damns, and the filth of it whereby it pollutes the soul: so God hath two ways to deliver us from it.

By removing the guilt already contracted, which he doth in justifying and pardoning the sinner.

By preventing us from falling into the filth and pollution of it for the future.

Of the pardon of sin, I have already largely treated, in the foregoing petition. The deliverance from evil which we here pray for, is, by preventing it for the future.

2dly. And whereas we are taught by our Saviour to beg this of God our Heavenly Father, we may observe, that it is only the almighty

power of God that can keep us from sin; and that will appear, if we consider either, our enemies, or ourselves.

(1st) Consider the mighty advantages, that our great enemy, the Devil, hath against us.

As he is a spirit, he is both powerful and subtle; and both these are whetted by his great malice against us. Long experience also, for above five thousand years, hath made him very politic in dealing with souls, and carrying on his own designs and interest. He knows our temper, our passions, and our inclinations; and can chuse and cull out those objects, which shall infallibly strike and affect us. He waits those mollia tempora fandi, those easy hours of whispering his suggestions to us, when we are most facile and compliant; when we are most easily wrought upon, and made soft to his hands by some foregoing circumstances. And if, after all this, he despairs to prevail upon us as a Devil, he can quickly shift his shape, and transform himself into an Angel of Light, and engage our very consciences unto evil: he can disguise his temptations into impulses of the Holy Spirit, persuade us, that what he prompts us to is our duty, head his fiery darts with Scripture sentences, wrap up his poison in the leaves of the Bible, and wound our souls by our consciences; and, certainly, this devil of light is now gone abroad into the world with all that power of deceivableness he can, and we cannot but with sad and bleeding hearts observe his too general prevalency and success. And, besides all this, he is continually present with us, follows us up and down wherever we go, and is always at our elbow to prompt us to evil, and at our right hand to oppose us in that which is good. Hell hath emissaries enough to afford every man a Fiend for his attendant: and these critically observe every glance of thine eyes, every flash of thy passions; and are presently ready to apply suitable temptations unto thee, and to strike thee in that part of thy soul which is softest and most yielding. And, as the Syrians, that were sent by Benhadad to the king of Israel to intercede for him, watched every word that should fall from his mouth, that they might lay hold of it to obtain farther favour from him: so these spies of hell do watch

every kind word, and every kind look of thine toward sin; and want no skill to improve them, to obtain yet greater matters from thee. Now if God did not appear to deliver us from these subtle wiles and methods of the Devil, how soon would he make fools of the wisest and most experienced Christians!

(2dly) Consider the mighty disadvantages, that we lie under, to oppose the temptations of the Devil: which though they be many and great, yet I shall name but two, which may be found even in the best of men.

[1st] Our inadvertency and heedlessness; through which we are often surprized into sin, and captivated by the cunning craftiness of our enemies which lie in wait to deceive.

How seldom is it, that we stand upon our guard; or, if we do, that we are completely armed! Sometimes our shield, sometimes our helmets, sometimes our sword of the Spirit, is wanting. How seldom is it, that we attend all the motions of the enemy! Indeed, a Christian should look round about him: for he is every where beset and encompassed about with enemies; and, whilst he is vigilant to ward one part, the Devil falsifies his thrust and wounds him in another. But, if he cannot wound on the right hand by presumption, he will try what he can do on the left by despair: if he cannot prevail by his temptations to cause us to neglect and cast off holy duties, he will tempt us to pride ourselves in the well performing of them: if he cannot make us fall, he will tempt us to be high minded because we stand; and so make our very standing the occasion of our woeful downfall: and, because we are apt to think ourselves better than others, he will tempt us to be supercilious despisers and contemners of others.

Now, O Christian, it is a very hard matter, and thou wilt find it so, thus to turn thee about to every assault: and that man had need to have his spiritual senses well exercised, that shall be able dexterously to do it. Now, when so great circumspection is scarce sufficient for

our security, how can they possibly escape without fearful wounds and gashes in their consciences, who are supinely negligent of their souls; and mind not which way their thoughts, their passions, their affections incline; and so give the Devil a handle to turn their souls by which way he will! Certainly, if we do not buckle our spiritual armour close to us, but suffer the joints of it by our heedlessness to lie open, the Devil may easily wound us wheresoever and in whatsoever part he pleaseth. And, truly, if, through this inadvertency and want of circumspection, Adam in the state of innocence and the state of uprightness fell, when the Devil had no immediate access or admission into the inward faculties and powers of his soul; yet if Satan, who was but a young, unpractised, and unexperienced devil, could prevail with him by his wiles, to ruin himself and to betray the great trust which God had deposited in his hands for all his posterity: how much greater may we think is his advantage over us, into whom he may insinuate himself and his temptations; and, when we are busy about other things, strike and wound us at unawares!

[2dly] Besides this inadvertency, the Devil hath another grand advantage to lead us into evil; and that is, because we are naturally prone and inclined of ourselves to those very sins to which he tempts us.

It is very hard for that place to escape, that hath enemies without and traitors within. So stands the case with us: we are not only beleaguered, but betrayed: there are in our hearts multitudes of lusts, that hold intelligence with the Devil, and espouse his cause; yea, there is no one sin how vile and profligate soever, but it may find partisans in our base and wicked hearts, wherein are the seeds and principles of all impieties: and, therefore, as things of a like nature presently conconcorporate, as we see one drop of water diffuseth itself and runs into another; so temptations to sin, meeting with a sinful nature, are presently entertained, and as it were embodied together: for, whilst we pursue what Satan tempts us unto, we do but pursue what our own natural lusts and corruptions inclined unto before, waiting only for an opportunity of being called forth into act.

And, therefore, considering both the advantages the Devil hath against us, and the great disadvantages under which we lie; he a spirit, we but flesh; he wise and subtle, we foolish and ignorant; he experienced, we raw and unpractised; he diligent and watchful, we careless and negligent; he laying a close siege to us without, and we betraying ourselves within: it must needs be ascribed only to the goodness and grace of, God, to deliver us from the commission of that evil, to which we are so fiercely and cunningly tempted.

And thus I have demonstrated the proposition, That it is only the Almighty Power of God, that can preserve us from sin.

3dly. It now remains to shew you the Ways and Methods, that God takes to do it.

And those are, in the general, three: by Restraining Providences; by Common and Restraining Grace; and by Sanctifying and Renewing Grace.

(1st) God delivers us from evil, by his Restraining Providence: putting a hook into men's nostrils, and a bridle into their jaws; and, by a powerful hand, reining them in when they are most fiery and furious.

And thus he often doth with the worst and vilest of men, whose lusts, though they estuate and boil within, and are like the raging sea, raging and rolling in their hearts; yet God sets bounds to their proud waves, and saith to them as he doth to the great sea, "Hitherto shall you proceed, and no farther." It is to this we owe it, that the wickedness of men hath not yet made the world an uninhabitable desert; that solitudes and wildernesses are not as secure retreats as frequented cities, and savage beasts as safe company as men. To this we owe it, that almost every one is not a Cain to his brother, an Amnon to his sister, a Judas to his Master, and a Devil to all the world: for, where grace doth not change, Divine Providence doth many times so chain the sinner, that he cannot bring forth that

wickedness he hath conceived; that, although he be permitted sin enough to destroy himself, which his very will and affection to evil is sufficient to do, yet, through God's withholding opportunity or abilities from him, his sins are not permitted to break out to the ruin and destruction of others. Though God doth, as it were, permit them to give up their hearts to the Devil, yet he ties up their hands: let them imagine and intend as much mischief as hell can inspire them with, yet none of all this shall they execute, any otherwise than as his Holy and Wise Providence permits. Yea, Divine Providence is effectual, not only in keeping wicked men from outward acts of sin, but even God's dearest children and servants: they also have a great deal of corruption stirring in their hearts; and, even in them, lust is too fruitful, conceiving those wickednesses which God often by his Providence so stifles and strangles in the very birth. May not the best of us, with thankful acknowledgements of the divine goodness towards us, reflect back upon many disappointments that we have met with, to which we had given our consent, and entertained purposes of sinning? May we not all say, Had not God denied opportunities, or cast in diversions, or cut off the provisions which we had made for our lusts, we should at such or such a time have dishonoured the Gospel, scandalized our profession, opened the mouths of wicked and ungodly men to blaspheme the Holy and Reverend Name of God, and contracted to our own consciences black and horrid guilt, by the commission of some infamous crimes, of which we were guilty by consenting to them? God hath hedged up the broad-way with thorns; that so he might turn us into the narrow-way, that leads to eternal bliss and happiness.

Now the particular methods, that Divine Providence makes use of, to prevent the sins of men, are many and various, and all of them wise and just.

[1st] Sometimes, God, by his Providence, cuts short their Power, whereby they should be enabled to sin.

All that power, that wicked men have, is either from themselves, or their associates whom they make use of to accomplish their wickedness. And, sometimes, Divine Providence strikes them in both. It cuts off their instruments for Counsel: and, thus, Providence, overruling Absalom to reject the politic counsel of Ahithophel, prevents all that mischief, that so wise and so wicked a statesman might afterwards have contrived: upon which he goes home and hangs himself; and, as if his sagacity forsook him not in his death, by that last action gave a prophetic omen of his master's attending destiny. Sometimes, God cuts off their instruments for Execution: so God miraculously defeated the huge and vast host of the blaspheming Rabshakeh; and, by unseen strokes, slew almost two hundred thousand of them dead upon the place. Sometimes, God immediately strikes their persons, and disables their Natural Faculties: so he smote the men of Sodom with blindness; and put out those very eyes, that had kindled in them the flames of unnatural lusts: thus, likewise, when Jeroboam had stretched forth his hand to lay hold on the prophet, God suddenly withers it up. Sometimes, he hides their Wits from them, and besots them: so the Jews, in John 7:30 sought to have apprehended Jesus; and, though he was in the very midst of them, and there was enough of them to do it, yet God so astonishes them, that they only stand gazing on him, whilst he passes through the crowd of them and escapes away. And, indeed, it is a great mercy of God, to take away that power from men, that he sees they will only use to their own destruction. And, though wicked men would think that if God should now strike them dumb, or blind, or lame, or impotent, that it would be a heavy plague or curse inflicted upon them: yet, believe it, it is far better that God should strike thee dumb, than that ever thou shouldst open thy mouth, to rail at him and his people; better thou wert stricken blind, than that ever the Devil and filthy lusts should enter into thy soul, by the windows of thine eyes; better that thou wert maimed, than that ever thou shouldst have power to commit those sins which will damn, if but intended, but if executed will sink the soul sevenfold deeper into damnation.

[2dly] Sometimes, Providence prevents sin, by raising up other Opposite Powers against a sinner.

Thus God defeated the designs of the Scribes and Rulers, who hated Christ: and, oftentimes, they would have put him to death; but, it is said, They feared the people, whom his doctrine, his miracles, and his course of life had obliged to himself. Instances of this nature are many, and occur familiarly.

[3dly] Sometimes, Providence casts in some seasonable Diversion, which turns men off from the commission of those sins, which they had intended.

Thus the providential passing by of merchants induced the patriarchs to sell their brother Joseph, whom before they had determined to famish. As skilful physicians, when one part of the body is oppressed with ill and peccant humours, draw them to another part less dangerous; so God, by his Providence, many times turns men from the commission of greater sins to a lesser sin. And I believe there are but few men, who, if they will but seriously examine their lives, may produce many instances, both of the Devil's policy in fitting them with occasions and opportunities of sinning, and of God's Providence in causing some urgent affairs, or some sudden and unexpected accidents to intervene, whereby they are turned off from what they purposed.

[4thly] Sometimes, by his Providence, he takes off the Objects, against which they intended to sin.

Thus God preserved St. Peter from Herod's ambitious rage. He intended, the next morning, to put him to death; but, that very night, God sends his angel to work his escape, and thereby hinders the execution of that wicked purpose. And thus, in all ages, God, many times, hides his children from the fury of wicked men, that their wrath against them, like Saul's javelin, misseth David and striketh

only the wall, from whence it often rebounds back into their own faces.

These now are some of the most remarkable Methods of Divine Providence, in preventing the sins of men. And I am very prone to think, that there are very few, who, if they will be at the pains to reflect back upon and strictly examine that part of their lives that is past and gone, they may easily produce many remarkable instances, both of the Devil's policy in fitting them with opportunities and occasions of sinning, and of God's Providences in causing some immergent affairs, or some other strange and unexpected accidents to interpose, so that he bath either graciously taken away our power, or taken away the objects of our lusts, or diverted us when we were in the pursuits of them. To this we owe much of the innocency, and in some respects blamelessness of our lives; that we have not been a scandal to the gospel, a shame to the good, and a scorn to the bad.

And this is the First way how God preserves from sin by his Providence.

(2dly) God preserves from sin by his Restraining Grace.

Now this Restraining Grace is that, which is common, and vouchsafed to wicked men as well as good. Indeed, God by it deals in a secret way with the very heart of a sinner; and though he doth not change the habitual, yet he changeth the present actual disposition of it: so as not only by external checks laid upon men's lusts, but by internal persuasions, motives, and arguments, they are taken off the prosecution of those very sins, which yet remain in them unmortified and reigning.

Thus Esau comes out against his brother Jacob with a troop of two hundred ruffians, intending doubtless to take revenge upon him for his birth-right and blessing; but, at their first meeting, God, by a secret work so mollifies his heart, that, instead of falling upon him to kill him, he falls upon his neck and kisses him. Here God restrained

Esau from that bloody sin of murder: not in a way of external providence only, but, with his own hand, he immediately turns about his heart; and, by seeing such a company of cattle bleating and bellowing, timorous women and helpless children bowing and supplicating to him, he turns his revenge into compassion, and, with much urging, receives a present from him whom he thought to have made a prey.

The same powerful restraint God laid upon the heart of Abimelech, a heathen king: Gen. 20:6 where God tells him, I withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her. Here was nothing visible, that might hinder Abimelech; but God invisibly wrought upon his heart, and unhinged his sinful desires.

And, from these two instances of Esau and Abimelech, we may clearly collect, how Restraining Grace differs both from Restraining Providence and from Sanctifying Grace.

From Providence it differs, because, usually, when God providentially restrains from sin, he doth it by some visible apparent means, which do not reach to work any change or alteration upon the heart, but only lay an external check upon men's sinful actions: but, by Restraining Grace, God deals in a secret way with the very heart of a sinner; and, although he doth not change the nature of it, yet he alters the present inclination of it, and takes away the desire of committing those sins which yet he doth not mortify.

And, from Sanctifying Grace it differs also, in that God vouchsafes it to wicked men and reprobates; to the end that their lives may be more plausible, their gifts more serviceable, and their condemnation more intolerable. And, indeed, the efficacy of this Restraining Grace may be so great, that there may appear but very little difference between the conversation of a true Christian whom special grace sanctifies, and the conversation of one in a state of nature whom common grace only restrains: they may both live outwardly without blame or offence, avoiding the gross pollutions of the world, and

shine in a sphere above the ordinary sort of men; and yet the one be a star, and the other but a meteor. The highway may be as dry, and as fair, in a frosty winter, as in a warm summer; but there is a great deal of difference in the cause of it: in summer, the sun dries up the moisture; in winter, the frost binds it in. So, the ways of those, who have only a restraint laid upon them, may be as fair and clear as the ways of those who are truly sanctified; but the cause is vastly different: grace hath dried up the filth of the one, but only bound in the filth of the other.

Now God doth thus, by his Restraining Grace, preserve men from sin, by propounding to them such considerations and arguments, as may be sufficient to engage conscience against it, when yet the will and affections are still bent towards it. Restraining Grace thunders the curse of the Law, and brandisheth the sword of justice in the face of a sinner; reports nothing but hell and everlasting torments, and such terrible things, which may scare men from their sins, though still they love them. It is, indeed, a great mercy of God to keep us from sin, even by legal terrors; and, usually, these are a good preparation and introduction for saving grace. Doubtless, the thoughts and fears of hell have, with very good success, been made use of, to keep men from those sins that lead unto hell. But yet, if, in our conflicts against, temptations, we can draw arguments from no other topics but hell, and eternal death, and destruction; if we cannot as well quench the fiery darts of the Devil in the blood of Jesus Christ, as in the late of fire and brimstone; it is much to be doubted, whether our abstaining from sin be from any higher principle than what is common: only for fear of punishment, and not for love of God or goodness.

(3dly) God hath another method of keeping men from sin; and that is by his Special and Sanctifying Grace.

And this is proper only to the children of God, who are really sanctified and made gracious. Now, whatever sin God doth thus preserve any from, he doth it by exciting the inward principle and

habit of grace to the actual use and exercise of it. There is a twofold grace always necessary to keep the best Christians from sin; Habitual and Exciting: and God, by the one, quickens and stirs up the other, which else would lie sluggish and dormant. Habitual Grace denominates the soul alive unto God; but it is no otherwise alive, than a man in a swoon is: it is only Exciting and Influential Grace, that can enable it to perform the functions and offices of life. In the dreariest winter, there is life in a seed, that lies buried under ground; but it acts not, till the sun's influence draws it forth: but then it heaves and shoves away the earth that covered it, and spreads itself into the beauty of a flower and fruit. So is it here. Inherent Habitual Grace is, indeed, an immortal seed: and it is but a seed, till the influences of an approaching God awaken it, and chafe its benumbed virtue; and then it stirs and thrusts away all that dung and filth of corruption under which it lay buried, and flowers into Actual Grace. Habitual and Influential Grace must both concur to produce Actual Grace; as necessarily, as there must be both the concurrence of the heat of the sun, and the life of the root, to the production of a flower.

Now God, by exciting the Inherent and Habitual Grace, which was before in the soul, keeps men from sinning two ways.

[1st] Hereby he prevents and excludes those sins, which were we not employed in the exercise of Grace, we should certainly commit.

When the soul is constantly employed in holy and spiritual affairs, sin then neither hath room nor opportunity to exert itself. It is kept out of the thoughts, when they are employed about holy meditations. It is kept out from the affections, when they are set upon heavenly objects. It is kept out from the conversation, when both the duties of our general and particular callings are duly performed in their respective seasons. The Apostle exhorts us, Eph. 4:27 not to give place to the Devil. Truly, when God's Exciting Grace quickens our Inherent Grace to a continual exercise; when every faculty is filled with holy actions, and every season with holy duties; the Devil then can have no place to tempt, nor corruption to stir. It is the best

security God can give us from the commission of evil, to quicken us to the performance of what is good. When we hear, pray, or meditate, or attend upon the public ordinances, we ought to bless God for this his Exciting Grace; whereby we have not only performed a duty, but also possibly escaped some foul and notorious sin, which else we might have committed. We, who are here this day before the Lord, had we neglected, as so many others do, this present opportunity; who of us know what horrid temptations and fearful sins we might, in our own houses, have been exposed unto, which, in God's House, we have avoided? David, when he walked idly upon the roof of his house, lies open to the snares of the Devil; and falls into those foul sins of adultery and murder: had he then been at his harp and his psalms, he might thereby have driven the Evil Spirit from him; as, formerly, he was wont to do for his master Saul. Running streams preserve themselves clear and pure: whereas standing puddles soon grow corrupt, and breed noisome and venomous creatures: so is it with the heart: whilst God's Exciting and Quickening Grace puts it upon continual exercise, it is preserved from corruption; but when it once grows sluggish and doth not freely flow forth into the actings of grace and the performance of duties, the spawn of all manner of sins will breed there, and filthy lusts crawl to and fro without disturbance.

And, therefore, in praying that God would deliver us from evil, we pray that he would continually vouchsafe unto us the quickening influences of his Holy Spirit; that he would always fill our sails with that wind, that bloweth where it listeth: Awake, O worth wind; and come, thou south wind; and blow upon our garden, that the spices thereof may flow forth: for, indeed, if the spices do not, the stench will.

[2dly] As God, by his Exciting Grace, hinders those sins, which might arise in the heart; so he suppresseth those, that do arise.

There is the greatest contrariety imaginable, between Inherent Grace and Indwelling Sin. When the one is vigorous, the other languisheth. And both of these opposite principles have their seat in the same

heart; and both of them are in a continual expectation of an exciting influence to call them out into act. Indwelling corruption is usually roused up by temptations: and, when it stirs in the heart, and is ready to break forth into the life, Habitual Grace is of itself so feeble, that it cannot make any opposition, until a kindly influence from the Spirit of God calls forth some particular grace, that is most of all contrary unto it, to resist and subdue it.

This method God used, to keep St. Paul from sinning. He was under a sharp and pungent temptation, which he calls a thorn in the flesh: 2 Cor. 12:7. Satan buffets; and he prays: and God answers, My grace is sufficient for thee: "My grace is sufficient, not thine. The grace, that is in thee, is weak and helpless: it is a very nothing, if I withdraw my influence from it; but the quickening grace, that flows from me, this alone is sufficient to remove the temptation, and to prevent the sin." Now, whilst God's Exciting Grace works thus upon St. Paul's Inherent Grace; this temptation, this thorn at his breast (as they report of the nightingale) only makes him the more wakeful and vigilant. But, if God should have suspended his gracious influence, this thorn would sadly have wounded his conscience, by the commission of some foul and gross sin.

Now, as all manner of sin lies couched and comprehended in that body of sin, which we carry about with us; so all manner of graces are couched also in that principle of grace, which God hath implanted in his own children: and when the Devil, by a temptation, calls forth a particular sin; God also, by his exciting influence, calls forth a particular contrary grace to hinder the commission of it. Thus, when they are tempted to pride, God calls forth humility to prick that swelling and puffy bladder. So, when they are tempted to wrath and passion, he stirs up meekness to oppose it: when to a murmuring and repining at God's dispensations, he puts patience upon its perfect work. And, in brief, there is no one sin whatsoever, that the Devil can, by his temptations, stir up in the heart; but God also can, and often doth, stir up a contrary grace to quell and master it.

[3dly] But now there are Two Graces, which are more especially employed in this service: and they are an Awful Fear and Filial Love of God.

And, therefore, when we pray that God would deliver us from evil,

(a) We pray, that he would so affect our hearts with that dread and reverence of his Holy Majesty, that we may not dare to commit the least sin, knowingly and willingly, against him.

For the Fear of God is a powerful preservative, to withhold the soul from consenting to temptation; and, when we are fully possessed with it, we shall be able to return that answer to every solicitation of the Devil, that Joseph did to the filthy enticements of his lewd mistress, How shall we do this thing, and sin against God? Yea, it will preserve us not only from the more gross and scandalous acts of sin, but from the secret lurking wickednesses that lie deep in the heart: 2 Cor. 7:1. Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness and pollution both of flesh and spirit; perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Indeed, where this Fear of God is deeply implanted, it will keep us from offending him in our thoughts, as well as in our actions. We shall be afraid to sin against him by hypocrisy, or unbelief, or impenitency; as well as by murder, or blasphemy, or any of those flagitious crimes, which not only the law of God, but the law of nature and right reason condemn.

(b) We pray, that God would so affect our hearts with a holy and filial Love of himself, that may sweetly and yet powerfully keep us from whatsoever may be an offence unto his Divine Majesty.

For Love would not willingly do any thing, that may offend or grieve the object loved. There is a holy ingenuity in this grace, that strongly engageth the heart to love what God loves, and to hate what he hates. Now the only object of God's hatred is sin; and, therefore, where the Love of God is implanted, it will cause such a divine sympathy of affection, that those, who love the Lord, will hate sin and iniquity; as

the Psalmist speaks: Ps. 97:10. And, certainly, hatred of sin is a most effectual means to keep us from committing of it.

And thus I have shewn you the methods, that God useth in delivering us from evil: by his Restraining Providence; by his Restraining Grace; and by his Sanctifying and Renewing Grace.

Hence, then, see to whom you are to ascribe your preservation from evil; and from those horrid sins, that others fall into. Sacrifice not to your own net; not to the freedom of your own wills, not to any excellency in your own disposition and temper, not to your natural aversation to what is wicked and impious: but give the praise and glory, both of what thou art and of what thou art not, wholly unto God. Thy nature is as sinful as the worst of men's; and, that thy life is not as sinful and wicked as the worst, proceeds only from the goodness and grace of God, which hath made the difference: yea, a difference little less than miraculous; for is it not a miracle, that, when the fountain is as bitter in our hearts as in the hearts of others, yet that the streams should not be so? Whence is it, that, since we have the same corrupt hearts with Cain and Judas, or any of the most branded wretches in the world for sin and wickedness, that yet we have not committed the like impieties with them; but that God hath either restrained or sanctified us? But Sanctifying Grace, of itself, is not enough: for whence is it, then, that we have not committed the same sins, that those have done, who yet have been sanctified; whose foul sins and sad miscarriages are recorded for our warning? Are we more holy than they? Have we obtained a greater measure of sanctification than they? No: only our gracious God, by vouchsafing us a constant influence of his Exciting Grace, hath been pleased to keep us from those sins, into which he suffers wicked men to fall; and, not only them, but sometimes his own dear children also. Well, then, Let not the strong man glory in his strength; but, let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord: for he is our strength and our deliverer. What have we, that we have not received? and, if we have received it, why should we boast, as if we had not received it? It is not what we have already received, but what we are continually receiving from

God, that makes us to differ from the vilest and most profligate sinners in the world.

And thus much shall suffice, for the way and method how God doth deliver us from evil.

Now that, which we pray for in this petition, is,

First. That if it shall please God to lead us into temptation, yet that he would not leave us under the power of temptation; but, with every temptation, he would make a way for us to escape, that we may be able to bear it.

Secondly, That if, at any time, temptation should get the upper hand, and prevail over us to the commission of sin, yet that God would not leave us under the power of that sin; but raise us up again, by true repentance and godly sorrow, that so, at last, we may be delivered from the great and soul-damning evil of obduration and impenitency.

Thirdly. That God would not only deliver us from gross and self-condemning impieties; but from every evil way and work, and preserve us blameless to the heavenly kingdom of his Son.

Fourthly. That he would be pleased, not only to deliver us from that, which is in itself evil; but from all the occasions and all the appearances of evil: for these also are evil; if not in effect, yet in tendency.

And thus now I have finished the Sixth and Last Petition of this most Excellent and Divine Prayer of our Saviour. And, I nothing doubt, but, in the discourses I have made of it, you have seen it verified, what at first I affirmed of it: That it is a comprehensive summary of all that we can ask of God, whether it be for supplies of our temporal or spiritual wants; and that all other prayers, which we make, are but a commentary upon this, drawing that out at length, which here is closely wound up in one bottom.

DOXOLOGY

This Prayer of our Saviour, now expounded unto you, consists, as I told you in the beginning, of Four Parts.

The Preface, or Introduction; Our Father.

The Requests, or Petitions; which are six.

The Doxology, or Praise. And, then,

The Conclusion, or Ratification of all, in the word, Amen.

The two first I have dispatched. I now come to the

III. Third: and that is the DOXOLOGY or PRAISE; for praise is a necessary part of prayer.

This praise now is here ascribed unto God, by ascribing unto him his Attributes: Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory for Ever.

In which words, Four of God's Attributes are mentioned, and ascribed unto him.

i. His Sovereignty: Thine is the Kingdom.

ii. His Omnipotency: Thine is the Power.

iii. His Excellency: Thine is the Glory.

iv. His Eternity: all these are thine for ever.

The Kingdom is thine for ever: the Power is thine for ever: the Glory is thine for ever. For so this particle, for ever, is to be distributed unto each of the foregoing Attributes.

Now, in ascribing unto God these attributes, we may consider, the Eminency and the Propriety of them.

The Eminency of them in the particle the; THE Kingdom, THE Power, THE Glory: denoting to us the highest and the chiefest of all these. For his Kingdom is that, which ruleth over all: his Power that, which no created power can controul: his Glory, such, as stains all other excellencies, and makes all their light and lustre to be only the shadow of God.

The Propriety of this attribute, in this particle, thine. Though others may have Kingdoms, and Power, and Glory; yet these, in their eminency, belong only unto God. They are thine; and thine only, originally, infinitely, and unchangeably.

Now all these attributes of God are annexed to the petitions of this prayer by the illative particle, for: FOR thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory, And this carries in it the strength and force of a reason: both why we pray unto God; and, likewise, why God should grant us those things, that we pray for.

First. We pray unto God: for his is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory for ever; and, therefore, he alone is able to relieve and supply us.

Secondly. We plead for the obtaining of those good things, which we ask of him: therefore grant them unto us, FOR thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory for ever. This adds strong consolation and assurance to our faith, that we shall be heard in these requests that we present to God.

For,

First. His is the Kingdom, and we are his subjects; and, therefore, we may depend upon him, as our king, for help and protection.

Secondly. His is the Power; and, therefore, he is able to supply and help us, and to do abundantly for us above what we can ask or think.

Thirdly. His is the Glory; and, therefore, since what we ask is for his honour and praise, we may firmly believe our requests shall be granted unto us. And,

Fourthly. All these are his for ever; and, therefore, we may rest assured, that, at no time, our prayers shall be in vain; but, as it is the same unchangeable God, who, in former ages, hath done great things for and given great things unto his servants, who have called upon him; so he still retains the same power and the same compassion: his ear is not heavy, nor his arm shortened, nor his bowels withered: and, therefore, we may with assurance expect, that he will supply our wants, and grant our desires, since the treasures of his mercy are for ever unexhausted.

Thus every word is a forcible reason, both to oblige us to address ourselves unto God; and, likewise, to move him to bestow upon us those good things, which we thus ask at his hands.

And from hence, by the way, we may observe two things:

That, in our prayers, we ought to plead with God by weighty and enforcing Reasons.

That the most forcible reasons in prayer are to be taken from the Attributes of God.

First. That, in our prayers, we ought to plead with God by weighty and enforcing Reasons.

Thus, God bids us to, Take unto ourselves words, and to turn unto him: Hos. 14:2. And, thus if we look into Scripture, those prayers of the Saints, which are there recorded, we shall find them disputes (if I may so call them) as well as requests; and so many reasons urged in them, as if, by dint of arguments, they would constrain God to yield

to their desires. So, in Moses's prayer: Exod. 32:11, 12, 13. Why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt, with great power? Wherefore should the Egyptians say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants; to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven; and all this land, that I have spoken of, will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. And so Joshua pleads with God: Josh. 7:8, 9. O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name? And so Jehoshaphat: 2 Chron. 20:6. O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? And rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? And in thy hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? And so, in the following verses, he pleads with God by such powerful arguments, as if he would extort mercy and deliverance from him.

Now, although it be true that all the arguments we can urge, and all the reasons that we can alledge, cannot alter the purposes and determinations of God, as to any event that he hath ordained; yet there is this twofold use and necessity of pleading them.

First. Because, by considering the reasons we have to pray for such mercies, our desires will be the more earnest and fervent for the obtaining of them. It will put spirits and life into our petitions, when we can represent to God the necessity of our asking; which, to his mercy, will prove a strong motive for his granting.

Secondly. Because reasons in prayer do mightily conduce to the strengthening of our faith; and give us great encouragement to believe, that we shall certainly obtain what we have so much reason to ask. Now faith and assurance of obtaining our request is a great

condition to the acceptation of our prayers: and, therefore, the Apostle commands us, to lift up holy hands; as without wrath, so also without doubting: 1 Tim. 2:8 and, again, James 1:6, 7. Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For let not that man think, that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. Now when we can humbly represent unto God, both the great necessity that we stand in of those mercies that we beg; and likewise the equity which ariseth, either from his promises past, or his Name and Attributes proclaimed, that we should receive them: what abundant strength and confidence may this add to our faith; and make us come to God with an humble expectation, that he would either answer our prayers or our reasons!

And, therefore, if thou wouldst be sure to have thy prayers answered, pray chiefly for such things, for which thou canst produce such reasons as cannot be answered.

And, therefore,

Secondly. The most forcible reasons and arguments in prayer are to be taken from the Attributes of God.

These must needs be powerful, when they are himself. And if thou canst but get an attribute to take thy part when thou comest to the Throne of Grace, and if thou canst but rightly use and fit it to thy requests, thou mayest be sure of speeding: for God will not, nay he cannot deny himself. In us, there can be nothing found to move him, nor any where out of himself: and, where we find, as very often we do in Scripture, that the miseries and afflictions of God's people are made use of as a plea for mercy; yet this plea itself, which is usually most winning and most affecting, can no otherwise prevail with God, than as his pity and compassions engage him to relieve those that are in misery. And, to speak properly, they are not our afflictions, but the glory of his power and mercy in delivering us from them, that is a motive unto God: only, it is the art of a praying Christian aptly to represent himself as an object, for God's attributes to be exercised about. And, if he can but interest any name or attribute of God in his

behalf, he may be confident of the success of his prayer, and that he shall not return ashamed.

These two observations I gather from the illative particle, for: FOR thine is the kingdom, &c.

i. Concerning the KINGDOM of God I shall speak but very little now, having already treated of it in explaining the Second Petition of this most Excellent Prayer, Thy Kingdom came.

Certain it is, that God's Universal Kingdom is here understood; as he is the High Creator and Supreme Lord of all things, both in heaven and in earth: yet not so as to exclude his Peculiar Kingdom of the Church. And this is an excellent argument, to confirm our faith, for the obtaining of those things, which we pray for: because the kingdom is God's, and he is the absolute sovereign over all; and, therefore, all things are at his dispose. As for spiritual blessings which we seek, he hath the power of bestowing of them: for he is King of his Church; and bestows the gifts and graces of his Spirit upon the faithful subjects of that his kingdom. And as for temporal blessings that we beg, he likewise can readily bestow them upon us: for he is the Universal Monarch of all the World; a king, to whom all other kings are subject, and all other thrones are but the footstool of his. And, therefore, in the general, whatsoever we want, be it protection or provision, our faith in the sovereignty of God may encourage us to ask it with an humble boldness and confidence; for it is the office of a king to give both unto his subjects.

But let us more particularly consider how God's Kingdom may be accommodated to all the petitions of this prayer of our Lord; as a strong argument and reason to prevail with God, for the obtaining what we request in each of them.

1. The Kingdom is God's, therefore, he will see that his Name be hallowed and glorified in it.

Kings are jealous of their honour; and it is a great offence either to speak or do any thing, that may redound to their discredit. It is fit and decent for a king, to have the highest name and the greatest repute, among his subjects: and, therefore, we may be sure God will maintain this in the world. Yea, so jealous is God of having dishonour reflected upon him, that he hath forbidden not only the profanation and trivial mention of his own Name, but the profanation of that which doth but belong unto him: Mat. 5:34, 35. Swear not by heaven; for it is God's throne; nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the Great King. Heaven is the throne of his majesty, the theatre of his power; Jerusalem and the Temple, the seat of his worship: and, therefore as kings and princes have respect shown to their Presence Chamber; so God, because he is the great King of Kings and Lord of Lords, requires to be revered in all that doth appertain unto him, and he will be sanctified in all that draw near unto him. Those, who will not actually hallow him by their obedience, on them God will be hallowed passively by their punishment: and because he is a King, he will maintain the honour of his majesty and royalty. And, therefore, we may with faith pray, Hallowed be thy Name: for thine is the Kingdom, &c.

2. The Kingdom is God's, and, therefore, this Kingdom shall come: it shall be maintained, it shall be established, it shall be enlarged and increased.

Is it not the highest concern of a king, to look that his kingdom be not overthrown, and himself deposed and outed of it? So is it God's interest and concernment, to preserve his kingdom from the incursion of enemies, and the sad consequences of the rents and divisions of his subjects. He hath promised, that the gates of hell shall never prevail against it; that he will enlarge the borders of it, and give all nations unto Jesus Christ for his inheritance and possession; and, therefore, when we pray, Thy kingdom come, we may very well expect that our requests should be granted; for the Kingdom is God's, and we do but pray that he would regard his own

interest and concerns, that he would look down from heaven, and visit this vine, which his own right-hand hath planted, that neither the wild boar out of the forest may root it up, nor the cunning foxes pluck off its tender grapes.

3. The Kingdom is God's, and, therefore, we may well pray, that his will may be done in earth as it is in heaven.

For what is sovereignty without obedience to it, but a mere pageantry, a mock-shew of idle royalty? It is but fit and rational to pray, that his will should be done, whose the kingdom is. And, whilst we thus pray, we may be confident of being heard and accepted, since the reason we urge is so natural and pressing.

4. The Kingdom is God's and, therefore, we may, with great encouragement to our faith, pray for our Daily Bread; and all those temporal accommodations, that are needful and expedient for us.

For it is a kingly office to provide things necessary for their subjects; to protect and defend them, to supply and relieve them: and, therefore, Ps. 72 where we have a perfect character of a good king, it is said, verse 6. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; and as showers that water the earth: that is, he shall be to his people as soft showers to the sprouting grass, kindly nourishing it, and making it grow and flourish. And, certainly, God who is the greatest and best of Kings, will be so much more to his people and subjects; and, since he hath assumed to himself the style and name of King, he will provide abundantly for their peace and prosperity.

5. The Kingdom is God's, and, therefore, we may well make our applications to him for Pardon, and beg of him the Forgiveness of our Offences, since it is the prerogative royal of kings to forgive offenders.

Hence our Saviour, describing the process of the General Judgment, when he comes to speak of pronouncing the sentence of absolution upon believers, styles himself King. So we read, Mat 25:34. Then

shall the King say unto them on his right-hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom. So that here our faith hath a very strong plea to urge with God for the pardon of our sins: Forgive us our trespasses: for thine is the Kingdom; and it belongs to the royalty of thy kingdom to forgive humble and penitent suppliants.

6. The Kingdom is God's therefore, we may well pray in faith, that he would deliver us from Evil.

For this is one great end of government, to protect their subjects from the assaults of their enemies. And God, who is our King, will not neglect this care, when we do with an humble faith urge him to it, by representing to him, that the kingdom is his; for his interest is involved in the safety and welfare of his people.

And thus I have briefly shewn you, in general, that all our prayers ought to be enforced with strong and cogent reasons: which, although they are not properly motives unto God, yet are they good grounds for our faith to build upon; and, therefore, a good evidence when we use them, that our petitions shall be heard and granted. And I have likewise particularly accommodated this first motive and argument, taught us by our Saviour, thine is the kingdom, to each of the Six Petitions, which he hath instructed us to present to God.

ii. The Second Attribute, that we are to consider, as a reason and motive urged in this prayer, is the POWER of God: Thine is the power.

1. Now Power, according to the usual acceptation of the word, is nothing else but an ability to work those changes and mutations upon created beings, which were not in them before.

I speak only of Active Power: and the two terms of it are, either the effecting of somewhat that was not, or the annulling and destroying of that which was.

This is the notion of power, whether it be ascribed to God or man.

And, in both, it is either absolute, or ordinate. Absolute Power respects the simple ability of acting: Ordinate Power respects also the will and determination to act. And therefore in God, whose power we are now treating of, his Absolute Power is of a much larger extent, than his Ordinate: for the one relates to all things possible, that is, to all things whose existence doth not imply a contradiction; the other relates only to things future, and this likewise such as shall exist according to the common course and method of God's ordinary providence: for miraculous effects, although they are produced according to the will and ordination of God; yet they appertain not to his ordinate, but to his absolute power. So, then, the objects of God's Absolute Power are things merely possible, or things future; which are without the compass and sphere of second causes to produce. But the objects of God's Ordinate Power are things future, produced according to the laws of natural agents, and the virtue of second causes.

Yet both these powers in God are infinite; the one objectively, the other formally.

(1) God's Absolute Power is objectively infinite; that is, the object of it is infinite.

For all things possible are the object of this power; and all things are in themselves possible, which do not imply a contradiction. And, Oh, how vast and incomprehensible is the sum of these! God might have created more worlds, more angels, and men than he hath done; more sorts of creatures, and more of every sort, if he had so pleased. Yea, and he might have been creating and acting from all eternity to all eternity; and, in his infinite duration, be still producing new, and therefore infinite effects: for with God nothing is impossible: Luke 1:37. And the only reason why God hath produced such effects and no other, so many and not more, is not from want of power, but merely from the free determination of his own will and counsel. He might have hindered the fall of man, restored the fallen angels, raised the stones to be children unto Abraham, brought more

deluges and general plagues upon the world, if he had so pleased. Yea, and though our fancy and imagination hath a large empire, and seems boundless in these fictions and pourtraitures of things which we paint and limn there; yet God can really create more than we can only imaginarily create: for we can only patch together those things which we have seen, or have otherwise been the objects of our senses, and, by putting together several pieces of things really existing, make an idea of that which never was; but God can actually cause those species and kinds of beings in the world which never were, nor ever was there a former resemblance of them, and so can infinitely exceed the largest scope of what in us seems most unlimited, even our thoughts and fancies, for he is able to do above what we are able to think.

(2) God's Ordinate Power is infinite formally; that is, those things, which he works according to the counsel of his own will, they are all effected by Infinite Power.

For, though the objects themselves are finite, both for nature and number; yet the power that produceth them is infinite: for since the essence of God is infinite, and each of his attributes is his essence, it follows likewise that his power is infinite even in the production of things that are finite.

2. Now it appears that the Power of God is Infinite,

(1) By the Works of Creation.

For though the things that are created are finite, and but a few in comparison with those that are possible; yet it is no less than the Infinite Power of God, that can impregnate the vast womb of nothing, and make it bring forth a being. It must needs be an Almighty Word, that can call forth a creature out of non-existence, and make it start up into the rank of things that are. And, therefore, we find God often ascribing it to himself as a glorious demonstration of his Almighty Power, that he spread forth the curtains of the

heavens; that he laid the beams of the earth; that he hung out those glorious lights of the sun, moon, and stars; that he breathed forth all the various sorts of the creatures which people the universe, and by the commanding word of his mouth they were made. His power and his hand formed all those beautiful creatures we behold, out of a rude and confused chaos; and that chaos itself, out of the greater confusion of nothing: and although Second Causes, by their power and natural energy, introduce various forms into things; yet all the matter they have to work upon, was first God's workmanship, and there is nothing made by man but it is the creature of God, at least as to the matter and first principle of it. Now, it is only Infinite Power, that can bring something out of nothing: yea, and it is infinite creating power, that can form things out of matter utterly indisposed to receive the stamps of such natures as God imprints upon them; for no created agent can work, either where there is nothing to work upon, or where it is altogether unfit and incapable naturally to be formed into such a being as the agent intends: and, therefore, the Apostle tells us, Rom. 1:20 that the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.

(2) The Infinite Power of God is demonstrated in those Miraculous Effects which have been extraordinarily produced in the world.

It must needs be an Almighty Arm, that can arrest the course and impetus of nature, and turn it quite contrary to its own bias: for no created powers, either in heaven or earth, can, by their own efficacy, work a miracle: nay, they cannot be so much as natural instruments, but only moral, in the production of what is miraculous. Indeed angels, both good and bad, may produce very strange and marvellous things by their sudden, invisible, and effectual applying of proper actives to passives; and, by suiting the secret and unknown virtues of causes to fit and disposed patients: but they cannot produce any thing that is miraculous, and wholly either above or contrary to the course and sphere of nature. And those men, who have been so highly dignified as to be the moral instruments of miracles; as say

that Moses, and Elijah, and the Apostles of Christ wrought many miracles: yet they did not perform those works by any natural or proper physical influence, but only by their prayers and commanding faith. It is God alone, that is the immediate efficient cause of whatsoever events have been miraculous in the world: and, therefore, when some raised the dead, and others cured the blind and lame, when Moses first cleft the sea and afterwards the rock with his wonderous rod, when Joshua stopped the sun in its course, and Isaiah turned it ten degrees backward; all these extraordinary and supernatural effects are no otherwise to be ascribed unto them, than as to remote instruments, who, by their prayers and intercessions, prevailed with God to manifest his power, as an attestation of that commission they had received from him. His Infinite Power is the sole author of them: and to this end hath he wrought them, that those, who take little notice of his power, in the common and ordinary products of it, may be seized with admiration and astonishment, when they hear of such events, as neither reason nor nature can give any account of; and may be forced to acknowledge, with the magicians of Egypt, that it is the finger of God; or, more religiously, with the Psalmist, Ps. 89:13. Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right-hand.

(3) The Power of God is Infinite, even in the Common Course and Effects of his Providence.

Whatsoever comes to pass is through the Infinite Power of God. There is not the least spire of grass that sprouts out of the earth, not the least atom that plays and wanders to and fro in the air, not any motion of any creature how inconsiderable soever it be, but the Almighty Power of God is to be seen in it. For, although one Second Cause may depend upon another, in a long series; yet are they all ultimately resolved into the First Cause of all, and invigorated by his influence. See, for this, Hosea 2:21, 22. I will hear the heavens, saith the Lord; and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel. Be the chain of Second Causes never so long, yet God holds the first link in

his own hands, and conveys his power through them all to their last effects. So that, if we duly ponder the mysteries and wonders of nature, it will appear that it is as much Infinite Power to make a poor worm to crawl, or a sparrow to fly or to fall to the earth, as it was at first to create the world. It requires no more power in God to work miracles, than the most ordinary and common events that happen: only, those are said to be miracles, which are against or above the course of nature; and those to be natural events, which are according to it: but, to a considering mind, both the one and the other do equally declare the Almighty and Infinite Power of God.

3. Now this power is, in the text, ascribed to God by way of emphasis and eminency: Thine is the power: which notes unto us some peculiarity in the power of God, which distinguisheth it from all created powers whatsoever.

And it consists in these following things.

(1) In that the power of God is Infinite; as hath been demonstrated already: but the power of all creatures is only finite and limited.

God's Absolute Power hath no bounds; but whatsoever is possible to be, he is able to produce. His Ordinate and Actual Power is, indeed, limited; but only by his own will: Ps. 115:3. He hath done whatsoever he pleased. But our wills are often limited by our power; and those things, which we wish the accomplishment of, yet many times fail in taking effect, only because we want might and power to bring them to pass. And, therefore, when we ascribe power unto God, Thine is the Power, we attribute unto him a power, that is infinite; a power, which can effect whatsoever his will hath fore-determined, above, yea, and contrary to all the power of all the creatures, both in heaven and earth. Hence it is called, the exceeding greatness of his power: Eph. 1:19.

(2) The power of God is Originally in himself: but all created powers are only derived from him.

Whatsoever is in God is, according to the known rules of the Schools, God himself. And, therefore, as God hath not his being from any other, so neither hath he his power from any other: but whatsoever ability is found in any of the creatures, is from God, whether it be natural or moral power, strength or authority.

[1] All derive their natural power from God. It is he, that endues them with strength; and with all that force and might, which they enjoy: 1 Chron. 29:12. In thy hand is power and might; and in thy hand it is, to make great, and to give strength unto all.

[2] All derive their moral power and authority from God: Prov. 8:15, 16. By me kings reign, and princes decree justice: By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth: says the Essential Wisdom of the Father.

(3) The power of God is Supreme: all other power is but subordinate unto him.

And, therefore, he can weaken the strength and frustrate the attempts of all that shall combine themselves together against him; for his power is such, as no creature can resist. And, as billows do but dash themselves in pieces, by dashing against the rock; so all the united forces of nature, should they make head against God, would but dash themselves in pieces, by dashing against the Rock of Ages, whose counsels and purposes shall stand firm, though all the world dissent from them, and endeavour to oppose them. Yea, the power of God is so absolute and sovereign, that the greatest created powers are but instruments, for God to make use of, to bring about his own designs: and therefore they are compared to axes, and saws, and staves: Is. 10:15. Shall the axe boast itself against him, that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him, that shaketh it? Yea, in verse 5 God is said to take up a great king and a great nation, only as a rod to chastise his people with: O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. And, as a staff, a rod, or an axe cannot move themselves without the hand

and guidance of him that makes use of them; so neither can the mightiest princes nor the most powerful people move themselves, but by the power and direction of God, who applies them, as so many tools or instruments, to whatsoever work he pleaseth.

Now, upon all these accounts, power may be thus eminently ascribed unto God: Thine is the Power.

4. Yet, when we affirm God's Power to be thus Sovereign and Infinite, it doth not therefore follow, that it must take all things whatsoever within its reach and extent; for there are several things, which, as St. Austin speaks, lib. v. de Civitate Dei, cap. 10. God cannot do, because he is Omnipotent: *Duæ dam Deus non potest, quia est Omnipotens.*

(1) God cannot do the things, that are contradictory.

He cannot will the same thing to be and not be, at the same time. That there should be a body without quantity, or any other corporeal property belonging to it, as the Papists absurdly dream in their monstrous doctrine of Transubstantiation. For, when they have recourse to the Almighty Power of God, by which, they say that those things, which are naturally impossible, may be effected; as for the same body to be in ten thousand places at once; for the same body to have quantity, as it bath in heaven, and no quantity, as in the sacrament: we truly answer, that the power of God never reacheth to verify contradictions; and that it is as great a contradiction, to affirm a body to be in more places than one at once, or to be and not to have quantity, especially to have it and not to have it, as it is to affirm that it is a body and no body.

(2) God cannot do any thing, which may justly bring upon him the imputation of sin.

For sin is not from power, but from weakness; since all impiety consists of defect, and all defect is from impotence. And, therefore, the Apostle tells us, James 1:13. God cannot be tempted with evil.

Holiness and purity is an essential attribute of the Divine Essence; and, therefore, God can as soon not be, as be the author of sin: for all sin must arise, either from weakness in the understanding, or perverseness in the will: but the Divine Understanding is infinitely clear, and therefore cannot be dazzled with the false shews and appearances of evil; and the Divine Will is infinitely holy, and conformed to the sovereign rule of his sapience and wisdom. And, therefore, where there is no possibility of ignorance in the one, nor of irregularity in the other, there can be no obliquity in those actions, which proceed from both; but they must all needs be most holy, just, and righteous.

(3) God cannot do any thing that argues him mutable and unconstant.

He cannot change his purposes, nor break his promises, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his lips. And, though the Scripture makes frequent mention of God's repenting himself of what he hath done: so we read, Gen. 6:6. It repented the Lord, that he had made man: Exod. 32:14. The Lord repented of the evil, which he thought to do unto his people: 2 Sam. 24:16. And the Lord repented him of the evil. Yet these, and such like expressions, are spoken only by way of accommodation to our capacities, and spoken *συμπαθῶς καὶ ἀνθρωπινῶς*, "compassionately and after the manner of men;" but must be understood *θεοπρεπῶς*, after such a manner "as is befitting God." For as men, when they repent of what they have made, do again destroy it, and act contrary to their former actings; so, because God doth sometimes act contrary to his former actings, he is said to repent of what he had done: although, in strict propriety of speech, the immutability of his essence is such, that all his purposes and counsels stand firm and fixed for ever: Mal. 3:6. I am the Lord: I change not: James 1:17. With him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. And, therefore, because of this eternal fixedness of God's purpose, it is said, that he cannot deny himself: 2 Tim. 2:13 that he cannot lie: Tit. 1:2 and that it is impossible that God should lie: Heb. 6:18 because these things imply inconstancy and fickleness, which is

always an effect of weakness; for, whensoever we alter our counsels and resolutions, it is because we see some inconvenience would follow upon them, which we did not before consider, which to impute to God were the highest blasphemy.

Now, these three things only excepted, all other things in the world fall within the compass of God's power. He is able to do all things, as Origen speaks excellently, the doing whereof would not deny him to be God, or to be holy, or to be wise. And, therefore, he cannot bring to pass contradictions, nor can he alter his eternal purposes; for this would derogate from his infinite wisdom. He cannot be the author of sin; for this would be a stain and blot upon his infinite purity and holiness: and both would be impotency rather than power. And, were he weak enough to do those things, he would not be God; for it is essential to God, to be infinitely wise and infinitely holy.

5. Let us now briefly shew how this consideration of the power of God may be made use of as a prevalent argument for the strengthening of our faith in prayer, and the assuring of us that we shall obtain what we ask: for our Saviour hath taught us to subjoin it to all our petitions, as a reason why we should ask, and as a motive why we should speed: For thine is the power.

Now the great strength of this lies here, in that it most needs be a mighty encouragement to our faith, to reflect and consider, that, whatsoever we ask, we ask it of a God that is able to give it us: he is not a weak, impotent deity; but a God, who hath all power in his hands, and therefore can effect whatsoever we desire of him.

Behold what care God hath taken to strengthen our faith when we pray unto him. There are but two things, that can make us doubt of speeding in our requests: the one is whether God will, the other is, whether he can, grant us what we ask. And, that our faith might not boggle at either of these, our Saviour hath, as it were, hedged in and enclosed all our prayers with these two great fences for our faith, God's willingness and his power to help: the Preface to this excellent

prayer contains the one; and the Conclusion of this prayer the other. He is our Father; and, therefore, if earthly parents, whose bowels of mercy are but finite, are yet to tender over their children, and ready to do their utmost to contribute what assistance they can towards them; much more will our Heavenly Father, whose mercies and compassions are infinite and boundless. But lest our faith should yet stagger and suspect the power and ability of God to relieve and help us the Conclusion of this prayer puts in a caution against all unbelieving scrupled in this case: Thine is the Power. So that we have abundant security for our faith, in whatsoever we desire of God; because he hath declared himself both willing and able to supply our wants and satisfy our desires. Indeed, the power of God, alone, is not a sufficient plea; for we have before seen, that God is able to effect infinitely more that he will: but then the power of God is a strong and forcible plea, when it is joined with his will. And when we are once assured by the promises of his word, that God is willing to bestow upon us the blessings that we ask; then to bend the force of this plea towards him, that he is likewise able, will most certainly prevail. And that prayer, that is directed in faith, and winged with both these motives, shall never return into our bosoms in vain and ineffectual.

Thus have I finished the Two First Attributes of God made use of by our Saviour in this prayer, his Sovereignty and his Omnipotency.

iii. It remains, now, that we speak something to the Third Attribute of God, which our Lord here teacheth us to make use of in praying to him: and that is the GLORY of God: For thine is the Glory.

But this is an attribute so bright and dazzling, so surrounded and fringed about with rays of inaccessible light, that the Holy Angels themselves cannot steadfastly behold it, but twinkle and glimmer, yea, veil their faces, at the full beams of that object, the vision of which is yet their eternal joy and happiness. And, therefore whatsoever weak or vile man can either speak or conceive of the Infinite Glory of the Great God, will instead of exalting debase it; and we shall but defame, while we attempt to celebrate it: so infinitely do

the perfections of the Deity surmount our most raised affections, that our very praises thereof are but lessening of it; and whatsoever we ascribe unto God, is but detracting from him. Think with yourselves a little, if two blind men, that never saw the sun, were discoursing together about it, what strange, uncouth, and improper fancies would they form of its light and splendor! Surely, such, yea vastly more confused and disproportioned, are all our notions and conceptions of the Glory of God: which is a light, that is invisible; obscurity, that is dazzling; and whatsoever else is most inconceivable to human capacities. For the Scripture, sometimes, describes God's dwelling-place to be in that light, unto which no mortal eye can approach; and, sometimes, that his pavilion is dark clouds, which no eye can penetrate: and both to signify, how impossible a thing it is, to search out God, and to find out the Almighty to perfection.

Yet, since he hath been graciously pleased to give us some refracted and allayed rays of himself, such as we are able to bear; both in the works of creation and providence, and likewise in his holy word; let us, with all humble modesty, take notice of those discoveries, which he hath made of his glory: wherein we shall find enough, if not to satisfy our curiosity, yet to excite our veneration; and, by seeing some glimpses of his back-parts, which he causes to pass before us, our desires will be made more earnest after that estate of consummate happiness, where we shall for ever behold his face, where we shall no longer see him darkly through a glass, but shall see him as he is, and know him as we are known by him.

1. Glory, therefore, according to the true and genuine import or the word, signifies any excellency or perfection in a subject, that either is or deserves to be accompanied with fame and renown.

And, hence, we may well distinguish a twofold glory in God; the one Essential, the other Declarative.

The Essential Glory of God is the collection and system of those Attributes, which eternally and immutably belong unto the Divine

Nature.

The Declarative Glory of God is the manifestation of those his Attributes, so that his creatures may take notice of them with praise and veneration.

Both are here intended by our Saviour, when he teacheth us to ascribe the Glory unto God.

(1) God is Essentially Glorious, in all those Attributes, which appertain unto his Infinite Being: for each of them is infinitely perfect in itself; and the complexion and centering of them altogether, make up a glory infinitely great and incomprehensible.

Thus, his Holiness is glorious: Exod. 15:11. Glorious in holiness. His Power is glorious: 2 Thess. 1:9. They shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power: Col. 1:11. Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power. His Majesty is glorious: Ps. 145:5. I will speak of the glorious honour of his Majesty. His Kingdom is glorious; Ps. 145:11. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom. His Grace and Mercy is glorious: Eph. 1:6. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved. And, from all these, results the Glory of his great and terrible Name, which hath in it an excessive brightness and lustre from the constellation of so many Glories united in it: Deut. 28:58. That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful Name, THE LORD THY GOD. Yea, so infinite is this Essential Glory of God, that it diffuseth and sheddeth abroad its light and glory upon those things, which have but relation to him: therefore the Church is said to be glorious, because made in some faint resemblance like unto God: Ps. 45:13. The King's daughter is all glorious within: Eph. 5:27. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle. The Gospel is therefore glorious, because it is that glass, wherein we see the glory of God by a reflected light: and, as the beams of the sun falling upon a glass, make it shine with an exceeding brightness; so the Glory of God,

striking upon the Gospel, and from thence re-bounding off to us, hath stamped it with an excellent glory and lustre: 1 Tim. 1:11. According to the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God. His Throne is glorious: Jer. 17:12. A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our Sanctuary. Yea, not only his throne, but that which might seem more despicable, his very Footstool is glorious:, Is. 60:13. I will make the place of my feet glorious.

Now this Essential Glory of God is both Immutable and Incomprehensible.

[1] The Essential Glory of God is Immutable: the same, for ever: no addition can be made unto it, nor no diminution from it.

For, before there were ever any creatures extant, God was the same glorious being that now he is. Our praises and acknowledgments can no more contribute to this glory, than the eye that sees the sun can increase the light of it: for God's Attributes, that are his glory, are no adventitious accidental things, that may be assumed or laid aside at pleasure, but they are all as necessary as his nature is: and, therefore, though he be said to clothe himself with light and glory, as with a garment; yet is it a garment, that cannot be put on or off: but whatsoever God is in any one moment of eternity, the same he is from all eternity unto all eternity. He is the Lord, who changeth not; and with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Indeed, there are some Titles in God's style, which seem not to have been always appertaining to him; and, in respect of his eternal being, may appear as new stars in the heavens, and argue some alteration and change in his glory: as, to be Creator, the Lord and Governor of this World; which he was not from all eternity, nor could be till the creatures were formed.

But, here, we must carefully distinguish between the Absolute and Relative Attributes of God.

His Absolute Titles and Attributes are such as belong unto him simply, without depending upon any respect or reference to any thing without and besides himself: and so he is Infinite, Eternal, Wise, Holy, and Merciful in himself; and was so for ever, before there were any created objects, unto which or upon which he might manifest these his attributes.

But, now, the Relative Titles of God have a time wherein they began, and wherein they shall likewise cease; as, to be a Creator and Preserver of the World, as it now stands: wherein, though there may be daily mutations, yet God is the same, immutable; because these are only extrinsical denominations, and arise merely from that change that is made upon the creature, not from any change that is made in God. For, still, his Power is the same, whether he exert it in creating or no: his Wisdom is invariably the same, before he manifested it in the government of the world as since: and, in all the mutations that he brings upon the world, he is still the same Immutable and Unchangeable God. Only, as those, who sail, think the more removes, when it is but the ship: so are we subject to the same mistakes, and are apt to think God is changed, when only ourselves are changed; that he moves from not being a Creator to be a Creator, when, in truth, we only move from not being creatures to be creatures. And, therefore, when we say God is now a Creator which once he was not, it implieth no more change in God, than it would in any object which now is seen, which before was not seen: and this is only a different external denomination, that makes no real change in the thing.

But, it may be, these speculations are too abstruse; and, therefore, I shall not detain you longer in them.

[2] As the Essential Glory of God is immutable, so is it also Incomprehensible; for it is infinite, and the entire perfection of the Deity.

It is the very face of God; and, therefore, Exod. 33:18, when Moses desired God to shew him his glory, God answers him in the 20th verse, Thou canst not see my face: for there can no man see my face and live. And, although the angels in heaven and the spirits of just men made perfect, have brighter and more radiant discoveries made unto them of the glory of God, than any that we can bear; yet neither they nor any other creature can possibly comprehend the full latitude and utmost extent of that glory, any more than it is possible for a finite thing to contain what is infinite. And, hence it follows, that, when the Scripture promiseth us, as one great part of our reward, that we shall see God as he is: 1 John 3:2 we must not understand it, as if ever we could arrive to such a capacity as to see and know God as he is in his Infinite Essence: for God's Essence being altogether indivisible, to know God essentially, were to know him comprehensively; to know him, as much as he is to be known in himself, that is, to know him as much as he knows himself; which is impossible: for no finite understanding can comprehend an infinite object. And, yet, our sight and knowledge of God shall so far surmount those dim and glimmering discoveries which here he makes of himself to us, that, comparatively, the Apostle might well call it, a seeing him as he is, and a knowing him as we are known by him.

And, thus much, for the Essential Glory of God; which is himself, and his own infinite and eternal excellencies and perfections.

But, besides this,

(2) There is another glory of God; and that is, his Declarative Glory: which nothing else but that visible splendor and lustre, that reflects from his Essential Glory, upon the notice and admiration of his creatures.

So that there is a very great difference, between God's being glorious and being glorified.

God is always equally glorious in himself: so he was before the foundations of the world were laid; before ever there were any creatures to celebrate his praise.

But he is glorified, by his creatures' declaring and setting forth the infinite excellencies that are in his essence. We cannot set any new gems in his diadem, which did not shine there before; but, when we observe and admire those several coruscations of his attributes, which appear in those various methods that God takes to manifest them, then are we said to give glory unto God. His Holiness is always the same; but, when we endeavour to imitate it, then we glorify it: his Power is always the same; but we glorify it, when we depend upon it: his Mercy and Goodness is always the same; but we are said to glorify it, when we praise and extol it. And, therefore, God tells us, Ps. 50:23. Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me. We can add nothing to God, by all the glory that we ascribe unto him; but then we are said to give him glory, when we admire, and adore, and celebrate those glories, that are in him. And so, John 12:28. Christ prays, Father, glorify thy name; that is, make thine Essential Glory, the glory and brightness of thine Attributes, conspicuous to the world: to which request there was an answer returned from heaven, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again; that is, as I suppose the words may well be interpreted, "I have already glorified my Mercy, which is my Name, in thy Incarnation and Mission; and I will also glorify my Justice, in thy Passion and Crucifixion: by the one, declaring how gracious I am, in providing a Saviour for the ruined world; by the other, how just and holy I am, in exacting a full and complete satisfaction for the sins and transgressions of the world."

Now we may both add unto, and diminish from, this Declarative Glory of God. We rob God of his glory, when we interpose between his attributes and the manifestation of them unto others. We hereby wrong and injure his repute and esteem in the world; and, although we cannot pluck off any of his attributes from him; for if thou sinnest, what doest thou against God? Job 35:6: yet we obstruct the shining of them upon others. As, in an eclipse of the sun, the moon

doth not darken the sun, but only darkens us; and hinders the light, which still is the same in itself, from breaking out upon the lower world. So, wicked men, by their sins, though they cannot deprive God of the brightness of his glory; yet they impede the emanations and out-flowings of his glory, and hinder others from admiring and adoring of it as they ought.

Now the ways, whereby God useth to express and declare his glory, are various.

[1] He doth it by his Works.

Psalm 19:1. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy-work: for they manifest to the world, the attributes and perfections of their great Creator; even his wisdom, power, and goodness. Some of God's works are his Footsteps, and some are his Images. The Image of God is seen in rational and intellectual creatures: and, by considering the wisdom, understanding, and mental faculties that God hath endowed them with, we may come to apprehend some faint shadows and resemblances of the Infinite Wisdom and Knowledge of the Original Cause of them; since, whatsoever is in them must needs be, in a far more eminent degree, in the author and maker of them. But all God's works carry quædam vestigia Dei, "some prints and footsteps of God" stamped upon them; whereby, although they do not all shew his likeness, yet they shew his power and wisdom in framing them: Rom. 1:20. The invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead: but he especially glorifies himself in the extraordinary miraculous works of his hands, whether in a way of mercy or in a way of judgment: Exod. 15:11. Who is like unto thee, O Lord, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Ps. 85:9. Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land: that is, God, by his wonderful deliverances of his Church and People, establisheth his Glory to dwell among them.

[2] God declares his exceeding and infinite glory by his Word.

For, therein, he hath given us the most clear and lively representations of himself. And those attributes, which his works could never have discovered to us, he hath manifested by his Revealed Will. This is that table, on which he hath drawn his most resembling image. This is that glass, wherein We, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory: 2 Cor. 3:18. And it consists of two parts, the Law and the Gospel: the one discovers to us the glory of God's Justice; the other, the glory of his Mercy: and both of them are glories: 2 Cor. 3:9. For if the ministration of condemnation, which is the Law, be glory; much more doth the ministration of righteousness, which is the Gospel, exceed in glory.

[3] The most clear manifestation of the glory of God was made in Christ, who was the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person: Heb. 1:3.

In him, heaven was brought down to earth; the infinite comprehended; the invisible made conspicuous; and all the miracles, both of grace and glory, reconciled to our very senses. In him, all the Attributes of the Divine Nature are so interwoven with the Infirmities of the Human, that, if I may so speak, God in him studied to exhibit to us a person like ourselves, to give us some advantage for our apprehensions to conceive of his infinite perfections. In him, Omnipotence became weak; Eternity, mortal; Innocence itself, guilty; God, man; the Creator, a creature; the Maker of All, its own workmanship: life itself, in him underwent the sentence of death: and all these strange and impossible truths, as for other ends; so for this, that we might have some clearer hints and discoveries of the infinite glories of God, which in their full brightness would only dazzle and confound us, and were discernible by us only thus tempered and obscured. And, therefore, the Apostle calls him, God, manifest in the flesh: 1 Tim. 3:16. Certainly, God in flesh must needs be rather veiled and hidden, than manifested. But, although to

himself he was obscured, yet to us he was manifested; because, if the glory of the Deity had not been thus clouded and allayed, it had not been manifested. For that light, which when tempered makes us see, will strike us blind when too glorious: as we may safer direct our eyes towards the sun when it is under an eclipse, than when it shines with unchecked rays. Hence St. John, speaking of Christ in the mean estate of his humiliation, saith of him, John 1:14. We beheld his glory, the glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Thus, now, you have seen what the Essential and Declarative Glories of God are.

2. Let us now consider why this attribute should so eminently be ascribed unto God: Thine is the Glory.

Now there may be Three reasons given of it.

(1) Because all, that is excellent and glorious in the creatures, is to be found in God; and that, either formally or eminently.

Is grace or holiness, wisdom or strength, duration, justice, or mercy, any excellency in those creatures to which they are attributed? they are all in God, formally, and infinitely more glorious, and with infinite more perfections, than they are in the creatures: for created beings have but their limited and stinted proportions of these qualifications; but God is infinitely holy, infinitely wise, infinitely just, and infinitely merciful. These things are in him without allays or mixtures from their contraries. He is Holy, without any mixture of sin: Wise, without any mixture of folly: Just, without any mixture of iniquity: Merciful, without mixture of cruelty. Yea, these are all in him, without any bounds set them by his nature and capacity; for they are his nature, and therefore as infinite and as unbounded as it. Again, those excellencies, that are in the creatures and cannot formally agree with the Divine Essence, yet they are all in him, eminently. Are any creatures excellent for the beauty and symmetry

of their parts, for light, for motion or such like qualities, that do not belong unto the Divine Nature? Yet all these are eminently in God: for he is the prime and original cause, from whom they derive their being and perfection: so that all glory is his; his incommunicatively from any other, communicatively from him.

(2) All glory, in respect of God, is but darkness and obscurity.

And so it was both a true and divine conception of Plato, when he said, That light was but a shadow of God: for, as shadows are vastly dark, when the light that surrounds them appears; so God is infinitely brighter than light itself. Yea, the sun, that created fountain of light, is but a black coal compared with this Eternal Father of Lights. This is well expressed by Job 25:5. Behold, even to the moon, and it shineth not, yea, the stars are not pure in his sight. As the light of the sun, when it ariseth, drowns and extinguisheth all other lights; for its brightness, as it brings a day to all the rest of the world, so it brings a night to the stars: so the infinite brightness of the glory of God overcasts all other glory whatsoever, with night and obscurity. Hence it is said, that God charged his angels with folly: Job 4:18. so that if those wise and intellectual creatures be compared with God, they are but foolish and ignorant; for the glory of his infinite and unsearchable understanding so far transcends their reach, that they know nothing, in comparison with him, who knoweth all things. The two chiefest glories of men are wisdom and strength; wisdom to contrive, and power to execute: these perfect him, as he is a man. But yet see how the Apostle undervalues both these, when compared with God: 1 Cor. 1:25. The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. And, therefore, because God's glory is infinitely surpassing all others, our Saviour ascribes it to him peculiarly: Thine is the glory.

(3) Because all other glories in the creatures serve only to illustrate the glory of the Great God.

Seest thou any excellency and perfection in any of the creatures? God hath so endowed them with it, not that thou shouldest fix there, and make that thy idol: but that thou mightest have a hint from thence, how much more perfect he himself is; and take thy rise from visible excellencies, to admire those that are invisible. Is there so much beauty and harmony in the frame of nature? Think, then, how much more harmonious and orderly are the counsels and designs of the Great God, who hath contrived and disposed the whole course and circuit of Second Causes. Is there so much awe and dread in the presence of an earthly majesty, to daunt all that are not impudent and profligate offenders? Think, then, how infinitely venerable is the face of the Great God; since it is only some ray of his authority and majesty shining in them, that makes them so dreadful. Is it such a pleasant thing to the eye to behold the light? Raise, then, not thine eye of sense, but thine eye of faith, to consider how infinitely bright and glorious that light is, that is never clouded; that light which, though it infinitely diffuse itself, yet resides always in its centre: For God is light, and in him is no darkness at all: 1 John 1:5. Thus you see that God hath therefore made any created being glorious and excellent, that it might serve as a monitor to put us in mind of his greater glory; and, the more excellent any perfections are in the creature, the greater advantage have we from them to raise our meditations unto God.

3. And, having thus shewn you why glory is in such an especial manner attributed unto God, Thine is the glory; it remains now to consider, what force this plea hath to confirm our faith, that we shall obtain from God those things which we pray for.

And, here, let us see its influence upon every petition.

(1) The Glory is God's: therefore his Name shall be Hallowed.

For his declarative power consists in the hallowing of his name: since, to hallow, is nothing else, as I shewed you in the explication of that petition, but to declare God to be holy; and this is to give glory

unto God. Hence we have them both joined together: Lev. 10:3. I will be sanctified in them that come nigh to me; and, before all the people, I will be glorified. To sanctify, is to glorify God: and, therefore, what better argument can we urge that God would provide for the sanctifying of his Name, than this, that the glory is his; and if his Name be prophaned in the world, his glory needs must suffer? How can the world know that God is infinitely glorious in all his perfections and attributes, unless he take care by his own methods to have his name sanctified among his people in their expressions and actions, and to have it sanctified upon the wicked in their plagues and punishments? Therefore we may well pray in faith, Hallowed be thy Name, for thine is the Glory.

(2) The Glory is God's: therefore his Kingdom shall come.

For where should he be honoured, but in his own kingdom? God is greatly dishonoured, and his glory traduced, in the rest of the world: and, therefore, if he will have any glory secured and maintained, he must take care of his Church to maintain and propagate it: Ps. 76:1. In Judah is God known, his name is great in Israel. The glory of a king falls together with his kingdom; and it lays a blot upon his honour, if he should suffer his enemies to overthrow it, while he hath power to defeat their enterprises: since, therefore, the glory is God's, we may be confident that he will provide for the security and welfare of his own kingdom; and will, for his honour's sake, establish it so sure, that the gates of hell, all the power and policy of men and devils, shall never be able to prevail upon it, to its extirpation. Hence, then, whensoever we see the rage of the professed enemies of the Name of Christ encroaching upon the borders of his dominions, when the state of the Church Militant seems visibly to impair, or when the hypocrisy and wickedness of those who are the professed enemies of Christ seems to eat out the very heart and power of true godliness, we may well pray in faith, Thy kingdom come: Lord, raise, Lord, enlarge, Lord, establish it; for thine is the Glory: and, unless thou wilt confine thy glory only to heaven, and account the praises and eternal hallelujahs of saints and angels a sufficient adoration for

thy great Name, Lord, have regard to this thy poor decaying kingdom, for, only in it and in heaven, is thy glory celebrated. And, if thou leavest this thy kingdom to be overrun by the agents and ministers of the Devil, if prophaneness and idolatry gain ground in it so as to thrust thee out of the throne, what were this, but to give thy glory to another, which thou hast promised not to do?

(3) The Glory is God's: therefore his Will shall be done in Earth as it is in Heaven.

The greatest glory, that God can receive from us, is by our obedience: John 15:8. Herein, saith our Saviour, is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit. God's chiefest glory is his holiness; and therefore he is stiled, glorious in holiness: and we have no better way to glorify the holiness of God, than by endeavouring to be holy as he is holy; for then do we declare it to be a thing which we value as most excellent and glorious, when we strive to imitate it, and would fain get as much of it as our frail natures can receive. And, therefore, we may well pray in faith, Thy Will be done, for thine is the Glory; because the greatest glory we can give to God, is by doing his will.

(4) The Glory is God's; and therefore will he provide for us our Daily Bread, and all things that are necessary for our good.

And, therefore, when God was miraculously to provide bread for his people in the wilderness, he tells them, Exod. 16:7. In the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the Lord. And, certainly, it is not for the glory of God, that any of his should want things fitting and necessary for them. Only let us leave it to him, to judge what is so. For, although he should reduce thee to a morsel of bread, and a cup of cold water: yet he gives thee all that is fit for thee; and should he give thee more, it would not be a boon, but a curse.

(5) The Glory is God's: therefore he will Forgive thy Debts and Trespases.

The Wise Man hath told us, Prov. 19:11 that it is the glory of a man to pass over a transgression: and shall it not much more be the glory of God, whose mercies are infinitely more glorious than our charity can be? Yea, he tells us, Prov. 25:2 that it is the glory of God to conceal a thing; that is, to hide and cover our sins, so that they shall not be found against us: and expressly, Eph. 1:6, 7 that we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins, to the praise and glory of his grace. And I have shewed you, in opening of the petition, that it is a very high honour and superiority to forgive: it is the prerogative-royal of a King: and, therefore, we may well pray with faith, Forgive us our Trespases, for thine is the Glory.

(6) The Glory is God's: therefore he will deliver us from the assaults and incursions of our enemies: he will deliver us from temptations, or from the evil of temptation.

He will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear; but will, with every temptation, make a way for us to escape, hereby to demonstrate the glory of his wisdom and power, that it is above all the wiles and power of the Devil and our spiritual enemies. And, therefore, we may well pray, Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the Glory; because it is the honour of God, to defend his servants from the incursions of his and their enemies.

Thus we have treated on three of God's Attributes ascribed to him in this Doxology: his Dominion, his Power, and his Glory.

iv. It remains now to consider the amplification of all these by that expression, FOR EVER; which is to be referred and accommodated to the foregoing titles, The Kingdom is thine, for ever: the Power is thine, for ever: and the Glory thine, for ever.

Now this application of it denotes to us the eternity of God's attributes, and consequently his nature.

Indeed this particle for ever, doth not always in Scripture signify a strict and proper eternity; for it is often applied to things of various

durations.

First. Sometimes, most improperly, those things, which have both beginning and end, are said to be for ever.

So the Mosaical Pædagogy, and those rights and observances which were imposed upon the Jews by the Levitical Law, are said to be everlasting; although they were not to continue any longer than between Moses and Christ, which space was not completely fifteen hundred years: thus the Priesthood is said to be eternal: Num. 25:13 where it is called, The covenant of an everlasting priesthood: so the sprinkling of the blood of the passover is to be commanded to be observed for ever: Exod. 12:24 so Circumcision is called, an everlasting covenant: Gen. 17:13 and many more such instances might be given. Yea, things of a far shorter duration than these, such as are only to Continue during life, are yet said to be eternal: the servitude of him, that refuseth freedom, was to be for ever: Exod 21:6 that is, during his natural life: and so the Psalmist often resolves himself, and exhorts others to praise and magnify God for ever. And, indeed, it is very ordinary in Scripture, that those things are said to be for ever, which were not to alter their state for some continuance of time, nor to be disused till the date prefixed to them were expired.

Secondly. Some things, which had no beginning, but shall have an end, are yet said to be for ever.

And such, as they respect their objects, are the decrees or foreknowledge of God; which shall, in their due time, be fulfilled. Thus Eph. 3:11 they are called, the eternal purpose of God; and yet they cease under the notions of decrees and prescience, when that, which was from all eternity decreed and foreknown takes its accomplishment.

Thirdly. Those things, which had a beginning, but never shall have an end, are said to be for ever.

And such are the Angels; all of them created in the beginning of time, but their future continuance is without bound or period: and the Saints, after the Resurrection, are said to be made equal to the angels, because they shall not die: Luke 20:36 and Christ is said to be made a little lower than the angels, in that he tasted of death: Heb. 2:9. The good angels live in eternal beatitude: they always behold the face of God: Mat. 18:10. And the evil angels live in eternal torments and a never dying death: they are reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness: Jude, verse 6. And, thus, the souls of men are everlasting: for, being spiritual substances and free from all principles of decay and corruption, they shall for ever continue in that estate and condition, for which their actions in this life have prepared them. And not the soul alone, but the body also shall be eternally preserved in its being: This mortal must put on immortality: 1 Cor. 15:53 and then shall we ever be with the Lord: 1 Thess. 4:17. And yet all these had once their beginning, by the creating word of God; but are eternal, *à parte post*, and shall always retain those natures and beings.

Fourthly. That is most strictly and properly said to be eternal and for ever, which, neither hath beginning nor end; whose prospect, both ways, is infinite and boundless.

And, thus, God only is for ever; and it is an incommunicable attribute of his divine essence to be so. But, because all the perfections and properties of God are God himself, therefore this everlastingness here in the Doxology ascribed to his Kingdom, his Power, and his Glory, are said to be for ever. Yet not only these, but whatsoever is in God, is absolutely eternal: his Righteousness is an everlasting righteousness: Ps. 119:142 his Truth endureth for ever: Ps. 117:2 his Mercy is for ever: Ps. 136:1 his mercy endureth for ever; which is there made the burden of that most excellent song and the sweet close of every verse in it: his Love is for ever: Jer. 31:3. I have loved thee with an everlasting love.

Now, in treating of the attributes of God, I shall endeavour to shew these three things.

1. What the true and proper notion of eternity is.
2. That God is eternal.
3. What encouragement our faith may have from this attribute of God's eternity, that those things, which we pray unto him for, shall be granted unto us.

1. Let us see What Eternity is.

And here, though it be altogether impossible, exactly to describe what is boundless and infinite; yet, to help our weak and shallow conceptions, we may take this notion of it. Eternity is a duration, which hath neither beginning nor end, nor succession of parts: or, according to the common description of Boethius, *Est interminabilis vitæ tota simul et perfecta possessio*: "It is the complete possession of an endless life all at once."

So that it is distinguished from all other durations whatsoever:

(1) In that other durations have had their beginnings: for all things were created either in time, or with time; but eternity was before all time, and shall be after it.

(2) In that all temporal durations are successive, measured by the motions of heavenly bodies, by years, days, and hours; but eternity is permanent: it is but one abiding instant, and hath no parts following one after another; and, though it comprehends all time within its infinite circle, yet it doth not move along with time: for, as rivers are contained within their banks and flow along by them part after part, without any motion of the banks themselves; so time is contained within eternity, and flows along in it without any motion or succession of eternity itself.

This I confess is hard, if not altogether impossible, to be formed into an idea: yet conceiving reason will infallibly demonstrate that being, which neither hath beginning nor end, can have no succession in its duration: for wherever there is succession there must needs be a priority; and wherever there is a priority, there must needs be a beginning. And if eternity did consist and were made up of such parts as are equal and commensurate to our years and days, it must needs follow, that these parts themselves must be infinite: for if they be but finite, we shall come to a beginning, which is not to be granted in eternity: and if they be infinite, then in eternity there must be as many millions of years as of minutes, and consequently a minute would be equal to a million of years; yea, the least part of a minute would be equal to it, which is grossly absurd.

But I shall not detain you with these philosophical speculations. Only, when we say that God is from everlasting to everlasting, we ought not to conceive that there is any succession in his duration; that he grows older, or that he hath continued longer this day than he was yesterday. For though, when we speak of God, we are forced to use such expressions, and denote succession in his being, as that he was from everlasting, and that he shall be to everlasting; yet to say that God was, or that he shall be, is only allowable by reason of the penury of our conceptions: but, in strict propriety, these are derogatory to him; for God neither was nor shall be, but only is and enjoys his eternal essence immutably and unsuccessively. And, therefore, when Moses demanded his Name, that he might inform the Israelites who that God was that would take pity of their sufferings, he tells him, thou shalt say unto them, I AM hath sent me unto you: *Exod. 3:14*. And this, indeed, is the best and fittest expression of his eternity and unchangeableness. Yea, and the Scripture hath given us one more high and lofty expression of it: *Ps. 90:4*. A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday, when it is past. What is yesterday to this day? but a mere nothing. So a thousand years, yea, all the thousand years, and all the time that ever the orbs of heaven shall spin out to the world, is all to God but as yesterday when it is past: he lives not by it, nor is his Being measured

out by days or years; but it is a perpetual NOW, a standing moment, an indivisible and permanent sistent with eternity and an infinite duration, that there should be any thing past, or any thing to come in it: for what is already past cannot be infinite, because it is already ended; and what is to come cannot be eternal, because there was something going before it. And from hence it appears, that a duration which is eternal, must be without beginning, without end, and without any succession of parts.

2. Now, that God is thus eternal, appears both from clear evidence of Scripture, and invincible demonstrations of Reason itself.

(1) The Scripture bears abundant witness to the truth of this attribute.

Ps. 102:25, 26, 27. The heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish; but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old, like a garment: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end. Ps. 90:2. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. Is. 43:10. Before me there was no God formed; neither shall there be after me. 1 Tim. 1:17. Now unto the King eternal, and immortal, the only wise God, be honour and glory. But I cannot stand to cite all the testimonies that might be alledged.

(2) The eternity of God may be demonstrated by clear and irrefragable Reason.

And that I shall give you, in these several gradations.

[1] It is absolutely necessary, that there be some First Cause of all things that are made, which is not itself made or produced by any.

For the series of causes is not infinite: otherwise no effect could be produced; since what is infinite cannot be passed through. And if all beings, that are, are caused by some pre-existent being, then there is not, nor ever was a being, before which there was not another: and so

this gross absurdity will follow, That, before there was a being, there was a being, which is a contradiction. Therefore we must necessarily rest in some First Cause, from which all things have their origin, and is itself caused by no other.

[2] This First Cause of all is God.

For, whatsoever is the first cause of all things, must needs be almighty, in that it produceth them; and all-wise, in that it governs and maintains them: and incomprehensible; for that being, which hath no cause, cannot be perfectly known, since a perfect and comprehensive knowledge of things is derived only from the knowledge of the causes of them. Now whatsoever is Almighty, All-wise, and Incomprehensible, is that God, whom we adore.

[3] God being the First Cause of all things, and not produced himself by any other pre-existent being, it is impossible that there should be any time wherein he was not.

For, that, which once was not, either shall never be, or must be made. And, therefore, it being wholly inconsistent with the notion of a first cause to be made or produced, it clearly follows, that we can never conceive a time wherein God was not.

Hence it appears that God is eternal, *à parte ante*, or from everlasting.

And that he is also eternal *à parte post*, or to everlasting, appears,

[4] Because, that, which hath no beginning of its duration, can have no end of it.

For the First Cause of all not depending upon any for the production of its being, can depend upon none for the continuation of it; and, therefore, of necessity, must exist to all eternity.

And thus you see how much reason alone can speak for the Eternity of God. The demonstrations, which I have now given you, are so clear and perspicuous, that would those atheistical spirits, who acknowledge no God but their reason, duly ponder the force of them, they would, even by their deified reason, be enforced to acknowledge the Living and Eternal God, whom we adore.

Possibly, to some, these things may seem difficult: to others, they may seem needless; because we all readily acknowledge the eternity of God: but, certainly, if ever there were need to confirm the Doctrines and Articles of Faith by arguments drawn from the principles of reason, it is now, in these days of ours, wherein Atheism hath gotten ground and credit; and instant without flux or vicissitude. Indeed, it is wholly inconit is looked upon as a sign of a pregnant wit and mature and deep judgment, daringly to dispute against the being and attributes of God, and whatsoever is most sacred and venerable in religion.

But, certainly, if there be reason in any thing, there is reason to believe the existence and perfection of the Deity: not only from the oracles of the Scripture, which are enough to satisfy a Christian; but from the dictates also of natural light, and the evidence that reason brings in: which are so cogent and demonstrative, that he, that will notwithstanding be an Atheist, must also be irrational: and whosoever will say in his heart, There is no God, or that God is not eternal, or that God is not infinitely perfect, we may well say of him, as the Psalmist doth, that he is a fool: The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God: Ps. 14:1.

And thus I have shewed unto you what Eternity is, in its proper notion; and have evinced, likewise, that God is, in the strictest sense, Eternal.

(3) And now, before I come to the Third thing propounded, let us here make some few Practical Reflections upon this Eternity of God.

[1] Glorify this inconceivable and glorious attribute. Extol and venerate it, with your highest thoughts and lowest prostrations; sending your adoring thoughts as far into the eternity of God, as possible a human and finite understanding can dart them. For, though eternity be such a deep as can never be fathomed, since it hath no bottom: yet it is sweet and delightful, to lose ourselves and be swallowed up in this abyss of being. Those prospects are most pleasant to the eye, that have nothing to bound them; no limits to restrain the sight in its free range: so it is the most pleasant prospect to the mind, to contemplate such an object where there can be no boundaries set to our apprehensions; and where we can see no farther, not for want of object, but for want of sight.

[2] Is God eternal, from everlasting to everlasting? Let us leave then the care of all future events unto him; for he is the same unchangeable God: and, although we be but of yesterday, and may not be to-morrow, and when we die, then all our thoughts perish with us; yet the Everlasting God can and will order all affairs for his glory, and carry on our purposes if they be conformable unto his. We, oftentimes, are anxious and solicitous about what may happen after our decease, either to the world, or to those we love best in it; but let us commit this care to God: he ever lives, and hath the same ever Infinite Power and Infinite Wisdom, to dispose of all events as it shall please him. Let us, therefore, cast these burdens upon him, who shall still survive, as a father for our children, as a husband to provide for our widows, as a king and governor to provide for our country, as the universal lord and monarch to provide for the affairs of the whole world, according to the all-wise maxims of his eternal counsels.

[3] Is God eternal? Why then should we not give unto him the same honour, respect, and service, that his Saints have done in former ages and generations? He is still the same God; his holiness, and his justice, and his sovereignty still the same. And, if the consideration of these his attributes had such a mighty influence upon the Saints of former times, to engage them to a strict and holy life, why should

they not now have the like influence upon us? He is the Lord: he changeth not; and, therefore, as absolutely as he required obedience from them, so absolutely now doth he require it from us. But, the truth is, we live, as if God were grown old; as if his justice were now out of date, or his power decrepit: we live, as if there were decays in the Deity; yea, indeed, as if there were no God in the world, to take notice of and punish our sins. Certainly, that God, who once lived to denounce threatenings, still lives to execute them. He is the same holy, the same powerful, the same just God that ever he was. Why then should not we give him the same honour, and respect, and service? Why should we not love and fear him, as the Saints of old have done: since we have the same God, whom they worshipped; and a God, who requires from us the same duties and observances?

3. Let us now proceed to the Third and last thing propounded, which was to shew you what encouragement our faith may have from this attribute of God, Eternity, to expect the grant of those good things, which we pray for. For our Saviour hath taught us to use this, as a plea with God in our prayers. For thine is the kingdom, &c. for ever.

And, indeed, this encouragement is great and manifold. For hence we may, with confidence, rely upon God, for merciful supplies in all our wants, for deliverance in all our dangers, for supports under all our troubles, and for comfort under all our sorrows, because he is eternal; and therefore the same God, who hath, heretofore in all ages of the world, done great things for all those who trust in him. And therefore the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, which were a forcible plea with God in former times, a plea to which he could deny nothing when urged in faith, have still the same efficacy and validity now: for these, and all other of God's attributes, are his for ever.

Therefore, O Christian, now lay hold on God's strength; and plead with him what he hath done for his children in former ages: how he hath forgiven the penitent, revived the contrite, restored joy and salvation to dejected and despondent spirits: how he hath wrought for the sanctification of his great Name: by what wonderful

providences and wise methods he hath established and enlarged his kingdom: how he hath strengthened the weak hands and feeble knees; and made those, who were without might, able, by his grace, to perform the hardest duties in fulfilling his will and commandments: how he hath provided for all their necessities, rebuked the temptations of the Wicked One, and kept them in the world from the evil of the world. And then urge: Lord, thou art still the same God, eternal in thy essence, immutable in thy attributes: thy power, thy wisdom, and thy mercy are the same that ever they were, and therefore vouchsafe unto us the same favour.

This plea offers a holy violence to heaven; a violence, that is pleasing and acceptable unto God, which he will not, he cannot resist. If we endeavour to be of the same dispositions and affections with the Saints of old, we may be sure to obtain of God's hands the same mercy and salvation. See how Asaph instructs the Church, to make use of the memorials of God's former loving-kindnesses, and the great and wonderful works that he had wrought for their fathers: Ps. 78:4, 6, 7. We will shew to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done: that one generation may declare them to another; that they might set their hope in God.

And, therefore, the consideration of the eternity and unchangeableness of God is of vast and infinite comfort; and a mighty advantage for the strengthening our faith, in pleading with God for the same mercies, which he hath formerly bestowed upon others, because he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

And thus I have finished the Doxology: and therein considered the four glorious attributes ascribed unto God in it; his Sovereignty, his Omnipotence, his Excellency, and his Eternity.

CONCLUSION

IV. There remains but one thing more to be spoken of in this Prayer, and that is the CONCLUSION and RATIFICATION of all, in that short particle, Amen.

Of this I shall speak but very briefly, and so shut up this whole subject.

This word, Amen, is sometimes prefixed before a speech, and sometimes affixed after it.

First. When it is prefixed before, it is assertory: and so we find it very often in the Evangelists. For wheresoever our Saviour useth the word Verily, it is no other but Amen. Verily, verily I say unto thee: i. e. Amen, amen, I say unto thee; which is a vehement assertion of the truth and necessity of what he speaks. And our Saviour useth it to gain the more attention and belief to what he desires: thus, John 3:5. Amen, amen, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. So, John 16:23. Amen, amen, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you: and so, in many other places in the Evangelists. How backward are we to believe, since our infidelity is such, that it constraineth the Son of God, who is truth itself, to use asseverations and protestations to win our assent unto him!

Secondly. As this particle, Amen, used in the beginning of a speech, is assertory of the undoubted truth of it: so, when it is subjoined and used at the end of it, it is precatory; and signifies our earnest desire to have our prayers heard and our petitions granted: Ps. 41:13. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen, and amen. Ps. 72:19. Let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and amen. Ps. 106:48. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen.

In the former sense of the words, as it is prefixed to a speech, it signifies so it is: in this latter, as it is added to a petition or request, it

signifies so be it.

Now this teacheth us to put up all our petitions,

First. With understanding: duly weighing and considering what it is we ask of God. For when we use vain and insignificant babbling, how can we seal and close them up with a hearty Amen? And this condemns the mockery of the Papists; who, because God understands what is uttered in a language to them unknown, think that they may lawfully pray to him in a tongue which they themselves understand not. But, with what zeal, with what affection, can they close up such prayers with an Amen? This is like setting a seal to an instrument, which they know not what it contains; and is expressly condemned by the Apostle: 1 Cor. 14:16. How shall he, that occupieth the room of the unlearned, say Amen, at thy giving of thanks? seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest.

Secondly. It teacheth us to present all our requests to the Throne of Grace, with fervent zeal and affection. Amen is a wing to our prayers: it is the bow, that shoots them up to heaven. And, although every petition, as we utter them before God, should be accompanied with an earnest and hearty desire to have them heard and granted; yet, at the close of them all, we are to redouble and repeat this our desire in the word Amen. Wherein we do, as it were, briefly and succinctly pray over again all that we had prayed before; and, in one word, beg of God, that he would give us all that we had before asked of him.

And, therefore, whether we pray ourselves, or join in prayers with others and make their petitions ours, we ought to attest our understanding of, our assent unto, and our earnest desires after the mercies that are begged by sealing up the prayers with an Amen.

And, certainly, it would be a very beseeming thing, if Amens were audible and sounding: unless we are ashamed to be thought to pray, when others pray; and to make use of others' expressions, to present our petitions. When we come to the public worship, we are not to

look upon the minister only as praying for the people; but he is the people's mouth unto God: and it is or ought to be the prayer of the whole congregation which he presents. They pray with him, and by him; and every petition, that he makes to God, ought to be ratified with an Amen sent from our very hearts: which if we sincerely and affectionately perform, we have abundant assurance, that what is confirmed by so many suffrages on earth, shall likewise be confirmed by our Father which is in heaven. And how beautiful, how becoming, would this be, when the whole Church shall thus conspire together in their requests! St. Jerome tells us, it was the custom in his days, to close up every prayer with such an unanimous consent, that their Amens rung and echoed in the Church; and sounded like the fall of waters, or the noise of thunder. This would be a testimony of our hearty consent to the things we pray for. And, if any two, that shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, shall have it granted them, as our Saviour hath promised, Mat. 18:19 then, certainly, the joint prayers of a whole multitude of Christians must needs have a kind of Omnipotency in them, and be able to do any thing with God.

And thus I have, with God's assistance, given you a brief Exposition of this most Excellent Prayer of our Saviour. The Lord sanctify it unto you; and make it a means to help you to pray with more understanding, with stronger faith, and with greater fervency!

THE END OF THE LARGER EXPOSITION.

A CATECHISTICAL EXPOSITION

ON THE LORD'S PRAYER,

BY WAY OF QUESTION AND ANSWER

BY THE RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,

EZEKIEL, LORD BISHOP OF DERRY;

By which he examined the Youth each Lord's-Day, during the whole time he preached upon the Lord's Prayer.

Quest. IS the Lord's Prayer a Form of Prayer, or only a Pattern for Prayer?

Answ. It is both. That it is to be used as a Form, appears, Luke 11:2. When ye pray, say, Our Father, which art in heaven, &c. That it is a Pattern, Mat. 6:9. After this manner, therefore, pray ye: Our Father, which art in heaven, &c.

Q. What are the Parts of this prayer?

A. They are Four.

1. The Preface, or Introduction.
2. The Petitions and Requests.
3. The Doxolgy, or Praise-giving.
4. The Conclusion and Ratification.

Q. What is the Preface to this prayer?

A. "Our Father, which art in Heaven."

Q. What observe you from it?

A. That, in the beginning of our prayers, we ought seriously to consider and reverently to express the glorious attributes of God, as an excellent means to compose us into a holy fear of his Divine Majesty.

Q. How many are the Petitions contained in this prayer?

A. Six: whereof the three first respect God's glory, and the three last our own good.

Q. What learn you from this Order and Method?

A. That we ought first to seek God's glory, before any interests and concerns of our own.

Q. How are those petitions divided, which immediately concern the glory of God?

A. In the first of them, we pray that God may be glorified; in the other two, for the means whereby he is glorified.

Q. How divide you those petitions, which concern our own good?

A. One relates to our temporal, the other two to our spiritual good.

Q. What observe you, from placing the petition for our temporal good, in the midst of this prayer?

A. That we are only to bait at the world, in our passage to heaven; and only refresh ourselves with our daily bread, in our way and journey thither.

Q. What are the petitions, which relate to our spiritual good?

A. They are two: one, whereby we beg the pardon of our sins; the other, whereby we beg deliverance from them.

Q. What ascribe you to God in the Doxology?

A. Four of his most glorious attributes.

1. His Sovereignty: Thine is the Kingdom.
2. His Omnipotence; and the Power.
3. His Excellency; and the Glory.
4. The Eternity and Unchangeableness of all these: they are thine for ever.

Q. What signifies that particle, "Amen," at the end of this prayer?

A. It signifies two things.

So be it: which notes our desire for the obtaining of what we ask.

So it shall be: which notes our assurance of being heard.

Q. What is the PREFACE to the Lord's Prayer?

A. "Our Father, which art in heaven."

Q. What doth this teach us?

A. That, in our entrance into prayer, we should seriously consider both the Mercy of God as he is our Father; and likewise his Majesty as he is in Heaven: that the one may beget in us filial boldness, and the other awful reverence; and, by the mixture of both, we may be kept from despair and presumption.

Q. In what respects may God be styled Father?

A. In Three especially.

1. In respect to the Eternal Generation of his Son: and so this title is proper only to the First Person of the Trinity.

2. In respect of Creation and Providence: and so he is the Father of All: Mal. 2:10, Have we not all one father? Hath not one God created us?

3. In respect of Regeneration and Adoption: and so he is the only Father of the Faithful: John 1:12, 13. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Rom. 8:15, 16. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again, to fear: but ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

Q. In what respects do we call God Father, in this prayer?

A. In the two last: as he hath created us and doth preserve us, and as he hath regenerated and adopted us.

Q. When ye style God, The Father, do ye mean only God the Father, the First Person of the Trinity?

A. No. For God, the First Person, is eminently called, The Father, not in respect of us, but in respect of Christ. In respect of us, the whole Trinity, both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is our Father which is in Heaven: Isaiah 9:6. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace: John 3:5. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Q. What is implied in this particule "Our," Our Father?

A. That God is the Father of all men. He is the Father of the wicked, by creation and providence; but especially of the godly, by regeneration and adoption.

Q. Is it proper, in our secret prayers to say, "Our Father?"

A. It is. For so we find: Dan. 9:17. Now, therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.

Q. What learn we, by styling God, "our Father?"

A. First, to esteem one another as brethren; since all partake of the same common nature; much more as we partake of the same especial grace: to interest one another in our prayers, and thereby maintain the Communion of Saints.

Q. But, since God is every where present, why hath our Saviour taught us to direct our prayers to our Father in Heaven?

A. 1. Because heaven is the most glorious place of God's residence; and therefore God is represented to us in heaven, to affect us with his glory and majesty.

2. Because God no where hears our prayers with acceptation, but only in heaven: for there only are they re-presented by Christ's intercession, which he makes in both natures.

Q. What learn ye, from our being commanded to direct our prayers to God in Heaven?

A. That we should so pray, as to pierce heaven; which cannot be done, by the strength and intention of our voice, but of our zeal and affection.

Q. Is the voice necessary in prayer?

A. It is, only upon Three accounts.

1. As that, which God requires should be employed in his service.
2. When, in secret, it may be a help to raise our affections; still keeping it within the bounds of decency and secrecy.
3. In our joining with others, it is a help likewise, to raise and quicken their affections.

Q. What is the FIRST PETITION of the Lord's Prayer?

A. "Hallowed be thy Name."

Q. What is here meant by the Name of God?

A. 1. God's Name is himself: Ps. 20:1. The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble: the name of the God of Jacob defend thee: and many other places.

2. The Name of God is any perfection ascribed unto him, whereby he hath made himself known unto us.

Q. What are the names of God?

A. His Titles and his Attributes.

Q. What are his Titles?

A. They are many: as Jehovah, which signifies being, and giving being; Creator, denoting his infinite power; Lord and King, denoting his authority and dominion; Father, signifying his care and goodness towards his creatures; Redeemer, noting his mercy and grace, in delivering them from temporal evils, and especially from eternal death.

Q. What are the Attributes of God?

A. They are of two sorts, either incommunicable or communicable.

Q. Which are his Incommunicable Attributes?

A. Such as are so proper to the Divine Essence, that they cannot, in any measure or resemblance, be ascribed to the creatures: such are Eternity, Immensity, Simplicity, and Immutability.

Q. What are his Communicable Attributes?

A. They are such as may, in some analogy and resemblance, be found in the creatures: as Holiness, Justice, Mercy, Truth, Wisdom, and Power.

Q. Since they are to be found in the creatures, how are they then the proper Names of God?

A. They are the proper Names of God, when they are applied to him free from all those imperfections, that attend them in the creatures.

Q. What are these Imperfections?

A. They are Three.

1. That all the perfections of the creatures, are not originally from themselves, but derivatively from God.
2. They are not infinite, but limited.
3. They are not unchangeable, but mutable.

Q. How then do these become the Names of God?

A. When we ascribe them unto God, as originally from himself, and infinitely and unchangeably in himself.

Q What is it to Hallow this name of God?

A. It signifies to make his Name Holy.

Q. How can God or his Name be made Holy?

A. Neither by dedication to holy uses, nor by infusion of holy habits; both which are frequently in Scripture called hallowing or sanctifying: but only by declaration of his glory and holiness.

Q. How do we hallow the Name of God by Declaration?

A. When, in our most reverent thoughts, we observe and admire the expressions of his attributes, and endeavour to set them forth to others, both in words and actions.

Q. What pray you for in this petition, "Hallowed be thy Name?"

A. For Three things in the general.

1. We beg such graces for ourselves, as may enable us to sanctify the Name of God.

Q. What are they especially?

A. Knowledge and understanding of his nature, will, and works: thankfulness for every mercy: patience under every affliction: faith in his word and promises; for, to believe God's Word gives glory to his Name: Rom. 4:20. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God: a holy and exemplary life, whereby we especially glorify God, and induce others to do so too: Mat. 5:16. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven: and, lastly, savoury and

well ordered speech; that we may not prophane the Name of God by oaths, or curses, or vain using it, but speak of him with all holy fear and reverence.

Q. What else do we beg of God in this petition?

A. 2. We beg that others also may receive grace, to enable them to sanctify his Name. And, 3, we beg that God would so overrule all things, that his glory may be promoted by them.

Q. What learn you from Christ's making this the first petition of his prayer?

A. 1. That the glory of God is to be preferred by us, before all other things whatsoever: John 12:27, 28. Now is my soul troubled: and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

2. That, in the beginning of our prayers, we ought to beg assistance from God, to present them, that his Name may be hallowed.

Q. What is the SECOND PETITION of the Lord's Prayer?

A. "Thy kingdom come."

Q. How manifold is the Kingdom of God?

A. It is twofold; either Universal, or else his Peculiar Kingdom.

Q. What is God's Universal Kingdom?

A. The whole world; both heaven and earth, and hell itself, and all things in them: Ps. 103:19. The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.

Q. How doth God exercise his dominion over this kingdom?

A. By the power of his Providence; disposing of all his creatures and all their actions, according to his will.

Q. But since wicked men are rebels against God, how doth he maintain his dominion over them?

A. Three ways.

1. In that they cannot sin without his permission.
2. In that he restrains them when he pleaseth.
3. In that he justly punisheth them for their sins; sometimes in this life, always in the next.

Q. What is God's Peculiar Kingdom?

A. His Kingdom of Grace, which is the Church; and that, either militant here on earth, or else triumphant in heaven.

Q. How is the Church Militant to be considered?

A. As it is either Visible or Invisible.

Q. What is the Visible Church of God here on earth?

A. It is a company of people, openly professing the truths that are necessary to salvation, and celebrating the ordinances appointed by Jesus Christ.

Q. What is the Universal Kingdom or Church of God?

A. It is a company of true believers, who have internal and invisible communion with God, by his Spirit and their faith.

Q. What observe you of both?

A. Its mixture and imperfection: for in the Visible Church, there is a great mixture of persons, the bad with the good: in the Invisible, there is a great mixture in persons, of evil with good, and sin with grace.

Q. You have formerly told us that the Church of Christ, in its progress, is the Church Militant, either Visible or Invisible; and that the Church of Christ, in its consummation, is the Church Triumphant. What is this Church Triumphant?

A. The general assembly of such glorious Angels, as never fell; and such glorified Saints, as are raised from their fall.

Q. What is that kingdom, which in this petition we pray may come?

A. Not the Universal Kingdom of God, which is the world; for his dominion therein is always the same: but only the Peculiar Kingdom, which is his Church; and more especially that part of it, which is militant on earth.

Q. In what respects may God's kingdom be said to come?

A. In Three.

1. In respect of the means of grace and salvation; which are the Word and Sacraments: for where these are dispensed, there God's kingdom is erected.

2. In respect of the efficacy of this means in the conversion of sinners; whereby they are brought into the invisible kingdom of Christ.

3. In respect of the perfection of this kingdom: for then God's kingdom comes, when the saints' graces are increased; when their souls are received into heaven; and when both souls and bodies are consummated in glory.

Q. What do we pray for, when we say, "Thy kingdom come?"

A. 1. That God would plant his Church where it is not: that all the kingdoms of the earth may become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ.

2. That his ordinances may be purely and powerfully administered; his word truly preached, which is the law of his kingdom; and his sacraments duly dispensed, which are the seals of it.

3. That God would send into his Church able and faithful Ministers, to be faithful stewards of the mysteries of the Gospel.

4. That the Ministry of the Word may be successful to the conversion of those that hear it.

5. That all the Churches of Christ may be kept from error, schism, superstition, and idolatry; and that true doctrine and due discipline may be continued in them, to the end of the world.

Q. But may we not pray also for the Church Triumphant in heaven?

A. We may, for the fulfilling of what is promised.

1. That the number of them may be completed.

2. That their persons may be completed. That the bodies of those saints, which now sleep in the dust, may be raised, united to their souls, and both made eternally glorious in the kingdom of heaven.

Q. Is not this praying for the dead; so justly condemned of popish superstition?

A. No: for we pray not for another state, as the Papists do, when they pray for souls to be delivered out of purgatory; but we pray for the perfection of the same state, in which the souls of the faithful already are: we pray not for their release out of torments, but for a joyful resurrection, which both they and we expect; and whatsoever may be the object of our faith and hope, may well be the subject of our prayers.

Q. Which is the THIRD PETITION?

A. "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

Q. How is the will of God distinguished?

A. Into the Will of his Purpose, or the Will of his Precept; or into his Secret and Revealed Will.

Q. What is the Will of God's Purpose?

A. His eternal counsels and decrees, whereby he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

Q. What is the Will of God's Precept?

A. His holy laws, contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; wherein he hath revealed to us the duties we ought to perform for the obtaining of eternal life.

Q. How do these two wills differ?

A. 1. In that there are many things, which God wills by his Will of Purpose, that he hath not willed by his Will of Precept: for God commands nothing, but what is holy; yet he purposeth to permit many things, that are evil.

2. In that we may effectually resist his Will of Precept, so as to hinder the accomplishment of it, as we do whensoever we sin:

but we cannot resist the Will of God's Purpose, though, many times, to endeavour it, is our indispensable duty.

Q. Ought not the will of the Creature to be conformed to the will of God in all things?

A. Yes, to the Will of his Precept; for that alone is the rule of our obedience: but in all things to conform to the Will of his Purpose may involve us in the greatest guilt: Acts 2:23. Being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.

Q. Is there not then a manifest repugnance between God's Will of Purpose and of Precept?

A. No: for the object of God's Will of Purpose is event; but of his Will of Precept, duty; and it is no contradiction for God to will, or permit that to be, which he hath willed or commanded us not to do.

Q. Which of these do we pray may be done?

A. We especially and absolutely pray, that the Will of God's Precept may be done in earth as it is in heaven.

Q. What considerations may excite us to be earnest in this request?

A. 1. Because there is a great reluctancy in our corrupt nature against the holy will of God; therefore we ought earnestly to pray, that he, by his grace, would subdue it.

2. Because the glory of God is deeply concerned in doing his will; for, by this, we own his sovereignty, and our subjection to his laws and kingdom.

3. Because our own interest is deeply concerned in it; for it is only by doing his will that we can inherit the promises: Rev. 22:14. Blessed are they, that do his commandments.

Q. Ought we not absolutely to pray, that God's Will of Purpose may be done?

A. No: and that, because many things are brought to pass by this will, which we ought to pray against; as temporal evils, and the permission of sin.

Q. How then do the Saints in Scripture pray for the accomplishment of this will of God? as in 1 Sam. 3:18. "And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good:" 2 Sam 15:26. "But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him:" Acts 21:14. "And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done." And our Saviour, Luke 22:42. "Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done."

A. These are not so much prayers, as declarations of their submission unto and patience under the hand of God.

Q. May we not pray at all, that God's Will of Purpose may be done?

A. Yes: if it is for temporal, or spiritual, or eternal blessings on ourselves or others.

Q. What force doth the particle THY carry in it, when we pray, "thy will be done?"

A. It may be taken either emphatically or exclusively.

1. It signifies that God's will ought to be preferred above and before all others: Acts 4:19. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye: both because it is most sovereign, and because it is most holy and perfect; so that we act most like men, when we act most like Christians.

2. It signifies exclusively, that God's Will, and not our own, may be done: for ours being carnal and corrupt, we pray for the subduing of it to his.

Q. What mean you by praying that God's Will be done in earth?

A. 1. I pray that it may be done by myself, and by all others living on the earth: Psal. 67:2. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.

2. We pray that we may improve the few days of this mortal life, in the service of God; for there is no device nor operation in the grave.

Q. Having given this account of the petition, in the Matter of it, what is next observable?

A. The Proportion of it: "as it is in heaven."

Q. But is it not impossible to do the will of God in earth, as it is in heaven; where the holy angels do perfectly perform it?

A. It is, as to the equality of perfection; but not, as to the similitude and proportion of our endeavours after it: for we are commanded to be holy as God is holy, and perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect: Mat. 5:48. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect: which command we obey, when we seriously endeavour it.

Q. How then is the will of God done in heaven?

A. 1. Their obedience is absolutely perfect, both as to parts and degrees; that is to say, they obey all God's will enjoined them, and that with all their might: and after this perfection we ought to strive, and in this petition to pray for a greater measure of it.

2. Their obedience is cheerful, not extorted by fears nor sufferings.

3. They do the will of God, with zeal and ardency: Ps. 104:4. Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire.

4. They do it, with celerity and ready dispatch; and therefore the angels are often in Scripture described to have wings.

5. The will of God is done in heaven, with all possible prostration and reverence: Rev. 4:10. The four and twenty elders fall down before him, that sat on the throne; and worship him, that liveth for ever and ever; and cast their crowns before the throne.

6. The will of God is done in heaven, with constancy and perseverance: Rev. 7:15. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he, that sitteth on the throne, shall dwell among them.

And thus we ought to pray and endeavour, that we may do the will of God on earth.

Q. What learn you from this?

A. That we ought not to satisfy ourselves in comparing our obedience with other men's; as the boasting Pharisee did: but to take the examples for our holiness from heaven; and to endeavour to imitate the purity of angels, and the God of Angels. For St. Paul himself, when he prescribes his life as an example

for Christians, doth it only as he followed the pattern of Christ: 1 Cor. 11:1. Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

Q. We have already considered the Three First Petitions, which immediately relate to God's Glory: it remains now to treat of those, which immediately concern our own good. Which is the FIRST of them?

A. That, wherein we beg the good things of this present life, in these words, "Give us this day our daily bread."

Q. What is here meant by Bread?

A. All temporal and earthly blessings, that contribute, either to our being or well being: for bread being the most usual and useful support of life, it is often in Scripture put for all kind of provision necessary for natural life: Gen. 3:19. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground: for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shall thou return.

Q. What learn we hence?

A. That it is not below a spiritual Christian, to pray for temporal mercies: both because they are needful for us; Matt. 6:32. (for after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things: and God hath promised to bestow them; Phil. 4:19. But my Gods shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus.

Q. How ought we to pray for them?

A. Only conditionally, if it may consist with God's good pleasure to bestow them; otherwise, we do not pray, but invade: and if it may consist with our good to receive them, otherwise we ask a curse instead of a blessing.

Q. What learn you from the word "give?"

A. That God is the giver of every temporal mercy.

Q. How is God said to give us our daily bread?

A. I. By producing it, and bringing it to us: for though the chain of natural causes be never so long, yet God holds the first link of it in his own hand: Hosea 2:21, 22. And it shall come to pass in that day, will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens; and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel.

2. By blessing it to us, without which our daily bread can never nourish us: Deut. 8:3. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, (which thou knowest not, neither did thy fathers know) that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only; but by every word, that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord, doth man live.

Q. What mean you, when you pray for daily bread?

A. By this we pray, that God would bestow upon us daily, those mercies, which are sufficient for the day.

Q. What learn you hence?

A. That, as, in praying for bread, we pray for conveniencies; not for superfluities or delicacies: so, in our praying for daily bread, we pray for present supplies; not goods laid up for many years. Which teacheth us to moderate our cares and desires after earthly things, and to rest satisfied in God's providence and present blessings.

Q. May we not then carefully provide for the time to come, and the support of our dependents?

A. We may, and ought: but our care must be only prudent and provident; not perplexing and desponding.

Q. Why is that expression, "this day," added?

A. To shew us that every day we stand in need of supplies from God; and, therefore, should daily pray to receive them.

Q. Since we pray for daily bread, why is it called "our bread?"

A. To note, that we ought to use lawful means to acquire what we pray for.

Q. What pray you for in this petition?

A. 1. That God would give us the good things of this life, as the acquisitions of our lawful endeavours.

2. That he would bless the increase of what is lawfully ours.

3. That he would bestow upon us a spiritual right, in whatsoever we enjoy, through Jesus, the Heir of all Things.

4. We pray, that we may not desire nor covet what is another's.

5. We pray for life itself, that it may be prolonged, whilst God hath any service for us to do in this world.

6. For all the means, that may lawfully preserve our life and health.

7. That he would strengthen our faith and dependence on his Providence, who is the giver of all good.

8. That he would give us contentment in that portion of earthly blessings which he allots us.

Q. What is the FIFTH PETITION of the Lord's Prayer?

A. "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

Q. What things are observable in this petition?

A. The Order and the Matter of it.

Q. What observe you from the Order of it?.

A. That, after we have prayed for our daily bread, we are taught to pray for pardon of sin. Which method is most rational:

1. Because the guilt of sin, many times, withholds from us those temporal comforts, which we stand in need of: Isaiah 59:2. But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear,

2. Because, without pardon of sin, our temporal enjoyments are but snares and curses.

Q. What observe you in the Matter of this petition?

A. Two things: the petition itself; "Forgive us our debts:" and the condition, or proportion, or plea, and argument for obtaining this forgiveness; "As we forgive our debtors."

Q. What mean you here by Debts?

A. The same, which St. Luke, 11:4 calls Sins. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one, that is indebted to us.

Q. How stand we indebted to God?

A. We stand indebted to God, both as we are his Creatures, and as we are Offenders: on the former account, we owe God the Debt of Obedience; on the latter, the Debt of suffering Punishment.

Q. Which debt do we pray God to forgive?

A. The latter only: for the former is irremissibly due to our great Creator.

Q. How come we to be thus indebted unto God?

A. By the sentence of the Law, which condemneth every transgressor of it, to undergo the penalty it threatens; which penalty is all manner of woes and curses, and everlasting death: Gal. 3:10. Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things, which are written in the Book of the Law, to do them: Rom. 6:23. For the wages of sin is death: Ezek. 18:4. The soul, that sinneth, it shall die.

Q. Since the suffering of these is the debt we owe to divine Justice, why say you that sin is that debt?

A. Because sin alone is the meritorious cause of these; and we owe the suffering of them, only as we are sinners.

Q. Are there no sins venial in their own nature, so as not to deserve eternal damnation?

A. No; not the least: for the wages of every sin is death. All therefore are mortal in their own nature; and all are venial, through the mercy of God in the merits of Christ, excepting only the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Q. Can we no way pay off these debts, so as to satisfy the justice of God?

A. No: for neither can we do it by obedience, nor yet by sufferings. Not by the duties of obedience: for these are a debt we owe to God's holiness and sovereignty; and therefore cannot pay the debts we owe to his justice, and we cannot pay debts by debts. Not by suffering: for sin, being an infinite evil, must be

punished with an infinite punishment; but we cannot suffer a punishment infinite in degrees, therefore it must be infinite in duration: so that the damned in hell shall never be able to say, it is finished.

Q. How then may we hope to be acquitted of our numberless debts?

A. Only through the free mercy and grace of God, pardoning them in Jesus Christ, and therefore, we pray, Forgive us our debts.

Q. What is pardon, or forgiveness if sin?

A. It is the removal of the guilt of sin.

Q. What is the guilt of sin?

A. The guilt of sin is either the intrinsical desert of punishment; or, else, an obnoxiousness and liableness to it, through God's designation of the sinner to undergo it.

Q. Doth pardon of sin remove both these guilts?

A. No, it removes not the former; for still the sins of those, who are pardoned, do, in themselves, deserve eternal death. But it removes the latter: viz. it takes away our appointment unto death: 2 Sam. 12:13 and David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin: thou shalt not die.

Q. How is it consistent with the justice of God, to pardon offenders without punishment?

A. Though believers are not personally appointed to punishment, yet mystically they are: which punishment they

have already suffered in Christ, their Surety; with whom they are made one by faith.

Q. To whom is this prayer for pardon of sin directed?

A. To God only; whose royal prerogative it is, to forgive sins: Isa. 43:25. I, even I, am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins: Mark 2:7. Who can forgive sins, but God only?

Q. Have not the ministers of the gospel power to forgive sins: according to that of St. John 20:23. "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted?"

A. They have a ministerial and declarative power, as officers; not an authoritative and judicial power, as sovereigns. As the prince only pardons, the herald proclaims it: so God alone, by the prerogative of his grace, grants pardon; the Minister, by his office, publisheth it to all that repent and believe.

Q. What then must we judge of that absolute and plenary power, which the Pope assumes of pardoning sins?

A. That it proves him to be Antichrist, in exalting himself above God: 2 Thess. 2:4. Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped: so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God: for whosoever can forgive wrongs done against another must be superior to him; and have authority to cause the person offended to surcease the prosecution, and sit down by the wronged him.

Q. If God only can forgive sins, how then are we bound to forgive those who trespass against us?

A. We ought to forgive them, so far forth as they have wronged us: but we cannot forgive the wrong they have done to God in

wronging us; but must leave them to his mercy, and their repentance.

Q. Since it is God's prerogative and glory to pardon sins, what inferences may we collect from hence?

A. 1. That our pardon is free and gratuitous; without respecting former deserts, or expecting future recompence.

2. That our pardon is full and complete: because it is an act of God within himself; whereas, what he works in us is, in this life, imperfect: nothing of guilt is left upon the soul, when God pardons it; though still there is something of filth left in it, when he sanctifies it. God does not pardon by halves, nor leave any guilt to be expiated by purgatory.

3. That, upon our faith and repentance, our sins, whether greater or less, fewer or more, shall be forgiven; for this makes no difference in infinite grace and mercy.

Q. But may not this encourage to continue in sin?

A. Many do so abuse it; but their damnation is sure and just: Deut. 29:19, 20. And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: the Lord will not spare him.

Q. You have formerly observed, that it is God alone who can forgive sins, and from thence inferred both the freeness and fulness of pardoning grace: what observe you farther?

A. 1. That, though God's pardoning grace be altogether freely bestowed, in respect of us, Isaiah 43:25. I, even I, am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins: yet, in respect of Christ's purchase, it is not free, but cost him the price of his blood: Heb. 9:22. And almost

all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. Mat. 26:29. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

2. That the obtaining of pardon is not free from the performance of conditions on our part.

Q. What are the conditions upon which pardon is granted?

A. They are two; faith and repentance: Acts 10:43. That, through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins: Acts 3:19. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.

Q. Is, therefore, a mere sorrow that we have sinned, a sufficient qualification for obtaining pardon?

A. No: for so Judas is said to repent: Matt. 27:3. Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders. But, as true repentance includes in it a sorrow of heart; so reformation of life and manners is always joined with a lively faith.

Q. Is pardon of sin an act only of God's mercy?

A. It is likewise an act of God's justice to pardon the sins of those, who perform the conditions of the covenant of grace.

Q. How prove you this?

A. Both by express Scripture: 1 Epistle of John 1:9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And, likewise, by Scripture-Reason: because believers, being made mystically one with Christ, therefore, their sins, being already punished in him their

Surety, and their debts paid by him, cannot be again justly punished in their own persons, nor demanded from them.

Q. Is pardon of sin our entire Justification?

A. No: but it is one principal part of it. For Justification consists both in remission of sins, and acceptation of our persons: the former depends upon Christ's passive, the other upon his active obedience: his satisfaction, applied by faith, makes us accounted guiltless of death, and his obedience worthy of life; both which complete our justification: Eph. 1:6, 7. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved: in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

Q. We have thus considered the petition, "Forgive us our debts:" what remains further considerable?

A. The condition upon which we ask it; or the plea we urge for obtaining it: As we forgive our debtors.

Q. Who are meant here by Debtors?

A. Other men.

Q. How are men debtors one to another?

A. Either, 1. By owing them a Debt of Duty: and, thus, all men are mutually debtors to one another, superiors to inferiors, and inferiors to superiors; and equals owe one another love, respect, and kindness.

2. By owing them a Debt of Satisfaction, for injuries and wrongs done to others.

Q. Which of these debts is here meant?

A. The latter only: for we are bound to forgive those, who owe us satisfaction and reparation.

Q. What learn you from hence, that those, who have wronged others, are called their Debtors?

A. That they, who, in any kind, wrong others, are obliged to make them satisfaction: if in their good names, by acknowledging the offence, and stopping slanderous reports: if in their goods and estates, by a full restitution.

Q. Is restitution necessary to the obtaining of pardon?

A. It is: for unjust detainure is as evil, as unjust seisure; and it is a continued theft: and our repentance can never be true, while we continue in the sin we seem to repent of; and, without true repentance, there can be no pardon or salvation.

Q. But what if those we have wronged be since dead?

A. We ought to make restitution to those, to whom, it is to be supposed, what we have detained would have descended.

Q. If none such can be found, what must we then do?

A. Then God's right takes place, as the Universal Lord of All; and we are obliged to restore it to him: that is, to his servants and to his family, in the works of piety and charity.

Q. We have already considered the debtor's duty; which is to make satisfaction and restitution: what is the duty of the creditor or person wronged?

A. To forgive his debtors: for we pray that God would forgive us, AS we forgive them.

Q. Wherein doth this forgiveness consist?

A. In two things.

1. In abstaining from the outward acts of revenge upon them.

2. In the inward frame and temper of our hearts towards them; bearing them no grudge nor ill-will; but being as much in charity with them, as though they had never offended us.

Q. Must we then sit quiet under every petulant wrong, that is done us; and so tempt others to the sport of abusing us?

A. Private revenge is, in no case whatsoever, to be allowed: Rom. 12:19. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves; but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine: I will repay, saith the Lord. Revenge only belongs to God, and the magistrate to whom he hath delegated it: Rom. 13:4. For he is the minister of God; a revenger, to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

Q. But if the wrong done us tend to the loss of our necessary subsistence or our life, may we not resist it, and require satisfaction for it?

A. We may: but it must be only in a public and legal way: and, even then, we must harbour no malice against them; but be ready to perform all the offices of charity and kindness, within our power.

Q. May we not prosecute those, who have wronged us, unless the injury be intolerable?

A. We may, when we cannot pass by the wrongs without wronging others: but where the injuries are supportable, and we may forgive them without injuring of others, the law of Christianity commands us so to do: Mat. 5:39. But I say unto

you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. Where the scope of our Saviour is, that we should rather be willing to suffer a second injury, than to revenge the first in matters tolerable.

Q. But since this is a duty so contrary to the revengeful humour of flesh and blood, what arguments can you produce to persuade to the practice of it?

A. First. That it is far more honourable to forgive a wrong, than to revenge it.

Q. How does that appear?

A. 1. Because, by pardoning wrongs, we act like God; and imitate him in that attribute, wherein he chiefly glories: Exod. 34:6. The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.

2. Because, to pardon, is always the act of a superior; and a Christian expresseth the royalty of his calling, by issuing out of pardons.

Q. What is the Second motive?

A. Consider how many offences God hath forgiven us; though the distance between him and us is infinitely greater, than can be only between fellow-creatures; and though our offences against him are infinitely more and greater, than those which we are to forgive to others: ours against him are but a few pence.*

Q. Which is the Third motive to enforce this duty?

A. The consideration of that binding particle, AS: forgive us, as we forgive others.

Q. Wherein lies the force of this?

A. By this we seal the guilt of our sins upon our own souls, unless we be ready and willing to forgive others: and so we turn our prayers, not only into sin, but into a direful tremendous curse.

Q. Which is the SIXTH and last PETITION of the Lord's Prayer?

A. "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

Q. What learn you from the method of this petition?

A. In that it immediately follows the petition, wherein we prayed for pardon of sin, I learn that it should be our care, not only to seek for the pardon of past sins, but the prevention of future.

Q. How is this petition divided?

A. Into two branches: the one negative, Lead us not into temptation; the other positive, But deliver us from evil.

Q. What signifies the word Temptation?

A. It signifies proving or trying: which, sometimes, is done only by way of search and exploration; and, sometimes, is joined with suasion and inducement: so that temptations are either merely probatory; or else they are likewise suasive.

Q. How many sorts of temptations are there?

A. Five, in the general.

1. Whereby one man tempts another.
2. Whereby a man tempts himself.
3. Whereby we tempt God.
4. Whereby God tempts us.

5. Whereby the Devil tempts us.

Q. How is one man said to tempt another?

A. When either he persuades him to what is evil: Prov. 1:10. My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. Or, to do that, which may bring him into danger: Luke 20:23. Why tempt ye me?

Q. How is man said to tempt himself?

A. Two ways.

1. When he unnecessarily rusheth into danger, and ventures upon the next occasions of sinning.

2. When he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed: James 1:14. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

Q. How are we said to tempt God?

A. Two ways.

1. When we, by our sins, provoke him to take vengeance upon us: Ps. 95:8. Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness.

2. When we presumptuously try the Providence of God, having no warrant nor necessity to cast ourselves upon the extraordinary effects of it: Mat. 4:6, 7. And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down.... Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Q. How is God said to tempt us?

A. When, in the method of his Holy Providence, he brings us into such circumstances, as will discover either our graces or corruptions: Gen. 22:1, 2. And it came to pass, after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him.... Take now thy son ... and offer him for a burnt-offering, upon one of the mountains, which I will tell thee of: 2 Chr. 32:31. God left him, to try him; that he might know all that was in his heart.

Q. How doth the Devil tempt us?

A. Always by suasion; inducing us, by his art and subtlety, to the commission of evil.

Q. What temptations do we especially pray against in this petition?

A. Three sorts.

1. Such as proceed from our own lusts and corruption.
2. Such as proceed from other men's enticing us to evil, or ensnaring us to danger.
3. Such as proceed from the great tempter, the Devil.

Q. What learn we hence?

A. That it is a Christian's duty, not only to keep himself from sin, but also from temptations to sin.

Q. What reasons confirm this?

1. Because it is the sign of a rotten and corrupt heart, to be content to lie under a temptation, though it consents not to the sin. That soul is not chaste to God, that is well-pleased with solicitations to violate its duty.

2. Because, while a temptation dwells upon our hearts, we are in imminent danger of committing the sin to which we are tempted.

3. Because most temptations are not only temptations, but sins too, as all evil thoughts and desires: and, as long as these abide in us with any complacency and delight; so long are we in the actual commission of sin.

Q. How is God said to lead men into temptation?

A. Three ways.

1. When he providentially presents outward objects and occasions, which do solicit and draw forth our inward corruptions.

2. When he permits Satan, or wicked men, his instruments, to tempt us. And, in these two senses, there is no temptation whatsoever that befalls us, but God leads us into it.

3. When he withdraws the influences of his grace and Spirit from us, without which dereliction no temptation could prevail over us: 2 Chr. 32:31. God left him, to try him; that he might know all that was in his heart.

Q. What therefore do we pray for, when we pray, "Lead us not into temptation?"

A. We pray for Three things.

1. That God, by his Providence, would so order and dispose all the occurrences of our lives, as not to lay before us those objects; nor offer us those occasions, which might excite or call forth our inbred corruptions.

2. That he would not permit the Devil to assault us, nor any of his instruments.

3. That he would continue the influences of his grace unto us, to enable us to stand when we are tempted.

Q. For what ends doth God thus lead men into temptation?

A. For many wise and holy ends: especially Four.

1. To exercise and breath forth our graces; to teach us the wars of the Lord; to administer matter for our victory, and occasion for our crown and triumph.

2. To engage us to depend upon his help and assistance, and earnestly to implore divine succours and supplies.

3. To glorify his justice and his mercy: his justice, in giving up wicked men to the rages of temptations, to be hurried by them from sin to sin; punishing one iniquity with another, till, at last, he punisheth all in hell: and his mercy, in supporting his children under them, and delivering them out of all their temptations; making his strength perfect in their weakness: 2 Cor. 12:9. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.

4. That, by our victory over temptations, he may confound the malice of the Devil, and commend the excellency of his own ways and service: Job. 2:3. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?

Q. Which is the positive part of this petition?

A. "But deliver us from evil."

Q. What observe you from the order and connexion of this branch of the petition with the former?

A. I observe, that the best security against sin, is to be secured against temptations to sin.

Q. Are not strong temptations to sin, an excuse for sinning?

A. No: for the Devil can only persuade, he cannot constrain: for if he could compel, he would likewise justify: since there is no sin, where there is no liberty. All our sins are of our own free choice; and so, by consequence, is the eternal misery they expose unto: Hos. 13:9. O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself: but in me is thine help: John 5:40. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life: Mat. 23:37. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Q. Wherein consists the great danger of being tempted?

A. In the sympathy and suitableness, that are between temptations and our corrupt natures; whereby they are apt to excite our affections, and our affections will sway our actions.

Q. What mean you by the word Evil, when you pray, "Deliver us from evil?"

A. 1. Satan, whose stile it is to be the Evil, or the Wicked One: Mat. 13:19. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom and understandeth it not, then cometh the Wicked One, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart: 1 John 2:13, 14. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him, that is from the beginning.... I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the Wicked One. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him, that is from the beginning. I have

written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the Wicked One.

2. All other evils, whether they be of sin, or for sin; whether transgressions, or punishments; but especially sin, which is the greatest of all evils.

Q. Why call you sin the greatest of all evils?

A. Because it is so, both in its nature and consequents.

1. In its nature, it is wholly defect and irregularity; and that only thing, which God always hates, and never made.

2. Because all other evils are but the effects and consequents of sin; since the Devil could not hurt us but by sin, and no other evils befall us but for sin.

Q. What collect you hence?

A. That, in praying to be delivered from sin, we pray to be delivered from all evils whatsoever.

Q. What observe you from our Saviour's teaching us to direct our prayers to our Father in Heaven, that he would "deliver us from evil?"

A. I learn hence, that it is only the Almighty Power of God, that can keep us from sin.

Q. Whence doth that appear?

A. 1. From the consideration of the mighty advantages, that our great enemy, the Devil, hath against us.

2. From the consideration of the disadvantages we lie under, to oppose his temptations.

Q. What are his advantages, and our disadvantages?

A. He is a spirit; we are but flesh: he is wise and subtle; we, foolish and ignorant: he, long experienced; we, raw and unpractised: he is diligent and watchful; we, careless and negligent: he lays a close siege to us, without; and we betray ourselves, within.

Q. What ways doth God take to keep men from sin?

A. In the general Three.

1. He doth it by Restraining Providence.
2. By Common and Restraining Grace.
3. By Renewing and Sanctifying Grace.

Q. What are the methods of God's Providence, whereby he delivers men from the evil of sin?

A. They are manifold and various: but Five are most especially remarkable.

1. Sometimes, Providence cuts short their power, whereby they would be enabled to sin: thus God withered Jeroboam's hand, which he stretched forth against the prophet.
2. Sometimes, God cuts off their wicked instruments: either for counsel, as he did Ahithophel from Absalom; or else for execution, as he did the host of Sennacherib.
3. Sometimes, by raising up another opposite power, to withstand the sinner: thus, the rulers would have put Christ to death; but durst not, for fear of the people.

4. By casting in seasonable diversions: thus the passing-by of merchants, altered the patriarchs' resolution, from killing Joseph, to selling him.

5. Sometimes, God removes the object against which they intended to sin: thus he delivered David from Saul, and Peter from Herod.

Q. We have seen how God preserves men from sin, by his Restraining Providence: shew now how he doth it, by his Restraining Grace.

A. By Restraining Grace God deals with the very heart of a sinner: and, although he doth not change the habitual, yet he changeth the actual inclination of it; and takes away the desire of committing those sins, which are unmortified and reigning.

Q. To whom doth God vouchsafe this grace?

A. To many unregenerate persons. As he did to Esau and Abimelech.

Q. To what end doth he vouchsafe it?

A. That their lives may be more plausible, their gifts more serviceable, and their condemnation at last more tolerable.

Q. How doth God keep men from sin, by his Special Grace?

A. By exciting the inward principle and habit of grace implanted in his children, to the actual use and exercise of it.

Q. Is not inherent grace, alone, sufficient to keep the godly from sinning?

A. It is not, without the continual influence of God's Quickening Grace: 2 Cor. 12:7. There was given to me a thorn in the flesh,

the messenger of Satan, to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

Q. What are those graces, that God doth especially excite, to keep his children from sin?

A. They are Three: Faith, Fear, and Love.

Q. How doth faith keep them from sinning?

A. Many ways: but more especially, by Two.

1. As it lively represents unto us eternal rewards and punishments; and makes them as real, as they are certain: Heb. 11:1. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

2. As it represents unto us God to be the observer of our actions, who must hereafter be the judge of them: for by faith, we see him who is invisible.

Q. How doth the Fear of God keep men from sin?

A. By possessing our hearts with awful thoughts of his dread majesty, whose power is infinite, and whose justice is strict and impartial: Ps. 4:4. Stand in awe, and sin not.

Q. How doth the Love of God keep men from sin?

A. By working in them a holy ingenuity, and sympathy of affection with God; loving what he loves, and hating what he hates: and, therefore, those, who love God, will certainly hate iniquity: Ps. 97:10. Ye, that love the Lord, hate evil.

Q. What do we pray for in this part of the petition, "Deliver us from evil?"

A. We pray.

1. That, if it shall please God to lead us into temptation, yet he would not leave us under the power of temptation; but would make a way for us to escape, that we might be able to bear it.

2. That, if, at any time, temptations should prevail over us, God would not leave us under the power of sin; but raise us again by true repentance, that so we may, at last, be delivered from the great evil of obduration and impenitency.

3. That God would not only deliver us from gross and self-condemning sins, but from every evil way and work.

4. That he would be pleased to deliver us, not only from what is in itself sinful, but from all the occasions and appearances of evil.

Q. After the Petitions of the Lord's Prayer, what next followeth to be considered?

A. The DOXOLOGY or Praise, in these words, "For thine &c."

Q. Of what consisteth this Doxology?

A. Of Four of God's most glorious attributes: his Sovereignty, thine is the Kingdom; his Omnipotence, thine is the power; his Excellency, thine is the Glory; his Eternity, all these are thine for ever.

Q. What observe you in the Manner of our Saviour's ascribing these attributes to God?

A. 1. The eminency of them, intimated in the particle, the; the kingdom, the power, and the glory: signifying HIS, the highest and chiefest of all these. And,

2. The propriety of them, in the particle, thine; to note to us, that they are God's only originally, independently, and unchangeably.

Q. What observe you from the illative particle, "for;" when ye say, "for thine is the kingdom, &c.?"

A. This word carries in it the force of a reason; both why we should pray unto God, and why we may expect to be heard when we pray.

Q. How is it a reason for us to pray unto God?

A. We pray unto God, because he alone is able to relieve us: for his is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory for ever.

Q. How is it a reason for us to expect, that God should hear our prayers?

A. Many ways.

1. His is the Kingdom, and we are his subjects; and, therefore, we may depend on him, as our king, for help and protection.

2. His is the Power; and, therefore, he is able to do for us abundantly above what we are able to ask or think.

3. His is the Glory; and, therefore, what we ask for his honour and praise shall be granted us.

4. All these are his for ever; and, therefore, we may be assured, that, at no time, the prayer of faith shall be in vain.

Q. What observe you from our Saviour's teaching us to use these arguments and pleas in our prayers to God?

A. Two things.

1. In our prayers we ought to plead with God, by weighty and enforcing reasons.

2. That the most prevailing arguments in prayer are to be taken from the attributes of God.

Q. What benefit is there in using such reasons, since God cannot by them be moved to alter his purposes?

A. The stronger our reasons are to sue for mercies, the more fervent will our prayers be, and the more confirmed our faith.

Q. How doth the consideration of the Kingdom being God's confirm our faith that we shall obtain what we pray for?

A. Many ways.

1. The kingdom is God's: and, therefore, he will see that his name be hallowed in it; for he is a king jealous of his honour.

2. The kingdom is God's: therefore, he will take care for the establishment and enlargement of it; since it is his own interest and concern.

3. The kingdom is God's: and, therefore, he will look to be obeyed in it; without which, royalty is but pageantry.

4. The kingdom is God's: and, therefore, we may expect our daily bread and temporal accommodations; for it is a kingly office, to provide things necessary for subjects.

5. The kingdom is God's: and, therefore, we pray to him for pardon and forgiveness; since it is a royal prerogative, to forgive offenders.

6. The kingdom is God's: and, therefore, we may pray in faith, that he would deliver us from temptations, and the evils to which we are tempted; for one great end of government is, to protect the subjects from the assaults of their cruel enemies.

Q. Which is the Second Attribute ascribed unto God in the Doxology of the Lord's Prayer?

A. Power: in these words, and the Power.

Q. How is the Power of God distinguished?

A. Into his Absolute and his Ordinate Power.

Q. What call you the Absolute Power of God?

A. The Absolute Power of God is that, whereby he is simply able to produce whatsoever is possible to be, i. e. all things, which imply not contradiction.

Q. What call you God's Ordinate Power?

A. God's Ordinate Power is that, whereby he is able to produce those things, which, according to his will, shall come to pass,

Q. Why is it called God's Ordinate Power?

A. Because the effects of it are limited by the ordination of his wisdom and will: Ps. 115:3. But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he pleased: Ps. 135:6. Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.

Q. Is God's power in itself infinite?

A. It is: for his power is his essence.

Q. How doth it appear that God's power is infinite?

A. 1. By the works of creation: for it requires an infinite power to bring something out of nothing.

2. By the many miracles, which have been wrought in the World, above and contrary to the course of nature.

Q. How then have many men wrought miracles; as Moses, Elijah, and the Apostles?

A. They wrought them, not by any proper virtue of their own; but only as the moral instruments, at whose presence or intercession God was pleased to manifest his power, as a seal to that commission they had received from him.

Q. Is God's power infinite, likewise, in the common effects of nature?

A. It is: for it is no less power, that preserves and moves the creatures, than did at first create them.

Q. Is there nothing impossible with God?

A. Yes, there are several things, which God cannot do, because he his omnipotent.

Q. What are they?

A. Such as, in the general, the doing thereof would deny him to be God, or to be holy, or to be wise.

Q. What are they more particularly?

A. 1. God cannot do things, that are contradictory; or rather, such things cannot be done: as, to make the same thing to be and not to be, at the same time; or, that the same body should at once have quantity and extension in heaven, and no quantity nor

extension in the host, as the papists affirm of their breaden God: for this were contrary to his wisdom.

2. God cannot do anything, that may justly bring upon him the imputation of sin: for this were contrary to his holiness.

3. God cannot do anything, that may argue him mutable and inconstant: for this were contrary to his being: 2 Tim. 2:13. If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself: Heb. 6:18. That, by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie.

Q. Is it not a diminution of the power of God, that he cannot do those things?

A. No: for these things argue weakness and defect, not power.

Q. Why hath our Saviour taught us to subjoin this acknowledgment of the power of God to our petitions?

A. To encourage our faith; by considering, that whatsoever we ask, we ask it of a God who is able to give it us, yea, and to do for us abundantly above whatsoever we are able to ask or think.

Q. What is the Third Attribute ascribed to God in the Doxology?

A. Glory: in these words, and the Glory.

Q. What is Glory?

A. Glory is any perfection or excellency, that either is or deserves to be accompanied with fame and renown.

Q. How is God's glory distinguished?

A. Into his Essential and Declarative Glory.

Q. What is the Essential Glory of God?

A. All those attributes, which eternally and immutably belong unto the Divine Nature. So, holiness is his glory: Exod. 15:11. Glorious in holiness. His power is his glory: 2 Thes. 1:9. They shall be punished from, i. e. by, the glory of his power. His majesty is his glory: Ps. 145:5. I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty. His grace and mercy are his glory: Eph. 1:6. To the praise of the glory of his grace. And, from all these united, results the glory of his Name: Deut. 28:58, That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD.

Q. What is the Declarative Glory of God?

A. The manifestation of his attributes, so that they are observed to his praise and honour.

Q. What is it to glorify God?

A. To glorify God, is, to admire and celebrate the Divine Attributes, shining forth in those ways and works, wherein he is pleased to express them.

Q. Do we, by glorifying God, add anything to his glory?

A. We can neither add unto nor diminish from the Essential Glory of God; for his infinite perfections are the same for ever: but we may add to his Declarative Glory, by setting forth his attributes; and we detract from it, by hindering the manifestation of them.

Q. By what means doth God declare his glory?

A. By Three especially.

1. By his works: Ps. 19:1. The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament sheweth his handy-work.

2. By his word: which discovers to us those attributes, which we could never have known by the works of creation and providence; and, therefore, both Law and Gospel are said to be glorious: 2 Cor. 3:9. For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.

3. By his Son: who is the Brightness of his Glory: Heb. 1:3. Who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person: and in whom the perfections of the Godhead are most visibly displayed.

Q. Why doth our Saviour, in the Doxology, peculiarly appropriate glory unto God: "Thine is the glory?"

A. For Three reasons.

1. Because all that is excellent and glorious in the creatures, is in God infinitely more perfect than in them; being neither limited by his nature, nor allayed with contraries: 1 John 1:5. That God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

2. Because all glory, in respect of God, is but darkness and obscurity: Job 25:5. Behold, even to the moon, and it shineth not: yea, the stars are not pure in his sight.

3. Because all the excellencies and glories of creatures, serve only to set forth and declare the glory of God.

Q. Why hath our Saviour added the acknowledgment of God's glory, at the end of the petitions he hath taught us to present?

A. That the consideration thereof may be a means to strengthen our faith, for the obtaining those good things, which we pray for.

Q. How is the consideration of the glory of God an argument to strengthen our faith in prayer?

A. Many ways, according to the petitions we prefer.

1. The glory is God's: therefore, his Name shall be hallowed; for to sanctify the Name of God is to glorify him: Lev. 10:3. I will be sanctified in them, that come nigh me; and, before all the people, I will be glorified.

2. The glory is God's: and, therefore, his kingdom shall come; for where should a king be honoured, but in his kingdom?

3. The glory is God's: therefore, his will shall be done; for our obedience is the greatest glory we can give: John 15:8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit: so shall ye be my disciples.

4. The glory is God's: and, therefore, he will provide for us daily bread; for it is not God's honour, that any of his family should want things convenient for them: Exod. 16:7. And, in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the Lord.

5. The glory is God's: and, therefore, he will forgive our trespasses; for it is his honour and royalty to pardon penitent offenders: Prov. 19:11. And it is his glory to pass over a transgression: Eph. 1:6, 7. To the praise of the glory of his grace ... In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

6. The glory is God's: and, therefore, he will deliver us from the assaults of our enemies; for it is his honour to protect his subjects.

Q. What observe you from that particle, "for ever?"

A. That God and his attributes are eternal.

Q. What is Eternity?

A. Eternity is a duration, that hath neither beginning nor end, nor succession of parts: or, it is the complete possession of an endless life all at once.

Q. What collect you hence?

A. Two things.

1. The duration of God is not to be measured by days or years: and that he waxeth not older; neither hath continued longer this day, than from the beginning of time.

2. That, in strict propriety of speech, God only is: and that it is only allowable, for want of expressions, to say, that he either was or shall be: and therefore he calls his name, I am: Exod. 3:14. I AM, hath sent me unto you.

Q. How prove you that God is eternal?

A. Both by Scripture and Reason.

Q. What Scriptures prove the eternity of God?

A. Several: especially Psalm 102:25, 26, 27. Thou art the same and thy years shall have no end: Ps. 90:2. From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God: 1 Tim. 1:17. To the King eternal, immortal ... be honour and glory.

Q. How do you demonstrate the eternity of God by Reason?

A. There must, of necessity, be a First Cause of all things: but that, which is the First Cause of all things, cannot be made by any, and therefore is from everlasting; neither can it cease to be, because it is not dependent on any, and therefore must be to everlasting.

Q. What duties doth the serious consideration of God's eternity oblige us to?

A. 1. To venerate and adore so great and inconceivable an attribute.

2. To leave the care of all future events, whether concerning our own private or the public interests, to his eternal wisdom and providence, who for ever lives to mind them.

3. To give unto him the same honour, respect, and service, which his Saints have done in former generations.

Q. What encouragement hath our faith to expect the mercies we pray for, from the consideration of God's eternity?

A. That, because he is the same God, who, in all ages, hath heard the prayers of those who trust in him; therefore, we may be assured that, if we have the same dispositions and affections with the Saints of old, we shall obtain the same mercies and favours: Heb. 1:12. But thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

Q. What signifies that particle "Amen," which is the END and CLOSE of the Lord's Prayer?

A. As, in the beginning of a speech, it is assertory; and signifies, so it is: so, in the end of it, it is precatory; and signifies, so be it; which denotes our earnest desires to have our prayers heard and our petitions granted.

Q. What learn you from hence, that our Saviour hath taught us to conclude our prayers with "Amen?"

A. I learn Two things.

1. That we ought to pray with understanding; and, therefore, not in an unknown tongue: for who can say Amen, to what he understands not? 1 Cor. 14:16. How shall he, that occupieth the room of the unlearned, say Amen, at thy giving of thanks? seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest.

2. That all our prayers ought to be presented to God, with fervent zeal and affection: 1 Thes. 5:17. Pray without ceasing.

Q. What is prayer?

Prayer is an humble representation of our wants and desires to God, through the assistance of the Holy Ghost, in the Name of Christ, for things according to his will, with reference to his glory.

Q. What is it to pray by the Spirit, or by the assistance of the Holy Ghost?

A. To pray by the Spirit, is, to present our requests to God, with holy and fervent affections excited in us by the Holy Ghost: Rom. 8:26. But the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings, which cannot be uttered.

Q. May those have the Spirit of prayer, who have not the Gift of prayer?

A. Yes, they may: and, on the contrary, some may have the Gift of Prayer, who pray not by the Spirit; for they, who use prescribed and set Forms of Prayer, pray by the Spirit, when their petitions are accompanied with fervent affections, stirred in them by the Holy Ghost; and, again, some, who are most fluent in conceived prayer, may pray only from the strength of their natural parts and endowments.

Q. But doth not the use of Forms damp and quench the Spirit of prayer?

A. Forms, indeed, are too often used formally; and so is any other kind of prayer: yet it is the truest test and the highest excellency of praying by the Spirit, when we are fervent in putting up those requests to God, where neither novelty, variety, nor copiousness of expressions can be suspected to move our affections; but only the genuine importance of the matter, which we pray for, though in prescribed words.

Q. To whom must our prayers be directed?

A. To God only; and not to saints or angels.

Q. How ought we to conceive of God, when we pray to him?

A. As an infinitely glorious, wise, powerful, and gracious being, whose presence is every where, whose providence and goodness is over all things; and thus we pray, at once, to each Person of the Ever Blessed Trinity.

Q. May we not particularly address our prayers, to some one person of the Trinity?

We may: especially in those cases, wherein their particular offices and dispensations are more immediately concerned.

Q. What things ought we to pray for?

A. Only such as are according to the will of God: 1 John 5:14. That if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.

Q. What are those things which are according to the will of God?

A. Chiefly spiritual blessings: 1 Thes. 4:3. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from

fornication. And, for these, we ought to pray absolutely and importunately.

Q. May we not also pray for temporal mercies?

A. We may: but, as these are promised only conditionally; so we ought to pray, that God would be pleased to bestow them upon us, if it may stand with his will and glory, and our good and benefit.

Q. How must we direct our prayers to God?

A. 1. In the name of Christ, trusting only in his merits and Mediation, for acceptance and answer: John 15:16. That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

2. In faith and persuasion of being heard: James 1:6. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: Mark 11:24. What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

3. With fervency and affection: James 5:16. The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Q. What ends ought we to propound to ourselves in begging blessings at God's hands?

A. Chiefly the glory of God; sincerely purposing to improve those blessings, which, by our prayers, we shall receive, in his service and to his praise: Ps. 50:15. And call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

Q. What directions have we concerning the seasons and frequency of praying?

A. The Scripture commands us to pray without ceasing: 1 Thes. 5:17. Pray without ceasing: to pray always and not to faint: Luke 18:1. And he spake a parable to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint: to pray always with all prayer and supplication: Ephes. 6:18. Praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.

Q. Must we therefore be always so actually engaged in this duty as to do nothing but pray?

A. No: for, therefore, we pray, that we may obtain grace from God, to perform other duties of religion, and a Christian life. Neither ought the duties of our particular callings to be neglected by us; nor we justle out one duty by another: besides the sinful omission of what we should perform, that, which we do perform becomes unacceptable, because unseasonable; and so we commit two sins, in doing one duty.

Q. What then is it to pray without ceasing?

A. Prayer may be said to be without ceasing Four ways.

1. When we observe a constant course of prayer, at fixed and appointed times: thus, Gen. 8:22. God promised that winter and summer, day and night, should not cease: and so the daily sacrifice is called a continual burnt-offering: Exod. 29:42 and yet it was offered only morning and evening.

2. When we are frequent and importunate in our prayers: so, Acts 12:5 the Church is said to make prayers for Peter without ceasing: and our Saviour spake the Parable of the Importunate Widow to this end, That men ought always to pray and not to faint: Luke 18:1.

3. When we frequently dart up short mental prayers and ejaculations unto God: which we may and ought to do,

whatsoever else we are employed about: Neh. 2:4. So I prayed to the God of Heaven.

4. When we keep our hearts in a praying frame and temper, so that they are, on all occasions, fit and ready to pour out themselves before God in prayer; and thus we habitually pray always.

Q. What must we observe, to maintain and cherish such a praying spirit?

A. Two things especially.

1. That we ingulf not ourselves too deeply in the businesses and pleasures of this life: for these will darken and deaden the heart to prayer.

2. That we fall not into the commission of any known and presumptuous sin; for guilt will fill us with slavish fear and shame, and both will drive us from God.

Q. What are the kinds of Prayer?

A. Three.

1. Public: as we are members of the Church.

2. Private: as we stand engaged in Family Relation. And

3. Secret: as we are particular Christians.

Q. Who is to send up Publick Prayers?

A. The Minister, and all the Congregation joining with him. And these prayers, though they must needs be more general, yet, withal, are more effectual than any other: Mat. 18:19. Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any

thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven.

Q. Who is to make Private or Family Prayers?

A. Every Master and Governor of a Family: and this he is not to do seldomer, than every morning and evening. In the morning, prayer is the key, that opens the treasury of God's mercies: in the evening, it is the key, that shuts us up under his protection and safeguard.

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