

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.

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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

kingdom his name is hallowed, so by doing his will his kingdom comes, or is advanced, and we own him to be King, Heb. xiii. 21. So all these three petitions meet in one great desirable point, viz. the glory of God. This is the scope of them all.

Observe here, by the *by*, that we are directed to speak to God in prayer as to one. Hallowed be *thy name*, not *your name*: *Thy will* be done, not *your will*. Wherefore then, should any forsake such a form of sound words, for such a harsh one, as speaks to God by *ye* and *your*, *your Majesty*, *ye know all things*, &c. ? I will not insist on what may be said to defend it, from the plurality of persons in the Godhead, the manner of speaking to kings, and from common conversation, (those who use it, I suppose, doing it rather from custom than judgment.) But it is not the scripture-way of speaking to God; it is not the way of this pattern of prayer; it is offensive to, and grating in the ears of the most part of Christians, as savouring of the opinion of the plurality of Gods, and therefore ought to be forsaken. I may well say in this case, 'But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God,' 1 Cor. xi. 16.

In discoursing from this petition, I shall shew,

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

II. By whom is *God's will done in heaven*.

III. What is the import of this petition.

IV. The reasons why the saints have such a concern, that the *will of God may be done in earth as it is in heaven*.

V. Apply.

1. I am to shew what is meant by *the will of God*. By it we are to understand the will of his commands, and the will of his providence.

*First*, The will of God's commands, Heb. xiii. 24. 'Make you perfect in every good work to do his will.' Matth. vii. 21. 'He that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' His is the kingdom over all creatures; he sits on the throne of his power, and gives out his will to all the rational world, which they are bound to obey, as the King's law, and laws of his kingdom, determining what they ought to do, and what to forbear. The church has that will of the King in all points in the Bible. In heaven, all do it; in hell, none do it; in earth, some do it, others not; and those who do it, do it but imperfectly. So we pray, *Thy will be done*.

The will of God's commands, is exceedingly comprehensive, Psal. exix. 96. 'Thy commandment is exceeding broad.' It is but one will of God; but the objects of it, the things willed are many: but as many as they are, sincere Christians do sincerely fulfil them,

though not perfectly, Acts xiii. 22. 'I have found David,—a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will,' Gr. 'all my wills.' This whole will of God, however, may be reduced to two heads, viz. faith, and holiness.

1. Faith, 1 John iii. 23. 'This is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.' And this is comprehended in that, Matth. vii. 21. 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' Ye are to look on it as the Father's will, the will of God, that ye believe in his Son, 2 Cor. viii. 5. 'They gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.' It is the great thing which he wills you to do, John vi. 29. 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.' His dinner is prepared, he wills you to come to the marriage, Matth. xxii. 2. This answers all the objections, I may not, I dare not, I will not be welcome. It is God's will that ye come forward. And ye have the prayers of all the saints to help you forward, *Thy will be done*. And the crossing of this will of God will ensure your ruin, more than any thing else, John iii. 18. 'He that believeth not is condemned already.' Mark xvi. 16. 'He that believeth not shall be damned.'

(1.) Faith is the first leading will of God, 1 John iii. 23. fore-cited. If ye would do any part of the will of God, believe: for ye can do none of it, if ye do not this, Heb. xi. 6. 'For without faith it is impossible to please God.' John xv. 5. 'Without me ye can do nothing.' If ye do not begin with believing, all that ye do is nothing. As in arithmetic, if a thousand cyphers be set in a line, they are nothing, but if begun with a figure, they are all something; so believe, and the rest will be the obedience of faith.

(2.) Faith is the last will of God. It is the Lord's last will, that ye believe in Christ, Mark xvi. 16. 'He that believeth shall be saved.' John iii. 16. 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' The Lord's will to man at first was, 'Do this and live.' Now he cannot do that: but that he may not perish, his will now in the second covenant is, 'Believe, and ye shall be saved.' The first not being complied with, the second came for man's help: but this second is the last. If ye do not believe, there is no third to be looked for, but fiery indignation, Heb. x. 26, 27.

2. Holiness, 1 Thess. iv. 3. 'This is the will of God, even your sanctification.' God is a holy God, and cannot will unholiness. It is Satan's will and your own corrupt will, that ye be unholy. But

therein ye contradict the will of God, Rom. viii. 7. 'Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Every unholy thought, word, or action, is a going cross to the will of God, and therefore sinners are said to 'vex his holy spirit,' Isa. lxiii. 10. as men are vexed when their will is still contradicted and crossed. Holiness is,

(1.) The will of God's nature, 1 Pet. i. 16. 'Be ye holy, as I am holy.' God has willed man to be holy; and it was inconsistent with his nature to have willed them to be unholy. Faith in a crucified Redeemer is God's will of free choice. He did not will innocent Adam to believe in a Mediator. He might, if he had pleased, never have provided that object of faith, and so there might never have been such a thing as faith in a Redeemer. But having once made man, he could not but will him to be a holy man. And fire and water may sooner agree than God's will and unholiness.

(2.) The will of his whole law. It is all pure, Psal. xix. 8. A vein of holiness runs through the whole of it, and through every part. All the ten commandments are so many laws of holiness; all the enlargements on them in the Bible are so many directions and instructions for holiness of heart and life. There the Lord has parcelled out his will in so many particulars, but holiness is the scope of them all.

(3.) The will of God to all men, yea, all the rational creatures. That reason, 'Be ye holy, as I am holy,' 1 Pet. i. 16. reaches all. The devils will not be condemned because they do not believe in Christ; they have no warrant to believe in him, the gospel-offer is not made to them, Heb. ii. 16. Prov. viii. 4. but because they are unholy. The pagans will not be condemned neither for their unbelief, Rom. ii. 12. for the gospel is not revealed to them, but because they are unholy, Rom. i. 8. 'The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.'

*Secondly*, The will of God's providence, Psal. cxxxv. 6. 'Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.' He sits in heaven universal monarch of the world, and has the disposal of all his creatures, and all that concern them in his hand, and is accountable to none for his disposals, Dan. iv. 35. forecited. They are all his own, as being created by him, and for him; and so he may do with them as the potter with his own clay, Matth. xx. 15. Now this will of God's providence may be considered two ways.

1. As directing to duty, Psal. xxxii. 8. 'I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way that thou shalt go.' God speaks by his works as well as by his word. The whole world have this sort of speech



made from heaven to them, Psal. xix. 1.—3. ‘The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech, nor language, where their voice is not heard.’ Providence serves to point men to particular pieces of service, Gal. vi. 10. ‘As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good to all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.’ And therefore we must not be idle spectators of Providence, Psal. cvii. ult. ‘Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.’ But we must observe the language and meaning thereof, proving what is the good and acceptable will of God to us in it.

2. As ordering and disposing of events about ourselves and others, Matth. x. 29, 30. ‘Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.’ The world is a great family, under the conduct and management of an infinitely wise Master. And, for as broad and wide as it lies, his eye is in every part of it, and his hand too. And there is no person or thing but is under his providence; and whatever befalls them is their portion or lot appointed by the great Master.

This all-disposing will of Providence reaches particulars, with respect to men, to us innumerable, even all that concerns them. But they may be reduced to two heads.

(1.) Smiling providences, in favourable dispensations, Rom. ii. 4. The unthankful world is filled with these, for he doth good even to the unthankful and the unholy. Every day his table is spread, and he loads men with his benefits; though the mess of some may be double to that of others, yet all feed at his cost.

(2.) Frowning providences, Micah vi. 9. ‘The Lord’s voice crieth unto the city.—Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it;’ and this in afflicting dispensations. It is the same God who draws the white lines in one’s lot, that draws the black ones too. It is the same hand that puts on the crown of prosperity, that pulls it off again. The same God who gives the fair weather, also sends the foul, and after the blink the shower, and the clouds after the rain. If it go ill with a land, with a congregation, or with one’s house, it is the will of the Lord that it should be so.

And to all we are to say, *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

II. I proceed to shew, by whom is God’s *will done in heaven.*

1. By the bodies of heaven, the heavenly bodies, the sun, moon, and stars. God their Creator, when he made them, appointed their

ends, motions, and courses; and these they have steadily observed from the time of their creation, Ps. cxix. 89, 91. 'For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy servants.' The scoffers observe this, 2 Pet. iii. 4. 'All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation,' though they make a very bad use of it. Though in the heavenly fabric, these bodies are hugely great, and there are so many of them that men cannot number them, yet have they all, from the beginning to this day, observed and kept their motions and courses, without any breach of order, or any deviation whatsoever. In the mean time it is notorious, that engines made by men, and consisting of many wheels, with a variety of motions, are very hard to be long kept right, without going out of their course. But these do the will of God steadily, evenly, and unweariably, Psal. xix. 5, 6. 'The sun is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.' The sun and moon's standing still in Joshna's time, was no faltering nor disorder in their course, but it was in obedience to a particular will of God. And thus they give us a fair copy of doing the will of God on earth.

2. By the angels of heaven. These glorious spirits, attendants of the great King, are obedient to the nod of their Maker, and fall in with every the least intimation of his will, Psal. ciii. 21. They 'do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.' Though they 'excel in strength,' they entertain not the least thought of disputing his orders, ver. 20. They never put in an exception against the meanest piece of service that God puts into their hands, but are well content to minister unto worm man, Heb. i. ult. 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' They never use any shifts or offputs in the doing of his will; but when he speaks the word, it is done by them; the orders are readily and cheerfully complied with. Thus they also give us a fair copy of doing the will of God, a copy of rational obedience. The saints in heaven do his will also after the same manner, Rev. vii. 5. having got a full answer of this petition as to themselves.

III. I shall now shew, what is the import of this petition, both with respect to the will of God's command, and his will of providence.

FIRST, I am to shew, the import of this petition with reference to the will of God's command. It imports something confessed, professed, and desired.

*First*, Something confessed. The children of God coming to him with this petition, confess, that,

1. The will of God is not done on earth as it is in heaven. There is no question but that all men on earth are obliged to do it with the same perfection as those in heaven do it, Matth. v. ult. 'Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' But, alas! it is not done. God has given men on earth his commands, and notified his will to them; but it is not complied with. Though the higher world abides to this day in obedience to its Maker, yet the frame of the lower rational world is quite marred and unhinged. Though above there is a perfect calm, yet below a most unnatural rebellion is raised and continued, so that it is a region of disorder and confusion.

*1st*, Most men make their own will, and not God's, their law, and the rule of their actions, Rom. viii. 7: 'The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' All unregenerate men have shaken off the yoke of subjection to God, and instead of serving God, 'serve divers lusts and pleasures,' Tit. iii. 3. If at any time they fall in with what is materially the will of God they do it, not because it is God's will, but because it is their own, and serves their own ends, as the Pharisees did in their almsgiving and prayers, &c. Matth. vi. 1.

*2dly*, The best men carry the yoke of subjection to the will of God very unevenly, Gal. v. 17. Though they are sincere, they are far from being perfect in doing the will of God. Their own will carries them aside in many things: though they sincerely design the shore for Immanuel's land, and keep not a straight course. The wind of temptations, and their own unruly passions, oft-times blow them aside, so that they are in danger of splitting on the rocks.

2. There is in all men naturally an utter indisposition and unfitness for the will of God's command. There was a sweet harmony betwixt the will of God and the powers of man's soul at first, Eccl. vii. 29. but that is gone. Sin has broken the concord, and marred the harmony; so that there is a sad jarring betwixt the two now. They are indisposed,

*1st*, For knowing it, for discerning what the will of God is, 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.' Sin hath raised a mist, so that the travellers cannot know the way, but are apt to chuse by-paths of destruction, instead of the King's high-way; to call evil good, and good evil: to put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.

*2dly*, For doing it, Psal. xiv. 3. 'There is none that doeth good,

no not one.' They are imperfect in that work, at best, they have lost the holy art of going by that rule. They have no skill of steering their course to the shore of Immanuel's land. Man naturally is under a threefold indisposition to it.

(1.) An inability to know or do the will of God. He has no head for it, 1 Cor. ii. 14. just above quoted. Like Samson, we have lost our two eyes in that point. The gospel is a doctrine of mysteries, that requires a saving illumination to understand it, Eph. i. 17. Even the law itself in its spirituality is not discerned without a new light from the Lord, Rom. vii. 9. And we have no hands for it neither, John xv. 5. 2 Cor. iii. 5. It is above our natural reach.

(2.) An unwillingness to know or do it. As we have neither head nor hand for it, so we have no heart for it neither, till a day of power change our hearts, Psal. cx. 3. And hence it is that the truths of God which are practical are neglected, as not desired, Job xxi. 14. And when they force their entry into the head, they are held prisoners there, that they may not exert their efficacy in the heart, Rom. i. 18. And much more unwilling are we to doubt it, Hos. iv. 16. 'Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer.'

(3.) A bias in the will to the wrong side, a bent and propensity to follow our own will, and the lusts of our own heart, Psal. xiv. 1. 'There is no God,' is the languish of every man's heart by nature. They would set up themselves for their own rule and their own end, and contend with their Maker for the sovereignty, that it should be according to their will with them, and not according to his. Again, it imports,

*Secondly*, Something professed. The children of God, coming to their Father with this profession, profess, that,

1. It is the grief of their hearts, that God's will is not done by themselves or others, as it is done in heaven, Matth. xxi. 29. Psal. cxix. 136. A gracious person has the law written in his heart. He knows it, and esteems it to be righteous in all things, the doing of it to be both one's duty and interest, Psal. cxix. 128. The heart inclines to the doing of it, though corruption and temptation drive him by it, Gal. v. 17. Hence proceeds sorrow of heart, that it is not done.

2. That God by the power of his grace, is able to reform this, and to frame the souls of men on earth to the doing his will, as in heaven, Prov. xxi. 1. He can new-frame men's will, give it a new bent of conformity to his own, and fix it too therein, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. So they put their own and other's hearts in God's hand, that he may set them in a way of obedience, Psal. cxix. 36. It imports also,

*Thirdly*, Something desired. And there are two things here desired of God by all the saints.



1. That he would by his grace remove from themselves and others all spiritual blindness and cause them to know his will, Eph. i. 17, 18. There can be no doing of God's will, without first knowing what it is, Rom. xiv. ult. For suppose one to do what God requires, who yet does not know that he requires it, it is plain that one in such a case does it, not because it is the will of God, but because it is his own will. There is a natural blindness in all, and the remains of it are in the regenerate. This hides the will of God from them in many particulars, and so hinders them from doing it. But the children of God desire to know it in all things.

This desire to know the will of God is a mark of sincerity, if it be attended with these two properties.

(1.) If it be universal, if the soul really desires to know the whole will of God, Rom. vii. 22; not only some shreds of the law, but the whole law, Psal. cxix. 6. Hypocrites may desire to know some parts of God's will, which are most agreeable to their own ends and inclinations. But happy they whose souls are opened to receive the intimations of the divine will in all things.

(2.) If it be practical, if they desire to know his whole will that they may conform themselves to it, Psal. ciii. 18. There may be a desire of the knowledge of God's will for speculation, to know it for the sake of knowledge, which may be found in the ungodly. But to desire the knowledge of it for the sake of practice, is a mark of sincerity.

Such a desire is a sure mark: because,

[1.] It evidences a heart reconciled to the whole will of God, Heb. viii. 10. The unrenewed heart is never so reconciled, Rom. viii. 7. And therefore, since they have no inclination to let in the whole law into their heart, they do what they can to keep it out of their heads, and are willingly ignorant of what they are unwilling to practice, Job xxi. 14.

[2.] It evidences a heart ready to part with every known sin, with any thing whatsoever, upon the discovery of its contrariety to the will of God, Psal. xix. 12. It is an evidence of an honest heart to be content to be searched, Psal. cxxxix. 23; but those who harbour deceit, will be unwilling to let in the discovering light, Jer. ix. 6.

2. That God by his grace would remove from themselves and others, all weakness, indisposition, and perverseness, and cause them to obey and do his will, as it is done in heaven, Psal. cxix. 35. So this desire extends to,

(1.) The removal of the impediments of dutiful obedience to the will of God. The children of God are sensible of the obligation

lying on all to conform to the will of God in all things; but withal, that there is in them,

[1.] A weakness, obstructing their obedience, which they would fain have removed, Eph. iii. 16. The weak knees, the feeble hands, fail them when they would ever so fain do his will. These are their burden, and these they lay before the Lord daily for strengthening, longing for the day when the executive power shall be answerable to their will, and their will to the will of God.

[2.] An indisposition, hindering their obedience, which they would fain be rid of, Matth. xxvi. 41. The gracious heart itself has such a mixture of corruption, that there is always a spice of backwardness to compliance with the will of God, and an inclination to the wrong side which they have to strive with. This is as iron fetters on them, out of which they would be enlarged, to run the way of God's commandments.

[3.] A perverseness of spirit, whereby one is inclined to resist and go quite contrary to the will of God. Ephraim complains of this, Jer. xxxi. 18. 'I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus, Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God.' And the remainders of it in the best occasion them many a sad struggle; by which the heart of a child of God is like a field of battle; the new nature endeavouring to take on the yoke, the corrupt nature resisting, and shifting, like an untamed ox.

(2.) God's advancing them to, and fixing them in a course of dutiful obedience to his own will, that they may do it as it is done in heaven. They look on perfect holiness as what would be their happiness. They see the will of God how it is done in heaven; they approve and love that way of it, and condemn their own, and would fain be brought up to the way of heavenly obedience, being wearied of their own earthly heartless way of doing it.

*Quest.* What signifies their praying for it, since they cannot obtain it while here? *Ans.* It speaks,

1. Their sense of duty in that case, and of their failings in their best performances. It is certain that perfection as well as sincerity of obedience is our duty, though we cannot reach it, Matth. v. ult. 'Be ye perfect, &c. And when the saints have stretched out to the utmost, they sit down sighing, that they cannot get the length they should, Luke xvii. 16.

2. Their desire of perfection, which is accepted of God, 2 Cor. viii. 12. They would do the will of God on earth as it is in heaven, if they could. That is the bent and disposition of their new nature,

and they would as fain be rid of the remainders of corruption, as ever a prisoner was desirous of being rid of his chains, Rom. vii. 24. while others please themselves therewith as with golden chains.

3. Their sincere endeavour to go forward to that perfection. Though, the stormy wind blowing in the face of the weak creature, they cannot hold pace with those in heaven in doing the will of God; yet they are still following them at a distance, if at length they may get up with them, Phil. iii. 13, 14. And here as in a glass, we may see what sort of doing the will of God the saints aim at, and desire. It is,

(1.) To do it evenly, without stumbling or changing their course. So the heavenly bodies and the angels are uniform in their course, Psal. cxix. 91. But, alas! what an unevenness is there in the walk of the best! Sometimes they are warm in obedience, and again key-cold. Sometimes they are tender with respect to the least of sins, and sometimes untender in great matters, according as grace or corruption gets the mastery. But all the saints are ashamed of this, and groan under the burden of it, longing for the day wherein they shall keep a stayed even course of obedience, as it is in heaven.

(2.) To do it unweariedly. Thus it is done in heaven, Psal. xix. 5. 'The sun is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race,' Rev. vii. 15. 'They are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple.' There is no wearying of this doing the will of God in heaven. But, alas! how soon are we on earth weary of well-doing? Even when the spirit is willing, the clog of earth which the soul is fixed to often sets up, and can go no farther. This often makes them long to be dissolved, that without weariness they may be capable to serve the Lord day and night in his temple.

(3.) To do it universally. So the angels do it, knowing all, and doing all in perfection, without the least failure, Psal. ciii. 21. But which of the commandments do we not break on earth? what part of God's will is done by us in every point as is required? None at all. But the saints hope and long for the day, when they shall be able to know and do the whole of it in every point.

(4.) To do it humbly. When the angels have wings to fly on God's errands, yet they have also wings to cover their face and their feet, Isa. vi. 2. There is no raising of pride in their hearts upon the doing of their duty, nor to keep them from any duty. But how does pride of heart keep us back from many duties as too low for us! and how often does it arise upon the doing any thing well; 2 Cor. xii. 7. This is a heavy piece of the body of death, which the saints long to be rid of.

(5.) To do it cheerfully, Psal. ciii. 20. So the angels do in heaven. It is no burden to them to do his will; there is no heavy driving in the course of their obedience. This also is our duty, Psal. c. 2. But, ah! how often are our hearts to be dragged to duty! what backwardness to the doing of God's will, like the cutting off of a right hand! How desirable is it to a holy heart to be able to obey cheerfully!

(6.) To do it readily, without delay. So the angels are represented with wings, to shew their readiness and speed in obeying their Lord. So should we, Psal. cxix. 60. 'I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.' But, alas! how far from it are the best many times! God speaks once, yea, twice, but we perceive it not. How often are we ruined with delays, and our work is marred in our hand! It is the desire of all the godly to be rid of this indisposition.

(7.) *Lastly*, To do it constantly. So the heavenly bodies do it without intermission, without interruption: and so do the angels. So the saints desire to do, Psal. cxix. 112. 'I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes always, even unto the end.' But, alas! how fickle and inconstant are they now, through a lightness of heart, which is heavy, heavy to every gracious soul!

SECONDLY, I shall shew, what is the import of this petition with reference to the will of God's providence. It imports,

*First*, A confession, (1.) Of a natural aptness in all men to quarrel, repine, and murmur against the methods and disposals of Providence, Numb. xiv. 2. No king's management is so freely canvassed and censured by the subjects, as the King of heaven's management in this world is by the hearts of men. An all-wise Providence guides the world, in every particular; but where is the man that has not some quarrel or other with it?

[1.] Kind providences towards others are grudged, Mat. xx. 15. Though God is a Sovereign Lord of all, and all things are his own, and he is debtor to none, men are prone to quarrel the disposal of his benefits, as if they would teach him on whom to bestow his favours.

[2.] Afflictive providences towards one's self are quarreled. The foolish heart speaks as one of the foolish women, Job ii. 10. Though the most we meet with in the world is short of our deservings, yet how does the heart rise against the smallest evils laid upon us! When the yoke of affliction is wreathed about one's neck, the unsubdued heart rages under it like a wild bull in a net.

(2.) Of a natural backwardness to fall in with the designs of providence of one sort or other. God teaches by kind providences, and



afflictive ones too. But such is the perverseness of human nature, that it scorns to be led by the one, Rom. ii. 4. or to be driven with the other, Jer. v. 3. Whether God write men's duty in white or black lines of providence, the heart is disposed not to fall in with it, Matth. xi. 16, 17.

*Secondly*, A profession, (1.) Of the saints' sorrow for this disposition of heart crossing the will of God. It is a burden to them, and the renewed nature hereby enters a dissent against this quarrelling of the corrupt nature against the will of God, Jer. xxxi. 18. They condemn themselves for not submitting cheerfully to, and falling in readily with the divine will in all things. It is one of the greatest struggles which a child of God has, to get his will conformed to the will of God.

(2.) Of the faith of the power of grace to subdue the will to this conformity. So they hereby put their stony refractory heart into the heart-changing hand to melt it down, and make it pliable, Jer. xxxi. 18. forecited. And it is the comfort of all the saints, that there is a remedy of sufficient grace in Jesus Christ, for the removing of the natural perverseness of their wills.

*Thirdly*, A desire of grace for a thorough compliance with the will of God's providence. Which extends to,

1. A submission to the will of God in afflicting providences. This is our duty, whatever be our trial, Psal. xxxix. 9. 'I was dumb,' says David, 'I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.' But it was a difficult duty, because of that corrupt self-love which cries for ease, and so much prevails in all men; because of that bliudness of men's minds, whereby they take that which is really for their good to be for evil to them, and because we are all so much wedded to our own will. Therefore the saints desire the removal of these impediments by God's grace, and the subduing of our hearts to a submission.

2. A thankful acceptance of merciful and kind providences, Luke i. 38. This is our duty also; but it is the natural bias of our hearts to sacrifice to our own net, and to forget and overlook God's goodness in these; to sit down to the covered table of kind providence, not looking up with due acknowledgments to him who has provided it. So it is the saints' desire to have grace to enable them to receive thankfully.

3. A compliance with the design of providences of all sorts. We must act according to the will of providence, Acts xiii. 36. and we have need of grace for it. When God by his providence puts work into our hands, and gives us abilities and occasions to serve him, we are obliged to employ all for his service, else we answer not the design. Mercies and rods have a call. And every one is by providence

put into some particular station, with some talents, less or more, for the duties of that station. He does the will of God's providence, that employs his interest, gifts, and abilities in his calling, moving in his own sphere prudently, constantly, and vigorously, as those in heaven do.

*Fourthly,* A consent to the will of God, a yielding of the heart that it may be done. Our Lord gives us a copy of this resignation to the will of God in his bitter sufferings, Matth. xxvi. 42. 'O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.' And the church in Paul's case wrote after this copy, Acts xxi. 14. saying, 'The will of the Lord be done.' And whatever befalls the church, ourselves, or others, by the will of providence, there ought to be a humble resignation to the will of God in it all.

IV. I shall give the reasons why the saints have such a concern that the will of God may be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

1. Because it is most just, holy, reasonable, and equitable, in all things, and they see it so, Psal. cxix. 128. 'I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right.' Psal. cxlv. 17. 'The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.' God is holy and just in his own nature, and can command, demand, or inflict nothing that is unjust. He can do no wrong to the creature, nor can he bid the creature do any thing wrong. He is infinitely wise, and knows how to guide the world best. What wonder, then, they be concerned his will be done, since it is the best that can be done?

2. Because the glory of God, which of all things is dearest to the saints, is deeply interested in this matter, God is perfectly glorified in heaven, because there his will is done perfectly: but he is dishonoured on earth, because his will is not obeyed and submitted to there. It is by this that his Spirit is vexed, his will being crossed and contradicted by vile worms.

3. Because this would make a heaven on earth. If there were such a harmony betwixt earth and heaven, that God's will were done in the one, as in the other, it would make on earth,

(1.) A heaven for beauty and order of all things. There is a comely order in heaven, because all there keep their own place, and follow the will of the Creator in all things. But sin has filled the earth with confusion and disorder, which will never be rectified till those on earth return to move according to rule, viz. the will of the creature. What would become of us, if the sun and moon were as irregular in their motions as we are?

(2.) A heaven for happiness. The happiness of men lies in their assimilation to God; and they are so far like him as they conform

to his will. Were our will perfectly conformed to the will of God, we could never be miserable; for if God's will were our will, nothing could befall us against our will; we would be pleased with all that we meet with.

USE. Are we directed thus to pray? Then,

1. We ought to be very careful to know what is the will of God in the several passages of our life, Eph. v. 10. Lest we mistake his will, or overlook it, we should study his word, that we may do it; and study his works, that we may comply with the call of them. For we can never be doers of the will of God, if we know it not. It is impossible that an ignorant person can do the will of God; and therefore it behoves us, if we would do his will, carefully to search the scriptures, and narrowly consider the works of God.

2. Let us be careful to do the will of God's commands, in such sort as we may most nearly resemble those in heaven, doing it evenly, unweariedly, universally, humbly, cheerfully, readily, and constantly, as you heard the saints desire to do. And let us never forget to comply with this great commandment, of believing in the name of Jesus Christ; for if this be not done in the first place, we cannot possibly do the will of God in any other thing. Faith is the foundation of all acceptable obedience to the will of God, leads to it, and animates the soul therein. For motives, consider,

*Mot.* (1.) We are under the greatest obligations to the doing of the will of God. God is our Creator, our Sovereign Lord and Ruler, and therefore has a just title to our obedience. The Creator's authority, and the Redeemer's love and grace, so amply displayed in the work of our redemption, loudly call for our obeying the will of God. The law is given us as the matter and rule of our obedience; and we are redeemed by Christ, that we may be holy, and comply with the whole will of God revealed to us.

(2.) It is only the doers of his will that shall get to heaven, Matth. vii. 21. There is a reward of grace to be reaped afterwards for it. 'In keeping of the divine commandment,' says the Psalmist, 'there is great reward.' None are fit or qualified for the work and employment of heaven but holy persons, and none can be holy without doing the whole will of God. Obedience to his will is an infallible evidence of holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

(3.) Since his will is manifested to us in his word and works, the neglect of it will lay us open to double stripes, Luke xii. 47. Since God has been pleased to write to us the great things of his law, and to reveal his will respecting both matters of faith and practice, we can have no pretence for ignorance, nor room to plead that we know not what is our duty. All pleas of ignorance are as inexcusable as

those of neglect, which shall be rejected at the great day, and all neglecters of the will of God punished with everlasting destruction.

3. *Lastly*, Let us be careful to comply with the will of Divine Providence. And,

(1.) Let us consider what the dispensations of the day towards the church, and towards ourselves do call for, and comply therewith. While the Lord's hand is stretched out, and he threatens to take away his peace from us, [1.] Let us examine ourselves, smiting on our breasts, and saying, What have I done to kindle the fire of the Lord's anger? [2.] Let us pray for the peace of Jerusalem, and have a deep concern for the preservation of truth and peace; that the Lord may support his own cause, bless the gospel for the conversion of sinners, and the edification of all who have given their names to Christ.

(2.) Let us be submissive under all afflicting providences, laying our hands on our mouths, accepting the punishment of our sins, and justifying God in whatever we meet with.

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THE FOURTH PETITION.

MATTH. vi. 11.—*Give us this day our daily bread.*

THE former three petitions respect God's glory; and the latter three our own welfare. In the first three we are directed to pray for the advancement of his name, kingdom, and will, and in the last three for our own temporal and spiritual good. The order is divine, and teaches us this

DOCT. 'That it is the duty of all, and the disposition of God's children, to prefer God's honour to all their personal and private interests.' It is preferable,

1. To our own temporal welfare: *Thy name be hallowed, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done*; and then, *Give us this day our daily bread.* It speaks the disposition of God's children in three things.

(1.) They desire that God's glory may be advanced, whatever come of their bread or provision for this life. Their life itself is by them put in subordination to God's honour, much more the outward comforts of it, Acts xxi. 13. If the chariot of God's honour cannot drive forward, but it must drive over their table, they bid it welcome to drive on, though it cast down their table, making its way over it, Luke xiv. 26.

(2.) They desire not bread in a way inconsistent with the glory of