

Monergism

# THE LORD'S PRAYER

A PRACTICAL EXPOSITION



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# **A Practical Exposition of the Lord's Prayer**

**by Thomas Manton**

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## **PREFACE.**

SUCH is the divine matter and admirable order of the Lord's Prayer, as became the eternal wisdom of God, that composed and dictated it to his disciples. In it are opened the fountains of all our regular petitions, and the arguments contained to encourage our hopes for obtaining them. In our addresses to men, our study is to conciliate their favourable audience; but God is most graciously inclined and ready to grant our requests, therefore we are directed to call upon him by the title of 'Our Father in heaven,' to assure us of his love and power, and thereby to excite our reverent attention, to raise our affections, to confirm our confidence in prayer. The supreme end of our desires is the glory of God, in conjunction with our own happiness: this is expressed in the two first petitions, that 'his name may be hallowed,' and 'his kingdom come,' that we may partake of its felicity. In order to this, our desires are directed for the means that are proper and effectual to accomplish it. And those are of two kinds — the good things that conduct us, and the removal of those evils that obstruct our happiness. The good things are either, the spiritual and principal means to prepare us for glory, an entire, cordial, and constant obedience to the divine commands, expressed in the third petition, 'Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven;' or, natural and subservient, the supports and comforts of this life, which are contained in the fourth petition, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' The removal of evils is disposed according to the order of the good things we are to seek: we pray that our sins may be forgiven, the guilt of which directly excludes from his glorious kingdom; that we may be preserved from temptations, that with draw us from observing the divine commands; and to be delivered from all afflicting evils, that hinder our arrival at our blessed end. The conclusion is to strengthen our faith, by ascribing to our heavenly Father, the kingdom, power,

and glory, and to express our ardent desires of his blessing, by saying, Amen.

This divine comprehensive prayer is the subject of the following sermons, wherein the characters of Dr Manton's spirit are so conspicuous, as sufficiently discover them to be his; and the reader is assured they have been diligently compared with his own copy.

WILLIAM BATES.

## INTRODUCTION

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father, &c.—MAT. 6:6–8.

I INTEND to go over the Lord's Prayer; and, to make way for it, I shall speak a little of these foregoing verses, wherein our Lord treats of the duty of prayer, and the necessity of being much therein.

In the beginning of this chapter our Lord taxeth the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, which was plainly to be seen in all their duties—their alms, their prayers, and their fasting.

I. For their alms: Christ deals with that in the first four verses. It seems it was their fashion, when they gave alms, to sound a trumpet; and their pretence was to call all the poor within hearing, or to give notice that such a rabbi giveth alms to-day. Now, our Lord showeth

that though this were the fair pretence to call the poor, yet their heart was merely upon their own glory; their own esteem with men; and therefore he persuades his disciples to greater secrecy in this work, and to content themselves with God's approbation, which will be open, and manifest, and honourable enough in due time, when the archangel shall blow the trumpet to call all the world together, 1 Thes. 4:16, and Christ shall publish their good works in the hearing of men and angels: Mat. 25:34–36. Thus he deals with them upon the point of alms.

II. For their prayers: Christ taxeth their affectation of applause, because they sought out places of the greatest resort,—the synagogues and corners of the streets,—and there did put themselves into a praying posture, that they might be seen of men, and appear to be persons of great devotion, and so might the better accomplish their own ends, their public designs upon the stage (for the Pharisees were great sticklers at that time), and also their private designs upon widows' houses, that they might be trusted with the management of widows' and orphans' estates, as being devout men, and of great sanctity and holiness.

In which practice there was a double failing:—

1. As to the circumstance of place, performing a personal and solitary prayer in a public place, which was a great indecorum, and argued the action to be scenical, or brought upon the stage merely for public applause. And certainly that private praying which is used by men in churches doth justly come under our Lord's reproof.

2. Their next failing was as to their end: 'Verily they do it to be seen of men.'

Object. But what fault was there in this? Doth not Christ himself direct us, in his Sermon, 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 yet the Pharisees are here taxed for praying,

fasting, and giving alms, that they might be seen of men; how can these places stand together?

By way of answer:—

1. We must distinguish of the different scope and intention of Christ in these two places. There, Christ's scope is to commend and enjoin good works to be seen of men, *ad edificationem*, for their edification; here, his scope is to forbid us to do good works to be seen of men, *ad ostentationem*, for our own ostentation: There, Christian charity to the souls of men is commended; and here, vainglory is forbidden.

2. Again, good works are to be distinguished. Some are so truly and indeed; others only in outward show and appearance. Good works, that are truly so and indeed, Christ enjoins there; hypocritical and feigned acts, that are only so in outward show and semblance, are forbidden here. To pray is a good work, take inward and outward acts of it together, and so it is enjoined. But hypocritical and superstitious prayer, which hath only the face and show of goodness, this is forbidden.

3. We must distinguish of the ends of good works; principal and subordinate; adequate and inadequate. First, the principal and primary end of good works must not be that we may be seen of men, but the glory of God; but now the subordinate, or less principal end, may be to be seen of men. Again, it must not be our adequate end, that is, our whole and main intention and scope; but a collateral and side end it may be. It is one thing to do good works, only that they may be seen; it is another thing to do good works, that they may not only be seen, but also be imitated, to win others by them to give glory to God. It is one thing to do good works for the glory of God, another thing to do them for the glory of ourselves. We may do good works to be seen in the first respect, but not in the last. We may not pray with the Pharisees merely to be seen of men, yet we may let our light shine before men, to draw them to duty, and give more glory to God.

4. Again, there Christ speaks of the general bent of our conversation, and here only of particular and private duties. It would argue too much hypocrisy to do these in public, though the whole frame and course of our carriage before men must be religious in their sight. And that is agreeable to what the apostle saith, 2 Cor. 8:21, 'We should provide for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.' And, Phil. 2:15, Christians are advised there to be 'blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, shining among them as lights in the world.' That which is obvious to the sight and observance of men, must be such as will become our holy calling. But our private and particular duties, which are to pass between God and us, these must be out of sight. I hope another man may approve himself to be honest and religious to me, though he doth not fall down and make his personal and private prayers before me. But to leave no scruple, if possible;

5. We must distinguish of the diverse significations of that phrase which is used here, ὁπῶς, that we may be seen. There is a twofold sense of ὁπῶς, or that. It may be taken two ways, as they speak, either causally or eventually. Causally, and then it implies and imports the end and scope why we do such a thing, namely, for this very purpose, that we may obtain it. And thus the Pharisees here did pray, ὁπῶς, that they might be seen of men, 'that is, this was their main end and scope. Thus that is taken causally. Secondly, that sometimes is taken eventually, and then it doth not import the end and scope, but only the event that will fall out and follow upon such a thing. Thus that is often taken in scripture. John 9:39: Christ saith there, 'For judgment I am come into the world, that they which see not, might see; and that they which see, might be made blind.' It was not Christ's scope to do so, but Christ foresaw that this would be the event of his coming into the world, and, therefore, he saith, that, &c. So Luke 14:10: Christ tells them there, 'But when thou art bidden to a feast, go and sit down in the lowest room, that when he that bade thee comes, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.'



That is taken eventually, not causally; for Christ doth not bid them there to set themselves at the lower end of the table, for this very end, or to make this their scope: that is the thing he forbids— affectation of precedency; but that, hoc est, then it will follow, that is, this is likely to be the event; then the master of the house will come to you if you do this. Not that it should be your scope to feign humility, that you may obtain the highest place at the table. And so may Christ's words be taken, 'Let your light so shine,' &c. This will fall out upon it then—men will be conscious to your Christian carriage and gracious behaviour, and by that means God will be much honoured and glorified. There it is taken eventually, but here it is taken causally. The Pharisees did it that they might be seen of men; that is, this was their scope and principal intention. And thus may you reconcile these two places of scripture.

Well, now, Christ having taxed them for these two faults: for their undue place, the synagogue and corners of the streets being unfit for a private and personal act of worship; and for their end, that they might be seen of men,—he saith, 'They have their reward.' That is, the whole debt is paid, they can challenge nothing at God's hands. God will be behindhand with none of his creatures. As they have what they looked for, so they must expect no more, they must be content with their penny. The phrase is borrowed from matters of contract between man and man, and is a word proper to those which give a discharge for a debt. As creditors and money-lenders, when they are paid home the full sum which is due to them, then they can exact no more; so here they must be contented with the empty, windy puffs of vainglory, and to feed upon the unsavoury breath of the people: they can expect no more from God, for the bond is cancelled, and they have received their full reward already. Briefly, here is the difference in the several rewards that the hypocrites and the children of God have: the hypocrites, they are all for the present, and have their reward, and much good may it do them; there is not a jot behind, it will be in vain to expect any more: but now, for the children of God, your Father will reward you; they must expect and wait for the future. And yet in scripture we read oftentimes that the

children of God have their reward in this life; but then the word in the original is ἔχουσι, which signifieth they have but in part; not the word which is used here, ἀπέχουσι, which signifies they have what is due, it is fulfilled, paid them. So those expressions in scripture are to be taken: 'Ye have eternal life,' 'and he hath,' 'and that ye may have.' It is often spoken in scripture of the children of God, so that they seem to have their reward too. They have their reward, but it is partially, not totally: there is something, the best things, yet behind. A child of God, he hath promises, first-fruits, some beginnings of communion with God here, but he looks for greater things to come.

Well, then, Christ, having disproved the practice of the Pharisees, seeks to set his own disciples right in the management of their prayers, as well as in their alms. Pharisaism is very natural in the best. We are apt to be haunted with a carnal spirit in the best duties; not only in alms, where we have to do with men, but in prayer, where our business lieth wholly with God; especially in public prayer; even there much of man will creep in. The devil is like a fly, which, if driven from one place, pitcheth upon another; so drive him out of alms, and he will seek to taint your prayers.

Therefore Christ, to rectify his disciples in their personal and solitary prayers, instructs them to withdraw into some place of recess and retirement, and to be content with God for witness, approver, and judge. 'But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy doors, pray to thy Father which is in secret,' &c.

In which words you may observe:—

I. A supposition concerning solitary prayer: 'But thou, when thou prayest.'

II. A direction about it: 'Enter into thy closet, and shut thy door, and pray to thy Father which is in secret.'

III. Encouragement to perform it: 'And thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.' Where two things are asserted:—

1. God's sight: He is conscious to thy prayers when others are not.
2. God's reward: 'He will reward thee openly.'

To open the circumstances of the text:—

In the supposition, 'But thou, when thou prayest,' observe:—

1. Christ takes it for granted that his disciples will pray to God. He doth not say, if thou prayest, but when thou prayest, as supposing them to be sufficiently convinced of this duty of being often with God. in private.

2. I observe, again, Christ speaks of solitary prayer, when a man alone, and without company, pours out his heart to God. Therefore Christ speaks in the singular number: 'When thou prayest;' not plurally and collectively, when ye pray, or meet together in prayer. Therefore he doth not forbid public praying in the assemblies of the saints, or family-worship; both are elsewhere required in scripture. God hath made promises to public and church prayer, praying with men or before men: Mat. 18:19, 'When two or three are met together, and shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.' And when they shall agree in one public prayer, it seems to have a greater efficacy put upon it—when more are interested in the same prayer—when, with a combined force, they do as it were besiege the God of heaven, and will not let him go unless he leaves a blessing. Look, as the petition of a shire and county to authority is more than a private man's supplication, so when we meet as a church to pray, and as a family, there is combined strength. And in this sense, that saying of the schoolmen is orthodox enough—viz., that prayer made in the church hath a more easy audience with God. Why? Because of the concurrence of many which are met there to worship God. Christ doth not intend in this any way to jostle out that which he seeks to establish elsewhere. Let your intentions be secret, though your prayers be public and open in the family or assemblies of the saints.

II. Let us open the direction our Lord gives about solitary prayer. The direction is suited so as to avoid the double error of the Pharisees; their offence as to place, and as to the aim and end.

1. Their offence as to the place: 'Enter into thy closet, and shut thy door.' These words are not to be taken metaphorically, nor yet pressed too literally. Not metaphorically, as some would carry them. Descend into thy heart, be serious and devout with God in the closet of thy soul, which is the most inward recess and retiring-place of man. This were to be wanton with scripture. The literal sense is not to be left without necessity, nor yet pressed too literally, as if prayer should be confined to a chamber and closet. Christ prayed in the mountain, Mat. 14:23; and Gen. 24:63, Isaac went into the field to meditate. The meaning is, private prayer must be performed in a private place, retired from company and the sight of men as much as may be.

2. Christ rectifieth them as to the end: 'Pray to thy Father which is in secret;' that is, pray to God, who is in that private place, though he cannot be seen with bodily eyes; wherein Christ seems secretly to tax the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, who did rather pray to men than to God, who was invisible; because all their aim was to be approved of men, and to be cried up by them as devout persons. So that what the Lord saith concerning fasting, Zech. 7:5, 6, 'When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me? and when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves?' so here, was this unto God? No, though the force and sound of the words carried it for God, yet they were directed to men. When God is not made both the object and aim, it is not to him; when you seek another paymaster, you decline God, yea, you make him your footstool, a step to some other thing.

III. Here are the encouragements to this personal, private, and solitary prayer; and they are taken from God's sight, and God's reward.

1. From God's sight: 'Thy Father seeth in secret;' that is, observeth thy carriage. The posture and frame of thy spirit, the fervour and uprightness of heart which thou manifestest in prayer, is all known to him. Mark, that which is the hypocrite's fear, and binds condemnation upon the heart of a wicked man, is here made to be the saints' support and ground of comfort—that they pray to an all-seeing God: 1 John 3:20, 'If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things.' Their heavenly Father seeth in secret; he can interpret their groans, and read the language of their sighs. Though they fail as to the outside of a duty, and there be much brokenness of speech, yet God seeth brokenness of heart there, and it is that he looks after. God seeth. What is that? He seeth whether thou prayest or no, and how thou prayest. (1.) He seeth whether thou prayest or no: mark that passage, Acts 9:11, 'The Lord said to Ananias, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus; for behold, he prayeth.' Go into such a city, such a street, such a house, such a part, in such a chamber, behold he prayeth. The Lord knew all these circumstances. It is known unto him whether we toil or loiter away our time, or whether we pray in secret; he knows what house, in what corner of the house, what we are doing there. (2.) He seeth how you pray: Rom. 8:27. It is propounded as the comfort of the saints, 'And he that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the spirit.' God knoweth you thoroughly, and can distinguish of your prayers, whether they be customary and formal, or serious acts of love to God, and communion with him.

2. The other thing which is propounded here is God's reward: 'And he will reward them openly.' How doth God reward our prayers? Not for any worth or dignity which is in them. What merit can there be in begging? What doth a beggar deserve in asking alms? But it is out of his own grace and mercy, having by promise made himself as it were a debtor to a poor, faithful, and believing supplicant. But 'he will reward thee openly.' How is that? Either by a sensible answer to thy prayers, as he doth often to his children, by granting what they pray for; as when Daniel was praying in secret, God sent an angel to him,

Dan. 9:20; or by an evident blessing upon their prayers in this world, for the conscionable performance of this duty. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that were men of much communion with God, were eminently and sensibly blessed; they were rewarded openly for their secret converse with him; or it may be, by giving them respect externally in the eyes of others. A praying people dart conviction into the consciences of men. It is notable that Pharaoh in his distress sent for Moses and Aaron, and not for the magicians. The consciences of wicked men are open at such a time, and they know God's children have special favour and great audience with him; and he having the hearts of all men in his hands, can manage and dispose respect according as he pleaseth. And when they are in distress, this honour God hath put upon you, they shall send for you to pray with them; and those which honour him, though but in secret, God will openly put honour upon them: 1 Sam. 2:30. But chiefly this is meant at the day of judgment; then those which pray in secret their heavenly Father will reward them openly. When thou relievest the poor, and showest comfort to the needy, they cannot recompense thee; but then thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just, Luke 14:14. There is the great and most public reward of Christians: 1 Cor. 4:5, 'Then he will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart; and then shall every man have praise with God;' that is, every man that is praiseworthy, however he be mistaken and judged of the world; for the apostle speaks it to comfort them against the censures of men. And mark, this is opposed to the reward which the Pharisees pleased themselves with: it was much with them to be well thought of in such a synagogue, or before such a company of men; 'but your Father, which seeth in secret, will reward you openly;' that is, not only in the eyes of such a city or town, but before all the world.

The point is this:—

Doct. That private, solitary, and closet-prayer is a duty very necessary and profitable.

It is a necessary duty; for Christ supposeth it of his disciples, to whom he speaks: 'But thou, when thou prayest,' &c. And it is profitable, for unto it God makes promises: You have a Father which seeth in secret, and one day shall be owned before all the world.

First, It is a duty necessary; and that will appear:—

1. From God's precept. That precept which requireth prayer, requireth secret and closet-prayer; for God's command to pray first falls upon single persons, before it falls upon families and churches, which are made up of single persons. Therefore where God hath bidden thee to pray, you must take that precept as belonging to you in particular. I shall give some of the precepts: Col. 4:2, 'Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;' and 1 Thes. 5:17, 'Pray without ceasing.' These are principally meant of our personal addresses to God, every man for himself; for in joining with others, the work is rather imposed upon us than taken up upon choice. And that can only be at stated times, when they can conveniently meet together; but we ourselves are called upon to continue to pray, and that without ceasing; that is, to be often with God, and to keep up not only a praying frame, but a constant correspondence with him. Surely every man which acknowledgeth a God, a Providence, and that depends upon him for blessings, much more every one that pretends he hath a Father in heaven, in whose hands are the guidance of all the things of the world, is bound to pray personally and alone, by himself to converse with God.

2. I shall argue it from the example of Christ, which bindeth us, and hath the force of a law in things moral. As Christ's word is our rule, so his practice is our copy. This is true religion, to imitate him whom we worship. In this you must do as Christ did. Now we often read that Christ prayed alone—he went aside to pray to God; therefore, if we be Christians, so it should be with us: Mark 1:35, 'And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.' He left the company of his disciples, with whom he often joined, that he might be alone

with God betimes in the morning. And again you have it: Mat. 14:23, 'And when he had sent the multitude away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray; and when the evening was come, he was there alone.' And, Luke 6:12, it is said, 'He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.' You see Christ takes all occasions in retiring and going apart to God. Now the pattern of Christ is both engaging and encouraging.

It is very engaging. Shall we think ourselves not to need that help which Christ would submit unto? There are many proud persons which think themselves above prayer. Christ had no need to pray as we have; he had the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily; yet he was not above prayer. And if he had need of prayer, he had no need of retirement to go and pray alone; his affections always served, and he was not pestered with any distraction, and all places and companies were alike to him; and yet he would depart into a solitary place that he might be private with God.

Then the pattern of Christ is very encouraging; for whatever Christ did, he sanctified in that respect—his steps in every duty leave a blessing. Look, as Christ sanctified baptism by being baptized himself, and made the water of baptism to be saving and comfortable for us; and the Lord's supper, by being a guest himself, and eating himself at his own table, so he sanctified private prayer: when he prayed, a virtue went out from him, he left a strength to enable us to pray. And it is encouraging in this respect, because he hath experimented this duty. He knows how soon human strength is spent and put to it, for he himself hath been wrestling with God in prayer with all his might. His submitting to these duties gave him sympathy; he knows the heart of a praying man when wrestling with God with all earnestness; therefore he helpeth us in these agonies of spirit. Again, his praying is an encouragement against our imperfections. Christians, when we are alone with God, and our hearts are heavy as a log and stone, what a comfort is it to think Christ himself prayed, and that earnestly, and was once alone wrestling with God in human nature! Mat. 14:23. And when the enemy came to attack him, he was



alone, striving with God in prayer. He takes all occasions for intercourse with God; and if you have the Spirit, you will do likewise.

3. I might argue from God's end in pouring out the Holy Ghost; wherefore hath God poured out his Spirit? Zech. 12:11–14, 'I will pour out the Spirit of grace and of supplication,' &c. He poureth out the Spirit, that it may break out by this vent: the Spirit of grace will presently run into supplication; the whole house of Israel shall mourn. There is the church, they have the benefit of the pouring out of the Spirit; and every household hath benefit, that he and his family may mourn apart, and every person apart; that we may go and mourn over our case and distempers before God, and pour out our hearts in a holy and affectionate manner. This argument I would have you to note, that this was God's end in pouring out his Spirit, for a double reason, both to take off excuses, and to quicken diligence.

Partly, to take off excuses, because many say they have no gifts, no readiness and savouriness of speech, and how can they go alone and pray to God? Certainly men which have necessities, and a sense of them, can speak of them in one fashion or other to God; but the Spirit is given to help. Such is God's condescension to the saints, that he hath not only provided an advocate to present our petitions in court, but a notary to draw them up; not only appointed Christ for help against our guilt and unworthiness, but likewise the Spirit to help us in prayer. When we are apt to excuse ourselves by our weakness and insufficiency, he hath poured out the Holy Ghost, that we may pray apart. Partly to this end, the more to awaken our diligence, that God's precious gift be not bestowed upon us in vain, to lie idle and unemployed, he hath poured out the Spirit; and therefore we should make use of it, not only that we may attend to the prayers of others, and join with them, but that we may make use of our own share of gifts and graces, and open and unfold our own case to God.

4. That it is a necessary duty, I plead it from the practice of saints, who are a praying people. Oh how often do we read in scripture that

they are alone with God, pouring out their souls in complaints to him! Nothing so natural to them as prayer; they are called a 'generation of them that seek God:' Ps. 24:6. As light bodies are moving upward, so the saints are looking upward to God, and praying alone to him. Daniel was three times a day with God, and would not omit his hours of prayer, though his life was in danger, Dan. 6:10; and David, 'Seven times a day do I praise thee,' Ps. 119:164; and Cornelius, it is said that he prayed to God always, Acts 10:2, not only with his family, but alone in holy soliloquies. He was so frequent and diligent, that he had gotten a habit of prayer—he prayed always. Well, then, if this be the temper of God's people, then to be altogether unlike them—when we have no delight in these private converses with God, or neglect them, it gives just cause of suspicion.

5. Our private necessities show that it is a necessary duty, which cannot be so feelingly spoken to and expressed by others as by ourselves; and, it maybe, are not so fit to be divulged and communicated to others. We cannot so well lay forth our hearts with such largeness and comfort in our own concernments before others. There is the plague of our own hearts, which every one must mourn over: 1 Kings 8:38. As we say, no nurse like the mother; so none so fit humbly with a broken heart to set forth our own wants before the Lord as ourselves. There is some thorn in the flesh that we have cause to pray against again and again: 'For this I sought the Lord thrice,' saith St Paul, 2 Cor. 12:7, 8. We should put promises in suit, and lay open our own case before the compassions of God. It is a help sometimes to join with others; but at other times it would be a hindrance. We have peculiar necessities of our own to commend to God, therefore must be alone.

Secondly, This closet and solitary prayer, as it is a necessary duty, so it is a profitable one.

1. It conduceth much to enlargement of heart. The more earnest men are, the more they desire to be alone, free from trouble and

distraction. When a man weeps, and is in a mournful posture, he seeks secrecy, that he may indulge his grief. They were to mourn apart: Zech. 12, and Jer. 13:17, 'My soul shall weep sore for your pride in secret places.' So here, when a man would deal most earnestly with God, he should seek retirement, and be alone. Christ in his agonies went apart from his disciples. When he would pray more earnestly, it is said, 'He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast:' Luke 22:41. It is said, 'He went apart.' Strong affections are loth to be disturbed and diverted, therefore seek retirement. And, it is notable, Jacob, when he would wrestle with God, it is said, Gen. 32:24, 'And Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.' When he had a mind to deal with God in good earnest, he sent away all his company.

A hypocrite, he finds a greater flash of gifts in his public duties, when he prays with others, and is the mouth of others; but is slight and superficial when alone with God; if he feels anything, a little overly matter serves the turn. But usually God's children most affectionately pour out their hearts before him in private; where they do more particularly express their own necessities, there they find their affections free to wrestle with God. In public we take in the necessities of others, but in private our own.

2. As it makes way for enlargement of heart on our part, so for secret manifestations of love on God's part. Bernard hath a saying, 'The church's Spouse is bashful, and will not be familiar and communicate his loves before company, but alone.' The sweetest experiences which God's saints receive many times are when they are alone with him. When Daniel was praying alone with great earnestness, the angel Gabriel was sent, and caused to fly swiftly to him to tell him his prayers were answered: Dan. 9:21. And Cornelius, while he was praying alone, an angel of God came unto him, to report the hearing of his prayers: Acts 10:3; and, ver. 9, Peter, when he was praying alone, then God instructs him in the mystery of the calling of the Gentiles: then had he that vision when he was got upon the top of the house to pray. Before we are regenerated, God appeareth to us many

times when we do not think of it; but after we are regenerated, usually he appeareth upon more eminent acts of grace—when we are exercising ourselves, and more particularly dealing with God, and putting forth the strength of our souls to take hold of him in private.

3. There is this profit in it: It is a mighty solace and support in affliction, especially when we are censured, scorned, and despised of men, and know not where to go to find a friend with whom we may unbosom our sorrow. Then to go aside, and open the matter to God, it is a mighty ease to the soul: Job 16:20, 'My friends scorn me; but mine eye poureth out tears unto God.' When we have a great burden upon us, to go aside and open the matter to God, it gives ease to the heart, and vent to our grief; as Hannah in great trouble falls a-praying to God, and then was no more sad: 1 Sam. 1:13. As the opening of a vein cooleth and refresheth in a fever, so when we make known our case to God, it is a mighty solace in affliction.

4. It is a great trial of our sincerity, of our faith, love, and obedience, when we are alone, and nobody knows what we do, then to see him that is invisible: Heb. 11:27;—when we are much with God in private, where we have no reasons but those of duty and conscience to move us. Carnal hypocrites will be much in outward worship. They have their qualms, and pray themselves weary, and do something for fashion sake when foreign reasons move them; but will they so pray as to delight themselves in the Almighty? Will they always call upon God? Job 27:10. That delight in God, which puts us upon converses with God, affects privacy.

5. It is a profitable duty, because of the great promises which God hath made to it. This secret and private prayer in the text shall have a public reward; it will not be lost, for God will reward it openly. So Job 22:21: 'Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee.' Frequent correspondence with, and constant visits of God in prayer, what peace, comfort, quickening brings it into the soul! So Ps. 69:32: 'His soul shall live that seeks the Lord.' Without often seeking to God, the vitality of the soul is lost.

We may as well expect a crop and harvest without sowing, as any liveliness of grace where there is not seeking of God. Could a man take notice of another in a crowd, whose face he never saw before? So, will God own and bless you in the crowds of the assemblies of his people, if you mind not this duty when you are alone?

## **APPLICATION**

Use 1. To reprove those which neglect closet-addresses to God; they wrong God and themselves.

They wrong God; because this is a necessary part of the creature's homage, of that duty he expects from them, to be owned not only in public assemblies, but in private. And they wrong themselves; because it brings in a great deal of comfort and peace to the soul; and many sweet and gracious experiences there are which they deprive themselves of, and a blessing upon all other things.

But more particularly to show the evil of this sin:—

1. It is a sin of omission; and these sins are very dangerous, as well as sins of commission. Natural conscience usually smites more for sins of commission, than for sins of omission. To wrong and beat a father seems a more heinous and unnatural act, than not to give him due reverence and attendance. We are sensible of sins of commission; but yet God will charge sins of omission as well as commission upon you; and so will conscience too when it is serious, when, against the plain knowledge of God's will, you can omit such a necessary part of God's worship: James 4:17, 'To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin,'—that is, it will be sin with a witness. Conscience will own it so, when it is awakened by the word, or by providence, or great affliction, or cast upon your death-bed. How will your own hearts reproach you then, that have neglected God, and lost such precious hours as you should have redeemed for communion with him! Sins of omission argue as great a contempt of

God's authority as sins of commission; for the same law which forbids a sin, doth also require a duty from us.

And sins of omission argue as much hatred of God as sins of commission. If two should live in the same house, and never speak to one another, it would be taken for an argument of as great hatred as to fight one with another. So, when God is in us and round about us, and we never take time to confer with him, it argues much hatred and neglect of him.

And sins of omission are an argument of our unregeneracy, as much as sins of commission. A man which lives in a course of drunkenness, filthiness, and adultery, you would judge him to be an unregenerate man, and that he hath such a spot upon him as is not the spot of God's children. So, to live in a constant neglect of God, is an argument of unregeneracy, as much as to live in a course of debauchery. The apostle, when he would describe the Ephesians by their unconverted state, describes it thus: Eph. 2:12, 'That they lived without God in the world.' When God is not owned and called upon, and unless the restraints of men, the law of common education, and customs of nations call for it, they live without God. So Ps. 14:1: 'They are corrupt, they have done abominable works; there is none that doeth good, they are altogether become filthy.' Every unregenerate man is that atheist. There is some difference among unregenerate men. Some are less in the excesses and gross outbreakings of their sins and folly. Some sin more, some less; but they all are abominable on this account, because they do not seek after God. And the apostle makes use of that argument to convince all men to be in a state of sin: Rom. 3:11, 'There is none that seeketh after God.' The heart may be as much hardened by omissions (yea, sometimes more), than by commissions. As an act of sin brings a brawniness and deadness upon the heart, so doth the omission of a necessary duty. Not only the breaking of a string puts the instrument out of tune, but its being neglected and not looked after. Certainly by experience we find none so tender, so holy, so humble, and heavenly, as they which are often

with God. This makes the heart tender, which otherwise would grow hard, dead, and stupid.

2. It is not only an omission in general, but an omission of prayer, which is, first, a duty very natural to the saints. Prayer is a duty very natural and kindly to the new creature. As soon as Paul was converted, the first news we hear of him, Acts 9:11, 'Behold, he prayeth.' As soon as we are new-born, there will be a crying out for relief in prayer. It is the character of the saints: Ps. 24:6, 'This is the generation of them that seek thee,' a people much in calling upon God. And the prophet describes them by the work of prayer: Zeph. 3:10, 'My supplicants'; and, Zech. 12:10, 'I will pour upon them the Spirit of grace and supplication.' Wherever there is a spirit of grace, it presently runneth out into prayer. Look, as a preacher is so called from the frequency of his work, so a Christian is one that calleth upon God. 'Every one that calleth on the name of the Lord, shall be saved:' Rom. 10:13. In vain he is called a preacher that never preacheth, so he is in vain called a Christian that never prayeth. As things of an airy nature move upward, so the saints are carried up to God by a kind of naturality, when they are gracious. God hath no tongue-tied or dumb children; they are all crying, 'Abba, Father.' Then it is an omission of a duty which is of great importance as to our communion with God, which lieth in two things—fruition and familiarity; in the enjoyment of God, and in being familiar and often with him. Fruition we have by faith, and familiarity is carried on by prayer. There are two duties which are never out of season, hearing and prayer, both which are a holy dialogue betwixt God and the soul, until we come to vision, the sight of him in heaven. Our communion with God here is carried on by these two duties: we speak to God in prayer, God answereth us in the word; God speaks to us in the word, and we return and echo back again to him in prayer. Therefore the new creature delighteth much in these two duties. Look, as we should be 'swift to hear,' James 1:19, until we come to seeing, we should take all occasions, and be often in hearing. So in prayer we speak to God, and therefore should be redeeming time for this work. In the word God comes down to us, and in prayer we get up to God;

therefore, if you would be familiar and often with God, you must be much in prayer. This is of great importance. You know the very notion of prayer. It is a 'visiting' of God: Isa. 26:16, 'O Lord, in trouble have they visited thee; they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them.' Praying to God, and visiting of God, are equivalent expressions. Now it argueth very little friendship to God, when we will not so much as come at him. Can there be any familiarity, where there is so much distance and strangeness as never to give God a visit?

3. It is the omission of personal and secret prayer, which in some respects should be more prized than other prayer.

Partly, because here our converse with God is more express as to our own case. When we join with others, God may do it for their sakes, but here, Ps. 116:1, 'I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplication.' When we deal, with him alone, we put the promises in suit, and may know more it is we that have been heard. We put God more to the trial; we see what he will do for us, and upon our asking and striving.

Partly, here we are more put to the trial what love we will express to our Father in secret, when we have no outward reasons, no inducements from respects of men to move us. In public duties (which are liable and open to the observance of others), hypocrites may put forth themselves with great vigour, quickness, and warmth, whereas in private addresses to God, they are slight and careless. A Christian is best tried and exercised in private, in those secret intercourses between God and his own soul; there he finds most communion with God, and most enlargement of heart. A man cannot so well judge of his spirit, and discern the workings of it in public, because other men's concernments and necessities, mingled with ours, are taken in, and because he is more liable to the notice of others. But when he is with God alone, he hath only reasons of conscience and duty to move him. When none but God is conscious



and our own hearts, then we shall see what we do for the approbation of God, and acceptance with him.

And partly, in some respects, this is to be more prized, because privacy and retiredness is necessary, and is a great advantage, that men's spirits may be settled and composed for the duty. Sinful distractions will crowd in upon us when in company, and we are thinking of this and that. How often do we mingle sulphur with our incense—carnal thoughts in our worship! How apt are we to do so in public duties! But in private we are wholly at leisure to deal with God in a child-like liberty. Now, will you omit this duty where you may be most free, without distraction, to let out the heart to God?

And partly, because a man will not be fit to pray in public and in company, which doth not often pray in secret: he will lose his savour and delight in this exercise, and soon grow dry, barren, sapless, and careless of God. Look, as in the prophet Ezekiel, you read there that the glory of the Lord removed from the temple by degrees: it first removed from the holy place, then to the altar of burnt-offerings, then to the threshold of the house, then to the city, then to the mount which was on the east side of the city; there the glory of the Lord stood hovering a while, as loth to be gone, to see if the people would get it back again; this seems to be some emblem and representation of God's dealing with particular men. First, God is cast out of the closet, private intercourses between God and them are neglected; and then he is cast out of the family, and within a little while out of the congregation; public ordinances begin to be slighted, and to be looked upon as useless things; and then men are given up to all profaneness and looseness, and lose all: so that religion, as it were, dieth by degrees, and a carnal Christian loseth more and more of the presence of God. And, therefore, if we would be able to pray in company, we must often pray in secret.

4. Consider the mischief which followeth neglect of private converse with God. Omissions make way for commissions. If a gardener withholds his hand, the ground is soon grown over with weeds.

Restrain prayer and neglect God, and noisome lusts will abound. Our hearts are filled with distempers when once we cease to be frequent with God in private. It is said of Job, chap. 15:4, 'Thou restrainest prayer before God.' That passage is notable, Ps. 14:4: 'They eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord.' Omit secret prayer, and some great sin will follow; within a little while you will be given up to some evil course or other: either brutish lusts, oppression, or violence; to hate the people of God, to join in a confederacy with them which cry up a confederacy against God. The less we converse with God in private, the more is the awe of God lessened. But now, a man which is often with God dareth not offend him so freely as others do. As they which are often with princes and great persons are better clothed and more neat in their apparel and carriage, so they which are often conversing with God grow more heavenly, holy, watchful, than others are; and when we are not with God, not only all this is lost, but a great many evils to be found. It is plainly seen by men's conversations how little they converse with God.

But now, to avoid the stroke of this reproof, what will men do? Either deny the guilt, or excuse themselves.

First, Some will deny the guilt. They do call upon God, and use private prayer, therefore think themselves to be free from this reproof. Yea, but are you as often with God as you should be?

There are three sorts of persons:—

1. Some there are that omit it totally, cannot speak of redeeming any time for this work. These are practical atheists, 'without God in the world:' Eph. 2:12. They are heathens and pagans under a Christian name and profession. We should 'pray without ceasing:' 1 Thes. 5:17; that is, take all praying occasions; therefore they which pray not at all, all the week long God hears not from them, surely come under the force of this reproof.

2. There are some which perform it seldom. Oh, how many days and weeks pass over their heads and God never hears from them! The Lord complains of it, Jer. 2:32: 'They have forgotten me days without number.' It was time out of mind since they were last with God.

3. The most do not perform it so often as they should. And therefore (that I may speak with evidence and conviction) I shall answer the case; what rules may be given; how often we should be with God; and when we are said to neglect God.

[1.] Every day something should be done in this kind. Acts 10:2: Cornelius prayed to God always, every day he had his times of familiarity with God. Daniel, though with the hazard of his life, would not omit 'praying three times a day:' Dan. 6:10. And David speaks of 'morning, evening, and noon:' Ps. 55:17. Though we cannot bind all men absolutely to these hours, because of the difference of conditions, employments, and occasions, yet thus much we may gather from hence, that surely they which are most holy will be most frequent in this work.

[2.] Love will direct you. They which love one another, will not be strange one to another: a man cannot be long out of the company of him whom he loveth. Christ loved Lazarus, and Mary, and Martha, John 11:5, and therefore his great resort was to Bethany, to Lazarus' house. Surely they which love God will have frequent recourse to him. In the times of the gospel, God trusts love: we are not bound to such particular rules as under the law. Why? For love is a liberal grace, and will put us upon frequent visits, and tell us when we should pray to God.

[3.] The Spirit of God will direct you. There are certain times when God hath business with you alone; when he doth (as it were) speak to you as to the prophet in another case, Ezek. 3:22, 'Go forth into the plain in the desert, and there I will talk with thee.' So, get you to your closets, I have some business to speak with you. 'Thou saidst, Seek ye my face: my heart answered, Thy face, Lord, will I seek:' Ps. 27:8.

God invites you to privacy and retirement; you are sent into your closet to deal with God about the things you heard from the pulpit. This is the actual profit we get by a sermon, when we deal seriously with God about what we have heard. When God sends for us (as it were) by his Spirit, and invites us into his presence by these motions, it is spiritual clownishness to refuse to come to him.

[4.] Your own inward and outward necessities will put you in mind of it. God hath not stated what hours we shall eat and drink; the seasons and quantity of it are left to our choice. God hath left many wants upon us, to bring us into his presence. Sometimes we want wisdom and counsel in darkness: James 1:5, 'If any lack wisdom, let him ask of God, which giveth to all men liberally.' It is an occasion to bring us to God: God is the best casuist to resolve our doubts and guide us in our way. Sometimes we lack strength to withstand temptations; the throne of grace was set up for a time of need, Heb. 4:16, when any case is to be resolved, and comfort to be obtained. We want comfort, quickening, counsel, and all to bring us to God. So for outward necessities too. Certainly if a man doth but observe the temper of his own heart, he cannot neglect God, but will find some occasion or other to bring him into his presence, some errand to bring him to the throne of grace. We are daily to beg pardon of sin, and daily to beg supplies. Now, certainly, when you do not observe these things, you neglect God.

Secondly, Others, to avoid it, will excuse themselves. Why, they would pray to God in private, but either they want time, or they want a convenient place, or want parts and abilities. But the truth is, they want a heart, and that is the cause of all; and, indeed, when a man hath no heart to the work, then something is out of the way.

1. Some plead they want time. Why, if you have time for other things, you should have a time for God. Shall we have a season for all things, and not for the most necessary work? Hast thou time to eat, drink, sleep, follow thy trading (how dost thou live else?), and no time to be saved—no time to be familiar with God, which is the greatest

business of all? Get it from your sleep and food, rather than be without this necessary duty. Jesus Christ had no such necessity as we have, yet it is said, Mark 1:35, 'He arose a great while before day, and went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.' Therefore, must God only be encroached upon—the lean kine devour the fat—Sarah thrust out instead of Hagar—and religion be crowded out of doors? Felix illadomus, ubi Martha queritur de Maria,—That is a happy house where Martha complains of Mary. Martha, which was cumbered with much service, complained of Mary that she was at the feet of Jesus Christ, hearkening to his gracious counsel; but in most houses Mary may complain of Martha; religion is neglected and goes to the walls.

2. Some want a place. He that doth not want a heart will find a place. Christ went into a mountain to pray, and Peter to the top of the house.

3. Many say they want parts, they cannot tell how to pray. Wherefore hath God given his Spirit? In one fashion or other a man can open his case to God; he can go and breathe out his complaints, the Lord will hear breathings. Go, chatter out thy requests to thy Father: though you can but 'chatter like a crane,' yet do it with fervency and with a spirit of adoption. We have not only Christ given us for an advocate, but the Holy Ghost to help our infirmities. He hath given us 'the Spirit of his Son, whereby we may cry, Abba, Father:' Gal. 4:6. A child can acquaint a father with his wants.

Use 2. To exhort God's children to frequency in this duty, and to much watchfulness and seriousness in the performance of it.

First, To frequency. For arguments again to press you:—

1. It argueth more familiarity to pray to God alone than in company. He that goeth to a prince alone, and upon all occasions hath access to him in private, when company is gone, hath nearer friendship and a greater intimacy with him than those which are only admitted to a

speech with him in the company of others; so, the oftener you are with God alone the more familiar. He loves to treat with you apart, as friends are most free and open to one another when they are alone.

2. Then you will have a more sensible answer of your own prayers; you will see what God hath done upon your requests. Dan. 9:21, 22. Daniel was praying for the church, and an angel comes and tells him, 'It is for thy prayers and supplications that I am come.' Therefore surely a man would take some time to go and plead the promises with God. But further, by way of means:—

[1.] Consider the omnipresence of God, which is the argument in the text: 'He is in secret, and seeth in secret.' If men were convinced of that, they would make conscience of secret prayer. Look, as Jesus Christ says of himself, John 16:32, 'You leave me alone, and yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me.' so when you are alone you are not alone; there is a Father in secret; though nobody to see and hear, yet God is there. We are apt to think all is lost which men are not conscious to, and done in their sight. Acts 10:4: 'Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.' God keeps a memorial of your private prayers; there is a register kept in heaven, and never a prayer lost.

[2.] Consider the excellency of communion with God. Jer. 2:32: 'Can a maid forget her ornaments, and a bride her attire?' Women are very curious and careful of their ornaments, and will not forget their dressing-attire, especially a bride upon the wedding-day, she that is to be set forth in most costly array—she makes it her business to put on jewels, to be seen in all her glory. God is as necessary to us as ornaments to a bride. We should be as mindful of communion with God as a bride of her dressing-ornaments. 'Yet they have forgotten me days without number.' Whatever is forgotten, God must not be forgotten.

[3.] Make God a good allowance; resolve to be much in the practice of it. It is best to have set times for our religious worship. For persons

which are sui juris, at their own dispose, it is lawful and very convenient to dedicate a certain part and portion of our time to the Lord of time. Lazy idle servants must be tasked and required to bring in their tale of brick; so it is good to task the heart, to make God a fair, and reasonable, and convenient allotment of some part of our time. David had his fixed hours: 'Three times a day will I call upon thee.' And Daniel had his set times; he prayed three times a day. Though we cannot charge you to observe these hours, yet you should make a prudent choice yourselves, and consecrate such a part of time as will suit with your occasions, your course of life, according to your abilities and opportunities. It is an expression of love to God to give him somewhat that is your own; and it will be of exceeding profit to you, and make your communion with him more seasonable and orderly. This will make you careful and watchful how you spend your other hours, that you may not be unfit when times of prayer come. 1 Pet. 3:7: 'Husbands, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, that your prayers be not hindered.' But do not propose a task too great for your strength, and perplex yourselves with such an unreasonable allowance as will not suit with your occasions. Men create a 'trouble to themselves, and bind themselves with chains of their own making, when they propose more duty than they can well discharge.

## **The Second Part of the Use**

Do it seriously, with caution, and warily. Here Christ gives direction: 'When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and shut thy door, and then think of thy 'Father which is in secret.' We need a great deal of caution; for:—

1. When you shut the door upon all others, you cannot shut the devil out of your closets; he will crowd in. When you have bolted the door upon you, and shut other company out, you do not lock out Satan; he is always at hand, ready to disturb us in holy duties; wherever the children of God are, he seeks to come at them. When the sons of God met together, Satan was in the midst of them: Job 1. He meets in

congregations, he gets into the closet. When Joshua the high priest was ministering before the Lord, Satan stood at his right hand, ready to resist him: Zech. 3:1.

2. There needs caution; because in private duties there may be many failings and evils, which we are apt to be tainted with in our private addresses to God.

[1.] There may be danger of ostentation; therefore Christ gives direction here, that it should be managed with the greatest secrecy, both as for place, time, and voice. Let none but God be conscious to our drawing aside that we may be alone. Withdraw yourselves out of the sight and hearing of others, lest pride and ostentation creep upon you. The devil will seek to blast this serious acknowledgment to God, one way or other.

[2.] There may be customariness, for fashion sake. It is said of Christ, that 'he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day, as his custom was.' We may use accustomed duties; but we must not do them customarily, and for fashion sake, no more than Christ himself did; for though this was his custom, yet he was not customary in these his synagogue attendances. We are very apt to do so, because we have used it for these many years. Men go on in a tract of duty, and regard not the ends of worship—Zech. 7:3—they come with a fond scruple and case of conscience to the prophet: they had an old custom among them to fast for the destruction of the temple; now when the temple was built again, 'Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these so many years?'

[3.] Much slightness and perfunctoriness of heart you may be guilty of. Such is the wickedness of men, that they think God will be put off with anything; and though they would set off themselves with applause in the hearing of others, yet how slight are they apt to be when they deal with God alone! Consider, you must sanctify the name of God in private, as well as in public; you must speak to God with reverence and fear, and not in an overly fashion. Take heed of



this slightness; it is a great wrong to the majesty of God. When they offered a sickly offering, saith God, 'I am a great King, and my name is dreadful among the heathen:' you do not consider my majesty.

[4.] There may be this evil: resting in the work, in the tale and number of your prayers: Luke 18:12, 'I fast twice in the week.' Man is very apt to rest and dote upon his own worth, and to build all his acceptance with God upon it; to come to God, and challenge him for a debt, as the Pharisee did. It is very natural to rest in those duties, and make them an excuse for other things.

[5.] There may be pride, even in the exercise of our gifts. There is a delight in duties, which seems spiritual many times when it is not;— as when a man delighteth in the exercise of his own gifts, rather than in communion with God; when there is a secret tickling of heart with a conceit of our own worth; as when, in the carriage of a duty, we come off roundly, and parts have their free course and career. This complacency and pride, it may be not only in public, where we have advantage to discover ourselves with applause, but in private, between God and our souls. When a man is conceited of his gifts, they may end in the private exercise of them, to the wrong of God. When invention is quick and free, he may have such a delight as may make him rest in the work, as it is a fruit of parts, rather than as a means of communion with God. Therefore there needs a great deal of caution when we are alone with our heavenly Father.

But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye, therefore, like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.—MAT. 6:7, 8.

OUR Lord having spoken of the ostentation of the Pharisees, and their vainglory, he cometh here to dissuade from another abuse, and that is babbling and lip-labour. They prayed to be seen of men; but the heathens were guilty of another abuse. Here take notice:—

1. Of the sin taxed.

2. The reasons which our Lord produceth against it.

First, the sin taxed is set forth by a double notion. Here is βαπτολογία and πολυλογία: the first we translate, 'vain repetitions;' and the last, 'much speaking.' Both may well go together; for when men affect to say much, they will use vain repetitions, go over the same things again and again, which is as displeasing to God as it is irksome to prudent and wise men.

But let us see a little what these words signify. The first word is βαπτολογία, which we translate 'vain repetitions.' Battus was a foolish poet, that made long hymns, consisting of many lines, but such as were often repeated, both for matter and words; and Ovid brings in a foolish fellow, that would be often repeating the same words, and doubling them over:—

'Montibus, inquit, erant, et erant sub montibus illis.'

And again:—

'Et me mihi perfide prodis?

Me mihi prodis? ait.'

And from thence this word is taken, which is here used by the evangelist: βαπτολογία, or idle babbling over the same thing. And the scripture representeth this vain going over of the same things: Eccles. 10:14, 'A fool also is full of words; a man cannot tell what shall be; and what shall be after him, who can tell?' The most judicious interpreters do conceive there is a μιμησις, an imitation of the fool's speaking. Groundless, fruitless repetitions are here reproved, or the tumbling out of many insignificant words, and the same over and over again; this is vain repetition. But the other word which Christ useth to tax the same abuse is πολυλογία, 'much speaking.' It signifieth affectation of length in prayer, or using many

words, not out of fervency of mind, but merely to prolong the duty, as if the length of it made it more powerful or acceptable with God, or a more comely piece of worship. This is what our Lord here reproves; vain repetitions and much speaking.

Secondly, here are the reasons produced against it; they are two:—

1. That it is a heathenish custom, and that grounded upon a false supposition. The heathens were detestable to the Jews, and therefore their customs should not be taken up, especially when grounded upon an error, or a misapprehension of the nature of God. Now the heathens think they shall be heard for their much speaking, for their mere praying and composing hymns to their gods, with thundering names repeated over and over again.

2. It is inconsistent with the true nature of God: ver. 8, 'Be not therefore like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things you have need of, before you ask him.' Here we learn three things:—(1.) Christianity and true religion takes up God under the notion of a father, that hath a care of his children. This will decide many questions about prayer, and what words we should use to God in the duty: go to God as children to their father. (2.) He is represented as an omniscient God—one that knows all things, our wants and necessities. (3.) As an indulgent father, who hath a propense and ready mind to help us, even before we ask.

From the words thus opened, that which we may observe is this, viz.:

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Doct. That certainly it is a sin needlessly to affect length of speech, or vain repetitions in prayer.

Our Lord dissuadeth us from it here, and his authority should sway with us. He knew the nature of prayer better than we do; for he appointed it, and he was often in the practice and observance of it. So we are directed to the contrary: Eccles. 5:2, 'Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God:

for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few.' Remember, you have to do with a great God, and do not babble things over impertinently in his ears. It is a truth evident by the light of nature: *Paucis verbis rem divinam facito* (Platinus). If you be to worship God, a needless prolixity doth not become addresses to him.

But because this text may be abused, I shall endeavour to clear it a little further. There are two extremes: the slight and careless spirit, and babbling.

1. There is the slight and careless spirit, who doth the work of an age in a breath, and is all for starts and sudden pangs, which pass away like a flash of lightning in a dark room; whose good thoughts are gone as soon as they rush into the heart. A poor, barren, and slight spirit, which is not under the influence and power of that celestial love which keeps the soul in converse with God, cannot endure to be any while with God. Alas! we need stroke upon stroke to fasten anything upon the heart. We are like green wood, that will not presently take fire, until it lie long there, and be thoroughly and well warmed; so until we have gone far in the duty, we can hardly get any warmth of heart. They which are short in prayer had need of much habitual preparation of heart.

2. The babbler is another extreme, who thinks the commendation of a duty is to be long in it, and affects to say much rather than well; whereas serious and short speech makes the best prayer: *Prov. 10:19*, 'In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin;' either to God or men, it is true; but especially when affected. So they do but beat the air, rather than pray to God.

These, then, are the two extremes: shortness, out of barrenness or slightness; or length, out of affectation; and we must carefully avoid these. Christ would not justify that shortness which comes from slightness and barrenness of heart, nor, on the other side, indulge the affectation of length in prayer.

Therefore let us a little see:—

I. What is the sin.

II. Give you the force of our Lord's reasons here urged, or how conclusive our Saviour's arguments are against this practice.

I. What is the sin? That is necessary to be known; for all repetitions are not vain, nor is all length in prayer to be accounted babbling.

First, for repetitions:—

1. When they express fervency and zeal, they may be used. And so we read, Christ prayed over the same prayer thrice: Mat. 26:44, 'O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.' And another evangelist showeth that he did this out of special fervency of spirit: Luke 22:44, 'Being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly.' And so we read of the prophet Daniel, chap. 9:17–19, 'O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant; O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not for thine own sake, O my God.' All this was out of vehemency; he goes over and over again the same request. When we use many words of the same kind and signification, and it be out of vehemency and fervency of spirit, it is not forbidden.

2. This repetition is not to be disproved when there is a special emphasis and spiritual elegancy in it, as Ps. 136, you have it twenty-six times repeated, 'for his mercy endureth for ever;' because there was a special reason in it, his purpose there being to show the unweariedness and the unexhausted riches of God's free grace, that, notwithstanding all the former experiences they had had, God is where he was at first. We waste by giving, our drop is soon spent; but God is not wasted by bestowing, but hath the same mercy to do good to his creatures as before. Though he had done all those wonders for them, yet his mercy was as ready to do good to them still. All along God saved and blessed his people, 'for his mercy endureth for ever.' But as there are repetitions which have their use, so there are useless

tautologies and vain repetitions. And such they are when they neither come from the heart nor go to the heart; when they come not from the abundance of the heart, but rather the emptiness of the heart; because we know not how to enlarge ourselves to God, therefore fall upon idle and useless repetitions of the same words and requests. As a man that hath small skill in music doth only play over the same note, so when men have not a full spiritual abundance, they waste themselves in prayer in these idle repetitions. And then they go not to the heart, they do not conduce to warm the affections. A vain, clamorous ingeminating the same thing, without faith and without wisdom, merely to fill up the tale of words, or to wear out a little time in a religious exercise, that is it which is here condemned under the notion of vain repetitions.

Secondly, For the other word, πολυλογία, or 'much speaking.' Every long prayer is not forbidden; for our Lord Jesus himself 'continued all night in prayer:' Luke 6:12. And in extraordinary duties of fasting, length seems to be very necessary: Esther 4:16, 'They fasted and prayed together for three days and nights, without eating any bread.' And Solomon prayed long at the dedication of the temple.

But that which is forbidden is, when men speak words without need and without affection; a needless lengthening out of prayer, and that upon a conceit that it is more acceptable to God.

1. In the general, prayer should be short, as all examples of scripture teach us. And the Lord's Prayer, you see how concise and short it is, for presently upon this our Lord teacheth his disciples to pray; for prayer is a spending rather than a feeding duty. Those which affect long speaking many times run into this: they make it a feeding duty, for they mingle exhortations with prayer, which is a great abuse. A man can bear up under the hearing of the word for an hour or two better than half an hour in prayer, with that necessary vigour of spirit which God hath required. Therefore the general rule is, let your words be concise, but full of affection. Look, as in vast and great bodies, the spirits are more diffused and scattered, and therefore

they are more inactive than those which are of a smaller compass; so, in a long prayer, there may be more of words, but less of life.

2. The affectation of prolixity is naught. Usually it comes from some evil ground, either from pride and ostentation of gifts;—thus we read the Pharisees were taxed for making long prayers, Mat. 23:14, that, under the colour of them, they might devour widows' houses; that is, be credited and trusted with the management of their estates;—or else it may come from superstition, such as is in the heathens, who had unworthy thoughts of God, as if he were harsh and severe, and delighted in much speaking, and needed to be quickened;—or it may come from folly, for folly abounds in words, though it be scanty in true affection and hearty respect to God. A wise man is content with words enough to express his mind: choice and measure of speech discovereth wisdom.

3. So much time should be spent in prayer, and so many words are necessary as may be convenient and profitable both for ourselves and others. For ourselves, when we are alone, so much as may express faith, and may argue a great plea in the promises, and so much as may reach fervent desire. While the fervency continues, the speech should continue; and so much as may express our filial dependence, that we have a sense that God is our Father, which are the ends for which prayer was appointed. And so as it may suit with the conveniency of others, that they may be warmed, but not tired, and may not be exposed to the temptations of weariness, and wanderings, and distractions in their mind, when things are spun out unto an unreasonable length; for then it is neither pleasing to God nor profitable to men. Thus I have stated the offence our Lord forbids, what are those vain repetitions and idle babblings, such as arise from weariness of soul and misconceit of God, or some other base grounds; not that plentiful expression which comes from a large and free heart, pouring out itself before the Lord. And if we be swayed by his authority, these things should be regarded by us, and we should remedy these sins in prayer.

II. Let us come to examine our Lord's reasons which are produced against it, and see how conclusive they are in the case, and you will discern the drift of Christ's speech.

Our Lord reasons:—

First, From the practice of the heathens: 'But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathens do.' In this reason several propositions are couched and contained, which deserve to be weighed by us.

1. This is implied: that the heathens had a sense of the necessity of worship, as well as the being of a God. Though natural light be inferioris hemisphærii, of the lower hemisphere, and chiefly reacheth to duties of the second table, of commerce between man and man; for that light which was left in the heart of man since the fall, more directly respects our carriage towards men, and there it is more clear and open; yet it so far reaches to the duties of the higher hemisphere, as that there is some discerning too of the duties of the first table, of piety as well as honesty; as that there is a God; and if there be a God, he is to be worshipped; for these two notions live and die together. The rude mariners were sensible of a divine power which was to be called upon and consulted with in case of extremity, and that the way of commerce was by worship: Jonah 1:5, when the storm arose, 'they called every man upon his god.'

2. Though heathens were sensible of the being of a God and the necessity of worship, yet they were blind and dark in worship; for Christ saith, 'Be not as the heathen; for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking.' Usually a half light misleads men. The heathens, though they had some notions of an eternal Power, yet when they came to perform their worship, Rom. 1:21, 'They glorified him not as God; but became vain,' ἐν τοις διαλογισμοῖς, 'in their imaginations;' that is, in their practical inferences. They saw an infinite, eternal Power, which was to be loved, trusted, worshipped; but when they came to suit these notions to practice, to love, trust,



and worship him, there they were vain, frivolous, and had misconceits of God.

3. Their errors in worship were many. Here our Lord takes notice but of one, that they thought to be heard for their much speaking. And there the original mistake of the heathens, and that which compriseth all the rest, was this, a transformation or changing of God into the likeness of man, which is very natural and incident to us. Upon all occasions we are apt to misconceive of God, and to judge him according to our own model and scantling: Ps. 50:21, 'Thou thoughtest I was altogether such an one as thyself.' So did these. Because man is wrought upon by much speaking, and carried away with a flood of words, therefore they thought so it would be with God. This transformation of the divine nature into an idol of our own shaping and picturing, the turning of God into the form of a corruptible man, this hath been the ground of all the miscarriage in the world.

But more particularly: their error in this matter was charging weakness and harshness upon God, or not worshipping him according to his spiritual nature.

[1.] Charging weakness upon God, as if many words did help him to understand their meaning, or to remember their petitions the better. Hence that practice of Baal's priests, 1 Kings 18:26, 'They called on the name of Baal from morning till night, O Baal, hear us.' They were repeating and crying again and again, 'O Baal,' as if their clamour would awaken their god. Whence Elijah's sarcasm, 'He sleepeth, and must be awaked.' As those that for two hours together cried out, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians! Great is Diana of the Ephesians!' Acts 19:34.

[2.] Their ascribing harshness to God, as if he were hard to be entreated, and delighted in the pain of his creatures, and would be more affected with them, because they wearied themselves with the irksomeness of a long prayer. Penal satisfactions are very natural.

Superstition is a tyranny; it vexeth the soul with unreasonable duty, affects outward length to the weariness of the flesh. The general conceit is, that man thinks God must be served with some self-denial, and the flesh must be displeased; but it shall be displeased but in a little, and in an outward way, as Baal's priests gashed themselves; as if God were pleased with our burdensome and long exercises.

[3.] There was error in it. They did not conceive aright of the spiritual nature of God; as if he were pleased with the mere task, a long hymn, and an idle repetition of words, without sense and affection. Whereas the Lord doth not measure prayers by prolixity, but by the vehemency; not by the labour of the external work, but by the inward affection manifested therein. And words are only accepted with him as they serve to quicken, continue, or increase our affection.

Secondly, Our Saviour's next reason is drawn from verse 8: 'Be not ye like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before you ask him.' It is inconsistent with the true notion of God. Here are three propositions, all which are of force to draw us off from babbling, or affectation of many words in prayer. As:—

1. That God is a Father, and that both by creation and covenant. By creation, to all mankind; so he will be ready to sustain that which he hath made. He that hath given life will give food; he that hath given a body will give raiment. Things expect supply thence from whence they received their being. But much more by covenant; so he is our Father in Christ: 'Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us,' Isa. 63:16. Well, but what is this to the present purpose, that God is a Father? This is a check to babbling; therefore we should go to him in an unaffected manner, with a child-like spirit and dependence, with words reverent, serious, and plain. Children do not use to make starched speeches to their fathers when they want bread, but only express their natural cry, and go to them for such things as they stand in need of. There they speak, and are accepted; and a word from a child moves the father more than an orator can move all his hearers. Even such a naked address should we make to

God in a plain manner; for when we come to pray, Christ would have us take up God in the notion of a father, and to behave ourselves in a natural way to him; for affected eloquence or loquacity in prayer is one of the main things Christ here disproves. Prayer ought to be simple and plain; therefore the great business of 'the Spirit of adoption' is to make us cry, 'Abba, Father:' Rom. 8:15.

2. He is such a Father as is not ignorant of our wants. The care of his providence is over all the creatures he hath made. God hath an inspection over them, to provide necessaries for them; much more over his people. His eyes run to and fro, to find them out in all the places of their dispersion; and he doth exercise his power for their relief: 2 Chron. 16:9. Now this thought should be rooted in our hearts when we come to pray to God: I go to a Father, which hath found me out in the throng of his creatures, and knows what is good for me. This is a great ground why we should not use battology, because God knows what my needs are. Words are not required for God's sake, but for ours; not to inform God, but that we may perform our duty the better. Well, then, so far as they are useful, so far they should be used; to bound our thoughts, to warm our affections, to strengthen our faith. (1.) To bound our thoughts; for an interruption in speech is sooner discerned than an interruption in meditation. (2.) And to warm our affections. Words at first are vent to affection, but afterwards they continue to increase the affection; as a hearth is first warmed by the fire, and then it serves to keep in the fire. (3.) And they conduce to strengthen our faith, while we plead promises in God's hearing. We wrestle with God, that we may catch a heat ourselves. And therefore words should be only used as they conduce to the strengthening our faith, or continuing our affection to God; longer than they serve that end in prayer, they are babbling and vain repetitions, and much speaking, which Christ here forbids. Consider, there is not a change in God, but a change in us, wrought by prayer. It is neither to give information to God, that he may know our meaning, nor to move him and persuade him to be willing by our much speaking, but only to raise up our own faith and hope towards God.

3. He is such a Father as is not unwilling to relieve us. Your heavenly Father is very ready to give you such things as you stand in need of, as Christ expresseth it, Mat. 7:11, 'If ye, being evil, 'know how to give good things unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask him?' And, Luke 11:13, it is, 'How much more shall your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit?' When you come to beg for grace, consider what earthly parents would do for a child. Their affections are limited, they are in part corrupt; and poor straitened creatures have not such bowels of compassion as God; and yet, when a child comes to them with a genuine cry, with a sense of his want and confidence of his father, he cannot harden his bowels against his child. This also checks much speaking; for we do not pray to stir up mercy in him, as if he needed much entreaty, and were severe, and delighted to put the creature to penance. No, he is ready before we ask; he knows our wants and needs, and is ready to supply us with those things we stand in need of, only will have this comely order observed. Sometimes he prevents our prayers before we ask: 'Before they call, I will answer; and I am found of them that sought me not.' Before we can have a heart to come, the Lord prevents us with his blessing. And sometimes he gives us what we ask. This is the condescension of God, that when you call he will answer; and when you cry, he doth in his providence say, 'What will you have, poor creatures?' And he gives more than we ask; as Solomon asked wisdom, and God gave him more than he asked—wisdom, riches, and honour.

Object. But here is an objection. These notions seem not only to exclude long prayer and much speaking, but all prayer. If God know our wants, and is so ready to give, whether we ask or no, what need we open them to him in prayer at all?

I answer, it is God's prescribed course, and that should be enough to gracious hearts that will be obedient to their Father. Whatever he intends, though he knows our wants and resolves to answer them, yet it is a piece of religious manners to ask what he is about to give: Jer. 29:11, 'I know my thoughts towards you, thoughts of peace, yet

will I be inquired of you for these things.' God knows his own thought's, hath stated his decrees, and will not alter the beautiful course of his providence for our sakes, yet he will be sought unto. So Ezek. 36.: God purposed to bless them, and therefore promiseth, 'I will do thus and thus for you'; yet, verse 37, 'I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.' I will do it, but you shall milk out the blessing by prayer. This course is also necessary, and that both for his honour, and our profit and comfort.

1. It is necessary for his honour, that God may still be acknowledged, that the creature may be kept up in a constant dependence upon God, and may go about nothing, but may ask his leave, counsel, and blessing: Prov. 3:6, 'In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.' We ask God's leave that we may do such a thing, for he hath the dominion over all events. And if we are doubtful, we ask his counsel, whether we may stay here or there, or dispose of ourselves and families, and we ask his blessing upon our resolution. Now that we may know God doth all, that he governeth all human affairs, that we may live upon his allowance and take our daily bread from his hands, and that we may see we hold all these things from our great landlord, therefore we pray unto him. We are robbers and thieves if we use the creature without his leave. God is the great owner of the world, who gives us our daily bread, and all our supplies; therefore he will have it asked, that we may acknowledge our dependence.

2. It is most for our profit. Partly, that our faith should be exercised in pleading God's promise, for there we put the promise in suit. Faith is begotten in the word, but it is exercised in prayer; therefore it is called the 'prayer of faith.' In the word, we take Christ from God; in prayer we present Christ to God. That prayer which is effectual, it is an exercise of faith: Rom. 10:14, 'How shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed?' And as it concerns our faith, so also our love, which is both acted and increased in prayer. It is acted, for it is delight in God which makes us so often converse with him. Thus the hypocrite: Job 27:10, 'Will he always call upon the Lord? Will he

delight himself in the Almighty? 'They that love God cannot be long from him, they that delight in God will be often unbosoming themselves to him. It doth also increase our love, for by answers of prayer we have new fuel to keep in this holy fire in our bosoms. We pray, and then he gives direct answers: Ps. 116:1, 'I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplication.' so our hope is exercised in waiting for the blessing prayed for: Ps. 5:3, 'O Lord, in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.' That looking up is the work of hope, when we are looking and waiting to see what comes in from pleading promises. It is much too for our peace of conscience, for it easeth us of our burthens. It is the vent of the soul, like the opening of a vein in a fever. When our hearts swell with cares, and we have a burthen upon us, and know not what to do, we may ease ourselves to God: Phil. 4:6, 'Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God shall keep your hearts.' Oh, blessed frame, that can be troubled at nothing here in this world, where there are so many businesses, encounters, temptations! What is the way to get this calmness of heart? Be much in opening your hearts to God. Let your requests be made known to God. Look, as in an earthquake, when the wind is imprisoned in the bowels of the earth, the earth heaves, and shakes, and quakes, until there be a vent, and the wind be got out, then all is quiet; so we have many tossings and turmoilings in our minds, till we open and unbosom ourselves to God, and then all is quiet. Also it prepareth us for the improvement of mercies, when we have them out of the hands of God by prayer: 1 Sam. 1:27, 28, 'For this child I prayed,' said Hannah, 'and I will lend him unto the Lord.' Those mercies we expressly prayed for we are more thoroughly obliged to improve for God. What is won with prayer is worn with thankfulness.

## **APPLICATION**

Use 1. To caution us against many abuses in prayer, which may be disproved and taxed, either formally, or by just consequence. I shall instance in five.

1. An idle and foolish loquacity, when men take a liberty to prattle anything in God's hearing, and do not consider the weight and importance of prayer, and what a sin it is to be 'hasty to utter anything before God:' Eccles. 5:2. It is great irreverence and contempt of the majesty of God, when men go hand over head about this work, and speak anything that comes into their mind. As men take themselves to be despised when others speak unseemly in their presence, surely it is a lessening and a despising of God, when we pour out raw, tumultuous, undigested thoughts, and never think of what we are to speak when we come to God: Ps. 45:1, 'My heart is inditing a good matter.' The word signifieth, it 'boils or fries a good matter.' It is an allusion to the Minchah, or meat-offering, which was to be boiled or fried in a pan, before it was to be presented to the Lord, that they might not bring a dough-baked sacrifice and offering to the Lord. Such ignorant, dull, senseless praying, it is a blaspheming of God, and a lessening of the majesty of God.

2. A frothy eloquence, and an affected language in prayer, this directly comes under reproof. As if the prayer were more grateful to God, and he were moved by words and strains of rhetoric, and did accept men for their parts rather than graces. Fine phrases, and quaint speeches, alas! they do not carry it with the Lord. They are but an empty babble in his ears, rather than a humble exercise of faith, hope, love, and child-like affections, and holy desires after God. If we would speak with God, we must speak with our hearts to him, rather than with our words. This is a sin of curiosity, as the other was of neglect. It is not words, but the spirit and life which God looks after. Prayer, it is not a work of oratory, the product of memory, invention, and parts, but a filial affection, that we may come to him, as to a father, with a child-like confidence. Therefore, too much care of verbal eloquence in prayer, and tunable expressions, is a sin of the same nature with babbling. Though men should have the wit to avoid impertinent expressions and repetitions, yet when prayer smells so much of the man rather than of the Spirit of God, alas! it is but like the unsavoury belches of a rotten breath in the nostrils of God. We

should attend to matter, to the things we have to communicate to God, to our necessities, rather than to words.

3. Heartless speaking, filling up the time with words, when the tongue outruns the heart, when men pour their breath into the air, but their hearts are dead and sleepy, or their hearts keep not time and pace with their expressions. We oftener pray with our tongues than with our minds, and from our memories than our consciences, and from our consciences than our affections, and from our affections, as presently stirred, than from our hearts renewed, bended, and inclined towards God. Be the prayer long or short, the heart must keep pace with our tongues. As the poet said, *disticha longa facit*, 'his distichs were tedious,' so it is tedious and irksome to God, unless we make supplication in the spirit: Eph. 6:18. Remember God will not be mocked.

4. When men rest in outward vehemency and loud speech, saith Tertullian, *Quibus arteriis opus est, si pro sono audiamur!* 'What lungs and sides must we have, if we be heard to speak to heaven by the noise and sound!' In some there is a natural vehemency and fierceness of speech, which is rather stirred up by the heat and agitation of the bodily spirits than any vehemency of affection. There is a contention of speech, which is very natural to some, and differeth much from that holy fervour, the life and power of prayer, which is accompanied with reverence and child-like dependence upon God. It is not the loud noise of words which is best heard in heaven, but the fervent affectionate cries of the saints are those of the heart rather than of the tongue. Exod. 14:17, it is said, 'Moses cried to the Lord.' We do not read of the words he uttered; his cry was with the heart. There is a crying with the soul and with the heart to God: Ps. 10:17, 'Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble.' It is the desires God hears: Ps. 39:9, 'Lord, all my desire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee.' The Lord needs not the tongue to be an interpreter between him and the hearts of his children. He that hears without ears can interpret prayers though not uttered by the tongue. Our desires are cries in the ears of the Lord of hosts. The vehemency



of the affections may sometimes cause the extension of the voice, but alas! without this it is but a tinkling cymbal.

5. Popish repetition, and loose shreds of prayer often repeated, as they have in their liturgy over and over again; their Gloria Patri, so often repeated; their Lord have mercy; and in their prayer made to Jesus, sweet Jesus, blessed Jesus; and going over the Ave Maria, and this to be tumbled over upon their beads, and continuing prayer by tale and by number: surely these are but vain repetitions, and this is that much speaking which our Lord aims at. Thus I have despatched the abuses of prayer.

Use 2. To give you direction in prayer, how to carry yourselves in this holy duty towards God in a comely manner.

I shall give you directions:—

1. About our words in prayer.
2. About our thoughts in prayer.
3. About our affections in prayer.

First, about our words. There is a use of them in prayer, to excite, and convey, and give vent to affection: Hosea 14:2, 'Take with you words, and turn to the Lord, and say, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously.' Surely the prophet doth not only prescribe that they should take affections, but take with them words. Words have an interest in prayer.

Now, these may be considered either when we are alone or in company.

1. When we are alone. Here take the advice of the Holy Ghost: Eccles. 5:2, 'God is in heaven, and thou art upon earth, therefore let thy words be few.' How few? Few in weight, conscience, reverence. Few in weight, affecting rather to speak matter than words; concisely and

feelingly, rather than with curiousness, to express what you have to say to God. Few in conscience. Superstition is a bastard religion, and is tyrannous, and puts men upon tedious services, and sometimes beyond their strength. Therefore pray neither too short nor too long; do it not merely to lengthen out the prayer, or as counting it the better for being long. The shortness and the length must be measured by the fervency of our hearts, our many necessities, and as it tendeth to the inflaming our zeal. As it can get up the heart, let it still be subservient to that. Few with reverence, and managed with that gravity, awfulness, and seriousness as would become an address to God. As Abraham, Gen. 18:31, had been reasoning with God before, therefore he saith, 'Let not God be angry if I speak to him this once,' when he renewed the suit. Thus alone.

2. In company. There our words must be apt and orderly, moving as much as may be, not to God, but to the hearers; managed with such reverence and seriousness as may suit with the gravity of the duty, and not increase, but cure the dulness of those with whom we join. And what if we did in public duties choose out words to reason with God, as Job saith, chap. 9:14, 'Choose out my words to reason with him;'—if we did use preparation, and think a little beforehand, that we may go about the duty with serious advice, and not with indigested thoughts? But this hath the smallest interest in prayer.

Secondly, Our thoughts; that we may conceive aright of God in prayer, which is one of the greatest difficulties in the duty.

1. Of his nature and being.

2. Of his relation to us.

3. Of his attributes.

First, Of the nature and being of God. Every one that would come to God must fix this in his mind, that God is, and that God is a spirit; and accordingly he must be worshipped as will suit with these two notions. Heb. 11:6, 'He that cometh to God must believe that God is,'

and then that God is a spirit; for it is said, John 4:24, 'God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.' Oh, then, whenever you come to pray to God, fix these two thoughts, let them be strong in your heart: God is; I do not speak to an idol, but to the living God. And God is a spirit; and therefore not so much pleased with plausibleness of speech, or tunable cadency of words, as with a right temper of heart. Alas! when we come to pray, we little think God is, or what God is. Much of our religion is performed to an unknown God, and, like the Samaritans, we worship we know not what. It is not speculations about the divine nature, or high-strained conceptions, which doth fit us for prayer: the discoursing of these things with some singularity, or terms removed from common understanding, this is not that which I press you to; but such a sight of God as prompteth us to a reverent and serious worshipping of him. Then we have right notions of God in prayer, when we are affected as Moses was, when God showed him his back-parts, and proclaimed his name: Exod. 34, 'He made haste, bowed his head, and worshipped.' When our worship suiteth with the nature of God, it is spiritual and holy, not pompous and theatrical. Well, then, these two things must be deeply imprinted in our minds—that God is, and that he is a spirit; and then is our worship right.

For instance:—

[1.] For the first notion, God's being. Then is our worship right, when it doth proclaim to all that shall observe us, or we that observe ourselves, there is a great, an infinite, eternal power, which sits at the upper end of causes, and governeth all according to his own pleasure. Alas! the worship of many is flat atheism; they say in their hearts either there is no God, or believe there is no God. Therefore, do you worship him as becomes such a glorious being? Is his mercy seen in your faith and confidence, his majesty in your humility and reverence, his goodness in your soul's rejoicing, his greatness and justice in your trembling before his throne? The worship must be like the worshipped, it must have his stamp upon it.

[2.] For the other notion, God is a spirit, therefore the soul must be the chief agent in the business, not the body, or any member of the body. Spirits they converse with spirits: the body is but employed by the soul, and must not guide and lead it, but be led by it. Therefore see whether there be the spirit, otherwise that which is most essential to the worship is wanting. To have nothing employed but the tongue, and the heart about other business, is not to carry yourselves as to a God, and a God that is a spirit. Recollect yourselves; where is my soul in this worship, and how is it affected towards God?

Secondly, As there must be thoughts to direct us in his being and nature, so also in his relation as a father, as one that is inclinable to pardon, pity, and help you. We have the spirit of adoption given us for this very end and purpose, that we may cry, 'Abba, Father;' and, Gal. 4:16, 'Because you are sons, therefore he hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father;' and, Rom. 8:15, 'We have received the Spirit of adoption, crying, Abba, Father;' that we may come to God in a child-like manner, dealing with him as with a father, acquainting him with our wants, necessities, burdens, with a hope of relief and supply.

Object. Ay, saith a distressed soul, if my heart be thus carried up to God, if I could discern such a Spirit of adoption prompting me to go to God as a father, then it would be better with me.

To this I answer:—

1. Many times there is a child-like inclination where there is not a child-like familiarity and boldness. What is that child-like inclination? The soul cannot keep away from God, and that is an implicit owning him as a father: Jer. 3:19, 'Thou shalt call me, My father; and shalt not turn away from me.' It is a child-like act to look to him for all our supplies, and to recommend our suit. As when a child wants anything, he goes to his father.

2. There is a child-like reverence many times when there is not a child-like confidence. The soul hath an awe of God when it cannot explicitly own him as our God and Father, yet it owns him in the humbling way: Luke 15:18, 'I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am not worthy to be called thy son.' Though we cannot confidently approach to God as our reconciled Father, yet we come with humility and reverence. Lord, I would fain be, but I deserve not to be, called thy child.

3. There is a child-like dependence upon God's general offer, though we have not an evidence of the sincerity of our particular claim. God offereth to be a Father in Christ to all penitent believers. Now, when a broken-hearted creature comes to God, and looks for mercy upon the account of the covenant, though he cannot see his own interest; for then we come to God, though not as our Father, yet as 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;' and that is a relief in prayer, as Eph. 1:3, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;' and, ver. 17, 'The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory;' and, Eph. 3:14, 'I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Mark, when we come to him as the Father of Christ, we believe what God offereth in the covenant of grace—namely, that he will deal kindly with us as a father with his children; that he will be good to those that come to him by Christ. The term Father is not only to be considered with respect to the disposition or qualification of the persons, but the dispensation they are under. It is the new covenant. In the new covenant God undertakes to be fatherly—that is, to pity our miseries, to pardon our sins, to heal our natures, to save our persons. Now all that come for refuge to take hold of this hope set before them, may come to God as a father, if they believe the gospel in general, though they are not assured of God's love to themselves.

4. There may be a child-like love to God, when yet we have not a sense and assurance of his paternal love to us. God hath a title to our choicest and dearest love before we: can make out a title to his highest benefits. We owe our hearts to him: Prov. 23:26, 'My son, give me thy heart.' If you give him your hearts, you are sons, though

you know it not. God may be owned as a father, either by our sense of his fatherly love, or by our choice and esteem of him, *optando, si non affirmando*. Come as fatherless without him: Hosea 14:3; or, to speak it in other words, the unutterable groans of the Spirit do discover the spirit of adoption, as well as the unspeakable joys of the Spirit: 1 Pet. 1:8. There is an option and choice, though we be not assured of our special relation.

5. God is glorified by an affiance, and a resolute adherence, where there is no assurance. When you are resolved, let him deal with you as an enemy, you will stick to him as a father: Job 13:15, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.' Faith can take God as a friend and father, and put a good construction upon his dealings, when he seems to come against us as an enemy. And we give glory to God when we can adhere to him as our only happiness, and trust his fatherly kindness and goodness, though he cover himself with frowns, and hide himself from our prayers; and you own him as the Father of mercies, though it may be you have no sense and feeling of his fatherly love to you.

6. There is a difference between the gift itself and the degree. We cannot say we have not the spirit of adoption because we have not so much of the spirit of adoption as others have—I mean as to the effects. We may have the Spirit as a sanctifier, though not as a comforter; though he doth not calm our hearts, and rebuke our fears, yet he doth sanctify us, and incline us to God. The Spirit was only given to Christ without measure, but to Christians in a different measure and proportion; and usually as you submit more to his gracious conduct, and overcome the enemies of your peace, the devil, the world, and the flesh. The impression is left upon some in a smaller, and upon others in a larger character. All are not of one growth and size; some are more explicitly Christians, others in a riddle. Much grace doth more discover itself than a little grace under a heap of imperfection. Some are more mortified and heavenly-minded than others.

7. When all other helps fail, faith will make use of our common relation to God as a Creator, as we may come to him as the workmanship of his hands. It is better to do so than keep off from him; and we may come to him as the workmanship of his hands when we cannot come to him as children of his family. The church saith, Isa. 64:8, 'Now, O Lord, thou art our father: we are the clay, and thou our potter, and we all are the work of thy hand.' They plead for favour and mercy by that common relation, as he was their potter, and they his clay. And David, Ps. 119:73, 'Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.' Surely it is some comfort to claim by the covenant of Noah, which was made with all mankind, when we cannot claim mercy by the covenant of Abraham, which was made with the family of the faithful. The scriptures warrant us to do so: Isa. 54:9, 'For this is as the waters of Noah unto me.' All this is spoken to show that, one way or other, we should bring our hearts to depend upon him as a father, for succour and relief.

Thirdly, His attributes. This text offereth three. God's omniscieny, 'He knows;' His fatherly care, 'Your Father knows what you stand in need of;' and his readiness to help, even before we ask.

[1.] He is omniscient: He knows our persons, for Christ calleth his own sheep by name: John 10:3. He knoweth every one of us by head and by poll, by person and name. Yea, and he knows our state and condition: Ps. 56:8, 'Thou tellest my wanderings; put thou my tears into thy bottle; are they not in thy book?' All our wanderings he tells them; all our tears he hath a bottle for them; to show God's particular notice; they are metaphorical expressions. And he observes us in the very posture when we come to pray, and where. Acts 9:11: Go to such a street, in such a place, and 'inquire for one Saul of Tarsus; for, behold, he prayeth.' The Lord takes notice, in such a city, in such a street, in such a house, in such a room, and what you are doing when you are praying. And he seeth, not only that you pray, but how you pray: Rom. 8:27, 'And he that searcheth the heart, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh

intercession for the saints, according to the will of God.' He can discern between lusts and groans, words and affections, and such words as are the belches of the flesh, and such as are the breathings of the spirit.

[2.] There is his fatherly care, for it is said, 'Your Father knows what things you have need of.' He knows what pincheth and presseth you. It is said, 1 Pet. 5:7, 'Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.' It is not said, that he may take care of you, but he doth take care. God is aforehand with us, and our carking care doth but take the work out of God's hand which he is doing already. Our cares are needless, fruitless, burthensome; but his are assiduous, powerful, blessed. A small matter may occasion much vexation to us, but to him all things are easy. Upon these considerations, 'We should be careful for nothing, but make known our requests unto God:' Phil. 4:6. Praying for what we want, and giving thanks for what we have; 'For your Father knoweth you have need of these things:' Mat. 6:32. His fatherly love will not suffer him to neglect his children or any of their concernments. Therefore, if you have a temptation upon you to anxiety and carefulness of mind, and know not how to get out of such a strait and conquer such a difficulty, remember you have a father to provide for you: this will prevent tormenting thoughtfulness, which is good for nothing but to anticipate your sorrow.

[3.] The next is, his readiness to help. This should be deeply impressed upon your minds, and you should habituate these thoughts, how ready God is to help and to run to the cry: Ps. 32:5, 'I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.' Before his purpose could be brought to pass: Isa. 65:24, 'Before they call, I will answer, and whiles they are yet speaking, I will hear.' So Jer. 31:20: 'I heard Ephraim bemoaning himself,' &c. God's bowels were troubled presently. He is more ready to give than you to ask. This will help and direct you mightily in the business of prayer; for God hath a care for his children, and is very ready to help the weak, and relieve them in all their straits.



Thirdly, For directions about our affections in prayer: three things are required, viz., fervency, reverence, confidence.

1. Fervency. That usually comes from two grounds, a broken-hearted sense of our wants, and a desire of the blessing we stand in need of. For the broken-hearted sense of our wants, especially spiritual. Weaknesses are incident to the best. All Christians have continual need to cry to God. We have continual necessities both within and without. Go cry to God your Father without affectation, but not without affection, and seek your supplies from him. Let me tell you, the more grace is increased, the more sense of wants is increased; for sin is more hated, defects are less borne. And then, there must be a desire of the blessings, especially spiritual; our needs must stir up fresh longings and holy desires after God: Mat. 7:7, 'Ask, seek, knock;' Luke 11:8, 'For his importunity, he will rise and give.' We spend the earnestness of our spirits in other matters, in disputes, contests, earthly pursuits; our importunate earnestness runs in a worldly channel. No, no; it must be from simplicity and sincerity, pouring out your hearts before him; no sacrifice without fire: James 5:16, 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.'

2. Reverence. A reverent respectful carriage towards our heavenly Father: Ps. 2:11, 'Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.' Mark, there is in God a mixture of majesty and mercy; so in us there must be of joy and trembling. God's love doth not abase his majesty, nor his majesty diminish his love. We ought to know our distance from God, and to think of his superiority over us; therefore we must be serious. Remember, 'God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him,' Ps. 89:7.

3. With confidence: Eph. 3:12, 'In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.' There is boldness in pouring out our requests to God, who will certainly hear us, and grant what is good. We must rely upon his goodness and power in all our necessities. He is so gracious in Christ that he will do that which is

best for his glory and our good, and upon other terms we should not seek it. If you would not turn prayer into babbling, much speaking to affectation of words, take heed of these abuses, and labour to bring your hearts to God in this manner.

## **Our Father Which Art in Heaven**

I HAVE insisted upon the foregoing verses, which do concern the duty of prayer; let me now come to the Lord's Prayer itself. This prayer was formed and indited by Christ, and therefore to be highly esteemed by Christians: Jesus Christ, who was the wisdom of God, he knew both our necessities and the Father's good-will towards us; and therefore surely he would give us a perfect form and directory. We are not absolutely tied to this form. We do not read that it was ever used by the apostles, though we have many of their prayers upon record in the Acts and in the Epistles; yet they plainly differ as to the construction of the words; and this very prayer is diversely set down by the evangelists themselves: Mat. 6:11, 'Give us this day our daily bread;' it is in other words, Luke 11:3, 'Give us day by day our daily bread;' and ver. 12, 'And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;' in Luke 11:4, it is, 'And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.' But, however, though we are not tied to this form, yet I think it may be humbly used; for Christ taught his disciples how to pray while as yet they were in their ignorance and tenderness, and had not received the Spirit. And God usually puts words into sinners' mouths: Hosea 14:2, 'Take with you words, and say unto him, Receive us graciously.' Look, as Joseph is said to feed his father and his brethren as a little child is nourished (as it is in the margin), there is not only food provided, but it is put into their mouths, Gen. 47:12; so did Christ teach his disciples to pray, not only as directing them what they should pray for, but putting a form of words into their mouths.

In this prayer there are three parts observable:—

1. The preface.
2. The petitions themselves.
3. The conclusion.

In the preface we have a description of God, as always we should begin prayer with awful thoughts of God. God is described partly from his goodness and mercy—Our Father; and partly from his greatness and majesty—which art in heaven.

I. His goodness and mercy: Our Father; where is set forth:—

1. The relation wherein God standeth to his people, in the word Father.
2. Their propriety and interest in that relation, wherein, not the particular interest of a single believer is asserted, My Father, but the general interest of all the elect in Christ, Our Father.

I shall waive all which may be said concerning prayer in general; concerning the lawfulness or unlawfulness of a form in prayer; the disputes concerning the use of this form; as also all the disputes concerning the object of prayer, which we learn from hence to be God alone. Surely prayer is a sacrifice, and belongeth only to God; it cannot be made to any other but to him, who knoweth all the prayers that are made in the world at the same time, and the hearts of all those that pray. I will also waive what might be spoken concerning preparation before petition; for here there is a preface before the prayer itself. Neither shall I speak concerning the necessity of conceiving right thoughts of God in prayer; how we may conceive of his goodness, to beget a confidence; of his majesty, to beget an awe and reverence.

That which I shall insist upon is, the notion and relation under which God is here expressed, which is that of Father—Our Father.

Observe, those that would pray aright must address themselves to God as a father in Jesus Christ.

Hypocrites, at the last day, will cry, 'Lord, Lord;' but Christ hath taught us to say, 'Our Father.'

Here I shall:—

I. Inquire in what sense God is a father.

II. What encouragements we have from thence in prayer, when we can take him up under this notion and appellation.

I. In what sense God is a father. This title may be given to God, either essentially, or with respect to personal relation.

1. Essentially; and so it is common to all the persons in the Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; all three are God, and our Father. And thus, not only the first Person, but the second, is called 'the Everlasting Father:' Isa. 9:6. And the Holy Ghost, being author of our being, is called our Maker. But,

2. It may be ascribed to God personally. And so the first Person is called God the Father; and that either with relation to Christ or to us.

[1.] With relation to Christ, as the Son of God. So the first Person is called the Father, as he is the fountain of the Deity, communicating to and with him the divine essence: Ps. 2:7, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.' The personal property of the Father is to beget; and of the Son, to be begotten. There is an eternal now, wherein God is said to beget him. Thus he may be called the Father of Christ, as he is the second Person, and not only as incarnate and Mediator. Though God be Christ's Father, as second Person, yet they are all equal in power, dignity, and glory; but as Mediator, God is his Father in another respect. So it is said, John 14:28, 'My Father is greater than I'—not as God, for so he was equal; 'He thought it no robbery to be equal with God:' Phil. 2:6. But 'greater than I;' that is,

consider him as man and mediator, in the state of his humiliation; for it is notable to consider upon what occasion Christ speaks these words: 'If ye love me ye would rejoice because I said I go unto the Father; for my Father is greater than I;' that is, You admire me and prize, my company exceedingly, because you see the power which I put forth in the miracles which I do; ye would rejoice if you understood it aright; he is infinitely more glorious than I appear in this state of abasement and humiliation. Thus, with respect to Christ God, the first Person, may be called the Father.

[2.] With respect to us; for the first person is not only the Father of Christ, but our Father: John 20:17, 'I go to my Father, and your Father.' We share with Christ in all his relations. As God was his God by covenant; so he is our God. And in this sense, personally, may be taken here; for our business lieth mainly with the first Person, with whom Christ intercedeth for us: 1 John 2:1, 'We have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous.' Before whom doth he appear? Before the Father. And it is to him to whom we direct our prayers, though not excluding the other persons: Eph. 3:14, 'I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Though it be not unlawful to pray to Christ, or to the Holy Ghost, for that hath been done by the saints. Stephen saith, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;' and Jacob saith, 'The angel of the covenant bless the lads.' And all baptized persons are baptized in the name of the Son and Holy Ghost, as well as in the name of the, Father. But usually Christian worship is terminated upon God the Father, as being chief in the mystery of redemption; and so it is said, Eph. 2:18, 'Through him, by one Spirit, we have access to the Father.' We come to him through Christ, as the meritorious cause, who hath procured leave for us; and by the Spirit, as the efficient cause, who gives us a heart to come; and to the Father, as the ultimate object of Christian worship. Christ procureth us leave to come, and the Spirit gives us a heart to come: so that by the Spirit, through Christ, we have access to God. So that now you may see what is meant by the Father—'Our Father.'

But now let me distinguish again. God is a father to mankind, either:

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1. In a more general consideration and respect, by creation; or,
2. In a more special regard, by adoption.

First, By creation God is a father. At first he gave a being to all; things; but to men and angels he gave reason: John 1:4, 'And this life was the light of man.' Other things had life, but man had such a life as was light; and so by his original constitution he became to be the son of God. To establish the relation of a father, there must be a communication of life and likeness. A painter, that makes an image or picture like himself, he is not the father of it, for though there be likeness, yet no life. The sun in propriety of speech is not the father of frogs and putrid creatures, which are quickened by its heat; though there be life, yet there is no likeness. We keep this relation for univocal generations and rational creatures. Thus, by creation, the angels are said to be the sons of God: Job 38:7, 'When he was laying the foundations of the earth, the sons of God shouted for joy;' that is, the angels. And thus Adam also was called the son of God: Luke 3:38. Thus, by our first creation, and with respect to that, all men are the sons of God, children of God. And (mark it) in respect of God's continual concurrence to our being, though we have deformed ourselves, and are not the same that we were when we were first created; yet still, in regard of some sorry remains of God's image, and the light of reason, all are sons of God, and God in a general sense is a father to us; yea, more a father than our natural parents are. For our parents, they concur to our being but instrumentally, God originally. We had our being, under God, from our parents: he hath the greatest hand and stroke in forming us in the belly, and making us to be what we are. Which appeareth by this: Parents, they know not what the child will be, male or female, beautiful or deformed; they cannot tell the number of bones, muscles, veins, arteries, and cannot restore any of these in case they should be lost and spoiled; so that he that framed us in the womb, and wonderfully fashioned us in

the secret parts, he is our Father: Ps. 139:14. As the writing is rather the work of the penman than of the pen, so we are rather the workmanship of God than of our parents; they are but instruments, God is the author and fountain of that life and being which we still have. And again, consider, the better part of man is of his immediate creation, and in this respect he is called 'the Father of spirits:' Heb. 12:9. They do not run in the channel of carnal generation or fleshly descent, but they are immediately created by God. And it is said, Eccles. 12:7, 'The spirit returneth to God which gave it.'

Well, then, you see how, in a general sense, and with what good reason, God may be called our Father. Those which we call fathers, they are but subordinate instruments; the most we have from them is our corruption, our being depraved; but our substance, and the frame and fashion of it, our being, and all that is good in it, that is from the Lord.

Now, this is some advantage in prayer, to look upon God as our father by virtue of creation, that we can come to him as the work of his hands, and beseech him that he will not destroy us and suffer us to perish: Isa. 64:8, 'But now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we are all the work of thine hand.' There is a general mercy that God hath for all his creatures: and, therefore, as he gave us rational souls, and fashioned us in the womb, we may come to him and say, Lord, thou art our potter and we thy clay, do us good, forsake us not.

What advantage have we in prayer from this common interest or general respect of God's being a father by virtue of creation?

[1.] This common relation binds us to pray to him. All things which God hath made, by a secret instinct they are carried to God for their supply: Ps. 145:15, 'The eyes of all things look up to thee.' In their way they pray to him and moan to him for their supplies, even very beasts, young ravens, and fowls of the air. But much more is this man's duty, as we have reason, and can clearly own the first cause.

And therefore upon these natural grounds the apostle reasons with them why they should seek after God: Acts 14:17.

[2.] As this common relation binds us to pray, so it draweth common benefits after it: Mat. 6:25, 26, 'Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them.' Where God hath given a life, he will give food; and where he gives a body, he will give raiment, according to his good pleasure. He doth not cast off the care of any living creature he hath made, as long as he will preserve it for his glory. Beasts have their food and provision, much more men, which are capable of knowing and enjoying God.

[3.] It giveth us confidence in the power of God. He which made us out of nothing is able to keep, preserve, and supply us when all things fail, and in the midst of all dangers. Saints are able to make use of this common relation. And therefore it is said, 1 Pet. 4:19, that we should 'commit our souls unto him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.' The apostle speaks of such times when they carried their lives in their hands from day to day. They did not know how soon they should be haled before tribunals and cast into prisons. Remember, you have a Creator, which made you out of nothing; and he can keep and preserve life when you have nothing. Thus this common relation is not to be forgotten, as he gives us our outward life and being: Ps. 124:8, 'Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.' As if the psalmist had said, as long as I see these glorious monuments of his power, these things framed out of nothing, shall I distrust God, whatever exigence or strait I may be reduced to?

Secondly, More especially there is a particular sort of men to whom God is a father in Christ, and that is, to believers: John 1:12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to be called the sons of God.' Those which in their natural state and condition were children of wrath, and slaves to sin and Satan, when they come, and are



willing to welcome and receive Christ into their hearts, in a sense of their misery, are willing to make out after God and Christ; they have an allowance to call God Father, and may have child-like communion with him, and run to him in all straits, and lay open their necessities to him. 2 Kings 4:19, When the child cried unto his father, he said, 'Carry him to his mother:' so when we are ill at ease and in any straits, this is the privilege of our adoption, that we have a God to go to; we may go to our Father and plead with him, as the church: Isa. 63:16, 'Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our father, our redeemer.' It is good to know God under this special relation of a father in Christ; and this is that which is the grace of adoption. Adoption is an act of free grace, by which we that were aliens and strangers, servants to sin and Satan, are, in and by Christ, made sons and daughters of God, and accordingly are so reckoned and treated with, to all intents and purposes. It is a great and special privilege, given to God's own children, by virtue of their interest in Christ; and therefore it is said, 1 John 3:1, 'Behold, what love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!' That is, behold it as a certain truth, and admire it as a great privilege. This second relation is a very great privilege, and it will appear, to be so, if we consider:—

[1.] The persons that receive it. We that were aliens, and enemies, and bond-slaves; that were of another line and stock; that might 'say to corruption, Thou art my father; to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister:' Job 17:14. We that were cousin-germans to worms, a handful of enlivened dust, that we should be taken into such a relation to God! We that might say indeed to the devil, Thou art our father, and the lusts of our father we will do: John 8:24. Satan is the sinners' father, and God disclaims them. The Lord disclaims the people which were brought out of the land of Egypt, when they rebelled against him: Exod. 32:7, 'The Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down, for thy, people which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves.' Thy people, which thou hast brought, in scorn and disdain, as if God did disavow them from being

his. And so it was with us all. When Adam had rebelled against God, God executed the law of the rebellious child against him, which was this, that he should be turned out of doors. So was Adam turned out of paradise, and lost his title and heritage; and we were reckoned to the devil. Now, 'behold, what manner of love was this, that we should be called the sons of God!'

[2.] You will wonder at it, you will behold it as an excellent privilege, if you consider the nature of the privilege itself, to be sons and daughters of God, to be able to call God Father. This was Christ's own title and honour. When God had a mind to honour Christ, he proclaims it from heaven: Mat. 3:17. 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' 'Surely, if our hearts were as apprehensive of heavenly privileges as they are of earthly, we would admire it more. Earthly alliance, how is it prized! If a great man should match into our blood and line, what an honour and glory do we reckon it to us! 1 Sam. 18:23, 'Seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's son-in-law?' Do we account this a small matter, to be related to kings, and princes, and potentates? No, no; we have high thoughts of it. And is not this an excellent thing, to be sons and daughters of God? In all other cases, if men have children of their own, they do not adopt. God had a Son of his own, in whom his soul found full delight and complacency; yet he would adopt and take us wretched creatures, he would invest us with the title of sons; and shall it be said of this and that believer, here is the son of God? O behold what manner of love! &c.

[3.] Then do but consider the consequents of it, both in this life and the life to come. In this life, what immunities and privileges have we! Free access, to God; we may come and treat with him when we please, as children to a father, when we stand in need of anything. 'We have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father:' Rom. 8:15. If we ail anything, we may go to our Father and acquaint him with our case and grief. And we shall have a child's allowance here in the world. The heirs of glory are well provided for in their nonage; they have a right to a large portion; all the good

things of the world, meat, drink, marriage, such things they have by a son's right. They have a right to the creature, in and by him who is heir of all things, so they are established in their right which Adam lost: 1 Tim. 4:3, 4. And they are under the ministry of angels; the angels are sent forth to be their guardians, and to supply and provide for them.

And then, in the life to come (for we are not only sons, but heirs), we have a right to the glorious inheritance! Rom. 8:17, 'If children, then heirs, heirs of God.' Here all the children are heirs, male and female, every son and daughter an heir and joint-heirs with Christ. We do as it were divide heaven between us; we have a great, blessed, and glorious inheritance; poor despicable creatures, 'chosen heirs of a kingdom:' James 2:5.

[4.] You will see it was a very great privilege, if you consider how we come to be entitled to it: Eph. 1:5, 'Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, to himself.' We come to it in and by Jesus Christ. Christ was fain to come down, and to take a mother upon earth, that we might have a Father in heaven. He comes down, and was made a man; he became our brother, and so layeth the foundation for the kindred: Heb. 2:11. Nay, not only incarnate, but he died to purchase this title for us. When the business was debated in the council of the Trinity, how lost man might be restored in blood, and have a right and interest in God; and when justice put in exceptions against us, Jesus Christ was content to be 'made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons:' Gal. 4:4, 5. There could be no reconciliation, no amity, no alliance, until sin was expiated and justice satisfied; therefore Christ was not only 'made of a woman,' but 'made under the law;' first our brother by incarnation, and then our redeemer by his death and suffering. As under the law, if a man had waxen poor, the next of kin was to be his redeemer: Lev. 25:25; or if he had sold himself, ver. 47, one of his brethren was to redeem him. Christians, there was a kind of sale and forfeiture on our part of the inheritance and right and title of children; therefore Jesus Christ, when he became a man, *jure propinquitatis*, by virtue of

his kindred and nearness to us, came to redeem his people, and purchase us to God. And this is the relation which is mainly intended in this place; for mark, Christ taught his disciples to pray, 'Our Father;' others, they cannot speak of this relation; and in them all that believe, and all that walk in the Spirit, these alone can' come to God as a father.

II. What advantage have we in prayer by taking up God under this notion and relation, when we can come to him and say, 'Our Father'?

1. It conduceth to our confidence in prayer.

2. It furthereth our duty.

First, It conduceth to our confidence in prayer: for it is not an empty title or a naked relation; but this is the ground of all that favour and grace which we stand in need of, and receive from God. It is notable, 2 Cor. 6:18, saith God, 'I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters.' In other places it is said, Ye shall be called my sons; but here, You shall be my sons; you shall not only be called so, but be so. He will really perform all the parts of a father to us; yea, no father like God. The outward father is but a shadow; as in all comparisons, outward things are but the shadow and similitude, the reality is in inward things. A servant is not always a servant, there may be a release; a husband is not always a husband, there may be a separation by divorce; but a father is always a father, and a child a child. 'I am the true vine.' The outward vine is but a shadow, but Christ himself hath the true properties of a vine. So the outward father is but a shadow and similitude, the reality is in God; none so fatherly and kind as he: Mat. 7:11, 'If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?' There is a how much more upon the fatherly care of God. Natural parents, whose affections are stinted and limited, nay, corrupt and sinful, when a son comes for a fish, will not give him a scorpion, when he comes for bread, will not give him a stone. That were a monstrous

thing, vile and unnatural. So Isa. 49:15: 'Can a woman forget her sucking-child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.' Passions in females are more vehement; the mother hath stronger affections. If the mother could do so as totally to forget that ever she had such a child, yet she would not forget her sucking-child—a poor, shiftless, helpless babe, that can do nothing without the mother, a child which never provoked her,—she would not forget such a child. They may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Certainly, God which hath left such an impression upon the hearts of parents, hath more of pity, bounty, and goodness in his own heart; for whatsoever of God is in the creature, is in God in a more eminent manner.

But particularly, How will God perform the parts of a father?

[1.] In allowing them full leave to come to him in all their necessities: Gal. 4:6, 'Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' There is a spirit that attendeth upon this state. They which are sons shall have the spirit of sons, and God will incline their hearts to come and call to him for supplies. This is a great advantage. When he gives a spirit of prayer, then he will be ready to hear and grant our requests; not only to give us a heart to ask them, but to incline his ear: Luke 11:13, 'How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' When we ask for the highest blessing; when we come and are importunate with him, and will take no nay.

[2.] In supplying all our wants: Mat. 6:12, 'Your Father which is in heaven knoweth you have need of these things.' A father will not let his child starve—certainly none so fatherly as God. You have not such a father as is ignorant, regardless of your condition, but takes an exact notice of all your wants and pressures. It is notable to observe how God condescendeth to express the particular notice he taketh of the saints: Isa. 49:16, 'Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.' As we use to tie things about our hands, that we may remember such a work and business; so God doth, as it were, put a

print and mark upon his hands; to speak after the manner of men. Nay, Mat. 10:30, 'The hairs of their heads are numbered.' God hath a particular notice of their necessities; and Jesus Christ, he is his remembrancer, one that ever appeareth before him to represent their wants: Heb. 9:24. As the high priest in the law was to go in with the names of the tribes upon his breast and shoulder when he did minister before God: Exod. 28; which is a type how much we are in the heart of Christ, ever presenting himself before the Lord on the behalf of such and such a believer.

[3.] Pitying our miseries. As he taketh notice of them, so he will pity their miseries, as a father pitieth his children when he seeth them in an afflicted condition: Ps. 103:13, 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.' Nay, he will pardon their sins: Mal. 3:17, 'And I will spare them as a man spareth his own son which serveth him.' An only son needs not fear much if his father were to be his judge, though he hath done unworthily. They may exhaust and draw up all their pity, their bowls may shrink when they meet with multitude of provocations. Now, God will spare us as a man spares his only son—nay, not only his only son, but his dutiful son which serves him. Many times we forget the duty of children, but God will not forget the mercy of a father. 'I will go to my father,' saith the prodigal. He had forgotten the duty of a child, he went into a far country and wasted his patrimony, and that basely and filthily upon harlots; yet, upon his return, when he was a great way off, the father runs to meet him half-way, and kisseth him.

[4.] In disciplining and treating us with much indulgence, and wisdom, and care. A father takes a great deal of pains in forming his child, and fashioning its manners and behaviour; so doth God with his children. If he afflicteth, it is as a father only, with purposes of good, and not so as an earthly father: Heb. 12:10, 'For verily for a few days they chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' They mingle a great deal of passion with their correction when they are inflamed; but God

never mingleth passion with his rod. When he gives a bitter cup he is a father still: John 18:11.

[5.] In providing able guardians for his children. None so attended as God's children are—those which are adopted and taken into grace and favour with Christ: Heb.1:14, Angels are 'ministering spirits, sent abroad for the heirs of salvation.' They have a guard of angels to watch over them, that they dash not their foot against a stone.

[6.] In laying up an inheritance for them. The apostle saith, 2 Cor. 12:14, 'Children ought not to lay up for their parents, but parents for their children.' Now, God hath laid up for us, as well as laid out much upon us: Luke 12:32, 'Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' He has a kingdom, a glorious inheritance to bestow upon us; and we are kept for that happy state. Though he hath an heir already, Jesus Christ, the heir of all things, yet God hath made us 'co-heirs with Christ:' Rom. 8:17.

Thus, then, it is a mighty advantage. If we did take up God in this notion, to look upon him as a father, it would increase our confidence and dependence upon him. This is a sweet relation: the reality is more in God than can be in an earthly father; for he is a father according to his essence, knowing our necessities, pardoning our sins, supplying our wants, forming and fashioning our manners, providing able guardians for us, and laying up a blessed inheritance for us in heaven.

Secondly, As it encourageth us to pray, so it furthereth our duty in prayer, that we may behave ourselves with reverence, love, and gratitude.

[1.] With a child-like reverence and affection in prayer: Mal. 1:6, 'If, then, I be a father, where is mine honour? And if I be a master, where is my fear?' If we expect the supplies of children, we must perform the duty of children. God will be owned as a father, not with a fellow-like familiarity, but humbly, and with an awe of his majesty.

[2.] With love. Now, our love to God is mainly seen by subjection and obedience to his laws. Thus Christ would have us take up God in prayer under such a relation, that we might mind our duty to him: 1 Pet. 1:17, 'And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.' We never pray aright but when we pray resolving to cast off all sin. How can we call him Father, whom we care not continually to displease from day to day? So the Lord treats his people: Jer. 3:5, 6, 'Thou hast said, Thou art my father. Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldest.' God takes it to be a contumely and reproach to himself when we do evil, yet come and call him Father. He takes it ill that men should come complimentally and flatter him with lying lips, and do not walk as children in holy obedience. Therefore, it is an engagement to serve God with holiness.

[3.] With gratitude. When we come to pray, we must remember not only what we want, but what we have received, acknowledging we have all from him; he is our father: Deut. 32:6, 'Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people, and unwise? Is not he thy father that hath bought thee? Hath he not made thee and established thee?' We must acknowledge the good we have, as well as that we expect to come from him. Therefore, if we would have a praying frame, and be eased of our solicitude, and that anxious care which is a disparagement to providence, it is good to take up God under the notion of a father, which makes us rest upon him for all things: Mat. 6:25, 'Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.' Why? 'For your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things.' You that are able fathers would think yourselves disparaged if that your children should filch and steal for their living, and beg and be solicitous, and go up and down from door to door for their maintenance and support, and not trust to your care and provision. A believer which knoweth he hath a heavenly Father will not be negligent in his calling, but be active and industrious in his way, and use those lawful means which, by the providence of God, he hath been brought up in;



and then, 'be careful for nothing,' as the apostle's advice is, Phil. 4:6, and 'in everything, by prayer and supplication, make your request known unto God.' Oh, could we turn carking into prayer, and run to our Father, it would be happy for us. Care, and diligence, and necessary provision, that is our work and labour: but, for the success and event of things, leave it to God. When we are carking in the world with such anxiousness, and troubled with restless thoughts, how we should be provided for in old age, and what will become of us and ours, we take God's work out of his hands. This is a disparagement to our heavenly Father, and a reproach to his providence and fatherly care. Well, then, certainly this is of great advantage in prayer.

### **APPLICATION**

Use. If it be a great advantage in prayer to take up God under the notion and relation of a father, then those that would pray aright, let this instruct and quicken them above all things. Clear up your adoption, that you may be able to call God Father, for otherwise, when you come to pray, it is a very lie to God. As Acts 5:4, when Ananias spake false to the apostle, saith Peter to him: 'Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.' Why? Because he knows all that is done in the world. But much more do they lie unto God here; this is a very disgrace and blasphemy, a contumely, rather than a prayer and supplication, when you will come and make God to father the devil's brats. When you that live in sin, and have no reverence and awe of God upon your hearts, shall come and pray to him, this is a lie which is told to the very face of God.

But if this be a truth, that all those which would pray aright must clear up their adoption and get a sense of it, then here will doubts arise. Therefore here I shall handle three cases:—

1. What shall natural men do? Must they desist from prayer? for they have no right to it.

2. What shall they do which have not as yet received the testimony of the Spirit? For a child of God may have the right of children, yet have not a sense of his adoption.

3. What are the evidences by which our adoption may be cleared up to us, how we may know we are taken into a child-like state?

First, What shall natural men do? Must they desist from prayer? for they have no right to it.

I answer, you may see here the miserable condition of wicked men, how much they are bound to pray, and yet what an impossibility lieth upon them of praying aright. Certainly none should desist from this duty of prayer because they cannot perform it aright, for though we have lost our power and fitness, yet there is no reason God should lose his right and his power to our obedience. There is an obligation and precept from God, as a father by creation, upon all mankind; all which are reasonable creatures, they are to own God as a father in this way. I say prayer is a homage we owe to God by natural right, therefore no doubt wicked men do sin when they cease to pray. It is one of the accusations brought against natural men, and is an aggravation of their sin: Ps. 14:1, 'They do not call upon God.' Rom. 3:10, it is applied to natural men. This is the misery they have subjected themselves to, that their prayer is turned into sin. As a natural man must not omit hearing, because it is a means to bring him to be acquainted with God, though he cannot hear in faith, so he must not omit prayer, because it is one means to bring us to own God as a father by adoption. A man is not to turn the back upon him, but call him Father, as well as he can: Jer. 3:19, 'But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? And I said, Thou shalt call me, My Father, and shalt not turn away from me.' Better to own God any way, than not to own him at all, than not to inquire after him; to own him rationally, if not spiritually, to own him by choice, if not out of sense. If we cannot come and clear up our title to this great privilege by the spirit of adoption, yet any way 'Thou shalt not turn away from

me.' We should not shut the door upon ourselves. It is required of a natural man, being weary of his sins, to fly to God in Christ Jesus, for his grace and favour, that he might become his God and Father.

Secondly, What shall they do which have not as yet received the testimony of the Spirit, that do not know their adoption?

I answer, a child of God may have the effects and fruits of adoption, yet not always the feeling of it, to witness to him that God hath taken him into a child-like relation to himself. Certainly they are in a very uncomfortable condition, for they want a help in prayer. 'Doubtless thou art our Father.' Oh, what an advantage is that! How much of eloquence and rhetoric is there in that, when we can speak to God as a father! Yet they are not to neglect their addresses to God, for this is a means to obtain the Spirit of adoption: Luke 11:13, 'He will give the Spirit to them that ask him.' Therefore, in whatever condition we be, we must pray; otherwise we shut the door upon our hopes. You continue the want upon yourselves, and so wholly detain yourselves in a comfortless condition.

There is a fourfold spiritual art we must use in prayer, when we have not the sense of our adoption, that we may be able to speak to God as our Father.

[1.] Disclaim when you cannot apply. When you cannot clear up your own relation and interest, then disclaim all other confidences. If thou canst not say Father; yet plead fatherless: Hosea 14:3, 'In thee the fatherless find mercy.' Come as poor, helpless, shiftless creatures; seek peace and reconciliation with God in Christ. It may be God may take you into his favour. He is a Father of the fatherless.

[2.] Own God in the humbling way. Learn the policy of the prodigal: Luke 15:18, 19, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.' This is the policy and art of a humble faith, to call God Father. As Paul catcheth hold of the promise on the dark side: 'Jesus Christ came to save sinners;' and

presently he addeth, 'where of I am chief:' so a believer may come and say, 'Lord, I am not worthy to be called thy son, make me as one of thy hired servants.'

[3.] The third policy we should use in prayer is to call him Father in wish: *Optando, si non affirmando*. If we cannot do it by direct affirmation, let us do it by desire. Let us pray ourselves into this relation, and groan after it, that we may have a clearer sense that God is our Father in Christ.

[4.] Faith hath one art more,—it maketh use of Christ Jesus. God hath a Son whose name signifieth much in heaven, therefore if you cannot come to him as your Father, come to him as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: Eph. 3:14, 'For this cause I bow my knees to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Let Christ bring you into God's presence. He is willing to change relations with us. Take him along with you in your arms. Go to God in Christ's name: 'Whatsoever you ask in my name, shall be given to you.'

Thirdly, But what are the evidences by which our adoption may be cleared up to us? How shall we know that we are taken into a child-like state?

[1.] Consider how it is brought about. How do we come to be related to God by Christ Jesus? By receiving Christ, as he is offered in the gospel: John 1:12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.' It is a prerogative, and special grant to those which receive Christ, even those that believe in his name, that is, those who, out of a sense of their own need, and sight of Christ offered in the promise, do really consent to take him for the ends for which God offereth him, to wit, as Prince and Saviour, that he might give you repentance and remission of sins, not in pretence, but in your hearts. These have full liberty to call God Father, to come to treat and deal with him, though they have not a sense of the blessedness of their state, for this followeth believing: 'After you

believed, you were sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise,' Eph. 1:13, 14.

[2.] There is a witness which is given to the saints, that the thing may not always be dark and doubtful. The Holy Ghost is given as a witness. If you would know whether or no you are the children of God, see that of the apostle: Rom. 8:16, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.' As under the law, in the mouth of two witnesses every doubtful thing was to be established, Deut. 17:6, so here the Spirit beareth witness, together with our spirits, that we are the children of God. Our spirits alone may be lying, deceitful; we may flatter ourselves, and think we are the children of God, when we are children of the devil. All certainly comes from the Holy Ghost; and, therefore, the great question which is traversed to and fro in the heart, is, whether we be God's children? What is the Spirit's witness?

(1.) He lays down marks in scripture, which are the ground and decision of this debate, for the scriptures are of the Holy Ghost's inditing, and so may be said to bear witness: Rom. 8:14, 'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God:' 1 John 3:10, 'In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doth not righteousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.' Thus the Spirit beareth witness to our spirits, by laying down such marks as we, by our own spiritual sense and renewed conscience, feel to be right within ourselves. And this is the main thing called the witness of the Spirit.

(2.) He worketh such graces as are peculiar to God's children, and are evidences of our interest in the favour of God; and therefore it is called 'the sanctification of the Spirit,' 2 Thes. 2:13; and 'the renewing of the Holy Ghost,' Titus 3:5. Look, as John knew Christ to be the Son of God by the Spirit's descending and abiding upon him, John 1:32, so by the Spirit's work, and the Spirit's inhabitation, we know whether we are the children of God or no; whether 'we dwell in God, and God in us, because of his Spirit that he hath given us;' that

is, because of those graces wrought in us. And this is called the seal of the Spirit; for the Holy Ghost, stamping the impress of God upon the soul, working in us an answerable likeness to Christ, is said to be the seal; then we have God's impress upon us.

(3.) The Spirit goes further: he helpeth us to feel and discover those acts in ourselves. There is a stupid deadness in the conscience, so that we are not always sensible of our spiritual acts. Hagar saw not the fountain near her until God opened her eyes, so we may not see the work of the Spirit without the light of the Spirit. We cannot own grace in the midst of so much weakness and imperfection; there is a misgiving of conscience: therefore the Spirit of sanctification is also a 'Spirit of revelation:' Eph. 1:17. The author of the grace is the best revealer and interpreter of it: he works, and he gives us a sight of it. As a workman that made a thing can best warrant it to the buyer, he knows the goodness and strength of it, and how it is framed and made; so the Holy Ghost, which works grace, he reveals and discovers this grace to us.

(4.) The Spirit helps us to compare them with the rule, and accordingly to judge of their sincerity. The Spirit opens our understandings, that we may be able to discern the intent and scope of the scripture, that so we may not be mistaken. We must plough with God's heifer if we would understand the riddle: 'In thy light we shall see light.' We shall be apt to misapply the rule, so as to judge of our own actions: Rom. 9:1, 'I lie not, the Holy Ghost bearing me witness;' when he had spoken of some eminent thing wrought in him. We are apt to lie, and feign and misapply rules, comforts, and privileges; but now the Holy Ghost bearing witness with our spirits, by this means we come to have a certainty. There are so many circuits, wiles, turnings in the heart of man, that we are not competent judges of what is wrought in us; therefore it is usually ascribed to the Spirit to be the searcher of the heart: Ps. 139:7, 'Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?' Acts 5:4, 'Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.' The Holy Ghost is rather spoken of than any other person, because it is

his personal operation to abide in the hearts of men, and to search and try the reins. It is more particularly ascribed to him, though it belongs to all the persons.

(5.) As the Spirit helps us to compare that which is wrought with the rule, the impression or thing sealed with the stamp or the thing sealing, so he helps us to conclude rightly of our estate. For many times when the premises are clear, the conclusion may be suspended, either out of self-love, in case of condemnation; or out of legal fear and jealousy, in case of self-acquittal. Therefore the conclusion is of the Holy Ghost: 1 John 4:13, 'Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.' There is a great deal ado to bring us to heaven with comfort. There needs a person of the Godhead to satisfy us as well as to satisfy God, and help us to determine concerning our condition.

(6.) He enlivens and heightens our apprehensions in all these particulars, and so fills us with comfort, and raiseth our joy upon the feeling of the sense of the favour of God; for all this is the fruit of his operation. Therefore it is said, Rom. 5:5, 'The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.' Those unspeakable glimpses of God's favour, and sweet manifestations of God's love in the conscience which we have, these are given by the Holy Ghost. There is not one act of the soul, but the Holy Ghost hath a stroke in it for our comfort. In every degree, all comes from God. So that if you would know what the witness of the Spirit is, consider—What are the marks in scripture? what graces are wrought in your hearts? how doth the Spirit help you to discern those graces, to compare them to the rule, to make accordingly in these things a determination of our condition? and what joy and peace have you thereupon wrought in your hearts by the Holy Ghost? For an immediate testimony of the Spirit, the scripture knows of no such thing. All other is but delusion besides this.

[3.] There are certain fruits and effects which do more sensibly evidence it unto the soul. What are those fruits of the Spirit of

adoption in our hearts, by which we may further evidence it, whether we are the children of God or not?

(1.) In prayer, by a kind of naturalness or delight in this duty of holy commerce with God: Rom. 8:15, 'We have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father;' Gal. 4:6, 'Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father;' and Zech. 12:10, 'I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication.' Wherever the Spirit of God is dispensed, and dwelleth in the hearts of any, the heart of that man will be often with God. The Spirit of grace will put him upon supplication; he will be often acquainting God with his desires, wants, fears.

(2.) You will be mainly carried out to your inheritance in heaven. Those which are the children of God do look after a child's portion, and will look for an estate in heaven, and cannot be satisfied with present things. Worldly men, they have their reward: Mat. 6:2. They discharge God for other things. If they may have plenty, honour, worldly ease, and delights here, they never look after heaven. As a servant hath his reward from quarter to quarter, but a child waits until the inheritance comes, so when we are begotten for this lively hope, when there is a heavenly-mindedness in you, this is a fruit of the Holy Ghost wrought in the heart, by which you might know you are the sons of God: Rom. 8:23, 'Having the first-fruits of the Spirit, we groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.'

(3.) By a child-like reverence and dread of God, when we are afraid to offend God: Jer. 35:5, 6. The sons of Rechab, their father had commanded them that they should drink no wine; now saith God by the prophet, 'Set pots full of wine, and cups, and say unto them, Drink ye wine;' that is, present the temptation. No, they would not: 'Our fathers have forbidden us.' So when a child of God is put upon temptation, his heart recoils, and reasons thus: 'How can I do this wickedness, and sin against God?' I dare not, my Father hath



forbidden me. There is an awe of his heavenly Father upon him: 1 Pet. 1:17, 'If you call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.'

We now come to speak of the possessive particle—Our Father. The word is used for a double reason:—

1. To comfort us in the sense of our interest in God.
2. To mind us of the common interest of all the saints in the same God. It is not my or thy Father only, but our Father.

First, Observe the great condescension of Christ, that poor creatures are allowed to claim an interest in God. If Christ had not put these words in our mouths, we never had had boldness to have gone to God, and said, 'Doubtless thou art our Father.' But he which was in the bosom of God, and knew his secrets, hath told us it is very pleasing to God we should use this compellation to him. This is a privilege which cannot be sufficiently valued; if we consider:—

[1.] The unworthiness of the persons which enjoy it: poor dust and ashes, sinful creatures, that were children of the devil, that we should lay claim and title to God for our Father. And,

[2.] If we consider the greatness of the privilege itself: 'Oh, behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called his children!' 1 John 3:1. We think it much when we can say, This field, this house is mine; but surely this is more, to say, This God is mine.

Again, observe here that interest is a ground of audience. So Christ would have us begin our prayers, 'Our Father.' God's interest in us, and our interest in God. God's interest in us: when Christ mediates for his disciples, he saith, John 17:6, 'Thine they were, and thou gavest them me.' And David: Ps. 119:94, 'I am thine, save me.' That is his argument: the reason is, because God, by taking them for his

own, binds himself to preserve and keep them. Everybody is bound to look to his own: 'He that provides not for his own is worse, than an infidel.' Now what a sweet thing is it when we can go to God and say, We are thine! So it is the same, as to our interest in God. It is an excellent encouragement: Ps. 42:11, 'Hope thou in God,' saith David to his soul. Why? For he is my God. And elsewhere, reasoning with himself: Ps. 23:1, 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.' First, his covenant-interest is built, and then conclusions of hope. So 1 Sam. 30:6, 'David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.' It is sweet when we can go to God as our God. Luther was wont to say, God was known better by the predicament of relation than by his natural properties. Why is interest such a sweet thing? Because by this relation to God we have a claim to God, and to all that he can and will do. God hath made over himself, *quantus quantus est*, as great as great he is, for his use and comfort. Therefore the psalmist saith, Ps. 16:5, 'The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup.' A believer hath as sure a right and title to God, as a man hath to his patrimony to which he is born, or as any Israelite had to that share which came to him by lot; so he may lay claim to God, and live upon his power and goodness, as a man doth upon his estate.

Well, then, labour to see God is yours, if you would find acceptance with him. It is not enough to know the goodness and power of God in general, but we must discern our interest in him, that we may not only say Father, but Our Father. It is the nature of faith thus to appropriate and apply: John 20:28, 'My Lord and my God.' How is God made ours? How shall we know it, that we may come and lay our claim to him? Behold, Christ teacheth us here to say, Our Father, by taking hold of his covenant; and this is God's covenant notion, 'I will be your God, and you shall be my people.' When we give up ourselves to be God's, then he is ours. Resignation and appropriation go together. 'I am my beloved's;' there is the resignation of obedience: 'And he is mine;' there is the appropriation of faith. A believer cannot always say God is his, but, I am thine; however it be with him, he would be no other's but the Lord's. If he cannot say he is God's by an especial interest, yet he will be God's by the resignation of his own

vows. He knows God hath a better right and title to him than he hath to himself.

Quest. But how shall we know that we do indeed resign up ourselves to God?

I answer, When we make him our chief good and our utmost end—that is, when we unfeignedly choose him for our portion, and set apart ourselves to act for his glory.

1. When we choose and cleave to him as our all-sufficient portion: 'The Lord is my portion, saith my soul,' Lam. 3:24. Sometimes the Lord speaks to us: 'I am thy reward, I am thy salvation,' Ps. 35:3. So the soul speaks to God: 'Thou art my portion.' When we cleave to God, 'He is my portion for ever,' Ps. 73:25; 'Whom have I in heaven but thee?' &c. When our souls are satisfied in God, having enough in him, this is to give up ourselves to him.

2. When we set apart ourselves to his use, to live and act for his glory, this is also entering into covenant with God. As in that formal matrimonial covenant that was used between the prophet and his wife, Hosea 3:3, 'Thou shalt not be for another man, so will I also be for thee;' so in the covenant we resolve to renounce all others, and to live and act for God: 'The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself,' Ps. 4:3. When we are thus set apart for God, to serve him and glorify him by this special dedication of ourselves to his use, this is the act of grace on our part. We were God's by election; but he comes and takes possession for himself by the Spirit, and then the soul sets himself apart for God.

Secondly, That all the saints have a common interest in the same God; therefore Christ taught us to say, 'Our Father.' They have one Father, as well as one Spirit—one Christ, one hope, and one heaven: Eph. 4:6. Questionless, it is lawful to say, My Father. Some have disputed it, because they suppose this expression is used to signify Christ's singular filiation: Christ could only say, My Father. But it is

lawful, provided we do not say it exclusively, and appropriating it to ourselves. But here Christ, when he giveth us this perfect form, teacheth us to say, 'Our Father.' As the sun in the firmament is every man's, and all the world's, so God is every single believer's God—the God of all the elect. But why would Christ put this in this perfect pattern and form of prayer?

[1.] To quicken our love to the saints in prayer. When we come to pray, there must be a brotherly love expressed; now that is a distinct thing from common love: 'Add to brotherly kindness, charity,' 2 Pet 1:7. When we are dealing with God in prayer, we must express somewhat of this brotherly love. How must we express it? In praying for others, as well as for ourselves. Necessity will put men upon praying for themselves, but brotherly love will put them upon praying for others. Wherein must brotherly kindness be expressed in prayer? In two things:—

(1.) In a fellow-feeling of their miseries, in being touched with their necessities, as we would be with our own. To be senseless, it is a spiritual excommunication, a casting ourselves out of the body. Members must take care for one another. We must be grieved with their pains. 'Who is offended,' saith the apostle, 'and I burn not?' If there be any power in such a confession or title of a Father, we must be wrestling with God, how well soever it be with us, remembering we speak to him in whom others have a joint interest with ourselves.

(2.) It must be expressed in wishing the same good to others as to ourselves. Many that pray in their own case, with what earnestness and importunity are they carried out! but how flat and cold in the case of others! Now, a good Christian must be as earnest with God for others as for himself. Look, what earnestness and heedfulness of soul he showeth when he puts up prayers for himself; the same must he do 'for all saints:' Eph. 6:18. Self-love and self-respect must not breathe only in our prayers; they must be carried out with as much earnestness as if we would go to God in our own case.

[2.] Again, as it showeth us what brotherly love we should express in prayer, so it checketh many carnal dispositions which we are guilty of, and Christ would mind us of them. It checks strife and contention; we are brethren—have one common Father. Everywhere meekness and love: it is a qualification for prayer. 'Let the husband live with his wife according to knowledge, that their prayers be not hindered.' 1 Pet. 3:7. If there be such brawls in the family, how can the husband and wife call upon God with such a united heart as is requisite? So, 1 Tim. 2:8, 'I will that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.' Not only lift up 'pure' hands to God, and that 'without doubting;' there must be confidence in our prayers. But that is not all: but 'without wrath;' there must be nothing of revenge and passion mingled with your supplication. And then it checketh pride and disdain. Christ teacheth all, in all conditions, whether masters or servants, fathers or children, kings or beggars, all to say 'Our Father;' for we have all one Father. Thou hast not a better Christ, nor a better Father in heaven, than they have. The rich and the poor were to give one ransom under the law, Exod. 30, to show they have all the same Redeemer. The weak should not despise nor disdain the strong, nor the rich be ashamed to own the poor as brethren. We should never be ashamed to own him as a brother whom God will own as a son.

## **Which Art in Heaven**

WE have considered the title given to God with respect to his goodness and mercy: He is a Father—'our Father.' Now, let us consider the titles given to him with respect to his greatness and majesty: 'Which art in heaven.' From thence note:—

Doct. It is an advantage in prayer to look upon God as a Father in heaven.

By way of explication, to show:—

First, What is meant by heaven. There are three heavens in the computation of the scripture. There is, first, the lowest heaven, that where the fowls of the air are, whence the rain descendeth; therefore the fowls are called the 'fowls of heaven,' Job 35:11; and, James 5:18, 'Elijah prayed, and the heaven gave rain.' Secondly, the luminary heaven, where the sun, moon, and stars are: therefore it is said, Mark 13:25, 'The stars of heaven shall fall.' Thirdly, there is the highest heaven, or the heaven of the blessed, spoken of Mat. 7:21: 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven;' that is, into the third heaven, the glorious heaven, the blessed presence of God. Mat. 18:10: 'In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven:' in heaven, that is, 'the third heaven.' So it is called by Paul, 2 Cor. 12:2, which was the highest part, because he saw and heard things which it is not lawful for a man to utter. In this heaven God is.

Secondly, How is God there, since he is everywhere?

Negatively; It is not to be understood so as if he were included in heaven, or locally circumscribed within the compass of it; for 'the heaven of heavens cannot contain him:' 1 Kings 8:27. In regard of his essence, he is in all places, being infinite and indivisible. He is not included within the heavens, nor excluded from earth, but filleth all places alike: Jer. 23:24, 'Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.' But yet in an especial manner is God present in heaven. That appears, because there is his throne: Ps. 103:19, 'He hath prepared his throne in the heavens.' Earthly kings, they have their thrones exalted higher than other places, but God's throne is above all, it is in heaven. He hath a more universal and unlimited empire than all the kings of the earth; so he hath a more glorious throne. Heaven is the most convenient place to set forth his majesty and glory to the world, because of the sublimity, amplitude, and purity of it. And so, Isa. 66:1, 'Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.' Heaven is his throne, because there is his majestical presence, more of his glory and excellency is discovered: and the

earth is his footstool, because there, in the lowest part of the world, he manifesteth his powerful presence among the lower creatures.

Briefly, to conceive how God is in heaven, we must consider:—

[1.] The several ways of his presence. He is in Christ, hypostatically, essentially, or (as the apostle speaks) bodily: Col. 2:19, 'The fulness of God dwells in him bodily.' In the temple, under the law, there God was present symbolically, because there were the signs and tokens of his presence. The Jewish temple was a sacramental place and type of Christ, in whose name, and by whose merit, worship was acceptable to God. But now, in Christians, he is present energetically, and operatively, by his Spirit. And in heaven, he there dwells by some eminent effects of his wisdom, power, greatness, and goodness. God hath showed more of his workmanship in the structure of the heavens than in any other part of the creation, that being the most glorious part of the world: Ps. 19:1–3, 'The heavens declare the glory of the Lord, and the firmament showeth his handiwork,' &c. Certainly it is meet God should dwell in the most glorious part of the world; now heaven is the most glorious part of the creation. Heathens in their straits would not look to the capitol where their idols were; but to heaven, where God hath impressed his majesty and greatness. Whenever we look upon these aspectable heavens, the vast expansion, the glorious luminaries, the purity of the matter, and sublimity of its posture, it cannot but raise our hearts to think of a glorious God that dwelleth there. When we come by a poor cottage, we guess the inhabitant is no great person; but when we see a magnificent structure, we easily imagine some person of account dwells there. So, though the earth doth declare the glory of God, and show much of his wisdom and power, yet chiefly the heavens, whenever we look upon them, we cannot choose but have awful thoughts, and be struck with a religious horror, at the remembrance of the great God, which has stretched out these heavens by his wisdom and power.

[2.] Therefore God is said to dwell in heaven, because from thence he manifesteth his powerful providence, wisdom, justice, and goodness. God is not so shut up in heaven as not to mind human affairs, and to take notice of what is done here below: Ps. 11:4, 'The Lord's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try the children of men.' Though his throne be in heaven, yet his providence is everywhere; his eyes behold, he seeth how we behave ourselves in his presence; and his eyelids try the children of men. He may seem to wink now and then, and to suspend the strokes of his vengeance, but it is but for our trial. He owneth his children from heaven: Deut. 26:15, 'Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people.' And from thence he punisheth the wicked: Rom. 1:18, 'The wrath of God is revealed from heaven.'

[3.] There is God most owned by the saints and glorified angels, therefore he is said to dwell there; as a king is beloved by his subjects, but most immediately served and attended upon by those of his own court. So that in heaven, there we have the highest pattern of all that duty which doth immediately concern God. In this prayer, 'Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done,' these three petitions concern God more immediately. Now before we put them up, Christ would have us think of our Father in heaven, praised by angels and saints that fall down before his throne, crying, Honour, glory, and praise. There he reigneth, his throne is there, and there he is perfectly obeyed and served without any opposition.

[4.] There God is most enjoyed, and therefore he dwells there, for there he doth more immediately exhibit the fulness of his glory to the saints and angels. In heaven God is all in all. Here we are supplied at second or third hand: Hosea 2:18, 'I will hear the heavens, and the heavens shall hear the earth,' &c. But there God is immediately and fully enjoyed. Here there are many wants and vacuities to be filled up; but 'in thy presence there is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore:' Ps. 16:11. Look, as when the flood was poured out upon the world, you read that the windows of heaven were opened,' Gen. 7:11; the drops of rain were upon earth, but the



cataracts and floodgates were in heaven; so when he raineth down drops of sweetness upon his people, the floodgates are above, they are reserved for that place where they are fully enjoyed.

Thirdly, Why hath God fixed and taken up his dwelling-place in the heavens? I answer,

[1.] Because mortal men they cannot endure his glorious presence: Deut. 5:23, 'When ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, for the mountain did burn with fire, ye said, Behold, the Lord our God hath showed us his glory, and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: now therefore why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die.' Any manifestations of God, how easily do they overset and overcome us! A little spiritual enjoyment it is too strong for us. If God pour out but a drop of sweetness into the heart, we are ready to cry out, Hold, Lord, it is enough; our crazy vessels can endure no more. Therefore, when Christ was transfigured, the disciples were astonished and fell back; they could not endure the emissions and beamings out of his divine glory, because of the weakness and incapacity of the present state: therefore hath God a place above, where he discovereth his glory in the utmost latitude. It is notable in scripture, sometimes God is said to 'dwell in light,' 1 Tim. 6:16; and sometimes to 'make darkness his dwelling-place,' Ps. 18:11. How doth he dwell in light, and how in darkness? Because of the glorious manifestations which are above, therefore it is said he dwells in light; and because of the weakness and incapacity of our comprehension, therefore he is said to dwell in darkness.

[2.] To try our faith and our obedience, that he might see whether we would live by faith, yea or no; whether a believer would love him and obey him, though he were invisible and withdrawn within the curtain of heaven. You know when the Israelites saw the glory of God, then they cried, 'All that God hath commanded us we will do:' Deut. 5:27. But as soon as that manifestation ceased, they were as bad as ever. If

all were liable to sense, there would be no trial of this world; but God hath shut up himself, that by this means the faith of the elect might be manifested: for 'faith is the evidence of things not seen:' Heb. 11:1. Where there is no sight there is exercise for faith. And that our love might be tried: 1 Pet. 1:8, 'Whom having not seen, ye love: in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' And this is that which discovereth the faithless and disobedient world: Job 22:12–14, 'Is not God in the height of heaven? How doth God know? can he judge through the dark cloud? Thick clouds are a covering to him that he seeth not, and he walketh in the circuit of heaven.'

[3.] It is fit there should be a better place into which the saints should be translated when the course of their obedience is ended: Eph. 1:3, 'He hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places.' The main of Christ's purchase we have in heavenly places. It is fit the place of trial and place of recompense should differ; therefore the place of trial, that is God's footstool; and the place of recompense, that is God's throne. The world, that is a place of trial; it is a common inn for sons and bastards, for the elect and reprobate; a receptacle of man and beast: here God will show his bounty unto all his creatures; but now, in the place of his residence, he will show his love to his people. Therefore, when we have been tried and exercised, there is a place of preferment for us.

Fourthly, What advantage have we in prayer by considering God in heaven? Very much, whether we consider God absolutely, or with respect to a mediator; both ways we have an advantage.

First, If we consider the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who have their residence in heaven; consider them without respect to a mediator. Why, the looking up to God in heaven:—

[1.] It showeth us that prayer is an act of the heart, and not of the lips. That it is not the sound of the voice which can pierce the heavens, and enter into the ears of the Lord of hosts, but sighs and

groans of the spirit. Christians! in prayer God is near to us, and yet far from us, for we must look upon him as in heaven, and we upon earth. How then should we converse with God in prayer? Not by the tongue only, but by the heart. The commerce and communion of spirits is not hindered by local distance; but God is with us, and we with him, when our heart goeth up.

[2.] It teacheth the great work of prayer is to lift up the heart to God. To withdraw the heart from all created things which we see and feel here below, that we may converse with God in heaven: Ps. 123:1, 'Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens;' and, Lam. 3:41, 'Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens.' Prayer doth not consist in a multitude and clatter of words, but in the getting up of the heart to God, that we may behave ourselves as if we were alone with God, in the midst of glorious saints and angels. There is a double advantage which we have by this getting the soul into heaven in prayer. It is a means to free us from distractions and doubts. To free us from distractions and other intercurrent thoughts. Until we get our hearts out of the world, as if we were dead and shut up to all present things, how easily is the heart carried away with the thoughts of earthly concernments! Until we can separate and purge our spirits, how do we interline our prayers with many ridiculous thoughts! It is too usual for us to deal with God as an unskilful person that will gather a posy for his friend, and puts in as many or more stinking weeds than he doth choice flowers. The flesh interposeth, and our carnal hearts interline and interlace our prayers with vain thoughts and earthly distractions. When with our censer we come to offer incense to God, we mingle sulphur with our incense. Therefore we should labour all that we can to get the heart above the world into the presence of God and company of the blessed, that we may deal with him as if we were by him in heaven, and were wholly swallowed up of his glory. Though our bodies are on earth, yet our spirits should be with our Father in heaven. For want of practising this in prayer, these distractions increase upon us. So for doubts, when we look to things below, even the very manifestations of God to us upon earth, we have many

discouragements, dangers without and difficulties within: till we get above the mists of the lower world, we can see nothing of clearness and comfort; but when we can get God and our hearts together, then we can see there is much in the fountain, though nothing in the stream; and though little on earth, yet we have a God in heaven.

[3.] This impreseth an awe and reverence, if we look upon the glory of God manifested in heaven, that bright and luminous place. This is urged by the Holy Ghost: Eccles. 5:2, 'Thou art upon earth, and God is in heaven; therefore let thy words be few;' Gen. 18:27, 'Who am I that I should take upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes?' We are poor crawling worms, and therefore, when we think of the majesty of God, it should impress a holy awe upon us. Mean persons will behave themselves with all honour and reverence when they supplicate to men of quality; so should we to God, who is so high and so much above us; he is in heaven. It is a diminution of his greatness (Mal. 1:14) when we put off God with anything, and come slightly and carelessly into his presence.

[4.] It teacheth us that all our prayers should carry a correspondence with our great aim. What is our great aim? To be with God in heaven, as remembering that is the centre and place of our rest, to which we are all tending: Col. 3:1, 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.' We come to our Father which is in heaven. He will have his residence there, that our hearts might be there. Therefore the main things we should seek of God from heaven are saving graces, for these 'come down from above, from the Father of lights:' James 1:17. We have liberty to ask supplies for the outward life, but chiefly we should ask spiritual and heavenly things: Mat. 6:22, 23, 'Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.' What then? 'First seek the kingom of God,' &c. If we have to do with a heavenly Father, our first and main care should be to ask things suitable to his being, and his excellency. If children should ask of their parents such a thing as is pleasing to their palate, possibly they might give it them; but when they ask instruction, and desire to be

taught, that is far more acceptable to them. When we ask supplies of the outward life, food, raiment, God may give it us; but it is more pleasing to him when we ask for grace. In every prayer we should seek to be made more heavenly by conversing with our heavenly Father.

[5.] It giveth us ground of confidence in God's power and absolute dominion over all things, for God is in heaven above all created beings: Ps. 115:3, 'Our God is in the heavens, and doth whatsoever he pleaseth.' So 2 Chron. 20:6, 'Art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?' Oh, what an advantage is this in prayer, when we think of our all-sufficient God, who made heaven and earth, and hath fixed his throne there! What can he too hard for him?

[6.] Here is encouragement against carnal fear. Whatever the world doth against us, we have a Father in heaven, and this should bear us up against all their threatenings and oppositions. When there were tumults and confusions in the world, it is said, Ps. 2:4, 'But God, which sits in heaven, shall laugh them to scorn.' An earthly parent may have a large heart, but a short hand; though they may wish us well, yet they cannot defend us, and bear us out in all extremities. But our Father in heaven will laugh at the attempts against his empire and greatness. Thus considering God absolutely, it is an advantage to reflect upon him as a Father in heaven.

But I suppose this expression hath respect to a mediator. Therefore,

Secondly, Let us look upon God with respect to a mediator, for so I think we are chiefly bound to consider our Father in heaven, because of Christ which sits there at his right hand: Heb. 8:1. It is said there, 'He sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary.' Oh, this is comfortable to think of. In heaven we have a Saviour, Jesus Christ, representing our persons and presenting our prayers to God, by which means God is

reconciled and well pleased with us. So that our duty in prayer is to look up to heaven, and to see Christ at God's right hand as our high priest, mediating for us that we may be accepted with God.

A notable resemblance we have between God's presence in the tabernacle or temple, and God's presence in heaven.

"In the temple you know there were three partitions. There was the outward court, and the sanctuary, as the apostle calls it, where the table of shew-bread was set, and there was the holy place, the holy of holies. Just so in heaven there are three partitions; there is the airy heaven, and the starry heaven, and the heaven of heavens: the lower heaven, which answers to the outward court; the starry heaven which answers to the sanctuary; and the heaven of heavens, which answers to the holy of holies by a fit analogy and proportion. Well, in the holy of holies, saith the apostle, there was the golden censer and the mercy-seat: Heb. 9:4. There you find God conspicuously manifesteth his presence, and gives answers to his people: 'At the mercy-seat, there will I answer thee, saith the Lord.' So here, in this heaven of heavens, there is a mercy-seat, there is a throne of grace, and there God will answer. We may 'come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need:' Heb. 4:16. Into this holy of holies none but the high priest did enter, and that once a year, after the sacrifice of atonement for the whole congregation: then the high priest was to come into the holy of holies, he was to pass through the veil with blood and with sweet incense in his hand. Just thus is Jesus entered into the heaven, of heavens for us. He is gone there to present his blood and sufferings, to appear before God for us, to present himself as a sweet-smelling sacrifice: Heb 9:24; Eph. 5:2. Now the high priest, when he went with this blood in to the mercy-seat, he went in with the names of the twelve tribes upon his breast and shoulder, as Jesus also doth appear before God for us, representing our persons continually before his Father. Now about the mercy-seat, there were cherubims, and figures of angels; just about the ark, there they stooped down, to show the angels do attend about the throne, to despatch messages abroad into

the world, and convey blessings to the saints. There is a throne of grace, a mercy-seat, a mediator there, angels at God's beck, ready to send up and down, to and fro, for the good of the saints. And mark, not only hath Jesus this liberty to enter into this heaven of heavens, but all the saints have a liberty to enter, and that not only at death, but in their life-time; for saith the apostle, Heb. 10:19, 'Having therefore boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus.' All of us, not only when we die, and personally go to God, do we enter into the holy of holies, but now we have boldness. It relateth to prayer, for the word signifieth liberty of speech. This holy of holies, which was closed and shut up against us before, is opened by the blood of Jesus; the veil is rent, and now all saints have a privilege to come freely to converse with God. It is good to observe the difference between the holy of holies, and the heaven of heavens. The Jews their sanctum sanctorum was earthly; but our holy of holies is heavenly. Into theirs, which was as it were God's bed-chamber, the common people were not admitted; none but the high priest could enter into the holy of holies. But now into ours all believers may enter and converse with God. There the high priest could enter but once a year; now we may come to the throne of grace as often as we have a cause to present to God. There the high priest he entered with the blood of beasts; but we enter by the blood of the Son of God. Oh, what a great privilege is this, that we have a Father in heaven! In this respect the holy place is now open to us. Though we have not a personal access till death, yet by the blood of Jesus we may come with boldness, presenting ourselves before the Lord with all our wants and desires. The great distance between heaven and earth shall not hinder our communion with God, if we have a friend above."

Therefore it is very comfortable now to say, 'Our Father which art in heaven;' that is, our gracious and reconciled Father, in and by Christ.

## **APPLICATION**

If we have a Father in heaven, let us look up to heaven often.

1. If we have a Father in heaven, and a Saviour at his right hand, to do all things that are needful for us, let us look upon the aspectable heavens with an eye of sense, with our bodily eyes. It is good to contemplate the glory of the heavenly bodies, or the outside of that court which God hath provided for the saints. It is not an idle speculation I press you to; the saints of God have thought it to be worthy of their morning and evening thoughts. It is notable, David doth, in two psalms especially, contemplate heaven; one seems to be a nightly, the other a morning, meditation. The night meditation you have Ps. 8:3: 'When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained.' David was got abroad in a moon-shining night, looks up, and had his heart affected. But now the 19th Psalm, that seems to be a morning meditation; he speaks of the 'sun coming out like a bridegroom from his chamber in the east,' and displaying his beams, and heat, and influences to the world; and then saith he, ver. 1, 'The heavens declare the glory of God.' Morning and evening, or whenever you go abroad to see the beauty of the outward heavens, say, I have a Father there, a Christ there; this is the pavement of that palace which God hath provided for the saints. Christians, it is a sweet meditation when you can say, He that made all things is there. It will be a delightful, profitable thing sometimes, with an eye of sense, to take a view of our Father's palace, as much as we can see of it here below.

2. Let me especially press you to this: with an eye of faith to look within the veil; and whenever you come to pray, to see God in heaven, and Christ at his right hand. The great work of faith is to see him that is invisible; and the great duty of prayer is to get a sight of God in heaven, and Christ at his right hand. What Stephen did miraculously, or in an ecstasy, we must do graciously in prayer. Now it is said of Stephen, Acts 7:56, 'Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.' There is a great deal of difference about Stephen's sight: how the heavens could be opened, which are a solid body, and cannot be divided as fluid air, and so come together again; how he could see the glory of God with his corporal senses, which is invisible; how he could see Christ at



such a distance, the eye not being able to reach so far. Some think it to be a mere intellectual vision, or a vision of faith; that is, he did so firmly believe, and had the comfort of it in his heart, as if he had seen it with his eyes. So they think Stephen saw the glory of God, and Christ at his right hand, as Abraham saw Christ's clay and rejoiced; that is, he saw it by faith. Some think it to be a prophetic vision, by seeing those things objected to his fancy by imaginary species; as Isaiah saw God in a vision—Isa. 6.—and as Paul's rapture. Some think it a symbolical vision; that he saw these things represented by some corporal images, as John saw the Holy Ghost descending in 'the form of a dove. Some think his bodily eyes did pierce the clouds, and got a sight of the glory of Christ. Whatever it be, there must be such a sight in prayer, something answerable to this. In a spiritual way, this must ever be done: Ps. 5:3, 'I will pray,' saith the psalmist, 'and look up.' There is a looking up required in all prayer, a seeing the invisible God by faith. If you would have God look down upon you from his holy habitation, you must look up with an eye of faith, and converse with God in heaven: Ps. 63:4, 'I will lift up my hands in thy name.' If you would have God look upon you with an eye of compassion, you must look up, and see Christ at his right hand, by an eye of faith.

3. Let us love our Father; love God in Christ, and love the place for his sake, where his residence is.

[1.] Love God in Christ: Ps. 73:25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee?' When God hath been so gracious to you! Christians, if I had no other argument to press you to love God but that he which is in heaven offereth to be your father in Christ Jesus, it might suffice; because it is a great condescension that the God of heaven will look upon poor broken-hearted creatures—that he whose throne is in heaven would look upon him that is of a trembling spirit: Isa. 66:2. 'That the high and lofty One, that dwelleth in the high and holy place, will look to him that is of a contrite heart:', Isa. 57:15. That he that is the Lord of heaven and earth will be our Father, and own us and bless us! A great condescension on God's part, and a great dignity also is put

upon us; and how should our hearts be affected with it! Therefore, though there be a great distance between heaven and earth, it should not lessen our affections to God. He is mindful of us, visits us at every turn; we are dear and tender to him; therefore let the Lord be dear to you. The butler, when he was exalted, forgot Joseph; but Christ is not grown stately with his advancement—he doth not forget us. Oh, let not us forget God. Let us manifest our love, by being often with him at the throne of grace, with our Father which is in heaven. A child is never well but when in the mother's lap or under the father's wing: so should it be with us, with a humble affection coming into the presence of God, and getting into the bosom of our heavenly Father. Never delight in anything so much as conversing with him, and serious addresses to him in prayer. Again:—

[2.] Love the place for his sake; God is there, and Christ is there. We have cause to love the place for our own sakes; and in a short time, if you continue patient in well-doing, you will be with God. It is not only God's throne, but it is your house: 2 Cor. 5:1, 'We look for an house in heaven, not made with hands.' It is a place appointed for our everlasting abode; therefore all our hopes, desires, and delights should run that way. But chiefly I would press you to love it for his sake, the place where your heavenly Father dwells. God hath not taken his denomination from earth, which is the place of corruption; but from heaven, which is the place of glory and happiness. Oh, let us not forget our heavenly Father's house. We are too apt to say, It is good to be here. Christians, let us draw home apace; let us grow more heavenly-minded every day; seek the things which are above; prize it rather upon this occasion, because if we were more heavenly in the frame of our hearts, we would be more heavenly in our solemn approaches to God. What is the reason a man is haunted with the world, and things which are of a worldly interest and concern, when he comes to prayer? It is because his heart is taken with these things.

# Hallowed Be Thy Name

WE are now come to the first petition of the Lord's Prayer; there three things will fall under discussion:—

I. The order of this petition.

II. The necessity of putting up such a request to God.

III. The sense and meaning of the petition itself.

I. Of the order; it is the first of all the six. The petitions of the Lord's Prayer may thus be ranked:—The four first concern the obtaining of good; and the two last, the removal of evil—either the removal of evil past, and already committed, or the removal of evil future, and such as may be admitted by the temptation of the devil. Among the former, those things that do more immediately concern the glory of God, they have the first place. In this petition, the glory of God is both desired and promised on our part; for every prayer is both an expression of a desire, and also an implicit vow or a solemn obligation that we take upon ourselves to prosecute what we ask. Prayer, it is a preaching to ourselves in God's hearing. We speak to God to warm ourselves, not for his information, but for our edification.

From the order observe:—

Doct. That those things are to be desired in the first place, and with the greatest affection, which do concern the glory of God. The first petition is, 'Hallowed be thy name.'

Here to show:—

1. Why this petition is put first.

## 2. Present some reasons of the point.

First, This petition is put first, for a double reason:—

1. Partly to show that this must be the end of all our requests. All that we desire and pray for, in behalf of ourselves and others, must be subordinate to this end. All these things must be asked, that by the accomplishment of them God may be brought more in request in the world. See all the other petitions in this prayer, how they are suited to this end in scripture. When we say, 'Thy kingdom come,' what do we beg that for, but ultimately the glory of God? Phil 2:10, 11, 'God hath given him a name which is above every name, that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' When we say, 'Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven,' it is still to the glory of God: Mat. 5:16, 'That our good works may still shine forth before men here upon earth, that they may glorify our Father which is in heaven.' When we ask our daily bread, and provisions for the present life, it is still that he may be glorified in our comfortable use of the creature: 1 Cor. 10:31, 'Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' When we ask for the remission of sins, it is that God may be glorified in Christ: Rom. 3:25, 26, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, that he may be just,' &c. When we beg freedom from temptation, it is that we may not dishonour God: Prov. 30:9. 'Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.' Still that God may be glorified in every condition. When we ask deliverance from evil: Ps. 50:15, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.' So that the glory of God, in all requests that we make to him, like oil, still swims on the top, and must be the end of all the rest; for other things are but means in subordination to it.

2. It notes that our chiefest care and affection should be carried out to the glory of God when we pray. We should rather forget ourselves

than forget God. God must be remembered in the first place. There is nothing more precious than God himself, therefore nothing should be more dear to us than his glory. This is the great difference between the upright and the hypocrite: the hypocrite never seeks God but when his necessities do require it, not in and for himself; but when the upright come to seek God, it is for God in the first place—their main care is about God's concernments rather than their own. Though they seek their own happiness in him, and they are allowed so to do; yet it is mainly God's glory which they seek, not their own interests and concernments. See that: Ps. 115:1, 'Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.' It is not a doxology, or form of thanksgiving, but a prayer; not for our safety and welfare, so much as thy glory; not to reek and satisfy our revenge upon our adversaries; not for the establishment of our interest; but for the glory of thy grace and truth, that God may be known to be a God keeping covenant; for mercy and truth are the two pillars of the covenant. It is a great dishonouring of God when anything is sought from him more than himself, or not for himself. Saith Austin, it is but a carnal affection in prayer when men seek self more than God. Self and God are the two things that come in competition. Now there are several sorts of self; there is carnal self, natural self, spiritual self, and glorified self. Above all these God must have the pre-eminence.

[1.] Carnal self. By a foolish mistake we take our lusts to be ourselves: Col. 3:5, 'Mortify your members here upon earth.' And these members he makes to be fornication, uncleanness, and the like. Our sins are as dear to us as any essential or intregal part of the body; they are our members. Now, these should have no room in our prayers at all, though usually they have the first place: James 4:3, 'Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.' Our prayers should be the breathings of the spirit, and usually they are but the belches and eructations of the flesh. And for these it is we are so instant and earnest with God. We would have God bless us in some revengeful and carnal enterprise. We deal with God as the thief that lighted his candle at the lamps of the altar. So

many would make God a party in their carnal designs: Prov. 21:27, 'The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination; how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?' It is an abomination when it is at the best; but when he hath an ill aim, then it is an abomination with a witness. Foolish creatures vainly imagine to entice heaven to their lure. Balaam builded altars and sacrificed, out of hope that God would curse his own people, and engage in Moab's quarrel; like the man in the Gospel that would make no other use of Christ than to compose his civil difference: Luke 12:13. He comes to him as a man of authority, 'Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.' We all look upon God, tanquam aliquem magnum, as Austin said he did in his infancy, as some great power that would serve all our carnal turns. In this sense we make God to serve our sins, Isa. 43:24, when we would have God to contribute to our lusts, to our pride, wantonness, revenge. This is such a foolish request, as if a wife should beg of her husband to give her leave to go on with her adulteries. Survey all the petitions which are in this present platform of prayer, there is not one that is calculated for such an evil purpose as our revenge, pomp, pride, pleasure. Carnal self surely must give way to God.

[2.] There is a natural self, when we seek our own temporal felicity. Christ hath allowed these natural desires a room in our prayers; but they must keep their order and their place: first, God's glory; and then, our safety. The obtaining of natural good is put in the last place. And, therefore, when our thoughts only run upon temporal felicity and outward supplies, it is not prayer, but a brutish cry: Hosea 7:14, 'They howl upon their beds for corn, wine, and oil.' Beasts are sensible of their pain, and are carried by natural instinct to seek their own welfare, as well as men. And, therefore, when this is our first and only request, it is a perversion of that order which Christ hath set down in this perfect form of prayer.

[3.] There is spiritual self, which is valuable either in point of justification or acceptance with God, or in point of sanctification and conformity to him. Now, as these blessings cannot be severed from

God's glory where they are really enjoyed, so they must not be severed in our prayers, nor preferred before it. To ask pardon as a separate benefit as it concerns our ease and quiet, not as it concerns God's glory, is a perversion and a diversion of our prayers. The main thing which God intends should be the main thing in our requests, is, 'the praise of his glorious grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved,' Eph. 1:6. And, therefore, this is the main thing which the soul intends: Ps. 79:9, 'Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name; and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake.' The argument is not taken from themselves merely, or from their own misery, but from God's glory. If God could not be more glorified in our pardon and acceptance with him than in our death and damnation, it were an evil thing to desire pardon. But now when God hath abundantly cleared up this to us, that he is no loser by acts of mercy; that this conduceth more to the exalting of his great name, to accept poor sinners to mercy; the soul goeth with the more confidence to beg it of God, that he would purge us from our filthiness for his name's sake. But now men's thoughts are wholly taken up with their own peace and safety, and take no care for God's honour. This is but a selfish request, or an offer of nature after ease. For the other part, to ask for grace and conformity to God's will, merely as it is a perfection of our nature abstractly from God's glory, it is not a right request. It is contrary to the very nature of grace, whose tendency is to God in the first place, that his name may be glorified, that we should be to the praise of his glorious grace. Grace wrought in us is but a creature, and not to be preferred before the Creator. See how the apostle prays: 2 Thes. 1:11, 12, 'We pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith, with power: that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.' That is a regular prayer, when all our spiritual interests are swallowed up in God, and we beg that his name may be glorified in us and upon us.

[4.] There is glorified self, which standeth in the eternal fruition of God. Man was made for two ends—to glorify God, and to enjoy him. Now our crown of glory must be laid at God's feet; as the elders, Rev. 4:10, 'Saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power.' All our desires must give place to this, that he may be glorified in our eternal happiness; and we are to beg it no further than as it may stand with his honour. Man's chief end, and so his chief request, in respect of himself, is, to enjoy God; but with respect to God, so it is the highest only of subordinate ends; for the highest, chiefly and absolutely, is the glorifying of God.

Well then, therefore, this is put first, to show that our chiefest care and affection should mainly run upon the glory of God, and that God might be advanced and lifted up on high.

Secondly, To give you some reasons why those things which concern the glory of God must be sought in the first place, and with the greatest affection:—

1. As we are reasonable creatures, it is fit it should be so. In all regular desires the end is first intended, and then the means. But now the glory of God, that is the end of all things: Prov. 16:4, 'The Lord hath made all things for himself;' that is, for his own glory, for the manifesting of his excellency. And so our redemption: Luke 2:14, 'Glory be to God on high.' When God came to show his goodwill in Christ, it was to make way for his glory: as it begins in goodwill, so it must end in glory. This is the end of all the privileges we have by nature and grace. Now God's glory is the end of our being and service, and therefore must be first taken care of in our prayers; first his glory, and then our profit, for the end is the first thing intended by any rational agent.

2. As we are the children of God by adoption. The great duty of children is to honour their parents. God pleads for honour upon this account: Mal. 1:6, 'If I be father, where is my honour?' So that if you consent to the preface, and say, 'Our Father;' then the next request



will be, 'Hallowed be thy name.' If we would own ourselves in such a relation, then we must make it our chief desire and care that God might be glorified by ourselves and others. Every kind of honour will not serve our heavenly Father. He must not be honoured as an ordinary father, in a common notion, but as an infinite and eternal Majesty; and to prefer anything to his interest or glory, or to equal anything to him, it is to make an idol of it, and to renounce him to be our father. The case of earthly parents is not always so. But now you renounce God when an idol is set in the throne; when any interest or concernment of yours is preferred before God, and before his interest and concernment.

3. That which is of most value and consideration should be sought first. Now God's glory it hath an infinite excellency above all other things. The glory of God is of more worth than all creatures,—than their being and happiness. The end is more worthy than that which serveth and conduceth to the end. Meats and drinks they were made for the body, therefore are not so good as the body. Who would dig for iron with mattocks of gold? The means or instrument is better worth than the purchase. Now no matter what becomes of us, so God may be glorified. As it is said of David, 'Thou art better than ten thousand of us;' therefore, though they exposed their bodies to hazard, they thought it not safe for him. So is God better than the whole world of men or angels. Our first care must be that he may be glorified, then let other things succeed in their place.

4. The example of Christ shows how much the glory of God should be cared for, and preferred before the creature's good: John 12:27, 28, 'Father, save me from this hour.' There was the innocent and sinless inclination of his human nature. 'But for this cause came I unto this hour; Father, glorify thy name.' He doth not so earnestly insist upon that, but submits all his human concernments, though exceeding precious, that they might give way to the glory of God; and he had no respect to his own ease, or to the innocent inclination of his human nature, or to the felt comforts of the Godhead. Now Christ's example it is the best instruction. He taught us how we should behave

ourselves to our heavenly Father; and, therefore, we should learn to prefer the honour of God before our own ease; and if God but get up, though we be kept low and poor, yet we should be contented. Look, as all natural things will act against their particular inclination for a general good; as to avoid a vacuity, the air will descend, and the water ascend, that there may not be a confusion or dissolution of the frame of nature: so hath Christ taught us still to prefer a general good. 'Father, glorify thyself;' that is it we must insist upon, though it be with our loss, suffering, trouble, yea, sometimes with our trouble of conscience, we must be content.

5. From the nature of prayer. The whole spiritual life it is a living to God: Gal. 2:19, 'I am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.' The whole tendency and ordination of all acts of the spiritual life they are to God. Even the natural life is overruled and directed to this end; there is an eating and drinking to God; the meat and drink we take, if God be not the last end of it, it is but a meat-offering and a drink-offering to our own appetite, and a sacrifice to Moloch. Now, much more in acts of immediate worship, there God will be principally regarded, for their respect and tendency is mainly to God. In our whole life we are God's, dedicated to him. Every godly man is set apart for God. A man that is a Christian must be 'holy in all manner of conversation,' 1 Pet. 1:15. A Christian must look upon himself as one that is dedicated to God, when he is at his meals, in his trade and calling; and grace is to run out in every act. But much more is this tendency of grace to bewray itself in our solemn sequestration of ourselves when we make our nearer approaches to him: Lev. 10:3, 'I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people will I be glorified.' What is it to sanctify God? A thing is sanctified when it is set apart; and God is sanctified when we set apart ourselves wholly for him—when he hath more than common affections and common respects. And therefore in prayer, in the first place, we should go to God for God, and surely in such a request we are likely to speed.

6. Love to God, if it be unfeigned, and hath any strength in the soul, will necessarily put us upon this. Love seeks the good of the party beloved, as much or more than its own. Those which love have all things in common between them, and one counts it done to himself what is done to the other; so it is in the love between us and God. Look, as Christ loves the saints, and counteth whatever you do to them it is done to him, because done to those whom he loved—Mat. 15: so, reciprocally, the saint which loves God, what is done to God is done to us: when God is honoured, we are comforted as much or more than with our own benefit; and when God is dishonoured, we have the grief and sorrow: Ps. 69:9, 'The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.' Or if they hear God's name rent in pieces, and men dishonour him by their filthy lives, it goeth to their hearts; for God and they have but one common interest—nay, they prefer God's interest before their own or any other's: John 21:15, 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?' By the world's maxim, love should begin at home; but by Christ's direction, it beginneth with God They are more tender of God's glory than their own lives and outward comfort: 'I count not my life dear to me,' saith Paul. Thus you see what reason there is why our main care and thoughts should be taken up about the concernments of God, and about the glory of his holy name.

Use 1. To reprove us, that we are no more affected with God's glory. Oh, how little do we aim at and regard it in our prayers! We should seek it, not only above the profits and pleasures of this life, but even above life itself; yea, above life present and to come. But alas! since the fall, we are corrupt, and wholly poisoned with self-love; we prefer every base interest and trifle before God; nay, we prefer carnal self before God. Some are wholly brutish; and so they may wallow in ease and pleasure, and eat the fat and drink the sweet, never think of God, care not how God is dishonoured, both by themselves and others. And then some, oh, how tender are they in matters of their own concernment, and affected with it, more than for the glory of God!—John 12:43. They are more affected with their own honour, and their own loss and reproach, than with God's dishonour or God's glory. If

their own reputation be but hazarded a little, oh, how it stings them to the heart! But if they be faulty towards God, they can pass it over without trouble. A word of disgrace, a little contempt cast upon our persons, kindles the coals and fills us with rage; but we can hear God's name dishonoured, and not be moved with it. When they pray, if they beg outward blessings, if they ask anything, it is for their lusts, not for God; it is but to feed their pomp and excess, and that they may shine in the pomp and splendour of external accommodations. If they beg quickening and enlargement, it is for their own honour, that their lusts may be fed by the contributions of heaven; so, by a wicked design, they would even make God to serve the devil. The best of us, when we come to pray, what a deep sense have we of our own wants, and no desire of the glory of God! If we beg daily bread, maintenance, and protection, we do not beg it as a talent to be improved for our master's use, but as fuel for our lusts. If we beg deliverance, it is because we are in pain, and ill at ease; not that we may honour and glorify God, that mercy and truth may shine forth. If we beg pardon, it is only to get rid of the smart, and be enlarged out of the stocks of conscience. If they beg grace, it is but a lazy wish after sanctification, because they are convinced there is no other way to be happy. If they beg eternal glory, they do not beg it for God, it appears plainly, because they can be content to dishonour God long, provided they at length may be saved. Most of us pray without a heart set to glorify God, and to bring honour unto his great name. Though a man hath never so much sense and feeling in his prayer, yet if his heart be not duly set as to the glory of God, his prayer is turned into sin. It is not the manner or the vehemency only, for a carnal spring may send forth high tides of affection, and motions that come from lust may be earnest and very rapid; therefore it is not enough to have fervour and vehemency, but when our aim is to honour and glorify God: Zech. 7:5, 6, 'When ye fasted, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me? And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did you not eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves?'

Use 2. For exhortation, to press us to seek the glory of God above all things. Take these arguments:—

1. How necessary it is the Lord should have his glory. The world serves for no other purpose; it is made and continued for this end: Rev. 4:11, 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.' All that God hath made, it was for his own glory; and, Rom. 11:36, 'For of him, and through him, and to him are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.' Of him, in a way of creation; through him, by way of providential influence and supportation; that they may be to him in their final tendency and result. God did not make us for ourselves, but his own glory.

2. It is a singular benefit to be admitted to sanctify God's name. Oh that poor worms should come and put the crown upon God's head! and that he will count anything we can do to be a glory to himself: 1 Chron. 29:14, 'But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.'

3. Consider how much it concerneth us, that we may make some restitution for our former dishonouring of God; therefore we should be more zealous in this work. How forward have we been to dishonour God in thought, word, and deed, before the Lord wrought upon us! There is not a mercy but we have abused it, nor anything we have meddled with, but one way or other we have turned it to the Lord's reproach and dishonour. Now when the Lord hath put grace in our hearts, when we are 'a people formed for his praise'—Isa. 43.—when he hath made us anew, we should think of making some restitution, some amends to God, and should zealously affect his glory above all things.

Use 3. For trial. Do we prefer the glory of God in the first place? Take these marks:—

1. Then we would be content with our loss, provided the name of God may gain any respect in the world; and so he may be magnified, no matter what becomes of us, and our interest and concernment: Phil.

1:20. The apostle expresseth there a kind of indifferency: so 'Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.' Oh, then it is a sign you make it your purpose, drift, and care, when you are contented to do or be anything that God will have you to be or do. This holds good, not only in temporal concernments, when you are content to want necessary food, &c., but it holds also in spiritual concernments: as to sense of pardon, though God should suspend the consolations of his Spirit, yet, if it be for the glory of his grace, I am to be content; nay, in some cases God's glory is more to be cared for than our own salvation, if they two could come in competition; but that case never falls out with the creature—our salvation is conjoined with the glory of God. But yet, in supposition, if it should, as Paul and Moses puts the supposition—Exod. 32:32, 'Blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which thou hast written'—so God might be honoured in saving that people. So Rom. 9:3, 'For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.' It was not a rash speech, a thing spoken out of an unadvised passion: see but with what a serious preface it is ushered in, ver. 1, 'God is my witness, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.' He calls God to witness this was the real disposition of his heart, and he speaks advisedly, and with good deliberation.

Object. But is it lawful thus to wish to be accursed? Certainly Paul could not wish himself to love Christ less, or to be less beloved of him; for these things we cannot part with them without sin; but in our enjoyment of Christ there is a happy part, some personal happiness which resulteth to us. Now all this he could lay at God's feet. How so? What, for others? A regular love begins at home, and every man is bound to look to his own salvation first, and then the salvation of others. But that was not the case; it was not their salvation and Paul's salvation which was in competition, but the glory of God, and the common salvation of the Jews, and Paul's particular salvation. It was a mighty prejudice to the gospel that the people from whom Christ's messengers proceeded—for the law went out of Sion, the gospel came out from among the Jews—that so many

of them were prejudiced, and a mighty eclipse to the glory of God. Now he could lay down all his personal happiness at God's feet, he speaks in supposition, if such a case falls out. But, however, this is a clear rule: the glory of God must be preferred before our own salvation. In some cases there will be need of this rule. For instance, there is many a man that possibly is convinced of a false religion; and the first question men make is, if they can be saved in such a religion, but many men are hardened in Popery. When, therefore, a man is contented to continue in a false religion, and dishonour God with his compliance there, provided he may be saved, he prefers his own salvation before the glory of God; and in case of the delay of repentance, when men dally with God, and put off the work of returning to the Lord until another time, or hereafter it is time enough to repent, these men prize their salvation before the glory of God. If it were true upon that supposition, that if ever they shall be saved, they are contented God shall be dishonoured a great deal longer, and that if they be saved at length this will satisfy them.

Quest. But how may we discern that we make the glory of God the first and chief thing we aim at in prayer?

1. Partly by the work of your own thoughts. The end is first in intention, though last in execution. When you are praying for a public mercy against an enemy, what runs in your thoughts? Revenge, safety, and your own personal happiness, or God's glory? 'What wilt thou do, O Lord, unto thy great name?' Josh. 7:9. Are you pleasing yourselves with suppositions of your escape and deliverance, and reeking your wrath upon your adversaries? So in prayer for strength and quickening, what is it that runs in your mind? Are you entertaining your spirit with dreams of applause, and feeding your minds with the sweetness of popular acclamation?

2. By the manner of praying, absolutely for God's glory, but for all other things with a sweet submission to God's will: John 12:27, '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.' Christ is absolute in the request, and he receives an answer. Is this enough? Do you mainly press God with this, that he might provide for his own glorious name, that his name might not lie under reproach? But now carnal aims do make affection impetuous and impatient of check and denial. Rachel must have children, or die. When the heart is set upon earthly success, pleasure, or comfort, then they cannot brook a denial without murmuring. The children of God only accept of God's glory, and in all other things they leave themselves to God's disposal, and therefore this is the main thing.

3. Partly too by the disposition of your hearts when your prayers are accomplished, and God hath given any blessing you pray for. We do not ask it for God's glory, if we do not use it for God's glory. The time of having mercies is the time of trial, and therefore when we consume our mercies upon our lusts, when they do not conduce to check our sins, it is a sign God's glory is not the thing intended as it should be.

Thus for the order of this petition.

II. The necessity of putting up such a request to God. It is his charge to us in the third commandment, that we should sanctify his name: 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.' The positive part of that commandment is, thou shalt sanctify it. Now here we make it matter of prayer to God: 'Hallowed be thy name.' From whence let me observe:—

Doct. Those that would have God's name hallowed and glorified, must seriously deal with God about it.

There are several reasons why we must put up such requests to God. I might argue from the utility and the necessity of it.

First, The utility. We put up these requests to God:—



1. That we may more solemnly warn ourselves of our own duty. In prayer there is an implicit vow, or solemn obligation, that we take upon ourselves to prosecute what they ask. It is a preaching to ourselves in God's hearing. So that every word we speak to God is a lesson to us, and our requests are so many exhortations to glorify his holy name. With what face can we ask that which we are wholly reckless and neglectful of? Then we shall certainly come under that character: Mat. 15:7, 8, 'This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.' It is the greatest mockage of God to ask, unless we have a mind to pursue and diligently to attend to this work and business, that the name of God may be glorified in us and upon us.

2. That we may have a due sense and grief for God's honour. God's children they are troubled to see God dishonoured. Lot's righteous soul was vexed, not with Sodom's injuries, but with Sodom's sins, 2 Pet. 2:8. And David saith: 'Rivers of tears run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law,' Ps. 119:136. Many will scarce weep for their own sins, where they have advantage of remorse of conscience; but when they are zealously affected with God's glory, they will weep for others' sins. When his name is torn and rent in pieces, it is a grief of heart to them. Now God will have us ask this, that this holy sense of spiritual grief may be kept up; for when it is become the matter of our requests, then we are interested in the glory of God. We are loth to see things miscarry where we have petitioned and begged for others; so when we have begged the glory of his name, it will further this spiritual sense and grief of heart when his name is dishonoured.

3. That we may count it as great a blessing when God is glorified as when we are saved. 'Continue in prayer,' saith the apostle, 'and watch thereunto with thanksgiving.' When we have been instant with God in prayer, that he might be glorified, then we shall count it as great a blessing when he is glorified as when we are saved. Prayer makes way for the increase of our esteem, and engages us to observe the return. When we have asked it of God, we will be affected with it

then. When we see all his works praise him, what a comfort will this be to the soul: 'Bless the Lord, O my soul,' Ps. 103:22.

But secondly, Let me show the necessity of dealing with God about it. The necessity will appear both in respect of persons and things; when we beg that God's name may be hallowed, we beg dispositions of heart and occasions.

First, The necessity will appear in respect of persons, both as to ourselves and others.

First, In respect of ourselves, there is a great necessity that we should deal with God about the hallowing of his name; because we need direction, sincerity, quickening, submission to God, humility, and holiness.

To instance in these six things:—

1. We need direction. The habits of grace are God's gifts, and the exercise of grace is another thing; to actuate, quicken, guide, and direct it: 2 Thes. 3:5, 'The Lord direct your hearts to the love of God.' And so in prayer, and in honouring of God. In prayer, 'we know not' how or 'what to pray for as we ought.' Though we have grace, yet we need direction. A ship that is well rigged, yet needs a skilful pilot: Rom. 8:26, 'Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought.' How much are we to seek to give God his due honour! 'Of ourselves we cannot so much as think a good thought:' 2 Cor. 3:5. There is an utter insufficiency in us to meditate of God, and conceive aright of his excellency, and give him the honour which is due to him. None of us but needs daily to go to God, that we may be taught how to hallow and sanctify his name.

2. We need quickening, being so backward to this duty. All the lepers could beg help, and but one returned to give God the glory. There is much dulness and deadness of heart as to the praising of God, and glorifying of God. Self-love will put us upon other things; but it is grace must quicken us to glorify him and praise him. When we go to

God for ourselves, our necessities will sharpen our affections, and put a shrill accent upon our prayers. But now when we beg of God for God, then there is a greater restraint upon us. And therefore David saith, Ps. 51:15, 'Open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.' We need God to open our mouths; that is, enlarge our hearts and quicken our affections. How apt are we to turn the back upon the mercy-seat! Ezek. 46:9. If a man came in at the north gate he was to go out at the south gate, but never at the same door. Why? That he might not turn his back upon the mercy-seat. When we have prayed, we are apt to forget that God which hath blessed us; and therefore that our hearts might be enlarged and quickened, we need to go to God.

3. We need uprightness and sincerity, that we may mind the glory of God. This is not a work of nature, but grace: Phil. 2:21, 'All men seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.' There is the fruit and effect of nature, it puts men upon seeking their own things, worldly case, profit, and pleasure. Every creature naturally seeks its own welfare; but to make the glory of God our great aim and pursuit, it is grace puts upon that. Water ascends no higher than it descends, so nature cannot rise beyond itself. The stream cannot rise above the fountain, and above the principle. A man that hath nothing but nature, he cannot unfeignedly seek the things which are of God. The old man with the deceitful lusts, that is the natural man. The upright heart, that unfeignedly seeks God, needs grace from above. Without influence from God, our actions cannot have a tendency to God. We shall prefer our interest before God's glory, if we have no higher principle than what our hearts furnish us with.

4. We must go to God for submission. Now there is a double submission required, which if we have not, we shall find it marvellously difficult to glorify God. One, as to the choice of instruments; another, as to the way and means by which God will bring about his own glory.

[1.] As to the choice of instruments. There is in us an envy, and wicked emulation. Oh, how hard a matter is it to rejoice in the gifts, and graces, and services of others, and be content with the dispensation, when God will cast us by as unworthy, and use others for the glorifying of his name! Therefore that we may refer the choice of instruments to God, we need go to him and say, Lord, 'hallowed be thy name;' do it which way, and by whom thou pleasest. We are troubled, if others glorify God, and not we, or more than we; if they be more holy, more useful, or more serious, self will not yield to this. Now by putting up this prayer to God, we refer it to him to choose the instrument whom he will employ. It was a commendable modesty and self-denial in John Baptist, which is described, John 3:13, 'He must increase, I must decrease.' When we are contented to be abased and obscured, provided Christ may be honoured and exalted; and be content with such a dispensation, though with our loss and decrease. Many are of a private station, and straitened in gifts, and can have no public instrumentality for God; now these need to pray, 'Hallowed be thy name,' that they may rejoice when God useth others whom he hath furnished with greater abilities.

[2.] A submission for the way; that we may submit to those unpleasing means and circumstances of his providence, that God will take up and make use of, for the glorifying of his holy name. Many times we must be content, not only to be active instruments, but passive objects of God's glory. And therefore if God will glorify himself by our poverty, or our disgrace, our pain and sickness, we must be content. Therefore we need to deal with God seriously about this matter, that we may submit to the Lord's will, as Jesus Christ did: John 12:27, 28, 'Save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour: Father, glorify thy name. And there was a voice from heaven that said, I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.' Put me to shame, suffering, to endure the cross, the curse, so thou mayest be glorified. This was the humble submission of Christ Jesus, and such a submission should be in us. The martyrs were contented to be bound to the stake, if that way God will use them to his glory. Phil. 1:20, saith Paul, 'So Christ shall be magnified in my body,

whether it be by life, or by death:' if my body be taken to heaven in glory, or whether it be exercised or worn out with ministerial labour. We need to deal with God that we may have the end, and leave the means to his own choosing; that God may be glorified in our condition, whatever it be. If he will have us rich and full, that he might be glorified in our bounty; if he will have us poor and low, that he may be glorified in our patience; if he will have us healthy, that he may be glorified in our labour; if he will have us sick, that he may be glorified in our pain; if he will have us live, that he may be glorified in our lives; if he will have us die, that he may be glorified in our deaths: and therefore, 'Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's:' Rom. 14:9. A Christian is to be like a die in the hand of providence, content whether he be cast high or low, and not to grudge at it, whether he will continue us longer or take us out of the world. As a servant employed beyond the seas, if his master will have him tarry, there he tarries; if he would have him come home, home he comes: so that we had need to deal seriously with God about this submissive spirit.

[5.] Humility; that we may not put the crown upon our own heads, but may cast it at the Lamb's feet; that we may not take the glory of our graces to ourselves. God's great aim in the covenant is, 'that no flesh should glory in itself; but whosoever glories, may glory in the Lord:' 1 Cor. 1:27–31. He would have us still come and own him, in all that we are, and in all that we do. As the good servant gave account of his diligence, Luke 19:16, he doth not say, My industry, but, 'Thy pound hath gained ten pounds.' And Paul was a zealous instrument, that went up and down doing good; he 'laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me:' 1 Cor. 15:10. In this case if we would honour and glorify God, we must do as Joab did, when he was likely to take Rabbah: he sent for David to gather up more forces, and encamp against the city and take it, 'Lest I take the city, and it be called after my name:' 2 Sam. 12:28. How careful was he that his sovereign might have the honour! So careful should we be that the crown be set upon Christ's head, and that he may have the glory of our graces and services, that,

they may not be called after our own name, that God may be more owned in them than we. Now what more natural, than for creatures to intercept the revenues of the crown of heaven, and to convert them to their own use? It is a vile sacrilege, to rob God of the glory of that grace he hath bestowed upon us; and yet what more common? The flesh is apt to interpose upon all occasions; and therefore we need to put up this request, 'Hallowed be thy name.'

[6.] There is holiness required, that we may not be a disgrace to God and a dishonour to him. The Lord saith, Ezek. 20:9, 'That his name should not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they (his people) were.' The sin of God's people doth stain the honour of God, and profane his name. When men profess much to be a people near God, and live carnally and loosely, they dishonour God exceedingly by their conversation. Men judge by what is visible and sensible, and so they think of God by his servants and worshippers; as the heathens did of Christ in Salvian's time,—If he was a holy Christ, certainly Christians would live more temperately, justly, and soberly. They are apt to think of God by his worshippers, and by the people that profess themselves so near and dear to him; therefore it concerns us to walk so, that our lives may honour him: 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.' As the loins of the poor (saith Job) blessed him, Job 31:20, namely, as they were fed and clothed by his bounty; so our lives may glorify God. David saith, Ps. 119:7, 'Then shall I praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I have learned thy righteous judgment.' There is no way to praise God entirely and sincerely until we have learned both to know and do his will. Real praise is the praise God looks after. Otherwise we do but serve Christ as the devil served him, who would carry him upon the top of the mountain, but it was with an intent to bid him throw himself down again. So we seem to exalt God much in our talk and profession; yea, but we throw him down, when we pollute him and deny him in our conversation. Our lives are the scandal of religion, and a pollution and blot to the name of God. So that with respect to

ourselves, you see what need we have to go to God. that he will give us grace that we may please him and glorify his name.

Secondly, In regard of others. A Christian cannot be content to glorify God himself, but he would have all about him to glorify God. As fire turns all things round about it into fire; and leaven, it spreads still, until it hath subdued the whole lump: so is grace a diffusive, a spreading thing. As far as we can reach and diffuse our influence, we would have God brought into request with all round about us. 'Being converted,' saith Christ to Peter, 'strengthen thy brethren.' So it will be where there is true grace. Mules, and creatures which are of a mongrel and bastard race, they beget not after their kind: so bastard Christians are not for the calling in of others, and the gaining of those about them. But a true Christian will be earnest, and much in this matter. Now their hearts are not in our power, but in God's; therefore we need to be much in prayer, and make this our main request, Lord, 'hallowed be thy name.' For hereby,

1. We acknowledge God's dominion over the spirits of men, which is a great honour to God, and a quieting to us. It is a title often given to God in scripture, that he is the 'God of the spirits of all flesh.' If they had a magistrate to choose, they go to God: Num. 27:16, 'Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation.' If a judgment to be averted, Num. 16:22, 'O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?' This is a great honour to God, when we acknowledge the power and dominion that he hath over the hearts and spirits of men. To roll a stone is not so much as to rule the creatures; and to keep the sun in its course is not so much as to rule the spirits of men, and to work them to the glorifying of his holy name. God can turn the hearts of men this way and that way, according as he pleaseth: Prov. 21:1, 'The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; he turneth it whithersoever he will.' As a man can dispose of a watercourse, turn it hither and thither as the necessities of his field or garden require, so can God draw out the hearts and respects of men. Surely there would not be

so many disorders in the world if we did often reflect upon this attribute, or did deal with God about his power over the spirits of men. We are wrathful, and think nothing but the confusion of men would serve the turn, and there is no riddance of our burden but by the destruction of those who stand in our way; whereas the conversion of men, a change of their spirits and hearts, would be a better cure, and bring more honour to God, and safety with it. The truth is, we look more to men than to God, and that is the reason why we pitch rather upon the destruction than the conversion of others. Destruction, that may be executed by the creature; but conversion, that is a power (to order and regulate the spirits of men) which God hath reserved in his own hands. One angel could destroy above a hundred and eighty thousand in Sennacherib's camp in one night; but all the angels, with their united strength, cannot draw in one heart to God. But now the God of the spirits of all flesh, who is too hard for him? Oh, did we often reflect upon this, we would be dealing with God about this matter, that he would work upon the spirits of men. If there be a wicked ruler, or an obstinate child or servant, &c., that he would sanctify himself upon them, and change their hearts.

2. You discover much love to God, when, as you would not dishonour him yourselves, so you are careful others may not dishonour him. 'Praise him, all ye ends of the earth,' Ps. 98:4, and 100:1. You would have all the world own him. Private spirits that would impale and enclose religion, that they may shine alone, they do not love God, but themselves, their own credit, and their own profit. 'Would to God all the Lord's people were prophets!' Num. 11:29. That was a free and noble speech. God is resembled to the sun, because it is he that must shine alone; but the church is compared to the moon and stars, where all may shine, but every star in its own glory. True Christians would have all to be as they are, unless it be with respect to their bonds and incumbrances.

3. You discover love to others, you would have them glorify God. The angels, they rejoice when a sinner is converted; they have a great love to souls, Luke 15:7. And so do Christians; the more spiritual they are,



the more they come near to the blessed spirits above, and the more affected they are with the good done to others, and with their conversion. Saith Paul, Rom. 9:3: 'I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.' Such a zeal and entire affection he had to the souls of others, that he could lay all his personal happiness at Christ's feet. And thus you see what need we have to deal seriously with God in this business, if indeed we make this our aim. Especially those which are in public relations, as Paul was, which had an office put upon him to procure the salvation of others, how will their hearts run out upon it!

Secondly, It is needful we should deal with God about the sanctifying of his name, as in regard of persons, so of things and events. God hath the disposal of all events in his own hands. There are many things which concern the glory of God that are out of our reach, and are wholly in God's hands; and therefore it discovers our love to his glory, and our submission to his wise and powerful government of all affairs, when we deal with God about it, and refer the matter to his disposal, and say, Lord, 'hallowed be thy name,' take the work into thy own hands. We discover our love to his glory, because we make it a part of our request that all these events may conduce to the glory of his majesty. As Joshua, when Israel fell before their enemies: Josh. 7:9, 'Lord, what wilt thou do for thy great name?' There was his trouble. And Moses: Num. 14:15, 16, 'What will the nations say round about? 'Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he swore unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness.' It goeth near to the heart of God's children when they see anything that will tend to God's reproach.

But that is not all; it is not enough we discover that, but also our submission to his wise and powerful government, when we refer the matter to his disposal, and can see that he can work out his own ends out of all the confusions which happen there; out of sins, errors, wars, blood: Ps. 76:10, 'The wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.' In the Septuagint it is, the wrath of man shall keep holy day to thee, shall increase a festival for

thee. God many times gets up in the world upon Satan's shoulders. When matters are ravelled and disordered, he can find out the right end of the thread, and how to disentangle us again; and when we have spoiled a business, he can dispose it for good, and make an advantage of those things which seem to obscure the glory of his name.

By the way, both these must go together, our love to his glory, and our submission to his providence. Our love to his glory; for we should not be altogether reckless and careless how things go; and yet not carking, because of the wisdom and power of his providence. The truth is, we should be more solicitous about duties than events. The glory of events belongeth to God himself, and we are not to take his work out of his hand, but mind him in it. Look, as some would learn their schoolfellows' lesson better than their own; so we would have things carried thus and thus. And so by murmuring we tax providence, rather than adore it, and we eclipse the glory of God. Yet we must be sensible of the reproaches cast upon God, and must pray to the Lord to vindicate and right his name, to take the way and means into his own hands.

Thus you have seen the necessity of putting up such a request to God, 'Hallowed be thy name.'

Use 1. Is for information. It informs us that whatever we bestow upon God, we have it from God at first: 1 Chron. 29:11, 'Of thine own have we given thee.' The King of all the earth, we cannot pay him any tribute but out of his own exchequer. When we are best affected to God's interest, and pray for God's concernments, we must beg the grace which maketh us to do so. It is his own gift. It is he must enable and incline us, quicken and direct us. So that in all things he is Alpha and Omega—we begin in him, whenever we end in him. And when we do most for God, we have all from him.

Use 2. For direction in the matter of glorifying God, in four propositions.

[1.] This life is not to be valued, but as it yieldeth us opportunities for this end and purpose, to glorify God. We were not sent into the world to live for ourselves, but for God. If we could make ourselves, then we could live to ourselves. If we could be our own cause, then we might be our own end. But God made us for himself, and sent us into the world for himself. Christ saith: John 17:4, 'Father, I have glorified thee on earth,' &c. It is not our duty only to glorify God in heaven, to join in concert with the angels in their hallelujahs above, where we may glorify him without distraction, weariness, and weakness; but here on earth, in the midst of difficulties and temptations. There are none sent into the world to be idle, or to 'bring forth fruit to themselves,' Hosea 10:1; to improve their pains and strength, to promote merely their own interest; but God's glory must be our chief work and aim while we are here upon earth,—this must be the purpose and intent of our lives.

[2.] Every man, besides his general calling, hath his own work and course of service whereby to glorify and honour God: John 17:4, 'I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.' As in a great house one hath one employment, one another: so God hath designed to every man his work he hath to do, and the calling he must be in; some in one calling, and some in another; but they all have their service and work given them to do for God's glory.

[3.] In discharge of this work, as they must do all for God, so they can do nothing without God. Every morning we should revive the sense of it upon ourselves, as the care of our work and aim, so the sense of our impotency. This day I am to live with God; but how unable am I, and how easily shall I dishonour him! 'The way of man is not in himself,' Jer. 10:23. When a Christian goeth abroad in the morning, he must remember he is at Christ's dispose; he is not to do as he pleaseth, but to be guided by rule, and act for God's glory, and fetch in strength from Christ: Col. 3:17, 'Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.' Not only in our duties or immediate converses with God, but in our sports, business, recreation. What is it to do things in the name of Christ,—that is, to

do it according to Christ's will and command? He hath allowed us time for recreation, for conversing with God, and calling in Christ's help, and aiming at his glory. If we have anything to do for God, we must do it in his own strength, in every word and deed.

[4.] You are directed again, when the glory of God and sanctifying of his name either sticks with us, or sticks abroad, God must be specially consulted with in the case. When our hearts are backward, then, 'Lord, open thou my lips;' Lord, affect me with a sense of thy kindness and mercy. When it sticks abroad, when such events fall out, as for a while God's name is obscured, and seems to be clouded, 'Lord, what wilt thou do for thy great name?'

III. Having opened the order of the words, and the reasons of putting up such a request to God, I now come to the sense of the petition, 'Hallowed be thy name.' Four things will come under consideration: —

1. What is meant by the name of God.
2. What it is to hallow and sanctify it.
3. I shall take notice of the form of the proposal, ἁγιασθητω, Hallowed.
4. The note of distinction, thy name.

First, What is meant by God's name?

1. God himself.
2. Anything whereby he is made known.

[1.] God himself. Name, by an Hebraism, is put for the person itself. Thus: Rev. 3:4, 'Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments;' that is, many persons; so: Acts 1:15, it is said there, 'The number of the names together were about one

hundred and twenty,' that is of persons. So it is used in the present case. God's name is put for God himself: Ps. 20:1,. 'The name of the God of Jacob defend thee!' That is, God himself. So: Ps. 44:5, 'Through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us;' that is, by thee. And to believe in the name of Christ is to believe in Christ himself. Name is put for person, for the immediate object of faith is the person of Christ: John 1:12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.'

[2.] Anything whereby he is made known to us, *Nomen quasi notamen*. As a man is known by his name, so God's titles and attributes, his ordinances, his works, his word, are his name, chiefly the two latter. For his works, they are a part of the name of God: Ps. 8:1, the burden of that psalm is twice repeated, 'O Lord, our Lord, how great is thy name in all the earth!' By the name there, is meant God made known in his works of creation and providence, for he speaks there of sun, moon, and stars, which proclaim an eternal power to all the world; and he speaks of such a name as is in all the earth. And, Ps. 147:19, 20, 'He hath not dealt so with any nation,' and given them his word, statutes, and ordinances; every one hath not that privilege. But, 'How great is thy name in all the earth!' That is, how manifestly art thou made known by thy works! But above all, by name is meant his word: Ps. 138:2, 'Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.' There is more of God to be seen in his word, than in all the creatures of the world, and in all his other works besides. We understand more of God than can be taken up by the creation. It helps us to interpret the book of nature and providence; there we have his titles, attributes, ordinances; there we have his greatest work, in which he hath discovered so much of his name, the mystery of redemption, which is not elsewhere to be known. Thus by the name of God is meant God himself, as he hath made known himself in the word. We desire that he may be sanctified, that he may with honour and reverence be received everywhere.

Secondly, The second thing to be explained, what is meant by hallowed? In scripture God is said sometimes to be magnified, sometimes to be justified, sometimes to be glorified, and sometimes to be sanctified. Now it is not here said, Magnificetur nomen tuum, or glorificetur, but sanctificetur—let thy name be sanctified. All these terms do express how God is to be honoured by the creature, and they have all distinct notions. God is said to be magnified: Luke 1:46, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord.' To magnify God argueth a high esteem or a due sense of his greatness. Again, God is said to be justified: Luke 7:29, 'The people and the publicans justified God.' What is it to justify God? To justify is to acquit from accusation, and when that word is applied to God, it signifieth our owning of him notwithstanding the prejudices of the world against him. To glorify God is to make him known to others, and to bring him into request with others, for glory it is clara cum laude notitia, a public fame or knowledge of excellency. Thus Christ saith, John 17:10, 'I am glorified in them;' speaking of his apostles, because by their means he was made known to the world. All these are included in the word of the text. Yet there is somewhat more intended by to be sanctified. When is God then said to be sanctified?

To hallow and to sanctify is to set apart from common use, and so to sanctify the name of God, is to use it in a separate manner, with that reverence and respect which is not used to anything else. So that when we pray that God's name may be hallowed or sanctified, we desire that, according as he hath made known himself in the word, so he may be known, revered, and esteemed in the world. Known to be the only true God: 1 Kings 18:36, 'Let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel,' and accordingly worshipped and glorified in the hearts and lives of men.

The third thing to open is the form of proposal, ἁγιασθητω. It is not sanctificemus, let us hallow, but sanctificetur, let it be hallowed, for in this form of speech, all the persons concerned in this work are included—God, ourselves, and others.

[1.] God is to be included in the prayer, that we may express our sense of his providence working all things for the glory of his holy name, yea, discovering his excellency, showing himself to be the holy God: Ezek. 38:23, 'I will magnify myself, and sanctify myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord.' The Lord magnifieth himself by the more eminent effects of his care and providence, but he sanctifieth himself chiefly by blessing and defending the godly, and by punishing and afflicting the wicked, for thereby he declareth his holiness, the purity of his nature, and his love to saints; so that when we say, 'Hallowed be thy name,' we mean, Lord, declare thyself to be a holy God, by putting a distinction between men and men in the course of thy providence, and owning thy people from heaven.

[2.] We include ourselves when we say, 'Hallowed be thy name,' for it is especially the duty of God's people: Isa. 29:23, 'They shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel.' It is our duty, by our religious carriage, to evidence that we have a holy God. This must be our first care, that we ourselves be sanctified, and to sanctify our sanctifier, the Holy One of Israel. Some, they would have God glorified by others, but do not look to themselves how they sanctify God. Now God hath made this to be a great part of our care, that his own people should not only magnify and glorify him, but sanctify him; therefore he rather makes them good than great. When he would make men great, then he shows his magnificence, to be the almighty disposer of the riches of the world; but when he makes them good, then he expects to be sanctified, that his people should discover that he is a holy One; that he is holy in himself, for we add nothing to him when we sanctify him, but only discover him to be such a one. In short, God sanctifieth us effectively by working grace and holiness in us, and we sanctify him relatively, objectively, declaratively, declaring him to be a holy God, and that we are a people belonging to this God.

[3.] The speech is so formed that others may be included, and that we may express our sense of their dishonouring God, as a thing that

is grievous to us, that we may show how near it goeth to our heart to see the ignorance, atheism, and blasphemy that is in the world. They would have the holy God to be sanctified abroad, either by the conversion of men, or by their punishment. And so it is meant: Isa. 5:16, 'God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness.' That is, his holiness and hatred of sin shall appear, either in the conversion of obstinate sinners, that God may be sanctified by them, or else for punishment, that God may be sanctified upon them.

Fourthly, The next thing is the note of distinction, 'Hallowed be thy name,' not ours. There seems to be a secret opposition between our name and the name of God. When we come to pray, we should distinctly remember whose name is to be glorified, that God may be at the end of every request. We beg of God many times, but we think of ourselves; our hearts run upon our own name, and upon our own esteem. How often do we come to him with a selfish aim, as if we would draw God into our own designs and purposes! None are so unfit to glorify God, and so unwelcome to him, as those that are so wedded and vehemently addicted to their own honour and esteem in the world. Therefore Christ, by way of distinction, by way of opposition to this innate disposition that is in us, he would have us to say, 'Hallowed be thy name.' That which gives most honour to God is believing: Rom. 4:19, 20, Abraham was 'strong in faith, giving glory to God.' Now, none so unfit for the work as they that seek glory for themselves: John 5:44, 'How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?' Affectation of vainglory, or splendour of our own name, is a temper inconsistent with faith, which is the grace that gives honour to God. I say, when we hunt after respect from men, and make that the chiefest scope of our actions, God's glory will certainly lie in the dust; when we are to suffer ignominy and abasement for his sake, the care of God's glory will be laid aside. The great sin of the old world was this: Gen. 11:4, 'Let us make us a name.' There are many conceits about that enterprise, what that people should aim at there in building so great and so vast a tower, before God confounded their tongues. Some, interpreting that place, 'Let us build us a tower even



to heaven,' think this was their intention, to make a way into heaven. But it is not likely they would be so foolish that had so late experience of the flood, and, when the ark rested upon the top of the highest mountains, found themselves to be at so great and vast a distance from heaven. Some think it was (as Josephus) to secure themselves from another flood; but that was sufficiently done by God's promise, who had engaged to them he would no more destroy the earth by water; and if that were their intention, why should they build in the plain, between the two rivers of Tigris and Euphrates? Moses gives the main reason there, that they might have an immortal name among posterity. But now see how ill they reckon that do reckon without God. Those that are so busy about their own name, how soon will God blast them! When in any action we do not seek glory to God, but ourselves, it is the ready way to be destroyed. This was the means to bury them in perpetual oblivion. Nebuchadnezzar, when he re-edified the city, Dan. 4:30: 'Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?' How doth God disappoint him, and turn him out among the beasts! Thus are we sure to be disappointed and blasted, when our hearts run altogether upon our own name. But now Christ saith thy name; when we are careful of that, this is the way to prosper.

From the words thus illustrated, I shall only observe:—

Doct. That God will be so glorified in the world as that his name may be hallowed or sanctified.

Here I shall show:—

1. How many ways God's name is sanctified.
2. Why God will be so glorified as that he may be sanctified.

First, How many ways is God's name sanctified? I answer, either upon us, or by us.

[1.] Upon us, by the righteous executions and judgments of his providence: and so God is sanctified when he doth by a high hand of power recover and extort the glory of his holiness from the dead and stupid world; as by that notable stroke of the Bethshemites, when fifty thousand were slain for peeping into the ark: 1 Sam. 6:20. This was the result of all: 'Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?' There he discovered himself to be a holy God, to be one that hath a high displeasure against the creature's disobedience. Now when he doth by a high hand extort this from the wicked, or from his children, then he sanctifieth himself upon us.

[2.] By us. And so he is sanctified in our thoughts, words, and actions; in our heart, tongue, or life.

1. In our hearts: 1 Pet. 3:15, 'Sanctify the Lord God in your heart.' How is God sanctified in our hearts?

[1.] When we have awful thoughts of his majesty: Ps. 111:9, 'Holy and reverend is his name.' Not only when we speak of the name of God, but when we think of it, we should be seriously affected. But,

[2.] More especially God is sanctified when, in straits, difficulties, and dangers, we can bear ourselves upon the power and sufficiency of God, and go on resolutely and cheerfully with our duty, notwithstanding discouragements. This is to sanctify the Lord God in our hearts. I shall prove it by two places where the phrase is used; one is, 1 Pet. 3:15, 'Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.' Mark, the Christians that did profess the name of God, which spake of God as their hope or object of their religion, were in great danger. Now what direction doth he give them, that they might not be afraid, but bear up? For he speaks before: 'Be not afraid of their terror, or be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.' See the same phrase used for the same purpose: Isa. 8:13, 'sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.' He opposeth it plainly there to carnal fear: ver. 12, 'Say

ye not a confederacy to all them to whom this people shall say a confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid; but sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear.' How comes this direction to be used in the present case? Thus; to sanctify is to set apart; and to sanctify God is to set apart, as the alone object of fear and trust, that he alone is to be feared and trusted, so that we can see no match for God among the creatures; therefore we are to embolden ourselves in the Lord, and go on cheerfully, when we can counterbalance all fears and dangers with his surpassing excellency. To glorify God is to do that which simply and absolutely tendeth to the manifestation of his excellency, without any relation to the creature; but to sanctify God is to set God above the creature, to do that which tends to exalt his greatness and excellency from and above all terrors, and all the discouragements that we can have from the creature; it is to ascribe that greatness, that power and glory, to God alone, which cannot be ascribed to anything else, and so to go on cheerfully with our duty, whatever difficulties we meet with. Thus Moses was chidden, that was amazed with present difficulty: Num. 20:12, 'And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel; therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.' Because they were discouraged, and thought they should never carry on their business, therefore God saith, 'Ye believe not to sanctify me:' you sanctify not God, or set him aloft, as the alone and supreme object of fear and trust. It is a practical acknowledgment of God's matchless excellency. Thus we sanctify God in our hearts.

2. God is sanctified with our tongues, when we use God's name, titles, ordinances, and word, as holy things; when we speak of the Lord with reverence, and with great seriousness of heart, not taking his name in vain; especially when we are deeply affected with his praise. It is no slight thing to praise God. God's people, when they have gone about it, see a need of the greatest help: Ps. 51:15, 'O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.' And Ps. 45:1: 'My heart is inditing a good matter;' my heart fries or boils a

good matter: when we will not give God dough-baked praise, nor speak of his name slightly, but so as becomes his greatness and surpassing excellency.

3. In our actions. Our actions may be parted into two things,—worship, and ordinary conversation.

(1.) In our worship, there God especially will be sanctified. Lev. 10:3, 'I will be sanctified in all that draw near unto me.' God is very tender of his worship: *sancta sanctis*, holy things must be managed by holy men in a holy manner. Therefore, what is it to sanctify God when we draw nigh to him? To have a more excellent frame of heart in worship than we have about other things. As in prayer, the frame of our hearts must not be common; we must not go about it with such a frame of heart as we go about our callings, worldly business, and converses with men: but there must be some special reverence, such as is peculiar to him. When we draw near to God in the word, he will be sanctified. The word must be received with meekness, and by faith applied to our souls, as an instrument designed to our endless good. When we have a peculiar reverence for God, and a respect to God in all our approaches; Eccles. 5:1, 'Look to thy feet when thou goest to the house of God:' we must not go about these holy services hand over head, but with great caution and heed. Thus is God sanctified in worship, or in our immediate converse with him.

(2.) In our ordinary conversation. Then God is sanctified; when our life is ordered so that we may give men occasion to say, that surely he is a holy God whom we serve. By two things you may know you sanctify God in your conversations: when you walk as remembering you have a holy God, and when you walk as discovering to others you have a holy God.

[1.] When you walk as remembering yourselves that you have a holy God, therefore you must be watchful and strict. It is notable, when the Israelites were making a hasty promise, Joshua puts them in mind, chap. 24:9, 'You cannot serve the Lord, for he is a holy God.'

So we should remember when we give up ourselves to God, he is a holy and jealous God, that is narrowly observant, and he will not be put off with anything that is common.

[2.] As discovering you have a holy God. A carnal worshipper profaneth the memory of God in the world. But now a Christian that walks according to his holy calling, that is holy in all manner of conversation, he discovereth what a God he hath. 1 Pet. 2:9, 'That ye should show forth the praises of him, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.' We are not only to conceive and make use of them to beget fear and reverence in our hearts of the all-seeing God, but are to show them forth, to evidence them to others. We should discover more than a human excellency, that so those which look upon us may say, These are the servants of the holy God.

Secondly, For the reasons why God will be so glorified, that he may be sanctified.

1. Because this is the glory that is due to his name. Ps. 96:8, 'Give unto the Lord the glory due to his name.' Every glory will not serve the turn, but such glory as is proper and peculiar for that God we serve. It is a stated rule in scripture, that respects to God must be proportioned to the nature of God. God is a spirit, therefore will be worshipped in spirit and truth. God is a God of peace, therefore lift up your hands without wrath and doubting. God is a holy God, therefore will be sanctified. They which worship the sun, among the heathens, they used a flying horse, as a thing most suitable to the swift motions of the sun. Well, then, they that will glorify and honour God with a glory due to his name, must sanctify him as well as honour him. Why? For God is 'glorious in holiness,' Exod. 15:11. This is that which God counteth to be his chief excellency, and the glory which he will manifest among the sons of men.

2. This is that glory which God affects, and therefore the saints will give it him, Isa. 6:3. The holy angels, what do they cry out when they honour God? They do not acknowledge his power and dominion over

all creatures as Lord of all; but they give him his peculiar glory, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.' So David, Ps. 103:1, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul; yea, all that is within me, bless his holy name.' That is the notion upon which he pitcheth, he would praise God with such praise as is welcome and acceptable to him.

3. This is the attribute which is most eclipsed and most blotted out in the hearts of the sons of men, because of God's patience, because he doth not take vengeance of all the sins of men: 'Thou thoughtest I was altogether such a one as thyself,' Ps. 50:21. Certainly if men did not blot and stain God in their thoughts, if they did not fancy an unreasonable indulgence, such as is not comely and proper to his majesty, they could not go on in sin, and think God could be so pure; therefore he will be so glorified, that he may be sanctified.

Use. To press us so to glorify God, as we may also sanctify him. Let this be your care. To quicken you, remember—

1. God is much offended with his people that do not sanctify him. Moses and Aaron, as choice and as dear to God as they were, yet you know what the Lord saith, Num. 20:12, 'Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel; therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.' When Moses and Aaron murmured, and spake unadvisedly, and did not sanctify him, nor carry God's excellency aloft, they shall not enter. And God remembereth this a great while after, in that, Deut. 32:51, 'Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel, at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel, thou shalt not go into the land which I give the children of Israel.' Well, then, though God's children should get to heaven, yet if they do not sanctify God they will want many a privilege. God will remember this against them; for he takes it ill when his people will not sanctify him as becoming his peculiar excellency.

2. If you do not sanctify God, then you pollute God, and stain his memory in the world: Ezek. 36:20, 'Ye have profaned my holy name among the heathen.' How is God polluted? Not intrinsically; God cannot receive any pollution from us. It is here, as in that case, 'A man that lusteth after a woman, hath committed adultery already in his heart,' Mat. 5:28. The man pollutes the woman in his heart, while she remains spotless and undefiled. So in this case we blemish God in appearance, as much as in us lies we pollute and blot God, though he remains pure and undefiled. You make heathens think as if you had an unholy God. Well, then, glorify God.

For directions:—

1. Be holy. The praise of the wicked is a disgrace to him, it is an obscuring of his praise: 1 Pet. 1:15, 'As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.'

2. Study his name, if ye would sanctify his name: Ps. 9:10, 'They that know his name will put their trust in him.'

3. Submit to his providence without murmuring. When we can speak well of him, though he seem to deal most hardly, as the Bethshemites, when there was such a slaughter made among them, fifty thousand slain; they do not say, murmuringly, Who can stand before this severe, cruel God? but before 'this holy God?' They own his holiness in the dispensation, though it were so dreadful, 1 Sam. 6:20. It is a great glory to God when you own him as just in all his ways, when he deals most hardly. Whatsoever be our lot and portion, yet he is a holy God. But to cavil and murmur, it is to tax and blemish God before the world.

4. Live to public ends, that is, to draw God into request with others. Let this be the aim of your conversation, not only to get holiness enough to bring you to heaven, but to allure others, and recommend God to them, that by the purity and strictness of your conversation

you might gain upon others, and bring them to be in love with God, and acquainted with him.

And lastly, Be sensible when God's name is dishonoured by yourselves and others, not enduring the least profanation of it.

## **Thy Kingdom Come**

THE first petition concerneth the end, the rest the means. Now, among all the means, none hath such a near and immediate respect to the glory of God as Christ's kingdom; for here there is more of God discovered, more of his infinite grace, justice, wisdom, and power than possibly can be elsewhere. All other things are for the church, and the church for Christ as head and king, and Christ for God, 1 Cor. 3:22, 23. So that Christ's kingdom is the primary means of advancing God's glory; and therefore among all the means it must be sought in the first place. Mat. 6:33, 'Seek first the kingdom of God.' First, not above the glory of God, it doth not come in competition with that, but above all other things whatsoever, before pardon and grace.

In the words observe three things:—

I. We grant a kingdom.

II. By way of distinction and appropriation we say, thy kingdom.

III. By way of supplication, we beg of God that it may come.

The concession, the distinction, the supplication are the three things to be opened.

I. First, The concession of a kingdom, which our heavenly Father hath. A kingdom in the general signifieth the government of a people under one head or governor; and therefore the term may be fitly applied to God, who alone is supreme, and we are all under his dominion.



Now, God's kingdom is twofold:—

1. Universal.

2. More particular and special.

First, There is a universal kingdom over all things; over angels and devils; over men elect and reprobate; over beasts and living creatures; and over inanimate things, sun, moon, and stars. This is spoken of: 1 Chron. 29:11, 'Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou are exalted as head above all.' And again: Ps. 103:19, 'The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.' There is no such monarch as God is, for largeness of empire, for absoluteness of power, and sublimity of his throne. This is not principally understood here, but is implied as a foundation and ground of faith, whereupon we may deal with God about that kingdom, which is specially intended in this request.

Secondly, More particularly and especially, God hath a kingdom over a certain order and estate of men. Of this especial kingdom there are two notable branches and considerations. One is that administration which belongeth to the present life, and is called 'the kingdom of grace;' and the other belongeth to the life to come, and is called 'the kingdom of glory.'

1. The kingdom of grace is spoken of in many places, specially that: Luke 17:20, 21, 'When he was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you,' or 'among you.' He speaks of a kingdom of God that was already come among them in the dispensation of his grace by Christ. And, then, the other belongeth to the life to come, called the kingdom of glory: Mat. 25:34, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;' 1 Cor. 15:50, 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.'

Now, the kingdom of grace may be considered two ways,—as externally administered, and as internally received.

[1.] As externally administered in the ordinances and means of grace, as the word and seals, and censures, and the like. In this sense it is said: Mat. 21:43, 'The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.' The gospel or means of grace administered in the visible face of the church, they are called God's kingdom upon earth, and a very great privilege they are when they are bestowed upon any people. Surely, when Christ saith, 'The kingdom of God shall be taken from you,' he doth not mean it of the inward kingdom,—that they had not, that cannot be lost,—but of the outward and external means.

[2.] As internally received; and then by it is meant the grace of God, which rules in the hearts of the elect, and causeth their souls to submit and subject themselves unto the obedience of Christ, and unto his sceptre, and to his word and Spirit, that this is that kingdom properly which is within us. This is 'the kingdom of God which consisteth in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,' Rom. 14:17. And this differeth from the kingdom of glory, not so much in nature as in degree.

Well, then, that by the kingdom of God is here meant, not his general empire over all the world, and all the things of the world, though that be not wholly excluded, but his special kingdom, which he doth administer by Christ: and that either as externally managed by ordinances and visible means of grace, or as internally received and administered in the hearts of the elect. This is that kingdom we beg that it may flourish and get ground more and more.

2. Then for the kingdom of glory, it is either begun and inchoate, or else consummate and perfect.

[1.] It is begun and inchoate upon our translation to heaven in the very moment of death, in which Christ reigns in the other world in

the spirits of just men made perfect—that is, being perfectly freed from sin, and admitted into the clear and immediate vision and fruition of God, though our bodies abide in the grave, expecting full redemption and deliverance. That there is such a kingdom carried on many scriptures intimate: Phil. 1:23, 'I desire to depart, and to be with Christ.' As soon as the saints are loosed from the body, they are with Christ under his government: Luke 23:43. 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' As soon as Christ died he was in paradise, and there was the good thief with him. The scriptures do not establish any such drowsy conceit as the sleep of souls, or such an estate wherein they do not enjoy God. We read of 'the spirits of just men made perfect,' which make up the congregation which is above, of which Christ is head: Heb. 12:23. As the spirits of the wicked are in prison, 1 Pet. 3:19, that is, in hell. This is the kingdom of glory begun.

[2.] There is a kingdom of glory consummate, when sin and death is utterly abolished, and the elect perfectly separated from the reprobate, and conducted into heaven, and there remain with the Lord for ever. This is a kingdom: Mat. 25:34, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.' The full and final estate we enjoy after the general judgment and resurrection, that is called a kingdom. Well, now, you see what is meant by the kingdom we pray for.

II. Secondly, Here is a note of distinction, thy kingdom, by which the kingdom here spoken of is limited by particular reference to God, not only to difference it from the kingdoms of men, which are subordinate to it, but those adverse kingdoms which are set up against God; as the kingdom of sin, Satan, antichrist, the destruction of which we intend when we pray for the advancement of God's kingdom, as I shall show you.

III. Thirdly, Here is the supplication or the request which we make to God about this kingdom, ἐλθέτω, let it come. What do we mean by that? This word must be applied to the several acceptations of Christ's kingdom.

1. If you apply it to the external kingdom of grace, then when we say, Thy kingdom come, the meaning is, let the gospel be published, let churches be set up everywhere, let them be continued and maintained against all the malignity of the world, and opposition of the devil: and in the publication of the gospel, where the sound of it hath not been heard, that God would come there in the power of his Spirit, and draw people into communion with himself: Mat. 12:28, 'If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you,'—meaning in the public tenders thereof. Saith he, if this miracle doth clearly, as it doth in your consciences, evidence my mission, then you may know the kingdom of God is come—that is, that there is a publication of the gospel of grace. Then we pray for the continuance of this privilege, notwithstanding opposition, that Christ may stand his ground. This is that we seek of God, that he may maintain his interest among the nations of the world, that the gates of hell may not prevail against his kingdom.

2. If you refer to the internal part of this kingdom, then we beg the beginning, the progress, and the final consummation of it. First, The beginning or the erection of a throne for Christ in our hearts, and the hearts of others, that he may fully exercise regal power. Secondly, The increase of this kingdom by holiness and obedience, and sincere subjection to him; for the kingdom of grace is so come already, that it will still be coming yet more and more. So long as we need to pray, so long shall we have cause to say, 'Thy kingdom come.' Thirdly, The consummation of it, when the fulness of glory in the second coming of Christ shall be revealed; when our head shall be glorious, and his day shall come, ἡμέρα κυρίου. For the present it is man's day, so the scripture seems to call it; hut then it is the day of the Lord, when all the devils shall stoop, and enemies receive their final doom, and the saints shall have the crown of glory put upon their heads in the sight of all the world.

Well, the sum of all is this, that though this petition do mainly concern the special kingdom, which God administereth by Christ, yet God's universal kingdom, the kingdom of his power and providence,

is a mighty support and prop to our faith in making this request to God. When we consider what an unlimited power God hath over all creatures, even devils themselves, to dispose of them for his own glory, and his church's good; we need not be discouraged though Christ's kingdom be opposed in the world, but should with the more confidence deal with God about it.

That which I shall handle upon this petition will fall under these two points:—

1. That God hath a kingdom, which he will administer and manage for his own glory.
2. All those which are well affected to God's glory should desire the coming of this kingdom, and seriously deal with God about it.

For the first, namely—

Doct. 1. That God hath a kingdom, which, he will administer and manage for his own glory.

I speak not of the kingdom of his power and providence, but of the dispensation of grace by Christ. The evangelical gospel state is compared to a kingdom; as, Mat. 3:2, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' So to the disciples, Mat. 10:7, 'And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' And so Christ himself.

It may be called so with very good reason, for in this kingdom there is a monarch, Jesus Christ, to whom all power and authority is given. God the Father calls him 'my king:' Ps. 2:6, 'I have set my king upon my holy hill.' And this king hath his throne in the consciences of men, where thoughts are brought into captivity to him: 2 Cor. 10:5. And he hath his royal sceptre, Ps. 110:3, which is called 'the rod of his strength.' And he hath his subjects, and they are the saints: Rev. 15:3, 'king of saints.' And he hath his laws and constitutions; we read of 'the law of faith,' and 'the law of liberty.' And in this kingdom there are privileges, and royal immunities; there is freedom from the curse

of the law, and from the power of sin, and from the destructive influence of Satan and the world. And here are punishments and rewards both for body and soul; there is hell and heaven. Now, because all these things do so fitly suit, therefore is the gospel called a kingdom. It will not be amiss to insist upon some of these.

1. The state of the gospel, or evangelical state, it is God's kingdom, in regard of the monarch whom God hath set up, that is, Jesus Christ, the great Lord of all things. There is no king like him: God hath made him 'higher than the kings of the earth,' Ps. 89:27. How doth he exceed all other monarchs and potentates in the world? Partly for largeness of command and territory. All kings and monarchs have certain bounds and limits by which their empire is terminated; but Christ is the true catholic king, his government runs throughout the whole circuit of nature and providence; he hath power over all flesh, John 17:2, yea, devils themselves are to stoop to him: Phil. 2:10, every thing under the earth is to bow the knee to Christ. Partly for the excellency of his throne. This king hath a double throne, one in heaven, the other in the heart of a humble sinner, which is his second heaven: Isa. 57:15. And in both these respects there is no monarch like Christ. 'He hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all,' Ps. 103:19. Earthly kings, that their majesty may appear to their subjects, have their thrones usually exalted; there were six steps to Solomon's throne; a description of it you have in 1 Kings 10:18, 19. But what is this to the throne of Christ, which God hath fixed above in the heavens? The whole globe of sea and earth is but as one point, and there are ten thousand times ten thousands of angels about his throne. The supporters of this throne are justice and mercy. And in regard of his other throne also in the hearts of men: the power of outward potentates reacheth but to the bodies of men, they can take cognisance of nothing but of external conformity to their laws: but Christ gives laws to the thoughts: 2 Cor. 10:5. So for his royal furniture: other princes, they have their chariots, and coaches, and horses, &c.; but 'he makes the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind,' Ps. 104:3. Riding up and down in the world, dispensing mercies and judgments. So for

troops and armies to support his dignity, all the hosts of heaven are obedient to him; one angel in one night destroyed in Sennacherib's army an hundred fourscore and five thousand. Hostility against him must needs be deadly. He is above in heaven, and can rain down fire and brimstone upon us, and cannot be resisted. He is higher than the kings of the earth too, because none hath so good a right and title to rule as this king hath, whom God hath set upon his holy hill of Sion. God's dominion over the creatures is founded in creation. Other kings find their subjects; he makes them. He hath the first and chief right, there is nothing we have but he made. We depend upon him every moment for his providential assistance, therefore he hath the highest right and title. No creature can be *sui juris*, at his own dispose. And he hath a right by conquest and by purchase; he hath bought us, and 'given his life a ransom for many,' Mat. 20:28. Christ is opposed there to worldly potentates; they must be served, but he came to minister. Subjects, their blood and lives must go to preserve the rights of the prince; but he gave his life. And he hath a right too by contract and covenant. All that are subjects of his kingdom have sworn allegiance. He hath such an absolute right that thou canst call nothing thy own. We think, indeed, our lips are our own, Ps. 12:4: and our estates our own; as Nabal, 1 Sam. 25:11, 'Shall I take my bread, and my water, and my flesh?' &c. All you have it belongeth to this king by right of creation and providence. Therefore in all these respects he is higher than the kings of the earth.

2. The gospel state is set forth as a kingdom, in regard of the subjects and their privileges. The gospel doth not only reveal a king, but maketh all kings: 'He hath made us to be kings and priests,' &c., Rev. 1:5. All those that submit to him. So that, indeed, Christ may properly be styled *Rex regum*, King of kings. As the king of Assyria made his boast, Isa. 10:8, 'Are not my princes altogether kings?' A vaunting speech of his, that his princes and favourites were, for power and authority, as good as kings. But Christ may say so. Are not my subjects altogether kings? Not only kings in regard of their spiritual power and command they have over themselves, ruling their own spirits in the fear of God, while others are slaves to their

base affections; but in point of their privileges. They have kingly privileges, they are made kings; they are royally attended by angels, they are sent forth to be as guardians to the heirs of promise: Heb. 1:14. They have royal immunities, from the curse of the law, from the damnable influence of sin; they may as well pluck Christ from the throne, as pluck the elect out of that state wherein they are. As David said, 'Is it a small thing to be the king's son-in-law?' so, is it a small thing to be the sons of God, co-heirs with Christ? This honour and glory doth God put upon his saints. And there is the greatest pleasure and contentment in this state; for this kingdom, which all the saints are interested in, it consisteth in 'righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost:' Rom. 14:17. And surely these consolations of God should not be small to us. It is a state of most absolute freedom and sovereignty: John 8:36, 'If the Son shall make you free, then shall ye be free indeed.' Many a monarch which ruleth over men may be a captive to his own lusts; but these are free. There are the richest revenues and increase which belong to Christ's subjects. 'All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos,' &c.: 1 Cor. 3:21. They are ours by covenant, and when they come into our possession, by the fair allowance of God's providence, we have them with a blessing, and may use them with a great deal of comfort.

3. In regard of the laws and manner of administration. I shall not speak of the external political government of the church, which questionless is monarchical, I mean in regard of Christ the Head; though it be aristocratical in regard of officers, and, in some respect, democratical, with reference to the consent of the people in all church acts. But there are laws and sanctions by which this body of men and this kingdom is governed: James 2:8, 'If ye fulfil the royal law.' It is called the royal law, not only as it requires noble work, but in regard of the dignity of the author, and firmness of the obligation. All the precepts of faith, repentance, and gospel-walking, are as so many royal edicts, which Christ hath set forth to signify his pleasure to his people. How slightly soever we think of these gospel injunctions, they are the laws and instructions of the great king.



4. In regard of punishments and rewards. Christ, who is a king by nature, might rule us with a rod of iron; yet he is pleased to govern us as a father and prince, that he might cast the bands of a man upon us. Christ, as a king, punisheth, and, as a king, rewardeth: Prov. 16:14, 'The wrath of a king is as messengers of death.' When a king is angry it is as if a messenger should come and tell us we must die. How great is the wrath of the king of kings! He cannot endure to be slighted in his regal power: Luke 19:27, 'But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me.' Christ himself will see execution done, in his own sight and presence, upon those rebels that will not submit to his rule and government. How should the hearts of wicked men tremble, which have violated the laws of Christ, and affronted his authority, when they consider how odious this is, how certainly Christ will see execution done upon them! When Adonijah and his guests heard of Solomon sitting upon his throne, and the shouts and acclamations of joy and applause, they were stricken with fear, and fled every one several ways: 1 Kings 1:49. You that cherish your lusts, which stand out against the sovereignty of Christ, that will not let him rule over you, whose hearts say (though their tongues dare not), 'We will not have this man to reign over us;' you that seem to put him by his kingdom, he is furnished with absolute and irresistible power to destroy you, and will one day come and say, Bring forth these drunkards, worldlings, voluptuous, that would not I should reign over them; those that durst venture upon known sin against the checks of their own conscience: how will their hearts tremble in the last day at the shouts and acclamations of the saints, when they shall welcome this great king, when he shall come forth in all his royalty and sovereignty! And as for punishment Christ will show himself as a king, so for rewards. Kings do not give trifles. Araunah 'gave like a king to a king:' 2 Sam. 24:23. He was of the blood-royal of the Jebusites, and he gave worthy of his extraction. And so Christ will give like a king. God propounds nothing that was cheap and unworthy, but he 'gives you a kingdom:' Luke 12:32. The poor of this world are 'heirs of a kingdom,' the fairest kingdom that ever was, or ever will be; as poor and as despicable as now they are, yet they shall

have a kingdom. What can you wish for and desire more than a kingdom? All shall reign with Christ for evermore; which shows the folly of carnal men that will hazard so great and so blessed hopes. Thus I have shown you why the gospel state is compared to a kingdom.

Now, let me tell you it is a spiritual kingdom, not such as comes with observation. Jesus Christ, when he was inaugurated into the throne, when he was to sit down at God's right hand, how doth he manifest it? He gives gifts, as princes use to do at their coronation, but they are spiritual gifts: Eph. 4:8. And he sent abroad ambassadors, poor fishermen, they and their successors, to go and treat with the world: 2 Cor. 5:19. Indeed, they had a mighty power with them, as becoming such a great king, as was under the vail of meanness and weakness; it was carried on in a spiritual manner. And still he doth administer his kingdom, not by force; he rules not by the power of the sword, but by his word and Spirit, so he governeth his people. The publication of the gospel is a 'sending forth the rod of his strength:' Ps. 110:2. And the Holy Ghost, as Christ's viceroy, he governeth them, and administereth all things that are necessary to his kingdom; he doth it by the Holy Ghost, as his deputy. The Father chooseth a sort of men, gives them to Christ; the Son dieth for them, that they may be subjects of his kingdom, and he commits them to be governed and ruled by the Holy Ghost: he useth the ministry of men, and so unites them to Christ; and Christ brings 'them to the Father by his intercession, committing them to his care and love; and by a final tradition at last, which is the last act of Christ's mediatorial kingdom, 1 Cor. 15:24, he shall deliver them up to the Father. The Spirit, blessing the ministry of men, works faith, by which we are united to Christ; and Christ intercedes for us, and 'will bring us to God again. And in this spiritual manner is this kingdom carried on. So that if we would enter into this kingdom, we must go to God the Father, and confess we are rebels and traitors, but desire he would not enter into judgment with us, but seek to be reconciled to God the Father. Now, as God bade the friends of Job to go to Job, chap. 42:8, so God sends us to Christ, in whom alone he is well pleased with the creature. If we

go to the Son, he refers us to the Spirit, to be reclaimed from our impurity and rebellion. If we go to the Spirit, he refers us to Moses and the prophets, pastors and teachers; there we shall hear of him in Christ's way, and there we feel the rod of Christ's strength, the efficacy of his grace put into our hearts.

Thus are we brought into his kingdom, and made to be a mystical body and spiritual society, in whom Christ rules; and there we come to enjoy those freedoms I spake of; and our obedience to this kingdom is carried on in a spiritual manner. In worship, we give our homage to God; in the word, we come to learn his laws; in the sacraments, we renew our oath of allegiance to this king; in alms and charity, we pay him tribute; in prayer, we ask his leave, acknowledging his dominion; and praise, it is our rent to the great Lord, from whom we hold all things. And thus is Christ's kingdom carried on in a spiritual manner.

Use 1. The use is to press you to come under this kingdom. Consider what God hath proffered to draw you off from your carnal delights and sinful pleasures: no less than a kingdom to bear you out, to call you off from your sins. Oh, do not answer, as the olive-tree and the vine in Jotham's parable: Judges 9:9, 'Shall I leave my fatness, and go to be promoted over the trees?' God comes to a worldling, and makes him a proffer of this blessed state, which is represented by a kingdom. Shall I leave all my sports and worldly hopes? (according as the man is affected). Shall I renounce my pleasures, live a strict and austere life? Must I leave off projects, saith a worldling, and depend upon the reversion of heaven? Oh, consider it is for a glorious kingdom. Men will do much for an earthly crown, though lined with cares,—for this golden ball, which all hunt after, and doth occasion so many stirs in the world. Turn your ambition this way. You may aspire to a crown, to the kingdom of heaven, without the crime of treason. This is a faithful ambition: it is indeed treason against the kingdom of heaven, not to look after this crown, and plot, contrive, and act, and offer violence for the obtaining of it. And, therefore, come under this kingdom; if you do not, you will be left

under the power of a worse: 2 Chron. 12:8, God saith, he would give them up to the king of Egypt; why? 'They shall be his servants, that they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries:' that they might see what difference there is between serving God and serving others. If you refuse God's government, you are under a worse, under sin, and the power of darkness; you are under your own lusts; nay, and by a just judgment God may give you over to live in bondage to unmerciful men. How many kings and lords doth he serve that will not serve one Lord? Oh, therefore, renounce those other lords that have dominion over you, and come under this kingdom which God hath set up.

Use 2. To press the children of God:—

1. To walk worthy of the gospel: it is a kingdom. The apostle hath an exhortation and charge to this purpose: 1 Thes. 2:11, 12, 'That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.' Walk in obedience to Christ, that is one thing. Christ is a king by a natural right; God hath chosen him, God hath set him upon his holy hill: 'The Lord hath made him to be head over all things,' Eph. 1:22. Nay, the church chooseth Christ: 'They shall appoint to themselves one head,' Hosea 1:11. And, therefore, for you that are called to his kingdom and glory, that have entered into covenant with Christ, that have subscribed to him as head and king; for you to be disobedient, give way to sin, it is worse in you. 'Will ye go away also?' saith Christ to his disciples. Christ hath a right to reign over wicked men; but you have actually chosen him. Treason is less culpable, in those which have not submitted to a power and prince, and owned him for their king, than in those that have sworn faith and allegiance. You have passed under the bond of the holy oath; 'God hath called you to his kingdom and glory;' therefore you should be more obedient than to allow a disloyal thought or rebellious lust against Christ.

2. As you should be more holy, wary, watchful, that you do not break the laws of Christ, for you have consented to him; so live as kings,

exercising all acts of regality within your own souls, ruling your own spirits, exercising judgment over your own hearts, and over every affection that will not be bridled. It is a disgrace to the regal estate of the gospel for you to be over-mastered by a lust, to lie under the power of any sin; yet thus it is, God's children are conflicting with one sin or other more than the rest. So far you have not experience of that truth: John 8:32, 'And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' A man that liveth in bondage to his lusts, how can he choose but doubt of those glorious privileges? Have you found the state of the gospel to be a kingdom? do you walk worthy of the gospel?

3. It teacheth us contempt of the world and earthly things: Phil. 3:14, 'I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ.' It is not for princes to embrace a dunghill, nor for eagles to catch flies. Remember, thou wilt one day be a king with God in glory, and therefore shouldst not be as low and base as the men of the world are, but walk worthy of God, who hath called you to a royal state.

4. A generous confidence in the midst of the troubles and abasements of the world. What though you be accounted as the scurf and offscouring of all things? Though your outward condition be low and mean, know the worth of your high calling in Christ. How poor and despicable soever you are in this world, yet you are heirs of a crown and kingdom. Therefore remember you are princes, that walk up and down in disguise in a foreign country. If you are kept in a mean condition, it is but a disguise God hath put upon you. We are the sons of God, though for the present it doth not appear what we shall be. God's heirs make little show in the world. But there is a high dignity, a mighty privilege put upon you; you are called to be heirs of this kingdom, and this blessed and royal estate, which God hath provided for them that love him.

Use 3. Are we translated into this kingdom? Col. 1:13, 'He hath delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the

kingdom of his dear Son.' Every man naturally is under other lords, the devil hath dominion over him, and he is under the government of his own lusts; but now are we translated into the kingdom of Christ.

The second point is:—

Doct. 2. All those that are affected with God's glory should desire the coming of this kingdom, and seriously deal with God about it.

None else can rescue and pluck them out of the power of darkness, and deliver them from the thralldom of those other lords that hold them, and none else can defend and preserve them.

I shall handle the point:—

1. In a private respect.
2. In a public respect.

First, In a private respect. Every man should desire that the kingdom of God should come down and be set up in his own heart. Here I must repeat and apply the distinctions of Christ's kingdom. He is to desire the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory may come to himself and others.

1. The kingdom of grace, that it may be begun, continued, and increased.

First, That this kingdom may be begun, and a throne erected for Christ in our hearts. The great necessity of this request will be evidenced in these considerations:—

[1.] That every man by nature is under another king, under the kingdom of sin and Satan. Satan is the monarch, and sin is the sceptre. Christ and the devil divide the world; either we belong to the one or the other. Now the devil, by reason of the fall of Adam, he hath the start of Christ, and the Lord Jesus coming to possess the

heart, doth not seize upon it as a waste which belongeth to the next occupier, but he seizeth upon it as already possessed by Satan. The devil quietly ruleth in the hearts of the unregenerate; he keeps house, and all the goods are in peace, Luke 11:21; and therefore wicked spirits are called, 'The rulers of the darkness of this world,' Eph. 6:12. All the ignorant and carnal part of the world falls to his share, and he doth not easily quit possession. Christ indeed employeth men to wrestle with principalities and powers. The work of the ministry is to shake and batter the empire of the devil. You must be turned, you must be rescued. You must be turned: Acts 26:18, 'To turn them from the power of Satan unto God.' You must be rescued and plucked out of this captivity by the strong hand: Col. 1:13, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of Satan;' who hath taken us out of darkness by a powerful rescue. Even as the Israelites were brought out of Egypt' by a strong hand and stretched-out arm,' so are we brought, out of the power of darkness. By such an irresistible power of grace must God recover you, otherwise men yield themselves up to his sceptre. Look, as the Spirit of God works holy motions and gracious desires in the hearts of God's children, so the devil is 'at work in the children of disobedience,' Eph. 2:2, framing wicked devices, carnal desires, evil thoughts against God. Man is such a perfect slave to the devil that he can do nothing but sin.

[2.] This kingdom which Satan exerciseth is an invisible kingdom. The devil doth not sensibly appear to his vassals and slaves. When Christ's kingdom and regiment was more external, so was the devil's also. As when God was served by sacrifices, and delivered his mind by oracles, so men did then more professedly own the devil by observing his prescribed rites of worship, and by being deluded by lying oracles, and answers to their prayers and questions. But now, since the kingdom of Christ is more spiritual, and managed by the Holy Ghost in the hearts of his saints, so is Satan's kingdom invisible. So that men may be Christ's subjects by external profession, and the devil's by internal. obedience and constitution of mind, though they worship not by pagan rites, as he ruleth in their hearts, and takes them off from obeying the gospel they profess. 'The god of this world

hath blinded their eyes:' 2 Cor. 4:4. All carnal men, however they defy Satan, and abominate the thought of serving him, yet while they remain in their sin and ignorance, they still hold the crown upon the devil's head. Look, as God's subjects may own him in verbal pretence, yet their hearts may be far from him: Mat. 15:8. So that wicked men may defy the devil in pretence and words, and cannot endure to hear of him; but they are under the god of this world, he hath blinded their hearts. So that this kingdom is to be fought for in the heart. Christ made a great inroad upon the devil, beat him out of his quarters; yet, as the sea gets in one place what it loseth in another, so though the devil hath lost ground in the Christian world as to external profession, whilst people renounce the superstitions of the Gentiles, yet still he gets ground in the hearts of wicked men by their carnal dispositions; his empire is upheld still, though professedly they are subjects of Christ.

[3.] Until Satan be cast out of the throne, Christ can have no entertainment in the heart. The ark and Dagon cannot sink and stand together; either the ark must be removed, or Dagon will down upon his face: so 2 Cor. 6:14, 'What communion hath Christ with Belial, and light with darkness?' It is impossible both kingdoms can stand together, or both kings be set up in the same heart. The marriage-bed will admit no partner nor rival. A man must be under Christ or Satan. Until he be east out, Christ hath no room to be entertained: Mat. 6:24, 'No man can serve two masters; ye cannot serve God and Mammon.' Look upon the devil under that notion, as he is Mammon, as he doth entice to worldliness: it is impossible to serve him and Christ. Both masters have work enough for their servants, and their commands are contrary. If two masters consent to employ one man in the self-same business, though they are two men, yet they are but one master. But now to execute the wills of men which differ in their design, and which have a several and full interest in our labours and actions, it is as impossible as to move two contrary ways at once. Well, then, Mammon and Christ, Belial and Christ, divide the world. It is impossible to be under Belial and Christ; both have full work for us to do, and their designs are



contrary. So that either it must appear we have changed masters, or we are under the power of the devil still. We must come out of the power of darkness, else we cannot be brought into the kingdom of the Lord Jesus, that we may obtain remission of sins.

[4.] Satan may be cast out in part, and yet still retain a supreme interest in the heart. I prove it out of that parable, Mat. 12:43–45: 'When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, but findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house, from whence I came out,' &c. Out of that parable we may plainly conclude there may be a shaking of Satan's empire, Satan may be cast out of a man in some sort, yet the man not plainly renewed. Well, how may he be cast out, and yet his empire remain unbroken? He may be cast out partly by conviction and illumination; yet as long as any lust remaineth there unmortified and unsubdued, he still keeps his sovereignty in the heart. Many begin to be troubled, and to be thoughtful about eternity, that see better, yet they do that which is worse in the issue. When there is a conflict between corruption and conviction, corruption carrieth it away. As iron often heated and often quenched is so much the harder; so, when they had some wamblings of conscience, and the heart begins to boggle, and after this sin breaks out the more. This is the scope of that place: they were convinced of a better estate, and had some thoughts of the Messiah, but did not give him entertainment. Again, the devil may be cast out in regard of some external reformation. A man may a little wash his polluted life and abstain from gross sins, yet Satan have full possession of the inner man. A man may abjure his former ill life, and for a while carry it fair, but afterwards retain his former filthiness, and keep a secret league with his lusts, and so he is entangled again, and then 'his latter end is worse than his beginning;' and as it is in 2 Pet. 2:22, 'The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.' A prisoner which hath made some escape, if ever the gaoler get him into his clutches, is sure to be laden with irons; so one that hath had some partial reformation, oh, when the devil gets such a man into his power again, he is ten times worse than he was before.

[5.] The difficulty of casting off the sovereignty of Satan, lieth partly in ourselves and partly in the devil.

Partly in ourselves. As in the Israelites going out of Egypt, the difficulty lay, not only in gaining the consent of Pharaoh, for he pursues after them when they were gone, but also in persuading the people to give their consent—it was long ere Israel desired to be gone—so in our natural condition, the mind of man is so depraved that he thinks his bondage to be his freedom, and that there is no such merry life as to wallow in carnal satisfactions; and our affections are so far engaged to this sinful estate, that we dote upon our shackles, and are unwilling to hear of a change. The first step of coming out of this kingdom of darkness is when we find it to be a heavy burthen, and grow weary of the devil's government, though it be but out of a principle of self-love, Isa. 26:13: 'O Lord, other lords besides thee have had dominion over us; but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.' Yea, but as soon as we begin to have any serious thoughts of that miserable state in which we are, Satan interposeth, dealing with us as Pharaoh did with the Israelites. The Israelites complain their bondage was very sore; what doth Pharaoh? He doubles the burthen: Exod. 5:17, 'You are idle,' &c.;—so that out of bondage of soul they would not hearken to Moses. Just so Satan deals with us. When souls begin to be serious, and to leave off fleshly and worldly lusts, and to give up themselves to God that they may be directed in the way of holiness and obtain eternal life, then he doubles our burthens. Corruptions are never more stirring than after some conviction: Rom. 7:9, 'When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died;' not only as to a deeper sense of the guilt of it, but as to its struggling for life. The bullock at the first yoking is most unruly; so we which are unaccustomed to the yoke, when we begin once to take it upon us, there is a mighty backwardness. Fire at first kindling makes abundance of smoke; so when conviction is stirring, corruption is more exasperated. The devil is very jealous of the first beam of light which breaks into the heart, and of every ordinance which conveys it; therefore sets corruptions at work, that it may appear to be a vain hope of ever escaping his clutches: so men are

tired and give over, and think it is to no purpose. But if light increases to more trouble, the devil seeks to clude the importunity of it by delay; as Pharaoh put off Moses and Aaron still by delay: or else by compromising and compounding the business; as Pharaoh, when he saw the people would go, God would have them go, then they shall not go far: Exod. 8:28. So if men will be thinking of Christ's service, and coming under his government, they shall go, but not far; they shall come and pray, and come and hear now and then, and make a general profession, but not too far in Christ's quarters; he is afraid of that. Just as Pharaoh stood hucking still; they must go a good way into the wilderness, otherwise it should be an abomination to the Egyptians, yet their little ones must stay. If people will not only hear and pray, but begin to reform and cleanse their lives, yet he must have a pledge, some lust, as a nest-egg, left in the heart, some darling sin that must keep up the devil's empire. Then they must leave their herds, then leave their flocks; no, not a hoof. Ah I how long is it, when we are under this power of darkness, ere we are free, and get rid of the government of Satan!

[6.] We can never be sure that Satan is wholly cast out until Christ be seriously received and entertained as Lord and King, until he dwell and rule in the heart by faith. Alas! there may be some brabble now and then between us and our sins, and some partial dislikes; but until you heartily consent to take another king, that you will be governed and ordered by, you are not his subjects, but remain in the same state: John 1:12, 'As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.' We are children of the devil before, under his standard and government; but when we receive him, then we are under another king, another power: when we receive what God offered, receive Christ as Lord and King, when the whole soul opens the door to Christ, that the King of glory may come in, and dwell with us, and reign over us, then is his kingdom set up. The first offer of the gospel is Christ as Prince and Saviour: Acts 5:31. And the main thing the business sticks at is Christ's regal power: Luke 19:14, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' Now, when we receive him with all

our hearts, and though before we had but mean thoughts of him, now he begins to be welcome to us, and with the dearest embraces of our souls we entertain him; and with a willing resignation we give up ourselves, not only by a consent of dependence, to rest upon him for reconciliation with God, but by a willing subjection to obey him, and give up the keys of the heart, and lay them at Christ's feet: as Paul, Acts 9:16, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' When you desire nothing more but that his kingdom might come, the King of glory himself, than that he might bring righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; until then you are not entered into his kingdom.

[7.] Christ is not received and entertained as Lord and King, but where his laws are obeyed: Col. 2:6, 'As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.' If you receive him as Lord and King, so also obey him. And Heb. 12:28, 'We receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.' In this prayer, first, we say, 'Thy kingdom come,' and then presently we add, 'Thy will be done.' We do but prattle over the Lord's Prayer, and say it with our lips only, until we are resolved to do what God would have us to do—love and hate, fear and rejoice, as God directs. Until we are brought to this frame, we do not in good earnest say, 'Thy kingdom come.' An earthly king will 'do according to his will:' Dan. 11:3. So Christ stands upon his will in his law. If you have taken God for your God, and Jesus Christ for your King, then say, with David, Ps. 143:10, 'Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God.' It is a universal maxim, 'His servants you are whom you do obey.' Where is your obedience? If subjects of grace, 'Every thought is brought in subjection:' 2 Cor. 10:5. You will watch not only against your irregular actions, but every thought which lifts up itself against the obedience of Christ. There will be a greater tenderness upon us not to break any of the holy laws which belong to Christ's government. Hereby you may know whether you come under another king, Do you fear a commandment? That is the description of a good man: Prov. 13:13. It is not he that feareth a punishment, but he that feareth a commandment, when the heart is brought under an awe of Christ's

laws; so that when a man is tempted to sin, Oh, I dare not; the Lord hath commanded me the contrary. This is more than if a flaming sword stood in his way. When we have such workings of heart when we are tempted to this and that sin, so when we are doing any duty, though irksome to flesh and blood, yet it is the will of my Lord, to whom I have entirely given up myself in a way of subjection; this is a sign you are brought under his government.

[8.] None can obey his laws but by the virtue and power of his Spirit. The new covenant, it is not only a law, but 'the law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ.' So it is called by the apostle, Rom. 8:2. It is not a bare literal command that shall urge us to duty; but it giveth strength and efficacy to the heart. Other kings, they give laws, that men may keep them by their own strength; but now Christ, he would be owned as a king, not only in a way of subjection, but establish a constant dependence. He is a king, not only to require, but to give repentance, Acts 5:31; not only to make a law, but to write and work a sense of this new covenant-gift upon the heart, Heb. 8:10. He doth not only set up his ordinances, laws, constitutions, but there is power goeth along with the dispensation of this kingdom, and thereby we are fitted and enabled to love, serve, and please God; and then are we under the kingdom of God, when we are under the spiritual power of it. It is not only necessary to obey his laws, but that we do it by virtue of his power and Spirit: 'The kingdom of God stands not in word, but in power,' 1 Cor. 4:20. That we may both acknowledge his authority and wait for his strength. This is a true submission, when we look for all from him, and serve him in the strength of his own grace.

[9.] All those that act through the virtue and power of his Spirit, they do unfeignedly seek his glory, and make Christ to be not only their principle, but their end; for having a new principle, they have a new tendency; acting in the power of the Spirit, their hearts are carried out to seek Christ's interest and Christ's glory. When they can say with the apostle, Phil. 1:21, 'To me to live is Christ,' when their whole business is to set up Christ. We set up ourselves in the room of Christ, if he be not at the end of all: 2 Thes. 1:11, 12, 'That God might

fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power, and that Christ may be glorified in you.' If you have the power of Christ's kingdom, this will be the immediate result and issue of it, that Christ may be honoured and set up, not only as a lawgiver and fountain of grace, but as the last end. If to us to live is Christ, then is the kingdom of God come into our heart. For this we pray, that the Lord would so break the yoke and government of Satan, that we may receive the Lord Jesus into our heart, that we may come under the awe of his laws, and in the power of his grace may seek his kingdom and glory.

To conclude: All this grace is offered to you; if you refuse the offer, your condition is worse than if it had never been tendered to you. The Lord hath sent his Son to help you out of the power of the devil, and bring you in heart and life again to himself; if you refuse this, then 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light:' John 3:19. The Lord Jesus, when he comes in flaming fire to render vengeance, it shall be upon them that do not obey his government, 2 Thes. 1:8, that did not acknowledge God to be their sovereign. There will be a sore vengeance on them which had the gospel tendered, and this wonderful provision brought home to them, and left to their choice, and yet have turned their backs upon it.

Secondly, We beg the continuance of it, that he would maintain this kingdom in our heart, and preserve us in this state; for those which can call God Father, are still to say, 'Thy kingdom come.' It is not enough to go to Christ to begin it, but to carry it on, and to keep and 'preserve us unto his heavenly kingdom,' 2 Tim. 4:18; that we may not revolt to the devil's side after we have chosen God for our God, and so our latter end be worse than our beginning.

Thirdly, We pray for the increase of it, that it may get ground more and more. There are some relics of the kingdom of darkness yet left, and there is something wanting to the kingdom of grace; we are troubled and molested still. Though sin doth not get the throne,

though the regency of it is cast down, yet it is not cast out in regard of inherence. 'Sin shall not have dominion over you;' that is all we can hope for: Rom. 6:14. We cannot hope for an extinction of sin, but only that it shall not have dominion. As the beasts in Dan. 7:12, though their dominion was taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. The reign, power, and dominion of sin is taken down, yet it continues for our exercise and molestation. Now, we desire he might rule in us by his grace, and that of the increase of his government there may be no end.

II. For the kingdom of glory, which, in this private consideration (as it concerns each person), is to begin at death. And when we desire the coming of the kingdom of glory, we do two things: we express our readiness for it, or our desire after it.

1. Our readiness for it; at least, the kingdom of God is ready for us if we were ready for it; as the apostle saith, 1 Pet. 4:5. God is ready to judge, but we are not ready to be judged. And therefore we read of the kingdom of heaven prepared for us, and of men prepared for the kingdom of heaven. It is prepared for the saints: Mat. 25:34, 'A kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' And the saints prepared for it: Rom. 9:23, 'Vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory.' And this is that which the apostle gives thanks for unto the Father: 'Which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,' Col. 1:12. Before we come to heaven, there is a right to heaven; we are made meet, more mortified and weaned from present things, often in communion with God here, and so for ever with the Lord hereafter. We are still to have our eyes to our rest and happy state, that we may be made ready for it. We express our readiness, or we beg it.

2. That we may express our desires after the enjoyment of it. A Christian is to desire the company of Christ: Phil. 1:23, 'I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ;' and he is to hasten the coming of the day of God: 2 Pet. 3:12.

Now because this cannot be but by our death, therefore here we may examine a case or two.

Case 1. First, about longing for death. Is it lawful to desire death? The law doth not only forbid acts, but thoughts and desires; therefore is it lawful to long for death?

Ans. Yes; but yet we are not anxiously to long after it till the time come; not to grow weary of life out of desperation and tiresomeness of the cross, as Jonah did, chap. 4:3; but in order to God's glory and accomplishment of our happiness. See more at large, Ps. 119 verse 17.

Case 2. Secondly, Do all that have an interest in Christ desire to die? Is not death terrible? Certainly death is terrible, both as a natural and a penal evil; as in itself it is the curse of the covenant; and as it depriveth us of life, the chiefest blessing. Yet we should train up ourselves in an expectation of death; we should look and long for it, that, when the time is come, we might be willing to give up ourselves into the hands of God. It is required of a Christian that he should not only be passive in his own death, to die in peace, but active. How? to hasten his death? No; but to resign up himself willingly into the hands of God, that his soul might not be taken away, but given up and commended to God. We should be willing to be in the arms of Christ, to be there where he is, to behold his glory. If Christ had such a good-will to men as that he longed to be with us, solacing his heart with the thought of it before all worlds, Prov. 8:31—he was thinking of us, how he should come down, and converse with men—surely we should not be so backward to go to Christ. And, therefore, as Jacob's spirit revived when he saw the chariots Joseph sent to carry him into Egypt, so our hearts should be more cheerful and comfortable when death approacheth: especially since death is ours, it is changed; therefore we should be framing ourselves to such a temper of heart by degrees that we might be ready.

Use 1. For reproof to those that would be glad in their hearts if Christ's kingdom would never come. As to the kingdom of grace, in



the external administration, they 'hate the light, and will not come to the light, lest their deeds should be reprov'd:' John 3:20. A wicked man is loth to be troubled. God's witnesses are the world's torment: Rev. 11:10, 'They tormented them that dwelt on the earth.' A man that is bodily blind would have a fit guide; but these wretchedly blind sinners, nothing so troublesome and hateful to them as one that would lead them to the kingdom of God. And then as to internal grace, when this kingdom of heaven breaks in upon their hearts, when any light and power darts in, they seek to put it out; they 'resist the Holy Ghost,' Acts 7:51, and refuse his call. And for the kingdom of glory, they say, 'It is good to be here,' and would not change their portion here for their portion in paradise.

Use 2. To exhort us to desire the coming of Christ's kingdom to ourselves. If you have any love to the Lord's glory, or your own good, you should do it: Rev. 3:20, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.' Will you not open to God that hath the best right? Will you not set open the doors to the King of glory, when Christ comes to bring entertainment to you, to sup with you? Again, all men (hill they, will they) are subject to Christ: either they must come and touch his golden sceptre, or feel the bruises of his iron mace; they must own him as king: 'Every knee shall bow,' Phil. 2:10. Therefore be more willing to have the kingdom of glory come. Again, if God be not your king, you will have a worse master, every sin, every lust: Titus 3:3, 'Serving divers lusts and pleasures.' You will be at the beck of every lust and carnal motion, and the devil will be your master to purpose; for upon the refusal of Christ's government, there is a judicial tradition, you are given up to your own heart's lusts: Ps. 81:12, 'Israel would none of me; so I gave them up to their own hearts' lusts, and they walked in their own counsels.' And to Satan, to be ensnared by him: 2 Tim. 2:26, 'Taken captive by him at his will and pleasure.' Not to buffet them, as Paul was, but to ensnare and harden their hearts. Again, if you be not subject to God, you go about to make God subject to you in effect. You would have the kingdom of glory, and yet continue in your lusts: Isa. 43:24,

'Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.' When you would have God patient, hold his hand, and be merciful to you, and yet would continue in your lusts, then you make God serve with your sins. Again, many temporal inconveniences will follow, if we do not give way to the kingdom of Christ to seize upon us. When we make no difference between God's service and the service of other lords, then he gives us up to the service of men, to a foreign enemy, to an oppressive magistrate, or breaks the staff of government among men, that we might know what it is to be under his service and government. Therefore give willing entertainment to the kingdom of Christ.

So much for the private consideration of this request, 'Thy kingdom come;' that is, to us and our persons, both the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory.

Secondly, Having spoken of the kingdom of Christ in a private, now I come to speak of it in a public, consideration. And that is twofold:—

1. The public visible administration of the kingdom of grace.
2. The public and solemn administration of the kingdom of glory at the day of judgment, when enemies shall have their final doom, and saints have their crowns set upon their heads in the sight of all the world.

I shall speak of both, but (because the discourse may be more fresh and lively) upon other texts.

1. The public visible administration of the kingdom of grace, on Ps. 51:18, 'Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of thy Jerusalem.'
2. The kingdom of glory, on Rev. 22:20, 'Surely I come quickly: Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.'

For the first. Though the church be never so afflicted, Ps. 102:14, when all is defaced, as to external appearance, lying in a ruinous heap, yet it is beloved and pitied by God's servants: 'Thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.' There is nothing God's people desire so much as Zion's welfare: Ps. 106:5, 'That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance.' And David in this psalm, Ps. 51:18, having prayed for himself, prayeth for mercy to the church and state: 'Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion; build thou the walls of thy Jerusalem.' But how cometh David, who was in the depth of private humiliation, so suddenly to fall upon the case of the church? There was a special reason for annexing this request to his own private complaints and confessions. The reasons will occasion so many observations.

[1.] Because of the offence, scandal, and mischief done to the church by his fall; and to make amends, he prayeth the more earnestly, let not Zion fare the worse for my sake. From thence observe, that the sins of particular persons oft bring a mischief upon the whole community. David had made a breach in the walls of God's protection, and left them naked, and more in danger of judgment: 'Therefore do good,' &c.

[2.] David was not only a private member, but a prince, and their sins have a more universal influence. The sins of magistrates draw down judgments on their people, all smart for their miscarriages. Hezekiah's pride cost Israel dear: 2 Chron. 32:25, 'Wrath was upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem.' It did not stay upon his person. As a great oak cannot fall but all the shrubs about it suffer loss. But,

[3.] David having some comfortable assurance of the pardon of his sins, doth now seek mercy for the church. From thence observe, that we are never fit to pray for the public, till we have made our peace with God; as the priests under the law offered sacrifice, 'first for their own sins, and then for the people's:' Heb. 7:27.

[4.] Because being brought by such a solemn but sad occasion into God's presence, he could not but have some thoughts of Zion. And from thence observe, that we should never come to God upon any private occasion but we should remember the public. We are to pray in love as well as faith. Christ hath not taught us to say, 'My Father,' but, 'Our Father,' to show that we should take in the interests and concernments of the whole body, that there may be a spirit of communion breathing in our prayers. David doth not only say, 'Have mercy upon me according to thy loving-kindness,' but, 'Do good unto Zion in thy good pleasure.' Every living member will be careful for the body. Members should be careful one for another, much more for the whole. Is any member pained or grieved?—all suffer. If the toe be trod upon, the tongue complaineth, you have hurt me; but now much more when all is concerned. Therefore we should not altogether seek our own things, but wrestle with God for the public.

I. This reproveth divers sorts of people. Some are enemies to the public welfare, as vipers eat out the dam's belly,—especially enemies to Zion: 'Down with it, down with it, even to the ground!' What monsters hath this age brought forth! Others are indifferent and careless which goeth up, Christ or Antichrist; they only mind the matters of their own interest and concernment: 'All seek their own things.' As to the public interest of the church, let all go how it will. Let me tell you, to be selfish is a sort of self-excommunication; you cast yourselves out of the bundle of life. And to be senseless, it is an implicit renouncing the body. Others there are that are gracious, but full of discontent at some passages of providence, and these seem to have lost their public affections. It is a sad symptom when a praying people are discouraged from praying for public welfare. God is very tender of the prayers of his people; he is loth they should be lost, and sorry they cannot be granted. We may sin in ceasing to pray. It is a sad judgment when the hearts of God's people are taken off from praying. Again, those that pray too coldly for the public, not as those that would do their work. There is a great decay of the spirit of prayer, which is also a sad presage. But now to show you:—

## II. What we should pray for for Zion.

1. The dilatation or enlargement of it throughout the world. The more ample God's heritage is, the more is his glory known: Prov. 14:28, 'In the multitude of the people is the king's honour;' and the glory of a shepherd lieth in the number of his flock. So Christ's kingdom, the more it is enlarged, the more honour God hath: Ps. 67:2, 'That thy way may be known among the heathen, and thy saving health among all nations.' Especially when the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in, Ps. 54:2; and when the Jews are brought in, Hosea 3:5. To be instrumental to enlarge Christ's kingdom, it is an honour to us to draw on Christ's triumphant chariot,—let us be sure to have a hand in it. These prayers, if sincere, are never in vain; if they profit not others, they promote the kingdom of God in ourselves.

2. The preservation and defence of the churches already planted, frustrating the plots and power of the enemies: That God would be 'a wall of fire round about them,' Zech. 2:5. *Qui comminus arceat et eminus terreat.* When at the weakest, God can protect them, bridling by his secret power the rage of adversaries, or defeating their attempts.

3. For comfort and deliverance in afflictions. We should pity the distressed church, as before; that God would redeem them out of all their troubles. Every true member of the church hath life from Christ; and that life giveth feeling, and that feeling affection and sympathy to rejoice and mourn. They that mourn for Zion rejoice with her: Isa. 66:10, 'Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her; rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her.'

4. For the furniture of the church, a supply of all good, internal and external.

[1.] Internal. That God would bless them with ordinances, enrich them with graces, preserve truth and unity, and continue his

presence with them: his ordinances, that they may enjoy them in purity, that the word, seals, and censures may be rightly administered till the Lord come. These are things pertaining to the kingdom of God, concerning which Christ spake to the disciples: Acts 1:3. These are to be kept till Christ's appearing: 1 Tim. 6:14. It is an honour to God, and of great profit to the church, and a rejoicing to God's people, to see them pure and unmixed: 'Though absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order,' Col. 2:5. And then that God would enrich them with his presence: Mat. 28:20, 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' It is God that giveth the increase: 'Paul may plant, and Apollos water; but God giveth the increase,' 1 Cor. 3:6—for conviction, conversion, confirmation. It was not the ark, nor mercy-seat covered with cherubims, but the answer from between the cherubims, given immediately by God, that manifested his presence. It is not the sound of the gospel, or outward ministry, but the work of his Spirit: Ps. 84:2, 'My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.' And Acts 10:44, it is said, 'The Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.' And then for unity: Christ hath called us into a body, not only into a family, but into a body. It was Christ's own prayer: John 17, 'Let them be one.' Disputes will not heal, but prayers may.

[2.] For external helps. We should pray that God would give us pastors after his own heart: Mat. 9:38, 'Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.' Men that will discharge their duty with all faithfulness, men whose hearts are set to the building up of Christ's kingdom, labourers. And then for schools of learning. A man that hath many orchards will also have seminaries of young plants to maintain them. Schools are seminaries, without which the church falleth to decay. And then for good magistrates, to patronise and protect God's people, and promote his work with them: Isa. 49:23, there is a promise, 'Kings shall be thy nursing-fathers, and their queens thy nursing-mothers,' &c. Rest from persecution is a great blessing: Acts 9:31, 'Then had the churches rest, and were edified; and walking in the fear of God,

and the comforts of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.' It is a great mercy that the church hath any breathings. These are the things that we should pray for for Zion.

Thus much shall suffice to be spoken of the kingdom of Christ in a public consideration, with respect, first, to the public visible administration of the kingdom of grace.

I come now to speak of the second, viz., the public and solemn administration of the kingdom of glory; and for that I shall insist on that portion of scripture: Rev. 22:20, 'Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.'

Here you have—

I. Christ's proclamation.

II. The church's acclamation in answer thereunto.

I. Christ's proclamation: 'Surely I come quickly.' Where take notice of two things:—

1. His asseveration: Surely.

2. His assertion: I come quickly.

1. His asseveration: Surely. It is a certain truth, though we do not so easily receive it. All notable truths, about which there is the greatest suspicion in the heart of the creature, you will find them thus averred in scripture; as Isa. 53:4, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.' The dying of the Son of God is so mysterious that the Holy Ghost propounds it with a note of averment, Surely; that is, how unlikely soever it seems, yet this is a certain truth. So here the coming of Christ is a thing so future, so little regarded by epicures and atheists, that it is propounded with a like note of averment, 'Surely I come quickly.' Herein secretly is our unbelief taxed, and also our confidence engaged.

2. You have his assertion: I come quickly. Let me explain what is meant by the coming of Christ. There is a twofold coming of Christ—a personal, and a virtual. Some think that the virtual coming is here meant,—his coming in the efficacy of his Spirit, or in the power of his providence, to accomplish those predictions. Here are many things prophesied of, and behold, 'I come quickly;' you shall find these things presently produced upon the stage of the world. So some carry it. I think rather it is to be meant of his personal coming. There are two mystical scriptures which do express all the intercourse which passeth between God and the church in the world, and they are both closed up with a desire of Christ's coming. The Canticles is one, which declareth the communion and intercourse which is between Christ and his church; and you will find it thus closed up: Cant. 8:14, 'Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.' And so here, in this book of the Revelation, where are the like intercourses recorded, it is closed up with this: 'Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly.' The personal coming, I suppose, is here meant. Now Christ's personal coming, it is but twofold—the first, and the second. The scripture knows of no other coming: Heb. 9:28, 'He shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation.' It is but a fond dream to think of a personal reign before Christ's coming to judgment. They reckon without book that look for any other. There was his first coming, which was to suffer; his second coming is to reign. The first his gracious, and this his glorious coming. The former is past, and the latter is yet expected.

'I come quickly.' How shall we make good that?

[1.] In general, Christ's absence from the church is not long. Though you reflect upon the whole flux of time, from his ascension to his second coming, it is but a moment to eternity; some hundreds of years, that may be easily counted.

[2.] It is no longer than need requires. The high priest, when he was gotten within the veil, was to tarry there until his ministration was ended, until he had appeared before God, and represented himself



for all the tribes, then he was to come out to bless the people. Jesus Christ tarrieth within the veil but until all the elect be gathered. 'He is not slack,' 2 Pet. 3:9, but we are hasty. Our times are present with us, but we must leave him to his own time to go and come.

[3.] Christ speaks this of the latter end of the world, and then it will not be long when once he begins to set forth. The old prophecies are accomplishing apace; and how little preparation soever there seems to be for this work, it comes apace. It is said of the antichristian state, 'Her plagues shall come upon her in one day:' Rev. 18:8. And of the Jews it is said, 'A nation shall be born at once:' Isa. 66:8. So much for the first part.

II. Here is the church's acclamation: 'Amen. So, Lord Jesus, come quickly.' This acclamation is double:—

1. Implicit, and enfolded in the word Amen.

2. Explicit, and unfolded: 'Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly.'

1. For the implicit acclamation of the church, in the word Amen. The word sometimes is taken nominally: Rev. 3:14, 'Thus saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness.' He that is Amen, as it is explained there, true and faithful, that will certainly give a being to his promises. Sometimes it is used adverbially, and translated verily. It is either an affectionate desire—'Let it be,' or a great asseveration—'It shall be.' It hath in it an affectionate desire: Jer. 28:6, the prophet said, 'Amen, the Lord do so, the Lord perform thy words,' &c. When he had prophesied peace to the people: 'Amen, the Lord perform thy words;' not to confirm the truth of his prophecy, but to express his own wish and hearty desire, if it might stand with the will of God. Then it expresseth a firm belief that it shall be done. Thus Christ often saith, 'Amen, verily, verily I say unto you,' by way of strong asseveration. Well, then, the church expresseth her faith and desire implicitly: Amen, Lord, that it were so; and surely, Lord, it shall be so; we believe it, and we desire it with all our hearts.

2. Explicitly: 'Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly.' From this latter clause I might observe many things.

[1.] The sweet and blessed harmony that is between Christ and the church. Christ's voice and the church's voice are unisons. Christ saith, 'I come.' And the church, like a quick echo, takes the word out of Christ's mouth, 'Even so, come.' There is the same Spirit in Christ and in the church; for it is his Spirit that resides with us. Christ, he speaks in a way proper to him, by way of promise, 'I come.' And the church in a way proper to her, by way of prayer, 'Even so, come.'

[2.] I might observe that, in the close of the world, we should most earnestly desire Christ's coming. We have the advantage of former times. To us Christ saith, 'I come quickly.' Now the set time almost is come, therefore our pulses should beat more strongly in putting up this request to Christ. Tertullian shows that the primitive Christians did pray *pro mora finis*, that the end might not come too soon, Christ having as yet but a small interest in the world, they expecting enlargement upon earth; but we have more cause to look for the accomplishment of his kingdom in heaven. They expected the revelation of Antichrist, and we expect the destruction of Antichrist. They, that God might be known in the world; we, that he might be no longer dishonoured in the world. When great promises are near their accomplishment, there is a more lively spirit stirring in the hearts of the saints: Dan. 9:2, 3, 'I understood by books the number of the years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. And I set my face to the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplication.'

But quitting these notes, I shall mainly insist upon this point, viz.:

Doct. That the church, and all the faithful members of it, do really and heartily desire Christ's second coming.

They look for it, they long for it, they wait for it. They look for it: Phil. 3:20, 'Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.' They reckon upon it, as Rebekah espied Isaac afar off. He is gone within the veil, he is appearing before God, but he will come out again. When they see the clouds, upon these one day will our Saviour come. Then they long for it. It is their description: 2 Tim. 4:8, 'They love his appearing.' Wicked men and guilty sinners hate and abhor it, he being to come to them as a terrible judge. Malefactors do not long for the assizes. But now the saints, who are absolved and washed in the blood of Christ, it doth them good to the heart to think of it, that one day Christ will appear in all his glory. And then they wait for it: 1 Thes. 1:10, 'They wait for his Son from heaven, even Jesus, who hath delivered us from wrath to come.' It is 'wrath to come,' something behind the coming of Christ, which makes it so terrible. Hell makes the day of judgment terrible. The devil could not endure to hear of Christ's coming, Mat. 8:29, 'Art thou come to torment us?' &c. So wicked men have the spirit of the devil; it is a torment and bondage to them to think of the Judge's coming. But those which have their discharge, they wait for it. It supports and bears up their hearts in the midst of their present afflictions, and they go on cheerfully in their work, notwithstanding lets and troubles.

To give some reasons why the faithful members of Christ so really and heartily desire Christ's second coming. They are of three sorts:—

1. Some in respect of the person who is to come.
2. Some in respect of the persons which desire his coming.
3. Some in respect of the coming itself.

I. In respect of him who is to come.

1. His person, that we may see him. The children of God have delighted to look upon him through a veil, and have had a kind of heaven upon earth from beholding his face in the glass of an

ordinance. Looking upon him in the veil of ordinances hath been a mighty comfort and refreshing to them; now they would desire to see his person face to face. They know by hearsay this great Redeemer and Saviour of theirs; he wooeth them by proxy. As Eliezer, Abraham's servant, was to go abroad and seek for a match for his master's son, so the great business of the ministers of God is to set forth our Master's Son. Now the saints would fain see him. Nay, they have not only heard of him, but believed in him, and received him into their hearts. Nay, not only believed in him, but they have loved him greatly: 1 Pet. 1:8, 'Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' It hath been a ravishing thought to them to think of Christ. And they have tasted: 1 Pet. 2:3, 'If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' And they have felt him in the drawings of the Spirit; they live by his life, they have found a virtue going out from him. Now all that they desire is, that they may see this great person, who hath been their Redeemer and Saviour.

2. Consider him as in his person, so in his relations to them. Here are two titles: 'Even so, Lord Jesus.' He is Lord, and he is Jesus. He is Lord, as a master and husband; as Sarah called Abraham, Lord. As a Master: good servants will look for their master's coming: Mat. 24:46. And surely such a Master should be longed for and looked for, for when he comes, he will not come empty-handed: 'Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me,' Rev. 22:12. Here Christ's servants have their vales, but not their wages. Here they have present maintenance, that is all they have now, but then they shall have their reward and wages. Here they have their earnest, but then they shall have the full sum. Under the law masters were charged severely not to defraud their servants of their hire—why? He hath lift up his soul to him; that is, in the middle of his hard labours this was his comfort: when the work of the day was over, he should have his wages and his hire at night. So you have lift up your souls to him; the great pay-day will come, and this hath borne you up in all your labours and travail of your soul. Therefore, as he is our Lord, so we should look for him. And then as our Husband; this is a sweeter relation: 'The bride saith,

Come,' Rev. 22:17. We are here contracted and betrothed to Christ: 'I will betroth thee to me,' Hosea 2:19. But the day of solemn espousals is hereafter. Here we are betrothed to Christ in the covenant of grace; Christ hath taken a token from us, and left a token with us. He hath taken human flesh, carried our nature to heaven, that he might be mindful of us, and hath left the Spirit with us. Now there will be a longing, looking, and waiting for this day of solemn espousals. And as he is Lord, so he is Jesus, a Saviour. With what melting wishes doth the captive long for a Saviour and Redeemer! Now 'we look for a Saviour from heaven.' Christ is a Saviour now, but not a perfect Saviour to the uttermost; never till then. Therefore the day of judgment is called 'the day of redemption:' Eph. 4:30. There is something left, that every coming of Christ might bring some benefit; something of misery left upon us to the last day. Here we have enemies within and without. Within, mighty lusts; and therefore his coming is 'like a refiner's fire,' Mal. 3:2, 'and fullers' soap.' His first and second coming we find oft in the Old Testament put together. His coming is 'to present us holy, without spot and blemish:' Eph. 5:27. Our present state is but a convalescency, a recovery out of sickness by degrees. There is some fruit of sin left upon the body, until the day of the general resurrection, that we may have new matter of glorifying God just as we are entering into heaven. Therefore that every coming of Christ might bring us a new benefit, the body is to die. The old Adam is not quite abolished until God be all in all. And so for enemies without us. Here we dwell among wicked men, whose sins are a grievance to us, and whose injuries are a very great molestation and trouble. We live here, like Lot in Sodom: 'His righteous soul was vexed with their ungodly deeds,' their filthy conversation. But then there will be a perfect separation between the sheep and the goats. Here we are exposed to many persecutions; here Antichrist is but consuming; there he shall totally and utterly be abolished.

II. If we respect the persons desiring this coming, there is something in them to move them to it. There is:—

1. The Spirit of Christ.

2. Certain graces which do necessarily issue themselves into this work.

3. Certain experiences they have, which put them upon this longing.

1. There is the Spirit of Christ: 'The Spirit and the bride saith, Come,' Rev. 22:17. The Holy Ghost breedeth this desire in the church. Nature saith, it is good to be here; but this is a disposition above nature, the Spirit in the bride. The flesh and corrupt nature saith, 'Depart;' but the Spirit saith, 'Come.' The great work of the Spirit is to bring us and Christ together; he comes from the Father and the Son, to bring us to the Father by the Son. All he doth is to bring Christ and the spouse together; therefore he enkindleth in the hearts of God's people a strong and earnest desire of his coming.

2. There are graces planted in us; faith, hope, love, zeal. Faith, that is the ground of this desire. Christ saith he comes quickly; and this provokes and draws up the desire to believe Christ will be as good as his word: John 14:2, 3, 'I go to my Father, and will come again to receive you to myself.' Christ hath ever been plain-hearted with us: he saith, 'I come;' and the church saith, 'Amen,' in a way of faith, 'Even so, come.' If Christ had gone away in discontent, and with a threatening in his mouth that we should never have seen his face more, then we could have had but cold hopes and faint desires; but he parted in love, and left a promise with us. The church and the believing soul saith, I have his word for it: he hath ever been punctual hitherto, and kept his word to a tittle, and hath said, 'I will come again.' This upholdeth the hearts of believers during his absence; for they reason thus: What need had Christ to flatter or deceive us, or promise more than he will perform? Would we flatter a worm that we can easily crush? He can strike us dead if we do not please him; he hath been true in all things, and we have ever found him plain-hearted. Then there is hope planted in the saints. Hope is faith's handmaid, it looks for that which we believe: faith determines

the certainty of the thing, then hope looks for it. This grace was made on purpose that we might reach out to heaven and see if our beloved be coming, that we might expect our full and future happiness. God not only provides a glorious estate for us, but grace to expect it; he works this hope in us that we might look after it: 1 Pet. 1:3, 'He hath begotten us again unto a lively hope.' Then there is love in the saints to Christ. This is an affection of union, it desires to be with the party beloved; he desireth to be with us, and we with him. Love awakeneth earnest longings: 'Oh, come, come! why is his chariot so long a-coming?' As a loving wife stands upon the shore ready to welcome her expected husband, so doth love in the saints; they desire to be with Christ, therefore they long for the kingdom of God coming to themselves out of love: Phil. 1:23, 'I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.' And upon the same ground they desire the general resurrection of the church. Especially is this inflamed with the thoughts of Christ's love to us. He hath removed his bodily presence from us, yet he cannot be satisfied until he and we meet again: John 14:3, 'I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also;' and John 17:24, 'And that you may be there with me, to behold my glory.' Christ is not satisfied in his glorious estate until we be with him, till he hath our company, and we be beatified with the sight of him. Before his coming in the flesh, he delighted to be with the saints before the world was: Prov. 8:31. And when the world was made, before his incarnation, he took pleasure to come and appear in the fashion of a man, and converse with his people in human shape. In the days of his flesh, he delighted to spend his time and busy himself among them that are faithful. And when he was to go from us, he did assure us of returning, and cannot be quiet until we be with him. So, reciprocally, and according to our measure, doth love work in us; we cannot be without Christ, therefore we long to be with him.

Then zeal is planted in the saints, and a tenderness for his glory. It is not their interest only which makes them desire his coming, but that the king may sit upon the throne, that Christ may reign in the most perfect manner, that the day of manifestation may come, that all

mists and clouds which are upon his person may vanish. The saints that love the glory of God as well as their own salvation, nay, above their own salvation, are longing for that time when Christ shall be seen in all his glory, that he may be dishonoured no more, that sin and opposition may have an end. Here God hath not his perfect glory, neither from us nor from the wicked, neither from angels nor devils: not his perfect glory from us, and therefore the saints long for that time when Christ may be more admired in them; it is the comfort of their souls that God is glorified in their glory, that there will a time come when he shall be admired and glorified in their glory, and when they shall praise him for evermore, without weakness and distraction. And then the wicked, that they may oppose and dishonour him no more, that the whole course of justice may be seen in the history of the world, which shall be produced at the day of judgment; that his power may be seen, when devils and all ungodly men are trodden underfoot, and all offences taken away, and all opposite powers are abolished. First, Christ would zealously affect us to the glory of God: 'Hallowed be thy name;' then he would have us pray, 'Thy kingdom come,' that our zeal for God's glory might make us earnest and instant for his kingdom. Then,

3. There are certain experiences that we have here which set us a-longing and groaning for this time: Rom. 8:23, 'We which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.' When they have tasted of the clusters of Canaan, oh, they long to see the land; they long that Jesus, the captain of their salvation, the spiritual Joshua, may lead them into the good land. The church hath here enjoyed Christ in her house: 'I brought him into my mother's house,' Cant. 3:4. Now they would enjoy him in his own house, have a more plentiful enjoyment of him. Wherefore have we a taste, but to long for a fuller banquet? Why doth God give out such a pittance, but to awaken our desires to look for more? Indeed these beginnings are sweet, and are a wonderful mercy; to hear Christ say in a promise, 'Come to me, that you may have life.' But when once they have embraced this, they will be longing for another call, for the great voice to say, 'Come, ye



blessed of my Father,' &c. When Christ biddeth them welcome into the kingdom of heaven, to the crown of glory; when we can get any joy in the Holy Ghost, a little peace of conscience, any sweet experience of our being cleansed from sin, this is reviving and comfortable. But why is this given, but to set us a-longing for the whole harvest? for this is but the first-fruits. It is sweet now to find pardon of sin, and any comfortable feeling of God's love in the conscience; to have any doubt resolved, any fear silenced and suppressed; to have a glimpse of the light of God's countenance, a little elevation of the heart in duty. Now this draws on the soul to long for more; for we begin then to think, What a sweet reviving will it be when we enjoy the full of all these things! If there be but one promise now set home upon our hearts, though here we have only the right, not enjoyment; if we have but our right cleared up to a promise, it is very reviving. God gives us this experience, that we may long to enjoy the thing promised, the full possession of it. When you have gone away feasted with loves at the Lord's table, thou hast said, One hour's communion with God is better than all the world. If thy heart was melted a little in duty, if it was affected with godly sorrow for sin, it hath yielded thee more comfort than all the mirth and music which fond worldlings cheer themselves withal, than all their jollity. Now this is but given as a foretaste, as a prelibation, and to awaken our desires after more. In the Lord's Supper many times we come and drink of that cup which God hath tempered for us; this is but a dark presignification of the 'new wine we shall drink in our Father's kingdom,' Mat. 26:29, and of those eternal comforts we shall have there, and those unmixed joys in the presence of Christ. Therefore, because of the tastes they have had, and those beginnings of glory, their hearts will be more enlarged and drawn out to look for more, and long for that happy time when all this shall be accomplished.

III. There may be arguments taken and drawn from the coming itself, that they long for his coming. Wherefore doth Christ come? what are the ends of it? It is to manifest his love to the saints mainly, as to punish his enemies and glorify his justice.

1. I will mention the first; to gather the saints together, to draw all his scattered people into one holy body and communion: Ps. 50:5, 'Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.' Now they are scattered up and down, as God hath service for them to do; one here, another there: they are spread in several places, where they are like two or three berries in the uppermost top of the bough. That psalm is generally acknowledged to be spoken of the day of judgment; then they are gathered to meet in one great assembly. The psalmist speaks of 'the great congregation of the righteous,' where the 'sinners shall not stand:' Ps. 1:5. At that great day when Christ comes, all the saints shall make but one assembly and one congregation. As the wicked shall be bundled together, and the tares cast into unquenchable fire, so all the saints shall be gathered together into one great assembly, and this glads their hearts. Therefore we are not feasted to the full, because we have not all our company; all the guests do not meet together until the day the Son of God comes to bless the elect.

2. He comes to proclaim our pardon, and to pronounce the sentence of our acquittance juridically in court, as judge upon the throne. Our pardon is passed and sealed as to conscience, then he will blot out all our sins; therefore it is said, Acts 3:19, 'That your iniquities may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.' He comes then to comfort and refresh the souls of the saints, by proclaiming their pardon in the ears of all the world. To whomsoever the throne of Christ is terrible, it should not be terrible to the saints: if he comes as a judge to them, he comes to acquit them upon the throne; he means no trouble to them.

3. He comes to crown us. Certainly there is a longing for this day and coming; for what is his work? He comes to crown the saints: 2 Tim. 4:8, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day.' Then he comes to put the crown of righteousness upon our heads, and invest us with all the fruits of his purchase; then the godly Christian comes to have his crown: 1 Pet. 5:4, 'When the chief Shepherd shall

appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away.' He that hath been careful to honour God in his relation, then the great Shepherd comes to put the crown of glory, which fades not away, upon his head.

Are the children of God always in this frame, as to desire his coming? Many tremble at the thoughts of it, and can have no comfort, for want of assurance of God's love; and many times the saints do not feel such inclinations, and such ardent and strong desires.

I answer:—

1. The meanest saint hath some inclination this way; he cannot but desire Christ should come into his heart and bless him, in turning him from his sins; and that he should come to judgment, since comfort and reward is more naturally embraced than duty. Whoever is begotten to God, is 'begotten to a lively hope,' 1 Pet. 1:3; his heart is carried this way, though not with so much strength and lively motions as others are. Yet I grant,

2. Sometimes there may be a drowsiness and indisposition, when their lamps are not burning, when they are grown careless and fallen asleep; as the wise virgins slept, as well as the foolish, by a sluggish security. And the saints may find themselves indisposed, possibly by the remission of their watchfulness; they may contract an indisposition, yet there is a spirit stirring this way, which begins with the new birth, and still continues, though it doth not always alike put forth itself. A wife desires her husband's coming home, yet it may be all is not in such good order. Now, all Christians desire the coming of Christ; but they are not so watchful, therefore are not so lively. Security brings deadness, until God awakens them by some sharp affliction. The needle that is touched with the loadstone yet may a little be discomposed and turned aside, but it settles again. This is the right posture and frame of a gracious soul, to be thus earnestly bent and carried out after the coming of Christ.

3. I answer again: The church doth really and heartily desire this coming, though they may tremble at some circumstances of it. When we think of this great day, and of the book that shall be opened, and the impartial proceedings, there is some degree of bondage still left in the saints, that doth a little weaken their confidence and boldness. 1 John 4:18 we are told: 'Perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment.' Until our graces are perfect, there is something of fear.

### **APPLICATION**

Use 1. To reprove those that do not desire the coming of Christ, but put off the thoughts of it. Why? Because it casts a damp upon their fleshly rejoicing; which put far away the day of the Lord, the evil day; it is so to them: Amos 6:3. They wish it would never come, and would be glad in their hearts to hear such news. Why? For Christ's coming is their torment and burden; they look upon it as a day of vengeance and an evil day, therefore are loth to entertain the thought of it. Saith Austin, 'Canst thou pray that the kingdom of God may come, when thou art afraid the kingdom of God should come?' A carnal man cannot say the Lord's Prayer without being afraid; they tremble at the remembrance of it; they are afraid it should be true, and afraid to be heard. If it might go by their voice, Christ should never come. The voice of corrupt nature is, 'Depart from us; and what can the Almighty do for them?' Job 22:17. Or if they do desire it, it is but in a slight, formal manner; as those in the prophet that would see the day of the Lord, yet they could not bear it: Amos 5:18, 'Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord; to what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness, and not light.' They little consider what they are doing, and what is their danger, when they are making such a prayer to God, 'Thy kingdom come.'

Use 2. For trial. How are you affected towards the coming of Christ? Are you carried out with such an inclination and bent of heart, as the day of your perfection, and the day of your solemn enjoyment of God,

requireth? Is the bent of your heart carried out to things to come? If there be looking, then there would:—

1. Be a preparing. A man that expects and desires the coming of a great person to his house will make all things ready, is careful to furnish himself; when all is sluttish and nasty, and nothing of provision, do you look for your guest? What have you done as to the day of Christ's coming? Have you judged yourselves? 1 Cor. 11:31, 'If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.' Have you ever seriously passed sentence upon yourselves, according to the law, that you may be found in Christ? Rom. 8:1, 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ.' That you may have Christ's righteousness to bear you out in that day against Christ's judgment? Are you so as you would be found in him? Do you 'live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world'? Strict walking is a preparing and providing for this day; you do but provide for terror when you give way to sin: 2 Pet. 3:10, 11, 'The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; therefore what manner of persons should ye be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God?' We should be trimming up our lamps.

2. What kind of entertainment do you give to Christ now? Do you entertain him for the present into your hearts, in his ordinances? A woman that never cares to hear from her husband, doth she long for his coming? Oh, be careful now to get Christ into your hearts!

3. What doth this expectation produce? what revivings in the forethoughts of it? John 8:56, 'Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad.' He means the day of his incarnation, the day of his abode in the world. Abraham foresaw, by the eagle eye of his faith, through all mists, clouds, veils, and ceremonies; he got a sight of Christ's day, and it did him good at heart. Do the apprehensions of it make your hearts spring and leap within you for joy? What groanings longings, what dealing with God about it doth it produce? Rom. 8:19, 'For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.' What support and strength

doth it give you against the burdens and sorrows of this present life, to remember Christ will come?

Use 3. To press us to this sweet affection and disposition of the saints. I might mention the profit of it; this longing, looking, and waiting for the coming of Christ, it will make us heavenly in our conversation. Christ is there: where should we converse most but where Christ is? And it makes us faithful in improving our talents: 'Our Lord will come, and reckon with his servants,' Luke 19:15.

## **Thy Will be Done in Earth, As it is in Heaven**

WE are come to the third petition, which is fitly subjoined to the former. In the preface we own our relation to God, 'Our Father.' In the first petition we express our care of his glory; in the second, our desires of his kingdom; and now we beg obedience to his will. We may judge of our respect to his name and kingdom by our obedience to his will, without which we neither sanctify his name nor submit to his kingdom. The kingdom of God implieth two things,—his government over us, or the privileges which we enjoy thereby.

1. As it is taken for his government over us, so there is a fair connexion between these two requests. Before, we pray that God would rule us, and now, for a soft and pliable heart, that we may be ruled by him. Christ is not our king when we do our own will. These two are distinct; government is one thing, and obedience to it another: as, Mat. 6:33, 'The kingdom of God,' and 'the righteousness thereof,' they are distinguished. The kingdom of God we plead for in the second petition, and here for the righteousness thereof; that Christ may not be a titular prince and sovereign, as certainly he is, when we do our own will. Every sovereign stands upon his own will, and the more absolute, still the more his will is to be looked upon as a law and rule. Now, God being so absolute a sovereign, it is but fit

his will should be done in the perfectest manner: 'Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.'

2. If you take the kingdom of God for the privileges of his government, especially if they be considered in their consummation and final accomplishment, for that which the scripture calls the kingdom of God, by doing God's will we enter into his kingdom: see Mat. 7:21, 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' It is not the blandishment of a spiritual compliment, but a true and hearty subjection to the will of God; that availeth in God's kingdom, and is intended by this petitionary clause, 'Thy will be done.'

Here consider—

I. The substance of the petition.

II. The circumstances thereof.

The substance of the petition, 'Thy will be done.' The circumstances are two: The place where, which indeed intimateth the persons by whom, by men here 'upon earth.' Then the manner is set down in a comparison, 'Upon earth, as it is in heaven.'

Let me first open these passages, then observe somewhat.

I. The substance of the petition, 'Thy will be done;' and there:—

1. The matter about which it is conversant, the will of God.
2. The request about it, Thy will be done.

First, The matter of the request, Thy will. God's name was under consideration in the first petition, his kingdom in the second, and now his will. And then here is a note of appropriation, Thy will, in contradistinction to all others.

God's will, it signifieth two things, either his decree concerning future events, or else that which God hath revealed concerning our duty—his intended or commanded will. The first is spoken of, Rom. 9:19, 'Who hath resisted his will?' that is, his decree and his purpose; and the second, his revealed pleasure concerning our duty, is spoken of, 1 Thes. 4:3, 'This is the will of God, even your sanctification.' The will not of his purpose, but it is his law, his revealed pleasure. Now it is not meant here of God's decree or secret will. Why? God's secret will, that is not known, therefore how can it be done upon earth? To that all are subject,—reprobates, devils. But here this petition speaks of a will which is to be done in conformity to the good angels. Again, we may, without sin, will that which God wills not by his secret will, as the life of a sick parent, which God purposeth to take away. Nay, a man may fulfil this secret will and yet perish for ever, as Judas, and many which break his commandments and yet fulfil his decrees, that do that which God had determined before to be done in his secret purpose; as it is said, Acts 4:28, 'To do that which his hand and counsel had determined before to be done.' Therefore his secret will is not here meant, but the will of God revealed. Therefore let me here distinguish again: The will of God is revealed two ways, in his word and in his works; the one to be done by us, the other to be done upon us: the one is *Voluntas de nobis*, God's will concerning us; the other, *Voluntas in nobis*, God's will in us, and to be done by us; the one maketh way for our active, the other for our passive obedience. Our active obedience hath respect to his laws and commands, but our passive to his providence. We show as much obedience in the one as in the other, in patience as in holiness: for as in holiness we own God as the supreme lawgiver, so in patience we own him as the supreme Lord, that hath a dominion over all events and all things which fall out in the world. In the one, we pray *Ut nihil Dei displiceat nobis*, that nothing which comes from God may provoke us to unseemly passion; in the other, we pray *Ut nihil nostrum displiceat Deo*, that nothing which comes from us may provoke God by unseemly and undutiful carriage. We principally pray for the latter here, that we may fulfil his will revealed in the word, and yet the other cannot be excluded. Take but this reason, because the saints in scripture



express their subjection to God's providence in words very agreeable to this request, to the form of this petition; as those believers, when they saw God had determined Paul's journey to Jerusalem, when he went bound in the Spirit, notwithstanding the dangers of it, and their loss by his departure, they said, 'The will of the Lord be done,' Acts 21:14. And Christ himself, speaking of his passion, Mat. 26:39, 'Not as I will, but as thou wilt:' and 'not my will, but thine, be done,' Luke 22:42. So that we pray both for the one and the other, though with a plain difference. Why? For our active obedience must be even without a conditional desire that the commands of God should be repealed; we cannot so much as desire God should disannul his law, and repeal those statutes he hath enacted. Yet we may desire conditionally, if God see fit, the removal of our affliction, and that condition of life to which we are determined by his providence: 'The commandment is not grievous' in itself, 1 John 5:3, yet the affliction in its own nature is grievous, Heb. 12:11. We may desire more knowledge of God's law, yet we may not desire more experience of affliction; the one is more absolutely necessary than the other. We are not only to obey actively, but to love the commandments of God, and to have our hearts carried out in a greater esteem, and to prefer them before liberty itself; but I doubt whether we are so concerning our afflictions, to prefer them before freedom and exemption, and the welfare of our nature.

Well, then, you see what is meant by the will of God, which is the matter about which this is conversant.

Then here is the note of appropriation, Thy will, in opposition to our own will, the will of Satan, the wills of men.

[1.] To our own will, which is the proudest enemy Christ hath on this side hell, and the cause of all the mischief which doth befall us. The great contest between us and God is, whose will shall stand, God's will, or ours? In every sin we slight the will of God, and set up our own. We 'despise the commandment,' 2 Sam. 12:9: not grossly and formally; David did not slight the commandment, and say, 'Tush! it

is a foolish law;' but by necessary interpretation we slight the law of God, and set up our own will. Therefore, when we pray that God's will may be done, we do in effect renounce our own will, those 'wills of the flesh and mind,' Eph. 2:3, which the apostle speaks of; so it is in the Greek. The soul is never renewed until the will be renewed, till the will be broken. And therefore self-denial is made one of the first principles of Christianity, the denying of our own will. The will is the leading part of the soul. Though the new creature begins with the mind, yet it comes not to any perfection, it is not formed until the will be subdued to God, until grace be seated in the heart. When a man treadeth on a dry hide, one part or other will be apt to rebound and leap up against him, till he stands in the middle and centre: so, until grace be seated in the heart, corruption will recoil. When a bird's wings are broken, it can fly no longer; so when the will is subdued, then the work of grace begins. The mind is the counsellor, but the will is the monarch and prince, which sways and rules all in the soul. Again, the will is more corrupted than the mind; the understanding is much blinded, but the will is more depraved. The mind hath a little light, and is apt to take God's part sometimes, by suggesting good motions; but the will doth more abhor and refuse good than the understanding is ignorant of it. We are convinced often when not converted. Therefore this is the main thing, that our corrupt wills may be subdued to God: Let thy will be done, not our own.

[2.] Thy will, in opposition to Satan's will. Our lusts are called his lusts: John 8:44, 'The lusts of your father the devil ye will do.' They are of his inspiring, of his cherishing; the grand incubus of hell is the father of these brats and sinful productions. So, 2 Tim. 2:26, the Holy Ghost speaks of carnal men, that they are 'taken captive by Satan at his will and pleasure.' Wicked men are at Satan's beck, and they do his will. The devil sets such a lust at work, the man obeys presently: the devil stirs such lusts by his arts and engines, and observes such a lust will be most prevalent at such a time; the man is taken by Satan's will. Now, Thy will, &c., we desire the Lord's grace, that we may not comply with the devil's motions.

[3.] Thy will, in opposition to the wills of men: 1 Pet. 4:2, 'That he no longer should live to the lusts of men, but to the will of God;' not according to the wills of men, but according to the will of God. In our natural state we are apt to be swayed by the lusts and humours of others, according as the posture of our interest is determined; and therefore it is a good piece of self-denial to cease from the lusts of men, from the humours and customs of those whom we fear and from whom we hope. And until we cease from men, in vain do we expect to serve God.

Thus for the matter about which this request is conversant, 'Thy will.'

Secondly, Here is the request itself, Be done; what doth this imply, when we say, 'Let thy will be done'?

[1.] We beg a heart to do it: Deut. 5:29, 'Oh that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always!' It is not enough to set ourselves to do what God hath commanded; but we must get a renewed, sanctified heart.

[2.] We beg skill to do it: Ps. 143:10, 'Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God.' We beg that God would teach us, and lead us forth in the obedience of his will.

[3.] We beg strength to do it. It is said, Heb. 13:21, 'The God of peace, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will.' We beg strength, that we may do what is pleasing in his sight. In our will there is a double mischief; it is opposite to and averse from God: Rom. 8:7, 'The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.' And it is strongly inclined to other things; and this both by nature and by evil custom. There is an aversion from God, which is natural, and which is increased by custom; therefore it is God must give us a heart to do his will, and skill and strength. Thus God he must draw us off from other things, which is called the 'circumcising of the heart,' Deut. 30:6. He must draw us off, and he must draw us

on too. As he pares away the foreskin, the fleshiness which cleaves to our hearts, and inclineth us to seek our own will, in hunting after pleasures, honours, profits: so doth the Lord draw us to himself: Cant. 1:4, 'Draw me, and we will run after thee.'

II. Let us come to the circumstances of the petition, 'In earth, as it is in heaven.'

First, The place, wherein also the persons are noted, in earth, that is, by the men which live upon earth. Why is this mentioned, on earth?

[1.] The earth is a place of our exercise and trial, and now is the time to show our self-denial and our obedience to God, to deny our own will and do the will of God: John 17:4, 'I have glorified thee upon earth.' This is a work that must not be suspended until we come to heaven; it will not be thankworthy then, when there is no interruption, no trouble, no molestation there: but here, 'I have glorified thee on earth,' where so few mind the work, and where there are so many distractions and temptations to divert us.

[2.] The earth is the only place where this work is begun, or else it shall never be done hereafter: instance in anything that is the will of God. Here we must believe, or there we shall never enjoy: Luke 2:14, 'Peace upon earth.' Now God offereth grace, and now it is his will we should come out of our sins, and accept of Christ to the ends for which he hath appointed him. And here we must be sanctified, else we shall be filthy for evermore. Corn grows in the field, but it is laid up in the barn. Now is the time of minding this work, here upon earth.

[3.] That while we are upon earth, we might long for that happy estate we shall have in heaven, wherein we might serve God. Therefore Christ in his prayer would have us think how God is glorified and obeyed there, that we might send up hearty wishes after that perfect estate, when we shall serve God without weariness, and without distraction.

[4.] Upon earth, to show that we pray not for those in the other world, but for those upon earth. We do not pray for the saints departed, they are out of harm's way, past our prayers, being in their final estate. We pray not for the dead, but for the living. Thus for the first circumstance in this petition, the place where.

Secondly, There remains nothing but the last, and that is the manner how this is to be done: 'As it is in heaven.' Chrysostom observes that this clause may be referred to all the former petitions: 'Hallowed be thy name upon earth, as it is in heaven;' 'Thy kingdom come upon earth, as it is in heaven.' But certainly most proper it is to the matter in hand. But what is the sense? How is God obeyed in heaven?

There are in scripture three heavens, the airy heaven, the starry heaven, and the heaven of heavens. In all these heavens God's will is done. God is obeyed in the lower heaven, you shall see in Ps. 148:8, 'fire, hail, snow, and vapours, stormy winds, fulfilling his word.' Winds and storms, and all those things which seem to be most tempestuous and unruly, to be the disorders of nature, they are at God's beck. Then in the starry heaven, ver. 6, 'He hath made a decree which shall not pass:' they are under a law and statute, and are not exorbitant and eccentric, do not alter their path; the sun riseth, sets, and knows the just point of his compass. But it is chiefly meant of the heaven of heavens, where angels and blessed spirits are, and they obey God perfectly: Ps. 103:20, 21, 'Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts, ye ministers of his that do his pleasure.' The angels do his commandments, and are hearkening to the voice of his word, are at God's beck, to be sent up and down, to ascend and descend as God will have them; so with respect to this doth Christ say, 'Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.'

But here, again, why is this added, As it is in heaven?

1. To sweeten our subjection to God's will. We upon earth are not held to a harder law and task than they in heaven. The angels, they are not sui juris, at their own dispose: they have many privileges above man, yet have no exemption from homage and duty to God. They have an exemption and freedom from trouble, and sickness, and disease, and the necessities of meat and drink, and all the molestations and infirmities of the flesh which we lie under, but are not freed from the will of God, but they obey his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word. These courtiers of heaven are servants of God, and fellows with us in the same obedience; none is too great to obey God. The angels, which excel in strength, they obey his will, and so must we; nay, they obey his will with a holy awe and fear, that they may not displease him in the least; for it is said of Michael the archangel, Jude 9, that 'he durst not bring against the devil a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.' He had not boldness to speak one uncomely word, or one unseemly word, to do anything that was displeasing to God.

2. As to sweeten our obedience, so to show us the reasonableness of this obedience. We would have the happiness of the angels, and, therefore, certainly we should come into a fellowship in their duty; it is but equal we should imitate their holiness. If we would have communion with them in glory, we should have communion also with them in grace. Mat. 22:30, it is said, we shall be ἰσάγγελοι, 'like the angels of God.' We seek after the same glory and happiness which they have: to stand before the Lord and to behold his face; that is their happiness. Surely if we would have the reward of angels, which we upon earth are aspiring and looking after, it is but equal we should do the work of angels, and write after their copy.

3. Therefore doth Christ use this comparison, that we might not miscarry by a low example. How apt are we to follow the track, and to take up with an easy and low rate of obedience: Luke 18:11, that put great confidence in that, 'God, I thank thee I am not as other men.' Now because we have few good examples in the world, and those we have have their spots and defects, and are very susceptible

of evils, and apt to miscarry by them, therefore Christ would carry us up to look after a heavenly and celestial pattern; he propoundeth the angelical perfection as a pattern and example. He that shoots at a star, will shoot higher than he that aims at a shrub: surely the higher the pattern that we aim at, the greater will our obedience be. Wicked men they think that everything is enough in religion, though it be never so little; but the godly cannot so easily satisfy themselves, they are pressing and hastening on more and more.

4. To teach us that we are not only to look to the quid, but to the quomodo; not only to what we do, but also in what manner we yield obedience to God; therefore Christ would not teach us to pray only, 'Thy will be done,' but 'as it is in heaven,' in such a manner. God respects not only the doing of what he hath required, but also the manner of it, that we may not only do good, but well; it is the adverb which crowns the action. We are to consider with what heart we go about it: Prov. 16:2, 'The Lord weigheth the spirits.' That which he putteth into the balance of the sanctuary is, with what spirit, with what heart, we go about the work; that is it he weigheth and regardeth. Now that we may look not only to the matter of obedience, but also to the manner how we do it, therefore doth Christ give us this pattern.

Object. But you will say, Our obedience is accompanied with many defects and infirmities; therefore, how can we serve God as the angels do in heaven? How shall we take comfort in our obedience if this be our pattern?

I answer:—

1. Though we cannot do it in the same measure, yet we should do it in the same manner; though there be not an exact equality, yet there should be some answerable resemblance. Our obedience should not be wholly different in the kind and manner of it from theirs which serve God in heaven, though for the degree and rate we cannot come up to their pattern.

2. Though we do not attain to this perfection in this life, yet we must aim after it, long for it, and pray for it. Aim after it, not sluggishly content ourselves with any low degrees of obedience, but aim at the highest. And to long for it: there is a time coming when we shall be perfect; when we shall be not only as the angels are, but as Christ is: 'We shall be like him,' 1 John 3:2. And we pray for that on earth which is expected in heaven; we pray for what we do expect from the final and consummate estate, when we shall be as the angels of God, and perfectly do his will.

I come to the points; they are three:—

1. It concerns them very much that would in prayer own God as a father, and pretend a respect to his glory and kingdom, to see that his will be done here upon earth.

2. It is the Lord that giveth to will and to do those things which are pleasing in his sight.

3. God doth not only look to this, that his will be done, but to the manner how it is done.

I. It concerneth them very much that would in prayer own God as a father, and pretend a respect to his glory and kingdom, to see that his will be done here upon earth.

I shall prove it:—

First, By the arguments intimated in the point.

1. As we pray to God, we should see his will be done, upon a double account—as real and successful.

[1.] As we would express a reality and sincerity in prayer. They mock God that pray they might do his will, yet have no care to do it, that declaim against their lusts, yet hug them and keep them warm in their bosoms. We oftener pray from our memories than our



consciences, and oftener from our consciences than our affections. From our memory, as we repeat words by rote, without sense, or feeling, or consideration of the importance of them. From our consciences, rather than affections. Austin observes of himself: while he was under the power of his lusts he would pray against concupiscence, but his heart would say, *At noli modo, timebam enim ne me exaudiret Deus*; 'But, Lord, not yet; for I am afraid lest God should hear me.' Conscience tells us that such things must be done and asked; thus we put a little of our conscience in prayer, but nothing of affection and serious desire. Many would be loth God should take them at their words, when they seem to resign up themselves to his will, and think of parting with their lusts; it is bitter and irksome to them: as Phaltiel, Michal's husband, 'went after her, going and weeping,' 2 Sam. 3:16. Now if we would manifest our prayers to be real, we should labour to perform the same; otherwise we are but like those soldiers which spat upon Christ and buffeted him, yet cried. 'Hail, King of the Jews;' so it is but a mockage to say, 'Thy will be done,' yet have no care to do it: Mat. 15:8, 'This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.' There is no reality in the prayer, whatever be in it, if the heart be not in it. Some men's prayers are but the fruit of wit and memory; others but the result of their judgments, what is fit to be done, rather than of their hearts, what they desire to be done; and they are only good so far as they do more solemnly express God's right, not their inward desires.

[2.] If we would have our prayers successful. Ps. 66:18, 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.' Clearly, if we will not do God's will, there is no reason he should regard our will. If I regard iniquity in my heart, there may be sin in the heart; but if I regard it there, God will not hear me, if I entertain an affection to it. When the wind blows, some cold air will get into the chamber, though the door be shut never so close; but to leave the door open for it doth not argue such a care of health as is requisite. There will be sin in the children of God, but it is not allowed. Love to any known sin makes our prayers to God to be without success. So Prov. 28:9, 'He that

turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.' God useth often the law of retaliation, will pay home sinners in their own coin: we will not hear him, therefore he will not hear us. The same argument we have to urge to God in prayer, that God hath to urge to us for duty and obedience. What argument will you use to awaken your confidence and affection? 'By the blood of Christ we have boldness to come to him,' Heb. 10:19, and Eph. 3:12. This is not only an argument to be urged in expectation of mercy, but also in the enforcement of duty, when God beseecheth you by the bowels of Christ to do his will, and to mind his work. If the blood of Christ cannot prevail with us, to bring us up to the will of God, how can we expect it should prevail with God to bring us in returns of blessing? When God speaks we slight him, therefore when we speak God may cast off our prayers.

God speaks more wisely to us than we can to him; we stammer, and lisp, and speak foolishly in our prayers to God. There is far more reason why we should hear God than God hear us; for there is more equity in his precepts than there is reason in our prayers, and we are bound to obey God's will more than he is to grant our request; and therefore if we would not have God turn away his ear from our prayers, we should not turn away our ears from hearing his law and counsel: John 9:31, 'Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.' It is a general maxim, Those which were ready to deprave Christ's actions were possessed of the truth of this: 'If any man worship him, and do his will, him he heareth,' John 9:31. It is not enough to keep up a form of worshipping, but we must be tender of his will; that is the way to get a gracious answer. Thus as we pray we are bound.

2. As God's children, so we must do his will: Mal. 1:6, 'If I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?' Relations to God are not bare titles and grounds, whereby we may expect favour from God; but they carry in their bosom obligations to duty on our part. Many will give God good words and fair titles, but

there is no care had of complying with his will. Nay, your owning that relation will aggravate your sin, and be a witness against you. You owned me your father, and have not done my will. So Mat. 12:50, 'Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.' These may be sure of a comfortable relation to God, and that God will own them in that claim, when they make it their business to do his will; otherwise you reproach God rather than worship him. When you do your own will, and call God Father, you lay the devil's brats at his door; you pretend to God, and take his name upon you; therefore those that say, 'Our Father,' must also say, 'Thy will be done.'

3. Those that would have respect to God's glory must do his will. This is the honour of God, when you are at his command. God gloried in Abraham; rather Cyrus than Abraham is there meant, as the context shows: see Isa. 46:11. Isa. 41:2, 'The man from the east, whom I have called to my foot.' When you are at his beck, ready to go step by step with God, as God leads you, you are ready to follow. It was the honour of the centurion that had his soldiers at such a command, that 'when he said to one, Go, he went; and to another, Come, and he came,' Mat. 8. So it is God's honour, when he can bid you do nothing but you are ready to obey, though with the greatest hazard and loss of all.

4. Our subjection to his kingdom. God stands upon his authority. What is a king without obedience? Christ is never received as king but where his will is obeyed, otherwise we mock him with an empty title. The high priest's servants said, 'Hail, King of the Jews,' in mockage; thus it is to own him as king, when we will not yield obedience. Then do we desire that his kingdom may come indeed and in power, when we resolve to do his will, to love as God will have us, and hate, fear, and hope as God will: Ps. 143:10, 'Thou art my God; teach me to do thy will.' If you own God as sovereign, you must be in subjection to his will. Thus this prayer will yield us arguments, as we own him as a father, as we profess respect to his glory and kingdom.

Secondly, I shall bring other arguments to persuade this, to make conscience of God's will.

1. The example of Christ Jesus, who wholly yielded up himself to the will of God; and wilt thou stand upon thy terms? John 5:30, 'I seek not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.' Christ did not seek to please his human, his own natural will, but the will of his Father. This is true religion, to be like him whom we worship. Now, we are never like Christ until we make doing of God's will to be the great business of our lives. Wherefore doth he come into the world? He tells you; to do his Father's will: Luke 2:49, 'Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?' This was his sole employment; so it should be ours, if we have the same mind which Christ had.

2. Consider God's right. We are not at our own dispose, but at the Lord's use. God hath a right in us, as he created us. The perfection of everything lieth in fulfilling the Creator's will, for that is the end wherefore they were made. The creatures 'are all thy servants, and continue this day according to thine ordinances,' Ps. 119:91. We owe our being, and all we have, from him. We see among men dependence begets observance; a man that lives upon another will be careful to please him. Thou holdest all by the indulgence and bounty of God, therefore it should be thy study to do his will. Jesus Christ hath bought thee: 1 Cor. 6:20, 'Glorify the Lord in your souls and bodies, which are God's.' That is God's which he hath bought. A servant that was bought, when men were sold for slaves, he was his master's money; so his strength, time, service belonged to his master. We are God's, because he hath bought us, therefore we cannot live as we will; for this is the property of a servant, that he cannot live as he will. Again, as God hath begotten us anew, regenerated us, what is the aim of his grace? 'That we should no longer live in the flesh, to the lust of men, but to the will of God,' 1 Pet. 4:2. It is the aim of grace to cure the disorders of the will, and to bring us to a stricter bond of duty and service to God. And indeed if grace hath had its fruit and power upon you, you will give up yourselves to God. Cant. 7:10, 'I am my beloved's.' You are your beloved's, to be used by him

as he pleaseth. So that unless you will retract your vows, you will make conscience of doing the will of God, for he hath a manifest right in you.

3. Consider our own incapacity. There is great reason why our wills should be given up to the will of God, because we are not able to manage them ourselves. By the law of nations, fools and madmen must have a guardian; they have lost the dominion and power over themselves, they are to be ruled by another, they are slaves by nature, that must be guided by another: Tit. 3:3. We are all by nature fools, and it is the greatest mischief that can be to be left to our own wills; and therefore, when God requireth the resignation of our wills, it is but as the taking of a sword out of a madman's hand, which will be the cause of his own mischief and ruin. *Nemo læditur nisi a seipso*,—'No man is hurt by any but himself, though he may be troubled by others.' Now, since we cannot manage our own will, it is fit we should have a guardian; and who is more wise than God to govern us? A merchant, though he owns the ship, and hath stored it with goods, yet because he hath no skill in the art of navigation, he suffereth the pilot to guide it. Certainly we shall but shipwreck ourselves unless we give up ourselves to be guided by the Spirit of God according to his will.

4. The benefit that accrueth to us by doing his will—we shall have his favour here and his glory hereafter. His favour here, which is that which endeareth us to God: Acts 13:22, 'I have found a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.' These are men after God's own heart, that do his will. And though we have great infirmities, yet because we are bent to do his will, they will be passed over; as David had his infirmities, yet because it was in his heart to do the will of God, therefore this is a man after mine own heart. And you shall have the glory of God hereafter: 1 John 2:17, 'The world passeth away and the lusts thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.' Those things that our wills carry us to they perish. The inclination of our heart carrieth us to the world, riches, honours, pleasures; but the will of God carrieth us to an everlasting estate.

'The world passeth away, and the lusts thereof.' There will a time come when those things we will, and are so strongly addicted to and lust for, will be gone—we shall have no relish, no savour in them, no appetite to them. When men are leaving the world, then they cry out how the world hath deceived them; but now 'he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.' Never any repented of doing the will of God; this will stick by us to all eternity, and bring us to everlasting happiness.

Use 1. To show how far they are from any sincere respect to God, that upon the least occasion transgress his will, and break through bonds and restraints God hath set to them. The heart is never right but when it lieth under the awe of a command. Many will fear a punishment; but it is said, Prov. 13:13, 'He that feareth the commandment:' if the commandment stands in his way he dares not break through, it is more than a hedge of thorns, or if lions stood in the way. But on the other side, when men make no bones of a commandment, when they will 'transgress for a pair of shoes' (as the prophet saith), when every small temptation is enough to draw them off from God, it showeth how little sincere respect they have to God.

Use 2. It serves to press us to a more tender regard to the will of God. To this end consider these motives:—

1. His absolute authority to command: 1 Tim. 6:15, 'Who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;' his will is enough—I am the Lord, you shall do thus and thus.

2. Consider the equity of what he hath commanded: Rom. 7:12, 'The commandment is holy, and just, and good.' Nothing God commandeth but what is agreeable to his own nature, and what is suited to our benefit. It is no burden to live justly, soberly, and holily in communion with God; it is not a burden, but a great advantage. The yoke of Christ is a bountiful yoke. Our service and duty hath its own reward in the very mouth and bosom of it. It is no great wrong to us to govern our affections, to live soberly, chastely, and in the

exercise of holy services; here is nothing but what raiseth and sublimates the nature of man. If the commandment of God had been to offer our children in sacrifice, or any of those barbarities which were practised among the Gentiles, yet this had been enough, 'I am the Lord;' but when he hath given such holy and good commands, which makes you live more like men, like reasonable creatures, you should be tender of the Lord's will.

3. To be given up to our own will is a great judgment. When the Lord hath a mind to destroy a people, he gives them up to their own will: Ps. 81:12, 'Israel would none of me; so I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust; and they walked in their own counsels.' It is the greatest judgment which can be laid upon any creature, that he may have his own will. A man may be given up to Satan, yet recover: 1 Cor. 5:5, 'Deliver such an one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.' He may be given up to Satan for his exercise and trial; but when he is given up to himself, to the sway of his own heart, to be besotted with his own counsels, and to have his own lusts, what a heavy judgment is this! When Balaam would not be satisfied, God said to him, 'Go,' Num. 22:35. He had his answer before, again and again, but he would be inquiring still; 'Go,' and that was his punishment.

4. It is the truest liberty to be subject to the will of God. Then, 'when the Son of God shall make you free, you shall be free indeed,' John 8:36. How doth the Son of God make us free? Not from duty, but for duty. He that lieth under the dominion and power of any sin is a very slave. But then are we free indeed, when we are loosed, not from a due subjection to God, but from the power of the devil. It is not liberty to be free to do what we please, good or evil; but the more determined we are to good, the more freedom—for that is a liberty which comes nearest to the liberty of God, who is a most free agent and yet cannot sin. Such a liberty is in God, Christ, and the angels in heaven: surely they do not live a slavish life that are ever praising and lauding of God. It will be the greatest pleasure in the issue to deny our own will and do the will of God. The more we are enlarged

for this, the greater is our happiness. Then we have the happiness of the spirits of just men. None among men have greater happiness than glorified saints, yet none have less of their own will. Why should we account that a bondage which is part of our happiness? In heaven glorified spirits there are not complaining of any burden, yet they have no will of their own, but they will and nill as God doth.

5. He that hath a heart bent to do the will of God, he hath the clearest knowledge of the mind of God: John 7:17, 'He that will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.' It is not the sharpness of parts that pierceth into a truth, especially into a controverted truth, when the dust of contention is raised; but he that is most close in walking with God, it is he that knoweth his mind. A blunt iron, when hot and in the fire, will pierce deeper into an inch board than a sharper tool that is cold; so a man that hath pure affections for God, a heart to do the will of God, pierceth deeper many times into controverted truth, and sees more of the mind of God in that truth than a man of parts doth. There are many mistakes about the will of God. Now make conscience of obedience, do not consult with the interest of your own private passions, and then you shall know the mind of God. It is just with God to withhold the light from them that consult with their lusts and interests and carnal humours, for these blind the mind, and only like and dislike things as they shall relish with their lusts.

6. God will surely punish the violation of his will. This implieth two things:—

[1.] That God takes notice of it; he observes whether his will be done, yea or no. The Rechabites were tender of the commandment of their dead father, who could not take cognizance of their actions; but it was the will of their father, and they would keep to the will of the dead: Jer. 35:14. But now the Lord seeth whether his will be kept, yea or no: Prov. 15:3, 'The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.' Wherever you are, God is with you. As the prophet said to Gehazi, 'Went not mine heart with thee?' 2 Kings



5:26, meaning his prophetic spirit. The Lord's Spirit goeth along with us wherever we go, he observes what we do. When Jesus Christ was in the throng, he saith, 'Who is it that toucheth me?' He was sensible virtue passed out from him when one touched him by faith. So in the throng of creatures we depend upon God—he knows what virtue goeth out to preserve thee and me in being. These are fit instances to ingenerate in our minds a sense of God's omniscience.

[2.] He will severely punish: James 4:12, 'There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy.' There are many lawgivers in the world, that have power of life and death, but that is only of life temporal; but there is one Lawgiver that can reward with eternal life, and punish with eternal death. So God truly and properly hath the power of life and death. Therefore, since he can punish so severely, we should not stand out against God's will. Many times the doing God's will is irksome to flesh and blood, but remember hell will be worse. When we press men to faith, repentance, and new obedience, and tell them this is the will of God concerning you, that you do believe in Christ, walk holily and humbly with God, what saith the man? Shall I mope myself, and sit mourning in a corner, and spend my life in a dark melancholy manner, in going from one duty to another? This is far better than to sit howling under the wrath of God for evermore.

For directions. If you would do the will of God, then—

1. There must be some solemn time of resigning and giving up thy will to him. Naturally we are averse. Now, whosoever is brought unto God, he comes and lays down the weapons of his defiance at God's feet. God hath a right to us, and he will have this right confirmed by our grant and consent: Rom. 12:1, 'I beseech you by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.' There cannot be a more acceptable sacrifice to God than the resignation of our own will to him: See how Paul comes and layeth down the buckler, when God had him under: Acts 9:6, 'And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' There will be a time when you will solemnly give up the keys of

your own hearts to God, and bid him come and enter. Paul, that now did nothing but threaten and breathe out terror to the children of God, when God had humbled him, then he lies at God's feet. When you are truly humbled, you will desire God to come and take possession of your hearts, and resolve to come under his yoke: Mat. 11:28, 'Take my yoke upon you, and you shall find rest for your souls.' Christ will force it upon none. In the matrimonial contract, consent is not to be forced: 'Take my yoke.'

2. When you give up yourselves to God, it must be without bounds and reservations: 'That ye may stand perfect and complete in the will of God,' Col. 4:3. That was his prayer for them: and, Acts 13:22, 'I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he shall fulfil all my will.' We should so perfectly obey, as if we had no will of our own, not reserving a property in anything. Our thoughts are not our own to dispose, nor our desires nor delights, but as God will. The least sin reserved is a pledge of the devil's interest and right in us. And therefore give up all to God, resign up yourselves wholly to him, as remembering that every motion, every thought, every affection, is under a rule, and in every action we should say, Will God have this to be done, yea or no?

3. There are some special things concerning which God hath more expressly signified his will and given special charge, and these we should make greatest conscience of, how distasteful soever they be to flesh and blood, or prejudicial to our own interest. For instance, concerning repentance and turning from sin, Ezek. 33:11, you have God's oath that he delights in it: 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live.' And God 'would not have any to perish, but that all should come to repentance,' 2 Pet. 3:9. This is the will of God; he hath told you what a great deal of pleasure he takes in repentance, that you should come and mourn over your sins, and bewail your stragglings. When a profane Esau knew what his father desired, he takes his bow to go and kill venison; when we know anything more pleasing to God, we should do it. And then he takes pleasure also in

the work of faith, believing in Christ: John 6:29, 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent: and 1 John 3:23, 'This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.' Therefore we should be much in the work of faith, and in receiving Christ, that we may accomplish the good pleasure of God in us. It is very pleasing to God we should thus repent, believe, and return to him. The very first motion, how welcome is it to the Lord! Ps. 32:5, 'I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.' So Luke 15:20: the father ran to meet him when the prodigal thought of returning. So that you should live a sanctified life: 1 Thes. 4:3, 'This is the will of God, even your sanctification.' That you should walk holily, God bath expressly declared his will. Then for duties of relations, God takes a great deal of pleasure in obedience to magistrates, parents, masters: 1 Pet 2:15, 'For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.' Then, that we should observe providences, ever be in a thankful frame: 1 Thes. 5:18, 'In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God, in Christ Jesus, concerning you.' It is a great rebellion and disobedience not to obey God's solemn charge.

4. We should be willing to obey God, whatever it cost us. The least sin is not to be committed to avoid the greatest trouble. You would think it were a small sin for Moses to tarry in Pharaoh's court, where he might be helpful to the people of God, yet he 'chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season,' Heb. 11:25.

5. For the greatest good that possibly can come of it, we should not cross God's revealed will. Many times this is a snare. Men think to be justified by their good intentions. We must not do evil that good may come thereof: Rom. 3:8. If one lie could save the world, we were not to do it, for the least evil is not to be done contrary to God's will, though the greatest good come of it.

Use 3. Examine how you stand affected to God's will. This is very needful, because—

1. There be many mistakes about it.

2. Hereby we may discern whether we are thus entirely affected with the Lord's will.

Men flatter themselves with a pretence of obedience, and cry, 'Lord, Lord,' but do not do his will. They give God good words, but do not break out into an actual contest; as those wretches, Jer. 18:12, 'We will every one do the imagination of his evil heart:' and Jer. 44:17, 'We will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth.' There are many things wherein we are apt to mistake. As,

[1.] We pretend to do God's will in general, but when it comes to particulars we stick at it. Usually, when we take up duty by the lump, it doth not exasperate opposite propensions and inclinations. This is our great fault, we please and flatter ourselves with notions and abstract conceits. What say you to this will of God concerning you in particular? How forward were the Israelites! Oh, they would do the whole will of God; they run away with the general notion. Yea, but saith Joshua, chap. 24:19, 'Ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is an holy God, he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.' We will do the will of God in general, but when it comes to cross our lusts and private inclinations, these make us grudge at it, and shrink back again.

[2.] Some commend and approve the will of God, and talk of it, but do not practise it. It is here, 'Thy will be done;' it is not, Let it be talked of, spoken and conferred of by me, but done. And it is not giving good words. You know the parable of the two sons: One said, 'I will not, and did;' the other, 'I go, sir, and went not,' Mat. 21:29, 30. Where Christ prefers the open sinner before the hypocrite, that is talking of God's will, and seems at a distance to be like the carbuncle, all of a fire, but touch him, he is key-cold. When we are approving

much of the will of God in our judgments, and commending of it, and do it not, this is in effect to say, I know what my Father commands me, but I will do as I list.

[3.] Another deceit about the will of God is this: For the present, while we are in a good humour, when our lusts lie low, when the heart is warm under the impulsions of a present conviction or persuasion, men have high thoughts of doing the will of God: Deut. 5:27, 'Speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; we will hear it, and do it.' There are several acts of our wills; there is consent, choice, intention, and prosecution. It is not enough to consent: these things may be extorted from us by moral persuasion; but there must be a serious choice, an invincible resolution, such an intention as is prosecuted with all manner of industry and serious endeavours, whatever disappointments we meet with from God and men. Then this intention or invincible resolution is such as will not be broken by difficulties, weakened by loss of interest, not discouraged by the many disappointments we meet with, even in our waiting upon God.

[4.] We have many times a seeming awe upon the conscience, and so are urged to do God's will, yet the heart is averse from God all the while; therefore they strive to bring God's will and theirs together, to compromise the difference. A notable instance of this you have in Balaam. He had a message sent to him, and a great bribe. Now he had a carnal heart, which ran out upon the wages of unrighteousness, and, therefore, though he knew the people of Israel were blessed of the Lord, yet first he will go to God: Num. 22:8, 'Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the Lord shall speak unto me.' He is very tender, he durst not go with them, unless the Lord say, Go. But God denies him: ver. 12, 'Thou shalt not go with them.' What then? The Lord refuseth to give him leave. Then Balak sends more honourable messengers, and propounds rewards again. Then his carnal will is for God: ver. 18, Balaam answered, 'If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more.' Was not this spoken with an

honest mind, think you? This was the dictate of his conscience; not for a houseful of gold durst he go against God the Lord. Yet you shall find it was a sore temptation to him, for he goes again to God: ver. 19, 'Tarry here this night, that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more.' Then saith God, Go, when he saw his heart was set for the wages of unrighteousness. There was a reluctancy in his conscience, he durst not go, therefore he would fain bring the will of God to his will. In many cases we are thus divided between our own affections and God's will, between our interests and the will of God.

It is a case often falls out, when there is a quarrel between conviction and corruption. When light is active and strong in conscience, men dare not go against the apparent will of God, yet their hearts hang another way. We have one carnal affection or other, and then all our business is to bring God's will and ours together; and how to disguise and palliate the matter, that with greatest leave to conscience we may seem to contradict the will of God.

[5.] A fifth deceit about the will of God, and that is, a wish that we were brought under the power of it, as he that stretched himself upon his bed, and said, Oh, that this were to labour! Many men have a velleity, a languid and incomplete will; they have a wish, but not a volition, not a serious desire; and sometimes they may draw it out to a cold prayer that God would make them better. It is just like a man that should lie down and complain, Oh, that I were at such a place! and never travel. Would I had performed such a task! yet puts not his hand to the work. Men would, but they will not, set themselves in good earnest to get the grace they wish for, there is not striving to accomplish their will. A chapman no doubt would have the wares, it is like he hath a cold wish, but will not come to the price; I will buy it whatever it cost me. They have not those active and industrious resolutions, such a strong and serious bent of heart towards God, but only a few wishes.

[6.] Halving the will of God; as in many cases many will do part of the will of God, but not all, they come not fully up to the mind of

God. For instance, they will take notice of some great commandment, but not of the least. We cannot dispense with ourselves in the least: Mat. 5:19, 'Whosoever shall break one of the least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.' We are apt to say 'It is but a little one, and my soul shall live.' No sin is little which is committed against a great God. It argueth more wickedness to break with God for a trifle and a very small matter, it argueth more corruption; as a little force will make a heavy body move downward. Again, in another ease, the ceremonialist stands upon some lesser things; as the Jews, John 18:28, 'would not go into the judgment-hall lest they should be defiled,' yet they could seek the life of the Lord of glory. They are not brought under the dominion of the Lord's grace, faith, repentance, holiness, and the weightier things of the law; these are things they regard not. This is hypocrisy. Like one that comes into a shop to buy a pennyworth and steals a pound's worth; so they are punctual in lesser things, that they may make bold with God in greater. Again, some will do the will of God in public, where they may be observed; but not in private, and when alone. They make a fair show in the world, but in their families their converse is more loose and careless: Ps. 101:2, 'I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.' A man that is truly holy will show it at home and abroad, in his closet and secret retirements, everywhere he makes conscience of the will of God. Many times we strain ourselves and put forth our gifts in public; God will be served with our utmost in secret also; and the will of God is expressed concerning the inward as well as the outward man, and we must make conscience of both: Isa. 55:7, 'Let the wicked man forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts,' &c. Not only make conscience of our way, our outward course, but of our thoughts as well as our actions, for the thoughts fall under a law. So some will make conscience of the first-table duties, and neglect the second; and some of the second, and neglect the first. Some are very punctual in dealing with men, but neglectful of God: Rom. 1:18, 'The wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.' Both tables are owned from heaven. Some will not wrong their neighbour of a

farthing, but stick not to rob God of all that faith, fear, love, trust, worship, that is due to him. Many that will not defile their bodies with promiscuous copulation, yet are adulterers and adulteresses to God, their hearts straggling from God, doting upon the creature to the wrong of God. Many condemn the rebellion of Absalom, and rise up against their heavenly Father, and are murderers, that strike at the being of God. They are tender of wronging the reputation of men, yet dishonour God, and are never troubled. So, on the other side, others fear and worship, but in their dealings are very unconscionable; they will not swear an oath, but are very uncharitable, censuring their brethren without pity and remorse. This is the fashion of the world, to be in with one duty and out with another.

[7.] A loathness to know the will of God, to search and inquire into it, argueth deceit, and that we are loath to come under the power of it. Some men shrewdly suspect it is true, but are loath to inquire into it: John 3:20, 'Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.' They have a shrewd guess about the ways of God, but will not search to be satisfied: 2 Pet. 3:5, 'They are willingly ignorant.' As Tertullian saith of the heathens, they would not search into the Christian religion, because they had a mind to hate it; so these are loath to inquire further into the will of God. There is a great deal of deceit in it; it shows we are afraid to come too near a suspected truth. Again, now and then when lusts are under some restraint, men seem to lie much under the will of God. A horse that is kept low is easily ruled by the rider, but when fed high he grows headstrong. Many times in a mean condition a man seems to make conscience of doing the will of God; but when prosperous, he waxeth wanton and disobedient: Jer. 5:5, 'I will get me to the great men, but these have altogether broken the yoke and burst the bonds.'

So that there are a great many mistakes about doing the will of God, therefore you had need search.



Secondly, How shall we know we are rightly affected with the will of God?

[1.] When God's will is reason enough for what he hath required of us; when a man is so sensible of God's will that this is instead of all reasons. Obedience is never right but when it is done upon the mere sight of God's will. This is enough to a gracious heart, that this is the will of God, 1 Pet. 2:15, 1 Thes. 5:18, though the duty be never so cross to our own desires and interests. This is to obey the commandment for the commandment's sake, without any other reason or inducement. There is, indeed, *ratio formalis* and *ratio motiva*, the formal reasons of obedience and the motives of obedience. The formal reason of obedience is the sight of God's will, the motives to obedience are rewards and a dread of punishment. The formal reason is God's will; and this is pure obedience, to do what God wills because God wills it.

[2.] When a man is very inquisitive to know what is the will of his heavenly Father. When he doth not only practise what he knows, but searcheth that he may know more: Rom. 12:2, 'That ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God;' and, Eph. 5:17, 'Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.' When a man is desirous to know the whole will of God, not for curiosity but for practice, that he might do it. When the understanding hath a confused notion of a thing they will not know it distinctly, but when men search, and are willing to find out the counsel of God in all things that they may come up to it, this is a sign the heart is rightly affected to the will of God.

[3.] Hereby may you know your affection to God's will, by keeping yourselves from your sins: Ps. 18:23, 'I was upright before him, and kept myself from mine iniquity.' There is an iniquity that we may call ours, upon which the will is most passionately addicted; be it worldliness, sensuality, inordinate desire of reputation and respect with men. Now, when we are plucking out our right eye, and cutting off our right hand, Mat. 5:29—when we are mortifying and subduing

our lusts—when we can deny ourselves in those things to which the heart is most wedded, that is a sign of compliance with the will of God.

The second point.

Doct. 2. That it is the Lord which giveth to will and to do those things which are pleasing in his sight.

Therefore we ask it of him, 'Thy will be done,'—that is, as I explained it, we ask of him a heart, skill, and strength to do his holy will.

Here I shall tell you:—

1. What I mean by the point.
2. Give you the proof of it.

I. What I mean by the point:—

1. I mean thus, that in the work of conversion God doth all: Ezek. 11:19, 'I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and I will give them an heart of flesh.' The benefit of a tender sanctified heart is God's gift: Ezek. 36:26, 27, 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh, and I will cause you to walk in my statutes.' Mark, a new heart—that is, another heart, a heart to understand, a heart to love, a heart to do the will of God, he gives it. He doth not only offer it, or prepare it, make way for it, but 'I will give you a heart of flesh.'

2. This is that I mean, that after conversion God still concurrerth. He doth not only give the habit of grace, but actual help in the work of obedience. 'He worketh all our works in us,' Isa. 26:12. His actual help is necessary to direct, quicken, strengthen, protect, and defend us. To direct us: Ps. 73:24, 'Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel, and

bring me to thy glory.' In our way to heaven, we need not only a rule and path, but a guide. The rule is the law of God, but the guide is the Spirit of God. To quicken and excite us by effectual motions: a drowsiness and a deadness is apt to creep upon our hearts, and we see in the same duty it is a hard matter to keep up the same frame of spirit, the same vigour of affection, life, and warmth; and therefore we had need go to God often, as David: Ps. 119:37, 'Quicken thou me in thy way.' It is God which doth renew the vigour of the life of grace upon all occasions, when it begins to languish and droop. To corroborate and strengthen what we have received: Eph. 3:16, the apostle prays there that he would 'strengthen with might by his Spirit in the inner man;' and, 1 Pet. 5:10, 'Make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.' There are many words heaped up there to show how God is interested in maintaining and keeping afoot that which he hath planted in the soul. In protecting and defending them against the incursions and assaults of the devil, who always lieth in wait to surprise the soul, to withdraw us from God. The regenerate are not only escaped out of his clutches, but are advanced and appointed to be Satan's judges, which an envious and proud spirit cannot endure; therefore he maligns, assaults, and besiegeth them with temptations daily. Now, it is God that defends: John 17:11, 'Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me;' by thy name—that is, by thy power.

3. God must not only help us in the general, and upon weighty occasions, but in every act, from the beginning of the spiritual life to the end. It is not enough to say that the first principles and motions are of God, but the flowing forth of all motions and actions, according to those principles: Phil. 2:13, 'It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.' God not only gives the desire and purpose, but he gives grace to the good which we will and purpose to do. These two are distinct; and we may have assistance in one kind and not in another; willing and doing, I mean, are different. Paul saith, Rom. 7:18: 'To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.' To will is more than to think; and to exert, and put forth our will into action, it is more than

both; and in all we need God's help. We cannot think a good thought, nor conceive a holy purpose, much less perform a good action, without God, so that every moment we need renewed strength. As long as the work of grace is powerful and renewed in us, so long we are kept in a warm and healthful frame; but we grow vain, loose, earthly, carnal again, and off from God, when this heat and warmth of grace is withdrawn; and therefore God still concurrereth in the whole business of our obedience to him.

II. Having showed what I mean, and how far God is interested in this work, what need we have to desire we may do his will; let us prove it. And because it is a weighty point, I shall prove it by parts.

1. As to the first grace, that it is God alone which frames our hearts to the obedience of his will.

2. That when we are thus framed by grace, after conversion, it is God still concurs, and must help us to do his will.

First, As to the first grace, I shall prove that it is God alone, by the power of his own Spirit, which frames our hearts to the obedience of his will. This will appear by considering:—

(1.) What man is by nature.

(2.) The words by which our cure is expressed, and the way God takes to put us into a course of obedience.

(3.) What the scripture speaks as to the utter impotency of man, to the framing of his heart to the obedience of God's will.

(1.) First, This will appear by those notions or emphatical terms by which the scripture doth set forth man's condition before God works upon him. He is one that is 'born in sin:' Ps. 51:5, 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me;' and things natural are not easily altered. And as he is born in sin, so he is greedy of sin: Job 15:16, 'He drinketh in iniquity like water;' it noteth

a vehement propension, as greedy to sin as a thirsty man to drink. Thirst is the most implacable appetite, hunger is far better borne. It is the constant frame of his heart: Gen. 6:5, 'Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually.' Oh, how many aggravating and increasing circumstances are there named. There is a mint that is always at work; the mind is coining evil thoughts, and the heart evil desires and carnal motions; and the memory is the closet and storehouse where they are lodged and kept. This is the case of man, born in sin, greedy and thirsty of sin, and one whose thoughts are evil continually.

But may not a man be reclaimed? Oh no, for he hath a heart of stone: Ezek. 36:26, 'I will take away the heart of stone.' Every man that comes to be converted hath a heart of stone; and what is that? insensible, inflexible. Insensible, he hath no feeling of his condition; inflexible, he will not be moved and wrought upon by the word, and the Spirit, and providence. How many means are wasted upon him, and to no purpose! And Jer. 17:9, 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?' It invents all kinds of shifts and excuses to elude God, or rather to cheat itself. When God comes to work upon man, it slides away from under his hand, as if salvation itself should not save them. Yea, but is not the New Testament more favourable to man than the Old? Or, is not man grown better now there is so much of God's grace discovered? I answer, there is a perfect harmony between the Testaments: there he is styled 'a child of wrath by nature,' Eph. 2:3; the elect as well as others were so. There you will find him to be a 'servant of sin,' Rom. 6:17. Never such an imperious master as sin is, never such a willing servant as man is. Sin never leaves commanding, and we love to work, and therefore are at its beck. There you will find him to be represented as a man that hath a 'blind understanding,' and a 'hard heart,' and one that is 'averse from the life of God,' Eph. 4:18. There you will find him to be one that is an 'enemy to the law of God,' 'enmity' itself, Rom. 8:7; one that neither will nor 'can please God.' One that is blind, and knows not what to do: 2 Pet. 1:9, 'He that lacketh these things is blind,' and with such a blindness as is far

worse than bodily. A man that is blind in his bodily eyes, would think it to be a great happiness to have a fit guide: as in Acts 13:11, when Elymas was smitten blind, 'he sought about for somebody to lead him by the hand.' But he that is spiritually blind, cannot endure to have a guide; or if one would lead him, and direct him in the right way, he is angry. And as the scripture represents him as blind, so without strength: Rom. 5:9, 'Dead in trespasses and sins;' Eph. 2:5, yea, worse than dead; a dead man doth no more hurt, his evil dieth with him; but there is a life of resistance and rebellion against God that goeth along. I have spoken but little, yet put all together, and then it shows what a miserable wretched creature man is.

The scripture doth not speak this by chance, it is not an hyperbole used once or twice, but everywhere, where it speaks of this matter, it sets out man to be blind, hard, dead, obstinate, and averse from God. Certainly man contributes little to his own conversion, if the word of God sets him out everywhere to be such a one; he cannot hunger and thirst after Christ, that drinks in iniquity like water. Nothing in his nature to carry him to grace, who is altogether sinful.

If the scripture had only said that man had accustomed himself to sin, and was not born in sin: if it had said that man is very prone, and not greedy and thirsty in iniquity: if it had only said that man did often think evil, but not continually: if the scripture had said that man was somewhat obstinate, but not a stone, an adamant, and like the nether mill-stone: that he had been indifferent to God and the world, God and the flesh, and not a professed enemy: that he had been a captive of sin, and not a servant of sin: that man had been weak and not dead: only a neuter and not a rebel: then there might have been something in man; and the work of conversion and reducing to God had not been so great. But the scripture saith the quite contrary, that man is all this and much more, therefore this clears it up, that his conversion is not in himself, but it is God must work this good work upon him, or else he can never be renewed.

(2.) Secondly, Let us consider the terms how the cure is wrought. Certainly to remedy so great an evil, requireth an omnipotent, an almighty power. Therefore see how conversion is described in scripture, sometimes by enlightening the mind: Eph. 1:18, 'The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling,' &c. Man, the best creature on this side heaven, is stark blind in the things of God. If he should go to see with the light of nature, how would he grope at noon-day! If he should put on the spectacles of art he will but be little better. Nay, let him take further the glass of the word, yet how blind in a spiritual sense. Something there must be done upon the faculty; the object must not only be revealed, but the eye must be enlightened. There are thick scales upon his eye, as Paul had in his blindness, that must be taken off, before he can see into the things of God.

But is this all, enlightening the eye? No; the scripture describeth this work of God by opening of the heart: Acts 16:14, 'God opened the heart of Lydia, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.' God doth not only knock at the heart—that he doth by his word, and by the external means—but he openeth the heart; he must open the door before he can come in, enter, and take possession.

As to the means, God trieth key after key, one providence after another. As when a man would open a door, he knows not what key will fit the lock, he trieth key after key; so God trieth one cross, one affliction after another, one sermon, one message after another; but until he puts his fingers upon the hole of the lock, we shall not open.

But these words are not emphatical enough, therefore it is expressed by a regeneration: John 3:3, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Mark, they must not only be reformed, but must be regenerated and born again.

Now, because this is an ordinary work which falleth out in the course of causes, therefore there is a more solemn notion used, it is expressed by a resurrection: Eph. 2:5, 'He hath raised you up

together with Christ.' Yea, but that which hath been may be again, therefore it is expressed not only by a resurrection, but by a creation: Eph. 2:10, 'We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works:' 2 Cor. 4:6, 'He that commandeth the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts.' And we are called new creatures. And higher than this, it is expressed not only by a creation, but by a victory and overcoming. It is resembled by beating and binding of the strong man, and rescuing and taking away his prey from him: Luke 11:21, 22; 1 John 4:4. 'By bringing into captivity every proud thought to the obedience of Christ,' 2 Cor. 10:5.

These expressions the scripture useth to set out the mystery of grace, the power of God that worketh in us. What is wanting in one is supplied in another.

(3.) The third thing I shall produce; That the scripture doth expressly deny any power in man to convert himself to God: 1 Cor. 2:14, 'The natural man cannot know the things of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned;' and as he cannot know, so he cannot obey: Rom. 8:7, 'The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be; and they cannot please God:' ver. 8. And they cannot come to Christ: John 6:44, 'No man can come to me except the Father draw him.' And they cannot do anything without Christ, John 15:15; and they cannot think a good thought, 2 Cor. 3:5; and they cannot bring forth good fruit, Mat. 7:18; and they cannot speak a good word, Mat. 12:34; and they cannot believe, John 12:39; and they cannot do that which is good, Jer. 13:23, 'Ye that are accustomed to do evil, cannot do good.' From whence doth all this deficiency in them arise? Partly from nature, partly from custom. Besides the natural there is a customary and habitual depravation. By nature we are averse from God, and by custom we are more confirmed in this evil aversation from God. Man, by lying long in his unregeneracy, hath his averseness from God increased and strengthened upon him. Naturally we are in love with the world, and have declined God and the things of God. Consider him in his naturals, he 'cannot know the things of the



Spirit:' 1 Cor. 2:14. And the carnal mind cannot be subject to the law of God, being at enmity against him, Rom. 8:7. There are other places express this cannot, which derive it from custom; they are become slaves to their lusts, and their sins have gotten such a hand over them that they know not how to break them off: Jer. 13:23, 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.' And so where it is said: John 12:39, 'They could not believe.' Naturally man is unable; but that place speaks of another degree of impossibility through contracted obstinacy and judicial obduration. Thus you see man is wholly impotent as to this work, and it is the Lord alone must do it.

Object. But here is an objection. If it be so that man hath such an utter impotency to convert himself to God, how can it stand with the mercy of God, as the creator of mankind, to require the debt of obedience from him that is not able to pay? How can it stand with the justice of God to punish him with eternal death, for the neglect of that which he is not able to do? and how can it stand with the wisdom of the supreme lawgiver, to exhort him by promises and threatenings, who hath no power to do what he is exhorted to do?

I answer:—

1. As to the first; how can it stand with the mercy of God to require the debt of obedience from him that is not able to pay? God hath not lost his right, though man hath lost his power; their impotency doth not dissolve their obligation. A drunken servant is a servant still. It is against all reason a master should lose his right by the servant's default. A prodigal debtor hath nothing to pay, yet he is liable to be sued for the debt without any injustice. God contracted with us in Adam, and gave us a power which we lost by his fall; and therefore though our power be gone, yet God may demand his due to obey and please him; especially since this obedience God required of Adam, was not only due by covenant and positive law, but by immutable right and natural justice of man. Men think it harsh to suffer for

Adam's fault, to which they were not conscious and actually consenting.

Yea, but consider, every man will find an Adam in his own heart. The old man is there, we are still sinning away those relics of natural light in conscience, and those few moral inclinations which are left. There is a little ability and strength he hath as a man, and shall not God challenge the debt of obedience from a proud prodigal debtor, that is weakening and wasting himself more and more? We are proud, therefore God may exact it of us. We think we are able to obey and do his will, when we are weak; we are poor, yet think ourselves rich; therefore God may admonish us of our duty, demand his right to show our impotency and beggary, and that we may not pretend we were not called upon for what we owe. But man is not only a proud debtor, but we are prodigal debtors; those relics of conscience and moral and human inclinations, which escaped out of the ruins of the fall, we lose those things every day, and embezzle them away by the service of sin. Therefore it standeth fully with the clemency of God, as creator of mankind, to require the debt of him that wastes that little stock he hath.

2. As to the other part, how it can stand with the justice of God to punish him with eternal death, for the neglect of that he cannot do. I answer: Besides natural impotency, there is voluntary. We must not consider man merely as impotent to good, but as delighting in evil, as loving it with all his heart. This cannot indeed is a will not, it is a voluntary impotence. 'You will not come to me, that ye might have life:' John 5:40. Our impotency lies in our obstinacy. So man is left without excuse, because we freely refuse the grace offered, and by continuing in sin we increase our bondage, and draw an inveterate custom upon ourselves, and so grow every day more obstinate against God.

3. As to the last, how can it stand with the wisdom of God to exhort him with promises and threatenings, that hath no power to do that which he is exhorted to?

I answer: These exhortations, they carry their own blessing with them to those to whom God means them for good. As God's creating word carried with it its power: 'Be there light, and there was light;' and as Christ's word carried forth his power, it was not in vain to say, 'Lazarus, come forth,' though he was dead, and could not hear it; there was a mighty power went with the word; so there is power goes along with the exhortations of the gospel, to work grace in the hearts of those to whom God intends it as a blessing.

Yea, but if this be for the elect's sake only, and to convey that power to them, to what use doth it stand to others? If the elect did dwell alone, and were a distinct community among themselves, the objection were plausible; but they are hidden among others: therefore reprobates are called obiter, by the by, as others are called according to purpose; and therefore they have the benefit of the common call and the common offer. The world stands for the elect's sake, yet others have the benefit of the world and worldly things. So the word is preached for the elect's sake, yet others have the benefit of an external call. The sun shines, though blind men see it not. The rain falls upon rocks and mountains, as well as fruitful valleys; so God may suffer these exhortations to light upon wicked men. And again, as to them, it is for their conviction; it is to bridle their corruptions; it is at least a means to civilise them, and keep them from growing worse: therefore such kind of doctrines and persuasions restrain their wickedness. Therefore it stands well enough with the wisdom of the lawgiver to call upon men, and invite them with promises and threatenings, to repentance.

Therefore now let me show how doth God reduce and frame our hearts to the obedience of his will. The ways God useth are of two sorts, moral and real.

[1.] God works morally, so as to preserve man's nature, and the principles thereof; therefore he works by sweet inclination, not with violence. So he comes with blandishments and comfortable words: Hosea 2:14, 'I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and

speak comfortably unto her.' So, Gen. 9:27, 'The Lord shall persuade Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem.' By fair and kindly words, he draweth on men to the liking of the gospel. He offereth no violence to our natural principles, but to our corruptions. God doth not make the will to be no will, but to be a good will; he restoreth the faculties to their right use and exercise; he layeth forth the beauty and excellency of his grace, and a glorious estate he sets before our eyes, and so outbids temptation, and draweth our hearts to himself. And God not only doth work suitably to our general nature, as we are reasonable creatures, but suitably to the particular frame of the heart. Some are of a stout and stubborn temper, and will not be subdued by milder means and motives; therefore God breaks them with fears and terrors, and with a spirit of conviction; and others, he draws them on by love, and by a gentle application.

That God hath respect to men's particular tempers was figured in those extraordinary ways of appearance and manifestation; they are fitted according to the state of men. To Moses, that was a shepherd, and was acquainted with bushes, God appears in a bush of fire; and to the wise men, that were skilled in the motions of the heavenly bodies, he appears in a star; and to Peter, that was a fisherman, he appears to him, and shows his power first in the draught of fishes, So still these are pledges of this kind of dispensation: that God will work suitably, not only to our general nature as men, but to our particular state and temper. Yea, yet further, to set on this moral way of working, there is a fit subordination of the circumstances of providence. God 'takes the wild asses in their month;' and he hath his season wherein to surprise the hearts of sinners: Prov. 25:11, 'A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.' God comes in in a fit season; as when a soul is humbled by some sudden accident; as one was converted by seeing a man fall down dead suddenly by him. God ordereth some providences to work, and awaken the hearts of men; or else by some great affliction: Hos. 2:14, 'I will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.' God finds many a sinner in the briars, as Abraham found the lamb. Stubborn humours are then most broken. Metal in the furnace is capable of

any form. God may suit and dispose us so that he may come in in a fit season to the soul, or in terrors of conscience, when the heart is scourged with remorse for great sins. All this is God's moral work.

[2.] There is a real work, which goes along with this persuasion: there is an almighty power; for bare persuasion cannot make the blind to see, the dead to live, or open the heart of man, that is so desperately and obstinately wicked, until he puts his fingers upon the holes of the lock, until he begins to open the heart.

Concerning this real work, observe it is secret, yet thorough and prevailing, so as the effect doth follow, when God will convert. The exact manner of God's drawing is unknown. Austin calls it an inward, hidden, and unspeakable power, which God putteth forth together with the word. It is marvellous in our eyes; but he that knew how to create souls knows how to work upon them. This power, it is like the influences of the heavens, which so insinuate themselves with the operation of second causes, that they cannot be seen; so there is such a mighty power working in us, though we cannot tell how to express it. We cannot say there is no such power, because we do not know what it is.

And as this power is secret, so when this power is put forth it is prevailing: he works prevailingly, so as the effect must necessarily follow. The grace God gives to men, to convert them, it is not a power to be converted, repent, and believe, if they will; no, but he gives repentance, he gives faith, and works so as the effect shall succeed: he works efficaciously and determinately, so as to oppose all the resistance of the will, and accomplish his work.

That is the first branch.

Secondly, When we are thus framed by grace, after conversion God still concurrerth, and must help us to do his will. He doth not only give us the habit of grace, but actual help in the work of obedience: Isa. 26:12, 'Thou hast wrought all our works in us.'

But why is it that still the Lord worketh in us, both to will and to do, unto the last; and not only begins with us, but still keeps grace in his own hands, so as we shall have our supplies from heaven from day to day?

There are several reasons:—

[1.] Because it endeareth God to a gracious soul. The more visits we have from God, and the more he is mindful of us at every turn, the more is God endeared to us. In such a duty, there we met with comfort and enlargement, because God was there; that is noted and regarded, so that the Lord is rendered the more precious. The experiment we have of God in every duty doth the more make us prize his grace. As David, Ps. 119:93, 'I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me.' I shall never forget such a sermon, and such a prayer, because there I met with God. So in affliction, Rom. 5:3, 'Patience worketh experience;' or in such a conflict, we had such a support: this endeareth God to the soul. As mutual acts of kindness do maintain a friendship between man and man, so do these renewed acts of love, and of God's care and kindness over us, maintain a friendship between God and us.

[2.] It engageth us to a constant dependence upon God, and communion with him. It is dependence which maintains the commerce between heaven and earth. Now, if we did keep the stock ourselves, God and we should soon grow strangers. When the prodigal had his portion in his own hands, he goes out of his father's house: Luke 15. The throne of grace would lie neglected and unfrequented. If we did not stand in need of daily receivings, when would the Lord hear from us? And therefore, to oblige us to a constant dependence, God will keep the grace in his own hands, that ever we may have something to drive us to himself, some necessities upon us; for the throne of grace is for a time of need: Heb. 4:16.

[3.] This is that which keeps us humble, and that upon several considerations. All we have, it is by gift; and then what can we be

proud of? Not only the habits of grace themselves, but also those actual incitements which are necessary to draw them forth into act. So that of all our excellencies we may say, Alas! it is but borrowed; and if we be proud of them, we are but proud we are more in debt than others: when most enlarged and most assisted, it is from God. We would laugh if a groom should be proud of his master's horse and his master's cloak; shall we usurp that honour that is due to God? 'What hast thou that thou didst not receive?' 1 Cor. 4:7. And then we have it from hand to mouth. That which we have received will not bear us out, unless God come in with new influences of grace. We should soon grow proud if God did not direct us, and give out the renewed evidences of his love day after day; and we should not acknowledge our benefactor if God should do all at once: therefore he lesseneth and weakeneth our corruptions by degrees, and by the renewed influences of his grace; and by this means we are made sensible of the mutability of our own nature. God left Hezekiah, 'to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart,' 2 Chron. 32:31. God hath so dispensed grace that he will be going and coming as to actual influence; therefore sometimes he will leave us, that he may discover a man to himself. Though we have grace planted in our hearts, and are renewed, yet if God leave us, how weak and foolish are we! We are renewed, but not fully recovered of that maim and bruise we got by the fall of Adam, and we cannot do as we will. If God withdraw his quickening, his strength, secret corruption will break forth, and our indisposition to holy things will soon appear.

[4.] Then it is for the honour of the Lord's grace. It doth abundantly provide for the glory of grace, that from first to last we are indebted to God; not only for those permanent and fixed habits which constitute the new creature, but for those daily supplies without which the motions of the spirit are at a stand. And this is that which makes the saints still to put the crown upon grace's head. When the servants gave an account of improving of their talents, saith one of them, Luke 19:16, 'Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds:' he doth not say, 'My industry,' but, 'thy pound.' So Paul, Gal. 2:20, 'I live;' yea, but he interposeth presently, 'Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'

They are ever ascribing all to God, because they see they can do nothing without him. When we come to heaven, it is a question which we shall admire most, grace or glory, the glory of that estate into which we are brought, or else grace, which was the foundation of it. Oh, when we see all that was done and suffered for God, it was from God: 'Of thine own have we given thee.' How will the soul admire the riches of his glorious grace! We have not only traded with his money, but by his direction; and when our stock was embezzled he supplied us at every turn. For these ends the Lord still keeps grace in his own hands, that we can do nothing to any purpose unless he be pleased to concur, by the influences and quickenings of his own Spirit.

Use. The use shall only be in these two branches:—

1. In doing any good work, let us do all things in him as well as to him. Let us not only make this our scope, that we may do it to God, but let us make his grace our principle: otherwise, when we go to work for God without God, it will befall us as it did Sampson, that thought to go out and shake himself as in former times, but his locks were cut and his strength gone. Men that have had former experiences, think to find a like vigour of affection, a like raisedness of spirit, a like savouriness of expression; but if they take not God along with them, they find their strength is gone, their affections dead, that all their spirits are dry and sapless, and that they do not go forth with such life and power as formerly. Therefore, whenever you go about a good work, say, as David, 'I will go forth in the strength of God.'

2. It directs us in ascribing the honour of what we have done. It is dangerous to assume divine honour to ourselves or accept it from others; but we must give the Lord the glory, whose concurrence doth all the work. Remember, we have received all from God, and God must have all the glory and honour; if others should ascribe it to us, we are not to take it. To conceal and receive stolen goods, brings us within the compass of theft, as well as to steal them ourselves. So,



when others would ascribe anything to us, still let the Lord have the glory of every work and business.

The third point.

Doct. 3. We are not only to look to this, that his will be done, but to the manner how it is done.

It is not for the honour of his majesty to be put off with anything; we must serve him with all our mind and strength: Mal. 1:14, 'When ye brought that which was torn, and lame, and sick, should I accept this of your hands? saith the Lord. I am a great king, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.' We are to aim at the highest manner of serving God. There is an ardent desire in the saints to be perfect: 'If by any means they would attain to the resurrection of the dead,' Phil. 3:11; that is, that happy and sinless state they shall enjoy hereafter. The manner is more considerable than the work itself. A man may sin in doing good, but he cannot sin in doing well; therefore the manner is that which is mainly stood upon in scripture. God doth not only look that we pray, but it must be fervent effectual prayer, not a drowsy devotion; not only that we hear, but take heed how we hear; not only that we serve him, but serve him instantly; not only run, but so run. The great thing that is put into the balance of the sanctuary, when God comes to weigh the actions of men, what doth he consider? He weighs the spirits: Prov. 16:2, 'All the ways of man are right in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits;' that is, he considers with what frame of heart, and in what manner, we go about anything we do for him. And therefore this is the main thing we should look after, in what manner we serve him, even as the angels do in heaven; not in an ordinary but perfect manner.

But wherein doth the resemblance hold; how should we be as the angels?

1. In conformity to the angels, we must serve God readily. The angels are represented as 'with wings,' Isa. 6:2: and the angel Gabriel is said to 'fly swiftly' upon God's message; they are hearkening for God's word, and go on God's errand. So we should be ready and speedy in our obedience: Ps. 119:60, 'I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.' It is not enough to keep God's commandments, but we must make haste; that is, before the strength of the present impulsion be lost, and those fervours which are upon us be cooled.

2. Willingly and cheerfully, and without murmuring. Angels are ready at God's beck; they are ministering spirits, even to the meanest saints; God hath sent them abroad for the heirs of salvation; they are as guardians to them, to look after them in all their ways. The devils, what Christ bids them do, do it murmuringly; the unclean spirit would not come out without rending and tearing, Mark 9; Christ's presence was a burthen to them, Mat. 8. When we do things with reluctancy, murmuringly, we are more like the devils than the angels. When the devils obey his word, they are forced to it by the absolute power of Christ; yet they do it not with willingness and freeness, as the good angels do. But we are to do it freely: 'I delight to do thy will, O my God,' Ps. 40:8. And, John 4:34, 'It is my meat and drink to do the will of him that sent me.' That was the dish Christ loved.

3. Constantly and unweariedly. Thus do the angels in heaven. The devils they abode not in the truth; but angels, they do it without weariness; they rest not day nor night, but are still lauding, praising, and serving God, and are never weary. God in communion is ever new and fresh to them; the face of their heavenly Father is as lovely as at the first moment; no weariness or satiety creeps upon those good spirits. Thus should we do it without weariness, and then we shall reap if we faint not.

4. Faithfully, not picking and choosing: 'They hearken to the voice of his word,' whatever it be, be it to ascend or descend. So we, if it be to go backward for God, though it be against the bent of our hearts. David is said to be 'a man after God's heart,' because he did 'all God's

will,' Acts 13:22: all which should be a pattern for us, and we should strive to come up to it.

## **Give Us this Day Our Daily Bread**

WE are now come to the second sort of petitions, that concern ourselves, as the former did more immediately concern God. Now you may observe the style in the prayer is altered. It was before, Thy name, Thy kingdom, Thy will; now it is, Give us, and Forgive us, &c. Before, our Lord had taught us to speak in a third person, 'Thy will be done;' and now in a second person, 'Give us this day:' which is not so to be understood as if we were not at all concerned in the former part of the Lord's Prayer. In those petitions, the benefit is not God's, but ours. When his name is sanctified, his kingdom cometh, and his will is done; these things do not only concern the glory of God, but also our benefit. It is our advantage when God is honoured by the coming of Christ's kingdom and the subjection of our hearts unto himself. But these latter petitions do more immediately concern us. Now, among these, in the first place, we pray for the necessary provisions of the present life. Some make a scruple why such a prayer should be put in the first place. Surely not to show the value of these things above pardon and grace; but this is the last of the supplications. The Lord's Prayer may be divided into supplications and deprecations. Among the supplications, there we prayed, first, for the glory of God; next, for the kingdom of God; next, for our subjection to that kingdom; and, in the last place, we pray for daily bread, or sustentation of the present life. But the other two are deprecations; and that either of evil already committed, and so we pray for pardon of sin, 'Forgive us our trespasses;' or deprecation of evil that is likely to be admitted, and so we pray against temptation, 'Lead us not into temptation:' so that this request is put into a fit order. First, we seek God's glory as the end; his kingdom as the primary means; our subjection to that kingdom as the next means; and last of all, our comfortable subsistence in the world as a remote subservient help, that we may be in a capacity to serve and glorify God.

In this petition there is:—

I. The thing asked, and that is bread, by which is meant all things necessary for the maintenance of this life.

Now this is set forth:—

1. By a note of propriety, our bread.

2. By an adjunct of time, daily bread.

II. The manner of asking, give; we ask it as a gift of God.

III. The persons for whom we ask, Give us; as many as are supposed to be in a family together. Those that can call God Father by the Spirit, they may come with most confidence to God about daily supplies.

IV. The renewing of our request, σήμερον, 'this day:' there is very much in that; we ask but from morning till night: 'Give us this day our daily bread.'

Before I come to explain these circumstances, let me observe in general:—

Doct. 1. That it is the Lord which doth bestow upon us freely and graciously the good things of this life.

It is bread we ask, and we ask it of God, and to God we say, 'Give.' All which circumstances do fully make out the point.

This point again must be made good by parts:—

1. That God giveth it.

2. That he freely and graciously giveth it.

First, I shall show you how God is interested in the common mercies we do enjoy; and how every one, high or low, rich or poor, full or in a mean condition, of what rank soever they be, even those that have the greatest store and plenty of worldly accommodations, they must come from morning to morning and deal with God for daily bread.

Those common mercies which we do enjoy:—

[1.] God gives us the possession of them, for he is the absolute Lord of all things both in heaven and in earth, and whatsoever is possessed by any creature, it is by his indulgence; for the primitive and original right was in him: Ps. 24:1, 'The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.' It is all God's; we hold it in fee from him, for he is the great landlord who hath leased out all these blessings to the sons of men. The earth is first the Lord's, and then by a grant he hath given it to men to enjoy: Ps. 115:16, 'The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; but the earth hath he given to the children of men.' He hath given it to men partly by a general grant, and leave given to enjoy and occupy it as the place of our service. But that is not all; he doth not only give the earth in general to men, but he makes a particular allotment; the particular designation of every man's portion of what he shall enjoy in the world, it is of God. And so it is said, Acts 17:26, 'He hath determined the bounds of their habitation.' God hath not only appointed in general the earth to be the place of our service for a while, but he hath determined how much every one shall possess, what shall fall to his share. These things come not by chance, or by the gift of others, or by our own industry, but by the peculiar designation of God's providence. However they come to us, God must be owned in the possession; whether they come to us by donation, purchase, labour, or by inheritance, yet they are originally by God, who by these means bestoweth them upon us. If they come by donation, or the gift of others, the hearts of men are in God's hands, and he it was that disposed them to be bountiful to us, that appointed them to be instruments of his providence, to nourish us. He that sends a present, he is the giver, not the servant which brings

it. So, though others be employed as instruments, it is the Lord which made them able and willing to do us good. If they come to us by inheritance, it is the providence of God that a man is born of rich friends and not of beggars: Prov. 22:2, 'The rich and poor meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all.' He that hath cast the world first into hills and valleys, it was he that disposed of men, some into a high, and some into a low condition. If they come to us by our own labour and purchase, still God gave it to us: Deut. 8:14–18, 'Take heed that thine heart be not lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God; for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.' He doth not leave second causes to their own power and force, as if he were only an idle spectator in the world. No, he gives the skill and industry to manage affairs, and success upon lawful undertakings; the faculty and the use, it is all from God. Though a man hath never so many outward advantages, yet, unless the Lord concur with his blessing, all would be to no purpose.

[2.] As God gives us the possession, so he gives us a right and title to them. There is a twofold right to these common blessings; a providential and a covenant right. *Dominium politicum fundatur in providentia*; 'Our civil right to things is founded upon God's providence;' but *Dominium evangelicum fundatur in gratia*; 'Our gospel right to things is founded upon God's grace.' (1.) He gives the providential right, and thus all wicked men possess outward things, and the plenty they enjoy is as the fruits and gifts of God's common bounty; it is their portion, he hath given it to them: Ps. 17:14, 'Which have their portion in this life,' whatever falleth to their share in a fair way, and in the course of God's providence; they are not usurpers merely for possessing, but for abusing, what they have. They have not only a civil right by the laws of men, to prevent the incroachment of others, but a providential right before God; and are not simply responsible for possession, but for their ill use and administration. (2.) There is a covenant right to these blessings: so only believers have a right to creature comforts by God's special love; and so, 'That little that a righteous man hath is better than the treasures of many wicked,' Ps. 37:16; as the mean fare of a poor subject is better than

the large allowance of a condemned traitor. Every wicked man is a traitor to God, and hath only an allowance until he be destroyed. But that little which a man hath, seasoned with God's love, is better than all the mighty increase of wicked men. Now, this covenant right we have by Christ, who is 'heir of all things,' Heb. 1:2; Christ hath the original right to them, and we by him come to have a covenant right. So it is said, 1 Cor. 3:23, 'Things present, and things to come, all are yours.' As things to come, the day of judgment is theirs; so things present are theirs by a new title from him. So it is said, 1 Tim. 4:5, marriage, meats, and drinks, and all creatures, are made for them that believe. They that believe have only a gospel right to them. To draw it to the present thing, we do not only beg a possession of these things, but a right; not only a providential, but a covenant right, that we may enjoy them as the gifts of God's fatherly love and compassion to us, that we may take our bread out of Christ's hands, that we may look upon it as swimming to us in his blood, and all our mercies as wrapt up in his bowels; and then they will be sweet, and relish much better with a gracious soul, because he can not only taste the creature, but the love of God in the creature.

[3.] He gives the continuance of our blessings, that we may keep what we have; for unless the Lord do daily support us, we cannot keep our comforts for one day. How soon can God blast them! It is at his pleasure to do what he will with you. He gave Satan power over Job's estate: chap. 1:12, 'Behold, all that he hath is in thy power.' Our life, it is continued to us by the indulgence of God, and by his providential influence and supportation. For as the beams of the sun are no longer continued in the air than the sun shineth, or, as the water retains the impress and stamp no longer than the seal is kept on it, so when God takes off his providential influence, all vanisheth into nothing. Thus he is said, Heb. 1:3, to 'uphold all things by the word of his power.' As a weighty thing is upheld in the hand of a man, when he looseneth his hand all falls to the ground; so it is said, Job 12:10, 'In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.' God by his almighty grasp holdeth all things in his own hands, and if he should but let loose his hand, all would



fall to nothing and disappear: Job 6:9. For it is from the intimate support and influence of his providence that we have our lives. So our comforts, they are continued to us by God. Alas! in themselves they are poor fugacious things! Haman was today high in honour, and to-morrow high upon the gallows. 'Riches make themselves wings, and fly away as an eagle towards heaven:' Prov. 23:5. The Holy Ghost seems there to compare riches to a flock of birds, which pitcheth in a man's field to-night, but to-morrow they are gone. Who is the richer for a flock of wild fowls because they pitch in his field now? So all these outward things are so flying that they are soon gone by many accidents, unless he preserves them and continues our possession of them. For God he can give a charge and commission to the fire, to the fury of men, one way or other, to deprive us of these things: 'Behold, all he hath is in thy hands,' Job 1:12. When a man hath gotten abundance of worldly comforts about him, and seemeth to be intrenched and provided against all hazards, the man is taken away, and cannot enjoy what he had heaped together with a great deal of care and solicitude.

[4.] We beg leave to use them. It is good manners in religion to ask God's leave in all things. It is robbery to make use of a man's goods, and to waste and consume them without his leave. We must ask God's leave upon this account, because, though God gives these good things to men, yet he still reserves the property in himself; for by distributing blessings to the creature, he never intended to divest himself of the right. As a husbandman, by scattering his corn in the field, did not dispossess himself, but still keeps a right and means to have the increase; so when the Lord scattereth his blessings, we only receive them as stewards, not as owners and proprietors: God still is the supreme Lord, and only hath the property and dominion. In life it is clear man is not dominus vitæ, but custos; not lord of his life, but only the steward and guardian of it; he cannot live or die at his own pleasure: if a man kills himself he runs the danger of God's law. What is said of life is true also of his estate: he is not an owner so much as a steward; that is the notion of our possession: we are stewards, and must render an account to God: Hos. 2:9, 'I will return and take away

my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax.' Though God hath communicated these things to the children of men, yet he hath reserved the dominion in his own hands: so Hag. 2:8, 'The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts.' He never disposed anything so into the creature's hands, but still he hath reserved a right and interest in it; and therefore it is, Gen. 14:19. that the Lord is not only called the creator of heaven and earth, but 'possessor of heaven and earth,' He is not only the possessor of heaven where he dwells, which he hath reserved to his own use, but he is possessor of earth, which he hath committed to the use of men. And God will have his right acknowledged from day to day.

[5.] It is he that giveth us ability to use them: we beg that we may not only have the comforts, but life and strength to use them; for God can blast us in the very midst of our enjoyments. It is the case of many, when they have hunted after a worldly portion, and begin to think, now I will sit down and enjoy it; when the gain is come into his hands, and he thinks to waste that which he hath got in hunting, death takes him away, and he hath not power to use them. Thus it was with the rich fool; when he began to sing lullabies to his soul, and enjoy what he had got, he is taken away by death: Luke 12:20, 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?' And it is said, Num. 11:33, when those people had gotten quails, that 'while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people; and the Lord smote them with a very great plague.' And that nobleman which saw plenty in Samaria, but could not taste of it: 2 Kings 7:19. So Job 21:23, 'One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet:' when he has gotten abundance of worldly comforts about him, death seizes on him of a sudden.

[6.] God yet is further interested in these mercies, so as to give us a sanctified use of them, that we may take our bread out of God's hands with prayer and thanksgiving, and due acknowledgments of

God. In 1 Tim. 4:4, 5, 'Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.' Then are the creatures sanctified to us, when we enjoy God in them; when our hearts are raised to think of the donor, and can love him the more for every gift. Carnal men, like swine, raven upon the acorns, but look not up to the oak from whence they drop. In the Canticles, the spouse's eyes are compared to dove's eyes. They which make the allusion say this is the meaning: look, as a dove pecks, and looks upward; so upon every grain of mercy, we should look up to the God of mercies: it is not enough to taste the sweet of the creatures, but also to own God, his love and bounty in them, so to have them sanctified to us. This is the privilege we have as men, that we can know the first cause, and who is the benefactor. All creatures subsist upon the first cause, but are not capable of knowing it. And this is our privilege as Christians, to have this capacity reduced into act. It is of the Lord's grace to give us a sanctified use of these things.

[7.] We beg of God the natural blessing upon the holy use of outward comforts, so as they may continue us in health and vigour for the service of God; for nothing will prosper with us but by his blessing: Ps. 106:15, 'He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their souls; that is, they had no natural comfort by that which they had obtained. God may give a man meat, yet not an appetite; he may not give him the comfortable use of it, a blessing with it. And therefore the apostle makes it to be an argument of God's bounty to the heathen, that as he gave them food, so he gave them gladness of heart: Acts 14:17, 'He gave them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness;' that is, gave them a comfortable use, a blessing upon the use of outward things. And Lev. 26, you will find a distinction between 'bread,' and the 'staff of bread.' We may have bread, yet not the staff of bread. Many have worldly comforts, but not with a natural blessing: Eccles. 3:13, 'That every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour; it is the gift of God:' not only that he should have increase by his labour, but enjoy good; to have the comfortable use of that increase.

[8.] Contentation is one of God's blessings that we ask in this prayer, 'Give us this day our daily bread;' that is, such provisions as are necessary for us, contentment and quiet of mind in the enjoyment: Joel 2:19, 'Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith.' It is not only a blessing we should look after, but contentment, that our minds may be suited to our condition, for then the creature is more sweet and comfortable to us. The happiness of man doth not lie in his abundance, but in the suitableness of his mind to his estate: Luke 12:15, 'A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth.' There is a twofold war within a man, both which must be taken up before a man can have comfort; there is a war between a man and his conscience, and this breeds trouble of mind; and there is a war between his affections and his condition, and this breeds murmuring and envious repining. Say, Yea, Lord, and let us be contented with thy gift. This for the first thing, how God is concerned in these outward comforts.

Secondly, That the Lord doth freely and graciously give these good things to us, that is; merely out of his bounty and goodness. It is not from his strict remunerative justice, but out of his grace. The very air we breathe in, the bread we eat, our common blessings, be they never so mean, we have them all from grace, and all from the tender mercy of the Lord. Ps. 136:25, you have there the story of the notable effects of God's mercy, and he concludes it thus: 'Who giveth food to all flesh; for his mercy endureth for ever.' Mark, the psalmist doth not only ascribe those mighty victories, those glorious instances of his love and power, to his unchangeable mercy, but our daily bread. In eminent deliverances of the church we will acknowledge mercy; yea, but we should do it in every bit of meat we eat, for the same reason is rendered all along. What is the reason his people smote Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og the king of Bashan, and rescued his people so often out of danger? 'For his mercy endureth for ever.' And what is the reason he giveth food to all flesh? 'For his mercy endureth for ever.' It is not only mercy which gives us Christ, and salvation by Christ, and all those glorious deliverances and triumphs over the

enemies of the church; but it is mercy which furnisheth our tables, it is mercy that we taste with our mouths and wear at our backs. It is notable, our Lord Jesus, when there were but five barley loaves and two fishes, John 6:11, 'He lift up his eyes and gave thanks.' Though our provision be never so homely and slender, yet God's grace and mercy must be acknowledged.

But to evidence this by some considerations that certainly it is of the mercy of the Lord that he giveth bread to the creature: God giveth these mercies—

1. To those that cannot return any service to him.
2. To those that will not return any service to him.
3. When we are at our best we cannot deserve them.
4. We deserve the quite contrary.

[1.] He giveth these mercies to those that cannot return any service to him; the beasts, and fowls of the air, the young ravens: Ps. 145:16, 'Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.' What can the beasts, or fishes, or fowls of the air deserve at God's hand? What honour and service can they bring to him? Only they have a bountiful Creator, from whom they receive their allowance.

So as to infants. Alas! what can they deserve at his hand? When God rocks their cradles, and nourisheth them from the dug, what service can they do to God? Isa. 46:3, 4, 'By me,' saith the Lord, 'you are borne from the belly, and carried from the womb; and even to your old age, I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you.' Mark, not only in old age, when we have done God service, doth he maintain us; but from the womb, the belly, before we could do anything for him, we were tenderly handled by him. He alludeth to parents and nurses, which carry their younglings in their arms. In infancy we are not in a capacity to know the God of our mercies, and look after him;

yet he looked after us then, when we could not perform one act of love and kindness to him. The psalmist takes notice of this: Ps. 22:9, 10, 'Thou art he that took me out of the womb; thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God from my mother's belly.' Christians, before ever you could do anything for him or yourselves, before you could improve his mercy, when you could not know who was your benefactor, who it was that nourished and cherished you, yet then God rocked your cradles, kept you from many dangers, nursed you, and brought you up, and carried you in the tender arms of his providence.

[2.] God gives these mercies to those that will not serve him when they can: Isa. 1:2, 'I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.' There are many in the world whom God protects, supplies, and provides them of all necessaries, yet they return nothing but disobedience, contempt, rebellion, and unthankfulness. The sun doth not shine by chance, but at God's disposal: Mat. 5:45, 'He makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.' Most of those which are fed at God's table, and maintained at his expense and care, they are his enemies; and many times the more men receive from him the worse they are. Look, as beasts towards man, when they are in good plight they grow fierce, and are ready to destroy those which nourish them, so, when we are plentifully supplied, we kick with the heel, wax wanton, and forgetful of God. Or as a froward child scratcheth the breast which suckles it, so we rebel against God that nourished us, and brought us up, and dishonour our heavenly Father that provides these blessings for us. Parisiensis hath a saying, 'They which hold the greatest farms many times pay the least rent.' So the great ones of the world, they which have most of God's bounty, give him the least acknowledgment.

[3.] When we do our best we cannot deserve these mercies, or merit aught at God's hands; for all we do is already due to God, as we are his creatures, and the paying new debts will not quit old scores. The

question is propounded: Job 22:2, 'Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself?' See the answer: chap. 35:7, 'If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?' And wherein is God profited if a man's ways be perfect? And, therefore, whatever God doth for creatures, he doth it freely, because he cannot be obliged by any act of ours and pre-engaged. Thus Adam in innocency could not obtain the blessing but by virtue of the covenant, nor merit aught at God's hands, that is, put any obligation upon God; and, therefore, certainly now we cannot. And partly, too, because whatever we do, it will not carry a proportion with these common mercies. We are proud creatures, and think of a condignity of works, and to merit from heaven these mercies. But, alas! there is no comparison; and if God would deal with us upon merit and strict commutative justice, we cannot give him a valuable compensation for temporal mercies: Gen. 32:10, 'I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies which thou hast showed unto thy servant.' Though none of God's mercies can simply be said to be little, for whatsoever comes from a great God should be great in our value and esteem, as a small remembrance from a great person is much prized; therefore no mercy is simply little, but comparatively. Now the least mercies some have, and others the greatest temporal things. When we are put into the balance, we and all our worth and deservings cannot counterpoise the least mercy, or merit the daily bread we have from God. And then the little good we do, it is merely by the grace that we have received. If one man differs from another, who made him differ? It is but a new gift, he is the more indebted to God.

[4.] We deserve the contrary. We have forfeited our lives, and all our comforts; we have put ourselves out of God's protection by sin. Death waylaid us when we were in our mother's womb; and as soon as we were born there was a sentence in force against us: Rom. 5:12, 'death came upon all, for that all have sinned.' And still we continue the forfeiture. We provoke God to cut us off. It is a kind of pardoning mercy by which we subsist every moment. This is sensible in case of sickness, when our lives and comforts slide from us, when there is

but a step between us and death, when the old covenant comes to be put in suit, and God seems to be executing the sentence of the law. And that is the reason why the temporal deliverance of the wicked and impenitent is called a remission: as Ps. 78:38, 'But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not.' And Mat. 18:26, 27, 28, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and forgave him the debt.' Why is it called a remission? Improperly, because it was a reprieve from the temporal judgment for a time; it was not an executing the sentence which was in force against us; and it was not from anything in the sinner, but from God's pity over his creatures. And a godly man, every time his life and comforts are in danger, hath a pardon renewed at that time: Isa. 38:17, 'Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption; for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.' They are loved out of danger, and loved out of sickness; the pardoning mercy of God is indeed renewed to them.

## **APPLICATION**

Use 1. For information, in two branches:—

First, That God will give his people temporal things. Not only pardon, and grace, and glory; but 'no good thing will he withhold:' Ps. 81:11. Many say they can trust God for eternal life, but cannot trust him for daily bread. This is an utter mistake. Certainly it is far more easy to trust God for daily bread than for eternal life; because there are more difficulties, more natural prejudices, against these greater mercies of pardon and eternal life, than there can be against the daily effects of God's bounty. It is a harder matter to work through our natural prejudices, which lie against eternal life, than to work through that distrust which lies against God's care over us and provision for us. Why? For God's common bounty it reacheth to all his creatures, even to the smallest worm; his mercy is over all his works. And surely it is more easy to believe his common bounty than



his special love, which runs in a distinct channel to such a sort of men.

But because many have too weak a faith about temporal things, let us consider how willing God is to distribute and give out these supplies. Several things I might mention.

1. God's respect to the bodies of his people is a mighty ground and encouragement. God is in covenant with the body as well as the soul. Jesus Christ proves the resurrection from thence, that God is 'the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob:' Mat. 22:32. This argument can never be made good, but upon the supposition that God is in covenant with Abraham's body, with the whole believer; and therefore the mark of circumcision was in their flesh, as the water of baptism is sprinkled upon our bodies. Well, then, if the bodies of the saints be in covenant with God, certainly some of the promises of the covenant do concern the body and sustentation of the present life. But that is not all, but Jesus Christ hath purchased both body and soul: 1 Cor. 6:20, 'Ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.' Not only the soul is Christ's, but the body.

You will say, That is ground of service; but what! can it be inferred that therefore God will provide for us? It is not only a ground of our service, but of Christ's care of us. If Christ had only purchased our service, yet it were a ground of hope. If you expect work and service from a body, you will give maintenance to that body. But Christ's purchase implieth his care over that he hath purchased; for the interest God hath in us in redemption is a gracious interest. God had an interest in us before we were redeemed; we could not make void his right by any rebellion of ours. But then God hath such an interest in us as engaged and solicited him to destroy us. Look, as a prince hath an interest in his subjects, if they rebel and revolt from their obedience, they cannot disannul his right, but it is such a right as binds him to pursue and chastise them until they return to their duty, so God hath a right to the fallen creature, but it was such a right

as solicited vengeance. But the right Christ purchased was a gracious right, that God might protect and preserve us. Well, then, if Christ purchased body and soul, he hath obtained, not only that God should be gracious to our souls, but gracious to our bodies; then the argument runs clearly for confirming the faith of the saints in expectation of temporal benefits.

2. God hath given us greater things, therefore he will not stand upon the less; when a man hath been at great cost, he will not lose it. The Lord hath given us his Christ: Rom. 8:32, 'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' Can any man be so illogical, so ill-skilled in consequences, as not to conclude from thence, if God give us Christ, with him he will give us all things? So Mat. 6:33, 'Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added to you.'

3. These things are dispensed to inferior, yea, to the worst of his creatures: Ps. 147:9, 'He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.' Will God maintain the beasts of the field, and will he not maintain his children? It is monstrous and unnatural to think thus, that God will not support you, and bear you out in your work. This is Christ's own argument: Mat. 6:34, 'Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' Daily bread is in your Father's power, and he gives it graciously to all his creatures, and therefore certainly he will give it to you. Thus you may see with what confidence you may expect daily supplies.

Secondly, It informs us that we may ask temporal things, if we ask them lawfully. It is true, prayers to God for spiritual things are more acceptable. As your child pleaseth you better when it comes to you to be taught its book, rather than when it comes for an apple, so it is more pleasing to God when you come for the Mediator's blessing and spiritual things: Acts 3:26, 'God hath sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.' But yet we may

ask other things. Why? For they are good and useful to us in the course of our service, and without them we are exposed to many temptations. And prayer easeth you of a deal of carking about them: Phil. 4:6, 'Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.' We may ask them, but it must be lawfully; and that, for order, not in the first place. That is howling, when we come to God merely for corn, wine, and oil; when we prefer these things before his favour and the graces of his Spirit. Then it must be lawful, too, as to the manner: a moderate proportion, not to set God a task to maintain you at such a rate, but to ask a moderate allowance. Christ teacheth us here to pray for bread, which is a necessary allowance: Prov. 30:8, 'Feed me with food convenient for me.' And, 1 Tim. 6:8, 'If we have food and raiment, let us therewith be content.' And then ask them with humility and submission to the will of God. We ought to say, as in James 4:15, 'If the Lord will, we will go to such a place, and get gain.' And then lawfully, too, as to the end; not for an unlawful end, for ostentation and riot, that we may live at large and at ease: James 4:3, 'Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.' But we must ask it for a good end: Ps. 115:1, 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.' Lord, not for our ease, or our plenty, but that thy name may be glorified, that we may be supported in service. And then again, lawfully as to the plea. We must not come and challenge it, as if it were our due; we must not use the plea of merit, but of mercy. Our Saviour doth not say, Let this bread come to us anyhow, as he saith, 'Let thy will be done;' our subjection to God is due; but, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' acknowledging the Lord's mercy.

Use 2. Let us not place our confidence in second causes, but in God, by whose goodness and providence over us all temporal things do come unto us; for without him all our carking and labour is nothing; and if we have our wishes without labour, yet we shall not have our comfort and blessing without God: Mat. 6:27. Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature?' By taking thought,

he meaneth anxious care about success. We cannot change the colour of a hair by all our anxious thoughts. We cannot make ourselves stronger or taller. Many a man is pierced through with worldly cares, and still the world frowns upon him, so all his care comes to nothing. Prov. 10:4, it is said, 'The hand of the diligent maketh rich.' Compare it with ver. 22, and it is said, 'The blessing of the Lord, it maketh eth rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.' Most commonly they that are diligent they thrive with their diligence; yea, but if that be all, if they have not the Lord's blessing, they have not that sweetness and peace when they have gotten abundance. Oh, therefore, let us place our confidence, not in second causes, but in God.

Use 3. Let us be thankful to God for these worldly things that we enjoy. I urge this:—

First, Because of the danger of ingratitude. Usually we never forget God more than when he remembereth us most. When men have what they would have, then God is neglected; they grow careless in prayer, or flat and cold in the performance of it. There is a great deal of difference between men poor and rich. When poor, they will seem to put a natural fervency into their prayers; but when rich, they grow cold and careless. Mark what the Lord saith, Hos. 13:6, 'They were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten me.' Oh, how frequent is this, that many having been kept under a great sense of God in a low condition, but when they have been well at ease, then they bear it up as if they could live without God. The bucket comes to the river with an empty mouth, gaping to receive its fulness, as it were; but when it is full, the bottom is turned towards it. So it is very usual with men to turn their backs upon the mercy-seat, and when the Lord hath given them great increase in worldly things, and leased out a great estate to them, he hath very little rent from them. Now, because this is usual, therefore those whom God hath blessed with the supplies of the present life, how should they study thankfulness!

Secondly, Because of the equity of it. Consider what an equity there is, that we should be thankful for outward blessings.

1. They are good in themselves.
2. They come from God.
3. They come from the Lord's grace and mercy.

[1.] They are good in themselves. Food and raiment is good, and 'every creature of God is good,' 1 Tim. 4:4. They are good things, though not the best things. They are good for ourselves, that we may serve God more cheerfully. The Lord would have the Levites and priests have their portion, that they might be encouraged in the law of the Lord: 2 Chron. 31:4. Now these things are good to encourage us, and support us in our work. Man consists of two parts, of a body and of a soul. Now whether we look to the one or the other, you will have many arguments to love and praise God, not only for what he hath done for our souls, but likewise for our bodies. And they are good, because they prevent many snares and temptations: Prov. 30:9, 'Lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.' Diseases which arise from fulness are more common; but diseases which arise from indigence and emptiness, they are more dangerous. So diseases of prosperity they are more common, it is a rank soil and yields more weeds; but diseases which arise from poverty breed atheism, irreligion, and rebellion against God. They are good, as they make us more useful for God and man. For God, as having more advantages for the honouring of God: Prov. 3:9, 'Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase.' And of doing good to others: 'That we may have to distribute to them that need,' Eph. 4:28. Oh, we should all covet and affect mightily, to have wherewith to relieve the necessities of others.

[2.] As they are blessings, so they are blessings which do not come by chance, or by man's providence: 1 Tim. 6:17, 'The living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.' The people of God are plentifully

provided for. Your tables are well furnished, backs well clothed; it is God which gives you richly to enjoy them, and he must be acknowledged. As David doth: 1 Chron. 29:14, 'For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.' Then, ver. 16, 'O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine holy name, cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own.' Though you yourselves have been purchasers of your own estate, and carvers of your own fortune (as man is most apt to forget God there), yea, but though you have prepared and brought together a great deal of store, yet, Lord, all comes from thee. It sweeteneth the mercy. When you are at the table, to be carved to by a great person, their remembrance is counted a greater favour than the meal itself. So it is not barely the comfort we have by the creature which sweeteneth it, but when we think of the donor, that the great God should think of us, that it is God who spreads our table for us, that doth put this meat and drink before us. It was he that 'gave seed to the sower, and bread for food,' 2 Cor. 9:10. When we take it immediately out of God's hands, it is much sweeter. And not only so, but also it is the more sanctified. When we look to second causes, we shall surely abuse the mercy: Hosea 2:8, 'For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold.' What then? 'Therefore she prepared it for Baal.' When God's kindness is not taken notice of, when we do not see God in our mercies, we shall not use them for God. That man will surely improve his comforts ill that doth not see God in them. Now that which comes from God leads the heart to God again, then the creature is sanctified. Therefore acknowledge God in these outward things. We should say of every morsel of bread, This is God's gift to me; of every night's sleep, This is the Lord's goodness. When God is acknowledged in these outward things, he takes it the more kindly, and we are the better for it; the mercy is the sweeter and the more sanctified.

[3.] They not only come from God, but from the Lord's free grace and mercy. These are two distinct notions, by which God's goodness is set out, and they are both significant and expressive in the present case: Grace, that doth all freely; mercy, that pitieth the miserable.

(1.) Then we have them from grace. Grace is at liberty to give them to whom it will. Well, there is grace in these outward things; for God gives them to whom he will; to some, not to others. Oh, when we consider the distinction between us and others—every one hath not such liberal supplies, nay, many of those of whom the world is not worthy—surely this is merely the Lord's goodness. Prov. 22:2, 'The rich and the poor meet together, the Lord is the maker of them all.' They had the same maker that you had (others which are destitute), therefore why is it you have more than they? It is merely from grace. Why is one vessel framed for an honourable use, and another for a baser use? So it pleased the potter. God, as the great master of the scenes, appointeth to every man what part he shall act, merely out of his own grace; he is bound to none. It was a good speech of Tamerlane, the great conqueror of the East, to Bajazet: What did God see in thee, that are blind in one eye, and me, that am lame of one leg, that he should make us, passing by many others, the lords of so many opulent and mighty kingdoms? A savoury speech from an infidel! What did God see in any of us, to exalt, cherish, and supply us, and let pass many others, who, for moral excellencies and virtuous endowments, do far exceed us? When we consider this distinction, then, 'Even so, Father, because it pleased thee.' There is a kind of election and reprobation in these common mercies; that is, God will dispense them to one and not to another; he will be glorified in their poverty and glorified in thy wealth; and therefore there is grace in it.

(2.) There is a mercy in it, that pitieth the miserable. How doth it appear these good things come from mercy? Because of our want, and because of our forfeiture.

(1st.) Our want and our indigence. Oh, when we think what shiftless creatures we should have been if he had not provided for us: Ps. 40:17, 'I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me.' If we were but sensible of our own weakness, and emptiness, and manifold necessities, we would admire that God should think of us, such forlorn and wretched creatures; or that our baseness and poverty

doth not make us contemptible to God: Ps. 34:6, 'This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.' He doth not say, This wise man, this eminent saint, but this poor man. This was the doctrine of the Gentiles—That the divine power did only care for the great and weighty concernments of the world, but other things he left to their own event and to their own chance; as if God, in the great throng of business, were not at leisure to attend every private man's request. These were the fond surmises the Gentiles had of God; but we are taught better. 'This poor man cried unto the Lord, and he heard him.' Poor men in the world, when they have anything to do with great persons, they must look long, wait, pray, and pay to seek their face and favour, and at length meet with a rough answer and sour look. But God will not shut the door; the throne of grace lies open for every comer. You will say, this would sweeten mercies to the poor. Nay, it concerns not only those that are actually poor, but the great ones of the world (for they are poor and shiftless in themselves if God did not provide for them); others are but glasses where they might see their own misery. If they did well weigh the wants and necessities of others, they might see what would have been their own case if the Lord had not been merciful unto them. As Austin, when he saw a beggar frisking and leaping after his belly was filled, the spectacle wrought much upon him that he had not such rejoicing in God, who tasted so much of his abundance. Saith Chrysostom, If you are not thankful for health, go to the spittals and lazar-houses, and see what might have been your own case. Thus if you are not thankful for abundance, go to the families where there are children that want bread. It is the Lord's mercy to the richest, for they were miserable and indigent. It is a great mercy to relieve those from hand to mouth; but you that have abundance, it is a double mercy to you, for he prevents the necessity before it was felt. As Ps. 21:3, 'Thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness.' David takes notice of the goodness of God to him. Before the need is felt and observed, you are stored; and this should be a great endearment of the Lord's mercy to you.



(2d.) It is mercy, if we consider not only our want, but our forfeiture. It is not only mercy, but pardoning mercy; at least a relieving from trouble, for we deserved the contrary. There is a kind of temporary pardon, which continueth all these blessings. It is as great a curse as possibly David could thunder out against obstinate sinners and God's implacable enemies: Ps. 28:4, 'Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours.' Do we think this would be matter of mischief only to David's enemies? No; every one of us, if we had our deserts, we should soon be shiftless, harbourless, begging from door to door, yea, howling for one drop of mercy to cool our tongues. Oh, then, surely the Lord is to be praised and acknowledged in bestowing the good things of this present life. Well, then—

As these blessings come from God, let them carry up your heart to God again. As all rivers they run from the sea, and they discharge themselves into the sea again, so let all be returned to God with thankfulness, with acknowledgments that you have received them from God. I shall urge it with one example: Jesus Christ, though he were heir, Lord of all things, 'Who thought it no robbery to be equal with God,' yet you find him ever giving thanks when he used the creatures: Mat. 15:36. And it is the main thing John taketh notice of, and passeth by the miracle: John 6:23, 'Where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks.' Nigh to Tiberias, there was the place where our Lord fed many with five loaves and two fishes; but he only saith this, 'Where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks.' He saw this was a notable circumstance, so he doth but cursorily mention the miracle, only calls it eating bread, but expressly mentioneth Christ's blessing the creature. He would teach us that the blessing of all enjoyments is in God's hand.

Use 4. If the Lord be the donor and giver of all these outward things, let us beware we do not abuse these gifts of God, as occasions of sinning against the giver, that we fight not against him with his own weapons. Jesus Christ, speaking to his own disciples, though they were trained up with him, a company chosen out, and select family,

who were to be his heralds and ambassadors to the world, yet he gives them this caution: Luke 21:34, 'Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.' He saw it needful to warn his own disciples. We had two common parents, Adam and Noah, and one miscarried by eating, and the other by drinking; these sins are natural to us. The throat is a slippery place, and had need well be looked unto. Mark, Christ there doth not mean surfeiting and drunkenness merely in a gross notion. When we hear of surfeiting and drunkenness, we think of spuing, staggering, reeling, vomiting, and the like; but we are to consider it in a stricter notion: 'Take heed lest the heart be overcharged.' The heart may be overcharged when the stomach is not; that is, when we are less apt to praise God, grow more lumpish and heavy, or rather when we settle into a sensual frame of spirit, and by an inordinate delight in our present portion, are taken off from minding better things. Look, as the heart is overcharged with the cares of the world, so likewise with creature delights and comforts of this world, when it is set for ease and vanity. Many that would be loathers of the other drunkenness, yet are guilty of this kind of surfeiting and drunkenness; the heart is overcharged with an inordinate affection to present things. There cannot be a more heavy judgment than when our table is made our snare: Ps. 69:22. A snare, it is God's spiritual judgment; when the comforts of this life serve not so much to lengthen and strengthen life, but when their hearts are hardened in sin, and they grow neglectful of God and heavenly things. Raining snares is an argument of God's hatred. First, 'The Lord shall rain snares;' and then, 'Brimstone and an horrible tempest shall be their portion,' Ps. 11:6. So it makes way for his eternal anger.

Use 5. Let us be contented with that portion which God hath given us of worldly things, if the Lord be the donor. Why?

1. Because God stands upon his sovereignty; you must stand to God's allowance, though he gives to others more and to you less; for God is supreme, and will not be controlled in the disposal of what is his

own. The goodman of the house pleaded, Mat. 20:13–15, 'Friend, I do thee no wrong; is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?' The fulness of the earth and all is his; and, therefore, though others have better trading, and finer apparel, and be more amply provided for than we are, God is sovereign, and will give according to his pleasure, and you must be content.

2. Nothing is deserved, and therefore certainly everything should be kindly taken. If a man be kept at free cost, and maintained at your expense, you take it very ill if he murmur and dislike his diet. Certainly we are all maintained at free cost, and, therefore, we should with all humble contentation receive whatever God will put into our hands.

3. God knows what proportion is best for us; he is a God of judgment, and knows what is most convenient for us, for he is a wise God. It is the shepherd must choose the pasture, not the sheep. Leave it to God to give you that which is convenient and suitable to your condition of life. A shoe may be too big for the foot, and a garment too great for the body, as Saul's armour was too large for little David: 1 Sam. 17. God will give you that which is convenient, that which is agreeable to you. A garment, when too long, proves a dirty rag; we may have too much; and therefore God he carves out our allowance with a wise hand.

4. God doth not only give suitable to your condition, but suitable to your strength, such a portion as you are able to bear. God layeth affliction upon his people, and he gives them mercies as they are able to bear; if they had more, they would have more snares, more temptations. You find it hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven: Mat. 19:24. A man may take a larger draught than he is able to bear; so God proportioneth every man's condition according to his spiritual strength; every man is not able to bear a very high prosperous estate: Heb. 13:5, 'Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;' then you

will live upon the promise. But when men set God a task, and he must maintain them at such a rate, that ends in mischief and distrust: Ps. 78:19, 'Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?' &c.

5. Contentment is one of God's gifts that we ask in this prayer, 'Give us this day our daily bread;' that is, we ask to be contented with our portion. Contentment and quietness of mind with what we do enjoy, it is a great blessing: Joel 2:19. See what the Lord saith there by his prophet: 'I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith.' The bare and simple blessing doth not speak so much of God's love as when we are satisfied, when we have contentment in it; that is the greater blessing. When our minds are suited to our condition, then the creature is more sweet, more comfortable. Your happiness lies not in abundance, but in contentment: Luke 12:15. This doth not make a man happy, that he hath much; but this, that he is contented; he hath what God will give him. All spiritual miseries may be referred to these two things: a war between a man and his conscience, and a war between his affections and his condition.

6. There may be as much love in a lesser portion as in a greater. There is the same affection to a small younger child, though he hath not so large an allowance as the elder brother; yet, saith he, My father loves me as well as him; not that I have a double portion, but I have as much of my father's love. So a child of God may say, God loves me, though he hath given another more and me less. Be content with what falls to your share, and with your allowance by the wise designation and allotment of God's providence. Thus much for the first point.

A word of a second, viz.:—

Doct. 2. In asking temporal things, Christ hath stinted us to a day, 'Give us, σήμερον, this day, our daily bread.'

God in an extraordinary manner fed his people in the wilderness; the manna stank if they had kept it another day; they had it from day to day. What is the reason Christ saith, 'Give us this day'?

1. That every day we may pray to God. Therefore it is not, Give us this month, or year, but day; because every day God will hear from us: 1 Thes. 5:17, 'Pray without ceasing.' God would not have us too long out of his company, but by a frequent commerce he would have us acquainted and familiar with him. This is required, that you should not let a day pass over your head but God must hear from you, for your patent lasts but for a day; you have a lease from God of your comforts and mercies, but it is expired unless you renew it again by prayer. How much do they differ from the heart of God's children, that could be contented, like the high priest of old, to come to the mercy-seat but once a year! Now the Lord would have us come every day to the throne of grace.

2. Every day, because there should be family prayer; for all that take their meat together are to come, and say to God, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' It is not said, 'Give me,' but 'Give us.' Therefore you see how little of love and fear of God is there, where, week after week, they call not upon God's name.

3. To make way for our gratitude and thankfulness. Our mercies, they flow not from God all at once, but some to-day, and some to-morrow, for we take them day by day; all together, they are too heavy for us to wield and manage: Ps. 68:19, 'Who daily loadeth us with benefits.' Our mercies, they come in greater number and a greater measure than we are able to acknowledge, make use of, or be thankful for. Therefore, this is the burden of gracious hearts, that mercies come so thick and fast they cannot be thankful enough for them; but to help us, God distributes them by parcels. Who loadeth us daily, some to-day, some to-morrow, and every day, that we may not forget God, but may have a new argument to praise him.

4. To show us every day we should renew our dependence upon God for temporal things. There is no day but we stand in need of the Lord's blessing, of sanctification, of comfort, that they may not be a snare, that there is still need of new strength, new grace, and new supplies.

5. Again, 'Give us this day,' that we may not burden ourselves with overmuch thoughtfulness, that we might not solicitously cark, for to-morrow: Mat. 6:34, 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' Every day affords business, trouble, care, and burden enough; we need not anticipate and pre-occupy the cares of the next day; God would not have us overborne with solicitude, but look no further than this day.

6. Christ would teach us that worldly things should be sought in a moderate proportion; if we have sufficient for a day, for the present want, we should not grasp at too much. Ships lightly laden will pass through the sea, but when we take too great a burden, the ship will easily sink with every storm. We have sore troubles to pass through in the world; now when we are overburdened with present things we have more snares and temptations.

7. Christ would train us up with thoughts of our lives' uncertainty: James 4:13, 'Say not, This and this I will do to-day or to-morrow: What is your life? it is but a vapour.' One being invited to dinner the next day, said, For these many years I have not had a to-morrow; meaning he was providing every day for his last day. We do not know whether we have another day, but are apt to sing lullabies to our souls, and say, 'Soul, take thine ease, thou hast goods laid up for many years,' Luke 12:19. We are sottishly secure, and dream of many years, whereas God tells us only of to-day.

8. To awaken us after heavenly things. When we seek bread for the present life, then give us 'this day;' but now come to me, saith Christ, and I will give you bread that shall nourish you 'to eternal life,' bread that endureth for ever: John 6:27, 'Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life.'

There is meat that will endure for ever, but for the present we beg only for this day: 1 Pet. 1:4, 'To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.' That is an eternal state, this but of a short and of a small continuance. You see what need you have to go to God, that he will most plentifully provide for you.

## **And Forgive Us Our Debts**

WE have now done with the supplications of this prayer, and are come to the deprecations. The supplications are those petitions which we make to God for obtaining of that which is good. The deprecations are those petitions we make to God for removing of that which is evil. Now of this latter sort there are two:—(1.) We pray for the remission of evil that is already committed; (2.) We pray for the prevention of the evil which may be inflicted. The first of these is the petition we have now in hand. Here,

1. The petition is proposed, 'Forgive us our debts.'
2. It is confirmed by an argument, 'As we forgive our debtors.'

In the first, take notice:—

- I. Of the object, or matter of this petition, and that is, debts.
- II. The subject or persons praying, us.
- III. The person to whom we pray, our heavenly Father, who alone can forgive our sins.
- IV. The act of God about this object, forgive.

Then the petition is confirmed by an argument, which is taken from our forgiving of others.

In which there is an argument.

1. A simili, from a like disposition in us. Thus, what is good in us was first in God, for he is the pattern of all perfection. If we have such a disposition planted in our hearts, and if it be a virtue in us, surely the same disposition is in God, for the first being wanteth no perfection.

2. The argument may be taken *à disparti*, or *à minori ad majus*, from the less to the greater. If we, that have but a drop of mercy, can forgive the offences done to us, surely the infinite God, that is mercy itself, he hath more bowels and more pity: 'For his ways are above our ways, as high as the heaven is above the earth,' Isa. 55:9. So it seems the argument is propounded: Luke 11:4, 'Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.'

3. The argument may be taken from the condition or the qualification of those that are to expect pardon. They are such that, out of a sense of God's mercy to them, and the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, are inclined and disposed to show mercy to others. So Christ explains it, ver. 14, making it a condition or qualification on our part: 'If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.' But this will be more abundantly clear when I come to examine that clause.

Before we come to the petition itself, the connexion is to be considered, for the particle and links it to the former petition. After 'Hallowed be thy name,' he doth not say, 'And thy kingdom come;' they are propounded as distinct sentences: but, 'Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts,' for three reasons:—

[1.] Without pardon all the good things of this life will do us no good. They are but as a full diet, or as a rich suit, to a condemned person; they will not comfort him and allay his present fears. Until we are pardoned, we are under a sentence, ready for execution and



therefore we cannot have that comfort in outward things until we have some interest in God's fatherly mercy. A man that is condemned hath the king's allowance until execution. So it is the indulgence of God to a wicked man to give him many outward things, though he is condemned already. We should not satisfy ourselves with daily bread without a sense of some interest in pardoning mercy.

[2.] To show us our unworthiness. Our sins are so many and grievous that we are not worthy of one morsel of bread to put in our mouths. When we say, 'Give us this day,' &c., we need presently to say, 'Forgive us our sins.' There is a forfeiture even of these common blessings: Gen. 32:10, 'I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant.' All that we have we have from mercy, and it is mercy undeserved. As we are creatures, there can be no common right between God and us to engage him to give temporal blessings, for we owe ourselves wholly to him, as being created out of nothing. Children cannot oblige their parents. But much more, as we are guilty creatures, it is merely of the mercy of the Lord.

[3.] These are joined together because sin is the great obstacle and hindrance of all the blessings which we expect from God: Jer. 5:25, 'Your sins have withheld good things from you.' When mercy comes to us, sin stands in the way and turns it back again, so that it cannot have so clear a passage to us. Therefore God must forgive before he can give, that is, bestow these outward things as a blessing on us.

Having spoken of this connexion, let me observe something from the petition itself.

The first thing I shall observe is the notion by which sin is set out, 'Forgive us our debts.' The point is:—

Doct. 1. That sins come under the notion of debts.

In Luke 11:4, it is, 'Forgive us our sins.' There is a twofold debt which man oweth to God.

1. A debt of duty.

2. A debt of punishment.

[1.] A debt of duty, worship, and obedience; this is a debt we owe to God. In this sense it is said, Rom. 8:12, 'We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.' In which negative the affirmative is clearly implied, that we are debtors to God, to live to God; debtors to the Spirit, to live after the Spirit. By the law of creation, we were not appointed to serve and please the flesh, but to serve God: Luke 17:10, 'When you have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our debt or duty to do.' Obedience, worship, and service, is a debt we owe to God, by virtue of that interest which he hath in us, and command he hath over us. And so you have that speech, Gal. 5:3, that we are debtors to the whole law, as we come under the obedience of it.

[2.] A debt of punishment, which we are fallen into through the neglect of our duty. Punishment is due to us as wages: Rom 6:23, 'The wages of sin is death.' God hath, as it were, made a contract with us, that if we will sin we must take our wages; we must take what it comes to.

Now in this petition, when we say, 'Forgive us our debts,' we do not desire to be discharged of the duty we owe to God, but to be acquitted of the guilt and punishment. The faults or sins that we are guilty of oblige us and bind us to the punishment; and therefore sins are called debts. The original debt we owe is obedience; and in case of default, the next debt we owe is punishment. Look, as in a contract and bond, if the party observe not the condition, then he is liable to the forfeiture: so God dealt with man by way of covenant, and the tenor of it was exact obedience; and this covenant had a sanction or an obligation annexed: in case obedience was not exactly performed,

we should be accursed, and suffer all manner of misery in this life and the next. Now, by the fall, we incurred this penalty; and therefore, as lost and undone creatures, we run to God's mercy, and beg him to forgive the debt, or the forfeiture of that bond of obedience wherein man standeth bound to God by the law.

A little to make it good, before I come to the body of the petition, let me show how sin is a debt, wherein it agrees. That will appear if you can consider:—

1. Our danger by sin.
2. Our remedy from sin.

In both the parts you will find sin is considered as a debt.

First, If you consider our danger by sin.

[1.] There is a creditor to whom the debt is due, and that is God: Luke 7:41, when he would set out God's mercy he saith, 'There was a certain creditor which had two debtors,' &c. God is there set forth under the notion and similitude of a creditor. God is a creditor, partly as our creator, and partly as a lawgiver, and partly as a judge. As our creator and benefactor, from whom we have received all that we have: it was the Lord that gave to every man his talents to trade withal; to some more, to some less: Mat. 25. Thus God hath trusted us with life, and all other blessings. But then, as a lawgiver: if God had given us life, strength, parts, wealth, that we should do with them what we would, though the gift would oblige us, in point of gratitude, to serve our benefactor, yet we had not been so responsible for our defaults. But we are under a law to serve him and honour him that made us and gave us what we have. God did not dispossess himself of an interest in them. He did not give them to us as owners and proprietors, to do with them what we would; but he gave them to us as stewards: our life and employment here is a stewardship. Nay, God is not only a lawgiver, but also a judge; he will call us to an account. He doth oblige us as a creator, but imposeth a necessity

upon us of obeying and serving him as a lawgiver; and not only makes a law, but will take an account of men, how they observe the law of their creation. There will a time come when the lord of those servants will come and reckon with them, and require his own with usury: Luke 19:23. He will require this debt and service at our hands, else we must endure the penalty. Well, this is the connexion: he that abuseth God's mercy as a creator offends him as a lawgiver, and is justly punished by him as a judge. There are many never think of this, therefore are not sensible of these great relations, nor that they shall answer for all their talents strength, and time, and advantages they have in the world. Thus there is a creditor.

[2.] As a debtor is bound to make satisfaction to the creditor, or else is liable to the process of the law, which may be commenced against him, so are we all to God, bodies and souls; we are become ὑπόδικος τῷ Θεῷ, 'guilty before the Lord:' Rom. 3:19. So we translate it. We are under the sentence of the law, liable to the process of his revenging justice, and one day God will pursue his righteous law against us. All the fallen creatures are quite become bankrupt; we can never pay the original debt of obedience, therefore must be left to lie under the debt of punishment.

[3.] Look, as debts stand upon record, and are charged upon some book of account, that they may not be forgot, so God hath his book of account—a book of remembrance, as it is called: Mal. 3:16. All our words, speeches, actions, they are all upon record; what means we have enjoyed, what mercies, what opportunities, what calls, and what messages of his love and grace: Job 14:17, 'My iniquity is sealed up in a bag.' As men's writings or bonds, which they have to show for their debts owing to them, are sealed up in a bag, so Job useth that similitude. Thus is sin represented as a thing that is upon record, and cannot be forgotten. Many times we lose the memory of what we have done in childhood and infancy, but all is upon record; and your iniquities will one day find you out, though you have forgotten, and think never to hear of them more.

[4.] A day of reckoning will come, when God will put the bond in suit, and all shall be called to an account. Sometimes God reckoneth with sinners, in part, in this world, but surely in the next. Death is but the summons to come to an account with God: Luke 16:2, 'Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward.' That passage of the parable is applicable to death: 'That when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations,' ver. 9. When the soul is turned out of doors, when it is cited to appear before the tribunal of God, then we give up our account. But especially at the great day: Rev. 20:12, 'And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened;' that is, the book of conscience and the book of God's remembrance. There are two books, that are written within and without, upon which all our actions are stamped: they are now closed in a great measure; we know not what is in these great books. One of the books (that of conscience) is in our own keeping, yet we cannot deface and blot it out. These books at that day will be opened; conscience, by the power of God, shall be extended to the recognition of all our ways. Conscience writes when it speaks not: many times it doth not smite for sins we are guilty of; but there stands the debt charged, upon which we shall be responsible.

[5.] After this reckoning there is execution. A bankrupt that cannot satisfy his creditor is cast into prison; so God hath his prison for impenitent, disobedient, and obstinate sinners: 1 Pet. 3:19, 'He went and preached unto the spirits in prison.' It is a dismal prison, where poor captive prisoners are held in chains of darkness; that is, under the horrors of their own despairing fears, looking for the judgment of the Lord, when they shall be cast into this prison, and no getting out again, until they have paid the utmost farthing: Luke 12:50. And that will never be as to the sinner: he is, as it were, always satisfying, and can never be said to have satisfied, the justice of God.

Thus you see how sin is a debt, and what correspondence there is between them—the obligation of punishment that ariseth from sin. But now it differeth from all other debts.

(1.) No debt to man can be so great as our debt to God, both for number and weight. Mat. 18:24, compared with ver. 28: you shall see there the parable of the lord forgiving 'ten thousand talents;' and the servant goes and takes his brother by the throat, and requireth from him a debt of 'an hundred pence.' Mark, offences done to God are greater than offences done to us; for there is as much difference and disproportion as between an hundred and ten thousand. And then the debt of the fellow-servant was but pence, an hundred pence; but the debt due to the lord, that was talents; and a talent is reckoned to be one hundred and eighty-seven pounds ten shillings. Our sins against God are more and more heavy than any which our brethren can commit against us. Pence, talents; one hundred and ten thousand: there is the difference and disproportion. Oh that we had a due sense of what it is to sin against God, against an infinite majesty! To strike a private person is not so much as to strike an officer of justice; and that is not so much as to strike the supreme magistrate. What is it to sin against God? and how often do we? All our imaginations are only evil, and that continually; and therefore all our sins against God will arise to a vast and heavy debt, because of the infiniteness of the object against whom sin is committed.

(2.) In other debts there is a day of payment set them; in this debt there is none. God doth not tell us when he will put the bond in suit against us; he may surprise us ere we are aware. Luke 12:20: when he dreamed of many years, 'Thou fool, this night.' The spirits now in prison did as little think of that doleful place as those sinners which are alive. It may be to-day, to-morrow, the next hour: Gen. 4:7, 'Sin lieth at the door.' There is a sentence and curse that waylays him. Sin, for the punishment of sin; it is ready to seize upon him; and pluck him by the throat, and bring him into God's presence. Still the curse hovers over the head of obstinate and impenitent sinners.

(3.) In other debts, if the goods are taken by way of execution, and suffice, the person is free; but here God aims at the person, and the whole person. 'Body and soul are cast into hell fire,' Mat. 10:28.

(4.) Here there can be no shifting, no avoiding the danger. If you fly from God, you do but fly to God; from God, as willing to be a friend; to God, who is sure to be revenged. 'Whither shall I fly from thy Spirit? If I go into the depths, thou art there,' Ps. 139. God is here, there, and everywhere.

(5.) All other debts cease at death; when a man dieth, we say his debts are paid: but here execution begins, then the law takes the sinner by the throat, and drags him to everlasting punishment, and doth in effect say, Pay me what thou owest. Death is God's arrest. As soon as the soul steps out of the world, presently it is attached and seized, and forfeited into the hands of God's justice. How many are there that lie under this danger and never think of it! Spiritual debts they are not so sensible of as literal. A man that is deeply in debt, and in danger of an arrest, cannot sleep, eat, walk abroad, but his fears are upon him. Augustus bought his quilt or bed, that could sleep soundly when he owed so many thousand sesterces. But poor senseless sinners never think of danger until they are plunged into it, and then there is no escape.

Secondly, The metaphor will also hold good as to our remedy and recovery, how we come out of this debt. A debtor that is insolvent is undone, unless there be some means found out to satisfy the creditor: so we must altogether lie under the wrath of God, unless satisfaction be made. Therefore, Jesus Christ, in the

[1.] Place, comes under the notion of a surety. Because he took the debt of man upon himself, therefore, Heb. 7:22, he is called, 'the surety of a better testament.' When Christ undertook the business of our salvation, he did in effect say, as Paul to Philemon, ver. 18, 'If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee aught, put that on mine account:' so did Jesus Christ in effect say to God, Let me be made a sin, and made a curse for them. He that was a judge, was willing to become a party, and to pay what he owed. David, in the type of Christ, saith, Ps. 69:4, 'I restored that which I took not away.' He did not take away any honour from God: it was we that robbed God of the glory of

his justice, authority, and truth; that trampled them under our feet: but Christ made restitution and amends to God.

[2] Having condescended to become our surety, he made full satisfaction, by suffering the punishment which was due to us: Isa. 53:4, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.' That which we should have borne upon our own backs, and would have crushed us for ever, that he hath borne, and he hath carried. Christ was to be the sinner in law, and was to suffer in our stead. Solomon hath a passage concerning suretyship: Prov. 11:15, 'He that is surety for a stranger, shall smart for it;' or, as the Hebrew will bear it, 'sore bruised;' or, as it is in the margin, 'shall be bruised and sore broken.' And the same word is used concerning Christ, that was our surety: Isa. 53:10, 'It pleased the Father to bruise him.' Christ is our surety, therefore he was bruised and broken, he suffered what we should have suffered. It is true, there are some circumstances of our punishment which Christ suffered not, as a great part of our punishment in hell; there is the worm of conscience and despair, and the eternity of torments; but this was not essential to the punishment, but did only arise from the guilt and from the weakness of the party that is punished, because we cannot work through it otherwise. Christ paid the full price which divine justice demanded, and so made satisfaction for us.

[3.] Christ satisfying as our surety, all those which had an interest in his death, they are set free from the wrath of God, they have a release from this great debt owed. As when the ram was taken. Isaac was let go; so when Christ was taken, the sinner is released and discharged: Job 33:24, 'Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom.' Certainly God will not exact the debt twice, of the surety and of the principal person; our surety having paid the debt for us, therefore we go free. And, therefore, if our consciences should pursue us at law, we may answer, Christ was taken for us, 'He was bruised for our iniquities, and he bore the chastisement of our peace.'



[4.] Christ hath not only satisfied for the punishment, but he hath procured favour for us; wherein he differeth from an ordinary and common surety. Christ does not only free us from bonds, but also hath brought us into grace and favour with the creator, lawgiver, and judge. There is a double notion of Christ's death; that of a ransom for the delivery of a captive, and as a merit and price which was given for eternal life. The death of Christ did not only dissolve the obligation which lay upon us to suffer the penalty for the breach of the law, and so deliver us from the wrath to come; but it was a price that was given to purchase grace, favour, and heaven for us, which is called, Eph. 1:14, 'The purchased possession.' Now, why must our surety instate us thus into favour? Because Christ was such a surety as did not only pay the forfeiture, but also the principal; that is, he did not only make satisfaction for the trespass and offence (which is the payment of the forfeiture), but also he established a righteousness answerable to the law (which is the payment of the principal), and of that original debt which God first required of the creature; for there is a debt of duty and service which Christ performeth and establisheth as a righteousness for us.

[5.] From hence in his name there is proclaimed redemption to the captives, freedom to poor prisoners that were in debt, and weak, and could not acquit themselves. And therefore the publication of the gospel is compared to the year of jubilee: Luke 4:19, Christ came 'to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.' It relates to the year of jubilee, wherein all debts were cancelled; it was a year of general releasement, proclaimed by sound of trumpet, that every man should return to his inheritance, and all debts dissolved and done away: Lev. 25:9, 10. So Jesus Christ saith, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord;' that is, to proclaim to poor captives a release of all debts, and all bonds which are upon them.

[6.] All those that come to God by Christ are interested in the comfort of this offer and proclamation of grace, and may plead with God about their discharge from this great and heavy debt. I put it mainly in that notion (those that come to God by Christ), because

you will find that is the description of those whom Christ means to save: Heb. 7:25, 'He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.' Who are those that come unto God by him? Those that in Christ's name do seriously, and with brokenness of heart, deal with him about a release and a discharge. To come to God by him, it is to come in his name, to plead his propitiation, or his satisfaction, as the only meritorious cause; and the promise of God in Christ to blot out our offences, as the only ground of hope; and as to ourselves, acknowledging the debt; that is, in confessing our sins, and our desert of punishment, with a purpose to forsake them.

(1.) There is required an acknowledgment of the debt. God stands upon it, that his justice may be owned with a due sense, according to the tenor of the first covenant: for though the satisfaction be made by another, and that by a surety of God's providing; yet God will have the creature know they are under so heavy a debt, that he will have them feel it in brokenness of heart; not know it only in a general conviction, but confess their sins: 1 John 1:9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.' When we come with true remorse, and confess we have offended so just, so holy, so merciful a Father, it must be grievous to us in the remembrance of it. You must not only confess sin as a wrong, but as a debt: sin hath wronged God, and it is also a debt binding you over to a punishment we could never endure, nor make God any satisfaction for. Therefore David, when he would have God's bond crossed and cancelled, see how he pleads: Ps. 51:2, 3, 'O Lord, blot out mine offences, for I acknowledge my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me.' Blot it out, for I acknowledge it; that is, I submit to thy instituted course; I submit to the justice of the first covenant.

(2.) The satisfaction of Christ must be pleaded also by a sinner in the court of heaven, in a believing manner, that there may be an owning of the surety. All parties that are interested in this business must consent. Now God and Christ they are agreed about the business of salvation: God hath agreed to take satisfaction from Christ, and Christ hath agreed to make this satisfaction to God: all the business

now is about the sinner's consent, or about his ready acceptance of Jesus Christ; and we never heartily indeed consent to this, that Christ shall be our surety, and he the person that must release and discharge this debt, until we look upon him by an eye of faith, as one that tore the bond and handwriting that was against us. The law is called 'the handwriting that was against us;' there is the bond which was to be put in suit: now, Col. 2:14, He hath torn, or 'blotted out the handwriting of ordinances, that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.' He hath disannulled the law, which binds to suffer the wrath of God. The law was the bond by which our death was ratified.

(3.) There is required an unfeigned purpose to forsake sin. He that hath been released of his debt, must not still run into new arrears.

Christ never blotted out our debts that we might renew them, and go on upon a new score of offending God again; this is to dally with God, to run into the snare when he hath broken it for us and given us an escape, to plunge ourselves into new debts again.

In this prayer, 'Forgive us our debts,' then presently, 'Lead us not into temptation.' Therefore we must purpose to forsake sin, otherwise we do not draw nigh to God with a true heart: Heb. 10:22. We do but deal falsely with God in all the confessions we make, and in all the pleas of faith, unless there be an unfeigned purpose to renounce all sin, and cast it off as a thing that will undo our souls. Thus, Christians, must you sue out your release and discharge in your surety's name.

Use 1. The use is, first, to show us the misery of an impenitent, unpardoned sinner; he hath a vast debt upon him, that will surely undo him unless he doth in time get a discharge. He is bound over to suffer the wrath of God for evermore, and no hand can loose him but God's. Many times they think of no such matter, and cry, 'Peace, peace,' to themselves; but it is not the debtor which must cancel the book, but the creditor. Have you a discharge from God? where is

your legal qualification? poor creatures, what will you do? Many take care that they may owe nothing to any man; oh! but what do you owe to God? To live in doubt and in fear of an arrest, oh, what misery is that! But when sin lieth at the door, ready to attack you every moment and hale you to the prison of hell, that is most dreadful. Therefore think of it seriously; how do accounts stand between God and you? Sinners are loth to think of it. When the lord came to reckon with his servants, Mat. 18:24, it is said, 'One was brought to him which owed him ten thousand talents:' he was loth to come to an account, he would fain keep out of the way, but he was brought to him. So we are unwilling to be called to account, we shift and delay, and will not think of our misery: but the putting off sin will not put it away; our not thinking of our misery will not help us out, and will not be a release and discharge.

2. If sins be debts, and an increasing debt, so that man is ever treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath; it presseth us to be more careful to get out of this condition. Saith Solomon, Prov. 6:3–5: If thou beest in debt, 'flee as a swift roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler.' Oh, it is a sad thing to lie in our sins! If you be under this debt, 'give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids; get away like the swift roe from the hand of the hunter,' &c. And what I say concerning a state of sin, I say concerning daily failings; make your peace with God betimes; if you have contracted a new debt, make all even between God and your souls, that you may not sleep in your sins.

3. This should make us more cautious that we do not commit sin: why? it is a debt that will render you obnoxious to the wrath of God; in itself it merits eternal death: oh, therefore, sin no more, do not run again into the snare! When you give way to sin, you hazard the comfort of your acquittance by Christ: Ps. 85:8, 'The Lord will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints; but let them not turn again to folly.' If the Lord hath given you your peace, and some hope of your being discharged of this heavy debt, take heed of meddling with forbidden fruit, and running into debt again.

II. From the subject or persons which make this prayer, 'Forgive us,' observe,

Doct. Even those that call God Father, ought to beg, daily and humbly, pardon of their sins.

Forgive us; who is that us that can say in faith, Our Father, daily? For this is a pattern for daily prayer, as the word σήμερον in the former petition noteth. We need beg, for Christ hath taught us here to sue out our discharge: in which begging there is an exercise of faith eyeing Christ: Rom. 3:25, 'God hath set forth him to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.' And there is an exercise also of repentance, as to mourning for sin: 1 John 1:9, and Prov. 28:13, 'He that confesseth and forsaketh his sin, shall have mercy:' and as to loathing of sin, Acts 3:19, 'Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.' And certainly it must be humbly begged; for if we seek pardon we must seek it in God's way. We do not beg God to rescind and make void his laws, and those wise constitutions he hath appointed whereby the creature shall receive this grace; and the manner wherein he will deal and transact this business with the offending creature: but we seek it as exercising our renewed repentance; that is, mourning for sin, and loathing of sin. But of this more hereafter.

Now, that the best of God's children should be dealing with God about a pardon of their sins, I shall argue it:—

1. From the necessity.
2. The utility and profit of such a course.

First, The necessity of this will appear two ways:—

- [1.] From the condition of God's children here in the world.
- [2.] From the way wherein God will give out a pardon.

[1.] From the condition of God's children here in this world. The best are not so fully sanctified in this life but there is some sin found in them; not only they who walk with no care, but even they that set the most narrow watch over their ways, they are not so sanctified but they need daily to go to God.

(1.) They have original sin which remaineth with them to the last, they have the sinning sin which the apostle speaks of. Paul complains of the body of death: Rom. 7:23, 24, 'Who shall deliver me from it?' The Hebrews were wont to propound their wishes by way of question; as, 'Oh that salvation were come out of Zion!' It is in the Hebrew, 'Who shall bring salvation out of Zion?' So, 'Who will lead me into Edom?' that is, 'Oh that I were led into Edom,' that I might display the banner there, because of God's truth. So, 'Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' that is, 'Oh that I were delivered!' Where the reign of sin is broken, yet there it remains; though it be cast down in regard of regency, yet it is not cast out in regard of inherency. As the ivy that is gotten into the wall, cut away the boughs, branches, stubs, yet still there will be some sproutings out again until the wall be pulled down; so until these earthly tabernacles of ours be tumbled in the dust, though we are mortifying and subduing of sin, yet there will be a budding and sprouting out again.

(2.) There are many actual sins: James 3:2, 'In many things we offend all;' and Eccles. 7:20, 'There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not:' that is, that sins not either in omitting of good or committing of evil: our offences are either total or partial. Partial offences; though a child of God loves God, fears God, trusts in God, yet not in that purity and perfection that he hath required of him; though he serves God and obeys him, yet not with that liberty, delight, reverence, which he hath required. There is an omission in part in every act: there is not that perfection which God deserveth, who is to be served with all our might, with all our strength. Our principles are divided; there is flesh and spirit; there is a mixture in all our actions. Sometimes there is a total omission, the spiritual life

is at a stand, many times all acts of respect are intermitted. Then for commissions, sometimes, out of ignorance, they do not see what is to be done. Though they have a general resolution to do the whole will of God, yet many times they mistake. Our light is but in part: And 'who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret sins:' Ps. 19:12. We sin out of ignorance, as a man in the dark may jostle against his friend. Sometimes by imprudence and inconsideration, as a man that is not heedful, though he knows it, he may mistake his way. Many are overtaken in a fault: Gal. 6:1; that is, unawares, and besides their intention. Sometimes, out of incogitancy and sudden incursion, they may not only be overtaken but overborne, 'drawn away by their own lusts,' James 1:14: overcome by the prevalency of passion and corrupt affection; so sin gets the upper hand. Thus it is with the children of God. Look, as it was said of the Romans, that in battle they were overcome, but never in war; though a child of God hath the best of it at last, yet in many particular conflicts he is overborne by the violence of temptation and his own corrupt lusts. Thus there is a necessity of begging daily pardon, if we consider the condition of the saints while they are here in the world, who carry a sinning nature about them, a corrupt issue that will never be dried up while they are in the world; and also they are guilty of many actual sins, both of omission and commission.

Secondly, The necessity of it will appear from the way wherein God gives a pardon, which is upon the creature's humble submission, and seeking of terms of grace; so that whatsoever right we have to remission in Christ, though we have a general right to remission and pardon of sin, yet we must seek to apply that right, and beg the use of it for our daily pardon and acceptance with God. This will appear by considering—(1.) The nature of this request; (2.) The right that a justified person hath to the pardon of his daily sins.

1. What we beg for when we say, Forgive us our sins. Five things we ask of God:—

[1.] The grant of a pardon.

[2.] The continuance of this privilege.

[3.] The sense and comfort of it.

[4.] The increase of that sense.

[5.] The effects of pardon, or a freedom from those penal evils that are fruits of sin.

(1.) The grant of a pardon, that God would accept the satisfaction of Christ for our sins, and look upon us as righteous in him. Jesus Christ himself was to sue out the fruits of his purchase: Ps. 2:8, 'Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.' Though he had a right to be received into heaven, to sit down at the right hand of God, and administer the kingdom for the comfort of his elect ones, yet 'ask of me.' And so we are to sue out our right: Ps. 32:5, 'I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.' What then? 'For this cause shall every one that is godly pray unto thee.' Though God be so ready to forgive—as soon as we conceive a purpose he gives out a pardon—yet we are to call upon God. God will have us to sue out the grant of a pardon. Why? Because he would deal with us as a sovereign, therefore doth he require the submission of our faith. It was of grace that he would appoint a satisfaction for us, which he did not for the fallen angels; and it was much more grace that he would give that satisfaction, give that price, out of his own treasury. Christ was not a mediator of our choosing, but God's; and therefore, though justice be fully satisfied, yet the debt is humbly to be acknowledged by the creature, and we are to sue out terms of grace. And again, the application to us is merely grace, when so many thousands perish in their sins; therefore we are to beg, to sue out this grace, that we may have the benefit of Christ's death. God doth it, that in begging we may acknowledge our own misery, and how unable we are to make satisfaction: Ps. 143:2, 'In thy sight no flesh can be justified;' and Ps. 130:3, 4, 'If thou shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is



forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.' Before God will give us an interest in this forgiveness, we are to come and confess ourselves utterly to be insolvent, and also to own Jesus Christ as the means, that we may solemnly and explicitly own our Redeemer, who was appointed by God, and procured this benefit for us: 1 John 2:1, 'And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' God hath required we should sue it out, and own our advocate, as well as confess ourselves unable to satisfy, that we might know who is our advocate. In the type of the brazen serpent, Num. 21:8, 'And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.' Mark, though God set up a sign of salvation (as it is called elsewhere), yet when you shall look upon him you shall live. So God would have us sue out the grant by looking to Christ, that so our interest may be established: John 3:14, 15, 'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.' That whosoever 'believeth in him,' that was the intent of looking upon it, that we might fix our faith on Christ, and come under the shelter of his wing. We beg, upon a sense of our own unworthiness, the acceptance of Christ's satisfaction for us.

(2.) We pray for the continuance of pardon; though we are already justified, yet 'Forgive us our sins.' As in daily bread, though we have it by us, and God hath stored us with blessings in our houses, yet we beg the continuance and use of it; so whatever right we have to pardoning mercy, yet we beg the continuance of it, for two reasons:—Partly because justification is not complete until the day of judgment, but mercy is still in fieri, that is, God is still a-doing: Acts 3:19, 'That your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.' Then are our sins blotted out, then is this privilege complete. We read of forgiveness in this world, and forgiveness in the world to come, Mat. 12:32. Forgiven in this world, when accepted to grace and favour with God; and forgiven in the world to come, when this privilege is complete, and fully made up to

the elect. Some effects of sin remain till then; as death, which came into the world by sin, remains upon the body till then—then our sin is blotted out, when all the fruits of it are vanished and done away. So that whilst any penal evils that are introduced by sin remain, we ought to pray for pardon, that God would not repent of his mercy. Look, as when we are in a state of sanctification, we pray for the continuance of sanctification, as well as the increase of it, because of the relics of sin, though our perseverance in grace and sanctification be as much secured by God's promise as our perseverance in God's favour, and the gift of justification; so we pray for the continuance of pardon, because the evils of sin yet remain in part. And partly, because God, for our exercise, will make us feel the smart of old sins, which are already pardoned; as an old bruise, though it be healed, yet ever and anon we may feel it upon change of weather. Accusations of conscience may return for sins already pardoned; as Job 13:26, 'Thou makest me possess the iniquities of my youth.' Though a man be reconciled to God, and in favour with him, yet the sins of his youth will trouble him after he hath obtained the pardon of them. God may make these return with a horrible and frightful appearance upon the conscience; their visage may be terrible to look upon. Though these sins are blotted out, Satan may make the remembrance of them very frightful; and God, in his holy, wise dispensation, may permit it for our humiliation. Though this be no intrenching of the pardon already past, yet it may exceedingly terrify the soul, and overcloud our comfort, and therefore we must beg the continuance of this benefit. Go to God as David did: Ps. 25:6, 7, 'Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving-kindness, for they have been ever of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions.' He begs God's ancient mercies would continue with him. He acknowledged he had received mercy of old; he could run up to eternity, that had been for ever of old; yet, Lord, remember not against me the sins of my youth. When the sense of old sins are renewed, we must renew petitions for the pardon of them. It is usual with God, when we are negligent, to permit the devil to make use of affliction to revive old sins, that they may stare afresh in the view of the eye of conscience; therefore we had need to beg the continuance of this privilege, for it

is not complete. Though the pardon itself be not abrogated, yet the comfort of it may be much intrenched upon, and old sins may come and terrify the soul with a very hideous aspect.

(3.) We beg here the sense and manifestation of pardon, though it be not the only thing we pray for. 'Forgive us our sins,' that is, let us know it. God may blot sins out of his book, when he doth not blot them out of our consciences. There is the book of conscience, and the book of God's remembrance. The book of God's remembrance may be cancelled (to speak after the manner of men); as soon as we believe and repent, then the handwriting which was against us is torn; but he blots it out of our consciences when the worm of conscience is killed by the application of the blood of Christ through the Spirit, when we are 'sprinkled from an evil conscience,' as the expression is, Heb. 10:22. And David is earnest with God for this benefit, the sense of his pardon: Ps. 51:8, 12, 'Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice; and restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.' Nathan had told him his sins were pardoned, yet he wanted the joy of God's salvation, that ancient free spirit, that comforting, enlarging spirit he was wont to have. God may forgive in heaven, when he does not forgive in our sense and feeling; therefore we beg the manifestation of it by the comforts of the gospel.

(4.) We beg the increase of that sense, for this sense is given out in a different latitude. Spiritual sense is not in all alike quick and lively; many have only a probable certainty, but have many doubts—some have comfort, but never arrive to peace. Comfort, you know, is that thing which holds up itself against encounters when we are confronted; so there may be many doubts when the preponderating part of the soul inclineth to comfort. Some have peace for the present, rest from trouble of conscience; others have joy, which is a degree above peace and comfort.

(5.) We beg the effects of pardon, or freedom from those penal evils which are continued upon God's children, and are the fruits of sin.

Clearly this is intended, for we beg of God to pardon us as we pardon others; that is, fully, entirely to forgive, forget. We beg of God to forgive us our sins; that is, to mitigate those troubles, evils, and afflictions, which are the fruits of sin. It is true, when a man is justified, the state of his person is altered; yet sin is the same in itself, it deserves all manner of evils; therefore we beg not only a release from wrath to come, but from those other temporal evils that dog us at the heels. Sin is the same still, though the person is not the same. It is still the violation of a holy law, an affront done to a holy God, an inconvenience upon the precious soul; it brings a blot upon us, an inclination to sin again; nay, it brings eternal death. Though it do not bring eternal death upon pardoned persons, yet it may occasion temporal trouble. God hath still reserved this liberty in the covenant: that he will 'visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail,' Ps. 89:32, 33. And Prov. 11:31, 'The righteous shall be recompensed in the earth;' that is, he shall smart for his evil-doings. A child of God, when he sinneth against him, though he be not executed, yet he may be branded, he may have a mark of shame put upon him, his pilgrimage may be made uncomfortable, and these may be fully consistent with God's grace and love. Therefore we beg a release from these penal evils, that as the guilt, so the punishment also may be abolished.

2. The right that a justified person hath to the pardon of his daily sins.

Pardon of sin is to be considered: (1.) in the impetration of it; (2.) the offer; (3.) the judicial application, or legal absolution of the sinner.

[1.] In the impetration and purchase of it. So when, Heb. 10:14, 'By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,' there needed no more to expiate them to satisfy justice.

[2.] In the offer of it. So God hath proclaimed pardon upon the condition of repentance: Ezek. 33:11, 'Say unto them, As I live, saith

the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?'

[3.] In the judicial application, or legal absolution of a sinner. God in his word hath pronounced the legal absolution of every one that believeth in Christ. As soon as we repent and believe, a threefold benefit we have:—

(1.) The state of the person is altered; he is a child of God: John 1:12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.' He hath full leave to call God Father, a kind of fatherly dealing from him. Translated from a state of wrath to the state of grace, from a child of the devil he is made a child of God, never to be cast out of his family.

(2.) The actual remission of all past sins: Rom. 3:25, 'To declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.' It would be a license to sin if his sins were remitted before committed.

(3.) A right to the remission of daily sins, or free leave to make use of the fountain of mercy, that is always running, and is opened in the house of God for the comfort of believers: Zech. 13:1, 'In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.'

Secondly, The utility and profit of such a course. See Sermon on Psalm 32:1, Sermon xx.

Use. The use is to press us to be often dealing with God about the pardon of our sins, by a general and daily humiliation; none are exempted from bewailing the evil of sin. The death of Christ doth not put less evil into sin; it is still damning in its own nature; it is still the violation of a holy law, an affront to a holy God, an inconvenience to thy precious soul. When Christ paid the price for our sins, it was upon this condition: that we should renew our faith and repentance;

that we should sue out our discharge in his name; that when we sin we may come and humble ourselves before the Lord. Under the law, if a man were unclean, he was to wash his clothes before evening; he was not to sleep in his uncleanness. So if you have defiled yourselves, you should go wash in the laver that God hath appointed. The Lord taught his people under the law the repeating a daily sacrifice, morning and evening. If one be fallen out with another, God hath advised us, before the sun be set, to go and be reconciled to our brother; and wilt thou lie under the wrath of God for one night? If we would oftener use this course, the work of repentance would not be so hard. Wounds are best cured at first, before they are suffered to fester and rankle into a sore; so are sins before they grow longer upon us. And if we did oftener thus reckon with ourselves, we should have less to do when we come to die. Therefore do as wise merchants; at the foot of every page draw up the account, so help it forward; so it will not be hard to sum up a long account, and reckon up our whole lives, and beg a release of all our debts; therefore daily come and humble yourselves before the Lord. The oftener you do this, the sooner you will have the comfort of pardon; but when you keep off from God, and delay, you suffer the loss of peace, and the loss of God's favour; and hardness of heart, and atheism, and carnal security increase upon you.

## As We Forgive Our Debtors

I come to the last branch. Hence observe:—

Doct. 3. Those that would rightly pray to be forgiven of God, they must forgive others.

First, I shall give you the explication; Secondly, The reasons.

For explication, I shall speak to three things:—

1. Who are debtors.
2. What respect our forgiving of others hath to God's forgiving of us.
3. In what manner we must forgive others.

First, Who are our debtors. It is not meant in a vulgar sense, of those only which stand engaged for a sum of money due to us; but of all such as have offended us in word or deed. There is a duty we owe to one another, which, when we omit, or act contrary unto it, we are not only debtors to God, but to one another; and the doers of the injury are bound to repair the wrong, and to make restitution. In this large sense is the word debtors here taken, with respect to the person that hath done the injury. He becomes a debtor, is to make satisfaction, and suffer the punishment which the wrong deserves.

Secondly, What respect hath our forgiving of others to God's forgiving us?

I shall speak to it negatively and positively.

1. Negatively.

[1.] It is not a meritorious cause, or a merit and price given to God, why he should pardon us, for that is only the blood of Christ. Every

act of ours is due, it is imperfect, and no way proportionate to the mercies we expect; and therefore it cannot be meritorious before God. It is due, it is a duty we are bound to do, and paying off new debts doth not quit old scores. God hath laid such a law upon us, that we are to forgive others. That cannot expiate former offences. And it is imperfect too. The remembrance of injuries sticks too close to us. When we do most heartily and entirely forgive others, even then we have too great a sense of the injury and wrong that is offered to us. Now that which needs pardon cannot deserve pardon. And it is disproportionate to the mercy which we expect. What a vast disparity and difference is there between God's pardoning of us and our pardoning of others, whether we respect the persons that are interested in this action, or the subject-matter, or manner and way of doing, or the fruit and issue of the action.

First, In the persons pardoning. What proportion can there be between God and man, the Creator and the creature? God he is most free, and bound to none, of infinite dignity and perfection, which can neither be increased nor lessened by any act of ours, for him or against him; but we live in perfect dependence upon God's pleasure, are subject to his command, and bound to do his will; and therefore what is our forgiving our fellow-creatures, made out of the same dust, animated by the same soul, and every way equal with us by nature, when they wrong us in our petty interests? What proportion is there between this forgiving and God's forgiving? he that is of so infinite a majesty, his forgiving the violations of his holy law?

And secondly, To the subject-matter, that which is forgiven, there is no proportion. When we compare the multitude or magnitude, the greatness, and the number of offences forgiven of the one side and the other, we see there is a mighty disproportion. We forgive pence, and God talents; we an hundred pence, he ten thousand talents: Mat. 18.

So, thirdly, The manner of forgiving: on God's part, by discharging us freely, and exacting a full satisfaction from Christ; therefore our



forgiving can hold no comparison with it, which is an act of duty, and conformity to God's law.

And fourthly, As to the fruit and issue of the action. Our good and evil doth not reach to God. Though our forgiving of others be an action of profit to ourselves, yet no fruit redounds to God. And therefore there being no proportion between finite and infinite, there can be no such proportion between our forgiving and God's forgiving, as that this act may be meritorious before God. Thus it is not brought here as merit, as that which doth oblige and bind God meritoriously to forgive us.

[2.] It is not a pattern or rule. We do not mean our forgiving should be a pattern of forgiving to God. So as is taken, indeed, ver. 10, 'Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven;' there it implies a conformity to the pattern. But when we say, 'Forgive us, as we forgive,' it doth not mean here a pattern or rule. We imitate God, but God doth not imitate us, in forgiving offences; and it would be ill with us if God should forgive us no better than we forgive one another. God is matchless in all his perfections; there is no work like his: Ps. 86:8. As God is matchless in other things, so in pardoning mercy. 'As the heavens are above the earth, so are his ways above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts:' Isa. 55:9. And upon this very occasion the Lord will multiply to pardon: 'As far as the heavens,' &c. This is the greatest distance we can conceive. The heavens, they are at such a vast distance from the earth, that the stars, though they be great and glorious luminaries, yet they seem to be but like so many spangles and sparks. This is the distance and disproportion which is made between God's mercy and ours: Hosea 11:9, 'I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God, and not man.' If God should forgive but only as man doth, it would be ill for Ephraim if he had to do with revengeful man. God acteth according to the infiniteness of his own nature, far above the law and manner of all created beings. Therefore it is not put here as a pattern and rule.

[3.] It doth not import priority of order, as if our acts had the precedency of God's; or as if we did or could heartily forgive others before God hath shown any mercy to us. No; in all acts of love, God is first; his mercy to us is the cause of our mercy to others. As the wall reflects and casts back the heat upon the stander-by when first warmed with the beams of the sun, so, when our hearts are melted with a sense of God's mercy, his love to us is the cause of our love and kindness to others: 1 John 4:19, 'We love him, because he first loved us;' that is, we love him, and others for his sake; for love to God implies that. Why? Because he hath been first with us. And then it is the motive and pattern of it. In that parable, Mat. 18:32, 33, God's forgiving is the motive to our forgiving: 'I forgave thee all thy debt; and shouldest not thou have compassion on thy fellow-servant?' In those that have true pardon it causeth them to forgive others out of a sense of God's mercy; that is, they are disposed and inclined to show mercy to others. But in others that think themselves pardoned, and have only a temporary pardon and reprieve (such as is there spoken of), it is a motive which should prevail with them, though it doth not. Nay, it is the pattern of our love to others: Eph. 4:32, 'Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you;' in that manner, and according to that example.

[4.] It doth not import an exact equality, but some kind of resemblance. As, it is a note of similitude, not equality, either of measure or manner; it only implieth that there is some correspondent action, something like done on our part. So, Luke 6:36, 'Be merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful.' As, notes the certainty of the truth, though not the exact proportion; there will be something answerable to God.

2. But positively to show what respect it hath.

[1.] It is a condition or moral qualification which is found in persons pardoned: Mat. 6:14, 'For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:' but, ver. 15, 'If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your

trespasses.' These two are inseparably conjoined, God's pardoning of us, and our pardoning of others. The grant of a pardon, that is given out at the same time when this disposition is wrought in us; but the sense of a pardon, that is a thing subsequent to this disposition. And when we find this disposition in us, we come to understand how we are pardoned of God.

[2.] It is an evidence, a sign or note of a pardoned sinner. When a man's heart is entended by the Lord's grace, and inclined to show mercy, here is his evidence: Mat. 5:7, 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.' The stamp or impression shows that the seal hath been there; so this is an evidence to us whereby we may make out our title to the Lord's mercy, that we have received mercy from the Lord.

[3.] It is a necessary effect of God's pardoning mercy shed abroad in our hearts; for mercy begets mercy, as heat doth heat: Titus 3:2, 3, 'Show meekness to all men; for we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient,' &c. There is none so tender to others as they which have received mercy themselves; that know how gently God hath dealt with them, and did not take the advantage of their iniquity.

[4.] It is put here to show that it is a duty incumbent upon them that are pardoned. God hath laid this necessity upon men. And that may be one reason why this clause is inserted, that every time we come to pray and beg pardon, we may bind ourselves to this practice, and warn ourselves more solemnly of our duty, and undertake it in the sight of God. So that when we say, 'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,' it is a certain undertaking or solemn promise we make to God, if he will show mercy to us, this will incline us to show mercy to others. In earnest requests, we are wont to bind ourselves to necessary duties.

[5.] It is an argument breeding confidence in God's pardoning mercy. When we, that have so much of the old leaven, that sour, revengeful

nature, in us, yet when we have received but a spark of grace, it makes us ready to forgive others; then what may we imagine in God! What is our drop, to that infinite sea of fulness that is in him! Clearly thus it is urged in that clause, Luke 11:4, 'And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.' There is a special emphasis upon that, for we also; that is, we that have so little grace, we that are so revengeful and passionate by nature, we also forgive those that are indebted to us. Therefore the gracious God, in all goodness, and in all moral perfections, doth far exceed the creature; and if this be in us, what is there in God? This kind of reasoning is often used in scripture; as Mat. 7:11, 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?' If evil men hath such bowels and affections towards their children, certainly there is more of this goodness and kindness in God.

Thirdly, Wherein this forgiving of others doth consist?

1. In forbearing others.
2. In acquitting others.
3. In doing good to them.

[1.] In forbearing one another and withholding ourselves from revenge. This is a thing that is distant from forgiving, and accordingly we shall find it so propounded by the apostle: Col. 3:13, 'Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.' Mark, there is first forbearing and then forgiving. What is forbearing? A ceasing from acts of revenge, which, though they be sweet to nature, yet they are contrary to grace. Some men will say, We will do to him as he hath done to us: Prov. 24:29, 'Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me; I will render to the man according to his work.' Corrupt nature thirsteth for revenge, and hath a strong inclination this way; but grace should give check to it:

'Say not,' &c. Men think it is a base thing, and argueth a low, pusillanimous spirit, to put up with wrongs and injuries: oh, it argueth a stupid baseness. But this is that which giveth a man a victory over himself; nay, it gives a man the truest victory over his enemy, when he forbears to revenge. It gives a man a victory over himself, which is better than the most noble actions amongst the sons of men: Prov. 16:32, 'He that overcometh his own spirit is more than he that taketh a city.' There is a spirit in us that is boisterous, turbulent, and revengeful, apt to retaliate and return injury for injury. Now, when we can bridle this, this is an overcoming of our own spirits. But that is the true weakness of spirit, when a man is easily overcome by his own passion. And then hath our enemy a true victory over us, when his injuries overcome us so far as we can break God's laws to be quit with him. Therefore the apostle saith: Rom. 12:21, 'Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.' Then is grace victorious, and then hath a man a noble and brave spirit, not when he is overcome by evil (for that argueth weakness), but when he can overcome evil. And it is God's way to shame the party that did the wrong and to overcome him too: it is the best way to get the victory over him. When David had Saul at an advantage in the cave, and cut off the lap of his garment, and did forbear any act of revenge against him, Saul was melted, and said to David, 'Thou art more righteous than I,' 1 Sam. 24:17. Though he had such a hostile mind against him, and chased and pursued him up and down, yet when David forebore revenge when it was in his power, it overcame him, and he falls a-weeping. So the captains of the Syrians, when the prophet had blinded them, and led them from Dothan to Samaria, what saith the king of Israel? is he ready to kill them presently? No: 2 Kings 6:22, 'Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master.' He was kind to them; and what followeth? 'They did no more annoy Israel.' This wrought upon the hearts of the Syrians, so that they would not come and trouble them any more.

[2.] In forgiving, it is not only required of Christians to forbear the avenging of themselves, but also actually to forgive and pardon those

that have done them wrongs. They must not only forbear acts of revenge, but all desires of revenge must be rooted out of their hearts. Men may tolerate or forbear others for want of a handsome opportunity of executing their purposes; but the scripture saith, 'Forbearing one another, forgiving one another.' This forgiving implieth the laying down of all anger, and hatred, and all desire of revenge. Now this should be done, not only in word, but sincerely and universally.

(1.) Sincerely, and with the heart. In the conclusion of that parable, Christ doth not say, If ye do not forgive, thus it shall be done to you; but, 'If ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses, so also shall my heavenly Father do to you.' We must not only do this, but do it from the heart. Joseph, when his brethren came to him and submitted themselves, did not only remit the offence, but his bowels yearned towards them, and his heart was towards them: Gen. 50:17. Then,

(2.) It must be done universally, whatever the wrong be, be it to our persons, names, or estates. To our persons: Acts 7:60, Stephen, when they stoned him, he said, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.' Though they had done him so great an injury as to deprive him of his life and service, yet, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.' So to our names: When Shimei came barking against David—the poor man was driven out of Jerusalem by a rebellious son, and this wicked wretch takes advantage against David and rails at him—yet David forgives him when restored to his crown: 'He shall not die,' 2 Sam. 19:23. Nay, he swore to him. So his estate: When a debtor is not able to pay, and yet submits. So Paul bids Philemon to forgive the wrongs of Onesimus: 'Put it on my score,' Philem. 18, that is, for my sake forgive this wrong.

[3.] We must be ready to perform all offices of love to them: Luke 6:27, 'Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you.' Mark, do not only forbear to execute your wrath and revenge upon them, but do good to them; yea, though they be enemies upon a religious

ground; though religion be made a party in the quarrel, and so engage us to the greater fury, when that which should bridle our passions is the fuel to them: 'Pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you,' Mat. 5:44. Miriam, when she had wronged Moses, yet he falls a-praying for her, Num. 12:13, that the Lord would forgive the sin and heal her.

For the reasons why those that would rightly pray to be forgiven of God must forgive others—it should be so, it will be so—there is a congruency and a necessity.

1. The congruency, it should be so. It is fit that he that beggeth mercy should show mercy; it is exceedingly congruous. For this is a general rule: that we should do as we would be done unto; and, therefore, if we need mercy from God, we should show mercy to others, and without it we can never pray in faith. He that doth not exercise love can never pray in faith. Why? His own revengeful disposition will still prejudice his mind, and make him conclude against the audience of his prayers; for certainly we muse on others as we use ourselves. And that is one reason of our unbelief, why we are so hardly brought to believe all that tender mercy which is in God; because it is so irksome to us to forgive seven times a day, we are apt to frame our conclusions according to the disposition of our own heart. Can we think God will forgive when we ourselves will not forgive? A man's own prayers will be confuted. What is more equal than to do as we would be done unto? And therefore it is but equal, if he entreat mercy for himself, he should show it unto others. Look, as the centurion reasoned of God's power, from the command that he had over his soldiers: Mat. 8:9, 'I am a man under authority, and I say to one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh.' Those things we are accustomed to, they are apt to run in our minds when we come to think of God. Now he that kept his soldiers under discipline that if he said, Go, they go, he reasons thus of God: Surely God hath power to chase away diseases. So accordingly should we reason of God's mercy according to the mercy that we find in ourselves. Therefore it is very notable that when Christ had spoken of

forgiving our brethren, 'not only seven times, but seventy times seven,' the disciples said unto the Lord, 'Increase our faith,' Luke 17:5. How doth this come in? In the 4th verse Christ had spoken that they should forgive not only seven times, but seventy times seven; and they do not say, Lord, increase our charity, but our faith; implying that we cannot have such large thoughts of God when our own hearts are so straitened by revenge and our private passions.

2. In point of necessity; as it should be so, so it will be so; for God's mercy will have an influence upon us to make us merciful. All God's actions to us imprint their stamp in us. His election of us makes us to choose him and his ways; his love to us makes us love him again, who hath loved us first; so his forgiving of us makes us to forgive our brethren. There is an answerable impression left upon the soul to every act of God. Why? For a true believer is God's image: 'The new man is created after God,' Eph. 4:24; and therefore he acts as God. Certainly, if there be such a disposition in our heavenly Father, it will be in us if we have an interest in him. Look, as a child hath part for part, and limb for limb, answerable to his father, though not so big in stature and bulk; so hath a child of God, which is created after God, he hath all the divine perfections in some measure in his soul. And this consideration is of more force, because the new creature cannot be maimed and defective in every part, but is entire, lacking nothing. And therefore, if God forgive others, certainly the godly will be inclinable to forgive too.

Use 1. Here is a ground of trial whether we are pardoned or no: Is our revengeful disposition, that is so natural and so pleasing to us, mortified? That is one trial or evidence whether we are forgiven of God; can we freely from the heart forgive others?

Object. But it may be objected against this: Do you place so much in this property of forgiving others? It doth not agree only to pardoned sinners, because we see some carnal men are of a weak and stupid spirit, not sensible of injuries. And, on the other side, many of God's



children find it hard to obtain to the perfect oblivion of injuries that is required of them.

Ans. As to the first part, I answer: We do not speak of this disposition as proceeding from an easy temper, but as it proceedeth from grace; when, in conscience towards God, and out of a sense of his love to us in Christ, our hearts, being tendered and melted towards others, to show them such mercy as we ourselves have received from the Lord; that is the evidence. And again, we do not press to judge by this evidence single and alone, but in conjunction with others; when they are humbly penitent, and confessing their sins, and turn to the Lord, which is the great evangelical condition: Job 33:27, 'If any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not,' then will he restore light to him. When a man is soundly touched with remorse, and seeth the folly of his former courses, and asketh pardon of God, then is God gracious to him. But this is that we say, that this disposition of pardon, in conjunction with the great evangelical condition of faith and repentance, it helpeth to make the evidence more clear.

2. As to the other part of the objection, which was this: it will be a great weakening of the confidence of God's children who cannot get such a perfect oblivion of injuries they have received, but find their minds working too much this way:—

I answer: As long as we live in the world there will be flesh and spirit, corruption as well as grace; there will be an intermixture of the operations of each. Carnal nature is prone to revenge, but grace prevaieth and inclineth to a pardon. Well, then, if this be the prevalent inclination of the soul, and that which we strive by all good means to cherish in us, this meek disposition, passing by of wrongs we receive by others, then we may take comfort by this evidence, though there be some reluctances and regrudgings of the old nature.

Use 2. To press us to this ready inclination to forgive wrongs and injuries. We are not so perfect but we all need it from one another.

There will be mutual offences while we are in the world, especially in a time when religious differences are on foot; therefore it concerns us to look after this disposition of forgiving others, as we would be forgiven of God. Human society cannot well be upheld without this mutual forbearance and forgiving. Now imitate your heavenly Father. No man can wrong us so much as we daily trespass against him, and yet God pardoneth us. He doth not only pardon the lesser failings, some venial errors, and sins of incogitancy and sudden surreption, which creep upon us we know not how; but he pardons the greatest sins, though they be as scarlet: Isa. 1:18. Those that are of a crimson hue, God can wash them out in the blood of Christ. And mark, what is it then that you will stand upon? Is it the greatness of the offence? God pardons great sins. Or is it the baseness of those that injure you—(this is the circumstance)—when we have received wrong from those which are our inferiors, that owe us more reverence and respect? What are we to God? Notwithstanding the baseness of those which affront him daily, all men to him are but 'as the drop of the bucket, and the small dust of the balance,' Isa. 40:15; yet God pardons them. And then again, cast in the consideration of God's omnipotency. He is able to right himself of the wrongs done to him, and no man can call him to an account. Many times it is not in our power: 'He can cast body and soul into hell,' Mat. 10:28. God is thus offended, and by saucy dust that is ready to fly in his face, inconsiderable man; and yet the Lord pardons, and this he doth freely: Luke 7:42, 'He frankly forgave them both.' And he pardons fully, as if it were never committed: Micah 7:19, 'He casts all our sins into the depths of the sea.' Then he pardons frequently: His 'free gift is of many offences unto justification,' Rom. 5:16. And he 'multiplies to pardon,' Isa. 55:7. And mark, he pardons too (in some sense) before they repent; there is a purpose; he provided Christ before we were born. And he gives us grace to repent, or else we could never humble ourselves at his feet, the offended God; he gives them the grace whereby they shall acknowledge the offence. Christ prayed for his persecutors when they had no sense of the injury they had done him; they were converted by that prayer afterwards: Luke 23:34, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;' therefore

certainly much more when they repent and submit. Oh, therefore, let us not be drawn hardly to this duty; or, at least, we should not upon every petty offence cherish hatred and rancour against our brethren.

But here are certain cases that would come into debate.

First Case. Whether it be consistent with this temper, forgiving of others, to seek reparation of wrongs in a way of justice, and pursue men at law for offences they have committed against us?

Ans. Yes. For,

1. Certainly one law doth not cross another. By the law of charity the law of justice is not made void. A magistrate, though he be a Christian, and bound to forgive others, is not bound up from executing his office against public offenders. Nor yet are private men tied from having recourse to the magistrate for restoration to their right, or reparation of their wrong. For to demand one's right is not contrary to love, nor to seek to amend and humble the party nocent by the magistrate's authority, who is 'the minister of God for good,' Rom. 13:4; and that others may 'hear and fear,' Deut. 19:20; and the party damnified may for the future live in peace. Forgiving is an act of private jurisdiction. The offence, as far as it is private to us, it may be forgiven; but there are many such offences as are not only an offence to us, but to the public order, and that must be left to the process of the law.

2. Whosoever useth this remedy must look to his own heart, that he be not acted with private revenge, nor with a spirit of rigour or rancour against the party offending; but that he be carried out with zeal to justice, with pity to the person, that he and others may not be hardened in sin. For this is the general law of Christ, that 'all things should be done in love,' 1 Cor. 16:14. Therefore when we are acted by our private passion and secret desires of revenge, we abuse God's ordinance of magistracy, and make it to lacquey upon our lusts. And therefore there must be a taking heed to the frame of our own hearts,

that they be upright in these things. Though it seem hard to flesh and blood, yet remember flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Grace must frame your hearts to the obedience of God's will.

3. These remedies from authority must be in weighty cases, and in matters of moment and importance. Their contending in law one with another about the smallest matters is that which the apostle taxeth: 1 Cor. 6:7. Not upon every trifling occasion. It must be after other means are tried and used; as the help of friends to compound the matter, for charity trieth all things: 1 Cor. 13:4. And the apostle saith, 1 Cor. 6:5, 'Is there none to judge between you?' that is, none to decide and arbitrate the difference, for the refuge to authority should be our last remedy. And it must be too when the party wronging is able to make satisfaction, otherwise it is rigour and inhumanity: 2 Kings 4:1. As when the creditors came to take the sons of the widow for bondmen. When you are rigorous with those that come to poverty, not by their own default, but by the discharge of their duty brought poverty upon themselves, it is contrary to Christianity. Look, as physicians deal with quicksilver, after many distillations they make it useful in medicines; so, after many preparations is this course to be taken.

Second Case. Whether, in forgiving injuries, we are bound to tarry for the repentance of the party? The ground of doubting is, because Christ saith, Luke 17:3, 'If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and, if he repent, forgive him;' and because of God's example, who doth not forgive an obstinate sinner, but him that repents. Certainly, even before repentance, we are bound to lay aside revenge, and in many cases to go and reconcile ourselves with others. Saith our Saviour, 'If thou hast aught against any one, go reconcile thyself to him, and then come and offer thy gift.' It is not said, If any have aught against thee, but, If thou hast aught against any one. I confess, in some cases, it is enough to lay it aside before the Lord. But at other times, we are to seek reconciliation with the party which hath wronged us. But this case is mightily to be guided by spiritual prudence. As for God's example, God is superior, bound to none, he

acts freely; it is his mercy that pardons any; and yet God gives us a heart to repent of his good pleasure,—he begins with a sinner. But this is nothing to our case who are under law, who are hound to forgive others.

III. The person to whom we pray, Our heavenly Father.

The note is, that God doth alone forgive sin.

There is a double forgiveness of sin—in heaven and in a man's own conscience; and therefore sometimes compared to the blotting out of something out of a book, sometimes to the blotting out of a cloud. To the blotting out of a book: Isa. 43:25, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins;' that it may be no more remembered or charged upon us. To the blotting out of a cloud: Isa. 44:22, 'I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins;' as the sun when it breaketh forth in its strength dispelleth the mists and clouds. Sin interposeth as a cloud, hindering the light of God's countenance from shining forth upon us. Both these are God's work; to blot the book and to blot out the cloud.

1. Pardoning of sin in the court of heaven, it belongeth to God peculiarly: Dan. 9:9, 'To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses,' &c. It is God alone can do it, for two reasons:—

[1.] He is the wronged party.

[2.] He is the supreme judge.

(1.) He is the wronged party, against whom the offence is committed: Ps. 51:4, 'Against thee, against thee only, have I sinned.' He had sinned against Bathsheba, against Uriah, whose death he projected. How is it said 'against thee only'? There may be wrong and hurt done to a creature, but the sin is against God, as it is a breach of his law, and a despising of his sovereign authority; the injury done to the creature is nothing in comparison of the offence done to God, against

so many obligations wherein we stand bound to him. Amongst men, we distinguish between the crime and the wrong. And a criminal action is one thing, and an action of wrong and trespass is another. If a man steal from another, it is not enough to make him restitution, but he must satisfy the law.

(2.) He is the supreme judge. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as one God, are the judge of all the earth, to whom they must be accountable for the offence: Gen. 18:25, 'Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?' But in the mystery of redemption, the Father, as first in order of the persons, is represented as the judge, to whom the satisfaction is tendered, and who doth authoritatively pass a sentence of absolution. And therefore it is said, 1 John 2:1, 'We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' He is to deal with him as the supreme judge; and 'it is God that justifieth,' Rom. 8:33. The whole business of our acquitment is carried on by the Father, who is to receive the satisfaction, and our humble addresses for pardon.

But to answer some objections that may arise.

Object. 1. It is said, Mat. 9:6, 'The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins.'

I answer: That is brought there as an argument of his Godhead. He that was the Son of man was also very God; and therefore upon earth, in the time of his humiliation, he had power to forgive sins, for he ceased not to be God when incarnate. And it became him to discover himself, as by his divine power in the work of miracles, so his divine authority in the forgiveness of sins.

Object. 2. Is taken from the text, 'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive those that trespass against us.'

I answer: In sin, there is the obliquity or fault in it, and the hurt or detriment that redounds to man by it. As it is a breach of the law of God, or an offence to his infinite majesty, God can only pardon it, or

dispense with it. As it is a hurt to us, so restitution is to be made to man, and man can pardon or forgive it.

Object. 3. It is said, John 20:23, 'Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.' So that it seemeth man hath a power to remit sins.

I answer: They do it declaratively, and by commission from God. The officers of the church have the keys of the kingdom of heaven committed to them; the key of knowledge or doctrine, and the key of order and discipline. Accordingly this power is called, 'The keys of the kingdom of heaven,' Mat. 16:19. And the use of them is to open or shut the doors of God's house, and to 'bind or loose,' as the expression is, Mat. 18:18. That is, to pronounce guilty and liable to judgment, or to absolve and set free declaratively and in God's name; or, as it is literally expressed in the place alleged, to remit or retain. The key of doctrine is exercised about all sin as sin, were it never so secret and inward; and the key of order and discipline about sin only as it is scandalous and infectious. Now what they act ministerially, according to their commission, it is ratified in heaven, for it is a declaration or intimation of the sentence already passed there. So that a declarative and ministerial power is given to the church; but the authoritative power of forgiving sins, that God hath reserved to himself. Man can remit doctrinally, and by way of judicial procedure, but that is only by way of commission and ministerial deputation. Such as are penitent, and feel the bonds of their sins, they do declaratively absolve and loose them, or take off the censure judicially inflicted for their scandalous carriage. This ministerial forgiving, however carnal hearts may slight it, both in doctrine and discipline, yet being according to the rules of the word, is owned by God, and the penitent shall feel it to their encouragement, and the obstinate to their terror.

2. As he pardoneth sin in the conscience; and there God alone can forgive sin, or speak peace to the soul upon a double account:—

[1.] Because of his authority.

[2.] Because of his power.

(1.) Because of his authority. Conscience is God's deputy, and till God be pacified, conscience is not pacified upon sound and solid terms. Therefore it is said, where conscience doth its office, 1 John 3:20, 21, 'If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things; if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.' God is greater than our consciences. His authority is greater, for God is supreme, whose sentence is decisive. Now, though conscience should not do its office, 1 Cor. 4:4, 'For I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.' All depends upon God's testimony.

(2.) Because of his power, who only can still the conscience: Isa. 57:19, 'I create the fruit of the lips to be, peace, peace;' that is, the lips of his ministers or messengers, who bring the glad tidings of peace, or the reconcilment of God to his people: and therefore it is called 'the peace of God,' Phil. 4:7, as wrought by him. The gospel is a sovereign plaster, but it is God's hand that must make it stick upon the soul, otherwise we hear words and return words: it is by the lively operation of his Spirit that our hearts are settled. God cometh in with a sovereign powerful act upon the soul, otherwise one grief or sad thought doth but awaken another. Till he 'command loving-kindness,' Ps. 42:8, we are still followed with temptation; as the rain swells the rivers, and rivers the sea, and in the sea one wave impelleth another, so doth one temptation raise another.

Use 1. It reproveth those that do not deal with God about the pardon of their sins. If God alone pardon sins, then God must be sought to about it. For though there be none in earth to call us to an account, yet God may call us to an account; and then what shall we do? Many, if they escape the judgment of man, think they are safe; but alas! your iniquities will find you out. You think they are past, and never more to be remembered; but they will find you out in this world or



the next; our business lieth not with man so much as with God. Therefore this should be the question of your souls: Job 31:14, 'What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?' Which way shall I turn myself when God calleth me to an account? He will come and inquire into our ways; are you provided of an answer? David's sin was secret; his plot for the destruction of Uriah closely carried. Nathan tells him, 2 Sam. 12:12, 'Thou didst it secretly.' But, 'against thee have I sinned.' Many escape blame with men, but God's wrath maketh inquisition for sinners. You cannot escape his search and vengeance if you do not treat with him about a pardon.

Use 2. It shows the folly of those that have nothing to show for the pardon of their sins, but their own secure presumptions; it is God's act to pardon sin. Man may forget his sin, but if God remember it he is miserable. Man may hide his sin, but if God bring it to light; man may put off the thoughts, but if God doth not put away; man may excuse his sin, but if God aggravate it; the debtor may deny the debt, but if the book be not crossed, he is responsible: Ps. 32:1, 2, 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity,' &c. We must have God's act to show for our discharge, then we may triumph: 'It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?' &c., Rom. 8:33, 34. God is the offended party, and the supreme judge. Then conscience hath nothing to do with us, nor Satan, neither as accuser or executioner. Not as an accuser, for then he is but a slanderer; not as an executioner, for he is turned out of office: Heb. 2:14, 'That he might destroy him that had the power of death, even the devil.' Have you your pardon from God? Is your discharge from him? When have it we from God?

1. Have it you from his mouth, in the word, or prayer, upon suing to him in Christ's name, and earnest waiting upon him? If men would consider how they come by their peace, they would sooner be undeceived. You were praying and wrestling with God, and so your comfort came. God speaketh peace. But when it groweth upon you,

you know not how; it was a thing you never laboured for; like Jonah's gourd, it grew up in a night; it is but a fond dream.

2. Have it you under his hand? Is it a peace upon scripture terms?—of faith: Rom. 5:1, 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:'—repentance: Luke 24:47, 'That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations,' &c.;—and the exercise of holiness,—then have you God's word to show for it. But if it be not a peace consistent with scripture rules, nay, you are afraid of the word, John 3:20, you are loth to be tried,—it is a naughty heart.

3. Have it you under his seal? 2 Cor. 1:22, 'Who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.' Have you the impress of God upon you, God's seal, his image? Doth the Spirit of promise assure your hearts before God, that you can live in the strength of this comfort and go about duties cheerfully? Then it is God's pardon; otherwise it is but your own absolution, which is worth nothing.

Use 3. It showeth that we need not fear the censures of men, nor the hatred of the ungodly; for it is God pardoneth, and who can condemn? God will not ask their vote and suffrage who shall be accepted to life and who not: 1 Cor. 4:3, 'But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment,' &c. A man must expect censure that will be faithful to God; but if he acquit us, it is no matter what our guilty fellow-creatures say.

Use 4. Is comfort to broken-hearted sinners; to those that need and desire pardon. It is well for them that God doth not put them off to others, but reserveth this power of pardoning sins to himself.

1. It is his glory to forgive sins: Exod. 33:18, 'And he said, I beseech thee show me thy glory;' compared with Exod. 34:6, 7, 'And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and

truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin,' &c. It is not only the glory of a man, who is so offensive himself and so passionate, that this passion will draw him to what is unseemly, but of God.

2. It is his glory, not only above the creatures, but above all that is called god in the world: Micah 7:18, 'Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.' The heathen gods were known by their terrors rather than their benefits, and feared rather for their revenges than their mercies. We may boast of him above all idol gods upon this account. He is known among his people, not so much by acts of power, as acts of grace, and the greatness of his mercy, in pardoning sins for Christ's sake.

3. He is willing to dispense a pardon: Micah 7:18, 'He delighteth in mercy.' God delighteth in himself, and all his attributes, and the manifestation of them in the world; but above all in his mercy. Justice is 'his strange act,' Isa. 28:21. There is not anything more pleasing to him. It is the mercy of God that he hath drawn up a petition for us; he would never have taught us to have asked mercy by prayer, if he had not been willing to show us mercy.

4. God will do it for his own sake, and not for any foreign reasons: Isa. 43:25, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake,' and out of a respect to his own honour. See how God casts up his accounts. It is mercy: Jer. 3:12, 'I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever.' So his truth: Ps. 106:45, 'He remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.' Not from any desert of theirs, who do so neglect him and wrong him; God will do it upon his own reasons.

5. He will do it in such a way as man doth not, in a way of infinite mercy: Hosea 11:9, 'I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger; for I am God, and not man.' It is the great advantage of us sinners

that we have to do with God and not man in our miscarriages; for man's pity and mercy may be exhausted, be it never so great. What! seven times a day? But God is infinite. Man may think it dishonourable to agree with an inferior when he stoops not to him; but God is so far above the creature that we are below his indignation. Man is soon wearied, but not God: Isa. 55:8, 9, 'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.'

I now come to the fourth and last consideration.

IV. That forgiveness of sins is one great benefit that we must ask of God in prayer. Here it will be needful to show:—

First, The necessity of treating with God about forgiveness.

Secondly, The nature of this benefit.

Thirdly, The terms how God dispenseth it.

First, The necessity will appear in these propositions:—

1. Man hath a conscience: Rom. 2:15, 'Thoughts accusing or excusing,' &c. A beast cannot reflect.
2. A conscience inferreth a law.
3. A law inferreth a sanction.
4. A sanction inferreth a judgment.
5. A judgment inferreth a condemnation to the fallen creature.
6. There is no avoiding this condemnation, unless God set up a chancery, or another court of grace.

7. If God set up another court, our plea must be grace. Of this see more at large, 'Twenty Sermons,' Sermon 1 on Ps. 32:1, 2.

Secondly, The nature of this benefit, or manner how God forgiveth.

1. Freely.

2. Fully.

[1.] Freely, and merely upon the impulsions of his own grace: Isa. 43:25, 'I, even I, am he that forgiveth your iniquities for my name's sake.' Nothing else could move him to it but his own mercy; and he could have chosen whether he would have done so, yea or no—for he spared not the angels, but offereth pardon to man, and all men are not actually pardoned. And, therefore, the only reason why he showeth us mercy and not others, is merely his own grace. The intervention of Christ's merit doth not hinder the freedom of it, though dearly purchased by Christ, yet freely bestowed on us. For it is said, Rom. 3:24, 'Justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ.' Why? Partly because it was mercy that he would not prosecute his right against us. Partly because he found out the way how to recompense the wrong done by sin unto his majesty, and out of his love sent his Son to make this recompense for us: John 3:16. It was love set all a-work. And lastly, not excited hereunto by any worth on our parts, but the external moving cause was only our misery, and the internal moving cause his own grace. Nor is the freedom of this act infringed by requiring faith and repentance on our part, because that only showeth the way and order wherein this grace is dispensed, not the cause why. It is not for the worth of our repentance, or as if there were any merit in it. A malefactor, that beggeth his pardon on his knees, doth not deserve a pardon; only the majesty of the prince requireth that it should be submissively asked. These are not conditions of merit, but order; not the cause, but the way of grace's working. And these conditions are wrought in us by grace: Acts 5:31; not required only, but given. In all other covenants, the party contracting is bound to perform what he

promiseth by his own strength. But in the covenant of grace, God doth not only require that we should believe and repent, but causeth it in us. Conditions of the covenant are conditions in the covenant. God requireth faith and repentance, and giveth faith and repentance. Compare Isa. 59:20, with Rom. 11:26. It is Christ's gift as well as his precept; so that when we come about pardon of sin, we have only to do with grace. We beg pardon, and a heart to receive it. It is a free pardon.

[2.] It is a full pardon. It is full in several respects. (1.) Because where the party is forgiven, he is accepted with God as if he had never sinned: Ps. 103:12, 'As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.' And Micah 7:19, 'Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depth of the sea;' Isa. 38:17, 'Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.' It shall not be remembered nor laid to their charge any more. It is true, for a while after they may trouble the conscience, as when the storm ceaseth, the waves roll for a while afterwards; so may sin in the consciences of God's children work trouble, after the fiducial application of the blood of Christ. But the storm ceaseth by degrees; and it is possible that the commitment of new sins may revive old guilt, as a new strain may make us sensible of an old bruise. Yet we must distinguish between the full grant of a pardon, from the full sense of it. When we are not thankful, humble, fruitful, former sins may come into remembrance, and God may permit it, as matter of humiliation to us, and to quicken us to seek after new confirmation of our right and interest. Yet God's pardon is never reversed, nor will the sin be charged again, or put in suit against him, to the final condemnation of the person so pardoned. Once more: though the sins of the justified should be remembered at the day of judgment, it will not be to the confusion of their faces, but the exaltation and praise of the Lord's grace. Then is this acquittance in all respects full. (2.) It is full, because where God forgiveth one sin, he will forgive all: Ps. 103:3, 'Who pardoneth all thy sins;' and Micah 7:19, 'Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depth of the sea.' Sins original, actual; of omission, commission; small, great; secret, open; lust that boileth in the heart, and breaketh out in the life; sins of

worship, of ordinary conversation. Look in the bill—what owest thou? A Christian is amazed when he cometh to a serious account with God; but the self-judging sinner needeth not be discouraged when he cometh to God. For where God pardoneth all that is past, the fountain stands daily open for him to flee unto, with all his faults as they are committed; and upon the renewing of his faith and repentance, he shall obtain his pardon. All sins are mortal, all of them damnable. Therefore if all sins be not pardoned, he remaineth in danger of the curse, and one sin let alone is sufficient to exclude us out of heaven. Therefore all is pardoned, first or last. Justice hath no more to seek of Christ. And we have all leave to sue out our pardon in Christ's name. He is under that covenant that will pardon all.

[3.] It is full; because where God forgiveth the sin, he also forgiveth the punishment. It will not stand with God's mercy to forgive the debt, and yet to require the payment. It is a mocking to say, I forgive you the debt, and yet cast the man into prison; and to pardon the malefactor, and yet leave him liable to execution. Here in the text, God forgiveth us, as we are bound to forgive our brother, not in part, but in whole. Guilt is nothing but an obligation to punishment (1.) As to eternal punishment, it is clear: Rom. 5:9. The eternal promises and threatenings, being of things absolutely good and evil, are therefore absolute and peremptory, that is certain. (2.) But now as to temporal afflictions, there is some difficulty, for where the whole punishment is done away, such grace and payment of any part of the debt cannot stand together. That pardon which is given upon valuable and sufficient price is full and perfect. Jesus Christ satisfied the justice of God for all our sins. How is it, then, that the saints are subject to so many afflictions? (1.) So far as sin remains, so far some penal evil remains: when the dominion of it is broken, there remains no condemnation, but yet some affliction, and when it is wholly gone, there is no evil at all. We are not yet purged from all sin; and, therefore, (2.) these afflictions are not satisfactory punishments, and need not, as to the completing of our justification, but are helps to us, as the furtherance of our sanctification; and so are of great use—[1.] To make us hate sin more. If we only knew the sweetness of it, and

not the bitterness, we would not be so shy of it. Now the bitterness of it is seen by the effects: Jer. 2:19, 'Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee; know therefore, and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts.' [2.] It will cause us to prize our deliverance by Christ. If affliction be so grievous, what would hell be? 1 Cor. 11:32, 'But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.' It is a gentle remembrance of hell-pains, or a fair warning to avoid them, when scorched or singed a little. [3.] To make us walk more humbly. We forget ourselves, and are apt to be puffed up. Paul saith, 2 Cor. 12:7, 'Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.'

[4.] It is full, because where God forgiveth sin, there are many consequent benefits.

(1.) God is reconciled: Rom. 5:1, 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' This is the great blessing, and our great work is to make and keep peace with God; to have no cloud between us and his face. Light is pleasant: what then is the light of his countenance, that filleth us with a peace that passes understanding? We would have a powerful friend, especially if we need him: Acts 12:20; they sought peace with Herod, 'because their country was nourished by the king's country;' so should we do: we cannot live without God. If sin be pardoned, then we are at peace with God, and may have free access to him, with a free use of all that is his.

(2.) A heart sanctified is a connexed benefit: 1 Cor. 6:11, 'And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus;' and 1 John 1:9. Sin is considerable in the guilt and filth of it, as it rendereth us obnoxious to God's justice, or as it tainteth our faculties and actions. According



to this double respect, Christ destroyeth sin, and no man hath benefit by him that is not freed from the guilt and filth thereof. Christ was sent into the world to restore God's image in us. But the image of God consisteth in the participation of holiness, as well as the participation of blessedness; for God, that is happy and blessed, is also holy and good. The filthiness of sin is opposite to holiness, and the guilt of it to blessedness; so that either Christ must restore but half the image of God, or he must give us this double benefit. If he should give us one without the other, many inconveniences would follow; therefore both are given: he justifieth that he may sanctify, and he sanctifieth that he may glorify.

(3.) Providence is blessed: the curse is taken out of our blessings, and the sting out of our afflictions. As long as sin remains unpardoned our blessings are cursed: Mal. 2:2, 'If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory to my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart.' There will be a worm in our manna, our 'table will become a snare,' Ps. 69:22. But when once sin is pardoned, the sting of misery is taken away: 1 Cor. 15:56, 'The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law: but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' Crosses are not curses.

(4.) We have a right to heaven, which is the great ground of hope: Rom. 5:10, 'For it, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.'

Thirdly, The terms upon which it is dispensed are faith and repentance.

1. Faith: Acts 10:43, 'To him give all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.' Faith is necessary to honour the mercy of God, to

own the surety, to consent to his undertaking, to encourage the creature to look after this benefit.

2. Repentance, which implieth a sorrow for sin, with a serious purpose of forsaking it. Sorrow for sin: no man can seriously desire a pardon but he that is touched with a sense of his sin, moved and troubled at it. And then, for purpose of forsaking: Ezek. 33:12, 'As for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness.' Sin pardoned must be left; otherwise, a pardon given to a wicked man would be a confirmation of his sin, or a concession of leave to sin. Well, then, let us seek pardon of God in this way.

## **And Lead Us Not into Temptation**

WE are now come to the sixth petition, which is doubly expressed:—

1. Negatively, Lead us not into temptation.
2. Affirmatively, But deliver us from evil.

The first part doth more concern preventing grace, that we may not fall into evil; and the second, recovering grace, that if we fall into evil we may not be overcome of it, nor overwhelmed by it, but may find deliverance from the Lord. Here we pray: (1.) that we may not be tempted; or, (2.) if the Lord see it fit we should be tempted, that we may not yield; or, (3.) if we yield, that we may not totally be overcome. As the former petition concerned the guilt of sin, so this concerns the reign and power of it.

In this first part, take notice:—

First, Of the evil deprecated, or that which we pray against, and that is, temptation.

Secondly, The manner of deprecation, Lead us not.

In which there is something implied, and something formally asked.

1. Something implied; and that is:—

[1.] God's providence. When we say to God, 'Lead us not,' we do acknowledge he hath the disposal of temptation.

[2.] God's justice, and our desert; that for former sins, God may suffer this evil to befall us. We have so often provoked the Lord, that in a judicial manner he may suffer us to be tempted.

[3.] Our weakness; that we are unable to stand under such a condition by our own strength, therefore we go to God.

2. Something formally asked; that is, either that God would prevent the temptation, or, if he should use such a dispensation towards us, give us grace to overcome it.

Of these things I shall speak in their order.

First, Of the evil deprecated; and from thence observe:—

Doct. 1. That temptations are a usual evil, wherewith we encounter in the present world.

Here I shall:—

I. Open the nature of temptations.

II. I shall give you some observations concerning them.

III. The reasons of it.

I. For the nature of temptations.

Temptation is a proving or making trial of a thing or person; what he is, and what he will do. And thus sometimes we are said to tempt God, and at other times God is said to tempt us.

1. We are said to tempt God when we put it to the proof whether he will be as good as his word, either in the comminatory or promissory part thereof: Ps. 95:9, 'When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works;' they tempted God, as they put him often upon the trial. To note that, by the way, there is a twofold tempting or proving of God, either in a way of duty or sin. (1.) In a way of duty, when we wait to see his promise fulfilled; and so, Mal. 3:10, 'Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing.' Come pay your tithes and offerings: he would have the portion which belonged to himself: 'and prove me now herewith,' &c. God submits to a trial from experience, when we wait for the good promised. Thus we try God, and try his word: Ps. 18:30, 'The word of the Lord is a tried word; he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.' All those which build upon it, that wait to see what God will do, they will find it, upon experience, to be accomplished to a tittle; never did any build upon it, or wait for the accomplishment of it, in vain. (2.) In a way of sin. Many ways we are said to tempt God. When we set God a task, in satisfying our conceits and carnal affections: Ps. 78:18, 'They tempted God in their hearts, by asking meat for their lusts;' and when we will not believe in him, but upon conditions of our own making; or when we confine him to our means, or time, or manner of working; or would have some extraordinary proof of his being, and power, and goodness; or see whether God will punish us though we sin against him. All these ways we are said to tempt God in a way of sin. But that is not my business now. Therefore,

2. As man tempts God, so is man himself tempted. Now man is either tempted:—

First, By God.

Secondly, By Satan.

Thirdly, By his own heart.

First, Man is tempted by God: Gen. 22:1, 'And it came to pass, after these things, that God did tempt Abraham.' How is God said to tempt man? When he trieth what is in us: Deut. 8:2, 'To humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart;' either what of grace, or what of sin, is in our heart.

[1.] What of grace. Thus the Lord tries us by afflictions, by delays of promises, and other means becoming his holy nature. By afflictions, for they are called a trial: 1 Pet. 1:6, 'Now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.' The afflictions of the gospel are called temptations. And so by delay of promises: God trieth us sometimes by delaying the accomplishment of his promise; as in Ps. 105:19, 'Until the time that his word came, the word of the Lord tried him;' that is, until the promise was fulfilled and accomplished. A man is put to trial of all the grace that is in his heart.

[2]. God tries what corruption there is in us. He trieth this either by offering occasions, or withdrawing his grace, or by permitting Satan to tempt us.

(1.) By offering occasions in the course of his providence: God puts us upon trial there; sometimes by want, sometimes by fulness. By want: John 6:5, 6, 'Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?' saith Christ to Philip. 'And this he said to prove him; for he himself knew what he would do.' Christ will have the weakness of his followers tried, as well as their strength. And he trieth his people often by this kind of trial, when there are many mouths and no meat, and a man cannot see which way his visible supplies shall come in: this he doth to prove them, to see whether they will look only to outward likelihood and probabilities, or rest themselves upon God's promise and all-sufficiency; or else, by fulness and outward prosperity, to see if they will forget him. I confess I do not remember where this is called a trial in scripture, unless there be somewhat in that place, Deut. 8:16, 'He fed thee with manna in the wilderness, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end.' Possibly the trial there might lie in this:

because they had but from hand to mouth, or because it was not that meat which their lusts craved, but that which God saw fit for them. But, however, though prosperity be not called so, yet certainly it is in itself a trial: Prov. 30:9, 'Give me not riches, lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?' Lust in us makes it to be a temptation, and the godly have been often foiled by it; and they need learn 'how to abound, as well as how to be abased,' Phil. 4:12. They need learn how to avoid the snares of a prosperous condition. David, it was a trial to him; while he was wandering in the wilderness, he had such tenderness, that his heart smote him when he cut off the lap of Saul's garment, while he was chased like a partridge upon the mountains, wandering up and down, from forest to forest. But when he was walking at ease upon the terrace of his palace in Jerusalem, then he falls into blood and uncleanness; and therefore his estate was a trial, and he lieth in it, notwithstanding all his former tenderness of heart, until he was roused up by Nathan the prophet. And certainly, as to the wicked, it is a very great temptation, judicially inflicted, disposed of to them by God's judgment: they are plagued by worldly felicity; and it is part of their curse that they 'shall be written in the earth,' Jer. 17:13; and suitable to this purpose, God saith, Jer. 6:21, 'Behold, I will lay stumbling-blocks before this people, and the fathers and the sons together shall fall upon them.' How doth God lay stumbling-blocks? If men will find the sin, God may with justice enough find the occasion; he will give them some outward condition that is a snare to them. As we may try a servant whom we have just cause to suspect, by laying something in the way, that his filching humour may be discovered, without any breach of justice; so the wicked, that harden their hearts against God, God may give them their hearts' desire, and worldly happiness, and so it may cause them to stumble.

(2.) God trieth us also by withdrawing his grace, as in 2 Chron. 32:31, 'God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart.' It is needful sometimes that we should see our weakness as well as our strength, and how unable we are to stand without grace, that we

may be sensible whence we stand, and which without temptation could not so well be.

(3.) God tries us, by permitting the temptations of Satan and his instruments; for surely these things do not befall us without a providence. Job 12:16, 'The deceived and the deceiver are his,' his creatures; and nothing can be done or suffered in this kind without God's providence. See it in Christ's instance, Mat. 4:1, it is said, 'He was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil;' that is, led by the good and Holy Spirit to be tempted by the evil spirit. So, 2 Sam. 24:1, compared with 1 Chron. 21:1: God moved David, and Satan provoked David, to number the people; that is, God did let loose Satan upon David, to accomplish the righteous ends of his providence. And many of those arrows which are shot at us, though they come immediately from Satan's bow, yet they are taken out of God's quiver. God, as a just judge, may give us up to Satan as his minister and executioner. Well, then, this is one way of God's tempting, permitting of Satan to tempt. And as Satan, so his instruments, God tries us by them. Deut. 13:1–3, 'If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, thou shalt not hearken unto him.' Why? 'For the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul.' God proveth. When there are delusions abroad and errors broached, it is 'that the approved may be made manifest,' 1 Cor. 11:19. God letteth loose these winds of error and delusion that the solid grain may be distinguished from the light chaff, and that he may discover his own people, and whether we have received truths upon evidence, or taken them up only upon hearsay. All these ways may God be said to tempt.

Now concerning this, take these rules:—

(1.) God's tempting is not to inform himself, but to discover his creatures to themselves and others. Not to inform himself, for 'he knows our thoughts afar off,' Ps. 139:2; that is, he knows not only the conclusion and event, and management of things near, but he knows

the very remote preparation aforehand; he knows what kind of thoughts we will have, and workings of spirit. As a man that is up in the air may see a river in its rise, and fountain, and course, and fall of it—seeth it all at once; whereas another which stands by the banks can only see the water as it passeth by. God seeth all things in their fountain and cause, as well as in their issue and event—he seeth all things together; therefore it is not for his own information. But the meaning is, therefore doth God try us, that what is known to him, and yet unknown to ourselves, that that which lodgeth and lieth hid in our heart may be discovered to us. That we may not be conceited of more than we have, and that the evil which before lay hid and was unseen may be cured when it is discovered. And, on the other hand, that grace may not lie sleeping in a dead and inactive habit, but we drawn out into act and view, for his glory and praise.

(2.) God's tempting is always good, and for good; his tempting is either in mercy or in judgment. In mercy: and so when he trieth the graces of his people; or when he means more especially to discover the failings of his people, it is all good. When he tries the graces of his people, there is no doubt of that. When God hath furnished a man with grace, that he may, without any impeachment of his goodness, put him upon trial, and use creatures for that end for which he hath fitted them; as a man which hath made and bought a thing may prove it and try the strength of it. Or when the intent of the dispensation is to try their weakness, that is good also, and for good; as when a man tries a leaky vessel, with an intent to make it stanch. So when God tempts us by sharp afflictions, or any other course, it is for good: Heb. 12:10, 'He, verily, for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' A man that hath a disease upon him, it may be by walking or stirring the humours the disease may appear, it is for good; it is better it should be discovered, that he may in time look after a remedy, than lurk and lie hid in the body to his utter undoing; so it is for good our corruptions and weaknesses should be discovered, that they may be made sound. Ay, but when God brings it in judgment, yet that is for good; that is, for his own glory and his church's good, though not for the good of the party. For



the church's good, that naughtiness where it is might in time be discovered: Prov. 26:26, 'Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be showed before the whole congregation,' lest men get a name that they might do religion a mischief. And it is for the glory of God that men may appear what they are. Here is no stain upon God's justice for all this. He that pierceth a vessel, if it run dreggy with musty or poisonous liquor, the fault is not in him that pierceth it, but in the liquor itself: he that pierceth or broacheth it doth only discover what is within, that if it be unsavoury he may cast it into the kennel. So, it is not the fault of God which pierceth, discovereth, and letteth out our corruption; the fault is in ourselves: we have those things within which are discovered as soon as God puts us upon a trial.

(3.) God tempts no man, as temptation is taken properly for a solicitation to sin: 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.' Mark, the apostle proves it, that in this sense God cannot tempt, because of the unchangeable holiness of his nature. In temptation we must distinguish between the mere trial, and the solicitation to sin; the mere trial, that is from God; but the solicitation to sin, that is from Satan and ourselves. God solicits no man to sin. It is true, God may try us, trouble us, toss us, exercise our faith, hope, and patience. God is the author of our trouble; but the devil is the author of our sin, who sinneth himself, and soliciteth others to sin.

(4.) When we say, 'Lead us not into temptation,' we do not beg a total exemption from God's trials, but only a removal of the judgment of them. Not a total exemption, for then we must go out of the world, for while we are here every condition is a trial to us, and every enjoyment. Afflictions and trouble more or less put to trial, and therefore temptation in this sense is a necessary part of that warfare we must encounter and grapple withal while we are in the world. Prosperity tries us, to see if we be then mindful of God when all things succeed well; and adversity tries us, to see if we can patiently

depend upon God. But it is the judgment of trials that we deprecate, that they may not come upon us as a judgment, or that our trial may be so moderate that we may stand our ground. When doth a trial come as a judgment? When it is immoderate and beyond our strength, either in a way of prosperity or adversity, but chiefly in a way of adversity; for that is most commonly set out in a way of trial in scripture. When it is immoderate and beyond our strength, 1 Cor. 10:13, God hath promised to his people that 'they shall not be tempted above that they are able to bear; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that they may be able to bear it.' God's conduct is very gentle. As Jacob drove on as the little ones were able to bear, so doth God proportion his dispensations to his people's strength, not to their deservings, but he considers what they are able to bear. Either God keeps off greater trials, or gives in greater strength; a sweeter sense of his love, or a greater measure of gracious support. A child would sink under that load that a strong back bears without any grudging. Now, this is that we ask of God, according to his promise, that our temptation may be not immoderate and too hard for us. Or else it is a judgment when it proves a provocation to sin; and so God's temptation, which was meant for our good, we may abuse it, and take occasion thence to sin; as when we murmur under the cross, or turn our worldly comforts into an occasion to the flesh. Now, to prevent the judgment which may be in these temptations; in all the trials which befall us, we should fear more the offence against God than our own smart, or the power of the devil, or any inconvenience that may accrue to us in natural evils which we feel. When we are under afflictions, we should be more solicitous that we do not offend God, that he would keep us from murmuring and dishonouring his name, then we should be about our ease and safety; for this is to prevent the judgment of the temptation. This was Paul's comfort when he was drawing to the conclusion of his life: 2 Tim. 4:18, 'The Lord hath delivered me out of the mouth of the lion, and he shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom.' And so, in good things that we enjoy, we should fear more offending God with them than the losing of them; for the loss of his favour is more than the

loss of our comforts. A man that loseth his worldly portion, this loss may be recompensed; but he that loseth the favour of God, that breach cannot be made up by any worldly comforts whatsoever.

(5.) In passive evils, which are the usual trials of God's people, we are not to seek them, but to submit to them when they come upon us. We are not to seek them: Mat. 16:24, 'If any man will be my disciple, let him take up his cross.' When clearly it is our cross, that is, when it lies in our way, and we cannot decline it, then take it up and fit his back to it. So James 1:2, 'My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.' He doth not say when ye run into them, but fall into them. We are not to draw them upon ourselves. Afflictions are not to be sought and desired, but improved. Christians, we never know when it is well with us: sometimes we question God's love, because we have no afflictions and trials; anon we are questioning his love, because we have nothing but afflictions. In all these things we should refer ourselves to God; not desire troubles, but bear them patiently and quietly when he lays them upon our backs.

(6.) Again, for those trials which come from God. When God tempts us, or trieth his people in mercy, he hath a great deal of care of them under their trials. As a goldsmith, when he casts his metal into the furnace, he doth not lose it there, and look after it no more; but sits, and pries, and looks to see if it be not too hot, that nothing be spilt, nothing lost. So it is said, Mal. 3:3, 'And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.' The Lord will observe his people when they are under trial, how to moderate affliction, how to refresh them with seasonable comfort, that all this might better them, and bring them to good.

(7.) Though in our trials we manifest weakness as well as grace, yet that weakness is to be done away. You must remember weakness is manifested that it may be removed, and grace manifested that it may be strengthened. When gold and silver is tried in the furnace, there is

not only pure metal discovered, but also the drossy part mingled with it; but it is so discovered that it may be severed from the gold. Such is our trial; it may discover a great deal of dross and sin in us. But this is our comfort, that as it doth discover sin, so it conduceth to mortify sin. Therefore saith Job, chap. 23:10, 'When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold;' that is, purified and refined, and having the drossy part eaten out.

(8.) God permits us to be tempted of Satan and his instruments for his glory and our good. For his glory; that his power may be discovered in our preservation, in upholding that grace he hath put into us: 2 Cor. 12:10, 'Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.' We should be glad that God be glorified, though with our great inconvenience. And it is for our good; to correct our pride and vainglory. When Peter presumed of his strength, then God left him to be tempted of the damsel, Mat. 26:33, 70.

(9.) When God permitteth Satan to exercise us, though he suspends the victory, yet if he give us grace to fight and to maintain the combat, it is a great mercy. For so he dealt with Paul when he had to do with the messenger of Satan—(Satan was in that trouble, be it what it will)—he had only this answer, 2 Cor. 12:9, 'My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.' Three times he had been with God, and then he gets his answer, and it was only this, 'My grace,' &c. Jesus Christ in his conflict and combat was answered as to support, and so was heard in the things he feared. So if God give strength to the soul, it is an answer, though he do not take off the trial.

Secondly, There are temptations from Satan, as well as from God, who is called the tempter: Mat. 4:3. Now the devil's temptations they are evil, and for evil. How doth the devil tempt?

[1.] By propounding objects; as Luke 4:5, 'He showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.' He had nothing to work upon within, therefore he propounds outward objects. So still the devil tempts us with a curious eye to take in the object, that it may be a bait and snare to the soul. Achan takes notice of it himself: Josh. 7:21, 'When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and a wedge of gold, then I coveted them, and took them.' I saw, I coveted, and I took: the eye awakens desire, and desire that inclines to practise. So Prov. 23:31, 'Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.' Unless we shut the windows of the soul, this pestilent plague gets in by the senses. The heart is corrupted by objects that we take in by the senses, as it corrupted Eve, dealt with her first by the sense; the forbidden fruit was full in her way, then the devil sets upon her.

[2.] He tempts by the persuasion of instruments, who are the devil's spokesmen: thus was Joseph tempted by the enticements and blandishments of his mistress, Gen. 39:7. And many times the devil sets nearest friends and relations to weaken their zeal, and withdraw their hearts from God: Mat. 16:23. Saith Christ to Peter, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.' It was Peter said it, yet Christ rebuked Satan, for the devil had a hand in it; he makes one of Christ's disciples his instrument.

[3.] He doth it by internal suggestion: 1 Chron. 21:1, 'And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel;' that is, by internal suggestion. John 13:2, 'The devil put it into the heart of Judas to betray him.' He haunts and pesters the hearts of men by vain thoughts and carnal imaginations. So 'the god of this world' is said to 'blind their minds,' 2 Cor. 4:4.

[4.] By stirring up the humours of our body. When he seeth men inclined to wrath, and angry motions, or lust, the devil, joins, and makes the tempest the more violent. He knows what use to make of

an angry look, a wanton glance; he knows how to tempt, by awakening the humours of our own body against us.

Take some observations here.

(1.) In all sins Satan joineth; he is not idle, but makes use of every inclination of ours; as he sees the tree leaning, he joins issue. But some sins are purely of his suggestion; horrid sins, and such as are so very evil, that they could come from no other but from the devil: such sins as could not be acted by man in an ordinary course of sinning. As Judas his treason: though he were devil enough to plot such a thing, yet it is said, Satan put it into his heart. And such singular diabolical suggestions may be darted into the bosom of believers sometimes; thoughts of atheism, blasphemy, unnatural sins, self-murder, suspicion of the gospel; these things the devil throws in. Therefore, Eph. 6:16, believers are warned to quench these fiery darts, that the devil hurls into the souls of men.

(2.) Every man is haunted with special temptations, from temper, sex, age, custom, calling, company, course of affairs; these things are often spoken of in scripture. From temper: God makes use of temper; for though he plants all grace in the hearts of the regenerate, yet there are certain graces wherein they are eminent; as Timothy for temperance, Moses for meekness, &c. Thus Paul speaks of the law in his members: Rom. 7:23. The devil may find forces from the temper of the body to destroy the soul. So also from sex; as he 'beguiled Eve,' 2 Cor. 11:3. And from age: we read of 'youthful lusts,' 2 Tim. 2:22. And how strong the devil is about young ones: 1 John 2:13, 'I have written unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one.' They are most assaulted with pride, with youthful lusts suitable to their age. So from custom and education: Ps. 18:23, 'I kept myself from mine iniquity.' Every man hath his iniquity; that is, such as his education and custom hath wrought upon him, which makes the sin prevail over other sins. A child of God hath a predominant sin, not over grace, for that is inconsistent with sincerity; but some master-sin which prevails over the rest; according as the channel is cut, so

corrupt nature runs, but some in this channel, and some in that: every man hath his special sin, and accordingly the devil plies him. Then our calling is a special temptation: 1 Tim. 3:6, the apostle speaks that a bishop should 'not be a novice, lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil;'—pride, and ostentation of gifts, and vainglory in such public service. Many other sins follow every calling: therefore if you would be skilled in Satan's enterprises, you must mind temper, age, calling. So company: as a man's company is, his soul is insensibly tainted. As a man that walks in the sun is tanned before he is aware, so are the souls of men sullied and defiled by carnal company before they be aware. A man would think, of all sins, passion is so uncomely that it should not tempt another man: yet it is said, Prov. 22:24, 25, 'Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go; lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul:' for the more accustomed to them, the less odious they seem; so by little and little, our spirits are shaped and fitted for such a sin. There are certain sins that are more special temptations. Look, as every disease hath a diet which suits with it, so all sins in the soul. Satan knows what baits we will catch at. It may be, a man that is addicted to the pleasures of the flesh may despise profit, and therefore the devil will not ply him that way. So a man that is addicted to gain despiseth pleasure. The devil suits him with a bait that suits the disease of his soul. It is an opinion the devils have their several wards and quarters; some for such a sort of sinners, others for another sort. Look, as the heathens had several gods (which were indeed devils), as Bacchus, the god of riot, or patron of good-fellowship; and Venus, of wantonness and love; and Mars, the devil of revengeful and angry spirits: and we read of Mammon for wealth: Mat. 6:24. I know it is a *fictio personæ*, to make the matter more sensible; there is a person feigned. But there may be something of this truth in it, that the devils have several quarters, some to humour the covetous, others enticing the wanton, others lie leigers in taverns and drinking-houses, to draw men to beastly excess; and others about the revengeful, to awaken their rage. But all this, however it be (it is the opinion of some), should make us

watchful over our own desires and inclinations, for that is it the devil makes use of to set upon us.

(3.) The sin of the devil tempting must be distinguished from our sin in consenting. If the devil tempt, and we consent not, it is his sin. The envious man may throw weeds over the garden wall; but if we do not suffer them to root there, it is not the gardener's fault, but the fault of the envious man: so the devil may fling in temptations, fiery darts, atheistical or blasphemous thoughts; yet if we throw them out with indignation, and give no harbour and entertainment to them there, it is our misery, but the devil's sin; and therefore, if our hearts abhor them at the very first rising, though they be man's cross, they will be put upon Satan's account.

(4.) Satan, if he cannot prevail by the first temptation to draw us to sin, he will seek to prevail by a second or subsequent temptation, to draw us to trouble and discomfort. If he cannot weaken grace, he may molest and disturb our comfort by flinging in a blasphemous thought, which is abhorred by a Christian. If he cannot draw you to deny God, then he will seek to cloud things, that you may suspect your own estate; and thus our way is made wearisome to us. Look, as a candle which sticks to a stone wall, though it cannot burn the wall, yet it smutcheth and defileth it; so the children of God, when the devil seeks to make their temptations stick, though he doth not burn their hearts with these fiery darts of blasphemy and atheism—they catch not there—yet they weaken our comfort; and then his second temptation is to bring us to doubt of God's love, to doubt of our own faith, and to draw us to impatency and murmuring at God's hand. Therefore it should be our care, not only to withstand the devil's first temptation, but his second also.

(5.) Certainly they cannot stand long that seem to give up themselves to Satan's snares. How may this be done? Any carnal affection unmortified layeth us open to the devil: 1 Tim. 6:9, 'They that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.' If a



man cherish his worldliness, and do not mortify it, he lieth ready to be seized upon as a ready prey for Satan. Judas, he had the bag, and he lay open to the devil; his worldliness increased upon him, so the devil entereth into him. Again, when we ride into the devil's quarters and will parley with temptation, when we freely open the windows of the senses unto alluring objects, and can dally with the snare and play about the temptation, then we do but tempt God to leave us, and tempt the devil to surprise us. And therefore 'be sober, be watchful, for your adversary, the devil, walketh about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour,' 1 Pet. 5:8. 'Be sober;' what is sobriety? A holy moderation in the use of worldly things. Be sure not to leave any carnal affection unmortified. And then be watchful; take heed not to play about the temptation, nor put yourselves upon occasions of sin, for then we lie open to the devil, and give him an advantage against us. Thus much for the second sort of temptations, such as come from Satan.

The third sort of temptations are those which arise from our own hearts; so we call these urgings and solicitations to sin which we feel in our bosoms. Concerning this also I shall give some observations.

[1.] If there were no devil to tempt us, yet the heart of man is fruitful enough of all that is evil: Mat. 15:19, 'Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies.' There is a black catalogue, and all comes out of the heart of man. And among the rest, observe, there is murder, which strikes at the life of man; and blasphemy, which strikes at the honour and being of God. Though the devil should stand by and say nothing to us, we have enough within us to put us upon all kind of evil: Jer. 17:9, 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?' As to actual sins, there is a difference; but as to original sin, it is the same in all. All the sins that ever have been or shall be committed in the world, they are virtually in our natures, they are but original sin acted and drawn out this way and that way, as all numbers are but one multiplied: Cain's murder, Judas's treason, Julian's apostasy and enmity to Christ, the seed and root of

all is in our nature; and if we were but left to ourselves, and had the same temptations and occasions, we should be as bad as others; such as we would not imagine that ever we should commit is in our heart: 2 Kings 8:13, 'Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?' when he had been told of those horrid cruelties he should act upon the women and children of Israel. No man knows the depth of his own wickedness, if loosened of his chain and the restraints are taken off. At first nature abhors them in the conceit of them; but when God permits us to lie under the temptation, and fair occasion, man is not to be trusted. We see, in this respect, what need there is to pray that God would not leave us under the power of temptation, because the heart of man is prone, naturally inclinable, to all evil. There are new actual sins, but there is no new original sin, that is but one and the same in all persons and at all times; the root of all the mischief which hath been in the world is within us.

[2.] That without the flesh, the world and the devil can have no power over us. A man cannot be compelled to sin against his own consent; he may be compelled to suffer temptation, but he is a sinner by his own choice. The world would not hurt us were it not for lust in the heart: 2 Pet. 1:4, 'Escaping the corruption of the world through lust.' I say, it is not the beauty or sweetness of the creature, but lust, which is our ruin and undoing, and that makes the world so dangerous unto us. A spider sucketh poison from the same flower from which a bee would suck honey; the fault is not in the flower, but in the spider: the devil can do nothing unless we give him leave. The fire is kindled in our own bosoms, Satan only doth blow it up into a flame. Saith Nazianzen, we have the coals in our own hearts, the devil doth but come and blow them up: suggestion doth nothing without consent. In vain doth one knock at the door, and none within to look out and make answer; so, all other temptations would be in vain, if there were not somewhat within that would close with what is suggested from Satan: James 1:14, 'Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed,' by his own concupiscence. If your hearts did not yield, if you did resist, the devil and the world could not force you. When Satan came to Christ, he might molest

him, but he 'found nothing in him,' John 14:30; as a glass of pure water may be shaken, but there is no filth, no mud there discovered. But now, the best of men, they have somewhat within them, naughtiness and corruption enough in their own hearts, upon which Satan may work and inflame them with his fiery darts. In short, we may commit sin without Satan, but Satan cannot betray us to sin without ourselves; cannot have his desire upon us without us.

[3.] The flesh doth not only make us flexible and yielding to temptations, but is active and stirring in our hearts, to force and impel us thereunto. There is 'a law in our members,' Rom. 7:23, a powerful active principle within us, that is always urging us to sin. We think and speak too gently of our own corrupt hearts when we think the corruption is sleepy, and works not until it be irritated by outward objects and Satan's suggestions. No, there is an active, stirring principle within us, that poureth out sin as a fountain doth waters, though nobody comes to drink of them; as Gen. 6:5, 'Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually.' There is a mint in man's heart that is always at work coining evil thoughts, evil desires, evil motions; and 'the flesh lusteth against the spirit,' Gal. 5:17: And 'Sin wrought in me all manner of concupiscence,' Rom. 7:8. Though there were no other occasion to irritate, but God's law and the motions of his Spirit, yet there is a continual fermentation wrought by these corrupt humours in our hearts. Natural concupiscence doth not lie idle in them, but is active and warring; and the objects that are in the world, and the solicitations of the devil make it more violent.

[4.] The temptations of the flesh and the world go in conjunction, and do mutually help one another. And therefore it is said, 1 John 2:16, 'For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes,' &c. Mark, whatever is in the world, he doth not mention the object, but the lusts, because these are complicated and folded up together in the temptation. The bait is the world, but the appetite and desire we have from the flesh. And this is intimated in that passage, James 1:14, 'Every man is tempted when he is drawn away

of his own lust, and enticed.' There are two words there, drawn away, and enticed: the drawing away notes the vehemency of desire or inclination of our own hearts; and the enticement, that is from the object. Both ways doth corruption work, by force and flattery. The great bait is pleasure, the contentment that we take in outward enjoyments. And we are carried out to it by the vehement propension of corrupt nature.

[5.] This vehement propension of corrupt nature to outward things is set at work by a hope of gaining them, or a fear to lose them; and so we are assaulted on every hand, by right-hand and left-hand temptations. By right-hand temptations, from the flatteries and comforts of the world, which are the more dangerous because of their easy insinuation into, and strong operation upon our hearts, and so our comforts prove a snare to us, and 'an occasion to the flesh,' as the apostle saith, Gal. 5:13. And then there are left-hand temptations, which arise from shame or fear of worldly evils, as the other did arise from a desire or hope of good. So the apostle: Gal. 6:12, 'As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.' That was their temporising then to comply with the Jews, who had some national privileges under the Roman government, and had better security to their worldly interests than possibly thorough Christians could have. Now, to avoid both these, the apostle, when he presseth Christians to all those graces which are necessary, he presseth them to temperance and patience: 2 Pet. 1:5, 6, 'Add to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience.' Both these are armour of proof against worldly temptations; temperance against the delights, and patience against the evils and troubles of the world. It was never yet so well with the world but that Christians (those that are so in good earnest, that mean to go to heaven and keep a good conscience) will be assaulted on both sides.

[6.] That there is no avoiding either of these snares and temptations as long as any carnal affection remaineth unmortified. For until a man be dead to worldly comforts, and hardened against worldly

sorrows, he doth but lie naked and open to Satan: 1 Tim. 6:9, 'He that will be rich, falls into temptation and a snare.' And what is said of riches, the same is true of pleasure: he that is vehemently addicted that way will soon come to put God out of the throne, and make his belly and his pleasure his God: 2 Tim. 3:4, 'Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.' Any lust that is cherished and indulged will betray us. As for honour: John 5:44, 'How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?' True faith cannot be planted in that heart that is not purified, until there be a prevailing interest established for Christ over all carnal affections. Grace bears no sway in us, and hath no power over us. The ambition and love of respect from men will necessarily make us unsound in the profession of godliness. Well, then, it stands us upon to allow and cherish no secret sin, but to observe what are the tender parts of our hearts, or which way our corruptions lie, where subjection to God is most apt to stick with us: Ps. 119:133, 'Order my steps in thy word; and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.' Though we seem to have a zeal in other things, yet if one lust be indulged, we shall soon swerve from our duty. True obedience to God is inconsistent with the dominion of any one lust or corrupt affection. I say, though a man, out of some slender and insufficient touch of religion upon his heart, may go right for a while, and do many things gladly, yet that corruption which is indulged, and under the power of which a man lieth, will at length draw him off from God; and therefore no one sin should have dominion over us. When doth sin reign or have dominion over us? When we do not endeavour to mortify it, and to cut off the provisions that may feed that lust. Chrysostom's observation is: The apostle doth not say, Let it not tyrannise over you, but, Let it not reign over you; that is, when you suffer it to have a quiet reign in your hearts.

[7.] The more we sin upon the mere impulsion of the flesh, and without an external temptation, the more heinous is our offence, for then the heart is carried of its own accord to sin: Ezek. 16:33, 34, 'They give gifts to all whores; but thou givest thy gifts to all thy lovers, and hirest them, that they may come unto thee for thy

whoredoms. And the contrary is in thee from other women in thy whoredoms, whereas none followeth thee to commit whoredoms: and in that thou givest a reward, and no reward is given unto thee, therefore thou art contrary.' These are expressions to set forth their idolatry. But that which is intended there is this: that they were not desired or solicited, but merely carried to sin by their own proper motion, which exceedingly aggravateth sin. Why? For then it is a sign the heart is carried of its own accord by its own weight, as a heavy body is moved downward, not by the impression of outward force, but by its own natural propension.

Now, when do men thus merely sin upon the impulsions of the flesh? I will instance in three cases:—

(1.) When the temptation is so small and inconsiderable that it should not sway with any reasonable man. It is said in Amos 2:6, 'They sold the poor for a pair of shoes.' And 'for a piece of bread will that man transgress,' Prov. 28:21. When pleasure and profit is so inconsiderable as that it could not rationally make up a temptation, then men sin merely upon the corruptions of their own flesh. When the devil hath to do with great souls, such as Christ was, he propounds the glory of all the world: Mat. 4. Oh! but a lesser price will serve the turn with those that are deeply engaged already, that are biased with their own propension. For instance, a little ease and carnal satisfaction, a slothful humour, is enough to take them off from the sweetness of communion with God, and the pleasure and contentment that they might enjoy with him in holy exercises. Look, as in general, it is a great aggravation of all sin that for such paltry trifles we turn the back upon God and his grace. All sinners do so; they part with all their hopes by Christ for a mess of pottage, for a little present pleasure; that is profaneness indeed: Heb. 12:16. So in particular things, when the smallest temptation seems to be strong enough to draw off our hearts from our duty, to bring us to a sin of omission, when it is needful to go and converse with God in secret; a little ease and sloth hangs upon us, and we cannot shake it off: or when we are drawn to a sin of commission by an inconsiderable

matter, by the smallest worldly interest as can be mentioned, for a piece of bread, and a pair of shoes.

(2.) When men tempt themselves, or provoke Satan to tempt them. As those which 'make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof,' Rom. 13:14; that cater for their lusts, and contrive how to feed them, and how to cherish those inordinate affections in their hearts; that run into the devil's quarters, that bespeak a temptation; or, as it is, James 5:5, that 'nourish their hearts, as in a day of slaughter.' To nourish our hearts, is to feed our lusts, to put strength into the enemy's hand. When a commander sent to his prince to know how he should keep such a rebellious town in order, he sent him this answer: That he should starve the dog, and strengthen the clog; that he should weaken the city, and strengthen the garrison, that was his meaning. Truly, what was his advice in that outward case, that is the duty of a Christian; to weaken his lusts, and still to be strengthening grace. He should be increasing the better part, and putting the spirit in heart by godly exercises; by treasuring up promises, getting arguments and fresh encouragements against sin; and by weakening the flesh, starving and cutting off provisions for the flesh. But, on the contrary, when men cater for the flesh, provide for it, indulge carnal distempers, and feed them with that diet which they affect, these tempt themselves, and seem willing to lie under their bondage, and to be glad of it.

(3.) When a man is a sinner to his loss, and hath reasons of nature to dissuade him, as well as reasons of grace, not only religion, but his civil interests, would counsel him to do otherwise; as he that brings a blot upon his name or ruin upon his estate by evil courses; when men 'draw on iniquity with a cart rope,' as the expression is, Isa. 5:18; that is, when it is not pleasure, but a very toil and burden and temporal inconvenience to them to be sinful; that industriously make it their business; those that are 'holden with the cords of their own sins,' Prov. 5:22. He speaks of such as did bring temporal inconveniences upon themselves, as did consume their flesh and their own bodies;

these certainly are those that have cause to complain of their own hearts, not to put it on Satan, but themselves.

II. Having opened the nature of temptations, I come now to give the reasons why this is so usual an evil we encounter with in the world—temptation.

1. God permits it for his own glory, to discover the power, the freeness and riches of his grace, that men may be driven the more earnestly to sue out their peace in the name of Jesus Christ. Luther propounds this reason: Though man be prone to sin of himself of his own accord, yet God suffers the tempter to be in the world, because man is backward to seek mercy and grace by Christ; and therefore God urgeth him with sore temptations. Certainly this reason was given by him not amiss. You know, when Paul felt those paroxysms and sad counter-buffs in his own spirit, this makes him bless God for Jesus Christ: Rom. 7:25. 'But thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' It makes him reflect upon the grace of God in Christ. We keep off from the throne of grace till temptations drive us thither. As when the sheep wander, the shepherd lets loose his dog upon them; not to worry them, but to bring them back to the fold again: so God lets loose Satan to drive us to himself.

2. For the trial of that grace which he hath wrought in us. Grace doth better appear in temptation than out of it. The greatness of the woman of Canaan's faith would never have been discovered, had it not been for Christ's answer and denial: Mat. 15:25–28; then, 'O woman, great is thy faith.' The glory of that grace which God hath wrought in his people would not be discovered so much, were it not for the great trials he puts them upon: Heb. 11:17, 'By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac.' Before we go to heaven we shall have our trials, and shall be tried in our dearest comforts, and choicest worldly contentments; and all to see what faith we have, and what loyalty to God in the midst of these trials. A great tempest discovereth the goodness of a ship and skill of the pilot; and so these great trials they discover the soundness of our hearts, and the fruit of



that grace which God hath wrought in us. Gold is most tried in the fire, and discovered to be pure and perfect. Stars that lie hid in the day shine in the night. We have but dry notions of the comforts of Christianity, and make them matter of talk, until we are put upon great trials, then is our belief and sense of them proved. A gilded potsherd may shine until it comes to scouring, but then the varnish and paint is worn off. The valour and worth of a soldier is not known in times of peace and when he is out of action. When we are put to some difficulty and straits, then is faith seen. Now this is a very pleasing spectacle to God, to see them approve their faith and loyalty to his majesty.

3. Temptations, as they serve to prove, so also to humble us, that we may never be proud of what we have, or conceited of what we have not. As Paul, that he might not be exalted above measure, he was buffeted with a messenger of Satan: 2 Cor. 12:7. Poor bladders we are, soon blown up and swollen into vanity and vain conceits of ourselves, therefore had need be pricked, that we may let out those swelling winds. A ship that is laden with precious ware, needs to be ballasted with wood, stones, or contemptible stuff. But why will God humble us by temptations, and such kind of temptations as are solicitations to evil? Answer. Spiritual evils need a spiritual cure. Outward afflictions they humble, but not so much as temptations do; they are not so conducive to humble a gracious heart as temptations to sin. Why? For then the breach is made upon our souls, and the assault is given to that which a gracious man counts to be dear, and therefore these are suffered to come upon us. If anything will humble a child of God, this will do it. It may be he may bear up under losses tolerably, but when his peace comes to be assaulted, and his grace, this will humble him to purpose. Worldly men, they value their estate by their outward interest, but a child of God by his peace of conscience, and his thriving in grace. Oh, this wounds him to the heart, when in either of these he suffers loss; this sets him a-praying and groaning to God, as Paul groans bitterly when he felt those gripes of sin, and those reluctances in his heart: 'O wretched man!' &c. Afflictions, they conduce to 'humble and prove' us, Deut. 8:16.

And besides, too, the Lord loves to make the cause of our mischief to be the means of our cure. This giveth us the sight of some corruption we saw not before.

4. God permits this exercise to his people to conform us to Christ. We must pledge him in his own cup, it must go round; he himself was tempted: Heb. 2:7. Christ hath felt the weight, burden, and trouble of temptations, and knows the danger of them. Now the disciple is not above his lord, nor the scholar above his master. The devil, that did set upon Christ, will not be afraid of us.

5. By temptations to sin God mortifieth sin; not only that sin to which we are tempted, but others, that we may not be so heedless. When we have smarted under temptation, we are not so indulgent to corruption as before; we do not let our senses nor affections run loose. As David speaks, that he got this by his fall: Ps. 51:6, 'In the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.' Oh, I shall be wiser and more circumspect for this all my life. When men have smarted they grow more cautious; and so, by the overruling and good hand of God, our sins do us service in our passage to heaven, as well as our graces; and God's children may say, they had sinned more if they had sinned less: they are more acquainted with the wiles and depths of Satan and naughtiness of their own hearts, and so are more solicitous.

6. To make us more meek to others: Gal. 6:1, 'If any man be fallen, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.' We are very apt to be severe and fierce upon the failings of others; but now, when we are tempted ourselves, we learn more pity and compassion towards them. Severe censurers are left to some great temptation, that they may be acquainted with their own frailties; they are tempted to some sins, to which their hearts were not so inclinable before. Well, then, that we may pity others, mourn over them, and have a fellow-feeling of their condition, God will make us know the heart of a tempted man, that we may have more compassion over poor tempted souls.

Possibly that may be a part of the apostle's sense: 2 Cor. 1:6, 'Whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation; or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.' Persons in office in the church, they are afflicted and tempted; and, it may be, have a greater measure of afflictions and temptations, that they may show more pity to other souls. Therefore Luther was wont to say, three things made a minister, viz., prayer, meditation, and temptation. When he is much in communion with God, much in the study of the word, and hath been exercised in temptation, then he will be of a tender and compassionate heart over others; and that he may help them out of the snares of the devil, he is more fitted to his work by temptation.

7. It occasions much experience of the care and providence of God, and the comforts of his promises. A man doth not know what the comforts of faith mean till he be exercised by temptation. And spiritual experiences will countervail all other troubles. This is an hour of temptation: Rev. 3:10. What should we do in this hour of temptation? Be not over-confident, nor over-diffident, in an hour when God casts us upon trying times. Not over-confident, in casting yourselves upon needless troubles without cause: Mat. 14:28. Peter said, 'Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.' Peter thought he could do anything in the strength of Christ's word; Peter seeks a call before it be given him. Nor yet be over-backward and diffident to own God, and the truths of God. As Paul taxed Peter for dissembling: Gal. 2:12. When those false brethren were likely to bring great trouble, Peter dissembled, and runs with them, and separates himself from the purer sort of Christians, he is taxed there for it. We should not run into them without cause, nor yet be ashamed to own the ways of God, those which are most agreeable to his holy word. Not be solicitous so much about events as duties; for God is far more concerned than we, and hath a greater interest than we can have. What is our interest, and the interest of our families and our children, to the great interest of God, the safety of his children, the safety of his glory, and cause of his church? Be not

troubled about events, for all our business is to understand our duty, that we may not sin, but keep blameless in the hour of temptation.

Use. If temptations be a usual evil, wherewith we encounter in the present world, then—

First, We should not be dismayed at them.

Secondly, We should be prepared for them.

First, We should not be dismayed at them, as if some strange thing did befall us. When we enter into the lists with Satan, resist the devil. Why? 1 Pet. 5:9, 'For all those things are accomplished in your brethren that are in the flesh.' They are all troubled with a busy devil, a naughty world, and a corrupt heart! And why should we look for a total exemption, and to go to heaven in an unusual way?

That we may not be dismayed by temptation, I shall give you several considerations.

[1.] We took an oath to fight under Christ's banner. Baptism it is sacramentum militare, our military oath, which we took to fight in Christ's cause, against all the oppositions and difficulties we meet with in the world: 1 Pet. 3:21. The apostle calls baptism 'The answer of a good conscience towards God.' An answer supposeth a question. It is an allusion to the questions propounded by the catechist to the catechumen. When they came to desire baptism, they asked them, Abrenuncias? Dost thou renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil? And they answered, Abrenuncio, I do renounce them. So Credis? Dost thou believe in Jesus Christ with all thy heart? as Philip propounds the question to the eunuch; and they answered, Credo, I do believe. Wilt thou undertake to walk in all holy obedience? and the answer is, I do undertake before God. Conscience, which is God's deputy, puts the question, in God's name, to those which take the seals of his covenant, Are you willing to renounce the flesh and worldly vanities? Will you cleave to God, and his ways, whatever they cost you? Whosoever makes this answer, is supposed that he makes

it knowingly, that he doth understand the difficulties of salvation, and what he must meet with in his way to heaven. So the apostle saith, 'You are not debtors to the flesh,' Rom. 8:12. A man is a debtor to another, either by the obligation of some received benefit, or by his solemn promise and engagement; both are of use in that place. They that would seek the well-being of their souls, need not gratify the flesh. They that are engaged to walk after the Spirit, and come under the bond of a holy oath, and that are thus solemnly engaged, cannot expect to carry on the profession of godliness without conflicts and multiplied difficulties.

[2.] That is not the happiest condition which is most quiet and free from the temptations of Satan; for Luke 11:21, 'When the strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace.' When the devil hath quiet possession, he doth not trouble men. The sea must needs be smooth and calm when wind and tide go one way. There are some which suspect their condition, because of continual temptation; and others, because they have no temptation. Neither is a safe rule, for the time of our conflict may not yet be come. But if any have cause to suspect themselves, it is the last sort; for they that are least troubled may be most hurt; they are quiet and secure, because Satan hath got them into his snare, and hath a quiet dominion in their souls.

[3.] Jesus Christ himself was tempted, and therefore we should not be dismayed with temptations. Upon several accounts is this a comfort to us; partly, as it shows that we cannot look for an exemption, for the captain of our salvation was thus exercised, Heb. 2:10. Be not disconsolate, it becomes good soldiers to follow their captain. We are to pledge him in this cup. He was tempted, therefore we shall be tempted. Partly and chiefly, because now he is more likely to pity us. It is said, Heb. 2:18, 'Wherefore he is able to succour those that are tempted.' Jesus Christ hath felt the weight and trouble of temptations, therefore sure he will pity us if we lie under griefs and dangers; as a man that hath been shipwrecked himself is the more likely to pity others in their distress when they have lost all. One that knows evils by guess and imagination, knows them only at a

distance, and doth not know how evil they are; but he that knows them by experience, he knows them at hand, and by such a smart sense as must needs leave a deep stroke and impression upon the soul. So Jesus Christ, that hath had an experimental knowledge, that knows the heart of a tempted man, can more feelingly succour those that are tempted; his heart becomes tender by experience; he knows the danger and troubles we are subject unto; therefore be not dismayed. And partly too, because by suffering this evil in his own person, he hath pulled out the sting of temptation. Christ sanctified every condition that he passed through; his being poor hath pulled out the sting of poverty. It is the more comfortable now to a godly poor man, one that hath an interest in Christ. His dying hath pulled out the sting of death; so that what is to him a prison (Isa. 53:8, 'He shall be taken from prison and from judgment') is to us a bed of ease: Isa. 57:2, 'They shall rest in their beds;' so his being tempted hath unstung temptations, and hath made them not so grievous. And partly too, as he hath directed us how to stand out, and with what kind of weapons to foil Satan. Christ, that is a pattern of doing and suffering, is also a pattern of resisting. He that left us an example of doing the will of God, and of suffering with meekness, and when he was reviled, reviled not again; so in resisting temptations hath he left us an example, hath taught us how to grapple with the devil, and in what manner to repress his temptation; therefore we should not be altogether dismayed.

[4.] Consider the comforts of the tempted. Abundantly hath God provided for his servants in their conflicts.

(1.) Jesus Christ, our general, the captain of our salvation, in whose quarrel we are engaged, hath overcome all our enemies, we are interested in his victory: John 16:33, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.' We may have many pressing and searching troubles, but the sting of them is gone. *Non pugna sublata est, sed victoria*: Christ hath not taken away the combat, we must fight; but the victory is sure, he hath overcome the world. This is our comfort when we are full of faintings

and fears, that all things are vanquished and overcome by Christ; that though they terrify us, yet they shall not hurt us. Though Christ will not exempt us from battle, yet we have to do with the devil, the world, and death, which are all vanquished enemies.

(2.) He hath a tender sense and knowledge of our estate. Christ saith to Peter, 'Satan hath a desire to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not,' Luke 22:32. Christ's love and mercy is never more at work for his people than when they are most assaulted by Satan; then is he interceding for them: John 13:1, 'Jesus having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.' When Christ was about to go to heaven, he thought, My own are to be left in the world, they are exposed to great temptation; and that set his heart a-work, as if he had said, Poor creatures! they are undone if I help them not. So, Zech. 3:1, 2, 'And he showed me Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?' 'And he showed me!' Our whole case and danger it is clearly known to Christ. He knows how Satan molests and troubles you in your approaches to God; how he seeks to divert your thoughts, to weaken your confidence. We have a friend and advocate that puts forth the strength of his mediation and intercession, and is zealous and affectionate for the welfare of his people. 'The Lord, that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee.'

(3.) He is engaged in the battle, and fights with us, by renewing the strength of his own grace: Phil. 4:13, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.' He gives relief and help, according to the nature of the conflict. If there be duty to be done, burden to be borne, or battle to be fought, Christ is giving in supply. As the olive-trees (Zech. 4:11, 12) were always dropping into the lamps, so is he dropping in strength and grace into the heart: Ps. 16:8, 'I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.' When a man hath an able second, he doth with the more

courage go to the conflict. God is on our right hand, he is our second; his grace comes into the combat, and then the field cannot be lost. If we would exercise faith in God we might be the more confident.

(4.) He will reward us when we have done. Hold fast to the end, and I will give thee a crown of life, a garland of immortality, that shall never wither. If you will but hold out, continue to fight the good fight of faith, there will a time of triumph come. He that is now a soldier shall be a conqueror, when the crown of righteousness shall be put upon his head, 2 Tim. 4:8. And mark that: Rom. 16:20, 'And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.'

It is troublesome to be in the world, but shortly God shall bruise Satan. Mark, he doth not only say, God shall tread Satan, but tread him under your feet, triumph over him. As Joshua called upon his companions, Come set your feet upon the necks of these kings, when they were hid in the cave; so the God of peace shall tread Satan under your feet shortly. Then your comfort will be greater, the more dangers you have gone through. As travellers, when they are come to their inn, and to their home, they sweetly remember the trouble and danger of the road; so, when we are come to heaven, these temptations will increase our rejoicing, and our triumph in God.

(5.) Even before the battle a believer may be sure of victory. In other fights the event is uncertain. *Non æque gloriatur accinctus, ac discinctus*, 'Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off,' 1 Kings 20:11. When a field is won then they will rejoice. But a believer, when he goes to fight, is sure to have the best of it beforehand, in bello, the war, though not in prælio, the particular conflict. Why? Because the Father and Jesus Christ are stronger than all his enemies; they cannot pluck the believer out of his hands: John 10:28, 29, 'I give to them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.' This is the privilege which Christ conferreth upon his sheep, upon those which have an interest



in him; though they have many shakings and tossings in their condition, yet their final perseverance is certain. Christ is so unchangeable in the purposes of his love, 'I will give to them eternal life;' and so invincible in the power of his grace, 'None shall pluck them out of my Father's hand;' nothing shall be able to hinder their perseverance. Now, though the fight be long and troublesome, yet this is one of God's encouragements, you are sure of victory at last. Therefore how much doth it concern us to get an interest in Christ, that we may keep on in this way and in this hope.

Secondly, Let us be provided and prepared against temptations. And to this end I shall—

First, Give some directions how to resist temptations in general.

Secondly, What to do in a special hour of temptation which comes upon the world:—

When there are terrors without, and we know not what evil may be a-coming, and our hearts are full of doubt, how we may support and bear up ourselves.

First, To direct you as to temptations in general.

[1.] You must be completely armed: Eph. 6:11, 'Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.' Not a piece only, but the whole armour of God, otherwise you will never come off with honour and safety from the spiritual conflict. The poets feign of their Achilles that he was vulnerable only in the heel, and there he got his death-wound. A Christian, though he be never so well furnished in other parts, yet if any part be left naked, you are in danger. Our first parents were wounded in their heel. Who would have thought, that they which had such vast knowledge of God and his creatures, that they should be enticed by appetite? And Solomon, who had the upper part of his soul so well guarded, that he should be enticed by women? To see men of great knowledge to be unmortified and miscarry by their sensual appetite, is sad. A

Christian must have no saving grace wanting: 2 Pet. 1:5, 'Add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge,' &c. There is all the graces, and they must come out in their turn. We need faith and virtue, zeal and holiness; and knowledge to guide it, and patience to arm it against the troubles of the present life; and we need temperance to moderate our affections to our worldly enjoyments; and godliness, that we may be frequent in communion with God; and brotherly-kindness, that we may preserve peace among our brethren, and may not make factions and ruptures in the church; and we need charity, that we may be useful to all that are about us. There is use and work for all graces, one time or other: sometimes we shall be tempted to a neglect of God, at other times we shall be tempted to make a breach upon brotherly-kindness, at other times there will be a breach of charity. Sometimes the devil seeks to tempt us to fleshly wickedness, therefore we need temperance; sometimes to spiritual wickedness, to error, therefore we need knowledge; sometimes to raging with despair, then we need faith. We need the whole armour of God, for Satan hath his various ways of battery and assault: sometimes through ignorance we miscarry and run into error; sometimes for want of faith we run into despair and discomfort; sometimes for want of temperance violent corrupt lusts overset the soul.

[2.] We must often pray to God for renewed influences; we must not only get habits of grace, but pray for a renewed influence. It is notable, next to the spiritual armour, the apostle mentioneth prayer: Eph. 6:18, 'Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance.' We never receive so much from God upon earth as to stand in need of no more. And therefore though you put on the whole armour of God, yet 'praying always with all supplication in the Spirit.' Why? Because without the Lord's special assistance, whereby he actuates those graces, we can never defend ourselves nor offend the adversaries, or do anything to purpose in the spiritual life. Strength of grace inherent will not bear us out against new assaults. Habitual grace it needs actual influence; partly, that these graces may be applied and excited to work: Phil. 2:13, 'He giveth to will and to do.' God giveth to

do; that is, excites that strength you have, and carrieth it out to work; and then that it may be directed in work: 2 Thes. 3:5, 'And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.' Every time we would make use of the helmet of salvation, when we would lift up the head and wait for the mercy of God. The Lord direct you; we must be directed: and not only so, but that it may be supplied with new strength, for it is said, Isa. 40:29, 'He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no power he increaseth strength.' And he doth continue it: Luke 22:32, 'I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.' Thus will God keep us in dependence for those liberal aids and constant supplies of his grace, without which we cannot use the grace that we have.

[3.] You must resist: 1 Pet. 5:9, 'Whom resist, steadfast in the faith;' James 4:7, 'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.' Stand your ground, and then Satan falls.

In all those assaults, Satan hath only weapons offensive, as fiery darts; none defensive. We have not only the sword of the Spirit, which is an offensive weapon, but the shield of faith, that is a defensive piece of armour; therefore your safety lieth in resisting.

Now, this resistance must be:—

(1.) Not faint and cold, but strong and vehement.

(2.) Thorough and total.

(3.) Constant and perpetual.

(1.) Not faint and cold. Some kind of resistance may be made by general and common grace. The light of nature will rise up in defiance of many sins, especially at first; but this must be earnest and vehement; it is against the enemies of your soul; Paul's resistance was with serious dislikes and deep groans: Rom. 7:15, 24, 'The evil that I hate;' and 'O wretched man! how shall I be delivered?' In most cases, a detestation or peremptory denial is enough. "When the devil

tempts Christ to worship him: Mat. 4:10, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.' In other cases, there must be serious disputes and repulses. When Eve speaks faintly and coldly, the devil renews his assaults with more violence: Gen. 3:1–3, 'Hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.' She speaks there warmly, and with too impatient a resentment of the restraint, and too cold in the commination and threatening. Therefore the devil works upon her, when he saw she amplifieth the restraint; for she saith more indeed: 'We must neither eat nor touch it.' A faint denial is a kind of grant, and therefore your repulse to Satan must be vehement and strong. In many cases, slight Satan—answer with indignation; as though a dog barks, yet the traveller goes by: Satan cannot endure contempt. At other times, argue for God strongly. Now, the great argument that quickens you to this lively and vehement resistance is, to consider thy soul is in danger, and all thy eternal concernments. So some expound that, Eph. 6:12, 'We fight not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual wickedness in high places;' in 'heavenly places' it is in the original. No worldly concernments must go so near as that which concerns the eternal good and salvation of your souls. What would the devil have from thee but thy soul and thy precious enjoyments, thy peace of conscience, communion with God, thy hopes of eternal life? And when Satan comes, and bids nothing but worldly vanities, we should repel them with indignation. A merchant that hath a precious commodity, and a chapman bids him a base price, he puts up his wares with indignation, and will not so much as regard him or hear him; so when the devil comes, and would cheat you of your precious enjoyments, you should repel him with indignation, when there is such base and unworthy trifles to come in competition with your great hopes: as Christ, Mat. 16:26, 'What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' What! shall I lose my soul, my hopes, and

happiness and all for such paltry things, for a little temporal advantage?

(2.) It must be a thorough and total resistance: when you yield, the devil encroacheth upon you. We are bid, in the Canticles, to 'take the little foxes,' to dash Babylon's brats in pieces: we should not yield to Satan a little. The devil at first cannot hope to prevail for greater things, therefore he seems more modest in his temptations; ay, but lesser sticks set the greater on fire: when ye entertain lesser temptations, this kindles in your souls, and it is easily blown up into a great flame in your conscience. At first, when the devil came to our first parents, 'Hath God said?' and then, 'You shall not surely die.' 'Hath God said you shall not eat of the fruit of the garden?' The first temptation was more modest. The approaches of Satan to the soul are gradual—he asks but a little; ay, but it is a great matter if we grant it. Consider, the evil of temptation is better kept out than got out. The stone on the top of the hill, when it begins to roll downward, it is a hard thing to stay it; we cannot say how far it will go. Saith the deceived heart, I will yield but little, and never yield again. The devil will carry thee further and further, until he hath left no tenderness in thy conscience. As many that thought to venture but a shilling or two, yet, by the secret witchery of gaming, they play away their estate, clothes and all; so many that think they will sin but little at first, at last sin away all principles of conscience and profession of godliness.

(3.) It must not be temporary, for a while, but perpetual. It concerns us not only to stand out against the first assault of Satan, but a long siege. Satan, what he cannot gain by argument, seeks to procure by importunity. But 'resist him,' saith the apostle, 'steadfastly in the faith,' 1 Pet. 5:9. As his instrument spake to Joseph, 'from day to day,' she ceased not, Gen. 39:10. Deformed objects, when accustomed to them, seem not so odious; so the devil hopes to prevail at last, at least temptation will not seem so odious. But you must keep your zeal to the last, as we rate away an importunate beggar that will not be answered: to yield at last is to lose the glory of the conflict. Grace

must not only have its work, but 'its perfect work,' James 1:4; so let all our graces, temperance, godliness, and brotherly kindness, have their perfect work.

[4.] There is required watchfulness: 1 Pet. 5:8, 'Be sober, be vigilant.' You that are not ignorant of Satan's devices should watch that you give not him an advantage, 2 Cor. 2:11; nor an occasion, 2 Cor. 11:12, lest Satan tempt you; nor a pretence, Gal. 5:13, to the flesh. Certainly, he that would not be foiled needs a great deal of holy moderation, and constant jealousy over his heart; he had need to guard his senses: Ps. 119:37, 'Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity;' and to look to his company: Ps. 119:115, 'Depart from me, ye evil-doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God;' and to avoid all occasions of sin, riot rush into them, but keep out of the way: Prov. 4:14, 'Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men;' for this is to ride into the devil's quarters, to run into the mouth of danger. Heretofore these were wholesome instructions, and why should they not be so now? The devil is not less subtle, or sin less odious and dangerous; only we are more foolhardy, therefore stand not at such a distance as we should from occasions. It is easier to avoid the occasion than the sin when occasion is offered; as it is easier for a bird to fly from the snare than, when entangled, to avoid danger. Therefore, when you run into harm's way, you tempt Satan to tempt; and when you look not to yourselves, it is just with God to let you fall into the snare.

Secondly, There are special times of temptation, when Christians should look to themselves. There is an evil day: Eph. 6:13, 'That ye may be able to stand in the evil day.' And there is an hour of temptation upon the world: Rev. 3:10, 'I will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world.' There are certain times when God is proving what men will do, and when the devil is likely to make a great advantage of our discontents and afflictions, when things fall cross to our desires, and we know not what evil waits for us; how should we do to behave ourselves?

[1.] Be not over-confident or over-diffident. Not over-confident, in running beyond the bounds of our calling, to cast ourselves into dangers and hazards of temptation. Nor over-diffident, by base flying from, or giving way when God calls for valiant resistance. Both ways is the devil likely to assault us; either by making us foolhardy. So Satan seeks to drive us beyond the bounds of our calling, to put us out of our place, that we may be a prey to him. As men use to trouble the water, that they may rouse the fish, and draw them into the snare, and drive them out of places of safety where they rest; so the devil seeks to put us out of our safety. Peter would needs come to Christ: Mat. 14:28, 'Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water;' and we see he sinks before he could accomplish his purpose. So when we are over-confident, and run out of our calling upon hazards, then we are ever and anon ready to sink. But we should not turn back when God calls us to a valiant resistance: 'should such a man as I flee?' Neh. 6:11. Observe Peter's dastardliness when he ventures without a call into the priest's hall; a question of the damsel's overturns him. He that was so cowardly when he was out of his way, look upon his boldness when he was in his work: Acts 4:7 unto ver. 13, 'When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, they marvelled.' John was the disciple of love, and Peter was the fearful disciple; yet how full of boldness, courage, and zeal when they were called and singled out to give proof of the reality of God's grace! And therefore we should never be over-forward, nor over-backward, but own God in his truth when we are in our calling. Let not Satan bring you out of your place to cast yourselves as a prey to him.

[2.] In an hour of temptation, we should be more solicitous about duties than events, and about sins than dangers. As to events, God is concerned as well as you, and he will order them for his own glory. It should be your great care that you may be kept blameless to his heavenly kingdom: 2 Tim. 4:17, 18, 'The Lord, that hath delivered me out of the mouth of the lion, shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom.' However God deal with you as to events, and whatever dangers attend you, this should be your care mainly, that you may not sin, but be kept blameless.

David often begged direction, that he might be guided in his trouble, and not falter, and do anything unseemly.

[3.] Be more jealous of Satan's wiles than of his open assaults. Natural courage, and the bravery of a common and ordinary resolution, together with deep engagement of credit and interest, may do much to make us stand out against assaults, against open force and violence of evil men; but there needs a great deal of judgment to stand out against the wiles and crafts of the devil. Flesh and blood will not so easily bear us out against the secret ensnarings of the heart. The young prophet doth thunder out his message against the king, 1 Kings 13:3, yet was enticed by the wiles of the old prophet. So we may stand out against an open assault and apparent violence, but take heed of the secret wiles of Satan.

[4.] The wiles of Satan are to enforce and draw us into those corruptions which are incident to the season. Here is the great point of spiritual wisdom, to be seasoned in our mortification, and to withstand the spiritual evil that is apt to grow upon us in the time of our fears: Ps. 56:3, 'What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.' Then our great business is, to cherish our dependence upon God, to prevent distrust and unbelieving thoughts of God's providence. As, on the other side, in a time when we are likely to be corrupted with ease and prosperity, then our business is to watch against security and deadness of heart, which is apt to grow upon us. As Nazianzen said, When things go prosperous with me, I read the Lamentations of Jeremiah, I remember the mournful passages which befall the people of God, and that is my cure. So to prevent despondency in a time of fears, to encourage our souls to dependence.

Now, when our wills are crossed, dangers attend us on every side, and we know not how far evil will break out to the overturning of all. What are the sins incident to such a time of trouble? and how do the wiles of Satan come upon us?



(1.) Impatience: Gen. 30:1, when the will of Rachel was crossed, she said unto Jacob, 'Give me children, or else I die.' When we impatiently fret against the Lord: Ps. 37:1, 'Fret not thyself because of evil-doers; neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.'

(2.) Murmuring and repining against the Lord, that is another snare: Jonah 4:9, 'I do well to be angry, even unto death;' when he was crossed. Discontent at God's providence gratifieth Satan exceedingly; when we will justify ourselves, and think it a kind of zeal to be angry, and pet against providence.

(3.) A spirit of revenge against instruments, when we do not sweetly calm the heart with the remembrance of God's hand: 2 Sam. 16:9, 'Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head.' Thus when wicked men disturb order, the heart is apt to rise in revenge, therefore we are to calm our hearts.

(4.) There is fainting in duty; when we begin to give over prayer, and are discouraged, and are loth to wrestle with God in an ordinance: Heb. 12:12, 'Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees.' When a man's hands begin to wax feeble, and he is discouraged in the ways of the Lord: 'My foot had well-nigh slipped,' saith David, Ps. 73:2.

(5.) There is closing with sinful means, and running to them for an escape; as Saul, when he was crossed: 1 Sam. 28:7, 'seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her.' When we go to carnal shifts, and unworthy means, these are very natural to us.

(6.) Despair and distrustful thoughts of God, though we have had much experience of his goodness. David, 1 Sam. 27:1, 'I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul,' after all his experience.

(7.) Questioning our interest in God, by reason of crosses, or the doubtful posture of our affairs: Judges 6:13, 'If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?'

These are the wiles of Satan. Hide out the storm upon gospel encouragements. This will bear us up, it is but a moment to eternity. It is but 'a light affliction, and will work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,' 2 Cor. 4:17.

The second point is this:—

Doct. 2. That if we would not be overcome by the evil of temptations, we should earnestly deal with God about them.

For so doth our Lord direct us here ('Lead us not into temptation') to come to God himself.

There are two reasons I shall consider of in this discourse:—

First, We cannot be tempted without the will of God.

Secondly, Nor resist without the power of God.

Therefore we should deal with God earnestly in all our temptations.

First, We cannot be tempted without the will of God. That God hath a providence in and about temptations, is clear from the scripture: Mat. 4:1, 'Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil.' The Holy Spirit had a hand in it, as well as the evil spirit. So, 2 Sam. 24:1, 'God moved David to number Israel and Judah;' but in 1 Chron. 21:1, it is said, 'And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.' Satan, he cannot tempt without leave from God. As a lion cannot stir out of his cage, until the keeper brings him out, so the devil, this roaring lion, is held by the irresistible chains of God's providence, and cannot stir until God brings him out.

Consider two things:—

[1.] To be led into temptation is more than simply to be tempted. God's permitting us to be tempted is not so much as God's leading us into temptation, for these are two distinct phrases. God may permit or suffer us to be tempted, as a lord or sovereign, which hath power over his own creature, for the trial and exercise of grace, and can absolutely dispose of it according to his own will; but he leads us into temptation as a judge. And therefore this is one of the comforts which Job propounds to himself, when Satan had a liberty to molest him: Job 9:12, 'He taketh away, who can hinder him? who shall say unto him, What doest thou?' The general of an army may, according to his discretion, lead which band he pleaseth, and set them in the forlorn hope, in a place of the greatest danger, and appoint for reserves which part of the army he pleaseth. So God may single out his champions to combat for his glory, and may leave others in a more quiet posture, according as he pleaseth. Thus, as a sovereign agent, God may suffer to be tempted. But now, to lead into temptation, that is another thing, and implieth something of punishment, or as it is expressed, Mat. 26:41, 'Pray that ye enter not into temptation.' We enter into it by our own voluntary motion, as having forfeited his protection. But then God leads us in as a judge, puts the malefactor into the executioner's or officer's hands: so doth God lead us into temptation; it is a judicial act, especially when left to perish under the weight of a temptation.

[2.] Consider God as a judge; he may lead us into temptation two ways: either he may act in way of correction, to manifest his fatherly indignation; or by way of strict punishment. And so, in respect of his fatherly correction, God may give us up to a vexing, or to an ensnaring temptation. He may lead the godly into temptation, that they may be molested and troubled; and may lead the wicked into temptation, that they may be seduced and led away for their eternal ruin. There is a vexing temptation God useth for the correction of his own children; and thus Paul was buffeted by Satan, lest he should be exalted above measure: 2 Cor. 12:7. The shepherd sets his dog upon

the strayed sheep, not to worry him, but to lodge him, and bring him back again into the fold: so doth God suffer his children to be buffeted and exercised by Satan, to their great trouble, but for their good in the issue; for he knoweth how to turn all these things for good. Then there is an ensnaring temptation, by which the wicked are entangled in a way of sin; and so Satan, as God's executioner, is said sometimes to blind the eyes of wicked men, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them, 2 Cor. 4:4; and sometimes to harden their hearts, John 12:40, 'lest they should be converted and healed.' For the punishment of former sins, God may give up the wicked to be blinded and hardened by Satan to their own destruction, which is one of the most dreadful acts of God, as a Judge, on this side hell.

Certainly then, when we are tempted, we have great cause to deal with God about the temptation, for he hath a hand: either he may suffer us to be tempted, as lord and sovereign; or may lead us into temptation, either in a way of fatherly correction, or as a mere punishment, that we may more ruin and destroy ourselves.

I come now to the second reason.

Secondly, God alone can give strength to resist and overcome the temptation; and therefore we should deal with him very earnestly about it: Rom. 16:20, 'The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.' It is God that treads down Satan, but under your feet. We fight it out, but the author of the victory is the God of peace. We are interested in it (for we trample upon Satan with our own feet), but God's is the grace. Our faculties are not only exercised, but our graces.

Briefly, two ways doth God concur with the saints in resisting temptations.

First, God plants all those graces in their hearts that are necessary to the conflict. To speak of those three essential graces, faith, fear, and

love; these are all necessary for the resistance of a temptation. That faith is necessary, 1 Pet. 5:9, 'Whom resist, steadfast in the faith.' And fear and love, that they also are necessary, I shall prove thus: Satan's weapons against us, and his way of assaulting, are either subtile wiles or fiery darts: 'That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, and quench all the fiery darts of the wicked,' Eph. 6:11, 16. As he assaults us by fiery darts, by raging and boisterous temptations, take the shield of faith, cover all with the righteousness of Christ, and with a sense of your privileges by Christ, and that is it which maintains the heart, and keeps it against the fiery darts of the devil. But as he assaults us by his wiles, there fear and the love of God comes in, and is necessary for us. For there are two sorts of wiles that Satan useth for the destroying of our souls: one is, to convey the temptation by such means as are most taking with the person tempted; and the other is, disguising and turning himself into an angel of light, colouring the temptation.

For the first, namely, as he suiteth every distemper of our souls with a proper diet or food, or tempts us by such means as are likely to prevail, as if a man were tempted by sensual delight; there the love of God is necessary. Why? For nothing but the love of God will make us deny that which is so near and pleasing to us, or that affection which grows upon the apprehension of his grace in Christ; therefore the grace of God is said to teach us to 'deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts:' Titus 2:12.

[2.] For the other wile. As Satan doth transform himself into an angel of light, and cover his base designs with plausible pretences; for instance, revenge shall be accounted zeal; he will disguise it so as that the very apostles shall count it zeal for the glory of God when they called for 'fire from heaven to consume them, even as Elias did:' Luke 9:54. And carnal counsel shall be counted pity and natural affection: Mat. 16:22, 'Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.' He shall be the devil's agent to tempt Christ, and his carnal counsel shall be looked upon as pity to his Master. And licentiousness shall be

Christian liberty, and our liberty by Christ shall be used as an occasion to the flesh: Gal. 5:13. And an immoderate use of carnal pleasure shall be Christian rejoicing or Christian cheerfulness. Therefore, as there needs love to withstand the potency of temptation, by the suitableness of the bait to our own affections, so there needs the fear of God: Prov. 14:27, 'The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.' When the devil, by his wiles, is laying snares for us, snares of death, the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life. A man that is afraid to offend God, and to abuse his liberty, or run into any excess, under colour of grace, is very cautious and watchful, and thereby is not so soon surprised. Thus, when the soul is inflamed by the vehement heat of boiling lusts, or raging despair, faith is necessary: Luke 22:31, 32, 'Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.' Faith laying hold upon Christ's righteousness, and waiting for his grace, teaches us to overcome in such conflicts.

But why should I instance in these three graces only, when we are bidden to 'put on the whole armour of God'? Eph. 6:11, 13. If we would come off with honour in this conflict, we must be completely armed; no power of the soul or sense of the body must be left naked and without a guard, therefore not one saving grace can be wanting.

A Christian is set forth as armed from head to foot. There is for the head a helmet of salvation, which is hope; a breastplate of righteousness; the girdle of truth; for shoes, the gospel of peace; the shield of faith; the sword of the Spirit. These are the graces necessary to resist temptation, and these we have from God. A Christian hath not only weapons offensive, but defensive; not only a sword, but also a shield. Satan hath only weapons offensive, as darts; he hath darts to wound the soul. Again, observe, there is no piece of armour for the back. Why? Because there is no flight in this spiritual warfare; we must stand to it: James 4:7, 'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.'

But let us see what are the pieces of the spiritual armour. The apostle begins with 'the girdle of truth,' by which is meant, not truth of doctrine (for that is the sword of the Spirit), but sincerity, or an honest intention; when a man endeavoureth to be both to God and man what he seems to be. Now, it is the Lord that must renew the right spirit within us. Satan he assaults us with wiles, but our armour of proof against him is the girdle of truth. We stand against the wiles of Satan, but we must not fight against him with his own weapons, and put off wiles with wiles; sincerity and honest intention, that is our strength; this is the girdle to the loins, it gives strength and courage to the soul. And then there is 'the breastplate of righteousness,' or that grace which puts us upon a holy conversation, suitable to God's will revealed in his word, whereby we endeavour to give God and man their due; it secures the breast and vital parts, the seed of inherent grace in the heart; an honest fixed purpose to obey God in all things. The next thing, the feet must be shod; we shall meet with rough ways in our passage to heaven, and what is that which is armour of proof for our feet? 'The preparation of the gospel of peace,' a sense of our peace and friendship made up between God and us through Christ. Without this we shall never follow God in the way of duty when we meet with difficulties and hardships, But 'above all, take the shield of faith.' A shield covers the body, but that which gives defence to all is faith: without this a man is naked. Destitute of Christ's imputed righteousness, he wants his covenant-strength; it applieth Christ's righteousness, and engageth the power of God on our behalf. Then there is 'the helmet of salvation,' which is hope: 1 Thes. 5:8. A well-grounded hope of salvation, it makes us hold up the head in the midst of all waves and sore assaults; that is, it is our great motive and encouragement in the work of sanctification. Then there is 'the sword of the Spirit,' which is both offensive and defensive; it wardeth off Satan's blows, and makes him fly back from us as one wounded and ashamed. These are the graces. Now God gives them to us, and therefore he is called 'The God of all grace,' 1 Pet. 5:10. Why? because he requires it only? No, but because he giveth it also. And it is called 'The armour of God,' ver. 11. God is the author, God is the maker, God is the inventor of this armour, and he doth freely bestow

it upon us. The apostle bids us 'take the whole armour of God,' ver. 13, that is, take it out of God's hand. This armour is not of our making and procuring, but made to our hands by God himself.

Secondly, He actuates these graces by putting good motions into our hearts, or sweet and gracious thoughts, whereby all the fore-mentioned graces are drawn out. When we are conflicting with sin in an hour of temptation, faith is set a-work: 'That God may fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power,' 2 Thes. 1:11; that is, by a divine power and influence quickening it into acts. Joseph, when he was assaulted by a grievous temptation, he had a gracious motion and thought put into his mind: 'How can I do this wickedness, and sin against God?' Gen. 39:9. Still there is a seasonable remembrance of things by the Spirit, whose office it is to bring all things to remembrance: John 14:26. The Spirit doth not only teach us all things, but brings things to our remembrance, when we have need of any truth to be set home upon the heart; either such a truth as forbids the evil to which we are tempted, or that speaketh comfort and encouragement to us under such a cross; or pressing such a duty as we hang off from. The seasonable remembrance of truths is the great actual help which we have from God. Jesus Christ himself, by seasonable urging the scriptures, defeated the temptation wherewith he was assaulted: Mat. 4:10, 11. The word quickeneth in affliction: Ps. 119:50. Some proper comfort is borne in upon the soul by the power of God. It is not the bare remembrance of truth, but the secret power of God which enliveneth it, and makes it effectual in its season to defeat the temptation.

Use. It directs you what to do in temptations, to go to God for help and strength against them. Briefly, when you treat with God, it should be under a threefold notion:—

1. As the author and giver of grace.
2. As the sovereign giver and disposer of it, according to his own will.



3. As a judge, by temptation correcting some foregoing sin by the present temptation.

1. Treat with God as the author and giver of grace: James 1:17, 'He is the father of lights, from whom every good and perfect gift cometh down.' And so—

[1.] We ought to come to him as renouncing our strength, and waiting for his grace as able to help us. That address Jehoshaphat made in a temporal case is good also in a spiritual: 2 Chron. 20:12, 'Lord, we have no might; our eyes are unto thee.' There is a renouncing of their own strength, and a dependence upon God. There must be a renouncing of all self-dependence, for God 'gives grace to the humble,' James 4:6. The word humble is to be understood not morally, to those that are of a lowly carriage towards men, of a meek spirit; but it is understood spiritually, of those that, in the brokenness of their hearts, acknowledge their own nothingness and weakness: to these he gives grace. God withholdeth and withdraweth his influences when we do not acknowledge the daily and hourly necessity of grace—when we do not desire it with such vehemency as we were wont, nor receive it with such thankfulness and rejoicing. In these three last petitions of the Lord's Prayer: 'Give us this day our daily bread;' then, 'Forgive us our trespasses;' then, 'Lead us not into temptation:' we beg daily bread, daily pardon, daily strength. We can neither live without the one nor the other: we cannot live without daily bread, nor live comfortably without daily pardon, nor live holily without daily grace. And therefore you are to 'wait upon God all the day,' Ps. 25:5; and Ps. 16:8, 'I have set the Lord always before me.' Now, we may be said to set the Lord before us, either in point of reverence, when we are sensible of his eye and presence, or in point of dependence, when we are still waiting for his strength; and that is the meaning there, 'He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.' Look, as a glass without a foot falls to the ground, and is broken as soon as it is set out of hand, such a sensible Christian apprehends himself to be if he be out of the hands of God; he is broken, and falls to pieces. Therefore, in this

sense, he goes to God, and desires him to keep him from temptation. Dependence begets observance. If the creature could once but live of himself, though it were but for a while, God would seldom hear from him. This is that which is the bridle upon the new creature, to keep up his constant commerce with God.

[2.] We must go to him with confidence, in an actual dependence upon the all-sufficiency of his grace. It is not enough to apprehend our weakness, but we must also go forth in the strength of God; that is, hold up our hearts with a sense of this, that God is able to bear us up, and defeat all our spiritual enemies. God would not take off the temptation from Paul, 2 Cor. 12:9, but saith, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' He can either weaken temptation, or give in further supply of strength; therefore encourage yourselves in the power of the Lord. The devil cannot tempt us one jot further than the Lord will permit him; his malice is limited and restrained: if you be in Satan's hands, Satan is in God's hands, and can do nothing without his leave and permission; he begs leave to enter into the herd of swine, much less can he enter into the sheep of his pasture.

2. Look upon God, not only as the giver of grace, but as the sovereign giver and disposer of it according to his own will: Phil. 2:13, 'It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.' His giving of grace is altogether free, as what measure of assistance we shall have, and by what means it shall be supplied. God may enlarge or abate the degree of his influence, according to his own will. Now, thus we must come to him, with submission to his good pleasure, either for taking off the temptation, or continuing it for your exercise, or the measure of your supply. When you murmur and fret, it is a sign you have too good thoughts of yourselves; when we prescribe to God, it argues some ascribing to ourselves. You are to endeavour, indeed, to pray, and use all good means to come out of temptation; but submit, if the Lord be pleased to continue his exercise upon you. Nay, though God should continue the temptation, and for the present not give out those measures of grace necessary

for you, yet you must not murmur, but lie at his feet; for God is Lord of his own grace.

3. You are to look upon God as a judge, correcting some foregoing sin by your present temptation. And therefore—

[1.] You must humble yourselves under his mighty hand, when you are exercised with great and sore temptations, and accept the punishment of your iniquity without murmuring; that is the only way to get it off, when you own it as the fruit of sin: Lev. 26:41, 'If then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity;' and Micah 7:9, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.' Acknowledge the justice of his providence in this trouble that is brought upon you. A Christian must not only look to the malice of Satan in his temptations, but to the justice of God. Look, as in outward afflictions, we are not to reflect upon instruments:—Job did not say, 'The Chaldean and Sabeans hath taken,' but 'The Lord hath taken,' chap. 1:21—so in these spiritual afflictions, take the temptation out of God's hand, as a judge. Though Satan pursue you with fiery darts, with temptations horrible and terrible, yet look upon it as the fruit of some foregoing sin. If he should tempt you by injection of despairing fears or blasphemous thoughts, these are not your sins, but they may be a punishment for your sins; so you ought to humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God. When you are vexed with such temptations as pierce and prick you in your veins, as David speaks; when the devil bears in blasphemous thoughts upon the heart, they are his sins, but your corrections, justly ordered by God. It may be it is for the correction of your sin that you have provoked God to afflict you thus; and this rod, if it smart, it was dipped in your own guilt, and it is a fruit of God's fatherly indignation for your folly and vanity; for God may thus manifest it, by giving thee up to this severe discipline, to be tempted and vexed by Satan. Now, it is your duty to be sensible of your sin, and say, as Sion in her troubles, Lam. 1:18, 'The Lord is righteous, for I have rebelled against his commandment.'

[2.] Find out and remove the cause of sin, when God lets loose Satan upon us. Paul discerned it presently—as usually God's rod brings light along with it—when he was buffeted with a messenger of Satan; it was that he might not be 'exalted above measure,' 2 Cor. 12:7. Now that which hath provoked God to exercise us with this discipline, that may be known sometimes by the time when this temptation surpriseth us: if it tread upon the heels of some immediate and foregoing provocation—that is the sin you should humble yourselves for; or by that ill frame and posture of spirit wherein the temptation found you, as Paul's heart was likely puffed up and exalted with his spiritual enjoyments; therefore God lets loose Satan. Sometimes by the nature of the temptation itself, for God suits punishments to sins, and apt and proper remedies to every disease; or else the sin will be cast up by workings of conscience in a way of remorse, as in a tempest that which is at bottom comes on top; or God will discover it by his Spirit, when you go and seek to him. When temptation is grievous and sore, go to God and say, Lord, why is it thus with me? Job 34:31, 32, 'Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more. That which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.' Pray for a discovery of your secret sin, and what is the mind of God in the dispensation. Now, when you have found out the cause of the sin, this is the direction, to remove the cause; for until we let the sin go, God will continue the punishment; though we strive, pray, and ask counsel, our burden will still be continued upon us, until sin be mortified in us, though in some measure it be removed out of our hearts.

## **But Deliver Us From Evil**

WE come to the close. The words ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ may be rendered, either 'from the evil one,' or 'from the evil thing.'

First, From the evil one: Mat. 13:19, 'Then cometh, ὁ πονηρὸς; the evil one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart;' and 1

John 2:13, 'I will write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome, τον πονηρὸν, the wicked one;' and 1 John 5:18, 'He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and, ὁ πονηρὸς, that wicked one, toucheth him not;' Eph. 6:16, 'Take the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked,' τοῦ πονηροῦ, of that wicked one. In all these places the devil is so called, because his great business is to draw, and drive others to sin; and therefore, as God is 'the holy one,' so Satan is called 'the wicked one.'

Secondly, It may be rendered that evil thing: Mat. 5:37, 'Whatsoever is more than, these cometh, ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ, of evil;' Mat. 5:39, 'But I say unto you, μὴ ἀντιστῆναι τῷ πονηρῷ, resist not evil.' We are commanded to resist the devil, and therefore in that place clearly it is put for the evil thing; and so in many other places. Now which of these senses shall we prefer?

First, If it be meant of the evil one, or Satan, the words will bear a good sense, thus: If God, for our trial and further humiliation, shall suffer us to be tempted by the devil, yet we desire that he may not have his will upon us, that we be not kept under his power.

To make good this interpretation, know the devil may fitly be called 'the evil one,' for he is the oldest sinner; he sins from the beginning: 1 John 3:8. And he is the greatest sinner, therefore he is called, Eph. 6:12, 'spiritual wickedness;' his sins are in the highest degree sinful, every sin of his is a sin against the Holy Ghost, against full light, and with malice and spite against God and the saints. And he is the father of sin, John 8:44. As Jubal was 'the father of all such as handle the harp and organ,' Gen. 4:21; that is, he was the first that taught the use of that instrument: so all the sins in the world are by his furtherance, both actual and original; therefore he may be fitly called the evil one.

Again, he hath a great stroke in temptation, that he is the artificer, the designer, the improver of them; therefore he is called, ὁ

πειράζων, 'the tempter,' Mat. 4:3. Well, then, 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'

Secondly, we may render it indefinitely, as we do, 'Deliver us from evil,' that is, from sin. And fitly is this so called, because it is the greatest evil, above poverty, sickness, and worldly loss. Everything which doth harm us, that may be called evil. Now sin doth most hurt; nothing so much as sin. Why? Because it doth endamage our inward man, and endanger our everlasting hopes.

[1.] It doth endamage our inward man, and hindereth and diminisheth our comfortable communion with God. Other things may harm the man, but they do not touch the Christian; and therefore saith the apostle, 2 Cor. 4:16, 'For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.' Breaches made upon the outward man come not so near as a breach made upon the inward man; therefore we faint not, so long as the inward man is safe.

[2.] It doth endanger our everlasting hopes and concernments, and therefore it is the greatest evil. All afflictions do but reach our temporal, but sin reacheth our eternal concernments; and therefore the apostle promiseth himself this kind of deliverance, as that which was most worthy: 2 Tim. 4:17, 18, 'I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom.' Well, then, you see it may be rendered the evil one, or the evil thing. The word carrieth it for sin; κακὸν denoteth the evil of afflictions, and malum pœnæ, as well as malum culpæ; but πονηρὸν never but evil of fault. And we need not anxiously dispute whether the one or the other, for one cannot be understood without respect to the other. Therefore I shall take it in a general sense—that evil which results from temptations, whether they arise from Satan, the world, or our own hearts.

From the words thus opened, the points will be two:—

First, That while we are in this valley of tears and snares, we should with earnestness and confidence pray to be delivered from evil.

Secondly, To be kept from the evil of sin is a greater mercy than to be kept from the trouble of temptation.

I observe the first point, because Christ thus directed us to pray to God. The second, because the evil of sin is intended. For the first, we should pray with earnestness, because of our danger, and with confidence, because of God's undertaking. The Lord Jesus knows what requests are most acceptable to his Father. Now when he would give a perfect pattern and platform of prayer, he bids you pray thus: 'Deliver us from evil.' Nay, we have not only Christ's direction, but Christ's example: John 17:15, 'I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.' He did not absolutely pray for an exemption from temptation, though he knew the world would be a tempestuous place, that his people must expect strong assaults—Lord, take them not out of the world, but keep them from the evil; so here, 'Deliver us from evil.'

First, We should pray with earnestness, because of our danger from the enemies of our salvation, which are the devil, the world, and the flesh; in respect of all which, we pray to be delivered from evil.

[1.] From the evil which the devil designs against us. Both bad and good men have need to make this prayer: bad men have need; good men will have a heart certainly to pray thus to God, if they consider their danger.

(1.) Natural and unconverted men, they are under the power of the devil, if they were sensible of it; for the devils are said to be 'rulers of the darkness of this world,' Eph. 6:12. By which is meant the wicked, ignorant, and carnal part of the world, whether they live in Gentilism, or within the pale and line of Christ's communion; over all those that live in their unrenewed state of sin and ignorance, over all these, Satan hath an empire and dominion. And mark, when God

carried on his kingdom in a way of sensible manifestation, by visions, oracles, and miracles, so did Satan visibly govern the pagan world by apparitions, oracles, lying wonders, and sensible manifestations of himself. But now, when God's kingdom is spiritual,—'the kingdom of God is within you,' Luke 17:21,—so by proportion, Satan's kingdom is spiritual too; he rules in the hearts of men, though they little think of it. All natural men, whether they be pagans or Christians, though outwardly and apparently they may renounce the devil's kingdom, and do not seem to have such open communion with him, as the Gentiles that consulted with his oracles, and were instructed by his apparitions, acted by his power, and offered sacrifice to him: but spiritually, all natural men are under the devil; for, 1 John 3:8, 'He that committeth sin is of the devil;' that is, he belongeth to him. How is he of the devil? They are his children: Acts 13:10, 'O thou child of the devil.' And they are his subjects, he ruleth in them, he hath a kingdom among men, which by all means he goeth about to maintain: Mat. 12:26, 'If Satan be divided against himself, how then can his kingdom stand?' And they are his workhouses, he worketh in them: Eph. 2:2, 'The spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience.' The devil is hard at work in a wicked man's heart, framing evil thoughts, carnal motions; urging them to break God's laws; drawing them on to more sin and villainy; fills their hearts with lying, and all manner of sins: Acts 5:3, 'Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?' He binds them with prejudices, and will not suffer them to hearken to the glorious gospel: 2 Cor. 4:4, 'In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them.' He blinds and holds them captive at his will and pleasure, their souls are fettered: 2 Tim. 2:26. And sometimes he oppresses their bodies (for Satan carrieth on his kingdom by force, tyranny, fears, and bondage); and therefore it is said, Acts 10:38, that Christ 'went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil.' Yet further, as God's executioner, he hath the power over death for their torment: Heb. 2:14, 'That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.' And unless the Lord be merciful, he never ceaseth carrying on wicked



men, until both they and he are for ever in hell: Mat. 25:41, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' All this is spoken, to show carnal men their condition. Oh that they would seriously think of it! When they do evil, when they slight the motions of God's grace, they are under Satan; and not only by force, as a child of God may be sometimes, but they are willingly ignorant: 2 Pet. 3:5. The more willingly we commit sin, still the more we are under the power of the devil. Well, then, if any have need to say, 'Deliver us from evil,' certainly unrenewed carnal men have need to go to God, and say, 'Lord, pluck us out of evil;' as the same expression is used, Col. 1:13, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness,' Ὁς ἐρρῦσατο, who hath delivered us with a strong hand. Oh, go to God, in the name of Christ; there is no way of escape until God pluck you out by main force. And mark, this power by which we are delivered, God conveyeth by the preaching of the word, which was appointed to turn us from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God, Acts 26:18; and therefore hearken to God's counsel before your condition grow incurable, and wait upon the ordinances; for the more you neglect and contemn the means of your recovery, your misery increaseth upon you; for every day you are still more given up to Satan by the just judgment of God, and to be captivated and taken by him at his will and pleasure by the snares he sets for you.

(2.) Good men, or God's own children, though they are delivered from the power of Satan, and brought into the kingdom of Christ, yet they are not wholly free in this world, but are sometimes caught by Satan's wiles, Eph. 6:11, sometimes wounded by his fiery darts, ver. 16. Their lusts and their consciences are sometimes set a-raging; though he hath no allowed authority over their hearts, yet he exerciseth a tyrannical power; though he cannot rule them, yet he ceaseth not to assault them, if it were but to vex and trouble them. Briefly, the children of God have cause to pray, Deliver us from evil, in regard of Satan, because Satan hath a hand in their persecutions, and likewise a hand in their temptations to sin. It is he that

instigateth their enemies to persecute them, and it is he that inflameth their lusts.

(1st.) In stirring up their enemies to persecute them. All the troubles of the children of God, they come originally from the devil: Luke 22:53, 'This is your hour, and the power of darkness.' We do not read that Satan did immediately vex Christ; and how was that hour then said to be the power of darkness? Why, by setting his instruments a-work to crucify him. And as he dealt with the head, so with the members: Rev. 12:12, 'The devil hath great wrath, for he knoweth he hath but a short time.' When his kingdom begins to totter and shake, then he stirs up all his wrath, and inflames his instruments, as dying beasts bite hardest. So, Rev. 16:14, we read of the spirits of devils that go forth unto the kings of the earth, to stir them up against the saints. If you could behold, with your bodily eyes, this evil spirit hanging upon the ears of great men, and buzzing into them, and stirring them up, and the common people, and animating them against the children of God, you would more admire at the wonders of God's providence that you do subsist. Oh, how they are acted by this wrathful spirit!

(2d.) By inflaming our lusts and corruptions. So, 1 Cor. 7:5, lest Satan tempt you by your incontinency, sets lusts a-boiling, either to vex the saints or to ensnare them. It is possible he may sometimes prevail with God's own children to draw them to some particular act of gross sin, as 2 Sam. 11:4, as when David defiled himself with lust, that thereby he may dishonour God; for by this means the name of God was blasphemed, 2 Sam. 12:14. Or that thereby he may disturb their peace, for this made David lie roaring, Ps. 32:3, 4; his radical moisture was even wasted and exhausted. Or else to spiritual sins, as murmuring, repining against God, distrust of providence when under crosses. Or when they are in their comforts, to drive them to carnal complacency and neglect of holy things, disuse of communion with God. Or to inordinate passions or spiritual wickedness, such as is not conversant about carnal passions or fleshly lusts, but spiritual pride, error, and unbelief. Certainly those that have anything of

experience of the spiritual life cannot be ignorant of Satan's enterprises.

Well, then, we had need go to God to deliver us from evil: for outward evils, for the protection of his providence; for these God hath undertaken: Ps. 50:15, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee.' Satan is in God's chains; he could not enter into the herd of swine without leave; therefore certainly he cannot get among the sheep of Christ's fold. It is the saying of Tertullian, If the bristles of swine be numbered, the hairs of our head are numbered; therefore you had need go to God ('Deliver us from evil'), that persecution may not rage over you, that he may hedge you in by his providence, Job 1:10, and that he would be as a wall of fire round about you.

As to inward evils, so we go to God for wisdom and strength; for Satan assaults us both ways, by wiles and darts: when he comes in a way of violence, he comes with fiery darts; but when he doth lie in ambush, there he hath his wiles to entice us with a seeming good. We

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(1.) Beg wisdom, that you may espy the wiles of Satan, and may not be caught unawares, for he is 'transformed into an angel of light,' 2 Cor. 11:14. Mark, the devil doth not care so much to ride his own horses, to act and draw wicked men to evil; he hath them sure enough; but he laboureth to employ the saints in his work, if he can, to get one which belongs to God to do his business; therefore he changeth himself into an angel of light. The temptation is disguised with very plausible pretences; then a child of God may be a factor for Satan, and an instrument of the devil. For instance, would Peter have ever made a motion for Satan if he had seen his hand? Oh, no; the temptation was disguised to him when he persuaded his Master from suffering. He covereth his foul designs with plausible pretences. Carnal counsel shall be pity and natural affection; Mat. 16:22, 23, 'Let not these things be; be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. He said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me.' At another time, the disciples, when their Master

was slighted and contemned, they thought certainly they should do as Elias did, call for fire from heaven to consume them, Luke 9:54. Revenge will often go for zeal for God. Revenge, or storming at personal affronts or injuries done to ourselves, is looked upon as zeal; then the disciples may not know what spirit they are of. Many times we are acted by the devil when we think we are acted by the Spirit of God, and that which seems to be zeal is nothing but revenge. Therefore we had need go to God: Lord, deliver us from evil; we are poor unwary creatures; that we may not be ensnared by fair pretences and surprised by his enterprises. And thus we beg wisdom.

(2.) We pray for strength to withstand his darts, that we may take the armour of God and withstand the evil one, Eph. 6:13. Alas! of ourselves we cannot deliver ourselves from the least evil, or stand out against the least assault; therefore it is God alone that must keep the feet of his saints, 1 Sam. 2:9. Therefore we go to him, that we may get his covenant strength, that we may be 'strong in the power of his might,' to conflict with Satan. Well, then, in regard of the first enemy of our salvation, the devil, we had need pray earnestly, that we may not be prevailed over by his arts; it is God alone that can keep us.

[2.] The world, that is another evil which is, as it were, the devil's chessboard; we can hardly move backward or forward but he is ready to attack us and surprise us by one creature or another, and draw us into the snare. Therefore it is said, Gal. 1:4, that Christ 'gave himself for us, that he might deliver us from this present evil world.' That is one way of being delivered from evil, when we are delivered from an evil world. It concerns us, and it is a great point of religion, to be 'kept unspotted from the world,' James 1:27. The whole world is full of evils and temptations, and we cannot walk anywhere but we are likely to be defiled. The things of the world, the men of the world.

(1.) The things of the world. All conditions of life become a snare to us, prosperity, adversity: Prov. 30:8, 9, 'Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me,' &c., 'lest I be full, and deny thee,' &c. Either condition hath its snares. A garment too short

will not cover our nakedness, and too long proves lacinia præpendens, ready to trip up our heels; and therefore both the one and the other condition are very dangerous. Many carry themselves well in one condition, but quite miscarry in another. As Ephraim was as a cake not turned, baked on the one side, Hosea 7:8, quite dough on the other. Or as it is said of Joab, 1 Kings 2:28, 'He turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom.' Some miscarry in adversity, others in prosperity. Indeed more under prosperity. Diseases which grow out of fulness are more rife than those which grow out of want; and fat and fertile soils are more rank of weeds. God's children most miscarry when all things are prosperous and flow in upon them, when they have lived in plenty. David was not soiled while he wandered up and down in the wilderness; but when he walked upon the terrace of his palace in Jerusalem, then he fell to lust and blood. The unsoundness of a vessel is not seen when it is empty; but when filled with water, then we see whether it be stanch, or leaky or no.

But the other condition is not without its snares neither. In adversity we are apt to be impatient, as well as in prosperity to be forgetful of God; and therefore we had need learn how to go up hill and down hill, to 'know how to abound, and how to be abased,' Phil. 4:12. Look, as the wind cloth rise from all corners, so do temptations. When we are kept low and bare, or in danger, then we are full of worldly fears, distrusts, cares, grow base, pusillanimous, and have not the spirit and generosity of a Christian. In a high condition we are proud, secure, forgetful of changes, vain, wanton; and press towards heaven less, and grow dead to good things.

(2.) As from the things of the world, so from the men of the world. We are apt to be poisoned by their bad example, and easily catch a sickness one from another. Good men may receive a taint: Isa. 6:5, 'I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.' Open excesses do soon manifest their own odiousness. I confess, a man that runs into open excess, we are not so much in danger of being enticed by him to the like practice; but we learn of

one another secretly to be cold, careless, and less mortified. I say, though we are not carried into inordinate practices and gross wicked-nesses by the example of others, yet we learn to be cold in the profession of godliness, formal, less stirring in the way of holiness, and sometimes ensnared by their counsels. The flood and torrent of evil examples and counsels is so great, that it carrieth away men: Gal. 2:13, 'Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.' And the wills of men is one of our snares, 1 Pet. 4:2. And besides, we are in danger to be terrified by their frowns, and act unseemly: Isa. 8:13, 'Fear not their fear, nor be afraid.' Out of the fear of men we are apt to miscarry in our duty to God. Well, then, we need to go to God to be delivered from the evil of the world, that we may not be infected nor terrified by the men of the world; or, which is the more usual temptation, corrupted by the things of the world. The world doth secretly and slightly insinuate with us; and therefore keep us from evil.

Now how comes the world to be evil?

In two things, when both our care and our delight is lessened towards heavenly things.

(1.) When our care is lessened, when we are not so serious, so frequent in communion with God as we were wont to be; as Martha, that was 'cumbered about many things,' but Mary 'had chosen the better part,' Luke 10:42. When you begin to lessen your cares of duty, and Hagar thrusts Sarah out of doors, when the son of the bond-woman begins to mock at the son of the free-woman, when religion begins to be looked upon but as mopishness; to be so nice, precise, and so careful to maintain constant commerce with God; and begin to have lessening thoughts of God, and religion goes to the walls. So,

(2.) When our delight is less in heavenly things, when we have lost our savour of the word, and ordinances, and Sabbaths, and they are not so sweet as before: 1 John 2:16, 'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' When the love of the world hath

made you weary of the love of God, when your heart goes a-whoring from God, the chief good. As when the affections are scattered, a man is tempted to look upon other objects, the wife of the bosom is defrauded of her right; so God is defrauded by an over-delight in the creature, the world intercepts your delight: Ps. 73:27, 28, 'Thou hast destroyed all them that go a-whoring from thee; but it is good for me to draw nigh to God.' When our delight in communion with God is lessened by delight in the creature, it is spiritual adultery. Now when worldly objects are so continually with us, soliciting our affections, and drawing us away from God, oh what need have the best of us to pray, 'Lord, keep us from evil!' The soul doth easily receive a taint from the objects to which we are accustomed; therefore they which live in the world had need to take heed of a worldly spirit. The continual presence of the object doth secretly entice the heart; as long suits prevail at length, and green wood kindles by long lying in the fire. Insensibly is the heart drawn away from God, and you shall find less savour in holy things.

[3.] We had need to pray earnestly, Lord, keep us from evil, because we are in danger of that other enemy, the flesh. There is not only an evil without us, as the devil and the world, but an evil within us: 'An evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God,' Heb. 3:12. An evil heart, that is full of urgings and solicitations to sin. There are not only snares and temptations in the world, but there is a flexibleness in the party tempted: James 1:14, 'Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed,' ὑπὸ τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας, of his own lust. The fire burns in our own hearts, Satan doth but blow up the flame. There is bad liquor in the vessel, Satan doth but only give it vent, and set it abroach with violence. We carry sinning natures about with us, therefore, Lord, 'Deliver us from evil.' The evil of the world would do no more hurt than the fire doth to a stone, if we were not combustible matter: 'The corruption that is in the world through lust,' 2 Pet. 1:4. The danger of living in the world doth not stand in this, because here are so many enticements and baits for every sense; but it is the corruption through lust; as the venom is not in the flower, but in the spider. The Philistines could

not prevail against Samson if Delilah, on whom he doted, had not lulled him asleep; or as Balaam first corrupted Israel before he could curse them or bring them any harm: so corruption in the heart makes us liable to Satan's malice. There is a treacherous party within to open the door to Satan, without which all outward force could not annoy us.

Well, then, we had need go to God: Lord, 'Deliver us from evil.'

Where we beg:—

(1.) That God would weaken the strength of inbred corruption, that we may not be foiled by it. Paul groans sadly, Rom. 7:24, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' It is a question, but it implieth a wish, for the Hebrews propose their wishes by way of question; that is, Oh that I were delivered! It is a great mercy to be kept from falling into sin: 'kept from every evil work,' 2 Tim. 4:18.

(2.) If we be foiled by our corruption, we beg that we may not lie in it, nor grow weary of our resistance, nor cast away our weapons, and suffer sin to have a quiet reign: Ps. 119:133, 'Let not any iniquity have dominion over me.' We cannot hope for a total exemption from sin, but, O Lord, let it not reign over us. How shall we know when sin reigns? When there is no course of mortification set up against it, to break the power, force, and tyranny of it. Take this distinction: There are remaining and reserved corruptions; sin remains where it doth not reign; but reserved corruption, that is reigning. I will explain it thus: sin remains when, notwithstanding all our endeavours, yet it still haunts and pesters us, though praying, watching, striving, waiting, and depending upon God for strength; but it is reserved when you let it alone and are loth to touch it, but rather cherish, dandle, and foster it in the heart, and make provision for it. Therefore then are we delivered from evil when we recover by repentance; and though we suffer by the tyranny of sin, we will not



let it alone to have a quiet reign in our hearts, do not live under the power of corruptions. Sin let alone will do us further mischief.

Secondly, As we have reason to pray to God with earnestness, because of our danger; so with confidence, because of God's undertaking: 2 Thes. 3:3, 'The Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.' God hath undertaken to keep those who, with humble and broken hearts, do come to him to be kept from evil; that are watchful, serious, and careful to get evils redressed as soon as discerned; therefore we may come with an assured confidence to be delivered from all evil.

How far hath God undertaken to keep his people from evils and dangers in this life? I answer:—

[1.] So far as may be hurtful to their souls: 1 Cor. 10:13, 'God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it'. It is part of God's faithfulness to keep you from evil, to proportion and temper temptation to your strength. God suits the burden to every back, he drives on as the little ones are able to bear; therefore certainly he will mitigate temptation, or give in supply of strength.

[2.] God will keep you from the evil of sin so far as it is deadly; that is, that it be not a sin unto death, 1 John 5:16; and that it may not reign in our mortal bodies, for you are dead to it: Rom. 6:14, 'For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.'

[3.] God undertakes for our final deliverance from all evil upon our translation to heaven. This is included in this prayer, that we may at length come to that state where is no sorrow, no sin, no assault and temptation from Satan, that we may be kept from all wickedness: Ps. 34:19, 'Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.' There is a time when God delivereth

us from all at once, and that is by death and our translation into heaven.

Well, then, let us fly to God for deliverance, waiting for his help.

Doct. That to be kept from the evil of temptation is a greater mercy than to be kept from the trouble of temptation.

'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;' that is, if we be led into temptation, let us be kept from the evil of it.

First, It is a more wonderful providence to be kept from evil than from temptation; esse bonum facile est, ubi quod vetat esse remotum est. It is no great matter to be chaste or honest, when there is no temptation to the contrary. Ay, but to keep our integrity in the midst of assaults and temptations, there is the wonder. If a garrison be never assaulted, it is no wonder that it standeth exempt from the calamity of war. This is like the bush that was burned, yet not consumed; exercised with temptation from day to day, and yet kept from evil. And in this sense God's power is more glorified than in keeping the angels; for the angels are out of gun-shot and harm's way, and not liable to temptations. But to preserve a poor weak creature in the midst of temptation, oh, how is the power of God 'made perfect in weakness!' 2 Cor. 12:9: perfected, that is, gloriously discovered.

Secondly, The evil of sin is greater than the evil of affliction or trouble.

[1.] The evil of sin is the greater evil, because it separateth from God: Isa. 59:2. It is an aversion from the chiefest good. Affliction doth not separate from God, it is a means to make us draw nigh to him. Poverty, sickness, blindness, loss of goods, let a man be never so low and loathsome, yet if in a state of grace, the Lord taketh pleasure in him, and he is near and dear to God; God kisseth him with the kisses of his mouth; nothing is loathsome to God but sin.

[2.] Sin is evil in itself, whether we feel it or no; affliction is not evil in itself, but in our sense and feeling: Heb. 12:11. Sin is evil, whether we feel it or no; it is worse when we do not feel it: 'Past feeling,' Eph. 4:19, when our conscience is benumbed.

[3.] Affliction, or *malum pœnæ*, is an act of divine justice; but *malum culpæ* is an act of man's corruptness. For the first, affliction, Amos 6:3, 'Is there any evil, and the Lord hath not done it?' But sin is the devil's work in us: 1 John 3:8, 'He that committeth sin, is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.' And John 8:34, 'Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin.' The one cometh from a just God, the other from our corrupt hearts. The one is the act of a holy God, the other the act of a sinful creature.

[4.] The death of Christ falls more directly upon this benefit—exemption from sin: Mat. 1:21, 'He shall save his people from their sins;' Acts 3:26, 'God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities;' not troubles or sorrows, but sins.

[5.] Affliction is a more particular temporal evil, but sin is an infinite universal evil. Sickness depriveth us of health, poverty of wealth, &c., and every adverse providence doth but oppose some particular temporal good; but sin depriveth us of God, who is the fountain of our comfort; the other but of some limited comfort.

[6.] Afflictions are sent to remove sin: Heb. 12:11, 'Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby;' Isa. 26:9, 'When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness:' but sin is not sent to remove affliction. Now the end must be greater than the means, both as to prosecution and aversation. As to prosecution; to dig for iron with mattocks of gold

and silver. So in aversation; if death were not worse than the pain of physic, no man would take physic to avoid death.

[7.] Affliction is the effect of God's love: Heb. 12:6, 'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.' But to be left to sin is an effect of God's anger. God doth not always exempt from troubles; yet if he keep from spiritual hurt thereby, if he sanctify the trouble, support us with sufficient grace, 2 Cor. 12:9; if preserved from evil, howsoever tempted and exercised, it is enough.

Use 1. To reprove our folly. We complain of other things, but we do not complain of sin, which is the greatest evil. This is contrary to the spirit of God's children, who rejoice in troubles, but not in sins: 2 Cor. 12:9, 'Most gladly therefore will I rejoice in infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.' They groan bitterly under sins: Rom. 7:23, 'O wretched man!' &c. If any man had cause to complain of afflictions, Paul had: in perils often, whipped, persecuted, stoned. But the body of sin and death was the greatest burden: lusts troubled him more than scourges; his captivity to the law of sin more than prisons. When affliction sitteth too close, sin sits loose. In affliction there is some offence done us, but in sin the wrong is done to God. And what are we to God? Afflictions may be good, but sin is never good. The body suffereth by affliction, but the soul suffereth by sin loss of grace and comfort, which are not to be valued by all the world's enjoyments. The evil of affliction is but for a moment—like rain, it drieth up of its own accord; but the evil of sin is for ever, unless it be pardoned and taken away. Sin is the cause of all the evils of affliction; therefore when we complain, we should complain, not so much of the smart, as of the cause of it.

2. It directeth us:—

[1.] How to pray to God against sin rather than trouble. This is indeed to be delivered from evil: 2 Tim. 4:18, Paul reckoned upon that, 'He will deliver me from every evil work.' When afflicted, you should rather desire to have the affliction sanctified than removed;

you will be most careful for that; saints do not pray for the interests of the old man rather than the new man. To be freed from trouble is a common mercy, but to have it sanctified is a special mercy. Carnal men may be without affliction, but carnal men cannot have experience of grace. Bare deliverance is no sign of special love.

[2.] In our choice. It was a heavy charge they put upon Job: Job 36:21, 'Thou hast chosen iniquity rather than affliction.' Sometimes we are put upon the trial, to lose the favour of God or the favour of men, duty and danger: here content myself, gratify my lusts and interests; there offend God. Out of the temptation, we could easily judge that all the misery in the world is to be endured rather than commit the least sin. But how is it upon a trial, when a worldly convenience and a spiritual inconvenience is proposed? By choosing sin, a man cannot altogether escape affliction here or hereafter. Wickedness, though it prosper a while, yet at length it proveth a snare.

3. It directeth us to submit to God's providence, and to own mercy in it. Though God doth not exempt us from troubles, yet if he keep us from hurt thereby, if he sanctify the trouble, and support us with grace sufficient, it is his mercy to us. For Daniel to be put into the lions' den was not so great a judgment as for Nebuchadnezzar to have the heart of a beast. To be given up to our own hearts' lusts, to commit any sin, it is a greater cross than any misery that can light upon us; therefore let us be patient under affliction. Our great care should be, not to dishonour God in any condition. God hath promised to be with his people in their afflictions to comfort them; but hath never promised to be with his people in their sins: 'I will be with you in the fire, and in the water,' as the Son of God was with the three children in the fiery furnace. But God is departed when they sin; I will go to my own place. Sin hindereth prayer, but afflictions quicken it: Isa. 26:16, 'Lord, in trouble have they visited thee; they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them.' In affliction it is a time to put the promises in suit; it doth not hinder our access to God and the throne of grace, but driveth us to it. But sin

increaseth our bondage, maketh us stand at a distance, and grow shy of God. The fruit of sin is shame, Rom. 6:21.

4. It teaches us how to wait and hope for the issue of our prayers. Pray that ye enter not into temptation; yet be not absolute in that, but to be kept from evil, that what way soever we are tried we may be kept from the evil of sin.

## **For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, For Ever. Amen**

IN these words we have the conclusion of all, and that which giveth us confidence in the requests we make to God.

First, The confirmation is taken from the excellency of God, to whom we pray; where there is a declaration of what belongeth to God:—

Secondly, The duration and perpetuity, for ever.

Three things are mentioned as belonging to God—kingdom, power, and glory.

1. By kingdom is meant God's right and authority over all things, by which he can dispose of them according to his own pleasure.

2. By power is meant his sufficiency to execute this right, and to do what he pleaseth, both in heaven and earth.

3. The final cause of all is his glory. 'Thine is the glory,' or the honour of all things in the world belongs to thee. Glory is excellency discovered with praise. We desire that he may be more honoured and brought into request and esteem.

Secondly, We have the obsecration and sealing of our requests in the word Amen; which is, *signaculum fidei*, an expression of our faith

and hope. And *actus desiderii*, the strength of our desire. There is the Amen of faith, and the Amen of hearty desire; as by and by.

Now let us look upon this conclusion, first, as a doxology or expression of praise to God: and the note is:—

Doct. That in every address to God, lauding or praising of God is necessary.

For in this perfect form of prayer Christ teacheth us, not only to ask things needful for ourselves, but to ascribe to God things proper to him.

There are two words used in this case in scripture, praise and blessing. Praise relateth to God's excellency, and blessing to his benefits: Ps. 145:10, 'All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee.' All the works of God declare his excellency; but the saints will ever be ascribing to God the benefits they have received from him. So they are spoken of as things, though somewhat alike, yet as distinct: Neh. 9:5, 'Blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.' Our praise cannot reach the excellency of his nature; nor our blessing express the worth of his benefits. Both may be here intended. For thine is kingdom and power, relateth to his excellency, and thine is the glory, to his benefits; for God's glory is the reflex of all his works, and so expresseth the benefits showed to the sons of men, especially to his people. Well, then, whenever you would pray to God to bless you, you must bless God again, and praise his name: Eph. 1:3, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.' It is the echo and reflex of his grace and mercy to the creatures. God blesseth us, and we bless God; as the echo returneth the word, or the wall beateth back the beams of the sun. Only consider, we bless God far otherwise than he blesseth us: God's blessing is operative, ours declarative; his words are accompanied with power: *benedicere* is *benefacere*. He

doth good; we speak good when we remember the blessed effects of his grace, and tell what he hath done for our souls.

The reasons why we are to mingle praises and thanksgivings with our requests are these:—

[1.] Because this complieth more with the great end of worship; which is not so much the relief of man as the honour of God; therefore we should not only intend the supply of our necessities, for that is but a brutish cry, howling for corn, wine, and oil, Hosea 7:14; but we should intend also the honour of God: Ps. 50:23, 'Whose offereth praise glorifieth me.' A man may offer requests to God, yet not honour him, but seek himself; but he that offereth praise glorifieth me. He that doth affectionately, and from his heart, give God the honour of his attributes and titles in scripture, he glorifieth him; and therefore worship being for the glory of God, that should not be left out.

[2.] This is the most effectual spiritual oratory, or way of praying: Ps. 67:5, 'Let the people praise thee, O God, let all the people praise thee.' What then? 'Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us.' We have comforts increased the more we praise God for what we have already received. The more vapours go up, the more showers come down; as the rivers receive so they pour out, and all run into the sea again. There is a constant circular course and recourse from the sea unto the sea. So there is between God and us; the more we praise him the more our blessings come down; and the more his blessings come down the more we praise him again; so that we do not so much bless God as bless ourselves. When the springs lie low we pour a little water into the pump, not to enrich the fountain, but to bring up more for ourselves.

[3.] It is the noblest part of worship, and most excellent and acceptable service. It is a great honour to creatures to bestow blessing upon God. In other duties God is bestowing something on us; but in praise (according to our manner, and as creatures can) we



bestow something upon God. In prayer, we come as beggars, expecting an alms; in hearing, we come as scholars and disciples, expecting instruction from God. Here (according to our measure and ability) we give something to him; not because he needs it, being infinitely perfect, but because he deserves it, being infinitely gracious. This is the work of angels and glorified saints. Other duties more agree with our imperfect state, as hearing and prayer, that our wants may be supplied; but this duty agrees with our state when we are most perfect. Love is the grace of heaven, and praise the duty of heaven; we are for vials, they harps; prayer is our main work, and praise theirs.

Use. To reprove us, that we are altogether for the supply of our necessities, but little think of giving God the honour due to his name. Either we meddle not with it at all, or do it in a very flighty fashion. In this perfect form the glory of God is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending of this short prayer. The first petition it is for God's glory, and the final conclusion also. And therefore it is verily a fault that God is no more praised. In our addresses to him (Ps. 22:3) it is said, 'O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel;' the meaning is, dwellest in Israel, where he is praised of them, because it is the great work they are about.

Surely our assemblies should more resound with the praises of God. In church worship there should be a mixture of harps, which are instruments of praise, as well as 'vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints,' Rev. 5:8. But usually we thrust gratulation, thanksgiving, and praise, into a narrow room, and are scanty therein, but can be large and copious in expressing our wants and begging a supply. This duty is made too great a stranger in your dealings with God. What are the reasons of this defect?

[1.] Self-love. We are eager to have blessings, but we forget to return to give God the glory. Prayer is a work of necessity, but praise a work of duty and homage. Self-love puts us upon prayer, but the love of

God upon praise. Now, because we are so full of self-love, therefore are we so backward to this duty.

[2.] A second cause is our stupid negligence; we do not gather up matter of thanksgiving, and observe God's gracious dealing with us, that we may have wherewith to enlarge ourselves in giving glory to his name: Col. 4:2, 'Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.' We should continually observe God's answers and visits of love, and what attributes he makes good to us in the course of his providence. But out of spiritual laziness we do not take notice of these things, therefore no wonder if we are backward to speak good of his name, but are always whining, murmuring, and complaining.

Secondly, It is not only a doxology, but a full one, and very expressive of the excellency of God. From whence note:—

Doct. The saints are not niggardly and sparing in praising of God; kingdom, power, and glory, and all that is excellent, they ascribe to him.

A gracious heart hath such a sense of God's worth and excellency that he thinks he can never speak honourably enough of it. See how David enlargeth himself very suitably to what is spoken here: 1 Chron. 29:10–13, 'And David said, Blessed be thou, Lord God, for ever and ever: thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.' Oh, when once a child of God falls upon speaking of God, he cannot tell how to come out of the meditation: he seeth so much is due to God that he heaps words upon words. So 1 Tim. 1:17, 'Now unto the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.' And in many other places of scripture. Now, this copiousness in praising of God is, partly, because of the excellency of the object: Neh. 9:5, 'Blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all

blessing and praise.' When they have done what they can to bless God, remember his benefits, or praise God, and recount his excellencies, still they come too far short; therefore when we cannot do all, we should do much. And partly, it is from the greatness and largeness of their affection; they think never to have done enough for God, whom they love so much. David saith, 'I will praise him yet more and more.' They cannot satisfy themselves by taking up the excellency of God in one notion only; therefore majesty, greatness, glory, wisdom, and power, they mention all things which are honourable and glorious.

Use. The use is again to reprove us for being so cold and sparing this way. It argueth a want of a due sense of God's excellency and straitness of spiritual affection; therefore we should study God more, and observe his manifold excellencies. Get a greater esteem of him in your hearts, for 'out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth will speak.' We should be calling upon ourselves, as David, Ps. 103:1: 'Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name.'

Thirdly, I observe again, it is brought in with a for, as relating to the foregoing petitions: 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom,' &c.

What respect hath this doxology to the foregoing requests?

First, It serves to increase our confidence in prayer.

Secondly, Our reverence and affection.

Thirdly, To regulate and direct our prayers:—

[1.] As to the person to whom we pray.

[2.] As to the manner of asking.

[3.] As to the persons praying.

Let us see all these requests.

First, The great end is to increase our confidence. Observe,

Doct. It is a great relief to a soul, in praying to God, to consider that his is the kingdom, power, and glory; and all these for ever.

His is the kingdom.

God hath the sovereign government of all things. And then his right to govern is backed with all-sufficient power and strength; and so he can dispose of his sovereignty for the bringing to pass what we expect from him.

Authority is one thing, and power another, but they both meet in God; he hath all power and authority.

And then, his is the glory: he is concerned as well as we; yea more, his interest is greater than ours, for the glory of all belongs to him: and all this, not for a time, but for ever. These are the encouragements to raise our confidence that our prayers shall be heard and granted when we ask anything according to his will.

There are two things that give us confidence in any that we sue to—if he be able and willing. Now God is able to grant our requests, and very prone and willing also. We are taught it sufficiently in this prayer; for we begin with him as Father, and we end with him as a glorious and powerful king; his fatherly affection, on the one hand, shows that he is willing; and his royal power, on the other, that he is able: so that if we ask anything according to his will, we need not doubt. We may gather his power and will out of this very clause: His power; for his is the kingdom, and power, or a right and authority, backed with absolute all-sufficiency. Then his will, 'Thine is the glory;' it is his glory to grant our petitions, not only matter of happiness to us, but of glory to God, therefore we need not doubt.

But more particularly:—

[1.] There is confidence established by that, that his is the kingdom. God's kingdom is either universal, over all men or things; or particular and special, which notes his relation to the saints, to those which have given up themselves to his government, to be guided by him to everlasting glory: and both these are grounds of confidence.

(1.) His universal kingdom over all persons and things in the world. This kingdom is an absolute monarchy, with a plenary dominion and propriety grounded upon his creation of them. There is a twofold dominion—dominium jurisdictionis, and dominium proprietatis. The one is such as a king hath over his subjects; the other, such as a king hath in his goods and lands: the latter is greater than the former. A king hath a dominion of jurisdiction over his subjects to command and govern them; but he hath not such an absolute propriety in their persons as he hath in his own goods and lands; he may dispose of them absolutely at his own pleasure, but his jurisdiction is limited. In short, we must distinguish of his dominion as a ruler, and as an owner. But both these, they concur in God, and that in the highest degree, for God is owner as well as ruler; he made all things out of nothing, therefore hath a more absolute dominion over us than any potentate or king can have, not only over his subjects, but his goods; and can govern all things, men, angels, and devils, according to his pleasure. It is more absolute than any superiority in the world, and more universal, as comprising all persons and things. God hath right to be king, because he gave being to all things, which no earthly potentate can: therefore the author must be owner. All other kings are liable to be called to account and reckoning by this great king, for their administration; but God is absolute and supreme.

Now this is a great encouragement to us, that we go to a God that hath an absolute right, for which he is responsible to none. We go not to a servant or a subordinate agent, who may be controlled by a higher power, and whose act may be disannulled; but to an absolute lord, to whom none can say, 'What doest thou?' Job 9:12. Here is the comfort of a believer, that he goes immediately to the fountain and owner of all things; the absolute lord of all the world is his father; the

sovereign and free disposing of all things is in his hand. If we expect anything from subordinate instruments, God's leave must first be asked, or they can do nothing for us; but he can do what he pleaseth, it is his own: Mat. 20:15, 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?' None can call him to an account.

(2.) His relation to the saints. It is the duty of a king to defend his subjects, and provide for their welfare; so God, being king, will see that it be well with those that are under his government. It concerns you much to get an interest to be under this king, then to mention it in prayer: Ps. 44:4, 'Thou art my king, O God; command deliverances for Jacob.' If you want anything for yourselves or the church, put God in mind of his relation to you: 'Thou art my king.' Let not this interest lie neglected or unpleaded. All the benefit which subjects can expect from a potent king you may expect from God.

Again, the word command is notable, and expreseth the case to the full: 'command deliverances.' All things are at God's command and beck; if he do but speak the word, or give out order to second causes, it is all done in a trice. So Ps. 5:2, 'Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my king and my God: for unto thee will I pray.' To thee, and to none other. Why should we go to servants, when we may go to the king himself? So Ps. 74:12, 'For God is my king of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.' God will defend his kingdom, and right his injured subjects. Therefore, if we would have any blessing to be accomplished for ourselves, or for the public, let us go to God: 'Thine is the kingdom.' And more especially, if we would have any good thing to be done by those in authority and subordinate power over us, do not so much treat with them as with God. Let us beseech God to persuade and incline their hearts, for his is the kingdom; he can move them to do what shall be for the glory of his name, and the comfort and benefit of his afflicted people. Let us go to God, who is the sovereign king; he can give you to 'live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty,' 1 Tim. 2:2. Or, he can give you favour; dispose of their hearts to do good to his people: Neh. 1:11, 'Prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of

this man; for I was the king's cupbearer.' The sovereign disposal of all things is in the hand of God.

[2.] Thine is the power. This also is an argument of confidence, that God hath not only a kingdom, but power to back it. Titles without power make authority ridiculous, and beget scorn, not reverence and respect. But now God's kingdom is accompanied with power and all-sufficiency. He hath right to command all, and no creature can be too hard for him. Earthly kings, when they have authority and power, yet it is limited: 2 Kings 6:27, When the woman came to the king of Israel, 'Help, my lord, O king. And he said, If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee?' But God's is an unlimited power: an absolute right and an unlimited power, they meet fitly in God; therefore this is an encouragement to go to him. Christians, that power of God which educed all things out of nothing, which established the heavens, which fixed the earth; that power of God, it is the ground of our confidence: Ps. 121:2, 'My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.' This power should we depend upon.

We can ask nothing but what God is able to give, yea, above our asking: Eph. 3:20, 'Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.' Our thoughts are vast, and our desires very craving, and yet beyond all that we can ask or think, 'According to the mighty power that worketh in us.' We cannot empty the ocean with a nut-shell, nor comprehend the infinite God, and raise our thoughts to the vast extent of his power, only we must go to some instances of God's power; that power which made the world out of nothing, and that power which wrought in you, where there is such infinite resistance. We may go to God and say, Mat. 8:2, 'Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.' You need not trouble yourselves about his will; he is so good and gracious, prone and ready to do good; so inclinable: he is your heavenly Father. But that which is most questioned is the sufficiency of God; can you believe his power? Now determine but that, Lord, thou canst, and that is a great relief to the soul. Our wants are not so many but God is able to

supply them; our enemies and corruptions not so strong but God is able to subdue them: surely your heavenly Father will do what is in the power of his hand. A beggar, when he seeth an ordinary man coming, lets him pass without much importunity; but when he seeth a man well habited, well attended, and with rich accoutrements, he runs close to him, and will not let him alone, but follows him with his clamour, knows it is in his power to help him. So this should encourage us to go to the mighty God, which made heaven and earth, and all things out of nothing.

The third argument which Christ propounds, 'Thine is the glory.' The honour and glory of all will redound to God, as the comfort accrueth to us; it is for God's honour to show forth his power in our relief, and to be as good as his word. Now this is a ground of confidence, that he hath joined his glory and our good together; and that God's praise waiteth, while our deliverance waiteth: Ps. 65:1, 'Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion.' You think your comfort stays, and all this while God's honour waits. So Ps. 112:1, 'Praise ye the Lord; blessed is the man that feareth the Lord.' It is the Lord's praise that his servants are the only and blessed people in the world; and this is a wonderful ground of confidence. Think, surely God's glory he will be chary and tender of; he will provide for the glory of his great name. There is nothing God stands upon more than upon the glory of his name; nothing prevaileth with God more than that. If God were a loser by your comforts, if he could not save or bless thee without wrong done to himself, we might be discouraged. But when you come and plead with him, as Abigail, It will be no grief of heart unto my lord to forgive thy servant; so it will be no loss to God if he show mercy and pity to such poor creatures as we are; you then may pray more freely and boldly. If thy comforts were inconsistent with his glory, or were not so greatly exalted by it, then it were another matter; but all makes for the glory of his name. If our good and happiness were only concerned in it, there might be some suspicion; but the glory of God is concerned, which is more worth than all the world. We are unworthy to be heard and accepted, but God is worthy to be honoured. It is for the honour of God to choose base, mean, and



contemptible things, and to show forth the riches, goodness, power, and treasure of his glory. Much of our trouble and distrust comes only from reflecting upon our own good in the mercies that we ask, as if God were not concerned in them, whereas the Lord is concerned as well as you. As the ivy wrapped about the tree cannot be hurt, except you do hurt to the tree, so the Lord hath twisted our concernment about his own honour and glory. Thus the saints plead God's glory as an argument: Jer. 14:7, 'O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy name's sake.' They do not tell him what he shall do, but do thou that which shall be for thy glory. So Ezek. 36:22, 'Thus saith the Lord God, I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake;' so Isa. 48:9, 'For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off.'

[4.] The duration, for ever. All excellencies which are in God, they are eternally in God. God is an infinite, simple, independent being, the cause of all things, but caused by none; therefore he was from everlasting, and will be to everlasting: 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.' If there were a time when God was not, then there was a time when nothing was; and then there would never have been anything, unless nothing could make all things. Therefore God is eternally glorious; for whatever is in God is originally in himself, and absolutely without dependence on any other, to everlasting. How loosely do honours sit upon men! Every disease shakes them out of their kingdom, power, and glory; and within a little while the state, show, and all the command of earthly kings will fade away, and come to nothing. Governors and government may die, principalities grow old and infirm, and sicken and die, as well as princes; kingdoms expire, like kings, and they like us: Ps. 82:6, 7, 'I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High: but ye shall die like men.' 'But thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,' Ps. 45:6. His kingdom, and power, and glory, they are without beginning and without end. Now this is also a ground of confidence and dependence upon God.

Earthly kings, when they perish, their favourites are counted offenders: 1 Kings 1:21, 'When my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders.' When other governors are set up, they and their children will be found offenders. But our king lives for ever; therefore this should encourage us to be oftener in attendance upon God, performing it with all diligence and seriousness, rather than court the humours and lusts of earthly potentates, who die like one of the people, and leave us exposed to the rage and wrath of others that do succeed them. But God is the same that ever he was, to all those that ever called upon his name. God is where he was at first: I AM is his name; there is no wrinkle upon the brow of eternity. 'His arm is not short, that it cannot save; or his ear heavy, that it cannot hear,' Isa. 59:1. Whatever he hath been to his people that have called upon him in former ages, he is the same still. So Isa. 51:9, 'Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?' God hath done great things for his people: he smote Rahab, and killed the dragon (meaning Pharaoh); and God is the same God still—his kingdom, power, and glory are for ever; and God will be your God too for evermore. Look, as this doth increase the terror of the damned in hell, that they 'fall into the hands of the living God,' Heb. 10:31—God lives for ever to see vengeance executed upon his enemies—so it is a comfort to have an interest in the living God, that can and will keep you, and bring you to heaven, where you shall be with him for evermore, that will ever live to see his friends rewarded.

Secondly, It directeth and regulateth our prayers.

[1.] It directs us to the object of prayer; to whom should we pray, but to him that is absolute and above control? To God, and God alone; not to angels and saints. To whom should we go in our necessities, but to him that hath dominion over all things, and power to dispose of them for his own glory? Will you think it a boldness to go immediately to God? It were so indeed if we had not a Mediator, for a

fallen creature can never have the impudence; and wicked men that have not got an interest in Christ cannot expect relief from God; but it is no impudence to come with a Mediator: Heb. 4:16, 'Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.'

[2.] It directs us how to conceive of God in prayer. Right thoughts of God in prayer are very necessary and very difficult. No one thing troubleth the saints so much as this, how to fix their thoughts in the apprehensions of God when they pray to him. Now here is a direction how we should look upon God: look upon him as the eternal being, and first cause, to whom belongs kingdom, power, and glory. We cannot see God's essence, and therefore we must conceive of him according to his praises in the word. Now take but the preface and the conclusion, and then you have a full description of God. Look upon him as an eternal being, whose is the kingdom, absolute right to dispose of all things in the world, backed with all-sufficiency and strength. And look upon him as your Father that is in heaven; for Our Father which art in heaven relates to Christ, that is, in the heavenly sanctuary, appearing before God for us. This will help you in your conceptions of God, that you may not be puzzled nor entangled in prayer.

[3.] It directs us as to the manner of praying: with reverence, with self-aborrancy, and with submission.

(1.) With reverence, for he is a great, powerful, and glorious king: 'Thine is the kingdom, power, and glory.' Oh, shall we serve God then in a slight and careless fashion? Mal. 1:8, 'If ye offer the blind, the lame, and sick for sacrifice, is it not evil? Offer it now unto thy governor, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts.' Go to an earthly king, would you come to him with rude addresses, not thinking what to say, tumbling out words without sense and understanding? And compare this with ver. 14: saith God, when they brought him a sickly offering, 'I am a great king,' implying it is a lessening of his majesty. You do as it were

dethrone God, you put him besides his kingdom, you do not treat him as he doth deserve, if you do not come into his presence with a holy trembling.

(2.) With self-aborrency, and a sense of your own nothingness. I observe this, because all the arguments in prayer are not taken from us, but from what is in God, from his attributes: 'Thine is the kingdom, power, and glory.' It is a blessed thing to have God's attributes on our side; to take an argument from God when we can take none from ourselves. Christ teacheth us to come with self-denial. The two first words, kingdom and power, show that all things come from God, as the first cause. And the last word, 'Thine is the glory,' shows all must be referred to God, as the last end; so that self must be cast out. So that all the reasons of audience and acceptance are without us, not from within us: Dan. 9:8, 9, 'To us belongeth confusion of face; to the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses.' Therefore thus it directs us to place all our confidence in God's fatherly affection, in his power, goodness, and glory, and in his absolute authority; nothing to move God from ourselves.

(3.) To come with submission. Thine is the kingdom; that is, he hath an absolute power to dispose of all blessings, therefore it is lawful for him to do with his own as he pleaseth. We must come, not murmuring or prescribing to God, but expecting the fulfilling of our desires, as it shall seem good to the Lord, according to his wisdom and power, by which he exercises his kingdom over all things, as may be for the glory of his name: Ps. 115:1, 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.' Not to satisfy our revenge, not to gratify our private interest and passions; but, Lord, for thy name's sake, as may be for manifesting thy mercy and truth, so do it: not too passionate for our own ends, but confident that God, who hath the kingdom and government of the world in his own hands, will administer and carry on all things for his own glory.

[4.] It directs us, again, what are the duties of the persons praying.

(1.) Freely to resign up ourselves to God's service. Otherwise we mock God, when we acknowledge his dominion over all the world, and we ourselves will not be made subject to God. Therefore certainly a man that useth this prayer, 'Thine is the kingdom, power, and glory,' will also say, 'I am thine, save me,' Ps. 119:94. Let us freely resign up ourselves for him to reign over us. Can you say, with any face, to God, 'Thine is the kingdom,' yet cherish rebellious lusts in your own hearts? It is the most unsuitable thing that can be. 'Thine is the power:' He is able to bear you out in his work, however the world rage. And therefore we should not think scorn of his service, for his is the glory: the service of such a king will put honour upon you.

(2.) Another duty of him that is to pray is to depend upon God's all-sufficiency. Shall we speak thus of God, and say, 'Lord, thine is the power,' and yet not rely upon him? He that cannot rely upon him for this life and the other, doth but reproach God when he saith, 'Thine is the power'—thine is the power, yet I will not trust thee, but fly to base shifts, as if the creature had power, and man had power—as if they could better provide for us than God. Therefore we are to live upon him, and cast ourselves into the arms of his all-sufficiency.

(3.) Another duty of them that would pray this prayer is, sincerely to aim at and seek the Lord's glory in all things. Why? For the glory is thine. Wilt thou say, 'Thine is the glory,' and yet give and take the glory which is due to God to thyself? All is due to him, from whom we have received all things. But he that prides himself in gifts and graces, cannot be in good earnest. Wilt thou rob God of the honour, and wear it thyself? Did men believe all glory belongs to God, they would not take vainglory to themselves. Herod was eloquent, and the people cried out, 'The voice of a god, and not of a man.' He did but receive this applause, and usurped the glory due to God, and God blasted him. Therefore, when we pride ourselves in our sufficiencies, and abuse our comforts to our own lusts, we cannot with a good conscience say, 'Thine is the glory.'

For ever. Amen

ALL this is sealed up to us in the last word, Amen; which may signify, either so be it, so let it be, or so it shall be.

The word Amen sometimes is taken nominally: Rev. 3:14, 'Thus saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God.' Sometimes it is taken adverbially, and so it signifieth verily, and truly; and so either it may express a great asseveration, or an affectionate desire. Sometimes it expresseth a great and vehement asseveration: John 6:47, 'Amen, amen, verily, verily, I say unto you.' In other places it is put for an affectionate desire: Jer. 28:6. When the false prophets prophesied peace, and Jeremiah pronounced war, 'Amen! the Lord do so; the Lord perform thy words which thou hast prophesied.' Amen, it is not an asseveration, as confirming the truth of their prophecy, but expressing his own hearty wish and desire, if God saw it good.

Two things are required in prayer—a fervent desire and faith. A fervent desire; therefore it is said, James 5:16, 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.' And then faith: James 1:6, 'But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.' What is that faith required in prayer? A persuasion that those things we ask regularly according to God's will, that God will grant them for Christ's sake. Now both these Amen signifies: our hearty desire that it may be so; and our faith, that is our acquiescency in the mercy and power and wisdom of God concerning the event.

Christ would have us bind up this prayer, and conclude it thus: Amen, so let it be, so it shall be. Observe hence,

That it is good to conclude holy exercises with some vigour and warmth.

Natural motion is swifter in the end and close: so should our spiritual affections, as we draw to a conclusion, put forth the efficacy of faith and holy desires, and recollect, as it were, all the foregoing

affections; that we may go out of the presence of God with a sweet savour and relish, and a renewed confidence in his mercy and power.

Again, this Amen relateth to all the foregoing petitions, not to one only. Many, when they hear, 'Lord, give us this day our daily bread,' will say, 'Amen;' but when they come to the petition, 'Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven,' they are cold there, and have not hearty desires and earnest affections. Many beg pardon of sin; but to be kept from evil, to bridle and restrain their souls from sin, they do not say Amen to that. Many would have defence, maintenance, and victory over their enemies; but not with respect to God's glory. They forget that petition, 'Hallowed be thy name;' but this should be subordinated to his glory. Nay, we must say Amen to all the clauses of this prayer. Many say, 'Lord, forgive us our debts,' but do not like that, 'as we forgive our debtors:' they are loth to forgive their enemies, but carry a rancorous mind to them which have done them wrong. But now we must say Amen to all that is specified in this prayer. Then,

Mark, this Amen it is put in the close of the doxology. Observe hence,

There must be a hearty Amen to our praises as well as our prayers, that we may show zeal for God's glory, as well as affection to our profit.

Your Allelujahs should sound as loud as your supplications; and not only say Amen when you come with prayers and requests, things you stand in need of, but Amen when you are praising of God.

## MONERGISM BOOKS

A Practical Exposition of the Lord's Prayer by Thomas Manton,  
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