

THE SECOND PETITION.

MATTH. vi. 10.—*Thy Kingdom come.*

As the first petition relates to the *name* of God, this second relates to the *kingdom* of God, the kingdom of our Father which is in heaven; the *coming* of which, that is the advancement thereof, is desired by all the children of God. And that is the great mean of glorifying his name; for then is his name hallowed, when his kingdom comes, is advanced and carried on till it come to perfection.

In discoursing further from this subject, I shall shew,

I. What is meant by *the kingdom of God.*

II. What is the import of this petition, for its *coming.*

III. The reasons of the concerns of the children of God for the *coming of his kingdom.*

IV. Apply.

1. I am to shew, what is meant by *the kingdom of God.* There is a fourfold kingdom of God mentioned in scripture.

1. The kingdom of his power, which reaches over all the world. The subjects of this kingdom are all creatures whatsoever, Psal. ciii. 19. 'His kingdom ruleth over all.' It reaches from the highest angel to the meanest worm that creeps on the earth. It is a vast dominion, comprehending earth, seas, and hell, and all that in them is. He made them all, and therefore has dominion over them all: and to him they must all submit themselves willing or unwilling, Rom. xiv. 11. 'As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.' Compare Phil. ii. 10, 11.—'At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' In this respect God is universal Monarch, and all the kings and emperors of the world are but his vassals.

2. The kingdom of his gospel, Matth. xxi. 43. 'The kingdom of God shall be taken from you,' says Christ to the Jews. This is not so large as the former. It is erected within it, but comprehends the whole visible church, in which God has set up the light of the gospel and Christ's name is known, and men profess subjection to him.

(1.) The subjects of it are all members of the visible church, whether godly or ungodly, sincere or hypocrites, (Matth. xiii. 47), with their children. Even the worst of them are privileged persons, in comparison of those of the world without the church, Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20. 'He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judg-

ments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation : and as for his judgments, they have not known them.'

(2.) The King of it is Jesus Christ, Psal. ii. 6. ' Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.' He is the alone Head of it, and only supreme in it. And neither Pope nor King can pretend to the supremacy over it, without invading his royal prerogative to their own cost, Eph. i. 22, 23. ' God hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be the Head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.' And his glory he will not give to another.

(3.) The laws of it are the word of God. The Bible is the book of the laws of the kingdom, which great and small within the kingdom are equally bound to walk by, Isa. viii. 20. ' To the law and to the testimony : if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' These laws are attended with the most weighty sanction ; and as they have the promise of eternal life of free grace to those who obey him, so they have the threatening of eternal wrath to the disobedient, suitable to the majesty of the King, Mark xvi. 16. ' He that believeth shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned.'

(4.) The ordinances of it are gospel-ordinances, instituted by the King himself, bearing his own signature, Matth. xxviii. 20. ' Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.' And for men to pretend to add or alter, as if they were not bound up to the divine institution, is the product of their own blindness, and enmity against Zion's King, a saying in effect, ' We will not have this man to reign over us,' Luke xix. 27. ' For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, Isa. xxxiii. 22.

Lastly, The officers of it (ordinary) are, pastors and teachers, for the work of the ministry, Eph. iv. 11, 12 ; ruling elders for government, 1 Tim. v. 17 ; and deacons for the care of the poor, Acts vi. As for prelates or bishops, archbishops, metropolitans, &c. whatever is to be said of their persons, their offices belong not to the kingdom of Christ, but of Antichrist, as well as priests, cardinals, and popes, there being no institution of them in the book of the manner of Christ's kingdom.

3. The kingdom of his grace, Matth. vi. 33. ' Seek ye first the kingdom of God,' &c. This is yet narrower than any of the former, and comprehends only the invisible church ; for it is not an external, but an internal kingdom, in which grace, saving grace, reigns in the hearts of those who belong to it ; for, says Christ to his disciples, ' behold the kingdom of God is within you,' Luke xvii. 21.

(1.) The subjects of it are believers, true saints, and they only; and they commence subjects of this kingdom in the day of Christ's power on their hearts, their new birth-day, Psal. cx. 3. Well may it be called a kingdom, for it is a kingdom of Kings, Rev. i. 6. as all the subjects of it are 'made kings unto God.' Out of prison (their natural state) they come to reign over their spiritual enemies.

(2.) The King of it is Christ, dwelling in their hearts, Eph. iii. 17; sitting in their hearts as on his throne, and all things else made his footstool, Luke xiv. 26. The gospel comes with power to the elect souls, Psal. xxiv. 8. The everlasting doors are lifted up, and the King makes his triumphant entry, and receives the crown at his entrance, Cant. iii. ult.

(3.) The laws of it are the laws of the Bible, but written over in their hearts, Heb. viii. 10. What others have in their book only, they have in their book and heart too; that is, inclinations of soul suited to the word are framed in them, which is a new nature, naturally disposing them to obedience without force. This is the law of their mind, Rom. vii. 23.

(4.) The ordinances of it are the same gospel ordinances, but observed in a spiritual manner, in spirit and in truth, John iv. 24. Phil. iii. 3. For this kingdom consists not in outward observances, but inward graces, Rom. xiv. 17. whereby the soul is conformed to the image of Christ, and the inner man serves the Lord Christ, as well as the outward man: it is 'not in word, but in power.'

Lastly, The Administrator of it is the Holy Spirit of Christ, John xiv. 16, 17. He teaches the subjects the laws of the kingdom. So they are taught of God. He enlivens, excites, and strengthens them to obedience. He leads them out to the war against their spiritual enemies, inspires them with courage and resolution in the conflict, and crowns them with victory. He makes use of the word for all this, and brings every thought into obedience, 2 Cor. x. 5.

4. The kingdom of his glory, 1 Cor. xv. 50. This is the blessed state of eternal happiness in the other world. This kingdom is now a-gathering, but shall fully come at the second coming of Christ.

(1.) The subjects of it are all the elect, being prepared for it by conversion, regeneration, justification, sanctification, and perseverance. This is the end of the golden chain, Rom. viii. 29, 30. (And the elect angels make up a part of this kingdom too). However long any of them lie among the pots, there shall none of them be left there, nor missing in that kingdom. There they shall be in body and soul too. For Christ will summon death to deliver him his own, and then he will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and present them spotless.

(2.) The King of it is God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, reigning most gloriously over all the kingdom, without the least degree of rebellion or uneasiness under the government among all the subjects, and without any mixture of enemies or malcontents among them, Luke xx. 36. This, then, is the kingdom by way of eminency, where the Lord reigns for ever and ever. The kingdom of his power has many malcontents in it, ready to quarrel with their Maker and his administration. The kingdom of the gospel has many adversaries, without and within men, and is held out of many nations. The kingdom of grace has no access to the hearts of many who hear the gospel; and where it is set up, ill neighbours, corrupt lusts, mar the progress. But in the kingdom of glory there are no such things.

(3.) The laws of it are the eternal laws of righteousness, indelibly engraven on their hearts, without the least blot. There is no Bible needed there; for the rule of conduct is written on the mind, and the writing neither waxes old, nor can be erased.

(4.) The ordinances of it are perpetual praises and hallelujahs, never-ceasing songs to God and the Lamb. There is no temple there, for God and the Lamb are the temple thereof. There is no need of preaching or prayer; for perfect knowledge takes place, and every saint is made perfect and full, so as to seek no more. Faith is swallowed up in vision, and hope in fruition.

Lastly, The administrator of this heavenly kingdom is the Holy Spirit, but without any external means. He trained up the saints while in the world for this royal state, and at once, by his internal agency and invisible operations, disposed, fitted them for, and ever presides over them, in the delightful employments of the kingdom of glory, John xiv. 16. From what has been said,

USE. 1. Submit yourselves contentedly to the disposals of Providence. If God be King over all, is there any fault in the administration; nay, is not all well done, yea, best done? Let his sovereignty silence us; should it be according to thy mind? His infinite wisdom should satisfy us, who knows better than we do what is best for us, and can over-rule all things for his glory and our good.

2. Submit yourselves to the good sceptre. Are ye subjects of the gospel-kingdom? Then it becomes you to be subject to the laws, to observe the ordinances, and to be submissive to the officers of the kingdom. The contempt poured on these falls on the Prince of the kingdom. Beware then of transgressing or offending in this matter, lest ye incur the guilt of high treason against the majesty of Heaven, and the stone cut out of the mountain without hands fall upon you,

and crush you to pieces. Answer the gospel-call, and let it have its due effect upon you, in submitting to the sceptre of Jesus Christ as King of Zion, and resigning yourselves wholly to him, as your Prophet, Priest, and Sovereign to be taught his will for your salvation, to be redeemed by his blood, sanctified by his Spirit, and to be ruled and governed by his laws as in the hand of the Mediator.

3. Let our royal Master have your hearts for his throne, and set up his kingdom of grace there. Let him sit enthroned there, without any rivals or competitors, and without any squint looks to any other sovereigns that may have had dominion over you, whether the devil, the world, or the flesh. Lie no more to him with your lips, nor offend him with any sinful or corrupt practices. Give him your hearts, and let them be his for ever, to meditate on his word and delight in his laws. There is no getting to the kingdom of glory without this. For all the loyal subjects of this kingdom are absolute nonconformists to the world, and are conformable to Christ their King in righteousness and holiness: and it is their study to be conformed to him more and more; and they are grieved that they are not so perfectly.

Lastly, Labour and be restless till ye get your interest in the kingdom of glory secured. And this is done by closing with Christ for all the ends for which he is given of God. It is dangerous to delay this. Therefore kiss the Son, lest he be angry. Now is the time, now or never.

II. I proceed to shew, what is the import of this petition for the *coming* of the kingdom of God. Here it is to be observed concerning this fourfold kingdom, that they are sweetly linked together, and stand in a line of subordination, the end of which is the kingdom of glory, the kingdom of grace being subordinated to it, the gospel-kingdom to that of grace, and the kingdom of power to the kingdom of the gospel. Therefore I must begin with the kingdom of glory.

First, What is the import of this petition with reference to the kingdom of glory? It imports,

1. That the kingdom of glory is not come yet, 1 John iii. 2. 'It doth not yet appear what we shall be.' The King has not yet erected that kingdom. The King's coronation-day for that kingdom, 2 Thess. i. 10. is not yet come. That is a kingdom of perfect light and uninterrupted day. But the king's glory is yet under a vail in this world, through which only some rays are darted forth. It is night still, and till the day break, and the shadows flee away, the King has betaken himself to the mountains of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense, Cant. vi. 6. And many of the designed subjects are yet lying among the pots, some of them yet in the devil's

kingdom, some of them in their pilgrimage, some of them are got home indeed, but only half-home, having their souls in heaven, but their bodies in the grave.

2. That it will come. The King really designs it. From eternity he decreed it, John xvii. 24. 'Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.' He is gone to heaven, but he will surely come back again, and he will set up this kingdom, Acts i. 11. There are two things one may say with full assurance about it, though it is not come yet.

(1.) It shall certainly come. It is impossible it can fail to be erected. The Father's truth, the Son's blood, and the Spirit's seal, are pledges of its erection. The Father has promised it, the Son purchased it, and the Spirit sealed it on the souls of all the saints. The King shall receive that crown, and the subjects theirs too, however low as some of them sit at this day, Matth. xxv. 31, 34.

(2.) It shall never come down, but last for ever. Many, sometimes famous, kingdoms in the world are now no more. The Assyrian, Chaldean, Persian, and Roman monarchies, as they came from below out of the sea, so they are all come to ruin. But this kingdom, as it is from above, so it shall never be destroyed, never swallowed up, nor succeeded by another, Dan. vii. 27. 'His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.'

3. That it is the duty and disposition of the saints and children of God, to desire the coming of this kingdom, and that themselves and others may be brought into it, 2 Tim. iv. 8. And this their desire comprehends these four things.

(1.) The King's coming to receive his kingdom at the last day, Rev. xxii. 20. 'He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly.' The Spirit in the hearts of the saints, that cries, 'Abba, Father,' cries also, (as Judg. v. 28.) 'Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots?' They would have swift time that runs like a post, and never halts, to put wings to its feet, to hasten their King's coming.

(2.) The destruction of the last enemy, death, 1 Cor. xv. 26. It is the last that will stand in the way of the erection of this kingdom of glory. But the King's summons, by the sound of the last trumpet, put in the hands of the grim tyrant, will give him one conquering stroke, cause the doors of the grave fly open, and loose his grips for ever of the bodies of his saints. And this they long for, and joy in the faith of it, 1 Cor. xv. 57.

(3.) The everlasting complete happiness of themselves and others

in that kingdom, Psal. xiv. ult. Col. iii. 2, 3, 4. Every thing desires its own perfection, and therefore grace is natively carried out in desire after glory. If it were at the saint's choice, he would not live always, Job vii. 16. and therefore is coming up out of the world in affection or desires, Cant. viii. 5.

Lastly, The coming of the kingdom of grace, in order to all this. Which brings me to the second thing. But before I enter on that, I must answer a

Case. If this be the disposition of the saints, I am none: for Christ's coming is a terror to me, and how can I desire it? *Ans.* (1.) If this temper of spirit rise in thee from an habitual tastelessness and unsavouriness of holy, spiritual, and heavenly things, and from a reigning relish of the things of this present world, no wonder that Christ's coming be a terror to thee, and thou canst not desire it, more than any thing can desire to be out of its element, as fish to be dragged out of the sea. And while it is so with thee, I can speak no comfort to thee, Phil. iii. 18,—20. 'For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly; and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.'

(2.) But if holy, spiritual, and heavenly things have the predominant relish habitually in thy heart, and that sin and the world's vanities are unsavoury, in comparison of these; then, though it is often a terror to thee when thou thinkest on it, yet thou dost really desire it, though not expressly, yet interpretatively, ver. 20. And this I prove to thee by two arguments.

1. Dost thou not desire to be perfectly freed from, and set beyond the reach of sin and death? And dost thou not know, that that will never be till that day? Wherefore that desire to be freed from sin and death, has the desire of Christ's coming in the bosom of it, as the desire to have the festered member cut off, for the safety of the life, implies a desire of the surgeon's coming, who is to perform the operation, though it be a terror to the person.

2. Dost thou not desire communion with God, and full and complete communion with him in his glory, in soul and body? Thou knowest that that cannot be till he come, that all sin and sorrow will not be taken away, and this absolutely perfect happiness obtained till then. Wherefore this desire implies, that

Your terror may arise either from natural causes, or want of evidence of interest in Christ, or both together. Wherefore labour to assure your hearts before him by believing, Isa. xxxv. 4.

Secondly, What is the import of this petition with reference to the kingdom of grace? There is no getting into the kingdom of glory but by coming through that of grace. So that desiring the coming of the former, is desiring the coming of the latter too. It imports,

1. That all men naturally are without this kingdom, under the dominion of Satan, Eph. ii. 2, 3. 'In time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience. Among whom also we had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.' These other lords have dominion over them. And as they are not subjects of, so they have nothing to do with the privileges of the kingdom of grace.

2. That we cannot bring ourselves or others into it, John vi. 44. 'No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.' God alone can do it, Col. i. 13. It is he who translates us into the kingdom of his dear Son. One will lie under the iron yoke for any thing he can do, till the power of grace break it. When one is brought into it himself, he cannot bring his nearest relations along with him. He may use the means, exhort, excite, &c. but can do no more.

3. That we cannot, where it is set up, maintain and advance it, against the enemies of it, 2 Cor. iii. 5. 'We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves.'—Satan, the world, and corrupt lusts, are the enemies of this kingdom, fighting against it continually, to extinguish it, and to retard its progress, Gal. v. 17. 'For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. And if there be not another power than our own to balance the opposition, it will give way before them.

4. *Lastly*, That it is the duty and disposition of the children of God to desire, that the Lord himself may bring forward his kingdom, as Paul said to King Agrippa, 'I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am,' Acts xxvi. 29. This extends to,

(1.) The destruction of the power of sin and Satan over the hearts and lives of men, Psal. lxxviii. 1, 18. 'Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men: yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord

God might dwell among them.' Every saint grudges the sway which these enemies bear in the world, and prays it down.

(2.) The conversion of sinners to God, 2 Thess. iii. 1. 'Pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified.' Converts are the church's children, for which she travails in birth, in her ministers and members, as naturally longing for the conversion of souls, as a travailing woman to see the fruit of her womb.

(3.) The preserving and advancing to perfection the state of those who are in it already, ourselves or others, 1 Pet. v. 10. 'The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you. It is the joint desire of all who are brought into this kingdom, to be carried on and through, till they come to the kingdom of glory, both themselves and others.

Lastly, In order thereto, the coming of the kingdom of the gospel. This brings me to the

Third thing, What is the import of this petition with reference to the kingdom of the gospel? It is by the kingdom of the gospel that one is brought into the kingdom of grace. So desiring the coming of the one, we desire also the coming of the other. It imports,

1. That there are many impediments in the way of the propagation and efficacy of the gospel, which we cannot remove. The devil is the main agent against it, 1 Thess. ii. 18. 'Satan hindered us,' says Paul. Under him, the chief agents are the Turk and Antichrist; and every wicked man that has access to put hand to that work, all the world over; corrupt lusts in every man's heart, Luke xix. 14. and even the untenderness and unwatchfulness of good men.

2. That the Lord himself can remove all the impediments out of the way, and make the gospel triumph over them all, persons or things, sins or troubles, that are laid in the way to hinder it, Isa. lvii. 14. 'Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people.'

3. That it is the duty and disposition of the children of God to desire the advancement of the kingdom of the gospel. It extends to,

(1.) The removal of the impediments out of its way in the world, 2 Thess. iii. 1. It is the desire of the saints, that Satan's power in the world may be broken. And they should all pray for the downfall of the Turk and Antichrist, for the purging of the church of corruptions, scandals, and divisions, and whatsoever hinders the progress of the gospel; and that peace and truth may be maintained.

(2.) The propagation of the gospel through the world, that it may

be carried through all nations; that the Jews may be brought in, Rom. x. 1. and the fulness of the Gentiles, Psal. lxxvii. and that Christ may be King in all the earth.

(3.) The efficacy of it, to set up the kingdom of grace in men's hearts, 2 Thess. iii. 1. and that all things may be ordered to the advantage of it; the Spirit poured out from on high, the church furnished with gospel officers and ordinances, countenanced and protected by the magistrate, ministers made powerful and lively in their work, and the people tender and orderly in their walk, &c. all these things contributing to the success of the gospel.

Lastly, That God would exert his power for all this; which brings me to the

Fourth thing, What is the import of this petition with reference to the coming of God's kingdom of power? It is by the power of God that all these great things must be brought about. So the desiring of the coming of the gospel, is the desiring of the coming of this kingdom too. It imports,

1. That these things will not be done unless Omnipotency interpose. The work is great, the hands employed in it are feeble and there is great opposition. It will stick, if heaven put not to a helping hand.

2. That it is the duty and disposition of the children of God, to desire that God would exercise the kingdom of his power in the world, as may best conduce to these ends, Isa. lxiv. 1, 2. 'Oh that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence. As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence.'

USE. Shew yourselves of the family of heaven, by your concern that the Lord's kingdom may come, even that of glory, grace, the gospel, and power. For this is the language of those who cry unto God, 'Abba, Father.' Let this be a petition in every one of your prayers, private or secret. And contribute ye your best endeavours for promoting this glorious end. And let your life and practice shew to the world, that ye have the interests of God's kingdom at heart.

III. I proceed to shew, the reasons of the concern of the children of God for the coming of his kingdom.

1. The new nature in them moves that way, Isa. xliii. 21. 'This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.' It is from heaven, and aspires to heaven, and is heavenly in its motions, Phil. iii. 20. 'Our conversation is in heaven,' Rom. viii. 5.

'They that are after the Spirit, do mind the things of the Spirit:' As by our first birth we join and addict ourselves to the interests of hell, Psal. lviii. 3. 'The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies;' so one by the new birth joins interests with heaven. So that the meanest saint has a natural concern for the kingdom of Christ's thriving, the Spirit put in them being a public Spirit.

2. It is their Father's kingdom. How then can the children not be concerned for it? Matth. vi. 9, 10. Their Father's honour must be dear to them, Mal. i. 6. 'If I be a Father, where is mine honour?' The further on his kingdom goes, the more his glory is advanced; and they have the more satisfaction as children, in their father's honour.

3. Their own interest lies in it. They are willing subjects of the kingdom of his power. They are subjects, not only of the kingdom of the gospel, but of the kingdom of grace, and designed subjects of the kingdom of glory. So in its good their own is wrapt up. See Jer. xxix. 7. Their all is in this ship. No wonder, then, that they be concerned that it come safe to land. When it does, they are made up for ever: if it were possible that it could be cast away, they are ruined.

4. Their brethren's interest lies in it too, Psal. cxxii. 8. All the saints are born brethren. The more the kingdom is advanced, it is the better with them; and the more it is retarded, it is the worse, Psal. ciii. 16, 17. For be it foul or fair, their lot is in it, and it fares with them as with it. Their brethren yet unborn, all the elect not yet converted, some of them come, some but coming into the world, Cant. viii. 8. Should the kingdom of God be taken away what should become of perishing souls? If the net of the gospel be folded up, how should the fish be caught? If the Lord leave our mother, how shall children be brought forth into God?

5. *Lastly*, The ruin of the enemies' interest lies in it too. Every kingdom has its enemies. There is an irreconcilable war betwixt the devil's kingdom and Christ's. It was proclaimed in paradise, Gen. iii. 15. 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.' It never was, nor will be, taken up by a peace; it must end in the ruin of one of the two. As the one goes up, the other goes down; and the perfection of Christ's kingdom will be the destruction of the other. No wonder, then, that all the King's children cry, *Thy kingdom come*.

I shall now make some practical improvement of this subject, in uses of information, trial, and exhortation.

USE I. Of information. From what is said, learn,

1. The excellency, usefulness, and necessity of the glorious gospel. It is the kingdom of God.

(1.) It is a most excellent thing, precious in itself, and in the eyes of all saints, 2 Pet. i. 4. It is more excellent than all the kingdoms of the earth; for it is the kingdom of God, Matth. xxi. 43. It is a field wherein a treasure lies, which, whoso discover, will part with all, if it were crowns and kingdoms, to gain it, Matth. xiii. 44. And a thousand times happy the man, who can call the field his own.

(2.) It is most useful; for it is the way by which one is brought into the kingdom of grace, and so to glory, Acts xxvi. 18. It is the sword of the Spirit, by which sinners are subdued to Christ, the devil's nest is rifled, his power over sinners broken, and his kingdom brought down. It is the sinner's life, the saint's health, and the instrument of all spiritual good to them.

(3.) It is most necessary, as the kingdom of God among men, without which they are in a miserable plight, the devil ruling among them at his will, Psal. lxxiv. 20. 'The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.' It is the key of the kingdom of grace, and opens the door of access to heaven. The world might better want the sun in the firmament, than want the gospel. It is the 'light shining in a dark place.' 2 Pet. i. 19. to guide our feet in the way to eternal happiness.

2. That the cry for the ruin of the kingdom of God, can be no other but the cry of the family of hell. Yet many join in it, saying, 'Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us,' Psal. ii. 3. 'We will not have this man to reign over us,' Luke xix. 14. The gospel-kingdom is the great eye-sore to the devil; and if he could reach it, he would destroy it. Sometimes his chain is lengthened, and his forces are raised to raze the temple of God among men. And then multitudes of great and small list themselves in his service, in the unholy war against the church. And then they 'roar in the midst of the congregations; they set up their ensigns for signs:' and 'they break down the carved work thereof at once, with axes and hammers,' Psal. lxxiv. 4, 6. But their cry is the cry of hell.

3. That the kingdom of our Lord will triumph over all its enemies, and drive over all opposition. For if what two agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, Matth. xviii. 19. shall be done for them, much more what all the saints on earth make their joint request. The devil's kingdom, and Antichrist's kingdom, though malignants lend their hand to carry it on, shall fall before the prayers of all the saints, and they in the ruins of it,

if they quit not the Antichristian interest. If Christ's kingdom were ever so low, the joint prayers of the saints will raise it up.

4. No wonder that most men's prayers be not heard, for their hearts and lives contradict them quite, Prov. xxviii. 9. 'He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.' They pray, that God's kingdom may come; yet they will not submit to it themselves. They cannot be bound with the laws of the kingdom of the gospel, they are strangers to that of grace, and the kingdom of glory is not their choice, if they could do otherwise. Christ says to such, 'Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?' Luke vi. 46. Remember, Sirs, that 'the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power,' 1 Cor. iv. 20. The devil's kindly subjects may pretend a great concern for the kingdom of God. But what of that? It is but a pretence, while the kingdom of God is not within them, but sin reigns in their hearts.

5. *Lastly*, It is sad work to be employed in hindering the advancement of the kingdom of God, whether men pursue it openly or covertly. For it is driving contrary to the prayers of all saints. Persecution is a sad piece of work, but the devil is known there by his cloven foot. But scandalous practices, and fiery divisions, in the church, are apt to do more mischief to the kingdom of Christ. For whatever zeal for it the authors of them do pretend, one thing is evident, that the way to the getting good of the gospel is filled full of stumbling-blocks, and the poor blind graceless world is thereby taught to despise the means of grace. It must needs be fearful opposition to the kingdom of Christ, that is thus written in the blood of perishing souls.

USE. II. Of trial. Try by this whether ye be of the family of God or not. Have ye a kindly concern for the coming of his kingdom? Do your hearts say within you, *Thy kingdom come?* If it be not so, God is not your Father; but if so, he is. How shall that kindly concern be known? If it be of the right sort,

1. It will be a judicious deliberate concern, on a fair view of the nature of the kingdom, Matth. xiii. 45, 46. Many have a concern for the kingdom of Christ, who indeed know not what it is. The Jews had a mighty zeal for it, upon a mistake: and when it came to them, not answering the notion they had formed of it, they opposed it with all their might. But if ye be concerned for it, on a right view of it from the Lord's word, as a kingdom of true holiness, it is well.

2. A universal concern for it, for the kingdom of power, the gospel, grace, and glory. Ye will be concerned that God would ex-

ercise his power, for the advancing of the gospel; that the gospel may have its due effect on yourselves and others; that Christ may sway his sceptre in your hearts; and that holiness may be perfected in glory.—You will not only be concerned for the kingdom without you, but for the kingdom within you; not for the kingdom within you only, but without you too.

3. An active concern for it, not in wishing and wouling only, but putting to your hand to get it forward, 1 Cor. iv. 20. ‘For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power; and this ye will do, as ye have access in the world, and particularly in your own hearts and lives. It will set you to keep up a constant war with the enemies, the devil, the world, and your own lusts.

4. *Lastly*, A superlative concern for it, mastering and swallowing up all other concerns. You will say as the captives in Babylon did, ‘If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy,’ Psal. cxxxvii.

6. For if ye belong to God, your chief interest is in that kingdom; and where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

USE. III. and last, Of exhortation. I exhort you to join issue this day with Zion’s King, to have common friends and enemies with him, come what will. Set yourselves against the kingdom of sin and Satan in the world and your own hearts; Psal. ii. ult. ‘Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.’ And do ye exert heart and hand, that his kingdom may come. In this matter ye cannot be neutral: ‘For he that is not with me,’ says Christ, ‘is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad,’ Matth. xii. 30. Therefore, if ye be not with heart and hand set for the advancement of this kingdom, I declare you enemies to it. Come then,

First, Be concerned that the kingdom of God’s power may come; that he may stretch out his almighty arm, and gain ground to himself in the world.

1. It is a universal kingdom. All is in his hand. He can reach to the ends of the earth. It extends over all persons and things; and he can make all things subserve his purposes. He can display his glorious arm in bringing in shoals of volunteers into the kingdom of grace, and utterly root out all the legions of hell that are in combination against him.

2. It is an uncontroulable kingdom. None can resist him more than the clay can resist the potter, Dan. iv. 35. ‘He doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What dost thou?’ He will work, and who can let it? It is in vain to contend

with this almighty Sovereign; for he can easily conquer all his enemies, as easily as he caused the Red Sea swallow up Pharaoh and all his host. He can baffle all the machinations and plots of his adversaries, disconcert their best-laid projects, and make them retreat with shame and confusion. These are great encouragements for this concern.

Secondly, Be concerned that the kingdom of the gospel may come. For motives, consider,

1. That it is not a universal kingdom, but a narrow one, and that it is to be enlarged. For Christ has declared, 'that this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations,' Matth. xxiv. 14. Though now this kingdom be confined within narrow bounds, yet it shall, according to Christ's promise, have a more diffusive spread: and the time will come when the Jews shall be brought in with the fulness of the Gentiles, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ.

2. It is a moveable kingdom. It may be taken from them that have it. Christ may remove his throne, as he did from the Jews, Matth. xxi. 43. and as he has done in many once famous churches. Where are now the seven churches in the Lesser Asia? and where are many of those churches that were planted by the apostle of the Gentiles? Alas! their candlestick has been long ago removed out of its place, and the delusions of Mahomet prevail in those places where once the pure doctrines of the gospel were preached. Though Christ will always have a church on earth, yet it is confined to no particular country or place. And therefore, we in this land should earnestly pray, that the kingdom of the gospel may come more illustriously among us, and that it may continue with us to the end of time, that we may still see many days of the Son of man, and that the candle of gospel-light may ever shine brightly among us. These considerations should influence us always to pray, that Christ's gospel-kingdom may come among us, and be spread through the world.

Thirdly, Be concerned, that the kingdom of grace may come. Consider,

1. It is a kingdom that easily gets a back-set, Cant. ii. 15. It may be thriving in a soul this moment, and the next going to decay. There is need of much faith and watchfulness for preserving and maintaining it. A multitude of formidable foes are still opposing it, and all the subjects of it have no power to resist them. They must look to their Captain-General, and be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. It is only through him that they can do valiantly: for it is he alone who treads down their enemies under

their feet. And through him they shall be more than conquerors. Trust ye then in the Lord for ever; for with the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. Be sober, then, and watch unto prayer, lest ye fall into temptation. Cry unto your King, for he will save you, and gradually overcome all your enemies.

2. Yet this is a kingdom that can never be overturned, never removed, Heb. xii. 8. It is a spark of fire in the midst of an ocean, that can never be quite drowned or extinguished. The bruised reed shall not be broken, and the smoking flax shall never be quenched. All the combinations of adversaries, however formidable, shall never overturn this kingdom; for the gates of hell shall never prevail against it. It is built on the Rock Christ, and all the surges and waves of the dragon's flood shall never overturn the edifice. The name of the city is, 'The Lord is there.' Of this kingdom of grace, it may well be said, 'Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us,' Isa. viii. 9, 10. 'These are powerful considerations for inducing you to a hearty concern for the coming of this kingdom of grace.

Fourthly, Be concerned that the kingdom of glory may come. Consider,

1. Sin and trouble will have an end put to them there. The stage of sin and vanity will then be put down for ever, and none of the scenes that have so much vexed the righteous here, will ever be exhibited again. All corruptions, temptations, and backslidings from God, will then come to a final period. All bodily trouble and spiritual distress shall cease, and never more be heard of.

2. Grace and happiness will then arrive at their full perfection. The mystery of God will then be finished. Then will God's kingdom of power, of the gospel, and of grace, fully obtain their end; and all the subjects of Christ shall be completely blessed in the full enjoyment of him for evermore. Let us all then say, Let the kingdom of glory be hastened. Amen.

THE THIRD PETITION.

MATTH. vi. 10.—*Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.*

THIS third petition relates to the *will of God*, the *doing* of which is desired by all the children of God. And as by the coming of his