is not enough: but be confident that ye shall get access, acceptance, and a gracious return for his sake, Mark xi. 24. Raise a believing expectation in him.

**Question.** How may one reach that? **Answer.** (1.) By a believing view of Christ on the cross purchasing, and at the Father's right hand, interceding for, our mercies; and particularly eying his sufferings, agreeable to your wants, as in the case of your want of light, the darkness came on him; in the case of your want of bread, his hunger, &c. (2.) By a believing application of the promises suitable to your needs. (3.) Considering this as God's ordinance for communication between heaven and earth, Gal. iii. 8.

5. **Lastly,** Watch against your hearts going off to any confidence in the duty itself; for that is to dishonour the name of Christ, and will provoke the Spirit of the Lord to depart from you.

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**OF GOD'S HEARING OF PRAYER.**

**Psalm lxv. 2,**

*O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.*

What avails prayer, if it be not heard? But God's people need not lay it aside on that score. Our text bears two things with respect to that matter.

1. A comfortable title ascribed to God, with the unanimous consent of all the sons of Zion, who are all praying persons, "O thou that hearest prayer." He speaks to God in Zion, or Zion's God, that is, in New Testament language, to God in Christ. An absolute God thundereth on sinners from Sinai, there can be no comfortable intercourse betwixt God and them, by the law; but in Zion from the mercy-seat in Christ, he is the hearer of prayer; they give in their supplications, and he graciously hears them. Such faith of it they have, that praise waits there for the prayer-hearing God.

2. The effect of the savour of this title of God, spread abroad in the world, "Unto thee shall all flesh come:" not only Jews, but Gentiles. The poor Gentiles, who have long in vain implored the aid of their idols, hearing and believing that God is the hearer of prayer, will flock to him, and present their petitions. They will throng in about his door; where by the gospel they understand beggars are so well served. They will "come in even unto thee," (Heb.) They will come in even to thy seat, thy throne of grace, even unto thee thyself, through the Mediator.

* The substance of some Sermons preached at Etterick in the year 1748.
The doctrine I chiefly propose speaking to, is,

**Doctriné**, God in Christ is the hearer of prayer.

In handling this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. Wherein God's hearing of prayer lies.
II. The import of his being the hearer of prayer.
III. What prayers they are that God hears.
IV. More particularly consider the hearing and answering of prayer.

V. *Lastly*, Apply.

1. I am to shew wherein God's hearing of prayer lies. God being omniscient and everywhere present, there can nothing be said or done in the world, but he hears or discerns it. But the hearing of prayer in the sense of the scripture is a peculiar privilege of the Lord's people, and lies in the following things.

   1. God's accepting of one's prayer, Psalm cxii. 2, "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening-sacrifice. Many prayers are said in the world, that are so far from being accepted of God, that they are an abomination to him, Prov. xxviii. 9. God turns them away from him, as one flings a petition over the bar, that he is displeased with, Psalm lxvi. ult. But the prayers that he hears, he is well pleased with them, he approves of them. Hence he is said to attend, hearken to the voice, and consider prayer, as one listens to a sound that pleases him, and dwells on a pleasing thought, Psalm lxvi. 19, "Verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer." He delights in the petition, Prov. xv. 8, "The prayer of the upright is his delight." He loves to hear the petitioner's voice, Cant. ii. 14, "Let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice." He accepts the petitioner's person, and his petition too, as the angel said unto Lot, Gen. xix. 21, "See I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken." For where prayer is heard, the person is accepted too, as Gen. iv. 4, "The Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering; Job xlii. 9, "The Lord also accepted Job."

2. His granting the request, Psalm xx. 1, 4, "The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble;—grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel." The sinner coming to God with a petition, lays it before him, and his desire is granted. God wills it to be unto him accordingly, Matth. xv. 28, "O woman," said Christ to the woman of Canaan, "great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." The mercy prayed for is ordered for the sinner, in kind or equivalent. Thus prayer is heard in heaven, heard and granted.
3. His answering of prayer, Psalm cii. 2, "In the day when I call answer me speedily." This is more than granting the request, being a giving unto the petitioner's hand what is desired. It is an answer not in word to the believer's faith only, but in deed to the believer's sense and feeling. Thus Hannah prayed for a child, and she got one; Paul prayed for the removal of a temptation, and he got grace sufficient to bear him out against it. Thus prayer heard in heaven comes back like the dove with the olive-branch of peace in her mouth.

II. I shall shew the import of God's being the hearer of prayer. These comfortable truths are importuned in it.

1. God in Christ is accessible to poor sinners, 2 Cor. v. 19, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Though he sits on the throne of glory, and we are guilty before him; yet he is on a throne of grace, so as we may have access to him with our supplications. The flaming sword of justice guards the tree of life, on the side of the law; so that on that part our God is a consuming fire, which sinners are not able to dwell with; yet behold him in Christ, and through the vail of his flesh he is accessible to the worst of sinners.

2. He is a sin-pardoning God, Exod. xxxiv. 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, and transgression, and sin." Prayer is made particularly for the pardon of sin; the daily cry at the throne is, "Forgive us our debts." If then he is the hearer of prayer, he is a sin-pardoning God. We cannot pay our debt, but God can forgive it, and will forgive it to all that come to him in Christ for forgiveness. All kinds of sin he forgives freely, Micah vii. 18; Isa. i. 18. There is no exception, but of the sin against the Holy Ghost, which in its own nature makes the guilty refuse pardon, Matth. xii. 31. The pardon is proclaimed in the gospel, Acts xiii. 38; not to encourage presumption in any, but to prevent despondency in all, Psalm cxxx. 4, "There is forgiveness with thee; that thou mayest be feared."

3. He is an all-sufficient God, Gen. xvii. 1, "I am the Almighty God, (Heb.) "All sufficient." He is self-sufficient for himself, and all-sufficient for his creatures. If he were not so, he could not be the hearer of prayer; the needs of praying persons would soon exhaust his treasure. But though all flesh come to him for supply of their various wants, he is the hearer of prayer; he has enough for them all, to answer all their needs, come as oft as they will. He is a fountain of goodness, that never runs dry, but is ever full.

4. He is a bountiful and compassionate God, Psalm lxxxvi. 5,
WHAT PRAYERS THEY ARE THAT GOD HEARS.

"Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee." He is willing and ready to communicate of his goodness and mercy to poor sinners for the supply of all their needs. He is more ready to give, than we to ask; we are not straitened in him, for he is the hearer of prayer; but in our own bowels. He has laid down a method, how we are to ask; and in that method, it is ask and have, James i. 5, 6, 7, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." The faith of this is necessary to acceptable prayer, Heb. xi. 6. "For he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarer of them that diligently seek him."

5. He is an omnipresent and omniscient God, Psalm cxxxix. 7, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit; or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" Heb. iv. 13, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked, and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." How else could he be the hearer of prayer? What part of the world soever the petitioner is in, whether he prays with the voice or with the heart only, God is the hearer of prayer. Idolaters might choose high places to worship their idols in; but it is all one to the hearer of prayer, whether the petitioner be on the top of the highest mountain, or as low as the centre of the earth. Jonah was heard out of the whale's belly. Though thousands of voices be going in prayer to the throne at the same time, the infinite mind comprehends them all, and every one, as easily as if there were but one at once.

6. Lastly, He is a God of infinite power, Rev. iv. 8, "They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." -While there is such a variety of cases, that the creatures have to lay before him in prayer, he could not be the hearer of prayer, if there were anything too hard for him to do. But nothing is impossible with him; he calleth things that are not to be as if they were, at the voice of prayer.

III. I proceed to show what prayers they are that God hears. It is not every prayer, nor every one's prayer that God hears. But it is the prayers of his children, for things agreeable to his will, made by the assistance of his Spirit, and offered through Christ.

1. They are the prayers of his own children, who are justified by faith, and reconciled to him, James v. 16, "The effectual fervent
prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Our Lord teaching how to pray, teaches us to call God "our Father;" which can be only through faith. Our persons must be accepted in justification, ere any work of ours can be so. Where there is no peace betwixt God and the sinner, what communion can be there? Amos iii. 3, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" The scripture is plain, "God heareth not sinners," John ix. 31. God's way of giving graciously, is to give other things with Christ, Rom. viii. 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?" It is in the covenant only that one can have a bottom for acceptance of his prayers.

Objection. Then it is in vain for any to pray, but true believers. Answ. There is less evil in praying by an unbeliever, than in his omitting it; and consequently less punishment will be. But going to pray, go to Christ by faith; and so your prayer shall be accepted; and no otherwise.

2. They are such prayers of theirs as are for things agreeable to God's will, 1 John v. 14, "This is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us." Even in saints there are remains of a corrupt will, and so it is not left to them to pray for what they please; not what is the choice of their corruption, but what is the choice of their grace. When James and John would have prayed for fire from heaven to consume the Samaritans, Christ rebuked them, and said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of," Luke ix. 54, 55. Elias did it, but they might not, not having his spirit.

3. They are prayers made by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, hence called "inwrought," (Gr.) Jam. v. 16. No language is acceptable in heaven, but what is learned from thence. It is not the art of prayer, but the Spirit of prayer, that is pleasing in the sight of God. The former may be reached by God's enemies, whose false heart may vent itself by a flattering tongue, as Israel did, Psalm lxxviii. 36, -37, "Nevertheless, they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant." The latter is the peculiar privilege of God's children, yet common to them all; Gal. iv. 6, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying: Abba, Father."

4. Lastly. They are prayers offered to God through Christ the Mediator, the soul trusting on his merit and intercession alone for the hearing of them, Dan. ix. 17, "Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy
face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake." John xiv. 14, "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." Christ is the altar on which our spiritual sacrifices can be accepted; and it is not consistent with the honour of God, to hear the prayers of sinners otherwise.

The doctrine being thus explained in the general, I come in the next place more particularly,

1. To confirm it, and shew that there is such a thing as hearing of prayer, the privilege of the Lord's people in this lower world.
2. To shew in what manner the Lord hears prayer.

First, I am to confirm it, and shew that there is such a thing as hearing of prayer, the privilege of the Lord's people in this lower world, God is in heaven, they are on the earth; voices from heaven, or angel-messengers to report the acceptance of prayers there, are not to be expected. Nevertheless we are sure there is such a thing still in being, and it is necessary to prove it.

1. For the sake of a profane generation, who, as they are strangers to, so they are despisers of, communion with God.
2. For the sake of formalists, who go about the duty of prayer as a task, but are in no concern for the fruit of it; send away the messenger, but look for no report.
3. For the sake of discouraged Christians who go bowed down, because they cannot perceive it as they desire.

That God is the hearer of prayer, and will hear the prayers of his people, is evident from these considerations.

First, The supernatural instinct of praying that is found in all that are born of God, Gal. iv. 6, forecited. It is as natural for them to pray, to fall a praying when the grace of God has touched their hearts, as for children when they are born into the world to cry, or to desire the breasts; Zech. xii. 10, "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications." Compared with Acts ix. 11, where, in the account that is given of Paul, at his conversion, it is particularly noticed, "Behold he prayeth." Hence the whole saving change on a soul comes under the character of this instinct; Jer. iii. 4, 19, "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth? I said, Thou shalt call me, My Father, and shalt not turn away from me." This supernatural instinct being the work of God in the new nature, cannot be in vain. Accordingly it is determined; Isa. xlv. 19, "I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain." But it would be a vain appetite, if it were not to be satisfied by hearing.

Secondly, The intercession of Christ; Rom. viii. 34, "It is Christ
that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." It is a great part of the work of Christ's intercession, to present the prayers of his people before his Father, Rev. viii. 4, to take their causes in hand contained in their supplications, 1 John ii. 1. So we find him interceding for his church of old in her low condition, Zech. i, and in the New Testament, John xvii. He is ever at the work, and cannot neglect it, Heb. vii. 25, and it cannot be without effect; John xi. 42, "I knew that thou hearest me always," said Jesus to his Father.

Thirdly, The promises of the covenant, whereby God's faithfulness is impawned for the hearing of prayer; as Matth. vii. 7, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Isa. lxv. 24, "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer, and whiles they are yet speaking, I will hear." Psalm cxlv. 19, "He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he also will hear their cry, and will save them." The promise of hearing of prayer, is one of the great lines of the covenant; Hos. ii. 20, 21, "I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord. And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens," &c.; and it is so proposed with his being his people's God; Zech. x. 6, "I am the Lord their God, and will hear them."

Fourthly, The many encouragements given in the word to the people of God, to come with their cases unto the Lord by prayer. He invites them to his throne of grace with their petitions for supply of their needs; Cant. ii. 14, "O my dove that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." He sends afflictions for to press them to come; Hos. iv. ult, "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face; in their affliction they will seek me early." He gives them ground of hope of success, Psalm i. 15, whatever extremity their case is brought to; Isa. xlii. 17, "When the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them." He shews them, that however long he may delay for their trial, yet praying and not fainting shall be successful at length; Luke xviii. 8, "I tell you that he will avenge them speedily."

Fifthly, The gracious nature of God, with the endearing relations he stands in to his people; Exod. xxii. 27, "And it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I am gracious."
Matth. vii. 9—11, "What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" He wants not power and ability to fulfill the holy desires of his people; he is gracious, and will withhold no good from them that they really need. He has the bowels of a Father to pity them, the bowels of a mother to her suckling child. He has a most tender sympathy with them in all their afflictions, the touches on them are as on the apple of his eye; and he never refuses them a request, but for their good; Rom. viii. 28.

Sixthly, The experiences which the saints of all ages have had of the answer of prayer. The faith of it brings them to God at first in conversion, as the text intimates; and they that believe cannot be disappointed. Abraham, Moses, David's and Job's experiences of this kind are in record, with many others, Paul's, &c. The Psalmist sets up his case as a way-mark to all the travellers to Zion; Psalm xxxiv. 6, "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him; and saved him out of all his troubles." And to this day the saints' experience seals the truth thereof.

Lastly, The present ease and relief that prayer sometimes gives to the saints, while yet the full answer of prayer is not come; Psalm cxxxviii. 3, "In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me; and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul." The unboosing of themselves to the Lord in prayer, comforts and strengthens the heart; 1 Sam. i. 18. This is on the faith of the Lord's hearing of prayer; Micah vii. 7, "I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me."

Secondly, I come to shew in what manner the Lord hears prayer. For clearing of this, I lay down the following observations thereon,

First, A thing desired of God may be obtained, and yet the prayer not heard and accepted, as in Israel's case; Psalm lxviii. 29, "So they did eat, and were well filled; for he gave them their own desire." For as it is plain on the one hand, that sinners out of Christ may sometimes obtain a thing they pray for, as in the case of the Ninevites, it is as plain on the other, that no prayer of theirs can be accepted of God, according to John ix. 31, "God heareth not sinners." It is one thing to get a thing prayed for, another to get it as an answer of accepted prayer; Psalm lxxviii. 34—38. Now this falls out in two cases,

1. When the thing prayed for is given downright in wrath, as it was in the case of the Israelites seeking a king; Hos. xiii. 11, "I
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gave thee a king in mine anger." Men often need no more to ruin
them, but to get their will; and God may give it them with a vengeance.
They get their desire, but it is far from being accepted; for it is in
anger it comes to them.

2. When it is given in the way of uncovenanted condescension.
Thus sinners out of Christ may get particular requests of theirs
answered, as Ahab; 1 Kings xxi. 29. For though God does not ac-
cept their persons, nor any performance of theirs; yet he may shew
regard to his own ordinance of prayer, and therefore make it not
fruitless even to them. And thus the Lord does to train sinners
to the yielding themselves to him, and to depending on him by faith
and prayer; Hos. xi. 3, "I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them
by their arms."

Answers of accepted prayer come in the way of the covenant of
grace, but these in the way of common providence. And they may
be discerned by these attending signs.

(1.) Wilfulness and unhumbledness of spirit in asking; 1 Sam.
viii. 19, "Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Sa-
muel; and they said, Nay, but we will have a king over us." When
one's will is peremptory, and is not brought to a holy submission to
God in the matter, but they will wring the mercy out of God's hand,
and have it at any rate, whether with or without his good will; be
sure that is what comes in the way of common providence only.

(2.) Strengthening and feeding of lusts by them when received,
Psalm lxxviii. 29, 30. Hence on such receipts men commonly grow
worse, and their mercies are short-lived; being greedily snatched
off the tree of providence, ere they are ripe, their teeth are set on
edge with them, vers. 30, 31.

(3) A frame of spirit, in asking and receiving, not of the mould
of the gospel, but of the law; whereby more stress is laid upon our
own necessity than on the intercession of Christ; there is much de-
sire of the mercy, but no believing dependence on the Lord for it in
the promise as a free promise through Christ; and ordinarily it
leaves the heart fixed on the gift, and does not carry it back to the
Giver.

Secondly, A prayer may be heard and accepted, and yet the de-
sire of it not granted. That is to say, God may be pleased with,
and accept of the prayer as service to him; and yet may see meet
to grant the thing prayed for. Even as a father going to cor-
rect one of his children, may be very well pleased with another child
of his interposing for sparing, though he may not see it meet to for-
bear for all that.

The truth of this is put out of doubt, in the case of Jesus Christ
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himself, Matth. xxvi. 39, who prayed, saying, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Compare, Heb. v. 7, "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard, in that he feared." If it was so done with the Head, no wonder it be so with the members too, as David, 2 Chron. vi. 8, 9, "But the Lord said to David my father, Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for my name, thou didst well in that it was in thine heart; notwithstanding, thou shalt not build the house, but thy son which shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house for my name." A thing may be very agreeable to the command of God, to be prayed for, which yet may be otherwise ordered in the holy wise providence of God. It is one thing what he requires of us by his revealed will, another what in his secret will he minds to do, Deut. xxix. ult., "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed, belong unto us, and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law."

Now of prayers accepted and not granted, it is to be observed,
1. They are not absolute and peremptory, but with holy submission to the divine pleasure, as of our Lord's, Matth. xxvi. 39. If we pray absolutely, for what God has not so promised, and such a prayer is not granted, it is not accepted neither. So all that this amounts to is, that God sees meet to refuse what the petitioner did seek, but with submission to his will either to grant or refuse it.

2. Where a prayer is accepted and not granted, there is in the bosom of the denial an unseen greater mercy. Had that cup passed from Christ, where had been the glory of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the salvation of an elect world, that was wrapt up in the denial of that sinless desire of Christ's holy human nature? Had David's child lived for whom he prayed, had he been a lasting stain on his father's reputation; but God refused David's petition in that, where the refusal was a greater mercy than the granting would have been.

3. Hence that treatment of such prayers is agreeable to the chief scope and aim of the petitioner, which is God's glory and his own good. This is the design of believers in all their accepted prayers, which, being agreeable to the promise, there is no jarring there betwixt God and them. Only, they in this case look on such a thing as they pray for to be the most proper mean for that end; God sees it is not, and therefore refuses it. So all that this amounts to is, as if one should desire one to lead him such a way to such a place; he refuses not to lead him to the place, but he will not lead him that way, but a nearer and better way.
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QUESTION. How may I know such prayers of mine to be accepted, when they are not granted?

Answer 1. When the heart is brought to submit to the denial as a holy and righteous dispensation; Psalm xxii. 2, 3, "O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." When the sinner from his heart clears the Hearer of prayer, leaving his complaint on his unworthy self, such an effect is an argument of prayer accepted, though not granted.

2. When though the thing be denied, yet divine support under the denial is granted, and made forthcoming, Luke xxii. 42, 43. Christ having prayed, saying, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done; there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him." And he was carried through all his sufferings by his Father, so that he was victorious over death itself. Thus often God, deuying the petitions of his children, with respect to temptations, troubles, &c., yet testifies his acceptance of their prayers by the supports given under the same; Psalm cxxxviii. 3, "In the day when I cried," says David, "thou answerest me; and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul."

3. Lastly, When such a soul is helped to go back to the same God with new petitions in faith and hope of hearing; 2 Sam xii. 20, "Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord and worshipped." This argues a faith of the promise of all things working together for good, Rom. viii. 28, a leaving a latitude of dispensation to sovereignty, well becoming a submissive and resigned petitioner.

Thirdly, The desire of a prayer may be heard and granted, and yet it may be long ere it be answered. That is to say, all prayers not answered to our sense and feeling, are not lost; they may stand granted in heaven, and yet it may be many a day ere the answer of them come to us. A prayer may be granted, and yet the mercy prayed for be still withheld, so that the petitioner may be obliged to send new petitions day by day for it still.

I shall first confirm this, and then shew why it may be so ordered.

First, To confirm the truth of this, consider,

1. Scripture instances. Abraham prayed for an heir, it was granted, Gen. xv. 3, 4, yet it was more than thirteen years before that prayer was answered, in the birth of Isaac, Gen. xvii. 25. So the Israelites in Egypt, Exod. ii. 23, 24; and Daniel, chap. ix. 23. Such instances are recorded for our learning.
2. There is a difference betwixt the granting of a petition, and the intimation of that grant to us; betwixt Heaven's order for our getting of the mercy, and the execution of it. The one is the hearing and grant of prayer, the other is the answer; and though these sometimes may come both in one instant, as Matth. xv. 28, "Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt; and her daughter was made whole from that very hour;" yet often they are at a great distance of time, as in Abraham's case.

3. The hearing and granting of prayer is an object of faith, the answer of prayer an object of sense and feeling, 1 John v. 14, 15; Matth. xv. 28. A prayer made through the assistance of the Spirit, according to the will of God, and offered to God through Christ, is heard and granted in that instant wherein it is made; and this is what we are to believe, on the ground of the faithfulness of God in the promise, before we get the answer to our sense and feeling; for "faith is the substance of things not seen, and we walk by faith not by sight;" and therefore this is the ordinary way to put the grant and answer at some distance of time, though not always, Isa. lxv. 24.

Secondly, I shall show why the answers of prayers heard and granted, are kept up for a time, and may be for a long time.

1. To keep the petitioners hanging on about the throne of grace; Prov, xv. 8, "The prayer of the upright is his delight." The Lord by this means gives them many errands to the throne, so that they must always be going back again, and renewing their suits. So fathers make their little children follow them, and hang about them, and speak to them as they can; and no father has such delight in the company and converse of his children, as God has in his, Cant. ii. 14.

2. For the trial of their graces; Jam. i. 12, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." This life is the time of trial, and God's withholding for a time the answers of granted prayers, is a piece of trial that will go in through and out through the child of God. It tries their sincerity and earnestness for an answer, Job xxvii. 10; with Luke xviii. 7; their patience and disposition to wait on God, Hab. ii. 3; their hope in God, Psalm cxxxvii. 11; and xliv. 5; especially it tries their faith in the word of promise, and that is a trial of great estimation in the sight of God; 1 Pet. i. 6, 7, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations. That the trial of your faith being much more precious
than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Every new act of faith in the word, is more valuable than all the famed exploits of carnal, selfish men; especially when faith keeps hold of the promise like a rope in the water, while providence is bringing one wave after another over the man’s head, Psalm lvi. 10. So Matth. xv. 21—28.

3. Till they be prepared and fitted for receiving the answer; Psalm x. 17, “Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble; thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.” Mercies we need, but we are not at all times meet to receive them. God gives his left-hand gifts to strangers, in the way of common providence, whether they be prepared for them or not; and hence many are ruined getting much laid to their hand before they have the grace or wisdom to manage it, for God’s honour and their own good. But his right-hand gifts to his children, in the way of the covenant, though they be ready for them, yet he will keep them back till they be made ready and prepared for them too. So he is at pains to humble them, and work them for that thing. Saul was brought to the kingdom easily, but David not so.

4. Lastly, Till the best time come, for their getting it, when it may come to them with the greatest advantage; Eccl. iii. 14, “I know that whatsoever God doth, it shall be for ever; nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it; and God doth it, that men should fear before him.” There is much in the timing of a favour; the same thing may be worth double to a man at one time, beyond what it will be at another. And be sure, if God is keeping back the answer of a granted prayer, he is only reserving till the best time of bestowing it; John xi. 14, 15, and ii. 4.

Quest. How may a Christian know his prayer is heard and granted, while yet it is not answered?

Answ. 1. If ye have prayed in faith, no doubt your petition is heard and granted, though it should not be answered for ever so long after; Matth. xxi. 22, “All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.” God refuses not, nor rejects any prayer for things agreeable to his will, made in faith of the promise, through the assistance of the Spirit, and offered to him through his Son. And ye ought to believe, that such prayers are granted, but that God for holy wise ends delays the answer.

2. If ye are strengthened to hang on about the Lord’s hand for the answer, hoping and waiting for the Lord; Psalm exxxviii. 3. It is a certain truth, which ye may build upon; Gal. vi. 9, “In due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” This is the very character
of an elect believer, on his trials for glory; Luke xviii. 7, "Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he be long with them?" Granted prayer brings something in hand, namely, grace to wait on; Psalm xxvii. ult., "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait I say on the Lord." Compare ver. 13, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

3. Lastly, It is a good sign when ye are encouraged to wait for the desired answer, by the Lord's answering you in other things that fall out in the meantime of the delay. For the Lord lays these to your hand to support your faith and hope in point of the delayed answer. How was David's faith of the promise of the kingdom kept up, so many years during Saul's reign? Why, David in that time had many experiences of answers of prayer, and fulfilling of promises in other things, as Psalm xxxiv. 6, "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him; and saved him out of all his troubles."

Fourthly, Prayers accepted and granted, shall certainly be answered to the believer's sense and feeling at length. The answer may be delayed, but it cannot be forgotten nor miscarried. Such prayers will surely be turned into praise at long-run; and faith will bring in sense and feeling, when it is tried a while.

I shall first confirm the truth of this, and then shew when they shall be so answered to their sense and feeling.

First. To confirm this, consider,

1. The interest the Mediator has in the matter, which secures and puts it beyond doubt. It is upon his merit that the prayer is accepted, on his intercession that it is granted; so that he is nearly concerned in the obtaining of the answer; and then he is the great Steward in heaven, into whose hands the whole fulness of covenant-benefits for sinners' supply is put. How then can it fail, when the mercy petitioned for is lodged in the hand of our Intercessor?

2. The faithfulness of God in his word; Psalm lxxxix. 8, "O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee?" This stands as a rock immovable in all the changes that befall his people. His word must be accomplished, and his promise fulfilled, whatever stand in the way of it. Heaven and earth shall rather be removed than it fail, or fall a minute behind the set time of its bringing forth; Hab. ii. 3, "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry."
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3. The love and pity God has to his children that cry to him. His ears are open to their cry; Psalm xxxiv. 15. He forgets it not; Psalm ix. 12. As he is their God, so he will be "a God to them," as the expression is; 1 Chron. xvii. 24, namely, to do the part of a God to them; that is, to hear and answer their prayers.

4. Lastly, Such prayers are the product of his own Spirit in them; Rom. viii. 26. And be sure, the mouths that he opens, he will fill; the holy appetite and desires that he creates in them, he will satisfy.

Secondly, I shall shew when they shall be answered to their sense and feeling. There are two periods in general, wherein God gives answers of prayers accepted and granted. Answers of prayer are given,

1. In time, during the petitioner’s life in this world; Psalm lviii. ult., “Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.” Believers in this life have communion with God, and do get answers of prayer, as provision allowed them of their Father, for their journey through the wilderness. But one may wait a long time of his life for an answer of some prayers, and ere he go off he made to say, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation;” Luke ii. 29, 30.

Of the seasons of life for answers of prayer, we may say in the general, there are four seasons thereof.

(1.) A time of the Lord’s return to a church and people from whom he had hid his face; Psalm cii. 16, 17, “When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory. He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.” The children may cry long to their Father, ere he let on he notices them, when he is angry with their mother; but when he is pleased with her, they get speedy answers from him; Dan. ix. 1, 2, 23. Times of reformation, and outpouring of the Spirit on a land, are times of answers of prayer to particular persons; which should move us to carry along the public case, with our private cases, as David did; Psalm li. 18, 19, “Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion; build thou the walls of Jerusalem;” &c.

(2.) A time of greatest extremity, when matters are carried to the utmost point of hopelessness; Deut. xxxii. 36, “For the Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants; when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left.” When God’s people are brought to that, they can do no more, then is the special season of God’s doing for them; Isa. xii. 17, “When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue
faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.” When the child was laid by for dead, the well was discovered. When the knife was at Isaac’s throat, the answer comes from heaven, “Stay thine hand.” A sentence of death is often passed on all probable means, the thing is put as it were in the grave, and the stone sealed; and then comes the resurrection of it; 2 Cor. i. 8—10. Psalm cxxvi. 1, “When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.”

(3.) A time of the petitioner’s deepest humiliation, when he is beat down from all his heights, and brought as low as the dust of the Lord’s feet, as in Job’s case; chap. xlii. 6, 7, &c., and the woman of Canaan’s; Matth. xv. 27, 28. It is the Lord’s way with his children to lay them very low, before he raise them up; to empty them soundly of themselves, before he fill them. They must be made to see their own utter unworthiness, that God is no debtor to them, be wholly resigned to the divine pleasure, and become as a weaned child. And that may cost much hewing; but it is the way they are prepared for mercy; Psalm x. 17.

(4.) Lastly, A time wherein the mercy may come most seasonably for God’s honour and their comfort, Gal. vi. 9, “In due season we shall reap, if we faint not,” The husbandman expects to reap his crop in the harvest, for that is the most proper season. Our God is the best judge of time for this or that purpose, and he does all in judgment, Deut. xxxii. 4. So that the petitioner shall be fully satisfied as to the delay of the answer, and the whole steps of providence in the matter, and be made to sing as Rev. xv. 3, saying “Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

2. In eternity, when the believing petitioner is got into another world, then will be a season of answers of prayer, Mal. iii. 17, 18, “They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.” I do not say, they will pray in another world, but prayers poured out in this world will be answered in another world, partly after death, and fully and completely at the resurrection. For consider,

(1.) There are accepted and granted prayers that are never answered on this side of time; yet they cannot miss to be answered, Psalm ix. 18, “For the needy shall not alway be forgotten; the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.” Therefore they are answered in eternity. Such is that prayer of all the children of God, Rom. vii. 24, “O wretched man that I am, who shall do-
liver me from the body of this death? The complete victory over all their enemies, and being set beyond their reach, which is delayed till the resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. 26, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed, is death."

(2.) There are prayers that are answered here in part, but are not fully answered till the petitioner comes into another world. The prayers for the coming of Christ's kingdom are begun to be answered now, but they will not be fully answered till the last day. Petitions for deliverance from temptation, the power of lusts and corruptions, are answered so as an earnest is given, but the full answer is till then in reserve, Rom. xvi. 20, "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

(3.) Lastly, All the accepted prayers of those that wait for the Lord, whether for their souls or their bodies, will be at once answered in heaven fully; there the promises will be told out to them for ever in full tale. There are many prayers for deliverance from temptations, trials, and troubles, which God sees not meet to answer now; but they will be all answered at once then, Rev. xxi. 4, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

Therefore, let none think that all the prayers are lost that are not answered during this life; for prayers here made in faith, may be delayed as to their answer, till the petitioner come home to his Father's house; and there will be a second crop there of prayers here answered.

QUEST. When an answer of prayer comes, how shall it be known to be an answer of accepted and granted prayer, and not come in the way of common providence?

ANSW. 1. Mercies that come so make the soul more holy, tender, and watchful, whereas others prove snares and fuel to men's lusts, Psalm vi. 8, "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping." Common providence filled the rich man's barns, then said he, "Soul take thine ease."

2. They enlarge the soul in thankfulness to God, Psalm cxxvi. 1, 12, "I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice, and my supplications. What shall I render unto the Lord, for all his benefits towards me?" And they make it to rejoice more in the Giver, than in the gifts, 1 Sam. ii. 1, "My heart rejoiceth in the Lord." The signature of God's good will that is upon the mercy, makes it of a great bulk, though it may be a small thing in itself, Gen. xxxiii. 10, "I have seen thy face, said Jacob to Esau, as though I had seen
the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me." Thus coming from God in the way of the covenant, it leads back to God; but others not so.

3. Lastly, They come seasonably, the heart being in some measure prepared for the receipt, Psalm x. 17, when the soul is moulded in a submissive disposition. Exercised souls will be afraid of a mercy coming too soon.

Fifthly, God answers prayer, either by giving the very thing itself asked, or the equivalent of it. As a man may pay his bond, either in money, or money worth. So there are two ways of God's fulfilling his promises, and answering his people's prayers.

1. Sometimes God answers prayer by giving the very thing desired. So he answered Hannah's prayer for a child, and Solomon's prayer for wisdom. And what comes that way will bear much bulk in the eyes of a gracious soul, because of the good will of God that is stamped on it, whereby it is distinguished from what comes in the common road.

And what comes that way, readily comes with a good incast to it, especially if the petitioner has been kept long hanging on for it. Such an incast got Solomon, 2 Chron. i. 12, "Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee, and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had, that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like." They that wait long for their answer, ordinarily get as it were both the stock and interest together. So Abraham and Sarah waited long for the promised seed, even till they were come to extreme old age; and then they got it with a renewing of their age.

2. Sometimes by giving, though not the thing itself, yet the equivalent of it, that which is as good; as one may pay his bond, by giving, though not money, yet what is as good as money. Thus though God did not give David the child's life, yet he gave him a Solomon, a mercy as good and better. Paul, though he got not free of the temptation at his asking, yet he got grace sufficient to bear him up under it, 2 Cor. xii. 9.

And God's as-good that he gives his people, will readily be found better, all things considered. That is best which is best for God's honour and our good, and God knows better than we what is most suitable to these purposes. It would have been more easy for Paul, to have been freed from the messenger of Satan; but it was more for God's honour and his spiritual good, to be helped to fight that messenger and overcome.

Learnt then, that your prayers may be answered, though ye get not the very thing ye ask. Though God answer you not in kind,
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if he answer you in kindness, you have no reason to say your prayer is not heard. If he take not off your burden, yet if he gives you support, he hears you, Psalm cxxxviii. 3. There are two ways how God gives his people as good.

(1.) Sometimes he gives them as good in the same kind: though he gives them not the same temporal mercy they would have had, he gives them another of the same kind as good as it. Though he gave not David the life of the child he asked, he gave him a Solomon. So God reserves to himself the choosing.

(2.) Sometimes he gives them as good in another kind; as not giving them such a temporal mercy, he gives them a spiritual mercy and enjoyment in the room of it; and surely there is no loss there.

Question, How may one know that God answers his prayer, by giving him the as-good.

Answer 1. When that which is given answers or serves the purpose as well as the thing desired would have done. David desired the child's life as a token of God's reconciliation with him; but Solomon's birth answered the same purpose, 2 Sam. xii. 24, 25. So there was no loss as to the main thing in view.

2 When the heart is brought to rest contented with what is given in the room of what was desired. So Moses was sufficed with a sight of the land from Pisgah, instead of entering into it. When the thing given takes the heart off what is withheld, it is a sign it comes as an answer of prayer by the way of an as-good.

3. When a person is to his own conviction a gainer by the choice God makes for him. Thus the Lord sometimes answers his people's prayers in trouble for deliverance, by giving them manifestations of his love and mercy, which they would not have gotten if the trouble had been removed, Lam. iii. 57, "Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee; thou saidst, Fear not."

Sixthly, God's answer of prayer sometimes agrees with the expression used in prayer, though not with the preconceived design and desire of the petitioner. There is a special help of the Spirit allowed God's people in prayer, beyond what they have otherwise, Rom. viii. 26. Hence going to God on such a particular errand, they are sometimes carried so to express their desire, that the answer agrees exactly to the expression used in the petition, though the petition as expressed doth swerve somewhat from what they intended.

It will therefore be profitable on the receiving an answer of prayer, to compare it with the expression in which the petition was made; and the harmony betwixt them being observed, will set the matter of the answer in a clear light.

Lastly, One mercy may be the answer of the prayers of many.
Whether it be a public mercy to a society, or a private mercy to a particular person, it may be given in answer to the prayers of many, and many may take the comfort of that answer. As when the prayers of a congregation are heard, or a mercy is given which many have privately prayed for, though the answer is one, it may belong to many.

**Question.** How may one know that in such a case there has been any regard had to his prayer for the mercy?

**Answer 1.** If thy heart did join in prayer for the mercy, with others, thy affections being touched with earnest desire of the mercy, thy soul lifted up to depend on the merit and intercession of Christ for the granting it, thou needest not doubt but it is an answer to thy prayer as well as to others, Matth. xviii. 19, "I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."

2. If thou findest thy heart enlarged in thankfulness to God for the mercy when it is obtained, that is another evidence that it is an answer to thy prayer as well as others, 2 Cor. iv. 15, "For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might, through the thanksgiving of many, redound to the glory of God." Many a prayer had been put up for the coming of the Messiah; Simeon when he saw him is transported with thankfulness of heart, as having obtained his desire, Luke ii. 29.

I shall now shut up this subject with some practical improvement.

**Use I.** of information. Hence see,

1. How much we poor sinners stand indebted to free grace providing a Saviour for us. We could have had no access with our prayers to an absolute God; justice would have barred our acceptance. S. fallen angels have no access to God allowed them; for Christ took not on their nature. But great is our privilege in this point; 1 John ii. 1, "For if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

2. The heinousness of the sin of neglecting prayer. A price is put in men's hands to get wisdom, but they have no heart to it. The door of mercy and grace stands open, but they will not come to it; God sits on a throne of grace, ready to answer petitions; but they have none to put in his hand.

3. The impiety and profaneness that is in abusing of prayer, making a scorn of it in ordinary conversation, as "God pity you, help you, bless us, save us," &c. How lamentable is it, that the name of God, and the ordinance of prayer, should be thus prostituted
to the lusts of men at every trifle! The day will come, when God's pity, help, &c., which ye make so light of now, will appear more valuable than ten thousand worlds, and ye shall not have them, if ye repent not of that contempt which ye now treat them with.

4. The folly of those who are in no concern for the hearing of their prayers. Surely, they forsake their own mercy. Ye would have little satisfaction in your meat, if it did not feed you; in your clothes, if they did not keep you warm. What satisfaction then can ye have in your praying, if ye cannot find it is heard?

5. Lastly, This shews why serious souls do so much value prayer, and betake themselves thereto in all their straits. Slight it who will, it will not be slighted by those who have experience of the Lord's hearing their prayers, Micah vii. 7, "I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me." Daniel was such a man; and he would rather venture on the den of lions, than forego his praying to God. The neglect of it, is a sign of unacquaintedness with that.

Use II. Of direction and comfort to the people of God, in all the trials and troubles they meet with in the world. Here is your course ye should take, go to God with your case, whatever it be, and make your prayer to him about it, Phil. iv. 6, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." Here is your comfort. God is the hearer of prayer, Isa. xlv. 19, "I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye my face in vain." There are four things I would suggest to you here for your direction and comfort.

1. God has made the way to heaven lie through many tribulations, that his children might have the more errands to his throne of grace. That this is the path-road to the kingdom of God, is clear from scripture testimony, Acts xiv. 22, "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God; John xvi. ult., "In the world ye shall have tribulation;" and the experience of Christ the Head, and the saints in all ages. That this is the design of it, appears also from the word, Hos. v. ult. "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face; in their affliction they will seek me early." Prosperity seldom fails to issue in forgetting of God, Deut. xxxii. 15. Adversity causes to feel a need of his help, Zeph. iii. 12. So God keeps the thorn of affliction at the breast of his people, to keep them waking, and sends the cross to invite them to the throne of grace.

2. The way to heaven in that respect never alters, though the external circumstances of the church in the world do alter. Sometimes there is persecution in the church, sometimes peace; but in the most peaceable time of the church, God's people shall go through
the world to the kingdom through much tribulation. The seed of the serpent will vent their enmity one way or other against the people of God, though they have not law on their side to bear them out in persecuting them. God will have his people tried, and caused to suffer in their bodies, goods, liberty, and life, if not by the hands of persecutors, yet by his own hand one way or other. For that is a perpetual rule, Matth. xvi. 24, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Luke xiv. 26, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." So there is no change, but only as to the means and instruments of trial.

3. Whatever be your trial, whether it be in temporal or spiritual things, ye are welcome to the throne of grace with it, Phil. iv. 6, foreordained. Whether it come on you immediately from the hand of God, or men, ye may carry it to God by prayer, and pour out your heart before him as a prayer-hearing God, in confidence that he can help you, and will do it in due time.

4. The more trials and afflictions God's people meet with, the more experience readily they will be found to have of God's hearing prayer; Rom. v. 3, 4, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience; and experience, hope." Of all the patriarchs Jacob had the most trials, and accordingly was richest in experiences. The more battles the Christian soldier is engaged in, the more is he enriched with spoil. The Israelites had not sung that triumphant song recorded Exod. xv., had they not been in that great strait at the Red Sea.

Use last, of exhortation. Then,

1. Improve your privilege of access to God through Christ in prayer. Since God has cast open the gates of mercy, come enter in by them; since he is saying to you, "What is thy petition and it shall be granted thee?" slight not the golden season of petitioning. Consider,

(1.) Your need is great. Whatever ye have or want in temporals, surely ye need a resting place for your conscience and for your heart; you need something to make you happy in time and eternity.

(2.) The whole creation cannot answer your needs. There is an emptiness in every creature, that it cannot be a resting place to you, Isa. iv. 2. The soul is of such a make, that no less than an infinite good can satisfy it. Only God in Christ can make you happy.

(3.) He offers to supply all your needs; Psalm lxxxii. 10, "I am
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the Lord thy God; open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." Ask in faith, and ye shall receive.

(4.) Lastly, This door of access will not always stand open; Matth. xxv. 10, 11, 12, "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord. Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not." Now is the accepted time.

2. Be concerned for God’s hearing of your prayers; look after them and see what speed they come. There are two things wherein this concern should appear.

(1.) In making your addresses to the throne of grace, being careful so to manage that, as ye may be accepted. They who are rash in their approaches to God, and careless how their petitions are formed and presented, cannot be duly concerned for a hearing of them. Labour, therefore, so to pray, as your prayers may be heard and accepted.

(2.) In depending and waiting on after prayer for an answer; Psalm v. 3, "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up." Do not drop your suits, but insist for an answer, depending for it on the promise of God in his word.

Thus far of God’s hearing of prayer. I shall shut up this with a word to another doctrine for the use of the whole.

Doctrine. Such is the glory of God as the hearer of prayer in Christ, that it will make all flesh that discerns it come unto him.

Here I shall shew,

I. What is that glory of God as the hearer of prayer in Christ, that is so attractive.

II. How this glory of God in Christ is discerned by a sinner.

III. What that coming unto God is, that is the effect of discerning that glory.

IV. Lastly, Deduce an inference or two.

I. I am to shew what is that glory of God as the hearer of prayer in Christ, that is so attractive. It is twofold.

1. The glory of his all-sufficiency; Gen. xvii. 1, "I am God all-sufficient." He is not only all-sufficient for himself, but for his creatures; if he were not so, he could not be the hearer of prayer. But sinners in the darkness of their natural state discern it not; they cannot comprehend what way he can be so, and therefore they traverse the round of the creation, seeking in the creature that sufficiency; till the light of the glory of God’s all-sufficiency shine into their
hearts in Christ. Then it shines unto them with a threefold ray of glory.

(1.) An absolute suitableness to their case, which must needs be very glorious in their eyes, since that is what they were always seeking, but could never find before, according to that; Isa. lix. 2, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Therefore with the wise merchant they "sell all to buy the one pearl," Matth. xiii. 45, 46. The heart of man is an empty, hungry thing, going among the creatures seeking a match for itself, in which it may rest; but there they cannot find it; but discovering it in a God in Christ, they are attracted with the glory of that sight.

(2.) A complete fulness for them; Col. i. 19, "For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell." In his all-sufficiency the soul sees the fulness of a Godhead, an infinite boundless fulness, to answer and satisfy the boundless desires of an immortal soul. That is a fountain for the thirsty soul to drink at to the full; a treasure to enrich the soul oppressed with poverty; a salve for all its sores, and a remedy for all its wounds. So it cannot miss to attract.

(3.) An ability to help in all possible incidents, Heb. vii. 25, "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." The arm of the creature is weak in all cases, and quite too short in many cases; but so is not the arm of an all-sufficient God; Isa. lix 1, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear." There is nothing too hard for him, there is nothing that Omnipotency can stick at. Who can but draw towards such a one for a Friend?

2. The glory of his free grace and good-will to poor sinners; hence the heavenly host sang; Luke ii. 14, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men." When the Lord would show Moses his glory, he proclaimed the name of the Lord before him; Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin." The glory of all-sufficiency may attract the desire of sinners; but the sinner cannot come to him, while that treasure appears to be locked up from him, a gulf fixed betwixt him and it. But when once an all-sufficient God appears in the glory of his free grace in Christ, the treasure appears open to the sinner, there is a bridge for him laid over the gulf; and so he comes freely away
HOW THIS GLORY OF GOD IS DISCERNED.

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to God in Christ. This shines to the coming sinner with a threefold ray of glory.

(1.) Readiness to forgive sin; Psalm cxx. 4, 7, 8, "But there is forgiveness with thee; that thou mayest be feared. Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plentiful redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities." He is gracious to pardon the sins for which he might justly condemn the sinner; he is willing to be reconciled to offenders, and receive them into peace, 2 Cor. v. 19. This is an attractive glory where the conscience is awakened.

(2.) Willingness to give and communicate all that is needful to make the sinner happy; Rev. xxii. 7, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." He is gracious to give, as well as to forgive; Hos. xiv. 2; not only to lay by his wrath against the sinner, but to load him with benefits.

(3.) And all this freely, without any view to any worth in the creature, as Isa. iv. 1, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price." No condition, no qualification is required; only the sinner is welcome to take and have, whatever he has been.

II. The next thing is to shew, how this glory of God in Christ is discerned by a sinner.

1. The mean of discerning it is the gospel; 2 Cor. iii. ult., "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord." As by means of light in the air we discern bodily objects, so by the means of the gospel we discern this glory of God, 2 Cor. iv. 4. By the law we discern the glory of an absolute God terrifying and confounding to a sinner, but by the gospel the glory of God as in Christ, attracting and refreshing to a sinner. It is as a looking-glass wherein we see the image of things; 2 Cor. iii. ult. It brings before us the lovely image of a God in Christ reconciling the world to himself.

2. The organ or instrument of discerning it is faith, Hab. iv. 2. Though there be full light in the air, and the looking-glass presenting the beautiful image of a person, be set before one's face, if the man's eyes be out, he cannot discern it. So the glory of God in Christ is held forth unto men in the gospel; but they are spiritually blind who are unbelievers, they perceive it not; 1 Cor. ii. 14, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." But faith sees the glory; John i. 14, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld

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his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father) full of
grace and truth."

3. The author of sinners discerning it is the Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. ult.
It is he that illuminates the dark mind, that cures sinners of their
natural blindness. He works faith in the soul, brings home the
gospel-report to the sinner in particular, demonstrating it to be the
word of God, and God's word to him in particular, and so makes the
soul embrace it by believing it, Isa. liii. 1.

III. The third head is to shew what that coming unto God is,
that is the effect of discerning that glory. The sinner discerning
the glory of God in Christ as the hearer of prayer,

1. He comes away from all other doors, which before he used to
hang about for supply. He despairs at length of coming speed
there, Jer. iii. 22, 23, "Return ye backsliding children, and I will
heal your backslidings; behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the
Lord our God. Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills,
and from the multitude of mountains; truly in the Lord our God is
the salvation of Israel." The light of the glory of God shining into
his heart, discovers the emptiness of all the poor shifts the sinner
makes to get supply in his natural state of blindness.

(1.) He comes away from the door of the empty creation, where
he had long laboured to find a rest; and despairs of finding it there
any more. The profits, pleasures, comforts, and conveniencies of
this world, appear lying vanities that can never give rest to the
heart; and they must have another portion; Jer. xvi. 19, "O Lord,
my strength and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction,
the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and
shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things
wherein there is no profit."

(2.) From the door of sin, where he expected a satisfaction in the
fulfilling of his lusts; and he despairs of ever finding it there, Job
xxxiii. 27. He finds that puddle-water will not quench his thirst,
that the pleasure of it is but short, but the pain and sting of it
lasting.

(3.) From out of the world lying in wickedness, 2 Cor. vi. 17, as
he would escape away from lions' dens and mountains of leopards,
Cant. iv. 8. He despairs of ever finding his account in the way of
the world.

2. He comes away unto God in Christ, for all, and instead of all;
Jer. iii. 22, "Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our
God." And he comes unto him,

(1.) As a Saviour, that will save his submissive suppliants, Jer.
iii. 22, 23. Faith apprehends him as God our Saviour, and so comes
to him and trusts on him for salvation from sin and from wrath, Matth. i. 21, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins."

(2.) As a portion, that will eternally make up impoverished and ruined creatures, Psalm cxlii. 5, and in which the poor petitioner may find what he has so long sought for in vain, in the world and the way of sin.

(3.) As his resort for ever in all his needs, whatever they shall be, Psalm lxxi. 3. The soul coming unto God, comes to him as one that will never go back to another, but will hang on about his door, though he should die at it.

I conclude with an inference or two.

1. Whoso come not unto God in Christ, as a Saviour, &c., are certainly ignorant of him, and see him not in his glory; "For they that know thy name," says the psalmist, "will put their trust in thee," Psalm ix. 10.

2. Great and powerful must that glory be, which draws sinners from all other doors unto God. By nature we are backward to come unto God; it must be a very ravishing glory that has such an effect on perverse sinners.

3. Lastly, Be concerned to discern that glory; to discern it by faith, and by experience, in order to your coming to him as your Saviour, portion, and continual resort.

ON ACCEPTANCE WITH GOD.—THE DOCTRINE OF THE ACCEPTANCE OF MEN'S WORKS EXPLAINED, AND A PRACTICAL REGARD THERETO IN ALL THE DUTIES OF LIFE INCULCATED.*

2 Cor. viii. 12,
For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

The Christians in Judea being in much distress and poverty, there was a contribution through the churches of the Gentiles for them. The communion of saints extends not only to spiritual, but temporal things too; that they be ready to help one another out of their substance. And this communication of worldly things to the supply of the saints, is not confined to those of our own church; but is to be extended to strangers on occasion, at the greatest distance. The

* The substance of several sermons preached at Etterick in the year 1726.