

A N
EXPOSITION
ON THE

Lord's Prayer,

WITH A
Catechistical Explication

Thereof, by way of
QUESTION and ANSWER,

For the Instructing of YOUTH:

To which is added some

SERMONS

On Providence, and the Excellent Advantages of
Reading and Studying the Holy Scriptures.

By EZEKIEL HOPKINS, late Lord Bishop of
London-Derry.

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J. Short Sculp.

EZEKIEL HOPKINS
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THE
PREFACE
TO THE
READER.

Christian Reader,

T*He following Discourses upon that
Excellent and Divine Prayer of
our Blessed Saviour, contain so
much of Practical Divinity necessary to
be known by all Christians, and are so Solidly
and Judiciously handled, that they need no
Epistle Recommendatory unto the World,
having the Stamp of the Divine Autho-
rity upon the Truths contained in them.*

But

The Preface.

But if any shall curiously enquire, whether this Reverend and Learned Prelate designed and finished them for the Press: I may truly return the same Answer that is given in Print by the present Bishop of Cork and Ross to the same Question, in his Epistle to the Reader before this Author's Exposition on the Ten Commandments; namely, That they were Transcribed by himself, and by him deposited in the hands of a Minister whom he could intrust, to be made Publick after his Decease; whose Epistle should have been prefixed hereunto, but that he is far distant in another Nation, and the Press cannot tarry so long for it, the Book being just finished.

And as a further Confirmation that his Lordship intended it should be made Publick, appears by his so often quoting this his Discourse on the Lord's Prayer, in his Treatise on the Commandments, which
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The Preface.

could not be seen or read by others but by the Printing of it. Upon which many Persons have been very desirous and inquisitive after it.

Unto this large and general Exposition on the Lord's Prayer, there is added a brief and short Catechistical Explication thereof by way of Question and Answer, made use of by his Lordship for the instructing of the younger and more ignorant Christians in the Knowledge and Understanding of those Divine and Heavenly Truths contained in this most Excellent Prayer.

And for a Conclusion of all, there are added several Sermons Preached by this Learned Prelate, upon the Providence of God, and on the Excellency and Usefulness of Reading and Studying the Holy Scriptures. All which have been diligently and carefully perused by several Persons of the Author's Acquaintance, both of the Clergy

The Preface.

Clergy and others, with very good Acceptance and Satisfaction; and the whole is now with Approbation exposed unto publick view.

And that the present Publication of them may tend much to the promoting of the Honour and Glory of God, and the Edification of many Souls in Grace and Holiness, is the hearty Prayer of the Publisher.
Farewell.

The Vanity of the World, with other Sermons, in *Octavo*.

Discourses and Sermons on several Scriptures, in *Octavo*.

An *Exposition* on the Ten Commandments, with other Sermons, in *Quarto*.

All Written by *Ezekiel Hopkins*, late Lord Bishop of *London-Derry*, and Sold by *Nathanael Raven*.

A

A Practical

EXPOSITION

ON THE

LORD'S PRAYER.

Matth. VI. 9, 10. &c.

After this manner therefore Pray ye, Our Father which art in Heaven: Hallowed be thy Name: Thy Kingdom come: Thy Will be done, in Earth as it is in Heaven: Give us this Day our daily Bread: And forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors: And lead us not into Temptation: But deliver us from Evil: For thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory, for ever. Amen.

HAVING often seriously considered with my self of the great use that is made of this most excellent Form of Prayer, composed by our Blessed Lord and Saviour himself; as also of the great Benefit and Advantage that might

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accrue

A Practical Exposition

accrue unto all those, that with understanding make a due use of it in their daily Devotions: I thought it might be very necessary for your Instruction, and greatly conducive unto your Salvation, to lay before your consideration, as brief and succinct an Exposition thereof, as the large extent, and various copiousness of the matter contained therein, will permit.

The Blessed Apostle, *St. Paul*, in *1 Cor. 14. 15.* tells us, *That he would pray with the Spirit, and he would pray with Understanding also.* And indeed when we pray, to pray with Understanding what we pray, is one great requisite to make our Prayers Spiritual, and through the prevailing Intercession of Jesus Christ to become acceptable unto God the Father. But to mutter over a road of Words only, (as the Papists are taught, and as multitudes of many ignorant Persons among us do also,) without understanding what they signifie, or being duly affected with those Wants and Necessities which we beg of God the Supplies of, is not to offer up a Prayer unto the Almighty, but only to make a Charm.

Now, because there is no Form of Prayer, that ever we have heard or read of, that is deservedly so much in use, as this of our Lord's is, I shall endeavour in some Discourses thereupon, to unfold to you those Voluminous Requests which we offer up unto God, when we thus pray, as our Saviour here teacheth us; wherein, as I doubt not but as I may greatly instruct the Ignorance of many, so possibly I may bring very much to the remembrance of those who have attained to great understanding in Religion, those things which may provoke their Zeal, and excite their Affections; and both these Undertakings, through the Blessing of God upon it, may be very usefully profitable to enable them to pray with Understanding, and with the Spirit also, when they approach the Throne of Grace,

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on the Lord's Prayer.

to present their Petitions unto the Great God, as by the Intercession, so in the Words of his dear Son.

In this Chapter, which contains in it a great part of our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, our Lord lays before his Hearers several Directions concerning two necessary Duties in a Christian's Practice; and they are Alms-giving and Prayer; the former a Duty relating more immediately unto Men; the latter a Duty in a more especial manner respecting God himself; in both which he not only cautions us against, but strictly forbids all Ostentation and Vain-Glory. *Therefore, says he, when thou dost thine Alms, do not sound a Trumpet before thee, for this is the Practice of Hypocrites, that they may have Glory of Men, verse 2. And when thou prayest be not as the Hypocrites, for they love to pray in the Synagogues, and Corners of the Streets, that they may be seen of Men, verse 5.* Thus must we not do in either of these Cases: For as we must not give Alms that we may be seen of Men, so neither must we pray that we may be heard and observed of Men: For what can be more absurd and ridiculous, as well as wicked and impious, than to be begging Applause from some, when we are giving Alms to others; or whilst we are praying to the great God of Heaven and Earth, to make frail mortal Men, like our selves, our Idols; which we do, whensoever we pray, rather that we may be heard and admired by Men, than that God should hear us and accept us.

In the next words our Saviour proceeds in laying down some other Directions concerning the Duty of Prayer, and therein he forbids his Hearers to use vain Repetitions in Prayer: *verse 7. When you Pray, use not vain Repetitions as the Heathens do.* Not that all Repetitions in Prayer are vain babblings, in the sight of God; for our Lord himself Prayed thrice using the same words, for so we read *Matth. 26. and 44.* For doubtless as Copiousness and Variety of fluent Expressions in any, usually flow from raised Affecti-

ons; so when those Affections are heightened and raised to an Ecstasy and Agony of Soul in our wrestlings with God in Prayer, Ingeminations are then the most Proper and most Elegant way of expressing them, doubling and redoubling the same Petitions again and again; not allowing God (if I may so speak with Holy Reverence) so much time, nor our selves so much leisure, as to form in our minds, much more with our Lips to offer up any new requests, till by a Holy Violence in wrestling with God, we have extorted out of his hands those Mercies and Blessings our Hearts are set upon the suing to him for. Vain Repetitions therefore are such as are made use of by any without new and lively Stirrings and Motions of the Heart and Affections at the same time. And that which makes a Prayer vain, makes a Repetition in Prayer to be vain also. Now that is a vain Prayer, and we shall certainly find it so, when the requests we offer up to God therein, are heartless and lifeless. For we must know, God hath Commanded us to Pray; not that he might be excited and moved by hearing the Voice of our Cries in Prayer, to give unto us those Mercies and Blessings, which he himself was not resolved before hand to bestow upon us; but that we our selves might be fitted and prepared to receive from him, what he is always ready and willing to confer upon us. He requires Prayer from us, not that he might be affected therewith; for as the Apostle St. James tells us, *With him there is no variableness nor shadow of turning*, James i. 17. but that we our selves might have our Hearts raised and affected therewith. And therefore the chiefest effect of Prayer being to affect our selves, if Prayer it self be not vain, neither are Repetitions in Prayer vain, if whilst we are spreading the same requests before God, we do it with new Affections and Desires. No Prayer therefore ought to be accused of idle Babbling and vain Repetitions; but those that Pray may (I fear) too often be charged with it. And here by the way, I desire all those
who

who are offended at, or refuse to joyn with the Stated Forms of Prayer that the Church hath appointed to be made use of either in publick or private, because the same requests do many times occur therein; to keep a strict Eye upon their Hearts and Affections, and then the Scruples and Objections that they make, will presently be removed, for it is much in their own Power to make them to be, either vain Repetitions, or the most fervent Ingeminations of their most affectionate Desires unto God, and the most Spiritual and Forcible part of all their Prayers and Supplications they offer up unto him.

But then further as our Saviour forbids vain Repetitions in Prayer, so he likewise forbids much speaking: for they think, says our Saviour, *St. Matth. 6. 7. That they shall be heard for their much speaking.* Now as the former Prohibition doth not exclude all Repetitions in Prayer, so neither doth this latter exclude (as some Ignorant Persons perhaps who are soon wearied out with the Service of God, may be apt to think) long Prayers: for this would be a flat contradiction to his own practice, for it is said in *St. Luke 6. 12. That he went out into a Mountain to Pray, and continued all night in Prayer unto God.*

Some indeed take the word *προσευχῆ* Prayer, to signifie the House of Prayer, as if our Saviour continued only in such a Dedicated House or Chappel all night, according as *Juvenal* useth the word, *in quate quæro profencha.* Yet as it will be hard to prove that the *Jews* had any such Houses for Prayer, besides their *Synagogues*, which were not seated in Desolate (whither our Saviour went then to Pray) but in Populous Cities and frequented Places: So it will be more hard to imagine that our Saviour would continue all night in the House of Prayer, if he had not been taken up in the performance of the Duty of Prayer.

There is therefore a great deal of difference between much speaking in Prayer, and speaking much in Prayer; for

for certainly a Man may speak much to God in prayer, when yet he may not be guilty of much speaking: for there is a compendious way of speaking, to speak much in a little; and there is a babling way of speaking, when by many tedious Ambages and long Impertinencies men pour out a Sea of Words, and scarce one drop of Sence or Matter.

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

But when a man's Soul is full fraught with matter (of which if he duly weighs, either his Spiritual wants, or his Temporal Sorrows and Afflictions, he can never be unfurnished) to pour out his Soul, and with a torrent of Holy Rhetorick, lay open his Case before God, begging seasonable supplies in suitable expressions, certainly he cannot fall under the reproof of much speaking, although he may speak much and long: for such an one hath much to say, and whilst Matter and Affections last, let his prayer be an hour long, yea a day long, yea an eternity long, as our Praises shall be in Heaven, he is not to be censured for a Babler, but hath still spoken much in a little.

It is true, the Wise Man hath Comanded, *That our words be few in our Addresses to God*, Eccles. 5. 2. and he gives a most forcible Reason; *For God is in Heaven and thou upon Earth*. His Infinite Majesty should therefore over-awe thee from using any rash and vain loquacity. But yet this makes not against long prayers; for many words may be but a few to express the sentiments of our Souls; and none can be too many, while the Heart keeps Pace with the Tongue, and every Petition is filled with Matter, and winged with Affections.

And

And whereas our Saviour condemns the Pharisees, *who devoured Widows Houses, and for a pretence made long Prayers*, Matth. 23. 14. yet certain it is, that it was not their long Prayers that he condemns, but their Pretence and Hypocrisie. Thus much I thought fit to observe from the Context.

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

Some taking advantage from these Words, deny this to be used as a Prayer it self; but only as a Model and Platform to direct us how to pray.

But if we consult not only the practice of the Church of Christ in all Ages, but the Scripture it self, we shall find it to be both the one and the other; for it is our Saviour's express Injunction, *Luke 11. 2. When ye pray, say*; and what should they say, but the Words immediately following, *Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.* One Evangelist says, *Pray after this manner*; the other saith, *When ye pray, say*; from both which, compared together, it is easie to collect, that it is both a Pattern for us to form our Prayers by, and that it is a Prayer it self; which our Saviour, in condescension to our Infirmities, hath framed for us; putting Words into our Mouths, to beg of God those Blessings, which through his most prevalent Intercession shall not be denied us.

And indeed of all Prayers this is the most absolute and comprehensive, containing in it, not so many Words as Petitions; for there is not any one thing that we can pray for, according to the Will of God, but it is summarily couch'd in this.

And yet this Comprehensiveness, which is the admirable Excellency of this Prayer, hath been the only Reason why some of late have scrupled and refused to use it; because they

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cannot pierce through all that is signified by these substantial Expressions; they think they should take God's Name in vain, in uttering that before him, which they do not understand the utmost extent of.

But if they did but consider their own Prayers, the same doubts would still remain. When they pray that God's Name may be glorified; can they comprehend in that short time, while they are uttering those Words, the infinite Latitude of that Request? Is it unlawful, at the close of our Prayers, to desire that God would give us all good things which we have not mentioned before him? And yet who of us can conceive how large an extent that Request may have? May we not say, *Amen*, and Seal up our Prayers with a *So be it*; though while we are speaking it, we cannot presently recollect all that hath been mentioned before God in Prayer? And for any to say, that the Lord's Prayer is a Morsel too big for their Mouths, (as some have done,) I have always accounted it a most unworthy and unfavoury Speech. Certainly Christ thought it not too big for his Disciples, whose Capacities at that time were possibly none of the largest; as appears in many instances, particularly in the Nature of Christ's Kingdom, which he taught them to pray that it might come, which they thought to be Temporal and Earthly. And those who refuse the use of the Lord's Prayer, as too big for them, would yet think themselves much wronged, if we should but suspect them as ignorant in that, and in many other points of Christian Doctrine, as the Disciples were when our Saviour instructed them thus to pray.

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

First,

First, The Preface or Introduction to it.

Secondly, The Petitions or Requests we present to God, in which the greatest part of it consists.

Thirdly, the Doxology, or Praise-giving; for Praise is a necessary part of Prayer.

Fourthly, The Conclusion, or Ratification of all, in the Sealing Particle, *Amen*.

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

First, For the Introduction or Preface unto the Prayer, and that is contained in these Words, *Our Father which art in Heaven*. This is used as a preparative to Prayer: And what greater inducement can there be to dispose us into a holy awe and reverence of God, than to set before us the Greatness and Glory of that Majesty before whom we prostrate our selves? And therefore we find that the Saints in Scripture, in all their approaches to the Throne of Grace, were wont in the beginning of their Prayers, to affect and over-awe their Hearts with the humble mention of God's Glorious Attributes. Thus *Solomon*, 1 Kings 8. 23. *O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like unto thee, in Heaven above, or in the Earth beneath, who keepest Covenant and Mercy with thy Servants*. Thus *Jehosaphat*, 2 Chron. 20. 6. *O Lord God of our Fathers, art not thou God in Heaven, and rulest not thou over all the Kingdoms of the Heathens, and in thy Hand is there not Power and Might?* So *Hezekiah*, 2 King. 19. 15. *O Lord God of Israel, who dwellest between the Cherubims, thou art God, even thou alone, who hast made Heaven and Earth*. And so the Prophet, *Jerem.* 32. 17. *Oh Lord God, behold, thou hast made the Heaven and the Earth, by thy great Power and stretched-out Arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee. The great, the mighty God, the Lord of Hosts*

is his Name, great in Counsel, and mighty in Working. And thus our Saviour himself, *Matth. 11. 25. I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth.* And so the Apostle, *Acts 4. 24. Lord, thou art God that hast made Heaven and Earth, the Sea and all that in them is.* And thus to consider seriously of, and reverently to express the infinitely Glorious Attributes of God, is an excellent means to compose us into a holy fear and awe of God, such as becomes vile Dust and Ashes to be affected with, when it stands in the presence of its great Lord and Creator: Only here let us remember, that we dwell not so long upon the Titles and Attributes of God, nor run so much out into Preface, as to forget our errand unto him.

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

First, Such as respect God's Glory.

Secondly, Such as respect our selves and others. The Three first respect God's Glory, and the Three or Four last our own Good; and that either Temporal or Spiritual. Temporal, in begging at God's Hands our daily Bread. Spiritual, in desiring both the Pardon of and Deliverance from Sin.

And here again we may observe the admirable Order and Method of this Prayer, in that our Saviour hath placed the Petition, which refers to our Temporal Good, as it were in the very midst and centre of it, it being encompassed round about with Petitions for Heavenly and Spiritual Blessings. And this may intimate to us, that we are only to bait at the World in our Passage and Journey to Heaven; that we ought to begin with Spirituals and end with Spirituals, but only to take up and refresh our selves a little with our daily Bread in our way.

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Thirdly,

Thirdly, In the Doxology, or Praise, there are Four things contained.

First, God's Sovereignty, *Thine is the Kingdom.*

Secondly, God's Omnipotency, *And the Power.*

Thirdly, God's Excellency, *And the Glory.*

Fourthly, The Eternity and Unchangableness of them, and of all God's other Attributes, noted to us in that Expression, *For ever.*

Fourthly, and *Lastly*, Here is the ratifying Particle, *Amen*, added as a Seal to the whole Prayer, and it importeth a desire to have that confirmed or granted which we have prayed for. And thus *Benaiah* when he had received Instructions from *David*, concerning the establishing of *Solomon* in the Kingdom, answereth thereto *Amen*; and explains it, *1 Kings* 1. 36. *The Lord God of my Lord the King say so too.* So that when we add this Word, *Amen*, at the end and close of our Prayers, it is as much as if we had said, *the Lord God say so too*; or the Lord grant these Requests: For the proper signification of *Amen*, is, *so be it*, or *so it is*, or *so it shall be*; the former notes our Desires, the latter our confidence and assurance of being heard.

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

First therefore, Let us consider the Preface in these Words, *Our Father which art in Heaven.* And here God is described by two of his most eminent *Attributes*, his *Grace* and *Glory*, his *Goodness* and his *Greatness*; by the one, in that he is stiled, *Our Father*; by the other, in that he is said to be *in Heaven*: And both these are most sweetly tempered together, to beget in us a Holy Mixture of Filial Boldness and awful Reverence, which are so necessary to the sanctifying of *God's Name* in all our Addresses to him. We are ~~commanded~~ to come to the *Throne of Grace* with boldness, *Heb.* 4. 16. and yet, to serve God acceptably with reverence and with fear, *Heb.* 12. 28. Yea, and indeed the very calling

ling of it a *Throne of Grace*, intimates both these Affections at once. It is a *Throne*, and therefore requires Awe and Reverence; but it is a *Throne of Grace* too, and therefore permits holy Freedom and Confidence. And so we find all along in the Prayers of the *Saints*, how they mix the consideration of God's Mercy, and his Majesty together, in the very *Prefaces* and Preparations to their Prayers. So *Neb. x. 5.* *Lord God of Heaven, the great and terrible God that keepeth Covenant and Mercy for them that love him.* So *Dan. 9. 4.* *O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping Covenant and Mercy for them that love him.* Now this excellent mixture of awful and encouraging Attributes, will keep us from both the Extreams, of Despair on the one Hand, and of Presumption on the other. He is *our Father*, and this may correct the despairing Fear which might otherwise seize us upon the consideration of his *Majesty and Glory*: And he is likewise infinitely Glorious, a God whose *Throne* is in the highest Heavens, and the Earth his *Foot-stool*. And this may correct the presumptuous irreverence, which else the consideration of God, as *our Father*, might perhaps embolden us unto.

Now here I shall *first* speak of the Relation of God unto us as a *Father*, and then of the Place of his Glory and Residence, *in Heaven*, and of both but briefly; for I must not dwell upon every particular.

First, To begin with the Relation of God to us, as a *Father*. Now God is a *Father* Three ways.

First, God is a *Father* by Eternal Generation.

Secondly, By Temporal Creation and Providence.

Thirdly, By Spiritual Regeneration and Adoption.

First, God is a *Father* by Eternal Generation; having by an inconceivable and ineffable way begotten his Son, God Co-equal, Co-eternal with himself; and therefore called, *The only begotten Son of God*, *Joh. 3. 16.* Thus God is a *Father*, only to our Lord Jesus Christ, according to his Divine Nature.

sure. And whensoever this Title, *Father*, is given to God, with relation to the Eternal Sonship of our Lord Jesus Christ, it denotes only the First Person in the ever Blessed Trinity; who is therefore chiefly and especially called the *Father*.

Secondly, God is a *Father* by Temporal Creation, as he gives a Being and Existence to his Creatures; creating those whom he made Rational after his own Image and Similitude. And therefore God is said to be a *Father of Spirits*, Heb. 12. 9. And the *Angels* are called the Sons of God, Job 1. 6. *There was a day when the Sons of God, came to present themselves before the Lord.* And so Adam upon the account of his Creation, is called the Son of God, Luke 3. 38. where the *Evangelist* runs up the Genealogy of Mankind till it terminates in God, *Who was the Son of Adam, who was the Son of God.*

Thirdly, God is said to be a *Father* by Spiritual Regeneration and Adoption, and so all true Believers are said to be the Sons of God, and to be born of God, John 1. 12, 13. *To as many as received him, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God, even to as many as believed on his Name, which were born not of the will of Man, but of God.* So Rom. 8. 17. we are said to receive the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry *Abba, Father.* For the Spirit it self witnesseth with our Spirits that we are the Children of God.

Now in these two last Significations, this Expression, *Our Father which art in Heaven*, is to be understood; and so they denote, not any one particular Person of the Blessed Trinity, but it is a relative Attribute belonging equally to all the Three Persons. God is the *Father* of all Men by Creation and Providence; and he is especially the *Father* of the Faithful by Regeneration and Adoption. Now as these Actions of Creation, Regeneration and Adoption, are common to the whole Trinity, so likewise is the Title of *Father*: God the first Person in the Blessed Trinity, is indeed Eminently

mently called the *Father*, but not in respect of us, but in respect of Christ, his only begotten Son from all Eternity. In respect of us the whole *Trinity* is our *Father* which is in *Heaven*, both *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, and in praying to our *Father*, we pray to them all joyntly, for Christ the *Second Person* in the *Trinity* is expressly called the *Father*, *Isa. 9. 6. Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and his Name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father.* And we are said to be born of the Spirit, *John 3. 5. Except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit.*

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

First, To admire his Infinite Condescension, and our own unspeakable Privilege and Dignity. *1 John 3. 1. Behold what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God.* Indeed for God to be a *Father* by *Creation* and *Providence*, though it be a Mercy, yet is no Privilege; for in that Sence he is, *Parens Rerum*; the common Parent of all things, yea the *Father* of *Devils* themselves, and of those Wretches who are as wicked and shall be as miserable as *Devils*. But that God should be thy *Father* by *Regeneration* and *Adoption*, that he should make thee his Son through his only begotten Son; that he should rake up such dirt and filth as thou art, and lay it in his Bosom; that he should take Aliens and Strangers near unto himself, and Adopt Enemies and Rebels into his Family, Register their Names in the Book of Life, make them Heirs of Glory, Co-heirs with Jesus Christ his Eternal Son, as the *Apostle* admirably recounts it, *Rom. 8. 17. This is both Mercy and Miracule together.*

Secondly, It should teach us to walk worthy of this High and Honourable Relation into which we are taken, and to demean our selves as Children ought to do in all
Holy

Holy Obedience to his Commands with Fear and Reverence to his Authority; and an Humble Submission to his Will. This God Challengeth at our hands, as being our *Father*, Mal. i. 6. *If I be a Father, where is mine Honour, and* 1 Pet. i. 17. *If we call on the Father, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.* And likewise by giving thee leave to style him by this Name of *Father*, he puts thee in remembrance that thou shouldst endeavour by a Holy Life and Conversation to be like thy *Father*, and so approve it to thine own Conscience and to all others that thou art indeed a *Child*, a *Son* of God.

Thirdly, is God thy Father? this then may give us abundance of assurance, that we shall receive at his hands what we ask, if it be good for us; and if it be not, we have no reason to complain that we are not heard, unless he should turn our Prayers into Curses. And this very Consideration seems to be the reason, why our Saviour chooseth this among all God's Titles and Attributes to prefix before this Prayer: and indeed it is the most proper Name by which we can style God in our Prayers unto him; for this Name of *Father* emboldens Faith, and is as a Pledge and Pawn before hand that our requests shall be heard and granted; and therefore our Saviour for the Confirmation of our Faith, argues very strongly from this very Title of *Father*, Matth. 7: 9, 10, 11. *What Man is there of you, whom if his Son ask him for Bread, will he give him a Stone? or if he ask a Fish, will he give him a Serpent? If ye then being evil know how to give good things when your Children ask them, how much more shall my Father give good things to them that ask him?* Indeed it is a most encouraging Argument; for if the Bowels of an Earthly Parent, who yet many times is humorous, and whose tenderest Mercies are but Cruelties in respect of God: If his Compassions will not suffer his Children to be defeated in their reasonable and necessary requests; how much

much less will God, who is Love and Goodness it self, and who hath inspired all Parental Affections into other *Fathers*, suffer his *Children* to return ashamed, when they beg of him those things which are most agreeable to his Will and to their Wants? What dost thou then, O Christian, complaining of thy Wants, and sighing under thy Burthens? Is not God thy *Father*? Go and boldly lay open thy Case unto him; his Bowels will certainly rowl and yern towards thee. Is it Spiritual Blessings thou wantest? spread thy requests before him; for as he is thy *Father*, so he is the God of all Grace, and will give unto thee of his fullness; for God loves that his *Children* should be like him. Or is it Temporal Mercies thou wantest? why, he is thy *Father*, and he is the *Father of Mercies and the God of all Comfort*: And why shouldst thou go so dejected and disconsolate who hast a *Father* so able and so willing to relieve and supply thee? only beware that thou askest not *Stones for Bread*, nor *Scorpions for Fish*, and then ask what thou wilt for thy good and thou shalt receive it.

Fourthly, Is God thy *Father*? This then may encourage us against Despair under the sense of our manifold sins against God, and departures from him: For he will certainly receive us upon our repentance and returning to him. This very apprehension was that which wrought upon the *Prodigal*, Luke 15. 8. *I will arise and go to my Father*. The Consideration of our own guilt and vileness, without the Consideration of God's infinite Mercy, tends only to widen the breach between him and us; for those that are altogether hopeless, will sin the more implacably and bitterly against God; like those the *Prophet* mentions, *Jerem. 2. 25. That said there was no hope, and therefore they would persist in their wickedness*. But now to consider that God is our *Father*, and that though we have cast off the Duty and Obedience of *Children*, yet upon our Submission he will bid us welcome, and instate us again in his Favour,

Favour, this to the ingenious Spirit of a Christian, is a sweet and powerful motive, to reduce him from his wandering and straying, for it will work both upon his shame and upon his hope: Upon his shame, that ever he should offend so Gracious a *Father*; and upon his hope, that those offences shall be forgiven him through that very Mercy that he hath abused. Thus we read *Jerem. 3. 4, 5. Wilt thou not henceforth cry unto me, My Father, thou art the Guide of my youth? Will he reserve his Anger for ever, will he keep it unto the end?* Noting that when we plead with God under the winning Name of *Father*, his Anger cannot long last, but his Bowels of Mercy will at last overcome the sentiments of his Wrath and Justice. And thus much concerning the endearing Title of *Father*, which our Saviour directs us to use in our Prayers unto God.

Secondly, The next thing observable, is the Particle *Our*, *Our Father*, which notes to us, that God is not only the *Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ, but he is the *Father* of all Men. He is the *Father* of all by Creation and Providence. And therefore we have the *Interrogation*, *Mal. 2. 10. Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God Created us?* But he is especially the *Father* of the Faithful, by *Regeneration* and *Adoption*; *who are born not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God*, *John 1. 13.* This therefore should teach us,

First, *To esteem one another as Brethren.* Outward respects, the Grandeur and Earthly Priviledges and Advantages of the World make no disparity in God's Love to us, or in our Relation to him: And therefore howsoever thou mayest be advanced in Wealth or Honour, or parts above others; yet still remember that they are thy *Brethren*, as they partake of the same common Nature, and much more if they partake of the same special Grace. Yea, Christ himself who is the Lord of all, *is not ashamed to call them Brethren*, *Heb. 2. 11.* And shalt thou, who art but an

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Adopted Son, no otherwise than the meanest Saint, be ashamed of the Relation, especially considering there is no Eldership, nor right of First-born in the Family, for they are all First-born, all Kings and Heirs with Christ Jesus himself?

Secondly, *If thou art mean and low in the World, this should teach thee to be well content with thy present State and Condition, for God is thy Father, and a Father to thee equally with the greatest. There is not the highest person upon Earth, but if he belong to God, prefers that Relation above all his other Titles: If he can write Prince, King, or Emperour, and can afterwards subjoin a Child of God, all his other Titles stand but for a Cypher with him. This, O Christian, how mean, how despised soever thou art, this is thy Priviledge, and a Priviledge it is that equals thee with David, with Solomon, and with all the great ones of the Earth, that ever laid down their Diadems and Scepters at the feet of God. What says the Apostle? Gal. 3. 28. There is neither bond nor free, but all are one in Christ Jesus.*

Thirdly, Since when we Pray we must say, Our Father, this teacheth us, to interest one another in our Prayers. Our Father would not have us selfish so much as in our Prayers, but in the very entrance into them, we are put in mind of the Communion of Saints, to beg those Blessings, for all that belong to God which we ask for our selves; for as Christ hath made us all Kings, so he hath made all Priests to God and his Father: Now the Office of a Priest is Intercession: And therefore when we go to God, we should bear upon our Breasts the Name of our Brethren, and present them before God, through the Intercession and Mediation of Jesus Christ our Great High-Priest, that both we and they may be accepted of God: And this we ought to do both in publick and private. It is true, in our secret Prayers we may pray particularly for our selves, and

And we have frequent instances for it in *Scripture*; yet ought we in every Prayer that we make to God, to be mindful of the State and Condition of our Brethren. Yea, and it is very Lawful and Commendable, even in secret between God and our own Souls, in those cases that are common to us, with the rest of God's Saints and People to joyn them in our Prayers; and although we are all alone, yet to say *Our Father*. For we find *Daniel* praying, *Dan. 9. 17. O Our God*, when yet he was in secret, *O Our God, hear the Prayer of thy Servant*. And this is to shew, that near and entire Communion which ought to be between all the Saints, praying with, and praying for all the Members of the Body of Jesus Christ, and esteeming their Interest as our own.

Fourthly, This shews us likewise the high Priviledge of the Children of God, that they have a Stock of Prayers going to Heaven for them from all their fellow Saints throughout the World; yea, from those whom they never knew, whom they never heard of, yet are they continually appearing before the Throne of Grace on their behalf. And thou who wouldst think it a great Favour if thou wert interested in the *Prayers* of some who are mighty in Prayer, and whom thou hast begged to recommend thy Condition to God, mayest here have abundant Comfort in that thou art nearly concerned and interested in all the *Prayers* that are put up to God throughout the whole World, by all those that are most prevalent at the Throne of Grace; yea, which is more, thou hast an interest in all the *Prayers* that have ever been preferred to Heaven by all the Saints from the beginning of the World unto this very day: for not only this present *Church*, but the *Church* in all Ages is the Body of Christ, and every Member of it imitates the Pattern of Christ's Intercession, *John 17. 20. Neither Pray I for these alone, but for all those that shall believe in me*. The difference is, that Christ's Intercession was Authoritative, theirs only Charitative.

And thus much shall suffice to be spoken concerning God's Goodness and Mercy, expressed in those Words, *Our Father*.

The next expression sets forth his Glory and Greatness, *Which art in Heaven*. But is not God every where present? Doth he not fill Heaven, and Earth, and all things? Yea, is it not said, that *the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain him*? How then are our *Prayers* to be directed to God in Heaven only, since he is as well on Earth as in Heaven? And were he only in Heaven, and not every where present on Earth, it would be in vain for us to *pray*, because our *Prayers* could never reach his Ears, nor arrive to his notice.

I *Answer*, It is true, God is every where present, and all that we think, we think in him; and all that we speak, we speak unto him; he understands the silent motion of our Lips, when we whisper a *Prayer* to him in our Closets; yea, the secret motions of our Hearts, when we only think a *Prayer*. Therefore when our Saviour bids us direct our *Prayers* to *our Father in Heaven*, this doth not imply that God is no where present, or that he no where hears *Prayer*, but only in Heaven: But this expression is used,

First, Because Heaven is the most Glorious Place of God's residence, where he hath more especially established his *Throne of Grace*, and there sits upon it. Now because it is a most Glorious and Majestical thing to hear the Suits, and receive the Petitions that are tendred to him; therefore the *Scripture* ascribes it to the most Glorious and Majestical Place, and that is to Heaven. And therefore we are commanded to pray to *our Father which is in Heaven*, to keep alive a due sense of his Majesty upon our Hearts. He would not have us think it a mean and trivial thing to have our *Prayers* heard; and therefore he represents himself to us arrayed in all his Glory; and sitting upon his Throne in the highest Heavens, willing to be thought a God never
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more Glorious, than when he is a God hearing Prayer.

Secondly, Our Prayers are directed to *our Father in Heaven*; because though he hears them wheresoever they are uttered, yet he no where hears them with acceptance but only in Heaven; and the Reason is because our Prayers are acceptable only as they are presented before God through the Intercession of Christ: Now Christ performs his Mediatory Office only in Heaven; for he performs it in both Natures, as he is God and Man, and so he is only in Heaven. And therefore we are still concerned to pray to *our Father in Heaven*. God indeed hears us upon Earth; for there is not a Word in our Tongue, but *behold, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether*; but this will not avail us, unless God hears our Prayers a second time, as repeated over in the Intercession of Jesus Christ, and perfumed with the much Incense which he offers up with the Prayers of all the Saints. Since then we are directed to pray to *our Father which is in Heaven*: This,

First, May inform us, that there is no circumstance of time or place that can hinder us from praying; for Heaven is over thee, and open to thee, wheresoever thou art; there is no *Clime* so remote, which is not over-spread with that *Pavillion*; and thou art in all places equally near to Heaven, and God is in it, sitting upon his Throne of Grace, to receive and answer thy Requests, wheresoever thou offerest them up unto him. And therefore we find in the *Scripture* some praying in God's House of Prayer, some making their Houses Houses of Prayer, *St. Peter* pray'd on the Housetop when he fell into his Trance, *Isaac* in the open Fields, our Saviour on a Mountain, *Jonas* in a Whale's Belly, *Abraham's* Servant in his Journey, and *Asa* in the midst of a tumultuous and bloody Battel; yea, whatsoever thou art doing thou mayest pray, so long as Heaven is over thee and God in it: Whatsoever Company thou art in, whatsoever Employment thou art about, thou mayest still pray; for thy

thy Father that is in Heaven still hears thee: He hears thy Thoughts and thy Desires, when either they are too big, or when it is not expedient to articulate them into Words.

Indeed the Voice in Prayer is not always necessary; nay, sometimes it is not convenient; yea, it is never necessary, but only upon three Accounts.

First, As that which God requires should be employed in his Service; for this was a great end why it was given us, that therewith we might Bless and Praise God: *With the Tongue*, saith the Apostle, *we bless God, even the Father*, Jam. 3. 9. Or,

Secondly, When in Secret it may be a means to help to raise up our Affections, keeping it still within the bounds of Decency and Privacy. Or,

Thirdly, In our joyning with others, it helps likewise to raise and quicken their Affections; otherwise, were it not for these three Reasons, the Voice is no more necessary to make our Wants and Desires known unto God, than it is to make them known to our own Hearts: For thy Father which is in Heaven, is not certainly excluded from any part of the Earth; he is with thee, and lays his Ear to thy very Heart, and hears the Voice of thy Thoughts when thy Tongue is silent: And thou mayest, whatsoever work or business thou art doing, dart up a Prayer and a winged Desire unto him, which shall be as acceptable and effectual, as the more solemn performance of this Duty at stated times.

Secondly, Is thy Father in Heaven, thy Prayers then should be made so as to pierce the Heavens where God is? But how can this be done, since the distance between Heaven and us is so infinite? This is not to be done by the intension of raising thy Voice, but by the intension of raising thy Zeal and Spirit; for Zeal and Affection is a strong Bow that will shoot a Petition through Heaven it self. Let all thy Petitions therefore be ardent, and carry Fire in them, and

and this will cause them to ascend to the Element of pure Celestial Fire, from whence thy Breast was at first inflamed. It is a most remarkable place, *Exod. 14. 15.* when the *Red Sea* was before the *Israelites*, and the *Egyptians* pursuing them behind, and unpassable Mountains on each side, the People murmuring, and *Moses* their Captain and Guide in an unextricable Streight, we read not of any Vocal Prayer that *Moses* then put up; and yet God calls to him, *Why cryest thou unto me;* a Prayer it was, not so much as accented; not so much as whispered; and yet so strong and powerful that it pierced Heaven, and was louder in the Ears of God than the Voice of Thunder.

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

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

Of those which relate to God's Glory; the First desireth the advancement of this Glory it self, *Hallowed be thy Name.*

The Second, The means of effecting it, *Thy Kingdom come.*

The Third, The manifestation of it, *Thy Will be done, in Earth as it is in Heaven.*

I begin with the *First* of these, *Hallowed be thy Name.* In the Explication of which we shall enquire,

First, What is to be understood by the *Name of God.*

Secondly, What it is to *Hallow this Name of God.*

Thirdly, What is contained in this Petition, and what we pray for when we say, *Hallowed be thy Name.*

First, What is meant by the *Name of God?*

To this I Answer, That the Name of God is any perfection ascribed to him whereby he hath been pleased to make himself known to the Sons of Men: For Names are

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given to this very intent, that they might declare what the thing is to which that *Name* doth belong. Thus when God had created *Adam*, and made him Lord of this visible World, he caused the Beasts of the Field, and the Fowls of the Air to pass before him, as it were to do Homage to their new Sovereign, and to receive *Names* from him; which according to the plenitude and perfection of his knowledge, did then aptly serve to express their several Natures, and were not only *Names* but Definitions too. So when mention is made in *Scripture* of the Name of God, it signifies some expression of his infinite Essence, in which he is pleased graciously to condescend to the weakness of our capacity, and to spell out himself to us, sometimes by one perfection, and sometimes by another; since it is utterly impossible for us finite Creatures, to have a full and comprehensive knowledge of that Being which is infinite; for so God is only known to himself; being as infinite to all others, so finite to his own Knowledge and Understanding: And therefore he hath displayed before us his *Name*, to give us some help and advantage to conceive somewhat of him, though his Nature and Essence are in themselves incomprehensible to us, and shall be so for ever, even in Heaven it self. Now this *Name of God* may well be distinguished into two sorts, his *Titles*, and his *Attributes*.

First, His *Titles* are his *Name*, and so he is in *Scripture* frequently called *Jehovah, God, Lord, Creator*, and the like; and most of these his *Titles* are relative, respecting us; so his Name of *Creator* denotes his infinite Power, giving Being to all things. *Lord* and *King* signify his Dominion and Authority, in disposing and governing all that he hath made. *Father*, signifies his Care and Goodness in providing for his Creatures. *Redeemer*, his Mercy and Grace in delivering them from Temporal Evils and Calamities, or especially from Eternal Death and Destruction.

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Now these *relative Titles*, though they properly belong unto God, yet are they not absolutely essential to him; but comote a respect unto the Creatures. And therefore, though before the Creation of the World, God was for ever the same infinitely Blessed Being that he now is, and by the Creation of it no accession was made to his infinitely perfect Nature, (*for in him there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning; but he is yesterday and to day and the same for ever;*) yet could he not be called by the Name of Creator, or Lord, or Redeemer, or Father, (unless in respect of his Eternal Son:) But all these Titles result from the Relations wherein we stand unto God, of Creatures, Subjects, and Children. These Names therefore had their beginning, some in the beginning of time, and some since, and yet they do very properly signify unto us that God who is without beginning or end.

Secondly, As his *Titles*, so his *Attributes* are his *Name*; and these are of two sorts, either *incommunicable* or *communicable*.

First, The *incommunicable Attributes of God*; and these are those which are so proper to the *Divine Essence*, that there is scarce the least foot-steps or resemblance of them to be found in any of the Creatures; and such are his *Eternity*, which denotes a duration as well without beginning as without end: For though there are some Creatures, whose Beings shall never have a period set to them, as *Angels* and *Men*; yet there is no Creature that never had no beginning of its existence. And so *God's Infiniteness* and *Immensity* filling all places and exceeding all; which was most excellently set forth in that most significant, yet unintelligible *Paradox* of the *Heathen Philosopher*, That God was a Circle, whose Centre was every where, but its Circumference no where: His *simplicity* also, excluding all Composition and Mixture, which no Creature doth; for take the most simple of them, as *Angels* and the *separate Souls* of

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Men, yet they are at least compounded in their *Essences*, and Powers, and Acts; for the Power of Understanding is not the Soul, nor the Act of Understanding the Power; therefore in these there is one thing and another. But it is not so in God, but whatsoever is in God is God himself, being one most pure and simple Act. Hence follows his *immutability* and *unchangeableness*, there being nothing in God which was not from all Eternity. And in the same rank are his *Omnipotency* and *All-sufficiency*, his *Omniscience* and *Independency*, and the like, which are incommunicable Attributes, and cannot without Blasphemy be ascribed unto any of the Creatures.

Secondly, There are other Attributes of God that are *communicable*, and are so called because they may in some Analogy and Resemblance be found in the Creatures also; so to be Holy, Just, Merciful, True, Powerful, and the like, are the Names of God, and yet may be ascribed to the Creatures. So in that most Triumphant Declaration of his Name to *Moses*, *Exod. 34. 5, 6, 7.* we find that the most of the Letters that compose it may be found, in some degrees, even among Men, the Lord proclaimed his Name, *the Lord God Merciful and Gracious, Long-suffering, and Abundant in Goodness and Truth, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression, and Sin.* Now this Name of God Merciful and Gracious, Long-suffering, and Abundant in Goodness, which he seems so much to delight and glory in, and which he adorns with such fair flourishes, he himself would have us to own and intimate, *Luk. 6. 36, Be ye merciful as your Father is merciful.* To aspire to a resemblance with God in his incommunicable Attributes and Name, is a most horrid and blasphemous Presumption; a Pride that cast the *Devils* from Heaven to Hell: But to aspire to a resemblance unto God in his communicable Name, is the tendency of Grace, and the effect of the Spirit of God, conforming us in some measure to his Purity, and making us partakers in
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this fence of the *Divine Nature*. And therefore it is press'd upon us, *Levit. 29. 2. You shall be Holy, for I the Lord your God am Holy.* And, *Mat. 5. 48. Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.*

Now these *communicable Attributes* of God, though they may in some respects be found in the *Creatures*, yet then are they properly the *Names* of God, when they are applyed to him free from all those *Imperfections* with which they are necessarily attended in the *Creatures*. Abstract them from all *Imperfections*, and we may apply them to God as his *Name*. Now these *Imperfections* are of two sorts, either *Privative*, or *Negative*. A *Creature* is then said to be *Privatively imperfect* when he falls short of what he ought to be: And so are the best of *Men* imperfect in this *Life*; *Merciful* they are, but still retain a mixture of *Cruelty*; *Patient* they are, but still they have *Impatience* mix'd with it; *Holy* they are, but yet not *Spotless* as the *Law* requires them to be: And therefore in ascribing *Holiness*, *Mercy*, and *Patience* unto God, we must be sure to separate from them all such *Imperfections* as are found in us, through the mixture of the contrary *Corruptions* with those *Graces*; otherwise they will be so far from being the *Name* of God, that they will prove *Blasphemous Derogatives* from him; neither is this enough, but we must remove all *Negative imperfections* also. Now a *Creature* is said to be *Negatively imperfect*, when though it hath all the *perfections* that is due unto it, or required from it; yet it hath not all *perfection* that is possible or imaginable. Thus the *Holy Angels*, and the *Spirits of just Men* in *Heaven*, although they are made perfect so as to exclude all *Privative imperfection*, their *Holiness* and their *Graces* there being as perfect as they should be, and as God requires from them; yet have they a *Negative imperfection*; that is, there is some *perfection* of those *Graces*, and of that *Holiness* further possible, which they have not, nor is it within the *Sphere*

of their Natures to attain unto; in which sense it is said, *Job* 4. 8. *He chargeth his Angels with Folly*; that is, not as if they wanted any Wisdom or Righteousness that was due unto their Natures; but they had not all that Wisdom that was possible, and so were at least Negatively imperfect.

In all perfections of the Creatures, whether *Angels* or *Men*, be they never so great or excellent, there are Three imperfections that will necessarily attend them.

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

Secondly, That they have them not *unchangeably*, but may not only increase but decrease, yea or utterly lose them.

Thirdly, That they have them not *infinitely*, but in a stinted and limited measure.

Now in all the communicable Attributes of the Divine Nature, remove from them these Three Negative Imperfections, and then apply them to God, and they become his proper Name. God is *Holy, Wise, Powerful, Just, Merciful, True, &c.* and so are likewise some of his most excellent Creatures, whom he hath made like unto himself; but then the difference between God and them consists in this, That his Wisdom and the rest of his Attributes are originally from him, theirs derivatively from him; his infinite and boundless, theirs limited and stinted; his invariable and unchangeable, theirs subject to mutations and decays and total abolition. So that in these Three respects, even the *communicable* Attributes of God, are themselves *incommunicable*; and so they are his Name, whereby he is known and differenced from all other Beings whatsoever.

But may it not be here said to me, as it was to *Mannaah*, *Judges* 13. 18. *Why askest thou after my Name, seeing it is secret and wonderful?* Indeed we can no more find.

find out the Name of God to perfection, than we can his Nature and Essence; for both are infinite and unsearchable. And there are Two expressions in *Scripture*, that make this Knowledge impossible, the one of them quite contrary to the other: One is, *that God dwelleth in that light to which no Man can approach*, 1 Tim. 6. 16. *Scrutator Majestatis opprimetur à Gloria*: He that will too busily pry into Majesty, shall be oppressed and dazled with Glory. And the other is, *that he dwells in thick Darkness*, 2 Chron. 6. 1. both implying the same impossibility of *searching out the Almighty to perfection*, as *Job* speaks, *ch. 11. 7.*

But though this comprehensive Knowledge be impossible, yet God hath given us hints and traces of himself, by which we may discover enough for our Adoration, though not perhaps for our satisfaction. And there are Two ways, whereby God hath made known himself and his Name unto us, and they are by his Works, and by his Word.

First, We may spell out God's Name by his Works; and to this end serve those two great Capital Letters of *Heaven* and *Earth*, the *Air* and *Sea*; yea, there is no one Creature, how vile and contemptible soever it be, but it reads us Lectures of the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of the great Creator; in which sence the *Apostle* tells us, *Rom. 1. 20. The invisible things of him, from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen, by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and God-head.*

Secondly, More expressly and distinctly by his Word, for the *Scriptures* are *Nomenclatura Dei*. By these we come to a more clear and evident Knowledge of these Attributes of God, which the Works of Nature held forth to us in a more obscure and confused manner. And by this likewise we attain to the Knowledge of those perfections of God which the Works of *Creation* and *Providence* could never have instructed us in; as of a *Trinity in Unity*, of the *Eternal Generation*, and *Temporal Incarnation* of the Son of God,

God, of the whole Mystery of Religion, and the tenure of the Covenant of Grace, which are things that could never have been known but by Divine Revelation.

Indeed we may from the Works of God alone gather Knowledge enough of him to make us inexcusable if we Worship him not as God, for so did the Heathens as the *Apostle* speaks, in the forecited place, *Rom. i. 20.* but it is only from the Word that we know so much of God as to make us Eternally Blessed and Happy. Here he hath displayed his Name, the Lord God, Gracious and Merciful, pardoning Iniquity, Transgression, and Sin. Here alone hath he made known himself to be our *Father* in Jesus Christ, and appointed the Spiritual Worship of himself, that might prepare us for the Eternal Enjoyment of him in Glory.

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

Let us in the next place, enquire what it is to Hallow this Name of God. To Hallow is nothing else but to Sanctify or make Holy, so that *Hallowed be thy Name,* is no other than let thy Name be made Holy. But here may be a Question;

How can Creatures be said to make God Holy, whereas it is God that makes them Holy?

I answer, There is a Three-fold way of Hallowing or Sanctifying a thing or person. One by *Dedication.* A Second by *Infusion.* And a Third by *Declaration.*

First, A thing may be Hallowed or made Holy by *Dedication,* setting them a part for Holy Uses and Services; so the

the First-born are said to be Sanctified to the Lord, *Exod.* 13. 2. And that because among Men the First-born were to be Priests unto the Lord, and among Beasts they were to be Sacrificed. And thus *Aaron* and his Sons and the whole Tribe of *Levi*, whom God took in Exchange for the First-born, are said to be Consecrated and Sanctified, *Exod.* 28. 41. and many more instances might be given to the same purpose, were it needful. And thus at least we are said to be Sanctified by *Baptism*, *Ephes.* 5. 26. That is, we are by that Holy Ordinance set apart and Consecrated to the Service of God. Thus one Creature may Sanctifie and make another Holy; namely, by *Dedication* or *Separation* to some Sacred Use and Service: And so the Ministers of Christ do Sanctifie and Hallow the *Elements* in the *Holy Communion*, setting them apart from common and ordinary use to that Blessed Mystery.

Secondly, There is a Sanctification or Hallowing by *Infusion* or *Implanting* the real Principles and Habits of Holiness into that which is Hallowed. And thus God Sanctifies his *Elect*, by *Infusing* of his Grace into them, and making them Holy in some measure and similitude like himself. So our Saviour Prays, *John* 17. 17. *Sanctifie them through thy Truth, thy Word is Truth.* And the *Apostle*, 1 *Thes.* 5. 23. Prays, *The very God of Peace Sanctifie you wholly.* In neither of these Two Sences is God's Name to be Sanctified or Hallowed by us, for thus to Pray were to Blaspheme.

Thirdly, There is a Sanctifying by *Declaration*, when we acknowledge and reverence that as Holy that is indeed so.

And thus only it is that Creatures may Sanctifie the Name of God the Creator. So we have it used, *Isa.* 29. 23. *They shall Sanctifie my Name, and Sanctifie the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel.* Now thus to Sanctifie the Name of God, is the very same with that other Expression that commonly occurs in *Scripture*, of *Glorifying* God. We can add nothing to his infinite Perfections,

nor

nor to the Lustre and Brightness of his Crown; yet then are we said to Sanctifie and Glorifie God when in our most Reverend Thoughts we observe and admire his Holiness, and the bright Coruscations of his Attributes, and when we endeavour by all Holy ways to declare them unto others, that they may observe and admire them with us, and give unto God that Holy Veneration which is due unto him.

Thus we see what the Name of God is, and what it is to Sanctifie or Hallow this Name. *Thirdly,*

Let us now consider what is contained in this Petition, *Hallowed be thy Name.* And here,

First, In that Christ hath taught us to make this the first Petition in our Prayer to God, we may learn that the Glory of God is to be preferred by us before all other things whatsoever. And indeed that which God hath made the last and utmost of all his ends, and hath appointed to be the highest and utmost of ours, should be the First of all our Thoughts and Endeavours, and preferred before whatsoever else is dearest unto us; yea, before our very Lives themselves. This was our *Saviour's Practice,* *John 12. 27, 28.* *Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour: Father, Glorifie thy Name.* As if he had said, Though Life be naturally dear, and the Cup which I am to drink very bitter, and the Wrath that I am to undergo, heavy and infinite; yet all these things are not so considerable to me as thy Glory, and therefore though it be by *Agonies,* by *Death,* by the *Cross,* yet, *Father, Glorifie thy Name.* The same mind should dwell in us likewise, and we should hereby be instructed to desire and pray for other things with limitations and restrictions, but for the Glory of God absolutely and simply. *Father, Glorifie thy Name,* and if in the Counsel of thy Will, and the course of thy Providence, it cannot be otherwise than by my Suffering or Sorrow; yea, or Death it self; yet, *Father,*
even

even in this Glorifie thy Name ; and out of my very Ruins erect thou a *Trophy* and *Monument* to thy Praise : Be thou Hallowed and Sanctified although at my cost, and with the loss of all.

Secondly, In that this Petition is placed in the beginning of the *Lord's Prayer*, it intimates to us that in the very beginning and entrance of our Prayers, we ought to beg assistance from God, so to perform Holy Duties that God may be Glorified, and his Name Sanctified by us in it. It is a good and needful request to beg of God the aid and help of his Spirit to enable us to Hallow his Name in the succeeding requests we are to make.

Thirdly, Observe that when we present this Petition before God, we beg Three things of him.

First, Such Grace for our selves as may enable us to Sanctifie and Glorifie him.

Secondly, Graces likewise for others to enable them thereunto.

Thirdly, That God would by his Almighty Providence, direct and over-rule all things both good and evil, to the advancement of his own Glory.

First, We beg of God that he would bestow upon us such Graces as are requisite to Glorifie him in the World. We beg Knowledge and Understanding of him, of his Nature, of his Will, and of his Works ; for we cannot Glorifie that God whom we are ignorant of. We beg likewise Patience and Contentment in all Estates, thankfulness for every Providence, Graces that do highly tend to the Promoting of God's Honour and Glory. We beg Faith likewise, whereby we give the highest and greatest Glory to God that Mortal Men are able to ascribe, for to trust upon his Word, and to build upon his Promises, is to Honour his Truth and Faithfulness. And therefore we have that Expression, *Rom. 4. 20. That Abraham was strong in Faith, giving Glory to*

God. We beg also, that our Speech may be Savoury, and such as *may Minister Grace to the Hearers.* And lastly, a humble, blameless, and exemplary life, for by our good Works we are to Glorifie our *Heavenly Father.*

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

Secondly, We herein beg of God, That he would so overrule all things whatsoever, that his Glory may be secured; nay, promoted by them; and therefore whatsoever falls out, we ought to say, *Hallowed be thy Name* by it. Hereby we Pray that the Gifts and Eminent Graces of God's Children may redound unto his Glory, that they may not be puffed up with them, nor ascribe the credit of them to themselves. That the Peace and Prosperity of the Church of Christ may turn to the Glory of God, that outward Mercies may not make them careless and forgetful of his Service and Honour. That the sins and failings of God's People, may eventually turn to the Glory of God, which seem directly to blot and stain it: And that by their Repentance and Confessions, they may give Glory to him whom they have offended, and Satisfaction to them whom they have scandalized, that all the Afflictions and Troubles of his People may in the end tend unto his Glory as well as their Good, by declaring his Power in supporting them, and his Goodness and Mercy in delivering them. That all the Devices and Conspiracies, the Rage and Fury of the Enemies of his *Church*, may, contrary to their intentions, be overswayed to advance his Honour, and that the Wrath of Man may praise him by shewing forth his Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, either in restraining or overturning it. And finally, that all Creatures both in Heaven and in Earth; yea, all the Works of God's Hands should Glorifie God in the several Stations in which he hath set them:

them : Some by being the Manifestations of his Attributes, and some the Manifesters of them. Brutes and Senseless Creatures passively declaring the Glory of their great Creator ; and rational and intelligent Creatures shewing it forth actively, and all concurring in this great Work, for which all were made, even the Glory and Praise of God.

Thus we see what a large and copious request we present before God, when we pray that his Name should be *Hallowed*, which that it may be, let us our selves endeavour to be Holy, for it is impossible that an unholy Heart or Life should Sanctifie a Holy God. Whilst we persevere in our wicked Conversations, we do but mock God and our selves, when we desire to Sanctifie that Name of his, which we daily prophane and pollute ; nay, indeed we do but Pray for our own Destruction, even that God would Sanctifie his Name, part whereof is his just and dreadful severity upon all those, and consequently upon our selves, who defile and prophane it. And thus I have finished the First Petition, *Hallowed be thy Name.*

The Second Petition follows, *Thy Kingdom come.*

This now very aptly succeeds upon the former, because this is the best way and means to *Hallow God's Name*, by enlarging his Kingdom, and bringing in many to submit to his Scepter and Government. For *Praise waiteth for God in Sion*, Psal. 65. 1. *And his Name is great in Israel*, Psal. 76. 1.

Now here for our clearer proceeding, we must distinguish of God's Kingdom, and then shew you how this Kingdom comes. And lastly, what we pray for in presenting this Petition to God, *Thy Kingdom come.*

First, We must distinguish of God's Kingdom. Now the Kingdom of God is Two-fold, either Universal, or more Particular and Peculiar : The one is his Kingdom of Power, the other is his Kingdom of Grace.

First, His *Universal Kingdom*, which extends over all things in Heaven and Earth, yea and Hell it self. And so he is the sole *Monarch* of the whole World, and all the *Princes* and *Potentates* of the Earth, are but his *Vice-Roys* and *Vicegerents*, that Govern under and should Govern for him: For he is that *Blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords*, as the *Apostle* Styles him, 1 *Tim.* 6. 15. and *his Kingdom ruleth over all*, *Psal.* 103. 19. It is true, in this *Universal Kingdom* there are many Rebels that would not have him to Reign over them. Many that daily rise up in Arms, break his Laws, defy his Justice, and reject his Mercy. Many, that were their Power equal to their Malice, would Dethrone and Depose him from his Sovereignty. Whole Legions of Infernal Spirits are continually mustering up all their Forces, and drawing wretched sinful Men into the Conspiracy, and their quarrel is for no less than *Dominion* and *Empire*; who shall be King, God or Satan; yet all their attempts are but vain and frustrate, and in spite of all their impotent rage, God's Kingdom shall stand, and as it was from Everlasting, so shall it be to Everlasting, *for thine is the Kingdom and Power, for ever and ever*. And therefore the most wicked of all God's Creatures are still his Subjects; not subject indeed to his Laws, for so they break his Bonds asunder, and cast away his Cords from them; but they are subject to his Power and Providence, and that in Three respects. As it grants *Permission*. As it imposeth *Restraints*. And as it inflicteth *Punishments*.

First, All are God's Subjects in that they can do nothing without his *Permission*. Neither the *Devil* that Arch-Creature, nor the worst of his Instruments, can so much as touch an hair of our Head, unless leave be granted them. Yea, we find that a whole *Legion* of *Devils* after they were dispossessed of their usurped abode, durst not so much as house themselves in a Herd of Swine, without first craving

craving leave of our Saviour, *Mark* 5. 12. And all the Villainies and Out-rages that have ever been committed in the World, have had their pass from God's Permission, without which the Lusts of Men as furious and eager as they are, must needs have miscarrying Wombs and dry Breasts. Nor is it any taint at all to the pure Holiness of God, that he doth thus permit the wickedness of Men, which if he pleased, he might prevent. For though we are obliged to keep others from sin when it lies in our power to do it, yet no such Obligation lies upon God, though he can keep the wickedst Wretch on Earth from ever sinning any more; yet he permits Wisely for the greater advancement of his own Glory, and the Exercise of his Peoples Graces, and at the last he punishes Justly.

Secondly, His Kingdom is over all, in that he can bend in and restrain his Rebellious Subjects as he pleaseth. Sometimes he doth it by cutting short their Power of doing mischief. He chains up those Mad Men, and takes from them those Swords, Arrows, and Fire-brands, which otherwise they might hurl abroad, both to their own and others hurt. Sometimes he raiseth up an opposite Power against them that they cannot break through to the Commission of their sins: so the *Jews* would often have taken Christ and put him to Death, but they feared the People, whom his Miracles and Cures had obliged unto him. Sometimes Providence casts in some seasonable diversion, and thus he overruled *Joseph's Brethren*, restraining them from killing him by the Providential passing by of *Merchants* that way. And sometimes by removing the *Objects* against which they intended to sin. So *Herod* intended to put *Peter* to death, but that very night, God sent his *Angel* to work his escape, and prevented that wickedness. Many other ways there may be of his Exercising his Sovereignty and Dominion over his most Rebellious Creatures, who though they are Slaves to their Lusts, yet God holds their Chain in his own

own hand, slackening it by his permission, and sometimes straitning it by his Powerful restraints. And therefore we find in *Scripture*, that God hath a certain measure for Mens sins, beyond which they shall not exceed. *Zach. 5.* There is mention made of an *Ephah of Wickedness*. And this signifies to us, that though wicked Men break the bounds of his Laws, yet they cannot break the bounds of his Providence. God hath set them their measure which they can neither fill without his Permission, nor exceed, because of his restraint.

Thirdly, God declares his Kingdom to be over all, by inflicting deserved punishments on the most stubborn and rebellious Sinners: though they transgress his Laws, and provoke his Holiness, yet they shall never out-brave his Justice; but he will certainly humble them, if not to Repentance, yet to Hell and Perdition, *Luke 19. 17.* *Those mine Enemies that would not that I should Reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me.* And therefore we see how God hath erected *Trophies* and *Monuments* to the Praise of his dread Power and Severe Justice, out of the Ruins of the most Proud and Insolent Sinners. *Pharaoh* who was both the great Type and Instrument of the *Devil*, how did God break that stubborn Wretch with Plague upon Plague, and one Misery after another? For to this very purpose God set him up, that he might shew his Signs and Wonders upon him. And thus God deals with many others in this Life by some Signal and Remarkable Punishments, making them Examples to deter others from the like Crimes.

But thus he deals with all his Rebels in *Hell*, for even that is one, and a large part of his *Kingdom*: It is his Prison wherein he hath shut up all his Malefactors whom his grim Serjeant, Death, hath Arrested. It is the great Slaughter-house of Souls, and the Shop of Justice; *Devils* are there his Executioners, and Fire, and Rack and Torments the due Guerdon of those impenitent Rebels, who shaking
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off his Yoke, and casting of his Cords from them, are crush'd for ever under the insupportable load of his Wrath, and bound in Chains of massy Darknes, reserved for the Judgment of the Great Day.

Thus we see God's *Universal Kingdom* consists of Three great Provinces, *Heaven, Earth, and Hell*: In Heaven, only Grace and Mercy Reigns; on Earth, both Mercy and Justice, in the various dispensations of them towards the Sons of Men; in Hell, pure and unmixed Justice triumphs, in the Eternal Damnation of his Apostate Creatures: This is God's *Universal Kingdom*. But,

Secondly, Besides this, God hath a peculiar *Kingdom*, and that is his *Kingdom of Grace*, which though it be not so large and extensive as the former, yet is it far more excellent, and the Royalty of it is God's singular Delight. Now this *Kingdom of Grace* is his Church, and may be considered

Two ways.

First, In its Growth and Progress.

Secondly, In its Perfection and Consummation.

In the former respect, it is the *Church Militant* here upon Earth; and in the latter, it is the *Church Triumphant* in Heaven, for both make up but one Kingdom under divers respects.

First, Let us a little consider God's Kingdom here upon Earth, or the *Church Militant*; and that is Two-fold, Visible and Invisible.

The *Visible Kingdom* of God upon Earth, are a company of People openly professing the Fundamentals of Religion, and those Truths necessary to Salvation, which God hath made known unto the World, and joyning together in the External Communion of Ordinances.

The *Invisible Kingdom*, are a company of true Believers, who have Internal and Invisible Communion with God by his Spirit and their Faith. The *Visible Church* is of a much larger extent than the *Invisible*; for it comprehends Hypocrite

A Practical Exposition

crites and Formalists, and all those who have given up their Names to Christ, and listed themselves under his Banner, and make an outward profession of the Truth, although by their Lives and Practices they contradict and deny what they own and profess with their Lips: These belong to the Kingdom of God's Grace, as to the External Dispensation and Regiment of it, because they profess obedience to his Laws, and live under the means of Grace, by which many of them through the efficacious concurrence of the Spirit of God, are translated into the *Invisible Kingdom* of his dear Son.

Now this *Visible Kingdom* of God upon Earth, is but an imperfect State and Condition; for though all that are Members of it are selected and taken out of the World, yet there is a great deal of Mixture and Dross, and many things that do offend. For,

First, There is in it a mixture of Wicked Persons with those that are really Holy. Many are of this Kingdom only, because their Consciences are convinced of the Truth of the Christian Religion, although their Lives are not subject to the Power of it; and these are taken out of the World only as they are brought into the Pale of the Church, and profess the Name of Christ and his *Religion*, as distinct from all other *Religions* in the World. And therefore we find the Church, or the Kingdom of Heaven, in *Scripture*, frequently compared to a *Net* cast into the *Sea*, gathering every kind of *Fish*, both good and bad, *Matth. 13. 47.* both sorts are embraced in the Bosom of this Net, and no perfect Separation can be made, until it be drawn to shore, at the Day of Judgment; and then the Good will be gathered into Vessels, and the Bad cast away, as it is there expressed. Again, it is compared to a *Floor*, wherein is both *Chaff* and *Wheat*, *Luk. 3. 17.* and these will be mix'd together until the last discriminating Day, and then shall the *Wheat* be gathered into the *Garner*, and the *Chaff* burnt up with unquenchable Fire. Again, it is compared to a *Field*, wherein

wherein there grows *Tares* as well as *Corn*, *Matth. 13. 24* which must grow together until the *Harvest*, and then shall the *Tares* be bound in Bundles to be burnt, and the profitable *Grain* be gathered into the *Barn*. This hath still been and will be the mix'd condition of God's Church on Earth, wherein, through Hypocrisie and gross Dissimulation, many that are Enemies to the Cross of Christ, will yet go under that Cognisance, and keep up a Form of Godliness, though they deny and hate the Power of it.

Secondly, There is even in the *Invisible Church* here on Earth a great mixture too; those who have a real and vital Union to Christ, and maintain a Spiritual Communion with him; yet even they have a sad mixture of Evil with all their Good, of Sin with all their Grace and Holiness; so that the *Church* is still imperfect, not only from a mixture of Persons, but from a mixture in Persons: As we know but in part, so we love but in part; we fear, we obey God but in part. And with our Profession of Faith we had need also to prefer that humble Petition, *Mark 9. 24. Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.*

Secondly, The Kingdom of God may be considered in its Perfection and Consummation, and so it is Triumphant in Heaven. And this consists of such Glorious *Angels* as never Fell, and of such *Glorified Saints* who are raised from their Fall, and restored to a far better Condition than what they lost. This is the most Glorious part of God's Kingdom; here is his Throne especially established, and here it is that he displays himself in the splendor of his Majesty; being surrounded by innumerable Hosts of Holy Angels, and the Spirits of Just Men made perfect, who continually Worship before him, with a most prostrate Veneration, and give *Honour, and Glory, and Praise to him that sits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.*

Now this *Kingdom* is altogether free from those former Imperfections and Mixtures. There is no mixture of good

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and bad together, neither is there any mixture of bad in the good; but all are Holy, and all as compleatly Holy as Creatures can be; for *into the New Jerusalem shall no unclean thing ever enter.* There are neither Temptations to try us, nor Sins to defile us, nor Sorrows to afflict us; but perfect Joy and perfect Purity: Where all Tears shall be wiped from our Eyes, and all Sin, the Cause of those Tears, rooted out of our Hearts. And yet if Heaven it self may be liable to any Defects, or capable of any Additions, there seems at present to be wanting in it these Two things.

First, The *Kingdom of Glory* is not yet Full, nor shall it be till the whole Number of the *Elect* shall be called, and the whole Number of the Called, Glorified. Many as yet are conflicting here below, and fitting themselves for their Eternal Reward; many yet lie sleeping in their Causes unborn, whom God hath *Foreknown* and *Predestinated* unto Eternal Life, all of whom he will in his due time bring unto the Possession of his Heavenly Kingdom, to compleat the Number of his Glorious Subjects. And therefore it is said, concerning the Saints that are already in Heaven, that *white Robes were given to every one of them,* and it was said unto them, that *they should rest yet for a little season, until their Fellow-Servants also and their Brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled,* Rev. 6. 11.

Secondly, Those Glorified Saints that are now in Heaven, though their Joys be perfect, yet their Persons are not; but one part of them, their Bodies, continue still under the arrest of Death and the Power of the Grave; but yet they sleep in Hope, and through that *Mystical Union*, that there is between Jesus Christ and every scattered Dust of a Believer, they shall obtain a Glorious and Joyful Resurrection; and then shall this Heavenly Kingdom be every way perfect; perfect in the full Number of its Subjects, and every Subject perfect in his entire and compleat Reward; his Soul made for ever Blessed in the *Beatifical Vision* of God, and his
Body

Body made inconceivably Glorious by the redundancy of that Glory that fills his Soul, and both shall remain for ever with the Lord.

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

The next thing in order is, to shew how this *Kingdom of God* is said to come. This Word, *come*, implies that we pray for a *Kingdom* that is yet in its *Progress*, and hath not yet attained the highest pitch of that *perfection* which is expected and desired; for that which is yet to come, is not as yet arrived to that *State* in which it is to be: And therefore we do not so properly pray that the *Universal Kingdom of God* should come; for his *Dominion* over the *Creatures* is actually the same, and shall be so for ever: But more especially we pray that the *peculiar Kingdom of God* should come, and that as to both parts of it, *Militant* and *Triumphant*. Now this *peculiar Kingdom* is said to come in Three respects.

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

Secondly, In respect of the *Efficacy* of those means, when all ready and cordial *Obedience* is yielded to the *Laws of God*, then doth this *Kingdom come*, and the *Glory* of it is advanced and increased.

Thirdly, In respect of *Perfection*, and so it comes when the *Graces* of the *Saints* are strengthened and increased; when the *Souls* of the *Godly* departing this *Life* are received into *Heaven*; and when the whole *Number* of them shall have their perfect *Consummation* and *Bliss* in the *Glorification*

both of Soul and Body, after the General Re-surrection. And thus we have seen how the *Kingdom of God* may come.

In the next place we must enquire, what it is we pray for when we say *Thy Kingdom come*.

I Answer, There are various Things lie couch'd under this Petition; as,

First, We pray that God would be pleased to Plant his Church, where it is not, according to his Promise, *giving all the Nations of the World to his Son for his Inheritance, and the utmost parts of the Earth for his Possession*. That the dark Places and Corners of the Earth, that are yet the Habitations of Cruelty, may be illustrated with the Glorious Light of the Gospel shining into them. That God would reveal his Son to those poor wretched People, that sit in Darkness and in the *Region of the Shadow of Death*, and would rescue them from their Blind Superstitions and Idolatries, and from the Power of the *Devil*, who strongly works in the Children of Disobedience, and would translate them into the Kingdom of his dear Son; especially, that he would remove the Veil from the Heart of the *Jew*, upon whom a sad Judicial Hardness hath long lain, that they at length may be brought into the Unity and Fulness of Christ's Body: We pray that all the World, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, may be gathered into one Sheep-fold, under Christ Jesus the great Pastor and Shepherd of Souls; so that as God is one, so his Name and Service may be one throughout all the Earth. And thus we pray that Christ's *Kingdom may come*, in respect of the means of Grace and Salvation.

Secondly, This Petition, *Thy Kingdom come*, intimates our earnest desire that the Church of Christ, where they are planted, may be increased in the Members of the Faithful. That those, who are as yet Enemies to the Name and Profession of Christ, may be brought into the Visible Church; and that those in it, who are yet Strangers to a powerful
Work

Work of Grace, may by the effectual Operation of the *Holy Ghost* be brought in to be Members of the *Invisible Church*. And thus we pray that God's *Kingdom may come*, in respect of the Efficacy of the means of Grace.

Thirdly, We pray that all the Church of Christ throughout the World may be kept from ruine, that they may not be over-run with Superstition or Idolatry: That God would not, in his Wrath remove his Candlestick from them, as he hath in his Righteous Judgment done from other Churches, which were once Glorious and Splendid: We pray likewise, that God would make up all Breaches, and compose all Differences; and silence all Controversies, and cut off all those who trouble the Peace, and rend the Unity of the Church, breaking it into Factions and Schisms, which are the most fatal Symptoms and Portenders of God's withdrawing himself, and carrying away his Gospel, and giving of it to another People, who will better bring forth the Fruits of it, which are Peace, Meekness, and Love. And if in any thing Christians be diversly minded, that God would be pleased to reveal it unto them; and that *whereunto they have attained, they may walk by the same Rule, and mind the same Things*. And thus we pray that *Christ's Kingdom may come* in respect of its perfection and entireness.

Fourthly, It intimates our humble Requests to God, that his Ordinances may be purely and powerfully dispensed: Hence, as I noted before, the Word is called the *Word of the Kingdom*, Matth. 13. 19. that is the Word whereby we are brought into the Kingdom of Christ here on Earth, and fitted for his Triumphant Kingdom in Heaven. It is the means of our New Birth, the Seed of our Spiritual Life. And as a Kingdom cannot be well established or governed without good Laws; so for the Government of his Kingdom, Christ hath established Laws, which are contained in the Records of the *Holy Scriptures*. And as his Word is the Law, so his Sacraments are the Seals of his Kingdom; for
to,

so every believing Partaker God doth under his Seal confirm the grant of Heaven and Eternal Salvation.

And therefore in this *Petition* we pray also, that God would give his Church able Ministers of the New Testament, that may know how rightly to divide the Word of Truth, and to give every one his Portion in due season.

And that he would be pleased to accompany the outward Administration of his Ordinances with the inward Operations of his Spirit, which alone can make them effectual to turn Men from Darkness to Light, and to bring them from the Power of Satan unto God. That the whole Number of God's Elect may in his due time be brought in by the means which he hath appointed and sanctified for their Conversion and Salvation.

These are the chief and principal things that we beg of God for the *Church Militant*, when we say, *Thy Kingdom come*, viz. that it may attain a perfection of Extent, and be planted where it is not to a perfection of Number; and may gain more Profelytes and Converts, where it is planted to a perfection of Establishment, that they may not be rooted out by the Violence of Men, nor abandoned through the Judgment of God. And to a perfection of Purity and Holiness by the powerful Dispensation of Gospel-Ordinances attended by the Efficacious Concurrence of the *Holy Spirit*. But,

Secondly, This *Petition* likewise respects the *Church Triumphant* in Heaven: Nor is this praying for the Dead a thing justly condemned of Superstition and Folly; for we pray not for them to alter their State, which is impious and ridiculous, and a Foppish Consequent upon the Figment of *Purgatory*: But we pray for the *Church Triumphant* only in general, that those things which are as yet defective in it may be supplied; for certainly whosoever there is any kind of imperfection we have ground to pray for the removal

removal of it; especially when God hath encouraged us to it by promise that he will remove it: And therefore,

First, We may well pray that the whole Body Mystical of Jesus Christ, and every Member of it, may be brought to the full Fruition of Heaven and Happiness, that daily more may be admitted into the Heavenly Fellowship, till their Numbers as well as their Joys be Consummate. And,

Secondly, We may pray that the Bodies of all the Saints that have slept in their Beds of Earth from the beginning of the World, may be raised again out of the Dust, and united to their Souls, and for ever made Glorious in the Kingdom of Heaven; for both these things are absolutely promised, the one *Rom. 8. 19, 30.* that those whom God hath Called and Justified he will likewise Glorify. And the other is, *1 Thessal. 4. 16.* *The Dead in Christ shall arise.* And certainly whatsoever may be the Object of our Faith, Hope may be the Subject of our Prayers. And this every true Christian longs and breaths after, that these Days of Sin and Misery may be shortned, that Christ would come in his Glory, that his Mediatory Kingdom being fulfilled, it might be delivered up unto the Father, and that we all might be one as the Father is in him, and he in the Father. *Even so come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.* And thus I have finished the Second Petition, *The Kingdom come.*

The Third follows, *Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.* This now follows upon the former in a most rational and admirable method; for, as before we pray that the Kingdom of God might come, as the best adapted means to Hallow his Name; so now we pray that his Will may be done by us, as the clearest Declaration that we are the Subjects of his Kingdom. Now here are considerable,

First, The Petition it self, *Thy Will be done in Earth.*

Secondly,

Secondly, The Measure and Proportion of it, as it is in Heaven.

I shall begin with the *Petition*, in which every Word carries great Weight and Moment; and therefore in the explication of it I shall shew you,

First, What this Will of God is.

Secondly, How his Will may be said to be done.

Thirdly, What force this Particle *thy, thy Will*, carries in it, and what it denotes.

Fourthly, What is meant by God's Will being done in Earth. And all these with all perspicuity and brevity.

First, What this Will of God is. Now the Will of God is commonly and very well distinguished, into the Will of his Purpose, and into the Will of his Precept; his Decrees or his Commands. The former respects what shall be done by him; the latter what ought to be done by us: Both these, in *Scripture*, are frequently called the Will of God.

First, God's Purpose is his Will; yea, it is more properly his Will than his Precepts are; for by this God doth absolutely determine, what shall be, and what shall not be; and all things in the World take their Place and are ranged in their several Stations; and the whole series of Causes and Effects are governed by the Ordination and Appointment of this his Sovereign Will. And therefore it is said, *Eph. 1. 11.* that *God worketh all things according to the Counsel of his own Will.* And *Psal. 135. 6.* *Whatsoever the Lord pleased that did he in Heaven, in Earth, in the Sea, and in all deep Places.* This is God's Will of Purpose, whereby he guides and governs all Events whatsoever; so that there is not the most inconsiderable Occurrence that happens, not the least flight of a *Sparrow*, nor the falling off of an *Hair*, nor the motion of an *Atome* in the Air, or a *dust*, or a *sand* on the Earth,

Earth, but as it is effected by his Power and Providence, so it was determined by his Will and Counsel.

Secondly, The Precepts and Commands are likewise the Will of God; but they are improperly so called; because these concern not, neither do they determine the Event of things, but only our Duty; not what shall be, but what ought to be; and it is called, *Rom. 12. 2. The good and acceptable and perfect Will of God.* This is all contained in the *Holy Scriptures*, which are a perfect Systeme of Precepts given us for the Government of our Lives here, and for the attaining of Eternal Life hereafter; and therefore it is likewise called his Revealed Will; whereas the other, namely the Will of Purpose, is God's Secret Will, until it be manifested unto us by the Events and Effects of it.

Now concerning this distinction of God's Will of Purpose and Precept, we may note that though there be a great deal of difference, yet there is no contrariety or opposition between them.

First, They differ the one from the other, not in respect of God, (for his Will is one infinitely pure and uncompounded Act,) but only in respect of the *Object*; for there are many things which God wills by his Will of Purpose, which he hath not willed by his Will of Precept. His Precepts are all holy, and command nothing but what is holy and acceptable: *This is the Will of God*, saith the Apostle, *even your Sanctification*, *1 Thessal. 4. 3.* It is the highest degree of Blasphemy to impute unto God, that he hath commanded us any thing but what is Holy, Just, and Good: This were to make him the Author of Sin, who hath declared himself the Punisher of it. But his *Will of Purpose* is not restrained within bounds and Limits; but extendeth it self to all Events whatsoever, whether Good or Evil.

And as Evils are of two sorts, either the Evil of Punishment, or the Evil of Sin; so is God's *Will of Purpose* two-fold,

fold, *effective* of the one, and *permissive* of the other; but in both most certain and infallible.

1. God's *Will of Purpose* doth effect and bring to pass the Evil of Punishment: *Amos 3. 6. Shall there be any Evil in the City and the Lord hath not done it?* For he doth both in Heaven and in Earth whatsoever pleaseth him. Were it not the Will of God, the World had never groaned under so many Miseries and Calamities as have in all Ages befallen it. Now God never enjoyns us this as our Duty, although he lays them upon us as our Burden.

2. God's *Will of Purpose* permits the Evil of Sin for Wise and Gracious Ends, that he may bring good out of Evil; even those very Sins and Wickedness which his *Will of Precept* forbids, his *Will of Purpose* permits; for if God did not will to permit them, there would be no such thing as Sin in the World.

Secondly, Hence ariseth another very remarkable difference, that we may effectually resist God's Will of Precept, so as to hinder the accomplishment of it; but whatsoever we do so it is our Sin, and will without repentance be our condemnation. So *Stephen* accuseth the *Jews*, *Act. 7. 51. You do always resist the Holy Ghost*; that is, by your Practices you do always go contrary to the Commands of God, revealed by his Spirit in his Word. And were it not for this resisting of the Will of God, we should be perfectly holy and blameless.

But we cannot resist the *Will of God's Purpose*, so as to hinder the Execution of it; although sometimes to endeavour it, may be so far from Sin, as to be our necessary and indispensable Duty: For though it may be the Will of God to bring us into Poverty or into Prison, or to lay sore Diseases upon us; yet it is not only lawful for us, but we are obliged as far as lies in us, to hinder these Evils of Punishment from befalling us, and to preserve our Estates, our Liberty, our Health, and all our outward Comforts, by all lawful and allowed

allowed ways, and means: Much more, if God should will to permit a Sin in others, or in our selves, are we bound to hinder the Commission of it; for, for us to be willing to permit, because God is, though it be a conformity of our Wills to God's *Will of Purpose*, yet this is not our Rule to walk by: And it is a wretched Rebellion against his *Will of Precept*, which alone we are to respect in all our Actions, and endeavour to conform our selves unto. Doubtless it was God's *Will of Purpose*, that Christ the Lord of Life and Glory should be Crucified; but yet the *Jews* conforming themselves according to this *Will*, were guilty of the most horrid Wickedness that ever was committed in the World; for both these we have confirmed to us, *Acts* 2. 23. *Him being delivered by the determinate Counsel and Fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by Wicked Hands have crucified and slain.* Although it was by the determinate Counsel and *Will of God*, that Christ should be taken and slain; yet nevertheless they were wicked Hands that were imbrued in that precious and inestimable Blood. And thus I have shown how the *Will of God's Purpose* and *Precept* do differ. But yet,

Secondly, Although there be this great difference, yet is there no contrariety or repugnancy, but a perfect Harmony and Uniformity between them. Some have thought that if God wills such a thing should be done; as for instance, the Crucifying of our Lord and Saviour by his *Will of Purpose*, and yet *Wills* that it should not be done by his *Will of Precept*, that these two *Wills* must needs contradict one another; and this Argument some do make no small use of to explode the distinction of the *Will of God*.

But the *Solution* is most easie; for when *Wills* are contrary to each other, there must be a *Willing* and a *Nilling* of the same thing; but it is not so here; for the *Object of God's Will of Purpose* is *Event*; but of his *Will of Precept*,

Duty. Now it is far enough from having any shadow of a contradiction for God to will or permit that to be which he hath willed or commanded us not to do. Indeed to will such an Event to be and not to be, that such a thing shall be my Duty and shall not be my Duty, are contradictions, and not to be imputed unto God. But to will that such a thing shall eventually be, and yet to will that it shall be my Duty to endeavour to hinder it, is so far from being a contradiction, that it is most apparent and evident, and falls out most frequently in our ordinary converse in the World. So in the forementioned famous instance of the Death of Christ. God willed by his *Will of Purpose* that it should so come to pass in all the circumstances of it as it was perpetrated: but then he willed by his *Will of Precept*, that it should be their Duty not to do it. Now certainly there is no contradiction or absurdity that Duty and Event may be quite contrary one to the other: unless we could take away all Sin, and Authorize all the greatest Villainies that ever were committed under the Sun. And thus much for the first Head.

And having thus seen what the Will of God is. The next General is to enquire, what Will it is we pray may be done, when we say, *Thy Will be done.* And here,

First, It is clear that we especially and absolutely pray that the *Will of God's Precept* may be done, and that not only by us, but by all Men: For this Will of God is the Rule of our Obedience, and according to it we ought to conform all our Actions. And because we are not sufficient of our selves so much as to think any thing of our selves, much less to perform all those various and weighty Duties of Holiness, which God hath enjoyn'd us in his Word, therefore our Saviour hath taught us to beg of God Grace and Assistance to enable us to fulfill his Will, giving us not only Commands of Obedience, but Promises for our Relief and Encouragement instructing us in the Word, to crave supplies of
Grace

Grace from him who hath required Duty from us. And indeed there is a great deal of Reason we should pray that his Will of *Precept* should be done on Earth, if we consider,

First, The great Reluctancy and Opposition of Corrupt Nature against it. *The Law is Spiritual, but we are Carnal and sold under sin*, Rom. 7. 4. and in the best of Men there is a *Law in their Members, warring against the Law of their Minds*, that when they would do good, evil is present with them; and therefore we have need to pray, That God would encline our hearts to his Commandments, and then strengthen us to obey them: That as our Will to good is the effect of his Grace, so the effect of our Wills may be the performance of his Will.

Secondly, God's Glory is deeply concern'd in the doing of his Will. For it is the Glory of a King to have his Laws obey'd. And so is it God's. When we profess our selves to be his Subjects, and pray that his *Kingdom may come*, it is but fit and rational, that we should pray likewise, *Thy Will be done*, without which this his Kingdom of Grace would be but meerly Titular: For his Word is the Scepter and Law of his Kingdom, and if we yield not Obedience to it, we do tacitly condemn it and the Law-maker also of Injustice, and thereby reflect a most intolerable disparagement upon God, preferring the will of Satan, and of our own Lusts, before his most Holy and Righteous Will. But when we endeavour to yield Obedience to his Commands, and pray that we may be able to do it with more diligence and constancy: this as it pleaseth, so it glorifieth God, for by so doing, we acknowledge both his Sovereignty and his Equity; his Sovereignty, in that he may require of us what he pleaseth; and his Equity, in that he requireth of us nothing but what is most just and fit: And therefore our *Saviour* tells us, *John 15. 8. Herein is my Father Glorified, that you bring forth much Fruit.*

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Our own Interest is deeply concerned in it : For through Obedience and doing the Will of God, it is, that we come to Inherit the Promises, *Revel. 22. 14. Blessed are they that do his Commandments that they may have a Right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the Gates into the City.* And therefore to pray, that God's Will may be done by us, is but to pray, that we our selves may be fitted and prepared for Eternal Life and Glory, unto which we can no otherwise attain, but by Holiness and Obedience. O think but to what an Excellency doth Grace advance the Soul even in this Life ; and makes *Christians* as much above other Men, as other Men are above Beasts. That when they are employed about the foul and nasty Offices of sin ; hurried by their vile Passions unto vile and base Actions, raking in the Mire and Filth of all manner of uncleanness, and defiling their Soul with those Sins which will hereafter Damn them : Thy work should be all Spiritual, consisting of the same pure Employments that the Holy *Angels* and *Glorified Saints* in Heaven spend their Eternity in. Consider what an high Honour and Priviledge it is that you should be admitted to attend immediately upon the Service of the *King of Kings*. You are called to wait about his Throne, his Throne of Grace, to which you have always free access to converse and commune with God, by maintaining Fellowship with him in the performance of Holy Duties ; which is a Dignity so high, that Humane Nature is capable but of one preferment more, and that is of being removed from one Throne to the other ; from attending on the Throne of Grace to attend on the Throne of Glory. And then think, O Soul, if it be possible to think, what *neither Eye hath seen, nor Ear hath heard, neither hath it, nor can it enter into the heart of Man to conceive.* Think how transcendently Blessed thy Estate shall be, when the Will of thy God which was here thy Duty, shall there be thy Nature : When thy Obligation to do it shall be turned into

into a happy necessity of doing it. When all thy Thoughts and Affections shall be center'd in God for ever, and not the least motion of thy Soul shall so much as twinkle or waver from the Eternal Contemplation and Fruition of the Infinite Deity. And therefore this our Eternal Happiness being wrapt up in doing the Will of God, it highly concerns us to pray, That it may be done, and to endeavour to do it on Earth, so as that at length we may attain to the perfection of doing it in Heaven. And this is the *First* thing that in this *Petition* we especially and absolutely pray for, viz. That God's *Will of Precept* may be done by us on Earth.

Secondly, It is more doubtful, whether we are simply to pray that God's *Will of Purpose* should be done. And that,

First, Because the *Will of God's Purpose* is secret and unknown, and therefore cannot so immediately concern us in point of Duty, *For secret things belong to God, but revealed things belong to us and to our Children*; Deut. 29. 29.

Secondly, Because this Will of God shall within the periods set by his Eternal Decrees, have its most perfect and full accomplishment. For though his *Revealed Will* may be resisted and hindered, yet neither *Men* nor *Devils* can hinder his *secret Will* and the Purposes of his Counsels, these shall take place mauger all their spite and oppositions; and therefore it seems not altogether so proper matter for our Prayers.

Again, *Thirdly*, Many things come to pass by the *Will of God's Purpose*, which we ought not to pray for; yea, which we ought to pray against: As not to instance in *God's Will* of permitting the sins and wickednesses of Men, which beyond all exceptions, we ought to deprecate. Let us but consider, common Charity obligeth us not to pray for any evil of Suffering to befall either our selves or others: and yet we know that it is often times the *Will of God's Purpose*.

to bring great and sore Judgments upon Kingdoms, and upon Families and Persons: And if we may indefinitely pray that this Will should be done, this would be nothing else but to pray for the Death and Ruine of many thousands, whom yet the *Revealed Will* of God commands us to pray for, and to desire all Good and Prosperity to them. But yet notwithstanding all this, we may doubtless pray, that the *Will of God's Purpose* may be done so far as it brings to pass those things, which we are obliged to pray for by the *Will of his Precept*. We may pray that God's Will may be fulfilled in giving Peace and Prosperity and good things both Temporal and Spiritual unto others and to our selves, but simply and absolutely to pray, That this Will should be done in whatsoever it respects, would be as often a Curse as a Prayer: Since (as I told you before) there is no evil comes to pass, whether of sin or punishment, but it is by God's Will permitting the one, and effecting the other.

But you will say, do we not find frequent *Examples* in *Scripture*, of Holy Men who have Prayed that God's Will might be done even in the bringing to pass that which was evil. Thus *Ely* when *Samuel* had denounced fearful Judgments both against himself and against his House, *It is the Lord*, says he, *let him do what seems good unto him*. 1 Sam 3. 18. And so *David*, when Persecuted by the unnatural Rebellion of his Son *Abfalom*. *If he say thus, Behold I have no delight in him, let him do as seems good unto him*, 2 Sam. 15. 26. And thus the *Disciples*, when upon *Agabus's* Prophecy what Afflictions should happen unto *St. Paul* at *Jerusalem*, they would have perswaded him from going thither, but could not prevail, conclude all with this, *The Will of the Lord be done*, Acts 21. 14. And thus likewise our great *Example*, the Lord *Jesus Christ* himself, when he had prayed that the bitter Cup of his *Passion* might pass away from him, he seems to correct himself and make another Prayer, *Not my Will, but thine be done*, Luke 22. 42. Although

Although he knew this Will of God could not be done without his own most extreme Sufferings, nor without the horrid sin and wickedness of his Murderers.

But to all these instances I *Answer*, That they are not so much Prayers as Declarations of a ready Submission and Obedience to the Will of God. For by this expression, *The Will of the Lord be done*, we do not desire that those things should come to pass which will be grievous and afflicting to us; but only testify our ready subjection to the Sovereign Will of God, and a patient resignation of our selves and of all our concerns unto his disposal. When we pray, we ought to beg of God that he would be pleased to avert from us those Plagues and Judgments which our sins justly expose us unto. But if it shall seem good to him to inflict any of them upon us, *The Will of the Lord be done*: That is, we desire with Patience to submit unto his Providence and contentedly to bear those burthens which he shall impose upon us.

The sum therefore of all is this, When we pray *Thy Will be done*; if it be the *Will* of God's *Precept*, we pray absolutely that it may be done by us, as being obliged thereunto by his express Word and Command. And if it be the *Will* of God's *Purpose*, intending any Temporal or Spiritual good unto us, we pray, that his Will may be done upon us. But if it be the *Will* of his *Purpose* to inflict any evil, then our saying, *Thy Will be done*, is not so much a Prayer as a Testimony of our submission to his Will without murmuring or repining at his Providence. Thus have we seen what this Will of God is that we pray may be done in this Petition, *Thy Will be done*.

Thirdly, The next thing to be taken notice of, is the Particle, *Thy*, *Thy Will be done*, and this carries in it both an Emphasis and an Exclusion.

First, *Thy Will*, emphatically to signify unto us, That God's Will ought to be preferred above and before all others.

others. Not to regard the fancies and humours of Men when the Will of God is clear before us: nor to be careful to please them, but our Lord Christ; and if they will quarrel with us upon any such account, we know whither to Appeal for our Justification, and for our Safety: For our Justification to their Consciences: *Whether we ought to obey Men rather than God, Judge ye, Acts 4. 19.* And for our Protection and Safety to God's Power and Providence, with those three *Heroick* Persons, *Dan. 3. 16, 17. We are not careful, O King to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning Fiery Furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand.* And there is great Reason for this preference of God's Will before all others.

First, Because God's Will is most Sovereign. He is the Supream Lord of the whole World: the greatest of Men are but his Subjects and Vassals. Now it is infinitely more Reason that we should conform our selves to the Will of him who is both our Lord and theirs, than to the Will of our fellow-servants: And that we should seek to please him who is able to *destroy both our Souls and theirs*, than that we should please them, who when their rage reacheth highest, can *destroy only this Body and vile Carcase.*

Secondly, Because God's Will is the most Holy and Perfect, and there is nothing that he hath Commanded us to do, but it hath a native Goodness and Excellency in it, and therefore it is called, *The Good, the Acceptable, and Perfect Will of God, Rom. 12. 2.* To be governed by our own or other Mens Wills, is usually to be led by Passion, and blind, head-long affections, but to give up our selves wholly to the Will of God, is to be governed by the highest Reason in the World: For his Will cannot but be good, since it is the measure and rule of goodness it self; for therefore things are said to be good because God wills them. And whatsoever he requires of us, is pure and equitable, and most agreeable to the dictates
of.

of right and illuminated Reason: So that we act most like Men when we act most like Christians, and shew our selves most Rational, when we shew our selves most Religious. And therefore we have a great deal of Reason to say, *Thy Will be done.*

Secondly, As this Particle, *Thy*, may be taken emphatically, *Thy Will* before all others; so likewise it may be taken exclusively, *Thy Will* and not our own be done. To teach us that hard Lesson of Self-denial. Indeed, when we consider the Rebellions of our corrupt Appetites and Desires, and all those tumults and uproars they raise in our Souls against the Holy and Perfect Will of God; the perverse Disputings of our Reason against his Authority, and those strong propensions that are in us towards that which is displeasing to him, and destructive to our selves, we shall find abundant need with our greatest fervency to pray, *Thy Will* and not our own *be done.* And thus I have finished the three First Enquiries, what this Will of God is, how it may be said to be done, and what is imported in this Particle, *Thy.* The

Fourth and last thing to be enquired into, is, What is meant by God's Will being *done on Earth.*

And here briefly, to resolve this, That the Will of God should be done on Earth, signifies, That it be done by Men living on the Earth, the place here being put for the persons in it. And although there be several other Creatures besides Man, who do all of them serve him and fullfill his Will according to the Rank and Station which they all hold. And therefore we have it expres'd, *Psal. 148. 8. Fire and Hail, Snow and Vapour, stormy Wind fullfilling his Word.* Yet this his Will and Word is only the Ordinance of their Creation. And the Will of his Purpose to the effecting of which they are often employed as Instruments. It is not the Will of God's Precept obliging them to Duty; for this can be fullfilled by none but by rational and intelligent Creatures.

This Petition therefore, especially, if not only, respects us Men whom God hath made Lords of this Earth, putting all other Creatures in subjection under us. Now here we pray,

First, That all Men in the World renouncing the will of Satan and their own corrupt wills, may readily subject themselves unto the Will of God. For this Expression, *on Earth* suffers us not to limit our prayers to this or that particular Place or Region, but wheresoever God hath spread abroad all Nations upon the face of the Earth, we are to desire of God for them Grace to enable them to do his Will, *Psal. 67.*
 2. *Let thy ways be known upon Earth, and thy saving Health unto all Nations.*

Secondly, We pray that we may employ and improve the few and short days of this Mortal Life to the best advantage. For this is that day wherein we may work the Works of God, and if we neglect to do the Will of God while we are here on Earth, it will be too late for ever, for there is *no Work, nor Operation, nor Device in the Grave whither we are going.*

And certainly if ever we would do the Will of God in Heaven, we must accustom our selves to do it here on Earth. Here we are as Apprentices that must learn the Trade of Holiness, that when our time is out, we may be fit to be made free *Denizens* of the *New Jerusalem*. Here we are to tune our Voices to the Praises of God, before we come to joyn with the Heavenly Chaire. Here we are to learn what we must there for ever practise. And thus I have done with the *Petition* it self. *Thy Will be done in Earth.*

The next thing observable, is the proportion of it, *As it is in Heaven.*

But you will say, Is it not utterly impossible while we are here on Earth, and clogg'd with Earthly Bodies, and encompassed about with manifold Infirmities? Is it not impossible ever to attain unto a Celestial and Heavenly Perfection in our Obedience?

I Answer, True it is so, but yet this Prayer is not in vain, for it teacheth and engageth us to aim at and endeavour after the perfect Holiness of *Angels* and the *Spirits of Just Men made Perfect*. We are commanded to be *Holy as God is Holy*, and to be *Perfect as our Heavenly Father is Perfect*, whose Perfection is impossible for us to equalize: Yet these excessive commands have their use, to raise up our endeavours to a higher strain and pitch, than if we were commanded somewhat within our own power. As he that aims at a *Star* is likely to shoot much higher than he that aims at a *Turf*.

Thus though it be a thing altogether impossible for us in this Life to attain to an Angelical perfection in our Obedience; yet the command that obligeth us to it, and our Prayers for it are not in vain; because by our utmost endeavours after further measures and degrees of Holiness, we may very much assimilate our Obedience to that Obedience that is yielded to God's Will in Heaven it self, and therefore this Particle, *As*, is rather a note of similitude than of equality. But though our Obedience on Earth cannot be equal to the Obedience that is yielded to God in Heaven, yet we pray that it may bear as much similitude, proportion and conformity unto it as is possible for us to attain unto while we are here in the Body.

And therefore that we may the more fully understand what it is we pray for when we present this Petition to God. *Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven*, we shall briefly enquire, how the *Holy Angels* and *Blessed Spirits* do the Will of God in *Heaven*. And,

First, Their Obedience is absolutely perfect, and that both with a perfection of Parts and Degrees. They do all that God enjoyns them, not failing in the least Tittle of Observance; and therefore they are said, *To follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes*, Revel. 14. 14. Hence it is ascribed to them

them as their proper and peculiar Character, *Pfal. 103. 20. Bless the Lord, ye his Angels that excel in strength, that do his Commandments, hearkning to the voice of his Word.* And again, they do the whole Will of God with all their Might, with all their Mind, with the greatest Intention that is possible, even to an *Angelical Nature*: never are they remiss in their Service, or slack in their Attendance, but are continually Blessing and Praising of God, standing ready to receive and execute his Commands and Commissions.

Now when we pray that we may do the *Will of God on Earth, as it is done in Heaven*; we pray for this Heavenly temper, that we may bear an Universal respect unto all God's Commandments: no more sticking or pausing at any thing that God requires of us, than an *Angel* or a *Glorified Saint* would do: But infolding all our Interest and Concerns in God's Glory, might respect nor value nothing but what tends to the promotion of that. This is to do God's Will as the *Angels* do it in Heaven.

Secondly, Their Obedience is cheerful, not extorted from them by violent constraints of Fear, or of Suffering; but it is their Eternal Delight, and their Service is their Felicity. And thus should we pray, and endeavour to do the Will of God with Alacrity and Cheerfulness; not being haled to it as our Task, but esteeming the Commands of God to be as the *Angels* do, our Glory and our great Reward. But alas, how infinitely short do we fall of our Pattern? we think the *Sabbath* long, and *Ordinances* long and tedious, and are secretly glad when they are over: And what should such as we are do in Heaven, where there is a *Sabbath* as long as Eternity, and nothing but Holiness there? And therefore we had need pray earnestly, that God would now fit and prepare us for the Work of Heaven, while we are here on Earth; for else Heaven will not be Heaven, or a place of Happiness unto us.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The Will of God is done in Heaven with zeal and ardency; and therefore it is said, *Psal. 104. 4. That God maketh his Angels and Messengers a Flame of Fire.* And have not we abundance of need to pray for Conformity with them in this respect also? We do the Will of God so coldly and indifferently, that we our selves scarce take notice of what we are doing. We often bring Sacrifices to God, and either bring no Fire with us, but are frozen and dull; or else offer them up with strange Wild-fire, and usually are heated more with Passion and irregular Affections, than with Holy and pious Zeal. And,

Fourthly, The Will of God is done in Heaven with celerity and ready dispatch; they are quick in executing the Commands of the great God and their Lord; and therefore are said to have *Wings and to fly, Esai. 6. 2.* And this expression of Wings, and the flying of *Cherubims* and *Angels* is frequently mentioned in *Scripture*, only to intimate to us, the expedition they use in the Service of God. But alas, how dull and slow are we? how long do we consult with Flesh and Blood, and are disputing the Will of our Sovereign Lord, when we should be obeying it? When we are clearly convinced that such a Duty is necessary to be done, how many delays, and excuses, and procrastinations do we make, being willing to stay the leisure of every vile Lust, and vain Impertinency, thinking it then time enough to serve God when we have nothing else to do. Certainly, this is not to do the *Will of God on Earth, as it is done in Heaven*, where, upon the first intimations of God's Will, they take Wings and execute it speedily.

Fifthly, The Will of God is done in Heaven with all possible Prostration, Reverence, and Humility: And therefore it is said, *Rev. 4. 10. that the four and twenty Elders fell down before him that sat upon the Throne, and Worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their Crowns before the Throne.* Crowns are themselves Ensigns of Majesty;

but

but here they cast their very Crowns, all their Dignity and Glory at the Feet of God; and make their chiefest excellency it self do Homage to him that is King of kings, and Lord of lords. And so should we in all our serving of God, do it with reverence and godly fear, preserving upon our Hearts an awful sense and regard of the dreadful Majesty before whom we appear.

Sixthly, The Will of God is done in Heaven with constancy and perseverance. *They serve God Day and Night, Rev. 7. 15.* and are never weary of his work, no more than they are of their own Happiness; for his Service is their Happiness, and their Obedience their Glory. And thus should we pray and endeavour that we might do the Will of God constantly and perseveringly; for it is perseverance that crowns all other Graces; and God hath promised to Crown our perseverance with Glory and Eternal Life. And thus we see briefly in these Six Particulars, how the Will of God is done in Heaven.

To conclude this: Is there no other nor lower Pattern set us, than the perfect Obedience of *Angels* and *Glorified Spirits*? Let us not then content our selves with a comparative Obedience, and by measuring our selves with those that are worse, think highly of our own Perfections: Let us not applaud our selves with the boasting Pharisee, with a *Lord, I thank thee, I am not as other Men are, Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers.* What is this to the Pattern that God hath set us for our imitation? Perhaps thou dost but all this while compare thy self with those that are in *Hell*, and dost God's Will not much better than such have done, if this be all that thou canst plead for thy self: Whereas God hath set thee *Examples* for thy imitation in Heaven. Dost thou endeavour to do his Will as *Seraphims* and *Cherubims*, and the whole Host of *Blessed Spirits*? Thou livest it may be not so like a *Devil* as others do; but dost thou live like an *Angel*? Dost thou serve God with the same proportionable

the Zeal, Ardency, Delight, and Constancy, as those Holy Spirits do, who always stand in the presence of God, ready to do his Will; if not, neither endeavourest after so high a degree of Obedience and Purity, know that thy imitation of any lower Example than that of Heaven, can never suffice to bring thee to Heaven. And thus I have finished the Three first Petitions of this excellent Prayer; namely, those that relate unto God; for the Petitions contained herein, as I said in the beginning, were such as immediately concerned God's Glory, or such as immediately concerned our good. The First I have already considered.

I now come to treat of those Petitions which immediately concern our own Good; and that is either our Temporal or our Spiritual Good: Our Temporal Good, in praying for our daily Bread: Our Spiritual Good in the two last Petitions, wherein we pray for the Forgiveness of our Sins past, and for Deliverance from Sin for time to come.

I begin with the First of these our Requests, or Petitions, for Temporal Blessings, contained in the Fourth Petition, *Give us this Day our daily Bread;* and here I shall consider,

First, The Order, and then the Petition it self.

First, The Order; and that is remarkable upon two Accounts.

First, Whereas this Petition is placed in the midst, and encompassed about with others that relate unto Spiritual Blessings; so that after we have prayed for the Glory of God, our Saviour teacheth us to make mention of our Temporal Wants, and so to pass on again to beg Spiritual Mercies for our Souls. This may instruct us in the Government of our Lives, to use worldly Comforts as here we pray for them. Spiritual and Heavenly things are our greatest Concernments,

ments, and should be our greatest care; with these we should begin, and with these we should end; only God allows us the World as an *Inn*; we may call in at it, and refresh our selves with the Comforts and Accommodations that we find, but we must not dwell nor set up our rest there. We are all Strangers and Pilgrims upon Earth; Heaven is our Country, and thither we are travelling, only in our Journey we may call and bait at the World, and take what we find provided for us with Sobriety and Thankfulness: And therefore this Bread that we here pray for, is elsewhere called the Staff of Bread, *Psal. 105. 16. He brake the Staff of Bread. Ezek. 5. 6. I will break your Staff of Bread.* And all this is to put us in Mind that we are to ask for, and to use these Earthly Enjoyments only as Travellers, that make use of a Staff for their help and support, whilst they are in their passage home. And we are hereby also taught to crave no more than will suffice for our convenient Supplies, otherwise we make our Staff our Burden, and our Support it self a Load and Pressure.

Secondly, It is observable, that though we are commanded, *to seek first the Kingdom of God and its Righteousness*; with a Promise that all other Earthly things shall be added to us; yet here our Saviour places the Petition for Temporal Blessings, before the Two Petitions we present to God for Spiritual Blessings; and this Order hath seemed so strange and incongruous to some, that hereupon alone they have been moved to affirm that this Bread which we here ask is not any Temporal good thing, but the Bread of Life, even Jesus Christ himself, as shall be shown more by and by.

Now this Order doth not intimate to us, that Earthly Blessings are better and more considerable than Heavenly, or that they should have the preference in our esteem or desires, (I hope there are none of us so brutish, nor so far degenerated into Beasts, as to account the poor Enjoyments of

of this Life, more valuable than the Pardon of Sin, and those Spiritual Mercies that are in a tendency to Eternal Life and Happiness.) But,

First, Our Saviour useth this method in his Prayer, in conformity to the method of Divine Providence towards us, which first gives us Life, and the necessities of it, and then Orders us Spiritual and Heavenly Blessings, as an accession, and happy addition to those Natural good things he bestows upon us.

Secondly, Because we are usually more sensible of our Temporal than of our Spiritual wants; our Saviour therefore doth by degrees raise up our Desires by the one to the other; for seeing we are commanded to pray for the supply even of our Temporal necessities, which are but trivial in regard of the necessities of our Souls; we cannot but be convinced that we ought to be much more earnest and importunate with God for Spiritual Mercies than for Temporal; by how much our Spiritual wants are more important and of vaster consequence than our Temporal. When therefore thou comest to this Petition, think with thy self, O *Christian*, if I must pray fervently and affectionately for my daily Bread, which can only nourish my vile Carcase for a few short years; a Carcase that must notwithstanding all these recruits shortly moulder into Dust, and it self become meat for Worms: How much more importunate ought I to be, for the Pardon of my Sins, and those Spiritual Mercies and Blessings, without which my precious and immortal Soul must eternally perish? Since Christ hath commanded us not to labour, and by consequence not to pray for that *Meat which perisheth*, with any comparative industry and earnestness, to our labouring and praying for that which endureth to *Eternal Life*. And thus much concerning the Order of this Petition.

In the Petition it self we have,

First, The matter of it, or that which we pray for, *Give us Bread.*

Secondly, The Kind, or Quality of it, called here, *daily Bread.*

Thirdly, Our Right and Property in it, *Our Daily Bread.*

Fourthly, The limitation of it in respect of time, *Give it us this Day.* Of all these briefly.

First, The matter of this Petition, or that which we pray for, and that is Bread. *Give us our Bread.* By Bread here is meant all Temporal and Earthly Blessings, that contribute either to our being or to our well-being in this Life. And because we have need of very many things for our present subsistence, as Food, Raiment, Habitation, and each of these comprehend many other necessaries in them; all which would have been too long particularly to enumerate in this compendious Prayer; therefore our Saviour hath summ'd them up in the word Bread; figuratively denoting all kinds of Provisions necessary for this Natural Life, whereof Bread is the most usual and the most useful. And therefore as when God speaks of a Famine, he calls it a *Famine of Bread*, *Amos 8. 11.* Not as if a scarcity of Bread were the only Dearth intended by it, but that there should be likewise a want of all things requisite to the sustentation of Life. So here when Christ teacheth us to pray; for our *Daily Bread*, this Phrase extendeth to all things conducive to maintain Health, or to recover it; to preserve Life, or to prolong it.

Some indeed think this too mean and ~~for~~ a request to be preferred to God, and would not have any of the low Conveniences of this present Life to have any place in a Prayer, all whose other parts are so Spiritual and Heavenly,
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and the whole so short and compendious; where the Petitions are so few, they will not believe any of them should be spent so trivially, as to beg that which, though they might not attain, yet they might be eternally Blessed and Happy; and therefore they interpret this Word, Bread, in a Spiritual sense, and take it for the Food of the Soul, whereby it is nourished unto Eternal Life; and especially for our Lord Jesus Christ, who is called the *Bread of Life*, John 6. 35. and *Living Bread which came down from Heaven*, verse 51. But here seemeth no place for any such Mystical Interpretation, the Word Bread being put without any addition or like circumstance that might refer it to Christ, or to Spiritual things; and therefore ought to be understood according to the Words literally and in their ordinary signification; although indeed it be here used by way of *Synecdoche*; one part of Temporal good things being put for the whole accession of them. Now from this we are taught these three things.

First, That Temporal Mercies and Blessings may lawfully be prayed for. And although we ought not to be most earnest and importunate, nor to enlarge and expatiate most upon these requests, but more earnestly to covet the best Gifts; yet neither is unworthy of a Christian whose Affections and Conversation is in Heaven, to beg at God's Hands those Mercies that he knows needful for the support and comfort of this present Life; yea, we read of nothing more frequent than the Saints praying either for the removal of some Temporal Evil or Punishment; or the receiving of some Temporal Blessing or Favour. If I should quote the *Scriptures*, I might transcribe a great part of the *Bible*; nay, so far were they from looking upon it as below them, that we find *Jacob* putting it into his *Indentures* when he bound himself to God, and made it as it were the Condition of his Obligation to God's Service, *Genes. 28. 20. Then Jacob vowed a Vow, saying, if God will be with me and keep me in this way*

way that I go, and will give me Bread to eat, and Raiment to put on, so that I come again to my Father's House in Peace; then shall the Lord be my God. And indeed there is a great deal of Reason and Ground to pray for these things; for they are both needful for us, and God hath promised to give them to us.

First, They are needful for us, as the means that God hath appointed for the preservation of our Temporal Life and Being, in which we have so many opportunities to serve and glorifie him, and so many advantages to secure Heaven and Glory to our Souls: And therefore as we tender either the obtaining of Heaven, or the additional degrees of Glory and Happiness there; so we stand obliged to pray that God would afford us those necessaries that may conduce to the prolonging of our Natural Life; till having finished our work we are made fit to receive our Wages and Reward. *Your Heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things*, says our Saviour, *Matth. 6. 32.* And therefore, though *Miracles* be a kind of a *Non-obstante* to the Law of Nature, and a suspension of the ordinary course of Providence; yet we often find God working a *Miracle* to supply these wants of his People; whereas it had been alike easie by another *Miracle*; to have caused them not to want; for it had been no more difficult for God to have kept *Elijah* from hungering, than it was to make the *Ravens* his *Parveyors*, or to make a *Barrel of Meal* become a whole Harvest, or to open a Spring and Fountain in the *Cruise of Oyl*; but he chooseth rather to supply these Wants than to cease them, to keep us in a continual dependance upon him, that the sense of our necessities might engage us to have continual recourse unto God for relief.

Secondly, As Temporal good things are needful for us, so God hath promised to give them to us: *Psal. 50. 15. Call upon me in the Day of Trouble, and I will deliver thee.* And,
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My God, says the Apostle, shall supply all your wants, Phil. 4. 19. The Lord will give Grace and Glory, and no good thing will be withhold from them that walk uprightly, Psal. 84. 13. Thus we see Temporal good things may be pray'd for, both because they are needful for us, and because God hath promised them to us: Yet,

Secondly, They must be prayed for only conditionally; for they are only conditionally promised. And these conditions are two-fold. If they be consistent with God's pleasure, and if they be conducible to our good; for without the observing the one we should not so much seem to Petition as to invade, and without observing the other we should but beg a Curse instead of a Blessing.

Thirdly, We may learn likewise that God is the Giver of every Temporal Mercy and Good thing. Whatever thou enjoyest, it is from his meer free Bounty. He spreads thy Table, fills thy Cup, makes thy Bed, puts on thy Garments; is the God of thy Health and Strength, and loadeth thee daily with his Benefits. If thou hast riches, *it is the Blessing of God that maketh rich, Prov. 10. 22. It is God that giveth thee Power to get Wealth, Deut. 8. 18.* Hast thou Credit and Reputation? It is God that *hideth thee from the Scourge of Tongues, Job 5. 21.* Hast thou Friends? It is God that giveth thee Favour in their sight. Hast thou Gifts and Parts? *It is the Almighty that giveth thee Understanding, Job 32. 8.* And hast thou Joy and Comfort in all these? It is God, who not only filleth thy Mouth with Food, but thy Heart with Gladness. Now God is said to *Give us our daily Bread,* and all the necessaries of Life, especially Two ways.

First, By producing them and bringing them to us. He is the great Lord and Proprietor both of Heaven and Earth. *The Earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof;* and he gives it to whom he will. He maketh it bring forth abundantly all its Stores for the use and service of Man: For be the Chain
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of Second Causes never so long, yet the first Link of them is held in his Hand: And therefore we have it expressed; *Ioseph* 2. 21, 22. *I will hear saith the Lord, I will hear the Heavens, and they shall hear the Earth, and the Earth shall hear the Corn, and the Wine, and the Oil, and they shall hear Jezebel.*

Secondly, God gives them, by Blessing them to us; without which Blessing our *daily Bread* would no more nourish us than so much Chaff: For had we all the abundance that the Earth could yield, and the Blessing of God withheld from it, the very Air would stifle us, and our very Food would famish us: For it is not so much by these things that we live; not so much by our *daily Bread*, as by every Word; that is, by every Word of Blessing upon them, which proceedeth out of the Mouth of God, *Deut.* 8. 3. And concerning those to whom he denies this his Blessing, he tells us; *Job* 20. 22. *In the fullness of their sufficiency they shall be in Streets.* And therefore when we pray that God would give us our *daily Bread*, we pray not only that God would give us the Possession and Enjoyment of Earthly Comforts; but that he would put Virtue and Efficacy into them, by his Blessing upon them, to be subservient to our relief and support, without which the Staff of Bread would break under us, and the Stay of Water roll away from us. And thus much for the first thing, *Give us Bread.*

Secondly, Let us consider, the Specification of this Blessing, or the Kind and Quality of it, our *daily Bread*. This Word *ἄρτον*, is variously rendred, I shall not trouble you with the particular Notions of it; let it suffice, that here by the Word, Bread, is meant our ordinary and usual Bread, or whatsoever is necessary for our subsistence in the World from Day to Day. And it is the same with what is expressed in that excellent Prayer of *Agur*. *Prov.* 30. 8. *Give me neither Poverty nor Riches, feed me with Food convenient for*

for me. So do we pray here, that he would bestow upon us daily, that which is sufficient for the day. And by this we are taught to moderate our Desires, and to beg of God no more than is needful for us. We beg not delicacies; we beg *daily Bread*, not superfluites, nor Goods laid up for many years.

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

I *Answer*, First, We may pray for the supply of all our Natural necessities: And to this the Sovereign Principle of self-preservation strongly obligeth us. And he that prays not nor endeavours for this, is a self-murderer in with-holding from himself what is simply, and absolutely necessary for the maintenance of his Life.

Secondly, Besides things that are naturally necessary, there are things that are civilly necessary, which are not so absolutely Imperious as the other; yet these also oblige us to pray for supplies and relief. I account those things civilly necessary, which though they are not simply necessary to the preservation of our Life, yet are necessary to the State and Condition in which Divine Providence hath set us. As for Men of High Birth, of Publick Note, or Publick Employment, more is necessary for them, than for others, whom God hath placed to take up a narrower room in the World. For *Cedars* require more Sap than *Shrubs*: And for such as these to pray against poverty, is possibly to pray for much more than would make private persons rich. We are allowed to pray for such a competent measure of Earthly Blessings as is suitable to our Station, and commensurate to our charge and burthens; and according to the Judgment of Christian prudence, apparently needful, for those whom we are bound to provide for, that they may live ho-

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neftly and decently. All thefe are neceffaries that we are to pray for in this Petition, *give us our daily Bread.*

But we muft take heed that neither Covetoufnefs nor Ambition impofe upon us, and make us meafure neceffaries by our inordinate Defires, rather than by our real Wants. For whatfoever is more than enough for our prefent State and Comfortable Subfiftence, is not our *daily Bread*, but the Bread of the Poor, out of whose mouths we snatch it. And whatfoever we lay up with great defigns of enlarging our felves or our Pofterity beyond our Lawful meafure, are but Treafures of wickednefs, whose ruft will Witnefs againft us at the laft day. And thus much for the Second Obfervable.

Thirdly, in the Words of this Petition, are defigned our Right and Propriety to this daily Bread: *Give us our daily Bread.*

Now right to a Temporal Enjoyment is Three-fold, either Natural, or Spiritual, or Civil. Natural by Creation. Spiritual by Regeneration. And Civil by Humane and Legal Conftitution.

First, As for the Natural Right by Creation, that was once found in *Adam*, who was made the vifible Lord of the Univerfe, and all things put under his feet. We may read his *Patent and Charter*, Gen. 1. 28. *And God faid unto him, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenifh the Earth and fubdue it, and have Dominion over the Fowl of the Air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the Earth.* But this Right we have loft, and can call nothing ours upon this account. Only as *Princes* allow *Traitors* and *Malefactors* Provision in their Prifon till they come to Execution. So God allows many Wicked Men many Earthly Enjoyments out of the mere bounty of Prifon-Provifion, to keep them alive till they are brought forth to their Execution. This Natural Right therefore being loft, there fucceeds in the room of it,

Secondly

Secondly, A *Spiritual Right* to Earthly Comforts. And this belongs unto all those who themselves do belong to Christ: for he is made the Heir of all things. And all things both in Heaven and Earth are consigned over unto him by a Deed of Gift from God his Father, and they being united unto Christ, and his Spiritual Offspring, are Heirs with Christ, and Co-heirs of all that ample Dominion which Christ himself possesseth. And upon this ground the *Apostle* tells the *Corinthians*, in 1 *Cor.* 3. 22, 23. *All things are yours, the World, things present and things to come, all are yours; and he subjoyns this reason for it, for ye are Christ's.* But yet this *Spiritual Right* is not to be extended to an Usurpation upon the Temporal Enjoyments of others. For Grace and Holiness being a thing wholly inward and invisible, cannot conferr any outward Title. For this,

Thirdly, Is given by another Right, which is Civil, according to the constitution of Humane Laws, and the Process in Courts of Humane Judicature. For Law is the only distributor of *meum* and *tuum*. And we can call nothing ours which is not so, or ought not to be so by the Sentence of the Law under which we live; and he that detaineth any thing which the Sentence of the Law adjudgeth to another, is guilty of Theft and Robbery.

Now when we pray for our *daily bread*, we pray,

First, That God would give us the good things of this Life to be obtained by us in a Lawful Regular manner.

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

Thirdly, That he would bestow upon us a Spiritual right in whatsoever we enjoy through Jesus Christ, who is the Heir and Possessor of all things. And,

Fourthly, We pray that we may not desire nor covet that which is anothers: for we are taught to pray only for that which we may justly call ours, to which we have as well a Civil as a Spiritual Right and Title. And thus much for the third particular. L 2 Fourthly,

Fourthly, We have in the words the limitation of the Petition in respect of time. *Give us this day our daily bread*. And indeed there is great reason why we should pray for it *this day*, for we every day stand in need of relief and supplies from God. Our wants and our Troubles grow up thick about us, and unless God make daily provisions for us, we shall be over-run by them. Food nourishes but a day, and that which we receive this day, will not suffice us to-morrow. There is a continual Spring and Fountain of necessities within us, and therefore we must have continual recourse unto God by prayer, that he would *daily* satisfy and supply our Wants, as they *daily* rise up about us.

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

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

First, We pray for Life it self, that it may be prolonged, whilst God hath any Service for us to do in the World.

To this very end we pray for *daily Bread*, that Life may be maintained and preserved by it.

Secondly, Health and Strength of Body, which is indeed the greatest of Temporal Blessings, and the salt to all the rest, without which they are unfavorable and tasteless.

Thirdly, All the means that God's Providence hath appointed to preserve Life and Health, and to recover Health when it is decay'd and impair'd.

Fourthly.

Fourthly, Success in our Lawful Calling and Endeavour^s for the procuring any Conveniencies and Comforts of Life. For in this Prayer we beg a Blessing upon our Callings and Industry, that God would prosper us in them, and by them encrease our Temporal Enjoyments, so far forth as is needful to his own Glory and our Good.

Fifthly, we beg a Blessing from Heaven upon whatsoever we enjoy that it may indeed prove good and comfortable to us; without which all that we possess may prove a great heap of things, but none of them will be Comforts or Enjoyments.

And thus I have finished the First of those Petitions that immediately concern our selves, wherein we beg of God the supply of all our Temporal Wants. The Two which remain respect Spiritual Blessings, of which the former (which is the Fifth Petition in Order of this most Excellent Prayer) is for the Pardon of Sin, *Forgive us our Debts; as we forgive our Debtors.* Of which I now come to treat.

And here before we come to the Petition it self, let us briefly take notice of the connexion and dependance that it hath upon what went before:

Having prayed for *our daily Bread*, we are next taught to pray for Pardon. And this method is indeed most Wise, and most Rational. For,

First, The guilt of Sin many times with-holds from us those Earthly Comforts we stand in need of. We have forfeited all into the hands of God's Justice, and he is pleased to make us know our obnoxiousness to his Power and Wrath, by denying or taking from us those Temporal good things as a due, though the least punishment of our deserts, *Esaï. 59. 2. Your Iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your Sins have hid his Face from you, that he will not hear you.* And therefore when we have prayed for *our daily Bread*, we are to pray likewise for the Pardon of our Sins. That the Partition between God and us may be removed,

removed, and his Blessing being no longer obstructed by our guilt, may descend down freely and plentifully upon us.

Secondly, Without *Pardon of Sin*, all our Temporal Enjoyments are but Snares and Curses unto us. Though God doth sometimes bestow abundance of this World's good things upon impenitent and unpardoned Sinners, yet they have not so many Enjoyments as Curses: Their Bread is kneaded up with a Curse, and their Wine tempered and mingled with a Curse; there is Poyson in their Meat, and Death in their Physick, their Table is their Snare, their Estate their Fetters; and whatsoever should have been for their wellfare, proves only a Gin and a Trap unto them; for the Wrath of God is one direful Ingredient among all that they possess. And therefore, if we would have our *daily Bread* given us, or Comfort and Blessing with it, we ought earnestly to beg the *Pardon of our Sins*, which are like the Worm in *Jonab's Gourd*, which will wither and devour all our Enjoyments. And thus much for the Method and Order.

In the Words themselves we have,

First, The Petition, *Forgive us our Debts*.

Secondly, The Condition or Proportion, or Plea and Argument, (call it which you will) for the obtaining of this forgiveness, *as we forgive our Debtors*.

In the Petition we may observe, that the same which our *Evangelist* calls *Debts*, is by *St. Luke* *xx. 4.* called *Sins*, *Forgive us our Sins*. We stand indebted to God both as we are his *Creatures*, and as we are *Offenders*: By the one we owe him the *Debt of Obedience*; and by the other, the *Debt of Punishment*.

First, As we are *Creatures*, we owe the *Debt of Obedience*: And to the payment of this *Debt* we stand bound both to the absolute *Sovereignty* of God, who is the *Supreme Lord* of all his *Creatures*, and therefore may oblige them

them to what he pleaseth; and likewise by his manifold Favours and Mercies conferred upon us. From him we have received our Beings and all our Comforts; he maintains us at his own Cost and Charge, he enlargeth us when we are in Streights, relieves us when we are in Wants, Counsels us when we are in Doubts, Comforts us when we are in Sorrows, Delivers us in our Dangers; and besides the manifold Temporal Mercies we daily receive from him, gives us the Means, the Hopes and Promises of obtaining far better things at his Hands, even Eternal Life and Glory: And therefore certainly upon these Accounts we owe him all possible Service and Obedience. And indeed it is but Reason we should employ all for him, from whom we receive all; and give up our selves to his Service, who are what we are by his Bounty, and hope to be infinitely better, than now we are, through his Mercy.

Now this *Debt of Obedience* is irremissible, and we are eternally and indispensably bound unto it: For it is altogether inconsistent with the Notion and Being of a Creature, to be discharged from its Obligation to the Laws and Commands of its Creator; for this would exempt it from the Dominion of God, and make it Absolute and Independent; that is, it would make the Creature to be no longer a *Creature* but a *Deity*. We do not therefore pray, that God would forgive us this *Debt*; no, he cannot so far deny himself, and it is our Happiness and Glory to pay it: To this his Sovereignty obligeth our Subject Condition, and his Mercy and Goodness our Ingenuity.

Secondly, As we are Transgressors, so we owe God a *Debt of Punishment*, to be suffered by us to make God some reparation to his Honour, and satisfaction to his Justice, for our transgressing his Law, which sentenceth all Offenders to Eternal Death and Damnation.

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This *Debt* now is that which we pray God would forgive us; a *Debt*, which if we pay, we are eternally ruined and undone; and there is no way possible to escape the payment of it, but by the free Grace and Mercy of God remitting of it unto us: And thus Sin is called a *Debt*, not indeed properly, as if we owed it, but by a *Metonymy*, as it is the meritorious Cause of this punishment, the suffering of which we owe to Divine Justice.

Hence, by the way, we may observe that every Sin makes us liable to Eternal Death; for Death and Damnation is the *Debt* which we must pay to the Justice of God, and Sin is that which exposeth us unto it, by the Sentence of the Law which we have transgressed. For as against other *Debtors* is brought forth some Bond or Obligation to exact payment from them: So against us is produced the Hand-writing of the Law, and we not having performed the Condition of the Bond, stand liable to the Forfeiture and Penalty, which is no less than Curses, and Woes, and Torments, and Everlasting Death. *Cursed is every one that continues not in all things written in the Book of the Law to do them*, Gal. 3. 10. And, *the Wages of Sin is Death*, Rom. 6. 23. And, *the Soul that sinneth it shall Die*, Ezek. 18. 4. Now here to excite thee to a fervency in praying for the forgiveness of thy *Debts*, consider,

First, The infinite multitudes of thy *Debts*. God's Book is full of them, and there they stand on account against us under every one of our Names. We were born *Debtors* to God; our Original Sin and Guilt obligeth us to punishment; and although we did not personally contract the *Debt*, yet as being the wretched Heirs and Executors of *fallen Adam*, the *Debt* is legally devolved upon us and become ours. And ever since we came into the World we have run upon the score with God, our *Debts* are more than our Moments have been; for whatsoever we have thought or done hath been

been Sin, either in the matter, or at least in the circumstances of it. God sets all our Sins down in order in his *Debt-book*; some as *Talents*, and some as *Pence*. Our flagitious Crimes and hainous Impieties, our presumptuous Sins, committed against Light, Knowledge, Conscience, Convictions, Mercies, and Judgments; each of these God sets down as a *Talent*: And how many thousands of these may we have been guilty of? Our Sins of Ignorance, Surreption, and daily Infirmary are much more innumerable, and though they may be but as *Pence* in comparison with the other, yet the unaccountable numbers of them will make the *Debt* desperate, and the payment impossible. And yet notwithstanding our *Debts* are so many, and very many of them such great Sums too; yet we daily run ourselves farther in Arrears, not considering that a Day of Accounts will come, when both our *Talents* and our *Pence* shall be punctually reckoned up against us, not omitting the least *Item*; when every vain Thought, and foolish Passion, that hath flushed up in us, with every idle and superfluous Word that we have unadvisedly spoken, as well as the more gross and scandalous Passages of our sinful Lives, shall be then audited; all which will make the Total Sum infinite, and us desperate.

Secondly, That God, who is thy *Creditor*, is strict and impartial; his Patience hath trusted and forbore thee long; but his Justice will at last demand the *Debt* severely, and every particular shall be charged upon thee even to the utmost Farthing; for he hath booked down all in his remembrance, and will bring all to thine: And therefore we have it expressed concerning the last Judgment, that *the Books were opened, and the Dead were Judged, out of those things which were written in the Books, according to their Works, Rev. 20. 12.* What now are these Books, but the two great Volumes of God's remembrance, and our own Consciences? These are two *Tallies* evenly struck, that shall justly represent

sent the same Sum and *Debt*, and God's strict Justice will not then abate thee any thing of its utmost due; for he will by no means acquit the Guilty. Indeed we are apt to think that because God so long forbears us, he will never call us to make up and adjust Accounts with him. Our present impunity tempts us to question his Omniscience, and to suspect his Threatnings; and because he winks at us, we are ready to conclude that he is Blind; we are of that wretched temper described, *Psal. 50. 21. Because God keeps silence, we think he is altogether such a one as our selves: As careless in requiring his Debts, as we are in contracting them; but he will reprove us, and set them in order before our Faces, to our everlasting shame and confusion.*

Thirdly, That the least of all these thy Debts make thee liable to be cast into the Prison of Hell, and to be adjudged to Eternal Death and Punishments. Not only thy impudent and scandalous Sins which make thee detested of Men as well as hated of God; but the least shadow of a thought that gives but an umbrage of vanity to thy Mind, the least motion and heaving of thy Heart towards a sinful Object, the exhaling but of one sinful Desire, the wavering of thy Fancy, a glance of thine Eye, is a *Debt* contracted with the infinite Justice of God; and a *Debt* that without forgiveness must be paid in the Infernal Prison of Hell: So says our Saviour, *Matth. 5. 26. Verily thou shalt not come out thence till thou hast paid the utmost Farthing.*

Beware therefore then that you do not entertain any slight thoughts of Sin; nor think, with the *Papists*, that there are some sorts of Sins that do not deserve Death, which they call *Venial* Sins, in opposition to other more gross and heinous Sins, which they allow to be *Mortal*. Believe it, the least prick at the Heart is *deadly*; and so is the least Sin to the Soul. And indeed it is a Contradiction to call any Sin *Venial*, in their fence, who hold it is not worthy of Damnation; for if it be a Sin, it is worthy of Damnation,
for

for the Wages of Sin is Death; if it be not, How is it Venial? There is but one Mortal Sin, simply and absolutely such, as God hath revealed in his Word, that it shall never be pardoned, neither in this World, nor in that which is to come; and that is the Sin against the Holy Ghost, which St. John therefore calls a Sin unto Death, 1 Joh: 5. 16. And so far are they who are guilty of it excluded from God's Mercy, that they are excluded from the Charity of our Prayers; for we are not so much as to pray for such, as it is there expressed.

Again, all the Sins of finally impenitent and unbelieving Wretches are eventually Mortal, and shall certainly be punished at last with Eternal Death and Damnation; For the Wrath of God abideth on him that believeth not, Joh. 3. 16. And God will render Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish, upon every Soul of Man that doth evil, Rom. 2. 9. All Sins whatsoever are Mortal meritoriously, both in the Penitent and in the Impenitent; the Law hath condemned all alike, though all Sins are not alike hainous, nor shall be equally punished; but with some it shall be far more intolerable than with others; yet all are alike Mortal and deserve Death and the same Hell, though not the same Place, nor the same Degree of Torments in Hell; for those Sins which are accounted most Trivial and Venial, are in themselves Violations of the Holy Law of God, and the Penalty that his Laws threaten is no less than Death. The Law is accurate and reacheth to the least things; yea, to the least circumstances of those things; and every Transgression against it shall receive its due recompence of reward: Nay, had we no other guilt left upon our Souls, from the first moment of our lives to this present day, but only the guilt of the least Sin that the Holy Law condemns; be it only the wrenching aside of a Thought or Desire, only a bye and smiter end in the performance of Holy Duties; nay, let it be but the first rudiment and imperfect draught

of a Thought not yet finished, without a full satisfaction and expiation, this small *Debt* would cast us into Prison, this little Sin would sink us irrecoverably into *Hell*, and lay us under the Revenges of the Almighty God for ever.

Oh then with what horreur and amazement may Sinners reflect upon their past Sins! With what dread and trembling may they expect their future State, since as many thousand Sins as they have committed of all sizes and aggravations, so many *Deaths* and *Hells* heaped up one upon another have they deserved, and without intervention of a full payment and satisfaction must they be adjudged to undergo. For though the least degree of Divine Wrath be a *tormenting Hell*; yet God will inflame his Wrath to as many degrees of acrimony and sharpness as they have committed Sins, till their Punishment be equal to their Offences, and become infinitely intolerable.

Fourthly, Consider, thou canst never pay God, nor discharge the least of thy Debts for ever. For,

First, Thou canst not possibly do it by any Duties or Services in this Life: For whatsoever thou dost is either required, or not required; if it be not required, it will be so far from being a satisfaction for thy Sins, that it will be an addition to them, and a piece of Will-worship, which will meet with that sad Greeting at the last Day, *who hath required these things at your Hands?* If it be required, it is no more than thou owest to God before, and if thou hadst never sinned wert obliged to pay it. To think to satisfy for thy Sins by thy Duties, is but to rob one Attribute of God to pay another; for whatsoever Obedience thou canst perform, thou owest it to the Sovereignty and Holiness of God, and his Justice will never accept of that which belongs to his Authority. Besides it is absurd to think to pay one Duty by another, to discharge the *Debt* of Sin by paying the *Debt* of Duty.

See

Secondly, Thou canst not pay off thy *Debts* by any Sufferings hereafter. It is true Sinners shall lie eternally in Prison, and be eternally satisfying the offended Justice of God; but in all that Eternity there shall never be that moment wherein they may say, as Christ did in his making satisfaction, *it is finished*, the Debt is paid, and Justice hath received as much as was due from me. No that satisfaction must be eternally making; and therefore the punishment must be eternally lasting: For every Sin, even the least Sin, is committed against an infinite God; and therefore the punishment of it must be infinite: For Offences take their measures, as well from the Dignity of the Person against whom they are committed, as from the hainousness of the Fact in it self considered. As a reviling Word against the *King* is Treasonable, against our Equals but actionable; and therefore by the same proportion, the same Offence against the infinite Majesty of the great God, must needs carry infinite guilt in it; that is, exposeth to infinite punishment.

Now then, O Sinner, think with thy self, what satisfaction thou canst make to God that can bear a proportion to thy infinite Offences. Thou canst not at once undergo an infinite measure of punishment, for thy Nature is but finite. Couldst thou do this, then indeed there were hope; yea, certainty of relief for thee; for Divine Justice will not exact more than its due. But because this is impossible, thy Woes and Torments in Hell must be Eternal, that they may be some way infinite as the Justice is which thou hast offended; infinite, if not in Degrees, yet in duration and continuance.

And O what dreadful despair will this cause in thee when thou shalt have been in Hell under most acute and insufferable Torments Millions of years, and yet the payment of all that sum of Plagues and Woes, shall not be of value enough to satisfy for the least of thy Sins, nor to cross out of God's Book the least and smallest of thy *Debts*: but thy account shall still be as great, and as full as it was at thy first plunging,

plunging into *Hell*, and still an Eternity of Torments remains to be paid by thee!

And now wretched Creatures that we are, whither shall we turn our selves? what hope, what relief can we find? shall we flatter our selves that God will not require our sins at our hands? no: they are *Debts* and therefore he may, and he is a Just God, Just to himself, and to the Interest of his own Glory, and therefore he will: God hath beforehand told us, at what rate we must expect to take up our sins, and what we must pay for them at the last. He hath told us as plainly as the mouth of Truth can utter it, that *the Wages of sin is Death*, and the ways Sinners choose, lead down to the Chambers of *Hell* and *Destruction*. Our own Misery is our own choice. He hath in his Word set Life and Death before us, and declared to us the means how we might escape the one and obtain the other. He hath represented to us the unconceiveableness of both: And if we will be so obstinate as after these manifest representations, to choose Hell and Death, it is but Reason and Justice that we should have our own Choice; for it is our Choice interpretatively, when we choose those ways and actions that expose to them.

And thus much concerning the acknowledgement we make in this Petition, *our Debts*. *Debts*, vast and infinite, which the Justice of God will strictly require of Sinners in their Eternal Condemnation. *Debts*, the least of which makes us liable to be cast into Prison, into Hell, and for the least of which we can never satisfie.

But what is there no hope? Is there no possibility to cross the Book, to cancel the Obligation whereby we stand bound to the revenging Justice of God, and everlasting Sufferings?

Truly none by our own personal satisfaction; but yet there is abundant hope, yea full assurance of it, through the free Mercy of our God. And therefore as our Saviour hath

hath taught us to acknowledge our *Debts*, so he hath likewise taught us to pray, *Father, forgive us our Debts.*

And now that I have shewed you our Misery by reason of our *Debts*, and you have seen the black side of the Cloud, which interposeth between God and us. So give me leave to represent to you our Hopes and Consolation in God's free Grace, and the Divine Mercy in dissolving this black Cloud, that it may never more appear. And here let us,

First, Consider what the Pardon of sin is. And this we cannot better discover, than by looking into the Nature of sin. Sin therefore, as St. *John* describes it, *1 John 3. 4. is a transgression of the Law of God.* And to the validity of all Laws, it is necessary that there be a penalty annexed, either literally express'd, or tacitly implied. The guilt that we contract by transgressing the Law, is nothing else but our liableness to undergo this penalty. And this guilt is Two-fold; the intrinsecal and formal, and that is the desert of punishment, which sin always necessarily carries in it as it is a violation of a Holy and Righteous Commandment.

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

Now Pardon is nothing else but the removal of the guilt of sin. But now the question is, which guilt it removeth. I Answer,

First, It doth not remove the intrinsecal guilt of sin, or the desert of punishment. For the sins of those who are Justified and Pardoned, do yet in their own Nature, deserve Death and Eternal Damnation. As a *Pardon* vouchsafed to a *Traitor*, doth not cause his Actions not to have been Treasonable and worthy of Death: for this doth necessarily follow immediately upon the Transgressing of the Law, to which the Penalty is annexed. So neither is it in the
Power

Power of Pardoning Grace to make that our sins should not deserve Death, according to their own demerit ; for that were a contradiction, since this demerit, is necessary and essential unto sin as such.

Secondly, Therefore *Pardon of sin* removes that guilt which consists in the adventitious Appointment or Ordination of the sinner unto Punishment, flowing from the Will of God, who hath in his Law threatned to inflict Eternal Death as the Reward and Wages of sin. Now this designation of the sinner unto punishment is Two-fold ; either *Personal* or *Mystical*. One of these two ways God will certainly punish every Soul that sins : either by appointing the sinner *Personally* to undergo the punishment of his iniquities ; and thus he deals with unbelievers whom he will punish in their own Persons for their transgressions. Or else he appoints them to undergo the punishment of their sins *Mystically*, as being by Faith made one with the Lord Jesus Christ, who himself hath born our sins in his own Body on the Tree. Now Pardon of sin doth not remove the *Mystical* appointment of a Believer unto Punishment, for he hath suffered it, for Christ hath suffered it, and Christ and he are one *Mystical* Person by Faith. God never Pardons but he likewise punishes the very sin that he Pardons ; he punisheth it in our surety and undertaker when he forgives it to a Believer. *Pardon of sin* therefore removes only that guilt which consists in our own Personal appointment and designation to punishment : though the sin doth always in it self necessarily deserve Death, though that Death hath been inflicted upon Christ, and therefore upon Believers in him, as Members of him.

But yet notwithstanding that God thus takes Vengeance on our sins, he doth Graciously Pardon them when he releaseth our Personal Obligation unto punishment, and reckons that we have suffered the penalty, in Christ suffering

ing in, and therefore ought to be discharged from any further Obligation unto it.

This now is that *Pardon of sin* which we pray for when we say, *Forgive us our Debts*. And for the more full Explication of it, I shall lay down these following positions.

First, The Pardoning Grace of God in respect of us, is altogether free and undeserved. We can of our selves scarce so much as ask forgiveness, but even this comes from the Grace of God; therefore much less can we do anything to merit it. Far be it from us to affirm as the *Papists* do, that Good Works proceeding from Grace are Meritorious of Pardon and Salvation. Alas, what are our Prayers, our Sighs, our Tears, yea our very Blood, should we spend it for Christ? They are but poor imperfect things, and are so far from having in them any infinite worth and value to counterbalance our sins, that the defects of them add to the number of our other Transgressions. They cannot all of them make one blot in the Book of God's Remembrance, but may well make more items there against us. Had it been possible for Men to have quitted scores with Divine Justice by what they could do or suffer; Heaven would not have been so needlessly lavish, as to send Christ into the World, to lead an afflicted Life, and to die an accursed Death, only for our Redemption and Salvation.

Secondly, The Pardoning Grace of God is not free in respect of Christ, but it cost him the price of Blood. It is the Blood of the Lamb Slain from the Foundation of the World, that crosseth the Debt-Book. Without shedding of Blood there is no remission, says the Apostle, Heb. 9. 22. And this is my Blood which was shed for the Remission of sins, Matth. 26. 28. And although possibly God might according to his absolute Sovereignty have freely remitted all the sins of all the World, without any kind of Satisfaction, only by a Free and Gracious Act of Mercy. Yet considering

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Truth,

Truth, that there must be a recompence made him for all our offences, it had been a wrong to his *Veracity*, if not to his *Justice*, to have granted the Pardon of any one sin without the intervention of a full price and satisfaction. No satisfaction could be made correspondent to the wrong done to an infinite God, but by an infinite Person who was God himself; for had the Person been finite, the Sufferings must have been Eternal, otherwise they could not have been proportionable to the offence, which requires an infinite Satisfaction: But if the Sufferings had been Eternal, Satisfaction could never have been made, but would for ever have been making unto the Justice of God, and consequently our sins could never have been Pardoned. And therefore God appointed to this Work of reconciling himself to fallen Man, his only begotten Son, God Co-equal, and Co-eternal with himself, and every way infinite as himself, that he might be able to bear the whole Wrath of God at once, and at one bitter draught, drink off the whole Cup of Fury which we should have been draining by little drops to all Eternity. So that Justice being satisfied in the Sufferings of Christ, for the sins of those whose Persons, and whose guilt he sustained upon the Cross; Mercy hath now a way opened to Glorifie its Riches in their Pardon and Salvation.

Thus in these two Positions, it appears that though the remitting of our sins be an Act of God's Free Grace and Mercy in respect of us, yet it is the effect of Purchase in respect of Christ. God Pardons sins to them who committed them, upon their Faith and Repentance; but he Pardons not those very sins to Christ, to whom they were imputed; but exacted Satisfaction from him to the very utmost rigour of Justice. Hence it follows,

Thirdly, That the Pardon of sin is not only an Act of meer Free Grace and Mercy, but according to the Terms of the Covenant of Grace, it is also an Act of Justice in God. Indeed both Mercy and Justice are concurrent in it, for

for since by the Union of Faith we are made one *Mystical Body* with Christ, it could not consist with the Equity of God to punish the sins of Believers in their own Persons; for this would be no other than to punish them twice for the same Offence, once in their surety, and again in themselves.

Now what abundant cause of Comfort may this be to all true Believers, that God's Justice as well as his Mercy shall acquit them: That that Attribute of God at the Apprehension of which they were wont to tremble, should interpose on their behalf, and plead for them. Yet through the All-sufficient Expiation and Atonement that Christ hath made for our sins, this Mystery is effected, and Justice itself brought over from being a formidable Adversary to be of our Party and to Plead for us. Therefore the *Apostle* tells us, 1 John 1. 9, *That God is Faithful and Just to forgive us our sins.* And St. Paul, 2 Thessal. 1. 6, 7. *It is a Righteous thing with God to recompence Tribulation to them that trouble you. And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from Heaven with his Mighty Angels.*

Fourthly, When God pardons, he doth no longer account of us as sinners. Indeed after Pardon, we still retain sinful and corrupt Natures, and there is that Original Pollution in us that can never be totally dislodged in this Life. But yet when God pardons, he looks not upon us as Sinners, but as Just. The *Malefactor* that is legally discharged, either by satisfying the Law, or by his Princes Grace and Favour towards him, is no more reputed a *Malefactor*, but as Just and Righteous as if he had never offended. So is it with us, we are both ways discharged of our guilt; both by satisfying the penalty of the Law in Christ, our Surety; and by the Free Grace and Mercy of God, who hath Sealed to us a Gracious Act of Pardon, and therefore we are Just in the sight of God as if we had never sinned.

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Fifthly,

Fifthly, Pardon of sin is one great part of our Justification. Justification consists of these two parts, Remission, and Acceptance: We have them both joyned together; *Ephes. 1. 6, 7. He hath made us accepted in the Beloved, in whom we have Redemption through his Blood; even the forgiveness of sins.* Remission of sins takes away our liability to Death, Acceptation of our persons gives us a Title unto Life. Now to be free from our obnoxiousness to Death, and instated in a Right to Eternal Life; these two constitute a perfect Justification. For to be accepted of God in Christ, is no other than for God through the Righteousness and Obedience of Christ imputed to us, to own and acknowledge us to have a Right to Heaven: And therefore we have mention of Pardon and an Inheritance together, in St. Paul's Commission to his Ministry, *Acts 26. 18. That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an Inheritance among them that are Sanctified.*

It is not therefore, O Soul, a bare negative Righteousness that God intends thee in the Pardon of thy sins; it is not merely to remove the Curse and Wrath thy sins have deserved (though that alone can never sufficiently be admired) but the same hand that plucks thee out of Hell by Pardon, lifts thee up to Heaven by what he gives thee together with thy Pardon, even a Right and Title to a Blessed and Glorious Inheritance. Thy Pardon thou hast from the Passive Obedience of Christ in his Sufferings. A Right to Heaven thou hast through the Active Obedience of Christ in fulfilling all Righteousness. And through both hast thou obtained a compleat Justification: God looking upon thee as Innocent through the Satisfaction of his Son, and as Worthy through his Obedience, both which are made thine by Faith.

Now this Pardon of sin is in *Scripture* set forth by very sweet and full Expressions. It is called, *a blotting out of Transgression.* A Metaphor taken from a Creditors crossing the

the Debt-Book, signifying thereby a discharge of the Debt. And, lest, we might possibly fear God will implead us for them without Book, the Prophet adds forgetting unto blotting out, *Esa. 43. 25. Even I am he that blotteth out thy Transgressions for my Names sake, and I will not remember thy sins.* It is called, a covering of our sins. *Psal. 32. 1. Blessed is the Man whose Transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is covered.* Yea, we have a further ground of Comfort, for it is not only a covering of our sins, but it is a covering of God's Face from them. *Psal. 51. 9. Hide thy Face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.* It is a casting of them behind God's back as a thing that he will never more regard. *Jf. 38. 17. Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.* And lest we should suspect he should turn again to behold them, it is called, a casting of them into the bottom of Sea, *Mic. 7. 19. as we do with things we would have irrecoverably lost and gone. It is a scattering them as a thick Cloud, Esa. 44. 22.* When the Vapours of it are so dissipated, that there shall not remain the least spot, to obstruct the shining of God's Face and Favour upon our Souls. Yea, and so perfect an Abolition shall be made of all our Iniquities, that though Divine Justice should enter into a strict search and scrutiny after them, they shall not be found against us. So the Prophet *Jeremiab* tells us, *Jerem. 50. 20. In that day shall the iniquity of Israel be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found.* How hath God heaped up Expressions of his Grace and Mercy one upon another? and studied words as it were to assure us of the Validity of our Pardon, giving to us abounding Consolations as our sins have been abounding. And thus much shall suffice to shew the Nature of Pardoning Grace and Mercy, as expressed in these words, *Forgive us our Debts.*

Secondly, Let us consider unto whom this Petition for Pardon is directed, and that is as all the rest are, to our Father;

ther; whose Laws we have violated, whose Justice we have offended, whose displeasure we have incurred, and to whose vengeance we have made our selves liable and obnoxious, to him we sue for Pardon and Remission.

Hence we may collect this note: *That it is the High Prerogative of God alone to forgive Sins.*

God assumes this particularly to himself, and seems to triumph in the Glory of this Attribute. *I even I am he that blotteth out thy Transgressions.* And therefore when Christ cured the *Paralytick*, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* storm'd at him for a *Blasphemer*, for saying, *Be of good cheer, thy Sins are forgiven thee: Thou Blasphemest, say they, for who can forgive Sins but God alone?* Mark 2. 7. And this Charge of *Blasphemy* which they laid against Christ, had he not been the true God, had been unanswerable: And therefore our Saviour denies not their Principle, which is most certain and infallible; but to convince them that they themselves were *Blasphemers*, in applying it to him, proves his *Deity* by a *Miracle*, and demonstrates his Authority to forgive Sins, by his Power in healing Diseases.

But you will say, if it be the incommunicable Prerogative of God only to forgive Sins, How is it that we find this Privilege and Power, ascribed unto Men also, *John 20. 23. Whosoever Sins ye remit, they are remitted.* It seems therefore that the *Apostles* and *Ministers* of Jesus Christ, their Successors, stand invested by Christ with a Power to forgive Sins.

I Answer, Remission of Sins is two-fold, either Authoritatively and Judicially; or, Secondly, Ministerial and Declarative: The former belongs only to God, who by the meer Authority of his Grace and Mercy doth freely and fully acquit us of our Guilt, without requiring any thing at our Hands, by way of recompence or punishment. Now for any Creature, either in Heaven or Earth, to assume this to himself, is a most insolent and *Blasphemous Pride*; which while

while the *Pope* of Rome doth, he hath given us the strongest Argument that can be, to assert and prove him to be the *Antichrist*, and that Son of *Perdition*; for among the many Characters that are given of *Antichrist*, all of which do more than sufficiently belong unto him, this is one, *that he exalteth himself above all that is called God*, 2 Thessal. 2. 4.

Not only above Titular Gods, as *Kings* and *Magistrates* etc. (for it is notoriously known what Power he arrogates unto himself in disposing Crowns, and transferring States, making *Princes* themselves far more inferiour to him, than their Subjects are to them;) but also above the only Living and True God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, in pretending to a Judicial Authority, to forgive Sins and Offences committed against God: For it is clear and evident, whosoever can Pardon the Offences of one Person against another must himself be Superiour to both, and have Authority and Jurisdiction over both; but chiefly over the Person offended to make him cease the Prosecution of his Right, and sit down by the Wrong received: For if a *Prince* should Pardon the Injury that one *Subject* doth the other, he must command the Person grieved not to molest or prosecute him that hath done the Wrong, and so disable him from taking revenge. Now what a wretched and damnable Insolence is it for any vile sinful Man to pretend to such a Power of forgiving Sins committed against God, as if by his Authority he could command God to surcease his Suit, and to require no farther recompence, but to rest himself contented that it is the *Pope's* Will and Pleasure to have it so? What is this but to exalt himself above all that is called God, not only on Earth, but in Heaven it self? A most horrid Blasphemy, and so proper a Character of *Antichrist*, that there needs no other to describe him by.

Secondly, There is a Ministerial declarative Remission of Sins; and this is either Internal in the Court of Conscience, or External in the Court of the Church of Christ
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here upon Earth. The former Remission is the Office or Ministry of the *Holy Ghost* sealing of us up unto the *Day of Redemption*, by his silent and most comfortable Testimony, witnessing unto us that our Sins are pardoned, and our Persons accepted. The External Declaration of Remission of Sins, is an open publication to all humble Penitent Sinners the Absolution and Pardon of their Offences, according to the tenor of God's Faithful Promises. And in this sense alone, the Ministers of Jesus Christ have power to pardon and remit Sins, *Whose Sins ye remit they are remitted*; that is, whose Sins you declare that God hath remitted, they are remitted, not absolutely but conditionally, in case Men come up to the performance of those conditions, upon which God hath promised Pardon and Forgiveness, which are Faith and Repentance. And therefore in our *Publick Prayers*, where the whole Congregation hath made an humble Confession of their Sins, the Minister according to his Office and Power given him by Christ, declares to them, *That God Pardons and Absolves all them that truly Repent, and unfeignedly believe his Holy Gospel*: Or, if on any other Occasion the Minister say, *I Absolve thee from thy Sins*; yet the meaning is the same, he absolves him Officially not Judicially; he Absolves by declaring him Absolved and Pardoned upon his sincere Faith and Repentance; which if People did but better understand, they would not be so forward to carp at, least they carp at the very Gospel it self.

Nor doth this at all intrench upon God's Prerogative; for the Minister, only as the Officer and Messenger of God, declares that it is he alone who Pardons and Absolves Penitent Sinners. A Practice as far from bordering upon the intolerable Arrogance of *Antichrist*; as it is on the other side from yielding enough to the express Authority of Christ to adjudge it vain and fruitless. As it is the *Prince* that Pardons, the *Herald* only proclaims it: So here, it is God only

only who Pardons Sinners, the Minister's part is in a solemn and official manner to Pronounce and Proclaim this Pardon, to all that shall accept it upon the Terms on which it is offered by God. And this may suffice in Answer to that *Objection*.

But then again it may be *Objected*, How is it God alone who forgives Sins, whereas we likewise are bound to forgive those that Trespas against us.

To this I Answer, Every Trespas against Man is also an Offence against God; for so merciful is our God unto us, that he hath taken his Creatures under the Protection of his Law, and fenced us round with the Authority of his Commands, so that no injury can reach us, but it must commit a Trespas upon the Divine Law, and break through those bounds that God hath set about every Man's Propriety and Right to defend it against unjust Invaders: But yet if any shall dare to violate this, we must forgive them so far forth as it is a wrong to us, (as I shall shew more largely hereafter;) but we cannot pretend to forgive the wrong that they have done to God in wronging us; but this must be left between him and their own Souls; to his Mercy and their Repentance.

If then it be the Prerogative of God alone to pardon Sin, hence we may for our abundant Comfort be informed,

First, That our Pardon is free and gratuitous; for whatsoever God doth he doth it freely, for his own sake, without respect to any former deserts, or expectations of any future recompence. It is infinitely below the Sovereignty of his Grace to admit of any other motive for his Mercy, but his Mercy. And therefore he hath told us, *I will be Gracious to whom I will be Gracious, and I will shew Mercy to whom I will shew Mercy*, Exod. 33. 19. Since it is a God that Pardons, it is infinitely unworthy of his Glory and Majesty to sell his Pardons and Indulgencies, and to make his Mercy Merchandise.

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But yet this pardoning Grace of God, though it be free in respect of Purchase, yet is it limited to Conditions in respect of Application; which Conditions are Faith and Repentance. *Whosoever believes in him shall obtain remission of Sins*, Acts 10. 43. *Repent*, says the Apostle, *that your Sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come*, Acts 3. 19. Think not therefore, O Soul, when thy Conscience is oppressed with the Guilt of Sin, think not what Expiation thou must make, what Ransom thou must pay to God; say not, *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, or bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before him with Burnt-Offerings, with Calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of Rams, or with ten thousand Rivers of Oil? Shall I give my First-Born for my Transgression, the Fruit of my Body for the Sin of my-Soul?* as the Prophet speaks, Micah 6. 6, 7. What shall I do, or what shall I offer to make amends and recompence for my Offences? This is to be injurious to the free Grace of God, which requires no satisfaction from thee; only thy present Acceptance and future Reformation. This is that indeed which God requires from thee; but to think to purchase his Favour, and to buy his Mercy, is infinitely to disparage it. And they only judge rightly of it, who judge it invaluable.

Secondly, It is God that Pardons; therefore our Pardon is full and compleat. Indeed those Acts that God works within us are in this Life imperfect. The Illumination of our Minds, the Sanctification of our Hearts, are God's Works within us; and these are defective, not as they come from God, but as they are received in us: As we know but in part so we are sanctified but in part. But those Acts of God, that he doth not work in us, but only terminate upon us, of which we are the *Objects*, but not the *Subjects*, they are all as perfect here as they shall be to all Eternity: Thus God Justifies, Adopts, and Pardons fully and compleatly;

pleatly; for these are Acts of God residing in his own Breast, where they meet with no opposition or allay; nor do they increase by any small Degrees as our Sanctification doth; but are at once as perfect as ever they shall be. I do not mean, (though some have so thought and taught,) that God doth at once Pardon all the Sins of a true Believer, as well those which for the future he shall commit, as those which he hath already committed, which is an absurd and dangerous Tenet; as if Sin could be pardoned before it were, or guilt removed before it be contracted. But only whatsoever Sins God pardons, he doth it not gradually. Nothing of guilt is left upon the Soul when God Pardons it, though still there be something of filth left in it when God Sanctifies it. And therefore, as it is the great grief of God's Children, that their inherent Holiness is so imperfect, affronted by Temptations, foiled by Corruptions, oppressed and almost stifled to Death by a Body of Sin that lies heavy upon it; yet this on the other Hand may be their exceeding great comfort and rejoicing, that God's pardoning Grace is not as his sanctifying Grace is, nor granted to them by the same stint and measure. A Sin truly repented of, is not pardoned to us by halves, half the guilt remitted and half retained, (as the *Papists* fantasie to establish their *Purgatory*;) No, O Sinner, there is not any guilt left for thee to satisfy for, not any reserve of punishment for thee to undergo; but all thy Sins are so pardoned, that they are in God's Account as if they had never been committed against him. And therefore be thy Comforts never so strong and flowing, and thy sense of God's pardoning Grace never so clear; yet know that thy Pardon is still infinitely more perfect than thy Joy in it can be satisfactory: For Assurance, and the sense of Pardon, is a Work of God's Spirit wrought in us, and is commonly mixed with some hesitation and mis-giving doubts; but our Pardon is an Act of God in himself, where it meets with nothing contrary; and therefore with

no abatement; but is as perfect and absolute as ever it shall be in Heaven it self.

Thirdly, Is it God that Pardons? Then for thy comfort know, that he can as easily forgive great and many Sins, as few and small: For the greatness and multitudes of thy Sins can make no odds in infinite Grace and Mercy, only repent and believe. God proclaims his Name, *Exod:34:7. The Lord God Merciful and Gracious, Long-suffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression, and Sin*: That is, all sorts and sizes of Sins. The greatest Sins repented of, are no more, without the extent of his Mercy, than the least unrepented of are without the cognizance of his Justice. And that there is any one, (though but one) Sin unpardonable, ariseth not so much from the atrociousness of the Fact, as if it exceeded Mercy; but only from the malignity of its Nature, hardning the Heart against God, and making it incapable of Repentance; otherwise could they who commit this Sin repent, even they also should obtain Pardon. Say not therefore, *Mine Iniquity is greater than can be forgiven*: I have out-sinn'd Mercy, and there is no Portion for me in God, his fiery Indignation will eternally devour me. This is to be injurious unto God, and to stint that Grace and Mercy which he hath made infinite: And thou may'st with as much Truth and Reason say, that thou art greater than God, as that thy Sins are greater than his Mercy.

Yet here, before I leave this, let me caution you that you do not abuse this comfortable Doctrine of God's pardoning Sin, and turn that into *Presumption* that was intended only to arm you against *Despair*. Indeed both *Presumption* and *Despair* tend, in a divers manner, to encourage and harden Men in Sin: The *Despairing Sinner* argues, If I must not be saved, if my Sins be so many and great that there is no Pardon for them, to what purpose then should I live strictly? To what purpose should I cross and vex my self by an

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unprofitable severity? It is too great niceness to scruple farther sinning, when I am already sure of *Damnation*; and therefore if I must go to *Hell*, I will make my way thither as pleasant as I can. This is a kind of *Despair* that produceth, not horreur, as it doth in some; but a most wretched carelesness what becomes of them.

On the other hand *Presumptuous Men* argue, God is able to pardon the greatest and vilest Sinners; they cannot sin beyond the reach and extent of his Grace and Mercy; and therefore what need they yet trouble themselves to repent and reform, they will yet indulge themselves a little longer in their Sins; for it is as easie for God to pardon them at the last moment of their lives, as upon many years preparation.

We see Iniquity every where most fearfully to abound in the World; and doubtless both *Despair* and *Presumption* have too great an influence both upon the Minds and Lives of Men; to make them careless in their Eternal Concernments.

Enough hath been spoken to the *Despairing*, which are but few; but to the *Presumptuous* let me add a Word. It is the most unworthy and disingenuous use they can make of the Mercy of God to press it to serve against its Authority: *Shall we continue in Sin that Grace may abound? God forbid? Shall we Sin licentiously, because God pardons freely? no, the Grace of God obligeth otherwise, the Love of Christ constraineth otherwise; the filial disposition of the New Creature enclineth otherwise. Gratitude and Retribution engage otherwise. But if these motives be too refined and ingenious for thy sordid and slavish Spirit; and if thou wilt still go on in the *Presumption of thy Heart*, crying *Peace, Peace to thy self*; although thou continuest, adding one Iniquity to another, know, O vile wretch, that the Lord will not spare thee, but the Anger of the Lord and his Jealousie shall smook against thee; and all the Curses that*

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are written in his Book shall come upon thee, and the Lord will blot out thy Name from under Heaven, Deutr. 29. 19.

And thus I have done with the general consideration of God's pardoning Sin, held forth to us in this *Petition: Forgive us our Debts or Trespases.*

Now in this *Petition* we pray not only for the Pardon of Sin; but likewise for all things that are antecedently necessary to obtain it: As,

First, We pray that God would discover to us the horrid odious Nature of Sin; that he would convince us of the woful miserable Estate that we are in by Nature; and how much more wretched and miserable we have made our selves by our sinful lives; that he would set home the terrors of Sin upon our Consciences to our humiliation, and make us Despair in our selves, that we might fly unto Christ, and lay hold on that help and refuge he hath set before us.

Secondly, We pray that God would humble us under the sight and sense of our manifold Transgressions, that as our Sins have made us vile in God's Eyes, so they may make us vile in our own, to loath our selves in dust and ashes for them.

Thirdly, We pray that God would give us his Spirit to enable us to confess our Sins cordially, and sincerely to pour forth our Hearts before him, and to acknowledge our manifold Provocations with shame and godly sorrow; upon which God promised to grant us pardon and forgiveness, *Prov. 28. 13. He that covereth his Sin shall not prosper; but he that confesseth and forsaketh them shall find Mercy.* And the *Apostle* tells us, *If we confess our Sins, God is Faithful and Just to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanse us from all Unrighteousness, 1 Joh. 1. 9.*

Fourth-

Fourthly, We beg a more clear understanding of the Sacrifice and Atonement made by Jesus Christ, through which alone all Pardon is purchased and procured: To know both what it is and why ordained; and likewise the knowledge of God's rich and free Mercy, and the Conjunction of this Sacrifice and Mercy together, in the great Mystery of the freeness of Divine Grace, and the Satisfaction of Jesus concurring to the Remission of our sins, and the Salvation of our Souls.

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

Sixthly and lastly, We pray that we may be brought over to close with the Lord Jesus Christ by a lively Faith; that his Righteousness thereby may be made ours, and we by that Righteousness may obtain Pardon of our sins, and an Inheritance among them that are Sanctified. For though Pardon be procured by the Death of Christ, yet the Application of it to the Soul, is only by Faith, uniting us unto him, and making us one with him. For all that Christ hath either done or suffered for the Redemption of the World, would be altogether in vain as to our particular benefit and advantage, were it not that Faith entitles us unto it, and makes that satisfaction which he hath given to Divine Justice to be *Mystically* our Act, as it was *Personally* his.

And thus I have considered the Petition it self, *Forgive us our Debts.*

I now proceed to the Condition or Plea annexed. *As we forgive our Debtors.* And here we have,

First, the Act, *Forgive.*

Secondly, The Object, *Debtors.*

Thirdly, The limitation of this Object, *our Debtors.*

Fourthly, The proportion or resemblance, in the Particle *as: As we forgive our Debtors.*

I shall begin with the Object, *Debtors*. As all Men stand indebted to God in a Two-fold *Debt*; a *Debt* of Obedience, and a *Debt* of Punishment: So one Man may be a *Debtor* to another two ways; either by owing to him a *Debt* of Duty, or else a *Debt* of Satisfaction.

First, Some Men stand indebted to others in a *Debt* of Duty. And indeed I might well have said, this *Debt* is reciprocal between Man and Man. Thus *Children*, owe *Parents* Reverence and Obedience, and *Parents* their *Children* Provision and Education. *Subjects* owe their *Magistrates* Honour and Tribute, and *Magistrates* owe their *Subjects* Justice and Protection. *Servants* owe their *Masters* Fear, Diligence and Faithfulness; and *Masters* owe their *Servants* Maintenance and Encouragement. And generally all Men owe one another, Love, Respect and Kindness.

Now these *Debts* cannot balance one another, that as much as is left unpaid me by any person; so much again I may refuse to pay him. If a *Father* pay not his *Debt* to his *Child*, or a *Magistrate* to his *Subject*, or a *Master* to his *Servants*, they are not hereby acquitted of their Obligations, but still Duty, Obedience and Faithfulness is required from *Inferiours* to their *Superiours*: And so on the contrary, Love, Protection and Maintenance is required from *Superiours* to their *Inferiours*, although peccant, as long as the Relation shall continue between them: And the reason is, because we are bound to these Duties, not only by the Obligations that mutual Offices lay upon us, but by God's express Will and Command, and the performance of the Relations that is betwixt us. And therefore, though it be Lawful for two Persons that owe one another an equal *Debt* of Money, or other such like things, to cross out one *Debt* by the other, and so discount it between them: Yet it is not so where the Duties that God requires are the *Debts* they owe to each other: for although others may fail in the performance of what belongs to their part, yet thou oughtest not

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to fail in thine; for thus to be even with Men, is to run in Debt with God, and to make him thy *Creditor*, who will certainly be thy *Revenger*.

And from hence it appears that this is not the *Debt* that we are to forgive our *Debtors*, for we have no power to release them from their *Obligation to Duty*, whilst the Relation between us continues, no more than we have to rescind the *Laws of God and of Nature*.

Secondly, Some Men may stand indebted to others in a *Debt of Satisfaction*, as they owe them reparation on good grounds for wrongs and injuries done against them, and this is the *Debt* which we are to forgive others.

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

And they are chiefly these *Six* that follow:

First, By wronging us in our persons, either by unjust Violence, or by unjust Restraints. Thus the *Persecuting Jews* were *Debtors* to the *Apostles and Disciples* of Christ, for often *Scourging and Imprisoning* them.

Secondly, By wronging us in our Place and Dignity, and in the Office, to which by God's Providence we are called. And so also those that vilifie the persons, and detract from the Authority of those that are set over them, become their *Debtors*. Thus *Aaron and Miriam* were *Debtors* unto *Moses*, for traducing the Authority that God had committed unto him, *Numb. 12. 2.*

Thirdly, By wronging us in our Friends and Relations, either by corrupting them. Thus *Sechem* became a *Debtor* to *Jacob* and his *Sons*, for violating his *Daughter* and their *Sister*. Or else by destroying them: So *Herod* to the *Bethlemitish Mothers* by murdering their Children.

Fourthly, By wronging us in our Right and Title, withholding from us what is our due.

Fifthly, In our Possessions, when either by Force or Fraud they take from us what of Right belongs to us.

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Sixthly,

Sixthly, And lastly, in our Reputation and good Name, unjustly defaming us for those Crimes which only their Malice hath invented and published against us:

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

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

Thou therefore who art Conscience to thy self of wronging any either in their Persons, or Dignities, or Relations, or Rights, or Possessions, or Reputations: Though it be thy Duty to confess it before God, and humble thy self to him for it, begging Mercy and Pardon at his hands: Yet this is not enough; for by one single offence thou hast contracted a *double Debt*; thou standest *indebted* to the Justice of God for the Violation of his Law: But this is not all, but thou standest in *Debt* unto Man likewise, by injuries done against him, and both thy *Creditors* must be satisfied: God by the Righteousness of Christ through thy Faith and Repentance; and Man by an Acknowledgment, Reparation and Restitution. The *Apostle* hath commanded us, *Rom. 13. 8. To owe no Man any thing, but to love one another.* And indeed Satisfaction for Wrongs is a necessary part of Repentance; for he that truly Repents, doth really and from his heart wish that the Wrong had never been done, and therefore will be sure to do his utmost to annihilate the fault, by giving the abused Party a compensation fully answerable to the injury, and to the utmost of his Ability, restore him into the same or a better Condition than that in which he was before he received the Wrong. Therefore,

First,

First, Art thou Conscious to thy self that thou hast wronged any Man in his Credit and Reputation, either by raising or divulging false and slanderous Reports: know that thou art his *Debtor*, and Justice obligeth thee to make him satisfaction for that injury, by wiping away those aspersions, and licking away the dirt with the same Tongue with which thou didst bespatter him: for if thou sufferest the same Reports to run on which thou hast set on foot, all that shall relate them after thee, multiply thy guilt; and all the numerous Off-spring of Lyes, which (through a certain itch that Men have of speaking ill) will be soon propagated, shall all be charged upon thee; for of them-all, thou and the *Devil* art the Father.

Secondly, Art thou Conscious thou hast wronged thy Superiours, as *Magistrates, Ministers, Parents, or Masters*, in that Authority and Power that God hath given them over thee, by any disobedient demeanour towards them: know that thou art their *Debtor*, and it lies upon thy Conscience to give them due satisfaction; which because it cannot be done by recalling the Offences past, it must be done by an humble acknowledgment to them, desiring their Pardon, and promising and endeavouring more ready submission for the future. So was the Case of *Aaron* and *Miriam* when they had affronted *Moses*, and were convinced of the wrong they had done him: *Aaron* makes his humble acknowledgment and begs forgiveness, *Numb. 12. 11. Alas my Lord, I beseech thee lay not this sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned.* And so the *Prodigal* when he returned to his *Father*, confessed his disobedience, *Luke 15. 21. Father, I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son.* Which though it be a *Parable*, yet teacheth us real and literal Duties in parallel cases.

Thirdly, Art thou Conscious to thy self, that thou hast wronged any one in their Right, either in with-holding or

taking from them what in Law and Equity belonged to them? thou art their *Debtor*, and as such art bound to make them satisfaction by making them a full and plenary Restitution; and that though the thing wherein thou hast wronged them be great or small, more or less; yea though it should seemingly tend to the loss of thy Credit to acknowledge such a wrong, or visibly tend to thy impoverishing and undoing to restore it. Nor is it enough when thy Conscience checks thee for it, that thou confests the sin to God, and prayest for Pardon at his hands; but it behooveth thee to render unto Man what is his, and what thou unjustly keepst from him, whether it be his by thy Promise and Engagement, or by his former Title and Possession. As thou lovest thy Soul, and hopest for Pardon and Salvation, thou must make Restitution; and the reason is, because as long as thou detainest it, so long thou continuest in the Commission of the same sin, for an unjust detainure and possession is a continued and prolonged Theft: And certainly our Repentance be it what it will, can never be true and sincere while we continue in the sin we seem to repent of, and this Repentance not being true, Pardon shall never be granted thee, but as thou remainest a *Debtor* to Man, so thy *Debt* to God remains uncancell'd; and though Men may not sue thee to recover their Right, because this sin sometimes is so secretly carried on, that it may not come to their knowledge, yet Divine Justice will sue thee for it, and pursue thee to Eternal Condemnation.

But you may say, What if those whom we have wronged, be since dead? how can any Restitution be made to them, or any Recompence reach them.

I Answer; In this case, thou art bound to find out their Children or Relations in whom they still live, and to whom it is to be supposed, that which thou hast detained, should have descended, and to restore it unto them, with ample satisfaction likewise for all the prejudice they have sustained in the mean time for want of it.

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But in case none can be found to whom of Right it may belong, then God's Right takes place, as he is the *Universal Proprietor* of all things, and thou oughtest besides what thou art obliged to give of thine own, to bestow it in Works of *Charity and Piety*, which may promote his Glory, still bewailing that thou hast so long deferred the Restitution of it to the immediate Owners, till thou hast made thy self now incapable of doing it.

This perhaps will seem a very hard Lesson to many; and doubtless it is so to a World so full of Rapine and Injustice: But I cannot, I dare not make God's Commands lighter nor easier than he hath made them: And let this seem as hard as it will, yet this is the Rule of Christianity, this is the inflexible Law of Justice, and without observing it, you keep your selves from all hopes of obtaining Pardon by continuing in your sin, which is utterly inconsistent with Repentance, and without Repentance there can be no Remission nor Salvation:

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

But then as there lies this *Debt* on the part of the *Debtor*, so doth there likewise one great and important Duty on the part of the *Creditor*, and that is forgiveness: *As we forgive our Debtors*. Now all pardon and forgiveness is a removing of the liableness unto punishment under which we formerly lay: And therefore as when God pardons, he frees us from the punishment due to our offences; so when we pardon and forgive others, it must be by a meek forbearing to punish others who have offended us. And this consists in two things.

First, In abstaining from the outward Acts of private and personal Revenge, whether by word, or by deed; for both are expressly forbidden us. If others have bent their
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Tongues against us, and *shot forth their Arrows even cruel words*; Christianity obligeth us not to return them back again, much less, (as is the common but wicked practice of the most) with double measure and advantage: for if they have wronged us by their actions, as well as by their speeches, we may not assume to our selves a liberty of Retribution, nor think that the iniquity of their proceeding, will justify the Equity of ours: for both of these, see what the *Apostle* saith, *1 Pet. 3. 9. Be pitiful, be courteous, not rendring evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but contrarywise blessing, knowing that you are thereunto called that you should inherit a blessing.* And indeed there is nothing that the Gospel and Laws of Christ do more instantly press upon us, than that we would not requite injuries with injuries: This prohibition is the proper Character of his *Doctrine*, and this the practice of his *Disciples*. Revenge is a wild untam'd passion that knows no bounds nor measures. And if we were permitted to carve it out for our selves, we should certainly exceed all limits and moderation: for self-love which is an immoderate affection, would be made the whole Rule of our vengeance: And because we love our selves abundantly too well, we should revenge every imaginary wrong done us with too much bitterness and severity: And therefore God would not trust the righting of our selves in our own hands, knowing we would be too partial to our own interest and concerns; but hath assumed it to himself as the Prerogative of his own Crown. *Rom. 12. 19. Dearly beloved, avenge not your selves, but rather give place unto Wrath, for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay saith the Lord.*

But you will say, How then, must we sit down under every petulant wrong that is done us, and by a stupid Patience invite injuries, and tempt others to the sport and recreation of abusing us; for every one will be ready to shoot his Arrows against a soft Butt, where they will stick; but who will care to shoot

shoot them against a Stone-wall, that will rebound them back in their Faces again?

I Answer, It is indeed well worth the most serious and critical consideration, rightly to state how far we are bound to forgive Injuries and Wrongs, without requiring any satisfaction for them. And because the resolution of this seems to be of great difficulty, as also of great importance for the regulating of our Consciences, I shall first lay down some Distinctions, and then some Conclusions drawn from them for our more full satisfaction in this case.

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

Secondly, Those Wrongs which thou may'st forgive without doing any wrong to any other, are either light and tolerable Offences, or of great concern and consequence. Now these Distinctions being premised, I say,

First, In no Case whatsoever, be the injury greater or less, is private revenge to be allowed; but so far forth art thou bound to forgive it, as not to be both Judge and Executioner thy self. This, I suppose, is clear and indubitable, that all revenge is to be committed to the *Magistrate's Sword*, whom God hath armed with Authority and Commission, to be the *Avenger* to execute Wrath upon them that do evil.

Secondly, Therefore if the wrong thou hast received be insupportable, and tends either to the ruine of thy Estate and necessary subsistence, or to the irreparable loss of thy good Name, or it may be of thy Life: I know no precept of forgiveness, that doth in this case forbid thee to seek satisfaction; but it must be only in a publick and legal way, otherwise in forgiving others we should vastly injure our selves, and so pervert the rule which commands us to love our Neighbours as our selves, and therefore our selves primarily as the standard and measure of our love to them. - Now if
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Any one should attempt to take away that which is necessary to my livelihood ; or by false accusations should go about to take away my Credit or my Life ; certainly I owe so much Charity to my self, as to resist him in it, and to require satisfaction and recompence for it ; but still this must be observed, that we ought not to right our selves according to our own private discretion, but by the Sentence of the Law and by the Authority of the Magistrate ; for the Law is good, says the Apostle, if it be used lawfully. And therefore briefly in our seeking for our Right at Law there are these three things requisite to make it a lawful and allowable Action.

First, When that we sue for, is a matter of moment.

Secondly, When we have to do with obstinate and stubborn Persons, who will yield to nothing but what they are forced and compell'd to, and will not stand to the Award and Arbitration of private Christians.

Thirdly, When we have before-hand used all-likely and probable means to prevail with those who have done us wrong, to make us necessary and fitting satisfaction. These Three things must always concur to make our suing even for publick revenge a thing lawful. And then in all such Processes we must be sure to observe these Two things.

First, That we have Right on our side, or at least be verily perswaded that we have it, and that the Person whom we prosecute doth us wrong. To seek for reasonable satisfaction in this case, is so far from being charged with Rancour and Malice, that it is rather an effect of Love to bring them to do us right, whereby indeed they do greater right to themselves.

Secondly, We must be sure to maintain Love to them, being willing and ready to do them any kind Offices, whatsoever lies in our power. We must therefore seek our Right with much meekness and compassion. And when a Controversie depends between us and any other, we should not
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make it a matter of strife and variance, but only put it to the decision of the Law, to whom the right belongs; and if it be found to belong to the other, and not to thy self, thou oughtest to be glad that Right is done, and to prefer the interest of Justice before thine own; otherwise thou seekest Victory and not Equity. And this is the *Second Conclusion*, that for a great important Wrong, thou mayest lawfully seek for satisfaction.

Thirdly, If the Wrong done thee cannot be pass'd by without the wronging of others, thou mayest and oughtest in this case to require satisfaction. As for instance, the Laws of the Land have ordained Death as the punishment of *Robberies and Theft* upon the High-way in the Day, and breaking open of Houses in the Night; not so much for revenge upon the Guilty, as for example to others, and for security to the Innocent. In this case, we ought not to pass by any who have been deprehended thus unjustly invading our Possessions; especially if we have just cause to suspect, (as commonly it so happens,) that our suffering them to escape, will but embolden them to farther outrages; for this were a wrong done to the Nation and Community in which we live, and by such an indiscreet pity and compassion we bring upon our selves the Guilt of all the Crimes that they afterwards commit.

Fourthly, If the Wrongs that are done thee be tolerable, and thou mayest forgive them without wronging of others; the Laws of Christianity oblige thee so to do, without standing upon any satisfaction and reparation for them. Our Saviour hath given us our Rule in this Case, *Matth. 5. 40.* *If any Man will sue thee at Law and take away thy Coat, let him have thy Cloak also:* Which teacheth us that about small matters, things which we may easily be without, or easily procure, such as a *Cloak* or a *Coat*, we should not be contentious, but rather recede from our Right, than vigorously pursue it with strifes and quarrels. And we ought

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to be so far from seeking revenge for such petty Injuries, as are not destructive nor greatly prejudicial to us, as to be willing rather to suffer a *Second*, than to revenge the *First*.

For if all that can be called our due and our right must be exacted to the very utmost, what *Debt* is there that we are bound to forgive? Those therefore are justly to be condemned that take every advantage against their Neighbours, and although the Offence be but trivial, a passionate Word, or a sudden and light Blow, that proceeded not from any propense and intended Malice, or the like, presently pursue such Advantages with rigour and extremity; and because they may do it according to the Law of Man, regard not the Law of God which commands us to forgive such *Debtors*.

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

Secondly, *Forgiving our Debtors* consists in the inward frame and temper of our Hearts towards them, that we bear them no Malice, no Ill-will; but be as much in Charity with them, as though they never had offended us. And this forgiveness we are bound always to exercise, even in those cases in which we may seek for satisfaction; yea, although we could never prosecute them for satisfaction; yet if we retain secret grudgings and animosities in our Hearts against them, this is not an entire forgiveness, and such as will be acceptable to God; for he estimates the Heart, and not only the outward Actions which may have many bye ends to sway and direct them.

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

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And now, Christians, I know you cannot but reflect seriously upon it, how hard and difficult a Duty this of forgiveness is. It is that which the whole interest of Flesh and Blood, and all the Party that Passions and Affections can muster up within us will certainly rebel against this Doctrine. And alas, how seldom is it that Men can conquer themselves so as to yield obedience unto it really and cordially! Whence is it that all places are so full of Railing and Reviling, Quarrels and Challenges, vexatious Contentions, and endless Suits, Warrants, Arrests, Actions, and Imprisonments, and that upon slight Injuries and Provocations; but only that they have not learned this necessary Duty, *of forgiving one another?* Nay, many think it the part of a high Spirit and generous Nature to make themselves terrible to those whom they suppose have in the least wronged and affronted them; and upon the least disgust fly out into all extremities of Threatnings and Revenge; whereas in Truth this is but the Effect of a mean and sordid Spirit. It is a Disposition breathed into Men's Souls by the *Devil*, and demonstrates, as a great deal of Pride, so a great deal of Vileness and Baseness: The truest Gallantry and Generousness is to imitate the great God, in being patient and long-suffering, and ready to pardon and forgive. This is that height of Spirit, the true *Magnanimity and Greatness*; and if we would be perfect we must stoop; stoop did I say? rather we must aspire to this Heavenly Temper. And to excite unto this, consider,

First, That it is infinitely more honourable to forgive a Wrong than to revenge it: For,

A First, The one makes thee like to God, the other makes thee like the Devil: Yea, it is the chiefest excellency by which God delights to be set forth. *I, even I, am he that bloteth out thy Transgressions, Isai. 43. 25. And who is a God like unto thee that Pardons Iniquity? Micah 7. 18.* Now how Glorious is it to imitate God in that which he himself

counts his chiefest Glory? The Great Ones of the Earth imitate him in Power and Authority, and are some kind of glimmering Types of his Majesty, who daunts and dazes all approachers. But a poor contemptible Christian, whose meanness lays him open and exposed to all the Wrongs and Injuries of abusive and insulting Wretches, may represent a far greater Glory of God, than that wherein *Princes* and *Monarchs* shine; even his Forbearance, Pity, Long-suffering, and Pardon: He may represent God sitting upon his *Throne of Grace*; whereas the other represents him only sitting upon his *Throne of Power*. Now God never Triumphs more in any Attribute, than that of his Mercy: See with what fair Flourishes he writes his Name, *Exod. 34. 6. The Lord, the Lord God*; infinite in Power, that spreads forth the Heavens and rangeth all the Host of them, that hangs up the Earth in the midst of the Air, and the whole World in the midst of a vast and boundless nothing, that pours out the great Deep and measures it in the hollow of his Hand, that rides upon the Wings of the Wind, and makes the Clouds the dust of his Feet? No, but when he would display himself in his greatest Glory, he doth it in a still Voice, *The Lord God, Merciful and Gracious, Long-suffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth, keeping Mercy for thousands, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression, and Sin*. Now, O Christian, by forgiving those who have wronged thee, thou makest thy self as a God unto them, and imitatest him in that wherein he doth chiefly Glory.

Secondly, It is more honourable, because to Pardon is always the Act of a Superiour; it is a Prerogative of Royalty, and highly becomes the *Majesty* of those whom Christ hath made *Kings* as well as *Priests*; and certainly they cannot better declare themselves such, than by issuing out Pardons. Think therefore with thy self, O Christian, when thou art wronged and affronted, think what an advantage the petulancies.

lects of froward Men do give thee to make thy self their *Superiour*; it is but pardoning them and thou ascendest the Throne. And certainly they can never so much Triumph over thee by their Injuries as thou maist over them by Forgiveness. And so much for the First motive.

Secondly, Consider how many Offences God hath forgiven thee, and this will be an effectual motive to engage thee to forgive others. And here consider who it is that hath forgiven thee, and what it is he hath forgiven thee.

First, Consider who it is that hath forgiven thee. And here consider the infinite distance that is between thee and him; he is the Sovereign Lord and Creator of all, in comparison with whom thou art nothing, yea less than nothing. He stands in no need of thee, but whether thou live or die, perish or art saved, he is the same God, for ever Blessed in himself. He is able to destroy thee every moment, able to breath thee back into thy Dust, to look thee into Hell and Destruction. *They perish at the rebuke of thy Countenance, Psal. 80. 16.* And yet this high and absolute Lord, at thy entreaty, freely forgives thee all thy *Debts*, although he might have gotten himself a great renown in thy everlasting Perdition, and might have set thee up as a flaming Monument of his Wrath, and inscribed on thee Victory and Triumph to the Glory of his everlasting Vengeance. And shouldst not thou then, *O Man, O Worm*, forgive thy Fellow-Servant, one of the same Mold and Materials with thy self, one to whom perhaps thou art no way *Superiour*, unless that he hath now given thee an opportunity of pardoning him; one who possibly may hereafter be helpful unto thee, and in Agreement and Peace with whom thou mayest find much Comfort and Good to thy self; shouldst thou not much more forgive him? Certainly God may very well think thee unworthy of his Pardon, who art infinitely his

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Inferiour, if thou canst not think those worthy of thy Pardon, who in Nature are thy Equals.

Secondly, Consider the *Wrongs* and *Debts* that God hath forgiven thee, are infinitely greater than those thou art to forgive unto Men: Their Offences against thee are but *Pence*; but thine against God are *Talents*. And as there is a vast disproportion in the *Nature* of the *Offences*, so is there likewise in the *Number* of them. The Servant in the *Parable*, whom his Lord forgave, owed him *ten thousand Talents*; but his Fellow-Servant, whom this Wretch would not forgive, owed him but *an hundred Pence*, Matth. 18. So is it with us, our *Sins* against God, for the greatness of them are *Talents*, for the number of them are *ten thousand*; in every thing we do we wrong the Glory of God, and are continuallly offending him: But Men do not always wrong us; or if they did, yet the least of our Offences against God is far more hainous, than the greatest of Men's can be against us; we cannot speak of him, nor to him, but that by our unworthy and low Conceptions we revile him far more, than any Man can do us by the most studied and bitter *invectives*. The least irreverend thought of God is a greater injury against him, than it would be against us if Men should wound or stab us. And yet although thy *Deeds* be as great as *Talents*, and so numerous as *many thousand Talents*, yet thy Lord and Master frankly forgave thee all: And this should, by all the obligations of *ingenuity*, constrain thee to forgive thy Fellow-Servant so small *Debts* as a *hundred Pence*, when he hath not wherewithal to make thee satisfaction. See how our Saviour *prefigeth* this in the fore-cited place, *Matth. 18. 32. I forgave thee all that Debt thou owedst me, because thou desiredst me; and shouldst not thou have had compassion on thy Fellow-Servant, as I had pity on thee?* Certainly if ever thou accountedst the *pardoning Grace and Mercy* of God sweet and precious, I will not say thou shouldst be glad of *Wrongs* that thou mightest have occasion

occasion to pardon them; but yet certainly thou shouldst most cordially embrace all such occasions, if it were but only to recommend the excellency of thy Charity unto others; as Divine Love hath recommend its Fullness and Riches to thy dearest esteem. And that's the Second. But,

Thirdly, Consider the binding Particle in the Text, *Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors.* And now think with thy self; that thou dost but bind and seal the guilt of thy Sins upon thy own Soul, unless thou art willing and ready to forgive others. Thou who art revengeful and implacable, instead of praying, pronouncest the most direful and dreadful Curse that can be against thy self, and beggest of God, no more to forgive thee, than thou dost forgive those that have offended thee; and so thy Prayer is not only turned into Sin, but into a Snare and Curse, and thou passest upon thy self the tremendous Sentence of thine own Eternal Damnation; for if thou prayest that God would forgive thee as thou forgivest others, thou either cursest thy self, or else thou must forgive them.

Now this forgiving of others must have these Qualifications.

First, It must be *unfeigned and cordial from thy very Heart and Soul*, for so thou wouldst have God forgive thee. It is not enough to forbear *outward Revenge*; but thou must not harbour in thy Breast the least grudge or prejudice against them. God forgives so as to forget; but if thou keepest *Malice* raked up in thy Heart till thou canst find a fit opportunity to vent it in *Revenge*s; how canst thou but expect that God likewise should take his advantage against thee, and when it would make most for the Glory of his Justice, break forth upon thee and exercise his vengeance in thy everlasting Destruction.

Secondly, Thou art obliged likewise to *forgive freely without any Recompence or Satisfaction from others*. If the injury be supportable, we ought not so much as expect or desire Satisfaction; if it be otherwise, and yet the persons offending unable to make *Satisfaction*, we ought to *forgive* them without taking any unmerciful Revenge upon them; which is the wicked custom of many, who will cast their insufficient *Debtors* into Prison, and there let them starve and rot; though by this cruelty they cannot satisfy their *Debt*, but their Malice and Revenge.

Thirdly, We must *forgive others fully and compleatly*, for God doth so. He pardons our sins so fully, that they are in his account as if they had never been committed; and so must we pardon injuries wholly and fully as if there had never been any done us. This the *Apostle* observes towards the *Galatians*, who were a People as injurious to his Ministry and Authority as any could be, and yet he forgives it so fully that he tells them, *Gal. 4. 12. Brethren, I beseech you be as I am, for I am as you are, you have not injured me at all*. And to express all this, we must blot out the remembrance of all wrongs, and be ready chearfully to take all occasions to do good unto them; yea, not only to take them, but to seek them: This will be a plain Evidence that no *Leaven of Malice or Revenge* hath soured our Spirits.

Well then to sum and close up all: What is it thou canst plead for *Revenge*, which the consideration of God's pardoning thee, will not abundantly answer. Is it that the wrongs that others have done thee are great and insupportable? What, are they more intolerable than thy sins against God? Is it that he is a vile and inferiour person unto thee? How much more art thou so unto God? Is it that he hath often wronged thee? Are they not *ten thousand Talents* that God hath forgiven thee? Is it that he will be emboldened to wrong and injure thee again? Possibly so, but thou art

art not certain of it : However, consider how often thou hast abused the Mercy of God to encourage thee, in sinning against him : Is it that Men will think thee base and cowardly if thou puttest up such wrongs and injuries? Seek thou the Honour that cometh from God, and not the vain foolish Repute of Men. But is God indeed accounted Faithful in pardoning thee? or doth he spare thee because he dare not strike thee? Certainly there is no offence, nor an aggravation of any offence, that can be pleaded as a Reason for *Revenge*, but the same may in a greater measure, and in a higher proportion be pleaded why *God* should *Revenge* himself upon thee ; and yet if notwithstanding this, thou hopest for pardon and forgiveness from him : go then to thy Brother and do likewise.

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

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

And here before I come to speak of the *Petition* it self, I shall (as I have done in the former) speak something concerning the Reason and Wisdom of its Order and Method.

And the only thing that I shall remark, is that whereas it immediately follows upon that *Petition* wherein we beg the *Pardon of our Sins*, that we may not be *lead into Temptation*: This ought to teach us that it should be our care not only to seek for the pardon of our past sins, but to endeavour the prevention of sin for the future. And therefore as when our Saviour cured the *impotent Man* that had

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lain a long time at the *Pool of Bethesda* without relief, he gives him this caution, *John 5. 14. Behold thou art made whole, sin no more lest a worse thing come unto thee.* So when God hath healed those Mortal Wounds that sin hath made in our Souls, by his pardoning Grace; it highly concerns us, without most exact circumspection to beware that we be not again entangled in guilt, and with our most fervent Affections to pray that we may not be exposed to the *fiery Darts* of the *Devil* to wound us anew: for Relapses and Recidivations are always most dangerous and fatal; and new Wounds received upon old Scars, most difficult to be healed. And indeed without this preventing Grace of God, all his pardoning Grace would be but in vain. It would be fruitless to forgive sins, if God did not withhold secure us for the future from running upon the score with his Justice: for such is the Force and Fraud of the *Tempter*, and the corruption of our own Natures so prone to comply with whatsoever he offers and suggests to us, that did not God: as well give us a stock to live upon, as forgive us our former *Debts*, we should soon run our selves as deep in Arrears as ever, and make our selves liable to be seized on by Justice and condemned to the Infernal Prison: And therefore that God's Grace in forgiving our Trespases, may not be in vain, our Saviour hath taught us to subjoyn this Request, *Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from evil.* And thus much for the *Connexion* of this *Petition* with the foregoing.

The *Petition* itself contains in it two branches, the one against *Temptations*, the other against the prevalency of them: *Lead us not into Temptation*, suffer us not to be assaulted and buffeted by the wicked one: or if, O Lord, thou shalt in thy all-wise Counsel and Purpose permit us to be *Tempted*, yet deliver us from the evil to which we are *Tempted*: Let us endure *Temptations* as our Affliction, but let us not consent to them and make them our sins.

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

First, What *Temptations* are. And,

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

First, What *Temptations* are. Temptation, according to the proper signification of the word, is no other but a *Trial* or *Probation*. And this may be of two kinds. Exploratory, or Suasory.

First, There is an *Exploratory Temptation*, to search out and to discover what is in Man, what his Graces and Corruptions are.

Secondly, There is a *Suasory* or *enticing Temptation*, that inclines the Will and Affections to close with what is presented to them.

Now in general, we may observe five several sorts of *Temptations*, whereof some are of the former, others of the latter kind.

First, Some whereby one Man Tempts another.

Secondly, Some whereby we Tempt our selves.

Thirdly, Some whereby we Tempt God.

Fourthly, Some whereby God Tempts us. And,

Fifthly, Some whereby the Devil Tempts us.

First, There are some *Temptations* whereby one Man tempts another : And such *Temptations* may be faultless, when they come only by Exploration, either to find out Mens great Excellencies : Thus the *Queen of Sheba* came to tempt or to prove *Solomon* with *hard Questions*, 2 Cron. 9. 1. to know whether his Wisdom was answerable to the *Fame* that went of it. Or else to find out and discover their *Rotteness* and *Hypocrisy* ; and thus the *Church of Ephesus* is commended for tempting or trying those who said they were *Apostles* and were not, finding them to be *Lyars*. But it is *Devillish*, when it is either by *Suasion* unto that

which is *Evil*: Thus the *Whorish Woman* Tempted the *young Fool*, Prov. 7. 18. Or with a design to entrap or draw any into danger. Thus the *Old Prophet* Tempted the *young Prophet*, being vexed that God should Honour him with so important a Message, whilst he was passed by, and knowing that God would not suffer his disobedience to go unpunished, in 1 *Kings* 13. 18. And such was the wicked Plot laid by the *Pharisees*, Luke 20. 23. when they came and asked our Saviour, whether *it was Lawful to pay Tribute to Cæsar or not* ? which if he had affirmed, would have lessened his Repute among the People, and made them to fall off from him, because they looked upon *Cæsar* but as an *Usurper*, and groaned for deliverance from the *Roman Yoke of Bondage*; yea, and many of them hoped and expected that this would have been effected by our Saviour. Or if he had denied, it would have brought him into danger of his life as an Enemy unto *Cæsar*, as afterwards he was accused to be.

Secondly, There is a way of *Temptation* whereby a Man *Tempts himself*, and that is Praise-worthy when it is only by Exploration and Trial of his own heart, to find out what Graces and what Corruptions lodge there. Thus we find the Saints in *Scripture* often examining and proving themselves. And every Christian is commanded expressly so to do. 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. *Examine your selves whether you be in the Faith, prove your own selves.* But it is wicked and sinful in two cases.

First, Then a Man wickedly and sinfully *Tempts himself*, when by presuming upon his own strength, he unnecessarily runs into danger, and ventures upon the next occasions of sinning, for this is to come within the *Devils Purlieus*, and if any such be made his prey, they must thank their own venturousness and folly.

Thus we *Tempt* our selves to the Commission of those sins, which we before-hand know such company, or such

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Employments, or other like Circumstances will prompt us to commit.

Secondly, A Man is said to Tempt himself, *when he is drawn aside by his own Lusts and enticed.* James 1. 14. For whensoever any particular sinful Object is propounded, it is this Lust that excites the heart to close with it and embrace it. This is indeed the great *Tempter*, without which other *Temptations* to evil would be but weak and ineffectual. And though possibly they might prevail through the innate liberty of our wills, yet were it not for our corruptions that cleave unto us, *Temptations* would have no more advantage upon us than our own free choice, and we might as easily reject as consent unto them.

Thirdly, There is a *Temptation* by which we are said to Tempt God: For the *Scripture* frequently witnesseth that God is *Tempted* by us, *Exod. 17. 2.* Moses chiding the People of *Israel*, expostulates with them: *Wherefore do you Tempt the Lord?* And God himself complains of it, *Numb. 14. 22.* *That they had Tempted him ten times.* Mal. 3. 15. Acts 15. 10. and divers other places. God is therefore *Tempted* by us, not as we are unto evil. For this the *Apostle* expressly denies, *James 1. 13.* *God cannot be Tempted to evil.* But,

First, *Tempting of God*, is sometimes taken for a presumptuous trying of the Providence of God. When we have no warrant nor necessity to cast our selves upon the extraordinary effects of it. Thus Christ Answers the Devil *Tempting* him to precipitate himself from the *Pinacle* of the *Temple*, upon confidence of an Extraordinary and Miraculous support from God, *It is written, says he, Thou shalt not Tempt the Lord thy God,* Matth. 4. 7. That is, we must not put God upon working of *Miracles* for our deliverance, when we may keep our selves from the danger in an ordinary providential way.

Secondly, *Tempting of God* is often times the same with *proyoking*:

provoking him. And therefore we find them put together, *Pfal. 95. 8. As in the provocation and in the day of Temptation in the Wilderness.* And therefore, look how God may be said to be provoked, so he may be said to be Tempted. That is, both in condescension to our Capacities, and in reference to the effects of it: for as a Man that is provoked, is Tempted to take Revenge upon him that hath done him the injury: So God expresseth himself as provoked by our sins, and Tempted thereby to inflict Wrath and Vengeance upon us for them. But this is only Figuratively. As for any proper *Temptation* by any new motion or inclination wrought in the Divine Will by the presence of any new Object, so God cannot without Blasphemy be said to be Tempted.

Fourthly, There is a *Temptation* whereby God is said to Tempt us: Now this is always Holy and Just; and it is only a *Temptation of Trial and Probation*. Sometimes it is to discover his Peoples Graces: And so he Tempted *Abraham*, that his Obedience might be conspicuous, *Gen. 22. 1.* And sometimes to discover their corruptions. So he Tempted *Hezekiah*, *2 Cron. 32. 31.* It is said, *That God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart:* Not but that God knew it before, for he is the Searcher of the Heart, and the Trier of the Reins. But that hereby it might be discovered and made apparent, and that *Hezekiah* by the discovery of his Pride and Corruption, might take occasion to humble himself the more deeply before God.

Fifthly, There is a *Temptation* whereby *Satan* Tempts us: yea, it is his proper Work, and that from which he hath his Name *ὀνειδιστῆρ*, the Tempter, *1 Thessal. 3. 5. Left by some means the Tempter might have Tempted you.* Now as God Tempts only by *Exploration and Trial:* So the Devil always Tempts by *Suasion*, inducing us by all possible Arguments and Motives to the Commission of sin, that he may have advantage to accuse us of it, and hereafter to torment us for it.

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Now among these many various kinds of *Temptations* which have been reckoned up, those *Temptations* which we are to pray against, are of three sorts.

Such as proceed from our own Lusts and Corruptions; such as proceed from other Mens perswading us, either by Motives or Examples unto that which is evil; or lastly, such as proceed from the *Devil*; or else they may be reduced to these two Heads. The *Temptations* which proceed from our own inbred Lusts and Corruptions, and those which proceed from the *Devil*: for indeed wicked Men are but his Agents and Instruments, when they Tempt us to that which is evil.

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

First, It is a very ill sign of a rotten and carnal heart, to be content to lie under a *Temptation*, although it doth not consent to the commission of sin. It speaks some kind of contentment and complacency that we take in the sin, when though we do not commit it, yet we are very well pleased to hear of it, and to entertain Motions and Sollicitations to it: This argues the Soul is not chaste towards God, that though we cannot enjoy it in commission, yet we will make some recompence to our selves for the scrupulousness of our Consciences, by enjoying it in the *Temptation*.

Secondly, If you suffer a *Temptation* to lodge in your Hearts, you are in imminent danger of being prevailed upon by it: The *Temptation* will be continually gathering strength, and your opposition against it may in some time flag and grow remiss, and objects and opportunities and such like advantages, may add such a force to the *Temptation*, as may hurry you away into the commission of the sin contrary:

trary to your former resolutions: You can promise your self no safety, no not from the commission of the vilest Sins, as long as you suffer the *Temptation* to abide upon you. Puddles that stand long unmoved will at last breed filthy and venomous Creatures: So a *Temptation* that lies long unmoved and undisturbed upon you, will form some filthy and loathsome Sin or other. The only secure way is to strike at the *Temptation* it self, to cut that off, and then there is no danger to be feared from the Sin. This is the course St. Paul took, 2 Cor. 12. 8. when he was *buffeted by a Messenger from Satan*, that is assaulted by a *Temptation*, he not only takes care that he might not yield to it, that was not altogether enough for a truly Gracious Soul to do; but he labours to be rid of the *Temptation* it self; *for this thing I besought the Lord thrice*, that is often, *that it might depart from me*. He prays not only that he may be kept from the Sin to which he was *Tempted*, but that he might be freed also from the *Temptation* it self.

Thirdly, Consider that as all *Temptations* are dangerous, and that we have great reason to fear least in the end they should prevail upon us to commit the Sin to which we are *Tempted*; so most of them are not only *Temptations*, but Sins also. Indeed there is a *Temptation* to Sin, which is a *Temptation* only and no Sin; for so Christ himself was *Tempted*, Matth. 4. 1. *He was led into the Wilderness to be Tempted of the Devil*. And we read there with what horrid *Temptations* he was assaulted, even to Worship the *Devil*, to distrust God, and to destroy himself. And yet as black as these *Temptations* were, they were only *Temptations* and no Sins; for so the *Apostle* tells us, Heb. 4. 15. *He was Tempted in all things like unto us, Sin only excepted*. And such sometimes are the *Temptations* wherewith the *Devil* assaults the Children of God, horrid and hellish *Temptations*, even to deny the very Being of God, the Truth of the *Scriptures*, the Immortality of the Soul, Heaven and Hell,

Hell, and such burlings of Blasphemies against the very Fundamentals and Ground-works of Religion; and yet if we bewatchful presently to abhor and reject these injections of *Satan*, and to cast back into his Face these his *fiery Darts* which he shoots into our Souls; they are not our Sins, though they are our Troubles; but they shall be charged upon *Satan*, to whom of right they do belong, we being but only Passive and Sufferers in them. But truly the most of our *Temptations* are Sins themselves; and therefore we have great Reason and need to pray against them; for they are Sins unto Sins; Sins as they are irregular and inordinate Motions of our Passions and Affections, and unto Sin as they tend to the bringing forth of farther Evil. And such are all the *Temptations* of our inbred Lusts and Corruptions, when our Desires and Affections strongly encline us to those *Objects* which God by his express Law hath forbidden us. Were it not for these sinful *Temptations*, the others which are immediately injected by the *Devil*, would not have any great advantage to prevail over us; for by reason of our Lusts and Corruptions, our Hearts always stand open to let in the *Devil*, and were it not that these have seized on the Soul, the *Devil* must have stood without, and though he had knock'd, yet would he have knock'd in vain: And therefore we see in his *first Temptation*, he deals all without doors, there was no Natural Lust in our *First Parents* to befriend him, or to betray the Soul unto him: He shuts up himself therefore in the Body of a *Serpent*, questioning with *Eve* about God's Commands, persuades her of the desirableness of the *forbidden Fruit*; tells her that *God's Threatning* was rather to fright them than to hurt them. But in all these Methods of Tempting, *Satan* had no admission into the Soul, because Lust as yet had taken no possession of it; but ever since, the Corruption of our Natures, contracted by the commission of the first Offence, the *Devil* doth not stand to *Tempt* us without doors, but he

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enters boldly as into the House of his old Friend *Conscience*; nay, as into his own House; for the Souls of wicked Men are so called, *Matth. 12. 29*. He is by Lust let into the very inmost recesses and retirements of the Heart, and can now propound *Objects* immediately to our *Fancies*, and by our *Fancies* darken our Understandings and Affections, and incline our Wills.

Again, our Natural Corruption as it admits, so it entertains and cherisheth the *Temptations* of the Devil. A spark of Fire, if there were no fuel prepared for it to seize on, would presently die and vanish. And so truly would *Satan's Temptations*, that are like so many sparks of *Hell Fire* struck by the Devil into our Souls; were it not for the prepared fuel, the catching Tinder of our Lusts and Corruptions, these *Temptations* would soon go out and expire; and be like a *flash of Lightning*, that might possibly startle us, but could not burn us. And thus though our *Saviour Christ* was grievously tempted; yet it is said, *Joh. 14. 30*. *The Prince of this World cometh and hath nothing in me*; that is, the Devil could find no Sin or Corruption in him, and therefore could fasten none of his *Temptations* upon him.

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

But since *Satan*, and our own Hearts prove *Tempters* unto us, some may possibly ask, how shall we know when it is *Satan* that *Tempts* us, and when the *Temptation* ariseth from our own Corruptions?

The *Question* is nice and difficult; yet because it may tend to the satisfaction of some who are curious in observing the *Workings* of their own Souls. I Answer,

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First, There is but one kind of *Temptations* to Sin, which have not their rise and original usually from Lust, and those are *Temptations* to sin against the Light and Law of Nature, as to the denying those Truths that are clear and evident by Natural Reason and strong Impressions on the Minds of Men; as the being of a God, the Immortality of the Soul, future Rewards and Punishments, and the like; or else the doing of those things which are repugnant to the Dictates of the Law of Nature, as for a Man to be *Tempted* to offer Violence to himself, and to destroy himself. It is very probable that such *Temptations* have not their first rise and original from our Natural Corruptions; but are immediately darted into the Soul by the *Devil*; though indeed our Corruptions too often catch at them and brood upon them, till they have from such *horrid Temptations* as these conceived some *horrid* and *monstrous* Sin in the Soul. Such injections as these, are Balls of *Wild-Fire* kindled in *Hell* and cast into the Soul by the *Devil*; and are not our Sins any farther than they are entertained by us and consented unto.

Secondly, As for those *Temptations* which have a greater compliance to the corrupt tendency and inclinations of our sinful Natures, which are not to such unnatural Sins as the other, it is very hard if not impossible to Judge, whether they originally proceed from *Satan*, or from our own inbred Corruptions; usually they both joyn together, if *Satan* first inject them, usually our Lusts nurse and foster them; or if our wicked Hearts be the first *Parents* of them, usually *Satan* inforceth them, and by additional recruits of *Temptations*, makes them more prevalent and permanent, and by fair and specious colours makes them more plausible and taking: And certainly there being such an innumerable Company of *Evil Spirits* that notwithstanding the great Work and Employment they have to do in the World; yet *Hell* could spare a *whole Legion* of them to Garrison in one

possessed Man, we may not doubt but that they are continually busie, prying into every one of our Tempers. And as long experience hath made them very sagacious in guessing at the first motions of our Hearts, by the alterations they find in our Fancies, or the Humours of our Bodies, of which they have an exact intuitive knowledge: So when by such visible Symptoms they perceive Corruption stirring in us, they presently joyn issue with it, and by all their art and policy inflame our Lusts by adding new fuel to them, improving the first Motions and imperfect Embryo's of Wickedness, till they arrive to their full strength and stature.

Thus, if by any *Symptoms* the Devil can perceive Wrath and Malice boiling within our Breast, he will presently move the Tongue to give it vent in opprobrious and reviling Speeches; and these he will second with injurious and violent Actions. So St. James tells us, *James 3. 6. The Tongue setteth on Fire the course of Nature, and is it self set on Fire of Hell.* But as a Holy Man, I think St. Austin, being demanded by a curious Questionist concerning the *Origin* of Evil, how Sin first got into the World? replied, It was not so necessary to discourse how it came into the World, as to consider how we might get it out again. So truly it is not so necessary critically to enquire, whence *Temptations* come into the Heart, as how they may be got out of it. And to this I may give the same Answer, that Christ did to his *Disciples*, *Matth. 17. 21. This kind goeth not out but by Fasting and Prayer.* We ought fervently to pray that God would rebuke the Wicked One, and cause him to depart from us; that he would by his Grace suppress all the Tumultuous Rebellions of our own Lusts and Passions, and neither lead us into *Temptation*, nor leave us under *Temptation*.

And thus I have done with the *First General* in this *Petition*, shewing you what *Temptations* are:

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The Second is, To shew you how God may be said to lead Men into *Temptation*; for it may seem very strange, that the Holy and Righteous God should have a Hand in *Tempting* of Men; which is so proper a Work of the *Devil*, and of our own Corruptions.

But the different manner of God's *leading us into Temptations*, and *Satan's Tempting us*, will sufficiently justify him from the least aspersion or suspicion of being the Author of Sin: And therefore,

First, God is said to *lead us into Temptation*, when he providentially presents outward *Objects* and Occasions, which do solcite and draw forth our inward Corruptions. When the *Temptations* of our inward Lusts meet with external enducements that are cast in a Man's way by God's Providence; then as we may be said to *Temp* him, so God may be said to *lead us into Temptation*. Thus *Achan* and *Judas* were no doubt of it covetous Wretches, before the one stole the *Wedge of Gold*, and the other, *betrayed his Master*: But the *Temptations* of those Lusts, were not as yet come to their strength, till the glittering of the *Wedge of Gold*, and the proffered Reward of the *High-Priest*, raised their Covetousness to its full height. Indeed we find the propensions of our wicked Hearts strongly bent towards Sin at all times, even then when we have no *external Objects* propounded to excite them; but when these inward inclinations do meet with outward enforcements, as alluring *Objects*, fit Opportunities, strong Perswasions from others, inducing Examples, or the like; the *Temptation* then grows headstrong and wild to purpose; and if Grace doth not rein it in with a hard hand, it will certainly hurry us into the commission of that Sin which hath so many advantages to commend it to the Soul. Now all these *Objective Temptations*, God may most righteously administer to our Lusts in the common course of his *Providence*, and we often see he doth so: For there is no outward act of Sin committed in the World,

World, but the Sinner took occasion from some *Providence* of God to perpetrate it. A *Thief* steals not any thing, but what *God's Providence* brings in his way. The *Murderer* slays not any Man but whom *Providence* offers to his Sword and Violence. And all the Villainy that ever was acted in the World was by a *Providence*, tending the Lusts of Men *Objects* and *Opportunities*, without which Sin conceived in us could not be brought to light.

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

Secondly, God is said to *lead us into Temptation*, when he withdraws the influences of his Grace and Spirit from us, and leaves us under the Power of a *Temptation*. Those very *Temptations* which when assisted by Divine Grace, we could easily resist and subdue; will when God withdraws himself from us, sadly prevail over us, and shamefully foil us. Thus it is said that God left *Hezekiah* to try, or to tempt him, 2 *Chron.* 32. 31. And indeed since our corrupt Natures are of themselves prone only unto evil, if God withdraw the Auxiliaries of his Grace, (as for many righteous causes he often doth,) every *Temptation* that assaults us will ravish our Consciences, and captivate our Souls: For all the security that we have from the committing of the most flagitious Crimes, is wholly from God's Grace, either restraining or renewing us; the former holding us back from the out-
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ward act of Sin; the latter weakening and destroying the inward habit and principle of Sin. And therefore when we pray that God would not *lead us into Temptation*; we beg that he would still continue the influences of his Grace unto us, and by them excite and quicken our Graces; that his Grace may not forsake us, nor our Grace fail us. That we may not be exposed to the Assaults of Spiritual Enemies naked and defenceless, to become a sure and easie Prey unto them.

Thirdly, God is said to *lead Men into Temptation* when he permits *Satan* and Wicked Men his Instruments to tempt us; yea, sometimes he gives them commission, as well as permission; and appoints and sends them to do it. Thus we find in the case of *Abab*, 1 Kings 22. 24. *Who shall persuade Abab that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead*; and an *Evil Spirit* steps forth, and very officiously accepts of the Employment, as most congruous to so malicious a Nature; and God sends him with his commission in the 22. verse, *Thou shalt persuade him and prevail, go forth and do so*; and so he did. And as God doth sometimes thus send the *Tempter*, and give him commission to assault and prevail over wicked and ungodly Persons, their former Sins provoking him to punish them with farther Impieties. So whensoever any of us are *Tempted*, God doth at least permit *Satan* to sift and winnow us, sometimes to his own defeat, but too often to ours. And in this sense there is no *Temptation* that befalls us, but God leads us into it. And therefore it is very observable, that whereas in 1 Chron. 21. 1. It is said, that *Satan provoked David to Number Israel*; yet in 2. Sam. 24. 1. it is said, *the Lord moved David against Israel, to say, Go number Israel and Judah*; here one and the same *Temptation* is attributed both to God and to the *Devil*; but it must be understood under a diverse habitude and respect; *Satan* Tempted him effectively, God only permissively. And thus God may be said to *lead every Man into*

into *Temptation* whom he suffers to be Tempted. When therefore we pray that God would *not lead us into Temptation*, we pray that he would not permit the *Devil* to approach near unto us, nor to cast his *Fiery Darts* at us; but that he would put a hook into the nose of that great *Leviathan*, and so bridle and restrain his Fury, that he may not be able to assault us. These now are all the ways that I know of, how God may be said to *lead Men into Temptation*. Either by offering them objects and opportunities by his Providence, which may correspond with their inward Lusts and Corruptions, and as it were entice and call them forth. Or else by permitting *Satan* and wicked Men to Tempt us. Or lastly, by withdrawing from us the influences of his Grace and Holy Spirit, and leaving us under the power of *Temptations* when they do assault us. But for any proper, effective, or persuasive *Tempting* of Men to sin; this is infinitely abhorrent to his Pure and Holy Nature, in which sence St. *James* tells us, *James* 1. 13. *Let no Man say when he is tempted, that he is tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted to evil, neither tempteth he any Man.* But though God cannot thus *Tempt* any Man without a stain to his Infinite Purity and Holiness: yet he may *lead Men into Temptation*: either Providentially, or Permissively, or by subtracting his Grace, whereby they should stand: And yet at last, justly punisheth them for sinning. And this is no unrighteous thing with God, for he lays no constraint upon the freedom of our Wills, but we sin freely and of our own accord.

Now although God can easily keep us from all assaults and attempts of our Spiritual Enemies, yet he permits us to be *Tempted* by them for most Wise and Holy ends. As,

First, He leaves these *Canaanites* to molest us, to teach us the *Wars of the Lord*, to make us continually Watchful, to breathe and exercise our Graces, to administer matter for our Conquest, and occasion for our Crown and Triumph.

Secondly,

Secondly, To convince us of our own utter inability to stand of our selves without his help and assistance: thereby engaging us to depend upon his Arm, and to call for Divine Supplies and Succours.

Thirdly, To Glorifie both his Justice and Mercy. His Justice in giving up wicked Men to the rage of Temptations, to be hurried by them from sin to sin, till at last they put an end to the Succession of their sins in Eternal Damnation. And his Mercy in succouring of, and supporting and delivering his Children out of all their *Temptations*. And therefore when *St. Paul* prayed to be freed from the buffettings of the Messenger of *Satan*; God answers him, *My Grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness,* 2 Cor. 12. 9. When the *Devil* presumes he hath so well laid his *Temptations* that it is impossible for the People of God to escape his Snares, yet God finds a way for their deliverance out of them all. For God holds the great *Tempter* under a powerful restraint, so that he cannot touch us beyond permission and commission. And therefore that place in *Revelat.* 2. 10. is very remarkable to this purpose, *Fear none of those things that thou shalt suffer, behold the Devil shall cast some of you into Prison, that you may be tried, and you shall have Tribulation ten days.* How many restraints are here mentioned to be put upon that malicious Spirit? He shall *cast into Prison*, whereas he would willingly cast into *Hell*, or at least into the Grave: It shall be but *some of you*, whereas his spight and rage is against all the Children of God: And it shall be *but for ten days*, but for a short time neither: the Place, the Number, the Time, all limited, and that with such a restraint, that all the Pride and Rage of the *Devil* shall not be able to exceed it.

Fourthly, God permits his own Children to be *Tempted*, that by their Victory over *Temptations* he may confound the Malice of *Satan*, and commend the Excellency of his own Ways and Service. This highly honours God, and

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shames the *Malice* of the *Devil*, when we are neither terrified by Sufferings, nor induced by the Pleasures of sin from the course of our Obedience; for this evidently declares, That we are True and Loyal to our Great *Sovereign*. That we more fear his Eternal Wrath and Displeasure, than those light Afflictions that are but for a moment; and that we find more true Joy and solid Delight in his Service, than in the ways of Sin and Vanity. And therefore God calls us forth as his Champions, puts his Cause in our hands, and bids us resist manfully for the Credit and Honour of Piety, and then lets loose *Satan* upon us, whom if we can but Conquer; (which certainly we shall do if we but seriously resolve it) God and Angels, who from the *Theatre of Heaven* are Spectators of the Combat, give us their Applause, and will hereafter give us our Crown. See how God Glories over this baffled *Devil*, and upbraids him with the Victorious Constancy of his Servant *Job*: God had before commended the Integrity of *Job*, *Chap. 1. 8.* *Hast thou considered my Servant Job, that there is none like him upon the Earth, a perfect and upright Man, one that feareth God and escheweth Evil.* To this that *Malicious Spirit* sullenly replies, *Doth Job fear God for nought? thou needest not Glory in his ready Service and Obedience when he is so well paid for it; no wonder he is so Pious and Devout when he gets so well by it; but leave him a while to me, to take from him those enducements that make him so Pious and Holy, and I will undertake that even this perfect and upright Man shall curse thee even to thy Face: God accepts the Challenge on his Servants behalf, Satan and Job enter the List, the Devil buffets him sore, destroys all his Cattel, coins his House, kills his Children; yet Job shrinks not for all this, but wrestles naked with his Adversary and foils him: See now how God rejoices at his Champion's Victory, and upbraids the Devil with his shameful overthrow, *Chap. 2. 3.* *Hast thou considered my Servant Job, that there is none like him.**

king in the Earth, a perfect and an upright Man, one that feareth God and escheweth Evil. God repeats the same Character and Commendation which he had before given him, Glorifying as if it were over Satan, that Job had made his Words good; yea, and still he holds fast his Integrity, although thou movest me against him to destroy him without cause. So truly, whensoever God suffers us to be Tempted, it is that by our Conquest he might bring Honour to himself, and Credit to Piety and Religion. For this makes it appear, That we see so much of Excellency in the ways of God, that nothing in the World, whether Crosses or Crowns, Thorns or Thrones, Pains or Pleasures, Loss or Profit, can in the least persuade us to baulk or forsake them. And in such an Heroick Champion as this, God himself Glories and Triumphs.

And thus I have finished the former part of this Petition, *Lead us not into Temptation*; the next follows, *But deliver us from evil*.

Now here before I come to speak of the Words themselves, let us observe their connexion with, and dependance upon the foregoing Words; for whereas our Saviour hath taught us to pray with this Adversative Particle, *But lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from evil*; this may instruct us. That the best security against sin, is to be secured against *Temptations* unto sin: For though it be no excuse that we are violently tempted to sin when we yield to the commission of it; yet withal, it too often happens, that those whom God leads into *Temptation*, and engageth amidst the press of their Enemies, it too often happens, that they come off bleeding and wounded. Yet,

First, It is no excuse for sinning, because no *Temptation* is a *Compulsion*. The Devil can only persuade, he cannot constrain us to sin: God may let him into the fancy, and suffer him to paint upon that the most alluring Images that Vice can be represented in, but when he hath done all this, it is still our own choice that makes us like what his

Pencil hath drawn there. And in this lies a great difference between God's Operations upon us by his Grace, and Satan's upon his Suggestions; in that God hath an immediate access to the very elicite Acts of our Wills and Understandings; and can and doth by his Spirit, actuate them by an immediate energy, and call forth not only by, but to their Objects: But now these are such Sacred Partments of the Soul, that the *Devil* hath no *Key* to them. And therefore his Method is to bribe the attendants on these chief Powers of the Soul, the *Fancy* and the *Passions*, to which he hath admission through the near dependance they have upon material *Organs*, and by these to send in Messages, and offer Proposals to it; which yet if it be not basely false and treacherous to its God, it may reject and disdain. If the *Devil* could force Men, he would likewise justify them, for that can be no sin, where there is no liberty: The same *Temptation* which compels to any Action, would likewise make that Action to be no Transgression; because Laws are not given but upon supposition of freedom. And therefore whosoever sins upon a *Temptation*, sins not merely because he was *Tempted*, but because he would sin: And though the sin had not been committed without the *Temptation*, yet the *Devil* can be no farther chargable with it, than only because his Malice prompts him to perswade us. Our own Wills are the most dangerous *Devils*, freely embracing the proffers of *Satan*, and consently to our own destruction, and whilst we consent to that upon which God hath threatned and entailed it. And therefore when thou sinnest, think not to lay the fault upon *Satan*, or his *evil Instruments* whom he makes use of in *Tempting*, for though it be their fault and guilt to *Tempt*, yet it is only thine to yield, and God will not condemn thee for being *Tempted*; which thou couldst not help; but for yielding and consenting, which is thine own free Act and thine own Sin also. Thou who art drawn away by thy lewd Companions,

panions, to abuse thy self and dishonour thy body by *Riot* and *Luxury*, or to break God's Laws and Man's by Theft, or any other condemned Crimes, though thou hast a great deal of reason to hate them, yet hast thou infinitely more reason to hate and abhor thy self. They can but persuade, they cannot compel thee; yea, if they should threaten thee with *Death* it self, unless thou consentest: yet, thou liest under no force, but sinnest freely, and upon very weak motives dost destroy and damn thy own Soul: since all motives inducing to sin must be accounted weak when God hath over-balanced them with the promise of everlasting Life, and the threatening of everlasting Death. And therefore we find God as justly, as frequently in *Scripture*, charging Mens perdition upon themselves, and laying the blood of their Souls upon the stubborn resolvedness of their own Wills. *Hosea* 13. 9. *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thy self.* *John* 5. 40. *Ye will not come unto me that you may have Life.* *Matth.* 23. 37. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you, as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings, and you would not?* And therefore let your *Temptations* be what they will, yet the sin and guilt is still your own; if as you are led into *Temptations*, so *Temptations* lead you into *Sin*.

Secondly; Though it be no excuse for sinning, yet it is too seldom seen, that those who are brought into *Temptation*, are brought off again without contracting some guilt on their *Consciences* by it. For since there is so great a Correspondence between *Temptations* and our *Corruptions*, it would be as strange for a Man that hath been hotly assaulted by them, to have no impression made upon him, as to carry Fire in his Bosom and his Cloaths not be burnt: yea, almost as *Miraculous* as to walk secure in the midst of a *Fiery Furnace* untouch'd by the Flames. There is a strong sympathy between our corrupt hearts and *Satan's* *Temptations*; and as it is with strings tuned to *Unisons*, upon the motion:

motion of the one, the other also will move and vibrate: So is it here, the heart vibrates and is secretly affected upon the first motion of a *Temptation* with some passion of Delight and Complacency towards that sinful Object. And there is a kind of liking and approbation of it in the very first conception of our Thoughts, before they are yet deliberated and digested; so that it is almost as impossible for Temptations to assault us without leaving some guilt and pollution behind them, as it is for *Objects* rightly presented to a *Mirror*, to make no impression of their Image upon it. For though the *Temptation* should produce nothing but hovering and fleeting *Idea's*, and some imperfect shadows of Desires and Affections in us, which yet are check'd and scattered, as soon as ever they begin to form themselves, yet there is not the thinnest film of a sinful thought, nor the least breathing of a sinful desire; but the Holy Law of God and his Word, which reacheth to the dividing asunder of the Soul and Spirit, and is a Judge and a Discerner of the Thoughts and intents of the Heart, doth strictly prohibit and condemn these callow, unslog'd motions of our Hearts, to be Concupiscence, the sad effects of *Original sin*, and the fruitful cause of all actual.

And therefore if we would be *delivered from evil*, we have very great cause first to pray that we be not led into *Temptation*: For some *Temptations* do almost so inseparably follow one upon another, that this will be our best security against those secret desires and workings, and first smotherings and rudiments of wickedness, which else the compliance of our corrupt hearts with *Satan's Temptations* will certainly betray us unto. Hence it is, that when God in *Scripture* frequently dehorts us from sin, he extends the prohibition to all *Temptations* and *Occasions* of sinning. Yea those things which in themselves considered, may be lawfully and innocently done by us, yet because they may prove Snares and *Temptations* to us, we must as carefully refrain

refrain from them, as we earnestly desire to keep our selves far from sin. And therefore it sufficeth not the *Wise Man* to command, *If sinners entice, consent thou not*; Prov. 1. 10. but that thou mayest be sure not to consent, thou must order thy Actions and Converse so, as that thou mayest not be enticed by them: in the 15. verse says he, *Walk not thou in the way with them, refrain thy feet from their path*. And so we have the same Counsel given us by him in another *Chapter*, that we may not be inveigled by the allurements of a strange Woman, be sure to avoid all occasions thereof, Prov. 5. 8. *Remove thy way far from her, come not near the door of her House*. And again, Prov. 4. 14, 15. *Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil Men, avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, pass away*. Here is earnestness even to a tautology, as some may prophanely think; but *Sacred Writ* can admit of no such thing. But there are so many expressions heaped up, signifying the same thing only, to denote how great the necessity of avoiding *Temptations* and *Occasions* to evil, is to those who desire to avoid the sin. We have treacherous and deceitful hearts within us, that have often betrayed us when we have trusted them. And I beseech you, call to mind when you have emboldned your selves to venture upon *Temptations* and sinful *Occasions*, being confident and fully resolved not to yield to them: Have you not often been surprized and led away Captive, contrary to your Hopes, contrary to your Intentions, contrary to your Resolutions, contrary to the vain Confidences with which you were before possess'd? Methinks former experience should make you cautious, never again to trust those hearts with such opportunities and advantages for wickedness, since they have been so often already treacherous and deceitful to us. Venture them not therefore upon *Temptations*, for what security have you that a sinful heart will not sin; yea, and betray you to commit those great abominations.

nations which possibly you cannot now think of, without horror and shivering.

And thus much I thought fit to note to you from the connexion of this part of the *Petition* with the former, *Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.*

In the words themselves we have two things chiefly considerable: The thing that we pray against, and the Person to whom we pray. That which we pray against is *Evil*, that we may be *delivered from it*. The Person to whom we pray, is God our Heavenly Father.

That which we pray against, is *Evil*. Some limit this word *Evil* only unto *Satan*, making the sence to be, deliver us from the *Evil one*: founding this Interpretation upon that *Article* that is joyned with the Original Word $\piονηρος$; but this is not always descretive, but sometimes indefinite, as for instance, *Matth. 12. 35.* and many other places. And therefore considering the Comprehensiveness of this Prayer, we ought to allow the Word a large extent, and to comprehend under it,

First, *Satan* whose proper *Style* and *Epithete* it is to be called, *the Evil one*: and so we find this *black Title* given him in *Scripture*, *Matth. 13. 19. The wicked one cometh and snatcheth away that which was sown.* And 1 *John 2. 13, 19. You have overcome the wicked one.* He is the wicked one eminently and singularly. He is the chief Author of *Evil*, his *Temptations* are all unto *Evil*, his delight is only in *Evil*, he is the Father of all those that do *Evil*. And therefore this is the most proper and significant Character of the *Devil*. But yet it is also ascribed unto Men according to their resemblance of him.

Secondly, All other *Evils* are here meant, whether they be of sin, or sorrow; whether they be Transgressions, or Punishments; and that either Temporal punishments in those Judgments which God inflicts upon sinners here: or Eternal Judgments, such as he hath threatned to inflict upon them

them hereafter. From all these we pray to be delivered; but the greatest of all these, is Sin. For,

First, It is greatest in the Nature of it, as being the only thing that is contrary to the greatest Good, even God; for in all other things else in the World there is something of Good, even as much as derived and participated of God: And so the very *Devils* themselves have a *Metaphysical* Goodness in them, as they are Creatures and have received their Beings and Powers from God, who is the Author of nothing that is *Evil*. But *Sin* hath not the least ray or footsteps of Goodness in it, but is only defect and irregularity: And that alone which as his Soul always hates, so his Hands never made.

Secondly, It is the greatest *Evil* in the Effects and Consequences of it. It once turn'd Glorious *Angels* into hideous *Devils*, and tumbled them down from Heaven to Hell, filled the World with Woes and Plagues, brought Death and Diseases, and a vast and endless sum of Miseries into it; it torments and terrifies the Conscience, kindles Hell-flames, exposes the Soul to the eternal and direful revenges of the great God; and is so perfectly and only *Evil*, that the worst of things here were they free from the Contagion of *Sin* would be excellent and amiable.

To pray therefore against the *Evil* of *Sin*, is to pray against all other *Evils* whatsoever; for the *Devil*, the *Evil One*, cannot hurt us but by *Sin*: And no other *Evil* can befall us but for *Sin*, God inflicting them as the due Guerdon and Reward of our Transgressions. *Sin* therefore being the chief and Principal *Evil*, and all others but retainers to it; I shall at present speak only of God's delivering us from *Sin*.

Now as there are Two things in *Sin* which make it so exceeding *Evil*, the Guilt of it whereby it Damns, and the Filth of it whereby it Pollutes the Soul; so God hath Two ways to deliver us from it.

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First, By removing the Guilt already contracted, which he doth in justifying and pardoning the Sinner.

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

Of the Pardon of Sin I have already largely treated in the foregoing Petition. The Deliverance from Evil, which we here pray for, is by preventing it for the future. And whereas we are taught by our *Saviour* to beg this of God our Heavenly Father, we may observe, that it is only the Almighty Power of God that can keep us from Sin; and that will appear if we consider, either our Enemies, or our selves.

First, Consider the mighty Advantages that our great Enemy the *Devil* hath against us: As he is a Spirit he is both powerful and subtile; and both these are whetted by his great Malice against us; long experience also for above five thousand years hath made him very politick in dealing with Souls, and carrying on his own designs and interest: He knows our temper, our passions, and our inclinations, and can chuse and cull out those *Objects* which shall infallibly strike and affect us; he waits those *Mollia tempora fandi*, those easie hours of whispering his suggestions to us when we are most facile and compliant, when we are most easily wrought upon, and made soft to his hands by some foregoing circumstances: And if after all this he despairs to prevail upon us as a *Devil*, he can quickly shift his shape and transform himself into an *Angel of Light*, and engage our very Consciences unto evil; he can disguise his Temptations into impulses of the *Holy Spirit*, persuade us that what he prompts us to is our Duty, head his *fiery Darts* with *Scripture Sentences*, wrap up his Poison in the leaves of the *Bible*, and wound our Souls by our Consciences; and certainly this *Devil* of Light is now gone abroad into the World with all that Power of Deceivableness he can, and we cannot but with sad and bleeding Hearts observe his too
general

general prevalency and success: And besides all this he is continually present with us, follows us up and down where ever we go, and is always at our Elbow to prompt us to Evil, and at our Right Hand to oppose us in that which is Good. *Hell* hath *Emissaries* enough to afford every Man a *Friend* for his Attendant; and these critically observe every glance of thine Eyes, every flash of thy Passions, and are presently ready to apply suitable *Temptations* unto thee, and to strike thee in that part of thy Soul which is softest and most yielding. And as the *Syrians* that were sent by *Benbadad* to the *King of Israel*, to intercede for him, watched every Word that should fall from his Mouth, that they might lay hold of it to obtain farther Favour from him: So these *Spies of Hell* do watch every kind Word, and every kind look of thine towards Sin, and want no skill to improve them to obtain yet greater matters from thee. Now if God did not appear to deliver us from these subtle *Wiles* and *Methods* of the *Devil*, how soon would he make Fools of the wisest and most experienced Christians?

Secondly; Consider the mighty Dis-advantages that we lie under to oppose the *Temptations* of the *Devil*, which though they be many and great, yet I shall name but two, which may be found even in the best of Men.

First, Our inadvertency and heedlessness, through which we are often surprized into Sin, and captivated by the cunning craftiness of our Enemies which lie in wait to deceive. How seldom is it that we stand upon our Guard, or if we do that we are compleatly armed? Sometimes our *Shield*, sometimes our *Helmets*, sometimes our *Sword* of the *Spirit* is wanting: How seldom is it that we attend all the Motions of the Enemy? Indeed a Christian should look round about him; for he is every where beset and encompassed about with Enemies; and whilst he is vigilant to ward one part, the *Devil* falsifies his thrust, and wounds him in another; but if he cannot wound on the Right Hand by *Presumption*,

he will try what he can do on the Left by *Despair*; if he cannot prevail by his *Temptations* to cause us to neglect and cast off Holy Duties, he will *Tempt* us to Pride our selves in the well performing of them; if he cannot make us fall, he will *Tempt* us to be high-minded, because we stand; and so make our very standing the occasion of our woful downfall; and because we are apt to think our selves better than others, he will *Tempt* us to be supercilious Despisers and Contemners of others.

Now, O Christian, it is a very hard matter, and thou wilt find it so, thus to turn thee about to every Assault: and that Man had need to have his Spiritual Senses well exercised, that shall be able dextrously to do it. Now when so great circumspection is scarce sufficient for our security, how can they possibly escape without fearful Wounds and Gashes in their Consciences, who are supinely negligent of their Souls, and mind not which way their Thoughts, their Passions, their Affections encline, and so give the *Devil* a Handle to turn their Souls by which way he will? Certainly if we do not buckle our *Spiritual Armour* close to us, but suffer the joynts of it by our heedlessness to lie open, the *Devil* may easily wound us wheresoever and in whatsoever part he pleaseth. And truly, if through this inadvertency and want of circumspection, *Adam* in the State of *Innocency*, and the State of Uprightness fell, when the *Devil* had no immediate access or admission into the inward Faculties and Powers of his Soul: yet if *Satan*, who was but a young, unpractised, and unexperienced *Devil*, could prevail with him by his Wiles, to ruine himself, and to betray the great Trust which God had deposited in his Hands for all his Posterity: How much greater may we think is his Advantage over us, into whom he may insinuate himself and his *Temptations*; and when we are busied about other things, strike and wound us at unawares.

Secondly, Besides this inadvertency, the *Devil* hath another grand Advantage to lead us into *Evil*, and that is because we are naturally prone and enclined of our selves to those very Sins to which he Tempts us. It is very hard for that place to escape, that hath Enemies without and Traytors within. So stands the case with us, we are not only beleaguer'd; but betrayed; there are in our Hearts multitudes of Lusts that hold intelligence with the *Devil*, and espouse his Cause; yea, there is no one Sin, how vile and profligate soever, but it may find Partisans in our base and wicked Hearts, wherein are the Seeds and Principles of all Impieties; and therefore as things of a like Nature presently congregate, (as we see one drop of Water diffuseth it self and runs into another,) so *Temptations* to Sin meeting with a sinful Nature are presently entertained, and as it were embodied together; for whilst we pursue what *Satan* Tempts us unto, we do but pursue what our own Natural Lusts and Corruptions inclin'd unto before, waiting only for an opportunity of being called forth into Act.

And therefore considering both the Advantages the *Devil* hath against us, and the great Disadvantages under which we lie; he a Spirit, we but Flesh; he wise and subtle, we foolish and ignorant; he experienced, we raw and unpractised; he diligent and watchful, we careless and negligent; he laying a close siege to us without; and we betraying our selves within: It must needs be ascribed only to the Goodness and Grace of God, to deliver us from the commission of that *Evil*, to which we are so fiercely and cunningly *Tempted*.

And thus I have demonstrated the *Proposition*, That it is only the Almighty Power of God that can preserve us from Sin. It now remains to shew you, the Ways and Methods that God takes to do it, and those are in the General Three: By *restraining Providences*; by *common*
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and restraining Grace; and by sanctifying and renewing Grace.

First, God delivers us from *Evil*, by his *restraining Providence*, putting an Hook into Men's Nostrils, and a Bridle into their Jaws, and by a powerful Hand reining them in when they are most fiery and furious. And thus he often doth with the worst and vilest of Men, whose Lusts though they estuate and boyl within, and are like the raging *Sea*, raging and rolling in their Hearts; yet God sets bounds to their proud Waves, and saith to them as he doth to the great *Sea*, hitherto shall you proceed and no farther. It is to this we owe it, that the Wickedness of Men hath not yet made the World an uninhabitable *Desart*; that *Solitudes* and *Wildernesses* are not as secure Retreats, as frequented Cities; and savage Beasts as safe Company as Men. To this we owe it that almost every one is not a *Cain* to his Brother, an *Amnon* to his Sister, a *Judas* to his Master, and a *Devil* to all the World; for where Grace doth not change, *Divine Providence* doth many times so Chain the Sinner, that he cannot bring forth that Wickedness he hath conceived; that although he be permitted Sin enough to destroy himself, which his very Will and Affection to Evil is sufficient to do; yet through God's with-holding Opportunity or Abilities from him; his Sins are not permitted to break out to the ruine and destruction of others. Though God doth as it were permit them to give up their Hearts to the *Devil*, yet he ties up their Hands, let them imagine and intend as much mischief as *Hell* can inspire them with, yet none of all this shall they execute, any otherwise than as his Holy and Wise *Providence* permits: Yea, *Divine Providence* is effectual not only in keeping wicked Men from the outward Acts of Sin; but even God's dearest Children and Servants they also have a great deal of Corruption stirring in their Hearts, and even in them Lust is too fruitful, conceiving those Wickednesses which God often

often by his *Providence* so stifles and strangles in the very Birth. May not the best of us with thankful acknowledgements of the *Divine Goodness* towards us, reflect back upon many dis-appointments that we have met with, to which we had given our consent and entertained purposes of sinning? May we not all say, Had not God denied Opportunities, or cast in Diversions, or cut off the Provisions which we had made for our Lusts, we should at such or such a time have dishonoured the Gospel, scandalized our Profession, opened the Mouths of wicked and ungodly Men to blaspheme the Holy and Reverend Name of God, and contracted to our own Consciences black and horrid Guilt, by the commission of some infamous Crimes, of which we were guilty by consenting to them? God hath hedg'd up the *Broad-way* with Thorns, that so he might turn us into the *Narrow-way* that leads to Eternal Bliss and Happiness.

Now the particular Methods that *Divine Providence* makes use of to prevent the Sins of Men, are many and various, and all of them wise and just.

First, Sometimes God by his *Providence* cuts short their *Power*, whereby they should be enabled to Sin. All that *Power* that Wicked Men have, is either from themselves, or their Associates whom they make use of to accomplish their Wickedness; and sometimes *Divine Providence* strikes them in both; it cuts off their Instruments for Counsel. And thus *Providence* over-ruling *Abjalom* to reject the politick Counsel of *Achitophel*, prevents all that mischief that so Wise and so Wicked a *States-Man* might afterwards have contrived, upon which he goes home and hangs himself; and as if his *Sagacity* forsook him not in his Death, by that last Action gave a Prophetic *Omen* of his Masters attending *Destiny*.

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Sometimes God cuts off their Instruments for execution: So God miraculously defeated the huge and vast Host of the blaspheming *Rabshekah*, and by unseen strokes slew almost two hundred thousand of them dead upon the place. Sometimes God immediately strikes their Persons, and disables their Natural Faculties; so he smote the Men of *Sodom* with Blindness, and put out those very Eyes that had kindled in them the Flames of unnatural Lusts: Thus likewise when *Feroboam* had stretch'd forth his Hand to lay hold on the *Prophet*, God suddenly withers it up. Sometimes he hides their Wits from them and besots them: So the *Jews*, in *Job*, 7. 30. sought to have apprehended *Jesus*, and though he was in the very midst of them, and there was enough of them to do it, yet God so astonishes them, that they only stand gazing on him, whilst he passes through the Crowd of them and escapes away. And indeed it is a great Mercy of God to take away that Power from Men that he sees they will only use to their own destruction. And though Wicked Men would think that if God should now strike them Dumb, or Blind, or Lame, or Impotent, that it would be a heavy Plague or Curse inflicted upon them; yet believe it, it is far better that God should strike thee Dumb, than that ever thou shouldst open thy Mouth, to rail at him and his People: Better thou wert stricken Blind, than that ever the *Devil* and filthy Lusts should enter into thy Soul, by the Windows of thine Eyes: Better that thou wert maim'd, than that ever thou shouldst have power to commit those Sins which will damn, if but intended, but if executed will sink the Soul seven fold deeper into damnation.

Secondly, Sometimes *Providence* prevents Sin, by raising up other opposite Powers against a Sinner. Thus God defeated the designs of the *Scribes* and *Rulers* who hated Christ, and oftentimes they would have put him to Death; but it is said they feared the People, whom his
 Doctrine,

Doctrine, his Miracles, and his course of Life had obliged to himself. Instances of this nature are many, and occur familiarly.

Thirdly, Sometimes *Providence* casts in some seasonable diversion, which turns Men off from the Commission of those sins which they had intended. Thus the Providential passing by of *Merchants*, induced the *Patriarchs* to sell their Brother *Joseph*, whom before they had determined to furnish. As skilful Physicians, when one part of the Body is oppressed with ill and peccant humours, draw them to another part less dangerous. So God by his *Providence* many times turns Men from the Commission of greater sins to a lesser sin. And I believe there are but few Men, who if they will but seriously examine their lives, may produce many instances both of the *Devil's* policy in fitting them with occasions and opportunities of sinning, and of God's *Providence* in causing some urgent Affairs, or some sudden and unexpected *Accidents* to intervene, whereby they are turned off from what they purposed.

Fourthly, Sometimes by his *Providence* he takes off the *Objects* against which they intended to sin. Thus God preserved *St. Peter* from *Herod's* Ambitious Rage. He intended the next morning to put him to *Death*, but that very night, God sends his *Angel* to work his escape, and thereby hinders the execution of that wicked purpose. And thus in all Ages, God many times hides his Children from the fury of wicked Men, that their *Wrath* against them, like *Saul's* *Javelin* misseth *David*, and striketh only the Wall, from whence it often rebounds back into their own Faces.

These now are some of the most remarkable Methods of *Divine Providence* in preventing the sins of Men. And I am very prone to think that there are very few who if they will be at the pains to reflect back upon and strictly examine that part of their lives that is past and gone, they may easily produce many remarkable instances, both of the

Devil's Policy in fitting them with opportunities and occasions of sinning, and of God's *Providences* in causing some immergent affairs, or some other strange and unexpected accidents to interpose, so that he hath either Graciously taken away our power, or taken away the *Objects* of our Lusts, or {diverted us when we were in the pursuits of them. To this we owe much of the innocency, and in some respects blamelesness of our lives; that we have not been a scandal to the Gospel, a shame to the Good, and a scorn to the Bad: and this is the *first* way how God preserves from sin by his *Providence*.

Secondly, God preserves from sin by his *restraining Grace*. Now this *restraining Grace* is that which is common and vouchsafed to wicked Men as well as good. Indeed God by it deals in a secret way with the very heart of a sinner, and though he doth not change the habitual, yet he changeth the present actual disposition of it; so as not only by external checks laid upon Mens Lusts, but by internal persuasions, motives, and arguments, they are taken off the prosecution of those very sins which yet remain in them unmortified and reigning. Thus *Esau* comes out against his Brother *Jacob* with a Troop of two hundred *Russians*, intending doubtless to take revenge upon him for his *Birth-right* and *Blessing*; but at their first meeting, God by a secret work so mollifies his heart, that instead of falling upon him to kill him, he falls upon his neck and kisses him. Here God restrain'd *Esau* from that bloody sin of *Murder*, not in a way of *External Providence* only, but with his own hand he immediately turns about his heart, and by seeing such a company of *Cattel* bleating and bellowing, timorous *Women*, and helpless *Children* bowing and supplicating to him; he turns his Revenge into Compassion, and with much urging, receives a Present from him whom he thought to have made a Prey. The same powerful restraint God laid upon the heart of *Abimelech* a *Heathen King*, *Gen.*

20. 6. where God tells him, *I with-held thee from sinning against me, and therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.* Here was nothing visible that might hinder *Abimelech*, but God invisibly wrought upon his heart, and unhing'd his sinful desires. And from these two instances of *Esau* and *Abimelech*, we may clearly collect, how *restraining Grace* differs, both from *restraining Providence*, and from *Sanctifying Grace*: from *Providence* it differs, because usually when God *Providentially restrains* from sin, he doth it by some visible apparent means, which do not reach to work any change or alteration upon the heart, but only lays an external check upon Mens sinful Actions. But by *restraining Grace*, God deals in a secret way with the very heart of a sinner, and although he doth not change the nature of it, yet he alters the present inclination of it, and takes away the desire of committing those sins which yet he doth not mortifie. And from *Sanctifying Grace* it differs also, in that God vouchsafes it to wicked Men and Reprobates, to the end that their Lives may be more plausible, their Gifts more servicable, and their Condemnation more intolerable. And indeed the efficacy of this *restraining Grace* may be so great that there may appear but very little difference between the Conversation of a true Christian whom *Special Grace* Sanctifies, and the Conversation of one in a State of Nature whom common Grace only restrains: they may both live outwardly without blame or offence, avoiding the gross pollutions of the World, and shine in a Sphere above the ordinary sort of Men, and yet the one be a *Star*, and the other but a *Meteor*. The high-way may be as dry, and as fair, in a Frosty Winter, as in a warm Summer, but there is a great deal of difference in the cause of it: In Summer the Sun dries up the moisture, in Winter the Frost binds it in. So the ways of those who have only a *restraint* laid upon them, may be as fair and clear as the ways of those who are truly *Sanctified*, but the cause is vastly different; Grace

hath dried up the filth of the one, but ownly bound in the filth of the other.

Now God doth thus by his *restraining Grace* preserve Men from sin, by propounding to them such Considerations and Arguments as may be sufficient to engage Conscience against it, when yet the Will and Affections are still bent towards it. *Restraining Grace* thunders the Curse of the Law, and brandisheth the Sword of Justice in the Face of a sinner, reports nothing but *Hell* and *Everlasting Torments*, and such terrible things which may scare Men from their sins, though still they love them. It is indeed a great Mercy of God to keep us from sin, even by legal terrours, and usually these are a good preparation and introduction for saving Grace. Doubtless, the thoughts and fears of *Hell*, have with very good success been made use of to keep Men from those sins that lead unto *Hell*. But yet if in our conflicts against *Temptations*, we can draw Arguments from no other *Topicks* but *Hell* and *Eternal Death* and *Destruction*: If we cannot as well quench the *Fiery Darts* of the *Devil* in the *Blood of Jesus Christ*, as in the *Lake* of *Fire* and *Brimstone*; it is much to be doubted, whether our abstaining from sin be from any higher principle than what is common: only for fear of punishment, and not for love of God or Goodness.

Thirdly, God hath another method of keeping Men from sin, and that is by his *Special* and *Sanctifying Grace*. And this is proper only to the Children of God who are really Sanctified and made Gracious. Now whatever sin God doth thus preserve any from, he doth it by exciting the inward principle and habit of Grace to the actual use and exercise of it. There is a Two-fold Grace always necessary to keep the best Christians from sin, *Habitual* and *Exciting*, and God by the one quickens and stirs up the other, which else would lie sluggish and dormant.

Habitual.

Habitual Grace denominates the Soul alive unto God, but it is no otherwise alive, than a Man in a swoon is; it is only *exciting* and *influential Grace* that can enable it to perform the Functions and Offices of Life. In the dreariest Winter there is life in a Seed that lies buried under ground, but it acts not till the *Sun's* influence draws it forth; but then it heaves and shoves away the Earth that covered it, and spreads it self into the Beauty of a Flower and Fruit. So is it here: *Inherent Habitual Grace*, is indeed an immortal Seed, and it is but a Seed till the influences of an approaching God awaken it, and chase its benumbed Virtue, and then it stirs and thrusts away all that dung and filth of corruption under which it lay buried, and flowers into *Actual Grace*. *Habitual* and *Influential Grace*, must both concur to produce *Actual Grace*: as necessarily, as there must be both the concurrence of the heat of the *Sun*, and the Life of the *Root* to the production of a *Flower*. Now God by exciting the *Inherent* and *Habitual Grace*, which was before in the Soul, keeps Men from sinning two ways.

First, Hereby he prevents and excludes those sins which were we not employed in the exercise of Grace, we should certainly commit. When the Soul is constantly employed in Holy and Spiritual Affairs, sin then neither hath room nor opportunity to exert it-self. It is kept out of the thoughts when they are employed about Holy Meditations. It is kept out from the Affections, when they are set upon *Heavenly Objects*. It is kept out from the Conversation, when both the Duties of our general and particular Callings are duly performed in their respective Seasons. The *Apostle* exhorts us, *Ephes. 4. 27. Not to give place unto the Devil*. Truly, when God's *exciting Grace* quickens our *inherent Grace* to a continual Exercise: When every faculty is filled with Holy Actions, and every Season with Holy Duties, the *Devil* then can have no place to tempt, nor corruption to stir. It is the best security God can give us from the
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Commission of Evil, to quicken us to the performance of what is good. When we *Hear, Pray, or Meditate*, or attend upon the *publick Ordinances*, we ought to bless God for this his *exciting Grace*, whereby we have not only performed a Duty, but also possibly escaped some foul and notorious sin, which else we might have committed. We who are here this day before the Lord, had we neglected, (as so many others do) this present opportunity: who of us know what horrid *Temptations* and fearful *Sins*, we might in our *own Houses* have been exposed unto, which in *God's House* we have avoided. *David* when he walked idly upon the Roof of his House, lies open to the snares of the *Devil*, and falls into those foul sins of *Adultery* and *Murder*: Had he then been at his *Harp* and his *Psalms*, he might thereby have driven the *Evil Spirit* from him, as formerly he was wont to do for his Master *Saul*. *Running Streams* preserve themselves clear and pure, whereas *standing Puddles* soon grow corrupt, and breed noisome and venomous Creatures. So is it with the *Heart*, whilst *God's exciting and quickning Grace* puts it upon continual Exercise, it is preserved from corruption: but when it once grows sluggish, and doth not freely flow forth into the *actings of Grace* and the *performance of Duties*, the Spawn of all manner of sins will breed there, and filthy Lusts crawl to and fro without disturbance. And therefore in praying that God would *deliver us from evil*, we pray that he would continually vouchsafe unto us the quickning influences of his *Holy Spirit*, that he would always fill our Sails with that Wind that bloweth where it listeth: *Awake, O North wind, and come thou South wind, and blow upon our Garden, that the Spices thereof may flow forth: for indeed if the Spices do not, the Stench will.*

Secondly, As God by his *exciting Grace* hinders those sins which might arise in the heart, so he suppresseth those that do arise: There is the greatest contrariety imaginable between

between *Inherent Grace* and *indwelling sin* imaginable: When the one is vigorous, the other languisheth; and both of these opposite principles have their seat in the same heart, and both of them are in a continual expectation of an exciting influence to call them out into Act. Indwelling corruption is usually roused up by *Temptations*, and when it stirs in the Heart, and is ready to break forth into the Life; *Habitual Grace* is of it self so feeble, that it cannot make any opposition, until a kindly influence from the Spirit of God, calls forth some particular Grace, that is most of all contrary unto it, to resist and subdue it. This Method God used to keep St. Paul from sinning: he was under a sharp and pungent *Temptation*, which he calls a *Thorn in the Flesh*, 2 Cor. 12. 7. Satan buffets, and he prays, and God Answers, *My Grace is sufficient for thee*; my Grace is sufficient not thine: The Grace that is in thee, is weak and helpless, it is a very nothing if I withdraw my influence from it, but the quickning Grace that flows from me, this alone is sufficient to remove the *Temptation*, and to prevent the sin: Now whilst God's *exciting Grace* works thus upon St. Paul's *inherent Grace*; this *Temptation*, this *Thorn* at his Breast (as they report of the *Nightingale*) only makes him the more wakeful and vigilant. But if God should have suspended his Gracious influence, this *Thorn* would sadly have wounded his Conscience, by the commission of some foul and gross sin.

Now as all manner of sin lies couched and comprehended in that body of sin which we carry about with us. So all manner of Graces are couched also in that principle of Grace which God hath implanted in his own Children: And when the *Devil* by a *Temptation* calls forth a particular sin, God also by his exciting influence, calls forth a particular contrary Grace to hinder the commission of it. Thus when they are tempted to *Pride*, God calls forth *Humility* to prick that swelling and puffy bladder. So when they are tempted to

to *Wrath* and *Passion*, he stirs up *Meekness* to oppose it. When a *Murmuring* and *Repining* at God's Dispensations, he puts *Patience* upon its perfect work. And in brief, there is no one sin whatsoever, that the *Devil* can by his *Temptations* stir up in the Heart; but God also can and often doth, stir up a contrary Grace to quell and master it. But now there are *two Graces* which are more especially employed in this Service; and they are an *awful fear*, and *filial Love* of God: And therefore when we pray that God would *deliver us from evil*, we pray.

First, That he would so affect our Hearts with that dread and reverence of his Holy Majesty, that we may not dare to commit the least sin, knowingly and willingly against him. For the *fear of God* is a powerful preservative, to withhold the Soul from consenting to *Temptation*, and when we are fully possessed with it, we shall be able to return that Answer to every solicitation of the *Devil*, that *Joseph* did to the filthy enticements of his lewd *Mistress*, how shall we do this thing and sin against God? Yea, it will preserve us not only from the more gross and scandalous acts of sin, but from the secret lurking wickednesses that lie deep in the Heart. 2 Cor. 7. 1. *Let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness and pollution both of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the fear of God.* Indeed, where this *Fear of God* is deeply implanted, it will keep us from offending him in our Thoughts, as well as in our Actions. We shall be afraid to sin against him by Hypocrisie or Unbelief, or Impenitency; as well as by Murder, or Blasphemy, or any of those flagitious Crimes, which not only the Law of God, but the Law of Nature and right Reason condemn.

Secondly, We pray that God would so affect our Hearts with a *Holy and filial Love* of himself, that may sweetly and yet powerfully keep us from whatsoever may be an offence unto his *Divine Majesty*. For Love would not willingly do any thing that may offend or grieve the *Object* loved.

loved. There is a Holy ingenuity in this Grace, that strongly engageth the Heart to love what God loves, and to hate what he hates. Now the only *Object* of God's hatred is sin; and therefore where the *Love of God* is implanted, it will cause such a Divine Simpathy of Affection, that those who *love the Lord, will hate sin and iniquity*, as the *Psalmist* speaks, *Psalms 97. 10.* And certainly hatred of sin is a most effectual means to keep us from committing of it. And thus I have shewn you the methods that God useth in delivering us from *Evil*. By his *restraining Providence*. By his *restraining Grace*. And by his *Sanctifying and renewing Grace*.

Hence then see to whom you are to ascribe your preservation from *Evil*, and from those horrid sins that others fall into. Sacrifice not to your own Net, not to the freedom of your own Wills, not to any excellency in your own disposition and temper, not to your Natural Aversion to what is Wicked and Impious: But give the Praise and Glory both of what thou art, and of what thou art not, wholly unto God. Thy Nature is as sinful as the worst of Mens; and that thy Life is not as sinful and wicked as the worst, proceeds only from the Goodness and Grace of God which hath made the difference: yea, a difference little less than *Miraculous*; for is it not a *Miracle*, that when the Fountain is as bitter in our Hearts, as in the Hearts of others, yet that the Streams should not be so? Whence is it that since we have the same corrupt Hearts with *Cain* and *Judas*, or any of the most branded Wretches in the World for Sin and Wickedness; that yet we have not committed the like Impieties with them; but that God hath either *restrained* or *Sanctified* us? But Sanctifying Grace of it self is not enough; for whence is it then that we have not committed the same sins that those have done, who yet have been Sanctified; whose foul sins and sad miscarriages, are Recorded for our warning: Are we more *Holy* than they?

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Have

Have we obtained a greater measure of *Sanctification* than they? No, only our Gracious God by vouchsafing us a constant influence of his *exciting Grace*, hath been pleased to keep us from those sins, into which he suffers wicked Men to fall, and not only them, but sometimes his own dear Children also. Well then let not the strong Man Glory in his strength, but let him that Glorieth, Glory in the Lord; for he is our Strength and our Deliverer: *What have we that we have not received, and if we have received it, why should we boast as if we had not received it?* It is not what we have already received, but what we are continually receiving from God that makes us to differ from the vilest and most profligate sinners in the World.

And thus much shall suffice for the way and method how God doth *deliver us from evil*. Now that which we pray for in this *Petition*, is,

First, That if it shall please God to *lead us into Temptation*, yet that he would not leave us under the power of *Temptation*, but with *every Temptation he would make a way for us to escape, that we may be able to bear it*.

Secondly, That if at any time *Temptation* should get the upper hand, and prevail over us to the commission of sin, yet that God would not leave us under the power of that sin but raise us up again by true repentance and Godly sorrow, that so at last we may be delivered from the great and soul-damning evil of obduration and impenitency.

Thirdly, That God would not only deliver us from gross and self-condemning impieties, but from every evil way and work, and preserve us blameless to the Heavenly Kingdom of his Son.

Fourthly, That he would be pleased not only to deliver us from that which is in it self *evil*, but from all the occasions and all the *appearances of evil*, for these also are *evil*, if not in effect, yet in tendency.

And.

And thus now I have finished the sixth and last *Petition* of this most Excellent and Divine Prayer of our Saviour: And I nothing doubt, but in the Discourses I have made of it, you have seen it verified what at first I affirmed of it; that it is a comprehensive summary of all that we can ask of God, whether it be for supplies of our Temporal or Spiritual wants, and that all other Prayers which we make are but a commentary upon this, drawing that out at length, which here is closely wound up in one bottom.

This Prayer of our Saviour now expounded unto you, consists, as I told you in the beginning, of four parts.

First, The Preface or Introduction, *Our Father.*

Secondly, The Requests or Petitions, which are six.

Thirdly, The *Doxology* or *Praise.* And then,

Fourthly, The Conclusion or Ratification of all in the Word, *Amen.* The two first I have dispatched: I now come to the

Third, and that is the *Doxology* or *Praise*; for Praise is a necessary part of Prayer: This Praise now is here ascribed unto God, by ascribing unto him his Attributes, *Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory for ever.* In which words four of God's *Attributes* are mentioned and ascribed unto him.

First, His Sovereignty, *Thine is the Kingdom.*

Secondly, His Omnipotency, *thine is the Power.*

Thirdly, His Excellency, *thine is the Glory.*

Fourthly, His Eternity, all these are *thine for ever.*

The *Kingdom* is *thine for ever.* The *Power* is *thine for ever.* The *Glory* is *thine for ever.* For so this Particle *for ever,* is to be distributed unto each of the foregoing *Attributes.* Now in ascribing unto God these Attributes, we may consider, the Eminency, and the Propriety of them.

The Eminency of them in the Particle *The, The Kingdom, The Power, The Glory,* denoting to us the highest and the chiefest of all these: For *his Kingdom* is that which ruleth

over all. *His Power*, that which no Created Power can controul. *His Glory*, such as stains all other Excellencies, and makes all their Light and Lustre to be only the Shadow of God.

The propriety of this Attribute in this Particle, *Thine*: though others may have *Kingdoms*, and *Power*, and *Glory*; yet these in their Eminency belong only unto God; they are thine, and thine only, Originally, Infinitely, and Unchangeably.

Now all these Attributes of God are annexed to the *Petitions* of this Prayer by the illative Particle *For*: *For thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory*. And this carries in it the strength and force of a Reason, both why we pray unto God, and likewise why God should grant us those things that we pray for.

First, We pray unto God: for his is the *Kingdom*, and the *Power*, and the *Glory for ever*, and therefore he alone is able to relieve and supply us.

Secondly, We plead for the obtaining of those good things which we ask of him; therefore grant them unto us, *For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory for ever*. This adds strong Consolation and Assurance to our Faith, that we shall be heard in these requests that we present to God. For,

First, *His is the Kingdom*, and we are his *Subjects*, and therefore we may depend upon him as our *King* for help and protection.

Secondly, *His is the Power*, and therefore he is able to supply and help us, and to do abundantly for us above what we can ask or think.

Thirdly, *His is the Glory*, and therefore since what we ask is for his Honour and Praise, we may firmly believe our requests shall be granted unto us. And,

Fourthly, All these are his *for ever*, and therefore we may be assured that at no time our Prayers shall be in vain:

But

But as it is the same unchangable God who in former Ages hath done great things for, and given great things unto his Servants who have called upon him; so he still retains the same Power and the same Compassion; his Ear is not heavy, nor his Arm shortned, nor his Bowels withered: and therefore we may with assurance expect that he will supply our wants, and grant our desires, since the Treasures of his Mercy are for ever unexhausted. Thus every word is a forcible Reason, both to oblige us to Address our selves unto God, and likewise to move him to bestow upon us those good things which we thus ask at his hands. And from hence by the way, we may observe two things.

First, That in our Prayers we ought to plead with God by weighty and enforcing *Reasons*.

Secondly, That the most forcible *Reasons* in Prayer are to be taken from the Attributes of God.

First, That in our Prayers we ought to plead with God by weighty and enforcing *Reasons*. Thus God bids us to, *Take unto our selves words, and to turn unto him*, Hosea 14. 2. And thus if we look into *Scripture*, those Prayers of the Saints which are there Recorded, we shall find them Disputes (if I may so call them) as well as Requests, and so many Reasons urged in them, as if by dint of Arguments, they would constrain God to yield to their desires. So in *Moses's Prayer*, *Exod. 32. 11. Wherefore doth thy Wrath wax hot against thy People, which thou hast brought forth out of the Land of Ægypt with great Power? wherefore should the Ægyptians say, for mischief did he bring them out to slay them in the Mountains, and to consume them from the Face of the Earth? Turn thee from thy fierce Wrath and repent of this Evil against thy People. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob thy Servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your Seed as the Stars of Heaven, and all this Land that I have spoken of will I give unto your Seed, and they shall inherit it for ever.*

ever. And so *Joshua* pleads with God, *Josh.* 7. 8. *O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turneth their backs before their Enemies! for the Canaanites and all the Inhabitants of the Land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round and cut off our Name from the Earth, and what wilt thou do unto thy great Name?* And so *Jehoshaphat*, *2 Chron.* 20. 6. *O Lord God of our Fathers, art not thou God in Heaven, and rulest thou not over all the Kingdoms of the Heathens, and in thy Hand is there not Power and Might, so that none is able to withstand thee?* And so in the following *verses*, he pleads with God by such powerful *Arguments*, as if he would extort Mercy and Deliverance from him. Now although it be true that all the *Arguments* we can urge, and all the *Reasons* that we can alledge, cannot alter the purposes and determinations of God, as to any Event that he hath ordained; yet there is this two-fold use and necessity of pleading them.

First, Because by considering the *Reasons* we have to pray for such Mercies, our desires will be the more earnest and fervent for the obtaining of them: It will put Spirits and Life into our *Petitions*, when we can represent to God the necessity of our asking, which to his Mercy will prove a strong motive for his granting.

Secondly, Because *Reasons* in Prayer do mightily conduce to the strengthening of our Faith, and gives us great encouragement to believe that we shall certainly obtain what we have so much reason to ask. Now Faith and Assurance of obtaining our Request is a great Condition to the Acceptation of our Prayers: And therefore the *Apostle* commands us, *to lift up Holy Hands, as without Wrath, so also without doubting, 1 Tim.* 2. 8. and again *Jam.* 1. 7. *Let him ask in Faith, nothing wavering; for let not that Man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.* Now when we can humbly represent unto God, both the great necessity that we stand in of those Mercies that we beg, and likewise the equity which ariseth, either from his Promises past, or his

his *Name* and *Attributes* proclaimed, that we should receive them : What abundant Strength and Confidence may this add to our Faith, and make us come to God with an humble expectation, that he would either Answer our Prayers or our Reasons? And therefore if thou wouldst be sure to have thy Prayers answered, pray chiefly for such things for which thou canst produce such *Reasons* as cannot be answered. And therefore,

Secondly, The most forcible *Reasons* and *Arguments* in Prayer are to be taken from the *Attributes of God*. These must needs be powerful when they are himself: And if thou canst but get an *Attribute* to take thy part when thou comest to the Throne of Grace, and if thou canst but rightly use and fit it to thy requests, thou may'st be sure of speeding; for God will not, nay he cannot deny himself. In us there can be nothing found to move him, nor any where out of himself; and where we find (as very often we do in *Scripture*) that the Miseries and Afflictions of God's People are made use of as a Plea for Mercy, yet this Plea it self which is usually most winning and most affecting, can no otherwise prevail with God than as his Pity and Compassions engage him to relieve those that are in Misery. And to speak properly, they are not our Afflictions, but the Glory of his Power and Mercy in delivering us from them, that is a motive unto God : Only it is the art of a Praying Christian aptly to represent himself as an *Object*, for God's *Attributes* to be exercised about. And if he can but interest any *Name* or *Attribute* of God in his behalf, he may be confident of the success of his Prayer, and that he shall not return ashamed. These two Observations I gather from the illative Particle, *for* : *For thine is the Kingdom, &c.*

Concerning the *Kingdom of God* I shall speak but very little now, having already treated of it in explaining the *Second Petition* of this most excellent Prayer, *Thy Kingdom come.*

come. Certain it is, that God's *Universal Kingdom* is here understood, as he is the High Creator, and Supreme Lord of all things both in Heaven and in Earth; yet not so as to exclude his *peculiar Kingdom of the Church*. And this is an excellent Argument to confirm our Faith for the obtaining of those things which we pray for; because the Kingdom is Gods, and he is the absolute Sovereign over all; and therefore all things are at his dispose. As for Spiritual Blessings which we seek, he hath the Power of bestowing of them; for he is *King of his Church*, and bestows the Gifts and Graces of his Spirit upon the Faithful *Subjects* of that his *Kingdom*. And as for Temporal Blessings that we beg, he likewise can readily bestow them upon us; for he is the *Universal Monarch* of all the World, a *King* to whom all other Kings are subject, and all other *Thrones* are but the Footstool of his.

And therefore, in the general, whatsoever we want, be it Protection or Provision, our Faith in the *Sovereignty* of God may encourage us to ask it with an humble boldness and confidence; for it is the Office of a *King* to give both unto his *Subjects*.

But let us more particularly consider how *God's Kingdom* may be accommodated to all the *Petitions* of this Prayer of our Lord, as a strong Argument and Reason to prevail with God for the obtaining what we request in each of them.

First, The *Kingdom* is God's, therefore he will see that his *Name be hallowed and glorified* in it. *Kings* are jealous of their Honour, and it is a great Offence either to speak or do any thing that may redound to their discredit. It is fit and decent for a *King* to have the highest Name, and the greatest repute among his *Subjects*. And therefore we may be sure God will maintain this in the World; yea so jealous is God of having dishonour reflected upon him, that he hath forbidden not only the profanation and trivial men-
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tion of his own *Name*, but the profanation of that which doth but belong unto him. *Matth. 5. 34, 35. Swear not by Heaven, for it is God's Throne; neither by the Earth, for it is his Foot-stool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the City of the Great King.* Heaven is the Throne of his Majesty, the Theatre of his Power: *Jerusalem* and the *Temple* the Seat of his Worship. And therefore as *Kings* and *Princes*, have respect shown to their *presence Chamber*. So God, because he is the Great *King* of *Kings*, and *Lord* of *Lords*, requires to be revered in all that doth appertain unto him, and he will be sanctified in all that draw near unto him. Those who will not actually hallow him by their Obedience, on them God will be hallowed passively by their Punishment. And because he is a *King* he will maintain the Honour of his Majesty and Royalty: And therefore we may with Faith pray, *Hallowed be thy Name: For thine is the Kingdom, &c.*

Secondly, *The Kingdom is God's*, and therefore this *Kingdom shall come*, it shall be maintained, it shall be established, it shall be enlarged and increased. Is it not the highest concern of a *King* to look that his *Kingdom* be not overthrown, and himself deposed and outed of it? So is it God's interest and concernment to preserve his *Kingdom* from the incursion of Enemies, and the sad consequences of the Rents and Divisions of his *Subjects*. He hath promised that the *Gates of Hell shall never prevail against it*, that he will enlarge the Borders of it, and give all Nations unto Jesus Christ for his Inheritance and Possession. And therefore when we pray, *Thy Kingdom come*, we may very well expect that our Requests should be granted; for the *Kingdom is God's*, and we do but pray that he would regard his own Interest and Concerns, that he would *look down from Heaven and visit this Vine which his own Right Hand hath planted, that neither the Wild Boar out of the Forest may root it up, nor the cunning Foxes pluck off its tender Grapes.*

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Thirdly,

Thirdly, The *Kingdom is God's*, and therefore we may well pray, *That his Will may be done on Earth as it is in Heaven*: For what is *Sovereignty* without Obedience to it but a mere Pageantry, a mock-shew of idle Royalty? It is but fit and rational to pray that his Will should be done whose the Kingdom is. And whilst we thus pray we may be confident of being heard and accepted, since the Reason we urge is so natural and pressing.

Fourthly, The *Kingdom is God's*, and therefore we may with great encouragement to our Faith, pray for *Our daily Bread*, and all those Temporal Accommodations that are needful and expedient for us: For it is a *Kingly Office* to provide things necessary for their *Subjects*; to protect and defend them, to supply and relieve them; and therefore, *Psal. 72.* where we have a perfect Character of a good *King*, it is said, verse 6. *He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, and as showers that Water the Earth.* That is, he shall be to his People as soft Showers to the sprouting Grass, kindly nourishing it, and making it grow and flourish. And certainly God who is the greatest and best of *Kings*, will be so much more to his People and Subjects; and since he hath assumed to himself the Style and Name of *King*, he will provide abundantly for their Peace and Prosperity.

Fifthly, The *Kingdom is God's*, and therefore we may well make our applications to him for *Pardon*, and beg of him the *Forgiveness of our Offences*, since it is the Prerogative Royal of *Kings* to forgive Offenders. Hence our Saviour describing the Process of the General Judgment, when he comes to speak of pronouncing the Sentence of Absolution upon Believers, styles himself *King*, so we read *Matth. 25. 34.* *Then shall the King say to them on his Right Hand, Come ye Blessed of my Father inherit the Kingdom.* So that here our Faith hath a very strong Plea to urge with God for the Pardon of our Sins, *Forgive us our Trespases:*

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For, *Thine is the Kingdom*; and it belongs to the Royalty of thy Kingdom to forgive humble and penitent Suppliants.

Sixthly, *The Kingdom is God's*, therefore we may well pray in Faith, that he would *Deliver us from Evil*: For this is one great end of Government, to protect their Subjects from the Assaults of their Enemies. And God, who is our *King*, will not neglect this care, when we do with an humble Faith urge him to it, by representing to him that the *Kingdom* is his; for his interest is involved in the safety and welfare of his People.

And thus I have briefly shown you in general, that all our Prayers ought to be enforced with strong and cogent Reasons, which although they are not properly motives unto God, yet are they good grounds for our Faith to build upon, and therefore a good Evidence when we use them, that our *Petitions* shall be heard and granted. And I have likewise particularly accommodated this *first* Motive and Argument, taught us by our Saviour, *Thine is the Kingdom*, to each of the *Six Petitions*, which he hath instructed us to present to God.

The Second Attribute that we are to consider, as a Reason and Motive urged in this Prayer, is the Power of God: *Thine is the Power*.

Now *Power*, according to the usual acceptation of the Word, is nothing else but an ability to work those Changes and Mutations upon created Beings, which were not in them before; I speak only of *Active Power*, and the Two Terms of it are, either the effecting of somewhat that was not, or the annulling and destroying of that which was: This is the Notion of *Power*, whether it be ascribed to God or Man; and in both it is either *Absolute*, or *Ordinate*. *Absolute Power* respects the simple ability of acting; *Ordinate Power* respects also the will and determination to act. And therefore in God, whose *Power* we are now treating of,

his *Absolute Power* is of a much larger extent, than his *Ordinate*, for the one relates to all things possible, that is to all things whose existence doth not imply a contradiction, the other relates only to things future, and this likewise such as shall exist according to the common course and method of God's *Ordinary Providence*: for *Miraculous* effects although they are produced according to the Will and Ordination of God, yet they appertain not to his *Ordinate*, but to his *Absolute Power*. So then the *Objects* of God's *Absolute Power* are things merely possible, or things future; which are without the Compass and Sphere of second causes to produce. But the *Objects* of God's *Ordinate Power* are things future, produced according to the Laws of Natural Agents, and the Virtue of second Causes. Yet both these Powers in God are infinite, the one Objectively, the other Formally.

First, God's *Absolute Power* is *Objectively* infinite, that is, the *Object* of it is infinite; for all things possible are the *Object* of this *Power*, and all things are in themselves possible, which do not imply a contradiction: And Oh how vast and incomprehensible is the sum of these! God might have Created more *Worlds*, more *Angels*, and *Men* than he hath done; more sorts of *Creatures*, and more of every sort, if he had so pleased. Yea, and he might have been Creating and Acting from all Eternity to all Eternity; and in his infinite duration be still producing new, and therefore infinite effects; for *with God nothing is impossible*, Luke 1. 37. And the only Reason why God hath produced such effects and no other, so many and not more, is not from want of Power, but merely from the free determination of his own Will and Counsel. He might have hindred the *Fall* of Man, restored the fallen *Angels*, raised the *Stones* to be *Children* unto *Abraham*, brought more *Deluges* and general *Plagues* upon the World, if he had so pleased: Yea, and though our fancy and imagination hath a large *Empire*, and
seems

seems boundless in these Fictions and Pourtraictures of things which we Paint and Limn there : yet God can really Create more than we can only imaginarily Create, for we can only patch together those things which we have seen, or have otherwise been the *Objects* of our Senses, and by putting together several pieces of things really existing, make an *Idea* of that which never was. But God can actually cause those *Species* and kinds of beings in the World which never were, nor ever was there a former resemblance of them, and so can infinitely exceed the largest scope of what in us seems most unlimited, even our Thoughts and Fancies, for he is able to do above what we are able to think.

Secondly, God's *Ordinate Power* is infinite formally, that is, those things which he works according to the Counsel of his own Will they are all effected by infinite Power ; for tho' the *Objects* themselves are finite, both for nature and number, yet the Power that produceth them is infinite: for since the Essence of God is infinite, and each of his Attributes is his Essence, it follows likewise that his Power is infinite, even in the production of things that are finite. Now it appears that the Power of God is infinite,

First, By the Works of Creation ; for though the things that are Created are finite, and but a few in comparison with those that are possible, yet it is no less than the infinite Power of God that can impregnate the vast Womb of nothing, and make it bring forth a Being. It must needs be an Almighty Word that can call forth a Creature out of non-existence, and make it start up into the rank of things that are. And therefore we find God often ascribing it to himself as a Glorious demonstration of his Almighty Power, that he spreads forth the Curtains of the Heavens, that he laid the Beams of the Earth, that he hung out those Glorious Lights of the *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars*, that he breathed forth all the various sorts of the Creatures which People the Universe, and by the commanding Word of his Mouth they

they were made : His Power and his Hand formed all those Beautiful Creatures we behold, out of a rude and confused *Chaos*, and that *Chaos* it self out of the greater confusion of Nothing : And although second Causes by their Power and Natural Energy, introduce various forms into things, yet all the matter they have to work upon, was first God's Workmanship, and there is nothing made by Man but it is the Creature of God, at least as to the matter and first principle of it. Now, it is only infinite Power that can bring something out of nothing ; yea, and it is infinite Creating Power that can form things out of matter utterly indisposed to receive the stamps of such Natures as God imprints upon them: For no Created Agent can work either where there is nothing to work upon, or where it is altogether unfit and incapable naturally to be form'd into such a Being as the Agent intends. And therefore the *Apostle* tells us, *Rom. 1. 20. That the invisible things of God from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and God-head.*

Secondly, The infinite Power of God is demonstrated in those Miraculous effects which have been extraordinarily produced in the World. It must needs be an Almighty Arm that can Arrest the course and impetus of Nature, and turn it quite contrary to its own Byass: For no Created Power either in Heaven or Earth can by their own efficacy work a *Miracle*; nay they cannot be so much as Natural Instruments, but only Moral in the production of what is *Miraculous*. Indeed *Angels* both good and bad may produce very strange and marvellous things by their suddain, invisible, and effectual applying of proper Actives to Passives. And by suiting the secret and unknown Virtues of Causes to fit and disposed Patients. But they cannot produce any thing that is *Miraculous*, and wholly either above or contrary to the Course and Sphere of Nature. And those Men who have been so highly dignified as to be the Moral Instruments

ments of *Miracles*, (as we say that *Moses* and *Elijah* and the *Apostles* of Christ wrought many *Miracles*) yet they did not perform those Works by any Natural or proper Physical influence; but only by their Prayers and commanding Faith: It is God alone that is the immediate efficient cause of whatsoever events have been *Miraculous* in the World. And therefore when some raised the *Dead*, and others cured the *Blind* and *Lame*, when *Moses* first cleft the *Sea* and afterwards the *Rock* with his wondrous *Rod*, when *Joshua* stopt the *Sun* in its course, and *Isaiab* turn'd it ten degrees backward; all these extraordinary and supernatural effects, are no otherwise to be ascribed unto them, than as to remote instruments, who by their Prayers and Intercessions prevailed with God to manifest his Power, as an attestation of that Commission they had received from him. His *Infinite Power* is the sole Author of them, and to this end hath he wrought them, that those who take little notice of his *Power*, in the common and ordinary products of it, may be seized with admiration and astonishment, when they hear of such events, as neither *Reason* nor *Nature* can give any account of, and may be forced to acknowledge with the *Magicians* of *Egypt*, that it is the *Finger of God*. Or more Religiously with the *Psalmist*, *Psal.* 89. 13. *Thou hast a mighty Arm, strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand.*

Thirdly, The *Power* of God is infinite even in the common course and effects of his Providence. Whatsoever comes to pass is through the infinite Power of God. There is not the least spire of grass that sprouts out of the *Earth*, not the least Atom that plays and wanders to and fro in the *Air*, not any motion of any Creature how inconsiderable soever it be, but the *Almighty Power* of God is to be seen in it. For although one second Cause may depend upon another in a long *Series*, yet are they all ultimately resolved into the *first Cause* of all, and invigorated by his influence. See for this, *Hosea* 2. 21. *I will hear the Heavens, faith*

Saith the Lord, and they shall bear the Earth, and the Earth shall bear the Corn and the Wine and the Oyl, and they shall bear Fezreel. Be the Chain of *second Causes* never so long, yet God holds the first link in his own hands, and conveys his *Power* through them all to their last effects. So that if we duly ponder the *Mysteries and Wonders of Nature*, it will appear that it is as much *Infinite Power* to make a poor *Worm* to crawl, or a *Sparrow* to fly or to fall to the Earth, as it was at first to Create the World. It requires no more *Power* in God to work *Miracles*, than the most ordinary and common events that happen; only those are said to be *Miracles* which are against or above the course of *Nature*, and those to be *Natural Events* which are according to it; but to a considering Mind, both the one and the other do equally declare the *Almighty and Infinite Power* of God.

Now this *Power* is in the *Text* ascribed to God by way of *Emphasis* and *Eminency*: *Thine is the Power*, which notes unto us some peculiarity in the *Power* of God, which distinguisheth it from all *Created Powers* whatsoever, and it consists in these following things.

First, In that the *Power of God* is infinite, (as hath been demonstrated already) but the *Power* of all *Creatures* is only finite and limited. God's *Absolute Power* hath no bounds; but whatsoever is possible to be, he is able to produce. His *Ordinate* and *Actual Power* is indeed limited, but only by his own Will. *Psal. 115. 3. He hath done whatsoever he pleased.* But our wills are often limited by our *Power*, and those things which we wish the accomplishment of, yet many times fail in taking effect, only because we want *Might* and *Power* to bring them to pass. And therefore when we ascribe *Power* unto God, *Thine is the Power*, we Attribute unto him a *Power* that is infinite, a *Power* which can effect whatsoever his Will hath fore-determined, above, yea and contrary to all the *Power* of all the *Creatures* both in *Heaven* and *Earth*. Hence it is called, *The exceeding greatness of his Power*, *Ephes. 1. 19.*

Secondly,

Secondly, The *Power* of God is *Originally* in himself: But all *Created Powers* are only derived from him. Whatsoever is in God is, (according to the known Rules of the Schools) God himself. And therefore as God hath not his being from any other, so neither hath he his Power from any other. But whatsoever ability is found in any of the Creatures is from God, whether it be Natural or Moral Power, Strength or Authority.

First, All derive their Natural Power from God. It is he that endues them with strength, and with all that force and might which they enjoy. *1 Chron. 29. 12. In thy hand is power and might, in thy hand it is to make great and to give strength unto all.*

Secondly, All derive their Moral Power and Authority from God. *Prov. 8. 15, 16. By me Kings Reign and Princes decree Justice, by me Princes Rule and Nobles, even all the Judges of the Earth:* says the Essential Wisdom of the Father.

Thirdly, The *Power of God is Supreme*, all other Power is but subordinate unto him: And therefore he can weaken the strength and frustrate the attempts of all that shall combine themselves together against him; for his Power is such as no Creature can resist. And as *Billows* do but dash themselves in pieces, by dashing against the *Rock*: So all the united force of Nature, should they make head against God, would but dash themselves in pieces, by dashing against the *Rock of ages*, whose Counsels and Purposes shall stand firm, though all the World dissent from them, and endeavour to oppose them; yea, the Power of God is so absolute and sovereign, that the greatest Created Powers are but Instruments for God to make use of to bring about his own designs; and therefore they are compared to *Axes*, and *Saws*, and *Staves*, *Esai. 10. 15. Shall the Ax boast it self against him that heweth therewith? or shall the Saw magnifie it self against him that shaketh it? Yea, in verse 5. God is said to take up a great King*

and a great Nation, only as a Rod to Chastise his People with, *O Assyrian, the Rod of mine anger, and the Staff in their hand is mine indignation.* And as a *Staff*, a *Rod*, or an *Ax*, cannot move themselves without the hand and guidance of him that makes use of them: So neither can the Mightiest *Princes*, nor the most Powerful People move themselves but by the Power and Direction of God, who applies them as so many Tools or Instruments to whatsoever work he pleaseth.

Now upon all these Accounts Power may be thus eminently ascribed unto God. *Thine is the Power.*

Yet when we affirm God's Power to be thus *Sovereign* and *Infinite*, it doth not therefore follow, that it must take all things whatsoever within its reach and extent; for there are several things, which as *St. Austin* speaks, *lib. 5. de Civitate Dei, cap. 10.* God cannot do because he is Omnipotent: *Quædam Deus non potest, quia est Omnipotens.*

First, *God cannot do the things that are contradictory.* He cannot Will the same thing to be and not be at the same time. That there should be a Body without quantity, or any other Corporeal property belonging to it, as the *Papists* absurdly dream in their Monstrous Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*; for when they have recourse to the *Almighty Power* of God; by which they say, That those things which are naturally impossible, may be effected: As for the same Body to be in ten thousand places at once: For the same Body to have *quantity* (as it hath in Heaven) and no *quantity* as in the *Sacrament*. We truly Answer, that the *Power* of God never reacheth to verifie contradictions; and that it is as great a contradiction to affirm a Body to be in more places than one at once, or to be and not to have quantity, especially to have it, and not to have it; as it is to affirm that it is a Body and no Body.

Secondly,

Secondly, God cannot do any thing which may justly bring upon him the imputation of sin; for sin is not from Power, but from Weakness: since all Impiety consists of defect, and all defect is from impotence. And therefore the Apostle tells us, James 1. 13. *God cannot be tempted with evil.* Holiness and Purity is an essential Attribute of the Divine Essence; and therefore God can as soon not be, as be the Author of sin, for all sin must arise, either from weakness in the understanding, or perverseness in the Will: but the Divine Understanding is infinitely clear, and therefore cannot be dazzled with the false shews and appearances of evil; and the Divine Will is infinitely Holy, and conformed to the Sovereign Rule of his Sapience and Wisdom. And therefore where there is no possibility of ignorance in the one, nor of irregularity in the other, there can be no obliquity in those Actions which proceed from both, but they must all needs be most Holy, Just, and Righteous.

Thirdly, God cannot do any thing that argues him mutable and unconstant. He cannot change his purposes, nor break his Promises, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his Lips. And tho' the Scripture makes frequent mention of God's Repenting himself of what he hath done: So we read Gen. 6. 6. *It repented the Lord that he made Man.* Exod. 32. 19. *The Lord repented of the Evil that he thought to do unto his People.* 2 Sam. 24. 16. *And the Lord repented him of the evil.* Yet these and such like expressions are spoken only by way of Accommodation to our Capacities, and spoken συμπαιδῶς ἢ ἀνθρώπωνως, compassionately and after the manner of Men, but must be understood, θεοπεπῶς after such a manner as is befitting God. For as Men when they repent of what they have made, do again destroy it, and act contrary to their former actings: So because God doth sometimes act contrary to his former actings, he is said to Repent of what he had done; although in strict propriety of Speech, the im-

mutability of his *Essence* is such that all his purposes and Counsels stand firm and fixed for ever, *Mal. 3. 6. I am the Lord, I change not. James 1. 17. With him is no variableness nor shadow of turning.* And therefore because of this Eternal fixedness of God's purpose, it is said, *That he cannot deny himself, 2 Tim. 2. 13. That he cannot lye, Tit. 1. 2.* and that it is *impossible that God should lye, Heb. 6. 18.* because these things imply inconstancy and fickleness, which is always an effect of weakness; for whensoever we alter our Counsels and Resolutions, it is because we see some inconvenience would follow upon them, which we did not before consider, which to impute to God were the highest Blasphemy.

Now these three things only excepted, all other things in the World fall within the compass of *God's Power.* He is able to do all things (as *Origen* speaks excellently) the doing whereof would not deny him to be God, or to be Holy, or to be Wise.

And therefore he cannot bring to pass contradictions, nor can he alter his Eternal Purposes, for this would derogate from his infinite Wisdom. He cannot be the Author of sin, for this would be a stain and blot upon his infinite Purity and Holiness, and both would be impotency rather than Power: and were he weak enough to do those things, he would not be God, for it is Essential to God, to be infinitely Wise, and infinitely Holy.

Let us now briefly shew how this consideration of the *Power* of God, may be made use of as a prevalent Argument for the strengthening of our Faith in Prayer, and the assuring of us that we shall obtain what we ask, for our *Saviour* hath taught us to subjoyn it to all our *Petitions* as a Reason why we should ask, and as a motive why we should speed, *For thine is the Power.*

Now the great strength of this lies here, in that it must needs be a mighty encouragement to our Faith, to reflect
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and consider that whatsoever we ask, we ask it of a God that is able to give it us ; he is not a weak impotent *Deity*, but a God who hath *all Power* in his hands, and therefore can effect whatsoever we desire of him.

Behold what care God hath taken to strengthen our Faith when we pray unto him. There are but two things that can make us doubt of speeding in our Requests, the one is whether God will, the other is whether he can grant us what we ask: And that our Faith might not boggle at either of these, our Saviour hath as it were hedged in and inclosed all our Prayers with these two great fences for our Faith, God's willingness, and his Power to help: the *Preface* to this excellent Prayer, contains the one, and the *Conclusion* of this Prayer the other. He is our *Father*, and therefore if Earthly Parents whose Bowels of Mercy are but finite, are yet so tender over their Children, and ready to do their utmost to contribute what assistance they can towards them ; much more will our *Heavenly Father*, whose Mercies and Compassions are infinite and boundless. But lest our Faith should yet stagger and suspect the *Power* and *Ability* of God to relieve and help us, the *Conclusion* of this Prayer puts in a caution against all unbelieving scruples in this case; *Thine is the Power*. So that we have abundant security for our Faith in whatsoever we desire of God, because he hath declared himself both willing and able to supply our wants, and satisfy our desires. Indeed the *Power* of God alone is not a sufficient plea, for we have before seen, that God is able to effect infinitely more than he will, but then the *Power* of God is a strong and forcible plea, when it is joyn'd with his Will: And when we are once assured by the Promises of his Word, that God is *willing* to bestow upon us the Blessings that we ask ; then to bend the force of this plea towards him, that he is likewise *able*, will most certainly prevail. And that Prayer that is directed in Faith, and winged with both these motives, shall never return into our Bosoms in vain and ineffectual. Thus

Thus have I finished the two first *Attributes* of God made use of by our Saviour in this *Prayer*, his *Sovereignty*, and his *Omnipotency*. It remains now that we speak something to the third *Attribute* of God, which our Lord here teacheth us to make use of in praying to him, and that is the *Glory* of God. *For thine is the Glory.*

But this is an *Attribute* so bright and dazling, so surrounded and fring'd about with Rays of inaccessible light, that the *Holy Angels* themselves cannot stedfastly behold it, but twinkle and glimmer; yea, veil their Faces at the full Beams of that *Object*, the Vision of which is yet their Eternal Joy and Happiness. And therefore whensoever weak or vile Man can either speak or conceive of the infinite Glory of the great God, will instead of exalting, debase it; and we shall but defame while we attempt to celebrate it; so infinitely do the *Perfections* of the *Deity* surmount our most raised Affections, that our very Praises thereof, are but lessening of it: And whatsoever we ascribe unto God, is but detracting from him. Think with your selves a little, if two blind Men that never saw the *Sun*, were discoursing together about it, what strange, uncouth and improper fancies would they form of its Light and Splendour? Surely such, yea vastly more confused and disproportion'd, are all our notions and conceptions of the *Glory* of God, which is a Light that is invisible, obscurity that is dazling, and whatsoever else is most inconceivable to humane capacities. For the *Scripture* sometimes describes God's dwelling-place to be *in that Light unto which no Mortal Eye can approach*. And sometimes that his *Pavillion is dark Clouds* which no Eye can penetrate: And both to signify how impossible a thing it is to search out God, and to find out the Almighty to perfection.

Yet since he hath been graciously pleased to give us some refracted and allay'd *Rays* of himself, such as we are able to bear, both in the Works of Creation and Providence, and like-

likewise in his Holy Word; let us with all humble modesty take notice of those discoveries which he hath made of his Glory, wherein we shall find enough, if not to satisfy our curiosity, yet to excite our veneration, and by seeing some glimpses of his *back-parts* which he causes to pass before us, our desires will be made more earnest after that Estate of consummate Happiness, where we shall for ever behold his Face, where we shall no longer see him *darkly through a glass*, but shall see him as he is, and know him as we are known by him.

Glory therefore according to the true and genuine import of the Word, signifies any Excellency or Perfection in a Subject that either is or deserves to be accompanied with Fame and Renown. And hence we may well distinguish a Two-fold Glory in God, the one *Essential*, the other *Declarative*.

The *Essential* Glory of God is the Collection and System of those Attributes which Eternally and immutably belong unto the Divine Nature.

The *Declarative* Glory of God is the manifestation of those his Attributes, so that his Creatures may take notice of them with Praise and Veneration. Both are here intended by our *Saviour* when he teacheth us to ascribe the *Glory unto God*.

God is *Essentially Glorious* in all those Attributes which appertain unto his infinite Being, for each of them is infinitely perfect in its self, and the complexion and concentrating of them altogether, make up a Glory infinitely great and incomprehensible. Thus his *Holiness* is Glorious, *Exod. 15. 11. Glorious in Holiness*. His *Power* is Glorious 2 *Theff. 1. 9. They shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power*, *Col. 1. 11. Strengthened with all Might according to his Glorious Power*. His *Majesty* is Glorious, *Psal. 145. 5. I will speak of the Glorious Honour of his Majesty*. His *King-*
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dom is Glorious, Psal. 45. 11. *They shall speak of the Glory of thy Kingdom.* His Grace and Mercy is Glorious, Ephes. 1. 6. *To the Praise of the Glory of his Grace wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.* And from all these result the Glory of his great and terrible Name, which hath in it an excessive brightness and lustre from the Constellation of so many Glories united in it. Deut. 28. 58. *That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful Name, the Lord thy God.* Yea, so infinite is this *Essential Glory* of God, that it diffuseth and sheddeth abroad its Light and Glory upon those things which have but Relation to him, therefore the Church is said to be *Glorious*, because made in some faint resemblance like unto God, Psal. 45. 13. *The King's Daughter is all Glorious within.* Ephes. 5. 27. *That he might present it to himself a Glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle.* The Gospel is therefore Glorious, because it is that Glass wherein we see the Glory of God by a reflected Light. And as the Beams of the Sun falling upon a Glass, make it shine with an exceeding brightness: So the Glory of God striking upon the Gospel, and from thence re-bounding off to us, hath stamp't it with an excellent Glory and Lustre. 1 Tim. 1. 11. *According to the Glorious Gospel of the Blessed God.* His Throne is Glorious. Jerem. 17. 12. *A Glorious high Throne from the beginning is the place of our Sanctuary.* Yea, not only his Throne, but that which might seem more despicable, his very *Foot-stool* is Glorious. Esa. 6. 13. *I will make the place of my Feet Glorious.* Now this *Essential Glory* of God is both *immutable* and *incomprehensible*.

First, *The Essential Glory of God is immutable*, the same for ever, no addition can be made unto it, nor no diminution from it; for before there were ever any Creatures extant, God was the same Glorious Being that now he is. Our Praises and Acknowledgements can no more contribute to this Glory, than the Eye that sees the Sun can increase the Light of it: for God's *Attributes* that are his *Glory* are

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no adventitious accidental things, that may be assumed or laid aside at pleasure, but they are all as necessary as his Nature is: And therefore though he be said to *cloath himself with Light and Glory as with a Garment*, yet is it a Garment that cannot be put on or off: But whatsoever God is in any one moment of Eternity, the same he is from all Eternity unto all Eternity. *He is the Lord who changeth not, and with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning.*

Indeed there are some *Titles* in God's Style, which seem not to have been always appertaining to him, and in respect of his Eternal Being, may appear as new Stars in the Heavens; and argue some alteration and change in his Glory, as to be *Creator* the Lord and *Governor* of this World, which he was not from all Eternity, nor could be till the Creatures were formed.

But here we must carefully distinguish between the *Absolute* and *Relative Attributes* of God. His *Absolute Titles* and *Attributes*, are such as belong unto him simply, without depending upon any respect or reference to any thing without and besides himself, and so he is *Infinite, Eternal, Wise, Holy* and *Merciful* in himself, and was so for ever before there were any *Created Objects* unto which, or upon which he might manifest these his *Attributes*. But now the *Relative Titles* of God have a time wherein they began, and wherein they shall likewise cease; as to be a *Creator* and *Preserver* of the World as it now stands; wherein though there may be daily mutations, yet God is the same, immutable, because these are only extrinsecal denominations, and arise merely from that change that is made upon the Creature, not from any change that is made in God: for still his *Power* is the same, whether he exert it in Creating or no: His *Wisdom* is invariably the same before he manifested it in the Government of the World as since, and in all the mutations that he brings upon the World, he is still the same *immutable and unchangeable God*. Only as those who Sail, think the

Shore removes, when it is but the *Ship*: So are we subject to the same mistakes, and are apt to think *God is changed*, when only *our selves are changed*; that he moves from not being a Creator to be a Creator, when in Truth we only move from not being Creatures to be Creatures. And therefore when we say God is now a *Creator* which once he was not, it implieth no more change in God, than it would in any *Object* which now is seen, which before was not seen: and this is only a different external denomination, that makes no real change in the thing. But it may be these *Speculations* are too abstruse, and therefore I shall not detain you longer in them.

Secondly, *As the Essential Glory of God is immutable, so is it also incomprehensible*, for it is infinite and the entire perfection of the *Deity*. It is the very Face of God, and therefore, *Exod. 33. 15*. When *Moses* desired God to shew him his Glory, God *Answers* him in the 20 verse, *Thou canst not see my Face, for there can no Man see my Face and live*. And although the *Angels* in Heaven and the *Spirits of Just Men made perfect*, have brighter and more radiant discoveries made unto them of the *Glory* of God, than any that we can bear, yet neither they nor any other Creature can possibly comprehend the full Latitude and utmost extent of that *Glory*, any more than it is possible for a finite thing to contain what is infinite. And hence it follows, that when the *Scripture* promiseth us as one great part of our Reward, that we *shall see God as he is*, 1. John 3. 7. We must not understand it as if ever we could arrive to such a capacity as to see and know God as he is in his infinite *Essence*, for God's *Essence* being altogether indivisible, to know God essentially, were to know him comprehensively; to know him as much as he is to be known in himself, that is to know him as much as he knows himself, which is impossible, for no finite Understanding can comprehend an infinite *Object*. And yet our sight and knowledge of God shall so far surmount

mount those dim and glimmering discoveries which here he makes of himself to us, that comparatively the *Apostle* might well call it, *a seeing him as he is, and a knowing him as we are known by him.*

And thus much for the *Essential Glory* of God, which is himself and his own Infinite and Eternal Excellencies and Perfections. But besides this,

Secondly, There is another Glory of God, and that is his *Declarative Glory*, which is nothing else but that visible Splendor and Lustre that reflects from his *Essential Glory*, upon the notice and admiration of his Creatures. So that there is a very great difference between God's being Glorious and being Glorified. God is always equally Glorious in himself, so he was before the Foundations of the World were laid. Before ever there were any Creatures to Celebrate his Praise. But he is Glorified by his Creatures, declaring and setting forth the infinite Excellencies that are in his *Essence*. We cannot set any new *Gems* in his *Diadem* which did not shine there before; but when we observe and admire those several *coruscations* of his *Attributes* which appear in those various methods that God takes to manifest them; then are we said to give Glory unto God. His Holiness is always the same, but when we endeavour to imitate it, then we Glorify it. His Power is always the same, but we Glorify it when we depend upon it. His Mercy and Goodness is always the same, but we are said to Glorify it, when we praise and extol it. And therefore God tells us, *Psal 50. 23. Whoso offereth Praise, Glorifieth me.* We can add nothing to God by all the Glory that we ascribe unto him, but then we are said to give him *Glory* when we admire and adore, and celebrate those *Glories* that are in him. And so *St. John 12. 28.* Christ prays, *Father Glorify thy Name*, that is, make thine *Essential Glory*, the Glory and Brightness of thine *Attributes* conspicuous to the World; to which *Request* there was an *Answer* returned

from Heaven, *I have both Glorified it, and will Glorifie it again*, that is (as I suppose the words may well be interpreted) I have already Glorified my *Mercy*, which is my *Name*, in thy *Incarnation* and *Mission*, and I will also Glorifie my *Justice* in thy *Passion* and *Crucifixion*: by the one declaring how Gracious I am in providing a Saviour for the ruin'd World; by the other how Just and Holy I am in exacting a full and compleat satisfaction for the Sins and Transgressions of the World.

Now we may both add unto and diminish from this *Declarative Glory* of God. We rob God of his *Glory* when we interpose between his *Attributes* and the Manifestation of them unto others. We hereby wrong and injure his *Repute* and *Esteem* in the World, and although we cannot pluck off any of his *Attributes* from him, (*For if thou sunnest, what dost thou against God? Job 35. 6.*) yet we obstruct the shining of them upon others. As in an *Eclipse* of the *Sun*, the *Moon* doth not darken the *Sun*, but only darkens us, and hinders the Light which still is the same in it self from breaking out upon the lower World. So wicked Men by their sins, though they cannot deprive God of the *Brightness* of his *Glory*, yet they impede the *Emanations* and out-flowings of his *Glory*, and hinder others from admiring and adoring of it as they ought.

Now the ways whereby God useth to express and declare his *Glory*, are various.

First, He doth it by his works, *Psal. 19. 1. The Heavens declare the Glory of God and the Firmament sheweth his handy-work*. For they manifest to the World, the *Attributes* and *Perfections* of their great Creator, even his *Wisdom*, *Power* and *Goodness*. Some of God's *Works* are his *Footsteps*, and some are his *Images*. The *Image* of God is seen in rational and intellectual Creatures, and by considering the *Wisdom*, *Understanding*, and *mental Faculties* that God hath endowed them with, we may come to apprehend
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some faint shadows and resemblances of the infinite *Wisdom* and *Knowledge* of the *Original Cause* of them; since whatsoever is in them must needs be in a far more Eminent degree in the Author and Maker of them. But all God's Works carry, *quædam vestigiū Dei*, some Prints and Footsteps of God stampt upon them, whereby although they do not all shew his likeness, yet they shew his *Power* and *Wisdom* in framing them. *Rom. 1. 20. The invisible things of God, from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and God-head.* But he especially Glorifies himself in the Extraordinary Miraculous Works of his hands, whether in a way of Mercy, or in a way of Judgment. *Exod. 15. 11. Who is like unto thee, O Lord, Glorious in Holiness, fearful in Praises, doing Wonders? Psal. 85. 9. Surely his Salvation is nigh them that fear him, that Glory may dwell in our Land.* That is, God by his wonderful deliverances of his Church and People, establisheth his *Glory* to dwell among them.

Secondly, *God declares his exceeding and infinite Glory by his Word*; For therein he hath given us the most clear and lively representations of himself. And those *Attributes* which his *Works* could never have discovered to us, he hath manifested by his revealed Will. This is that *Table* on which he hath drawn his most resembling *Image*, this is that *Glass* wherein, *We beholding the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image from Glory to Glory, 2 Cor. 3. 18.* and it consists of two parts, the *Law* and the *Gospel*, the one discovers to us the *Glory* of God's *Justice*, the other the *Glory* of his *Mercy*; and both of them are *Glories*. *2 Cor. 3. 9. For if the Ministration of Condemnation, which is the Law, be Glory; much more doth the Ministration of Righteousness, which is the Gospel, exceed in Glory.*

Thirdly, *The most clear manifestation of the Glory of God, was made in Christ, who was the brightness of his Glory, and*
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the express Image of his Person, Heb. 1. 3. in him Heaven was brought down to Earth, the infinite comprehended; the invisible made conspicuous: And all the *Miracle* both of Grace and Glory reconciled to our very Senses. In him all the *Attributes* of the *Divine Nature* are so interwoven with the infirmities of the *Humane*, that (if I may so speak) God in him studied to exhibit to us a person like our selves, to give us some advantage for our apprehensions to conceive of his infinite Perfections. In him Omnipotence became weak, Eternity Mortal; Innocence it self guilty, God, Man; the Creator, a Creature; the Maker of all, its own Workmanship; Life it self in him underwent the sentence of Death: And all these strange and impossible Truths, as for other ends, so for this that we might have some clearer hints and discoveries of the infinite Glories of God, which in their full brightness would only dazle and confound us; and were discernable by us only thus tempered and obscured. And therefore the *Apostle* calls him, *God manifested in the Flesh*, 1 Tim. 3. 16. Certainly God in Flesh must needs be rather veiled and hidden than manifested. But although to himself he was obscured, yet to us he was manifested, because if the Glory of the *Deity* had not been thus *clouded* and *allayed*, it had not been *manifested*. For that *Light* which when tempered makes us *see*, will strike us *blind* when too Glorious. As we may safer direct our Eyes towards the *Sun* when it is under an *Eclipse*, than when it shines with unchecked *Rays*. Hence St. *John* speaking of Christ in the mean Estate of his Humiliation, saith of him, St. *John* 1. 9. *We beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth.*

Thus now you have seen what the *Essential* and *Declarative Glories* of God are; let us now consider why this Attribute should so eminently be ascribed unto God: *Thine is the Glory.* Now there may be three Reasons given of it.

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First, *Because all that is Excellent and Glorious in the Creatures, is to be found in God; and that either formally or eminently.* Is *Grace or Holiness, Wisdom or Strength, Duration, Justice or Mercy, any Excellency in those Creatures to which they are Attributed?* they are all in God Formally, and infinitely more Glorious, and with infinite more Perfections, than they are in the Creatures: For Created Beings have but their limited and stinted proportions of these *Qualifications*, but God is *infinitely Holy, infinitely Wise, infinitely Just, and infinitely Merciful*: these things are in him without allays or mixtures from their contraries. He is *Holy* without any mixture of *Sin*. *Wise* without any mixture of *Folly*. *Just* without any mixture of *Iniquity*. *Merciful* without mixture of *Cruelty*. Yea, these are all in him without any bounds set them by his Nature and Capacity; for they are his Nature, and therefore as infinite and as unbounded as it.

Again, Those Excellencies that are in the Creatures and cannot formally agree with the *Divine Essence*, yet they are all in him Eminently. Are any Creatures Excellent for the Beauty and Symmetry of their parts, for Light, for Motion, or such like *Qualities*, that do not belong unto the *Divine Nature*? Yet all these are Eminently in God, for he is the Prime and Original Cause from whom they derive their Being and Perfection; so that all *Glory* is his, his incommunicatively from any other, communicatively from him.

Secondly, *All Glory in respect of God is but darkness and obscurity.* And so it was both a True and Divine Conception of *Plato*, when he said, *That Light was but a shadow of God*: for as *Shadows* are vastly dark when the *Light* that surrounds them appears. So God is infinitely brighter than *Light* it self. Yea, the *Sun* that Created Fountain of *Light* is but a *black coal* compared with this Eternal Father of *Lights*. This is well expressed by *Job, 25. 5. Behold even*

to the Moon and it shineth not, and the Stars are not pure in his sight. As the *Light* of the *Sun* when it ariseth, drowns and extinguisheth all other *Lights* (for its brightness as it brings a *Day* to all the rest of the World, so it brings a *Night* to the *Stars*) So the infinite brightness of the *Glory* of *God*, over-casts all other *Glory* whatsoever with *Night* and *Obscurity*. Hence it is said, *That God chargeth his Angels with Folly*, Job 4. 8. So that if those *Wise* and *Intellectual* *Creatures* be compared with *God*, they are but foolish and ignorant; for the *Glory* of his infinite and unsearchable *Understanding* so far transcends their reach that they know nothing, in comparison with him who knoweth all things. The two chiefest *Glories* of *Men*, are *Wisdom* and *Strength*; *Wisdom* to contrive, and *Power* to execute; these perfect him as he is a *Man*: But yet see how the *Apostle* undervalues both these, when compared with *God*. I Cor. 1. 25. *The foolishness of God is wiser than Men, and the weakness of God is stronger than Men.* And therefore because *God's Glory* is infinitely surpassing all others, our *Saviour* ascribes it to him peculiarly: *Thine is the Glory.*

Thirdly, *Because all other Glories in the Creatures serve only to illustrate the Glory of the Great God.* Seest thou any *Excellency* and *Perfection* in any of the *Creatures*? *God* hath so endowed them with it, not that thou shouldest fix there, and make that thy *Idol*; but that thou mightest have a hint from thence how much more perfect he himself is; and take thy rise from *visible Excellencies*, to admire those that are invisible. Is there so much *Beauty* and *Harmony* in the *Frame* of *Nature*? Think then how much more *Harmonious* and *Orderly* are the *Counsels* and *Designs* of the *Great God*, who hath contrived and disposed the whole course and circuit of second *Causes*. Is there so much awe and dread in the presence of an *Earthly Majesty*, to daunt all that are not impudent and profligate *Offenders*? Think then how infinitely venerable is the *Face* of the *Great God*,

God, since it is only some Ray of his Authority and Majesty shining in them, that makes them so dreadful. Is it such a pleasant thing to the Eye to behold the Light? raise then not thine Eye of Sense, but thine Eye of Faith to consider how infinitely Bright and Glorious that Light is, that is never Clouded; that Light which though it infinitely diffuse it self, yet resides always in its Center: For God is Light, and in him there is no darkness at all, 1 John 1. 5.

Thus you see that God hath therefore made any Created Being Glorious and Excellent, that it might serve as a Monitor to put us in mind of his greater Glory; and the more Excellent any Perfections are in the Creature, the greater advantage have we from them to raise our Meditations unto God.

And having thus shewn you why Glory is in such an especial manner attributed unto God, *Thine is the Glory*, it remains now to consider what force this Plea hath to confirm our Faith, that we shall obtain from God those things which we pray for; and here let us see its influence upon every Petition.

First, The Glory is God's, therefore his Name shall be Hallowed. For his *Declarative Power* consists in the Hallowing of his Name, since to Hallow, is nothing else (as I shewed you in the Explication of that Petition) but to declare God to be Holy, and this is to give Glory unto God. Hence we have them both joyned together, *Levit. 10. 3. I will be Sanctified by them that come nigh unto me, and before all the People I will be Glorified.* To Sanctifie, is to Glorifie God. And therefore what better Argument can we urge that God would provide for the Sanctifying of his Name, than this, that the Glory is his, and if his Name be prophaned in the World, his Glory needs must suffer. How can the World know that God is infinitely Glorious in all his Perfections and Attributes, unless he take care by his own

methods to have his Name Sanctified among his People in their Expressions and Actions, and to have it Sanctified upon the Wicked in their Plagues and Punishments? Therefore we may well pray in Faith, *Hallowed be thy Name, for thine is the Glory.*

Secondly, The Glory is God's; Therefore *His Kingdom shall come.* For where should he be Honoured but in his own Kingdom? God is greatly dishonoured and his Glory traduced in the rest of the World: And therefore if he will have any Glory secured and maintained, he must take care of his Church to maintain and propagate it. *Psal. 76. 1. In Judah is God known, his Name is great in Israel.* The Glory of a King falls together with his Kingdom, and it lays a blot upon his Honour if he should suffer his Enemies to overthrow it, while he hath Power to defeat their Enterprises; since therefore the Glory is God's, we may be confident that he will provide for the security and welfare of his own Kingdom, and will for his Honours sake establish it so sure, that the Gates of Hell, all the Power and Policy of Men and Devils shall never be able to prevail upon it, to its extirpation.

Hence then whensoever we see the rage of the professed Enemies of the Name of Christ, incroaching upon the Borders of his Dominions, when the State of the Church Militant seems visibly to impair, or when the Hypocrisie and Wickedness of those who are the professed Enemies of Christ seems to eat out the very Heart and Power of true Godliness, we may well pray in Faith, *Thy Kingdom come; Lord raise, Lord enlarge, Lord establish it, For thine is the Glory,* and unless thou wilt confine thy Glory only to Heaven, and account the Praises and Eternal Hallelujahs of Saints and Angels a sufficient adoration for thy Great Name; Lord, have regard to this thy poor decaying Kingdom, for only in it, and in Heaven is thy Glory Celebrated. And

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if thou leavest this thy Kingdom to be over-run by the Agents and Ministers of the Devil, if Prophaneness and Idolatry gain ground in it, so as to thrust thee out of the Throne, What were this but to give thy Glory to another, which thou hast promised not to do?

Thirdly, *The Glory is God's*, therefore *his Will shall be done in Earth as it is in Heaven*. The greatest Glory that God can receive from us is by our Obedience, *John 15. 8. Herein (saith our Saviour) is my Father Glorified, that ye bear much Fruit*, God's chiefest Glory is his Holiness, and therefore he is Styled Glorious in Holiness. And we have no better way to Glorifie the Holiness of God, than by endeavouring to be Holy as he is Holy. For then do we declare it to be a thing which we value as most Excellent and Glorious when we strive to imitate it, and would fain get as much of it as our frail Natures can receive. And therefore we may well pray in Faith, *Thy Will be done, for thine is the Glory*, because the greatest Glory we can give to God, is by *doing his Will*.

Fourthly, *The Glory is God's*, and therefore will he provide for us *our daily Bread*, and all things that are necessary for our good. And therefore when God was Miraculously to provide Bread for his People in the Wilderness, he tells them, *Exod. 16. 7. In the morning then shall ye see the Glory of the Lord*. And certainly it is not for the Glory of God that any of his should want things fitting and necessary for them. Only let us leave it to him to Judge what is so. For although he should reduce thee to a morsel of Bread, and a cup of cold Water, yet he gives thee all that is fit for thee, and should he give thee more, it would not be a boon but a curse.

Fifthly, *The Glory is God's*. Therefore he will forgive thy *Debts and Trespases*. The Wise Man hath told us, *Prov. 19. 11.* That *it is the Glory of a Man to pass over a Transgression*, and shall it not much more be the Glory of God, whose Mercies are infinitely more Glorious than our Charity can be? Yea, he tells us, *Prov. 25. 2.* That *it is the Glory of God to conceal a thing*, that is to hide and cover our sins, so that they shall not be found against us. And expressly, *Ephes. 1. 6, 7.* That *we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins to the praise and glory of his Grace*. And I have shewed you in opening of the Petition, that it is a very high Honour and Superiority to forgive, it is the Prerogative-Royal of a King, and therefore we may well pray with Faith. *Forgive us our Trespases, for thine is the Glory.*

Sixthly, *The Glory is God's*, Therefore he will deliver us from the Assaults and Incurfions of our Enemies, he will deliver us from Temptations, or from the evil of Temptation. He will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear, but will with every Temptation make a way for us to escape, hereby to demonstrate the Glory of his Wisdom and Power, that it is above all the wiles and power of the Devil and our Spiritual Enemies. And therefore we may well pray, *Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil, for thine is the Glory*; because it is the Honour of God to defend his Servants from the incurfions of his and their Enemies.

Thus we have treated on three of God's Attributes ascribed to him in this *Doxology*: His *Dominion*, his *Power*, and his *Glory*. It remains now to consider the Amplification of all these by that expression, *For ever*, which is to be referred and accommodated to the foregoing Titles, *The Kingdom is thine for ever*, *The Power is thine for ever*, and *the Glory thine for ever*. Now this application of it denotes to us
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the Eternity of God's Attributes, and consequently his Nature.

Indeed this Particle *For ever*, doth not always in *Scripture* signifie a strict and proper Eternity, for it is often applied to things of various durations.

First, Sometimes (most improperly) those things which have both beginning and end, are said to be for ever. So the *Mosaical Pædago*gy, and those rites and observancies which were imposed upon the *Jews* by the *Levitical Law*, are said to be everlasting, although they were not to continue any longer than between *Moses* and *Christ*, which space was not compleatly Fifteen Hundred Years. Thus the Priesthood is said to be eternal, *Numb.* 25. 13. where it is called, *The Covenant of an everlasting Priesthood*. So the sprinkling of the Blood of the Passover is to be commanded to be observed for ever, *Exod.* 12. 24. So *Circumcision* is called, *an everlasting Covenant*, *Gen.* 17 13. And many more such instances might be given.

Yea, things of a far shorter duration than these, such as are only to continue during life, are yet said to be Eternal. The servitude of him that refused freedom, was to be for ever, *Exod.* 21. 6. that is during his natural life. And so the *Psalmist* often resolves himself and exhorts others to Praise and Magnifie God *for ever*. And indeed it is very ordinary in *Scripture* that those things are said to be *for ever*, which were not to alter their State for some continuance of time, nor to be disused till the date prefixed to them were expired.

Secondly, Some things which had no beginning but shall have an end, are yet said to be *for ever*. And such (as they respect their Objects) are the Decrees or Foreknowledge of God, which shall in their due time be fulfilled. Thus *Ephes.* 3. 11. they are called, *The Eternal purpose of God*, and

and yet they cease under the notions of Decrees and Pre-science, when that which was from all Eternity Decreed and Foreknown takes its accomplishment.

Thirdly, Those things which had a beginning, but never shall have an end, are said to be *for ever*. And such are the Angels, all of them Created in the beginning of time, but their future continuance is without bound or period. And the Saints after the Resurrection are said to be *made equal to the Angels*, because they shall not die, *Luke 20. 36*. And Christ is said to be made *a little lower than the Angels*, in that he tasted of Death, *Heb. 2. 9*. The good Angels live in Eternal Beatitude, they *always behold the Face of God*, *Matth. 18. 10*. And the evil Angels live in Eternal torments and a never dying Death, *They are reserved in everlasting Chains, under darkness*, *Jude verse 6*. And thus the Souls of Men are everlasting. For being Spiritual substances, and free from all principles of decay and corruption, they shall for ever continue in that Estate and Condition for which their Actions in this life have prepared them. And not the Soul alone, but the Body also shall be eternally preserved in its being; *This mortal must put on immortality*, *1 Cor. 15. 53*. And then *shall we for ever be with the Lord*, *1 Theff. 4. 17*. And yet all these had once their beginning by the Creating Word of God, but are Eternal, *à parte post* and shall always retain those natures and beings.

Fourthly, That is most strictly and properly said be Eternal and for ever, which neither hath beginning nor end, whose prospect both ways is infinite and boundless. And thus God only is for ever, and it is an incommunicable Attribute of his Divine Essence to be so. But because all the perfections and properties of God are God himself, therefore this everlastingness here in the *Doxology* ascribed to his *Kingdom*, his *Power*, and his *Glory*, are said to be

be for ever. Yet not only these, but whatsoever is in God is absolutely Eternal. His *Righteousness is an everlasting Righteousness*, Psal. 119. 142. *His Truth endureth for ever*, Psal. 117. 2. *His Mercy is for ever*, Psal. 136. 1. His Mercy endureth for ever, which is there made the burden of that most excellent Song and the sweet close of every verse in it, *His Love is for ever*. Jer. 31. 3. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love*.

Now in treating of the Attributes of God, I shall endeavour to shew these three things.

First, What the true and proper notion of Eternity is.

Secondly, That God is Eternal.

Thirdly, What encouragement our Faith may have from this Attribute of God's Eternity, that those things which we pray unto him for, shall be granted unto us.

First, Let us see what Eternity is. And here though it be altogether impossible, exactly to describe what is boundless and infinite, yet to help our weak and shallow conceptions, we may take this notion of it. Eternity is a duration which hath neither beginning nor end, nor succession of parts. Or according to the common description of *Boethius*, *Est interminabilis vitæ tota simul & perfecta possessio*. It is the compleat possession of an endless life all at once. So that it is distinguished from all other durations whatsoever.

First, In that other durations have had their beginnings; for all things were Created either in time, or with time, but Eternity was before all time, and shall be after it.

Secondly, In that all Temporal durations are successive, measured by the motions of Heavenly Bodies, by years, days and hours; but Eternity is permanent, it is but one abiding instant, and hath no parts following one after another,

ther, and though it comprehends all time within its infinite Circle, yet it doth not move along with time. For as Rivers are contained within their banks, and flow along by them part after part, without any motion of the banks themselves, so Time is contained within Eternity, and flows along in it without any motion or succession of Eternity it self.

This I confefs is hard, if not altogether impossible to be formed into an Idea ; yet conceiving Reason will infallibly demonstrate that Being which neither hath beginning nor end, can have no succession in its duration ; for where-ever there is Succession, there must needs be a Priority, and where-ever there is a Priority, there must needs be a beginning. And if Eternity did consist and were made up of such parts as are equal and commensurate to our years and days, it must needs follow, that these parts themselves must be infinite ; for if they be but finite, we shall come to a beginning, which is not to be granted in Eternity. And if they be infinite, then in Eternity there must be as many Millions of Years as of Minutes, and consequently a Minute would be equal to a Million of Years ; yea, the least part of a Minute would be equal to it, which is grossly absurd.

But I shall not detain you with these Philosophical Speculations. Only when we say that God is from everlasting to everlasting, we ought not to conceive that there is any Succession in his duration ; that he grows older, or that he hath continued longer this day than he was yesterday. For though when we speak of God, we are forced to use such expressions, and denote Succession in his Being, as that he was from everlasting, and that he shall be to everlasting, yet to say that God was, or that he shall be, is only allowable by reason of the penury of our conceptions : But in strict propriety these are derogatory to him ; for God neither was nor shall be, but only is and enjoys his Eternal Essence immutably and unsuccessively. And therefore when

Moses

Moses demanded his Name that he might inform the *Israelites* who that God was that would take pity of their Sufferings, he tells him, thou shalt say unto them, *I AM hath sent me to you*, *Exod. 3. 14.* And this indeed is the best and fittest expression of his Eternity and unchangableness.

Yea, and the *Scripture* hath given us one more high and lofty expression of it, *Psal. 90. 4. A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past*, what is yesterday to this day? but a mere nothing. So a thousand years, yea all the thousand years, and all the time that ever the Orbs of Heaven shall spin out to the World, is all to God but as yesterday when it is past; he lives not by it, nor is his Being measured out by days or years, but it is a perpetual *Now*, a standing *Moment*, an indivisible and permanent instant without flux or vicissitude. Indeed it is wholly inconsistent with Eternity and an infinite duration, that there should be any thing past, or any thing to come in it. For what is already past, cannot be infinite, because it is already ended. And what is to come cannot be Eternal, because there was something going before it. And from hence it appears, that a duration which is Eternal, must be without beginning, without end, and without any Succession of parts.

Now Secondly, That God is thus Eternal, appears both from clear Evidence of *Scripture*, and invincible demonstrations of Reason it self.

First, The *Scripture* bears abundant witness to the Truth of this Attribute, *Psal. 102. 25, 26, 27. The Heavens are the Works of thy hands, they shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old as a Garment, but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end. Psal. 90. 2. Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the Earth and the World, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God. Isa. 43. 10. Before me was there no God formed, neither shall there be after me. 1.*

Tim. 1. 17. Now to the King Eternal and Immortal the only Wise God be Honour and Glory. But I cannot stand to cite all the Testimonies that might be alleadged.

Secondly, The Eternity of God may be demonstrated by clear and irrefragable reason. And that I shall give you in these several gradations.

First, It is absolutely necessary that there be some first cause of all things that are made, which is not it self made or produced by any. For the series of Causes is not infinite, otherwise no effect could be produced, since what is infinite cannot be pass'd through. And if all Beings that are, are caused by some pre-existent Being, then there is not, nor ever was a Being, before which there was not another, and so this gross absurdity will follow, That before there was a Being, there was a Being, which is a contradiction. Therefore we must necessarily rest in some first Cause, from which all things have their Origin, and is it self caused by no other.

Secondly, This first Cause of all is God. For whatsoever is the first Cause of all things, must needs be Almighty in that it produceth them, and All-wise in that it Governs and Maintains them; and incomprehensible; for that Being which hath no Cause, cannot be perfectly known, since a perfect and comprehensive knowledge of things is derived only from the knowledge of the Causes of them. Now whatsoever is Almighty, All-wise, and Incomprehensible, is that God whom we adore.

Thirdly, God being the first Cause of all things, and not produced himself by any other pre-existent Being, it is impossible that there should be any time wherein he was not. For that which once was not, either shall never be, or must be made. And therefore it being wholly inconsistent with the

the notion of a first Cause to be made or produced; it clearly follows, that we can never conceive a time wherein God was not.

Hence it appears that God is Eternal, *à parte ante*, or from everlasting: And that he is also Eternal *à parte post*, or to everlasting, appears,

Fourthly, Because that which hath no beginning of its duration, can have no end of it. For the first Cause of all not depending upon any for the production of its Being, can depend upon none for the continuation of it, and therefore of necessity must exist to all Eternity.

And thus you see how much Reason alone can speak for the Eternity of God. The demonstrations which I have now given you are so clear and perspicuous, that would those Atheistical Spirits, who acknowledge no God but their Reason, duly ponder the force of them, they would even by their Deified Reason be enforced to acknowledge the Living and Eternal God, whom we adore. Possibly to some these things may seem difficult, to others they may seem needless, because we all readily acknowledge the Eternity of God. But certainly if ever there were need to confirm the Doctrines and Articles of Faith by arguments drawn from the principles of Reason, it is now in these days of ours, wherein Atheism hath gotten ground and credit, and it is look'd upon as a sign of a pregnant wit and mature and deep judgment daringly to dispute against the Being and Attributes of God, and whatsoever is most Sacred and Venerable in Religion.

But certainly if there be Reason in any thing, there is Reason to believe the existence of perfection of the Deity, not only from the Oracles of the *Scripture*, which are enough to satisfy a Christian; but from the dictates also of natural Light, and the evidence that Reason brings in: which are so cogent and demonstrative, that he that will notwithstanding

be an Atheist, must also be irrational ; and whosoever will say in his heart, there is no God, or that God is not Eternal, or that God is not infinitely perfect, we may well say of him as the *Psalmist* doth, that he is a fool, *The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God*, Psal. 14. 1.

And thus I have shewed unto you what **Eternity** is in its proper notion, and have evinced likewise that God is in the strictest sence, Eternal.

And now before I come to the third thing propounded, let us here make some few practical Reflections upon this Eternity of God.

First, Glorifie this inconceivable and Glorious Attribute, extol and venerate it with your highest thoughts and lowest prostrations, sending your adoring thoughts as far into the Eternity of God as possible a humane and finite understanding can dart them. For though Eternity be such a deep as can never be fathomed, since it hath no bottom, yet it is sweet and delightful to lose our selves and be swallowed up in this Abyss of Being. Those prospects are most pleasant to the eye, that have nothing to bound them, no limits to restrain the sight in its free range, so it is the most pleasant prospect to the mind, to contemplate such an Object where there can be no boundaries set to our apprehensions, and where we can see no farther, not for want of Object, but for want of Sight.

Secondly, Is God Eternal from everlasting to everlasting ? let us leave then the care of all future events unto him, for he is the same unchangable God, and although we be but of yesterday, and may not be to morrow, and when we die, then all our thoughts perish with us, yet the everlasting God can and will order all affairs for his Glory, and carry on our purposes if they be conformable unto his. We often-times are anxious and sollicitous about what may happen after our de-
cease

cease either to the World, or to those we love best in it; but let us commit this care to God; he ever lives, and hath the same ever infinite Power and infinite Wisdom to dispose of all events as it shall please him. Let us therefore cast these burdens upon him who shall still survive, as a Father for our Children, as an Husband to provide for our Widows, as a King and Governour to provide for our Countrey, as the Universal Lord and Monarch to provide for the affairs of the whole World according to the All-wise Maxims of his Eternal Counsels.

Thirdly, Is God Eternal? Why then should we not give unto him the same Honour, Respect, and Service that his Saints have done in former Ages and Generations? He is still the same God, his Holiness and his Justice, and his Sovereignty still the same. And if the consideration of these his Attributes had such a mighty influence upon the Saints of former times, to engage them to a strict and holy life, why should they not now have the like influence upon us? He is the Lord, he changeth not, and therefore as absolutely as he required Obedience from them, so absolutely now doth he require it from us. But the truth is, we live as if God were grown old, as if his Justice were now out of date, or his Power decrepit: We live as if there were decays in the *Deity*; yea, indeed as if there were no God in the World to take notice of, and punish our sins. Certainly that God who once lived to denounce threatnings, still lives to execute them: He is the same Holy, the same Powerful, the same Just God that ever he was: Why then should not we give him the same Honour, and Respect, and Service? Why should we not love and fear him as the Saints of old have done, since we have the same God whom they worshipped, and a God who requires from us the same Duties and Observances?

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Let us now proceed to the third and last thing propounded, which was to shew you what encouragement our Faith may have from this Attribute of God, Eternity, to expect the grant of those good things, which we pray for. For our Saviour hath taught us to use this as a plea with God in our Prayers. *For thine is the Kingdom, &c. for ever.*

And indeed this Encouragement is great and manifold. For hence we may with confidence rely upon God for merciful supplies in all our wants, for deliverance in all our dangers, for supports under all our troubles, and for comfort under all our sorrows, because he is Eternal, and therefore the same God, who hath heretofore in all Ages of the World done great things for all those who trust in him. And therefore *the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory*, which were a forcible plea with God in former times, a plea to which he could deny nothing when urged in Faith, have still the same efficacy and validity now: For these and all other of God's Attributes are his for ever. Therefore, O Christian, now lay hold on God's strength, and plead with him what he hath done for his Children in former Ages: How he hath forgiven the Penitent, revived the Contrite, restored Joy and Salvation to dejected and despondent Spirits; how he hath wrought for the Sanctification of his great Name; by what wonderful providences, and wise methods he hath established and enlarged his Kingdom; how he hath strengthened the weak hands and feeble knees, and made those who were without Might, able by his Grace, to perform the hardest Duties in fulfilling his Will and Commandments; how he hath provided for all their necessities, rebuked the temptations of the wicked one, and kept them in the World from the evil of the World. And then urge: Lord, thou art still the same God, Eternal in thy Essence, Immutable in thy Attributes;

tributes ; thy Power, thy Wisdom and thy Mercy are the same that ever they were, and therefore vouchsafe unto us the same Favour. This plea offers an holy violence to Heaven, a violence that is pleasing and acceptable unto God, which he will not, he cannot resist. If we endeavour to be of the same dispositions and affections with the Saints of old, we may be sure to obtain of God's hands the same Mercy and Salvation. See how *Asaph* instructs the Church to make use of the Memorials of God's former loving kindneses, and the great and wonderful works that he had wrought for their Fathers, *Psal. 78. 4, 6, 7. We will shew to the Generations to come, the Praises of the Lord and his strength, and the wonderful works that he hath done, that one Generation may declare them to another, that they may set their hope in God.* And therefore the consideration of the Eternity and unchangableness of God, is of vast and infinite comfort, and a mighty advantage for the strengthening our Faith, in pleading with God for the same Mercies which he hath formerly bestowed upon others, because he is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever.

And thus I have finished the *Doxology*, and therein considered the four Glorious Attributes ascribed unto God in it; his Sovereignty, his Omnipotence, his Excellency, and his Eternity.

There remains but one thing more to be spoken of in this Prayer, and that is the Conclusion, and Ratification of all in that short Particle, *Amen*.

Of this I shall speak but very briefly, and so shut up this whole Subject.

This word *Amen*, is sometimes prefixed before a Speech, and sometimes affixed after it. When it is prefixed before,
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it is assertory, and so we find it very often in the *Evangelists*; for wheresoever our Saviour useth the word *verily*, it is no other but *Amen*. *Verily, verily I say unto thee*; i. e. *Amen Amen, I say unto thee*; which is a vehement assertion of the Truth and necessity of what he speaks. And our Saviour useth it to gain the more attention and belief to what he desires. Thus *John 3. 5. Amen, Amen, I say unto thee, except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*. So *John 16. 23. Amen, Amen, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father, in my Name he will give it you*. And so in many other places, in the *Evangelists*. How backward are we to believe, since our infidelity is such that it constraineth the Son of God, who is Truth it self, to use asseverations and protestations to win our assent unto him ?

Secondly, As this Particle *Amen* used in the beginning of a Speech, is Assertory of the undoubted Truth of it, so when it is subjoined and used at the end of it, is Precatory, and signifies our earnest desire to have our Prayers heard, and our Petitions granted. *Psal. 41. 13. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting, Amen, and Amen*. *Psal 72. 19. Let the whole Earth be filled with his Glory, Amen, and Amen*. *Psal. 106. 48. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting, and let all the People say Amen*. In the former sence of the words as it is prefixed to a Speech, it signifies *so it is*. In this Latter, as it is added to a Petition or Request, it signifies *so be it*.

Now this teacheth us to put up all our Petitions, First, with understanding, duly weighing and considering what it is we ask of God. For when we use vain and insignificant babbling, how can we seal and close them up with an hearty *Amen*?

Amen? And this condemns the mockery of the *Papists*, who because God understands what is uttered in a language to them unknown, think that they may lawfully pray to him in a Tongue which they themselves understand not. But with what Zeal, with what affection can they close up such Prayers with an *Amen*? This is like setting a Seal to an Instrument which they know, not what it contains: and is expressly condemned by the Apostle, 1 Cor. 14. 16. *How shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned, say Amen, at thy giving of Thanks, seeing he understands not what thou sayest?*

Secondly, It teacheth us to present all our requests to the Throne of Grace, with fervent Zeal and Affection: *Amen* is a wing to our Prayers; it is the Bow that shoots them up to Heaven. And although every Petition as we utter them before God, should be accompanied with an earnest and hearty desire to have them heard and granted; yet at the close of them all, we are to redouble and repeat this our desire in the word *Amen*. Wherein we do as it were briefly and succinctly Pray over again all that we had prayed before; and in one word, beg of God, That he would give us all that we had before asked of him.

And therefore whether we Pray our selves, or joyn in Prayers with others, and make their Petitions ours, we ought to attest our understanding of, our assent unto, and our earnest desires after the Mercies that are begged by Sealing up the Prayers with an *Amen*. And certainly, it would be a very befeeming thing if *Amens* were audible and sounding, unless we are ashamed to be thought to Pray when others Pray, and to make use of others expressions to present our Petitions. When we come to the publick Worship, we are not to look upon the Minister only as Praying for the People, but he is the Peoples Mouth unto God, and it

is or ought to be the Prayer of the whole Congregation which he presents. They Pray with him, and by him; and every Petition that he makes to God, ought to be ratified with an *Amen* sent from our very hearts: which if we sincerely and affectionately perform, we have abundant assurance, that what is confirmed by so many suffrages on Earth, shall likewise be confirmed by our Father which is in Heaven. And how beautiful, how becoming, would this be when the whole Church shall thus conspire together in their Requests? St. *Ferome* tells us, *It was the custom in his days, to close up every Prayer with such an unanimous consent, that their Amens rung and echoed in the Church, and sounded like the fall of Waters, or the noise of Thunder.* This would be a Testimony of our hearty consent to the things we Pray for. And if any two that shall agree upon Earth, touching any thing that they shall ask, they shall have it granted them, as our Saviour hath promised, *Matth. 18. 19.* then certainly, the joynt Prayers of a whole multitude of Christians, must needs have a kind of Omnipotency in them, and be able to do any thing with God.

And thus I have with God's Assistance, given you a brief *Exposition* of this most excellent Prayer of our Saviour. The Lord Sanctifie it unto you, and make it a means to help you to Pray with more understanding, with stronger Faith, and with greater Fervency.

The End of the Larger Exposition.

A Catechistical
EXPOSITION
OF THE
Lord's Prayer,

By way of
QUESTION and ANSWER.

By the Right Reverend Father in God, *EZEKIEL*,
Lord Bishop of *Derry*; by which he examined the Youth
each Lord's-Day, during the whole Time he preached
upon the Lord's Prayer.

Quest. **I**s the Lord's Prayer a Form of Prayer, or onely a
Pattern for Prayer?

Ans^w. It is both: That it is to be used as a Form, ap-
pears, *Luke 11. 2.* When ye pray, say, *Our Father which*
art in Heaven, &c. That it is a Pattern, *Matt. 6. 9.* After
this Manner therefore, pray ye: *Our Father which art in*
Heaven, &c.

F f

Q. What

Q. What are the Parts of this Prayer ?

A. They are Four.

1. The Preface or Introduction.
2. The Petitions and Requests.
3. The Doxology or Praise-giving.
4. The Conclusion and Ratification.

Q. What is the Preface to this Prayer ?

A. Our Father which art in Heaven.

Q. What observe you from it ?

A. That in the Beginning of our Prayers, we ought seriously to consider, and reverently to express the glorious Attributes of God; as an excellent Means to compose us into an Holy Fear of his Divine Majesty.

Q. How many are the Petitions contained in this Prayer ?

A. Six; Whereof the three first respect God's Glory, and the three last our own Good.

Q. What learn you from this Order and Method ?

A. That we ought first to seek God's Glory, before any Interests and Concerns of our own.

Q. How are those Petitions divided, which immediately concern the Glory of God ?

A. In the first of them we pray that God may be glorified; in the other two, for the Means whereby he is glorified.

Q. How divide you those Petitions which concern our own good ?

A. One relates to our Temporal, the other two to our Spiritual good.

Q. What observe you from placing the Petition for our Temporal good, in the Midst of this Prayer ?

A. That we are onely to bait at the World in our Passage to Heaven, and onely refresh our selves with our daily Bread, in our Way and Journey thither.

Q. What

Q. *What are the Petitions which relate to our Spiritual good?*

A. They are two: One whereby we beg the Pardon of our Sins; the other whereby we beg Deliverance from them.

Q. *What ascribe you to God in the Doxology?*

A. Four of his most glorious Attributes.

1. First, His Sovereignty; *Thine is the Kingdom.*
2. Secondly, His Omnipotence; *And the Power.*
3. Thirdly, His Excellency; *And the Glory.*
4. Fourthly, The Eternity and Unchangeableness of all these; *They are Thine for ever.*

Q. *What signifies that Particle Amen, at the End of this Prayer?*

A. It signifies two Things.

So be it; Which notes our Desire for the obtaining of what we ask.

So it shall be; Which notes our Assurance of being heard.

Q. *What is the Preface to the Lord's Prayer?*

A. Our Father which art in Heaven.

Q. *What doth this teach us?*

A. That in our Entrance into Prayer, we should seriously consider both the Mercy of God as he is our Father; and likewise his Majesty as he is in Heaven: That the one may beget in us Filial Boldness, and the other awfull Reverence, and by the mixture of both, we may be kept from Despair and Presumption.

Q. *In what Respects may God be stiled Father?*

A. In three especially.

1. First in respect of the Eternal Generation of his Son. And so this Title is proper onely to the first Person of the Trinity.

A Catechistical Exposition

2. In respect of Creation and Providence, and so he is the Father of all: Mal. 2. 10. *Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?*

3. In respect of Regeneration and Adoption: And so he is the onely Father of the Faithfull; John 1. 12. 13. *But as many as received him; to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believed on his Name: Which were born, not of Blood, nor of the VVill of Flesh, nor of the VVill of Man, but of God: Rom. 8. 15, 16. For ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to Fear: But ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father. The Spirit it self beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God.*

Q. In what Respects do we call God Father in this Prayer?

A. In the two last: As he hath created us and doth preserve us, and as he hath regenerated and adopted us.

Q. When ye stile God, the Father, do ye mean onely God: the Father, the first Person of the Trinity?

A. No. For God the first Person is eminently called, the Father, not in respect of us, but in respect of Christ. In respect of us the whole Trinity, both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is our Father which is in Heaven; Isaiah 9. 6. For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the Government shall be upon his Shoulder: and his Name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellour The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. John 3. 5. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee; Except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God?

Q. What is implied in this Particle Our, Our Father?

A. That God is the Father of all Men; He is the Father of the VVicked by Creation, and Providence; but especially of the Godly by Regeneration and Adoption.

Q. Is.

Q. Is it proper in our secret Prayers to say, Our Father?

A. It is: For so we find: Dan. 9. 17. Now therefore, O our God, hear the Prayer of thy Servant, and his Supplications, and cause thy Face to shine upon thy Sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's Sake.

Q. What learn we by styling God our Father?

A. First to esteem one another as Brethren; since all partake of the same common Nature; much more as we partake of the same especial Grace: To interest one another in our Prayers, and thereby maintain the Communion of Saints.

Q. But since God is every where present, why hath our Saviour taught us to direct our Prayers to our Father in Heaven?

A. First; because Heaven is the most glorious Place of God's Residence; and therefore God is represented to us in Heaven, to affect us with his Glory and Majesty.

Secondly; Because God no where hears our Prayers with acceptation but onely in Heaven. For there onely are they represented by Christ's Intercession, which he makes in both Natures.

Q. What learn ye from our being commanded to direct our Prayers to God in Heaven?

A. That we should so pray as to pierce Heaven, which cannot be done by the strength and intention of our Voice, but of our Zeal and Affection.

Q. Is the Voice necessary in Prayer?

A. It is, onely upon three Accounts.

1. As that which God requires should be employed in his Service.

2. When in secret it may be an help to raise our Affections, still keeping it within the Bounds of Decency and Secrecy.

3. In our joyning with others it is an help likewise, to raise and quicken their Affections.

Q. What

Q. *What is the first Petition of the Lord's Prayer?*

A. *Hallowed be thy Name.*

Q. *What is here meant by the Name of God?*

A. *First, God's Name is himself: Psal. 20. 1. The Lord bear thee in the Day of Trouble, the Name of the God of Jacob defend thee; and many other Places.*

Secondly, The Name of God is any perfection ascribed unto him, whereby he hath made himself known unto us.

Q. *What are the Names of God?*

A. *His Titles, and his Attributes.*

Q. *What are his Titles?*

A. *They are many; as Jehovah, which signifies Being, and giving being; Creator, denoting his Infinite Power; Lord, and King, denoting his Authority and Dominion; Father, signifying his Care and Goodness towards his Creatures; Redeemer, noting his Mercy and Grace, in delivering them from Temporal Evils, and especially from Eternal Death.*

Q. *What are the Attributes of God?*

A. *They are of two Sorts, either Incommunicable or Communicable.*

Q. *Which are his incommunicable Attributes?*

A. *Such as are so proper to the Divine Essence, that they cannot in any Measure or Resemblance be ascribed to the Creatures. Such are the Eternity, Immensity, Simplicity, and Immutability.*

Q. *What are his communicable Attributes?*

A. *They are such as may in some Analogy and Resemblance be found in the Creatures. As Holiness, Justice, Mercy, Truth, Wisdom and Power.*

Q. *Since they are to be found in the Creatures, how are they then the proper Names of God?*

A. *They are the proper Names of God, when they are applied to him free from all those Imperfections that attend them in the Creatures.*

Q. *What*

Q. What are these Imperfections ?

A. They are Three.

1. First, That all the Perfections of the Creatures, are not Originally from themselves, but derivatively from God.
2. Secondly, They are not infinite, but limited.
3. Thirdly, They are not unchangeable, but mutable.

Q. How then do these become the Names of God ?

A. VVhen we ascribe them unto God as Originally from himself, and infinitely, and unchangeably in himself.

Q. What is it to hallow this Name of God ?

A. It signifies to make his Name Holy.

Q. How can God or his Name be made Holy ?

A. Neither by Dedication to Holy Uses, nor by Infusion of Holy Habits ; both which are frequently in Scripture called Hallowing or Sanctifying ; but onely by Declaration of his Glory and Holiness.

Q. How do we hallow the Name of God by Declaration ?

A. VVhen in our most reverend Thoughts we observe and admire the Expressions of his Attributes, and endeavour to set them forth to others, both in VVords and Actions.

Q. What pray you for in this Petition, Hallowed be thy Name ?

A. For three Things in the General.

1. First, VVe beg such Graces for our selves, as may enable us to sanctifie the Name of God.

Q. What are they especially ?

A. Knowledge and Understanding of his Nature, VVill and VVorks ; Thankfulness for every Mercy, Patience under every Affliction, Faith in his VVord and Promises :

For

For to believe God's Word gives Glory to his Name ; Rom. 4. 20. *He staggered not at the Promise of God through Unbelief; but was strong in Faith, giving Glory to God: An Holy and Exemplary Life whereby we especially glorified God, and induce others to do so too: Matt. 5. 16. Let your Light so shine before Men, that they may see your good Works, and glorifie your Father which is in Heaven.* And lastly, favourable and well ordered Speech, that we may not prophane the Name of God by Oaths, or Curses, or vain using it ; but speak of him with all Holy Fear, and Reverence.

Q. What else do we beg of God in this Petition ?

A. We beg that others also may receive Grace to enable them to sanctifie his Name. And Thirdly, we beg that God would so over-rule all Things ; that his Glory may be promoted by them.

Q. What learn you from Christ's making this the first Petition of his Prayer ?

A. 1. First, That the Glory of God is to be preferred by us, before all other Things whatsoever. John 12. 27, 28. *Now is my Soul troubled, and what shall I say: Father save me from this Hour: But for this Cause came I unto this Hour. Father, glorifie thy Name. Then came there a Voice from Heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorifie it again.*

2. Secondly, That in the Beginning of our Prayers, we ought to beg Assistance from God, to present them that his Name may be hallowed.

Q. What is the second Petition of the Lord's Prayer ?

A. Thy Kingdom come.

Q. How manifold is the Kingdom of God ?

A. It is two fold, either Universal, or else his peculiar Kingdom.

Q. What

Q. What is God's Universal Kingdom ?

A. The whole World ; both Heaven and Earth, and Hell it self and all things in them : Psal. 103. 19. The Lord hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom ruleth over all.

Q. How doth God exercise his Dominion over this Kingdom ?

A. By the Power of his Providence, disposing of all his Creatures and all their Actions, according to his Will.

Q. But since wicked Men are Rebels against God, how doth he maintain his Dominion over them ?

A. Three ways.

1. First, In that they cannot sin without his Permission.

2. Secondly, In that he restrains them when he pleaseth.

3. Thirdly, In that he justly punisheth them for their Sins, sometimes in this Life, always in the next.

Q. What is God's peculiar Kingdom ?

A. His Kingdom of Grace, which is the Church, and that, either Militant here on Earth, or else Triumphant in Heaven.

Q. How is the Church Militant to be considered ?

A. As it is either Visible or Invisibile.

Q. What is the Visible Church of God here on Earth ?

A. It is a Company of People openly professing the Truths that are necessary to Salvation, and celebrating the Ordinances appointed by Jesus Christ.

Q. What is the Universal Kingdom or Church of God ?

A. It is a Company of true Believers, who have Eternal and Invisibile Communion with God by his Spirit, and their Faith.

Q. What observe you of both ?

G g

A. Its

A. Its Mixture and Imperfection; for in the Visible Church there is a great Mixture of Persons, the Bad with the Good; in the Invisible there is a great Mixture in Persons of Evil with Good, and Sin with Grace.

Q. You have formerly told us that the Church of Christ in its Progress is the Church Militant, either Visible or Invisible; and that the Church of Christ in its Consummation, is the Church Triumphant. What is this Church Triumphant?

A. The general Assembly of such glorious Angels as never fell; and such glorified Saints, as are raised from their Fall.

Q. What is that Kingdom, which in this Petition we pray may come?

A. Not the Universal Kingdom of God, which is the World, for his Dominion therein is always the same; but onely the peculiar Kingdom which is his Church, and more especially that part of it, which is Militant on Earth.

Q. In what Respects may God's Kingdom be said to come?

A. In Three.

1. First, In respect of the Means of Grace and Salvation; which are the Word, and Sacraments; for where these are dispersed, there God's Kingdom is erected.

2. Secondly, In respect of the Efficacy of this Means in the Conversion of Sinners; whereby they are brought into the Invisible Kingdom of Christ.

3. Thirdly, In respect of the Perfection of this Kingdom; for then God's Kingdom comes, when the Saint's Graves are increased; when their Souls are received into Heaven, and when both Souls and Bodies are consummated in Glory.

Q. What do we pray for, when we say, Thy Kingdom come?

A. I. First,

A. 1. First, That God should plant his Church where it is not: That all the Kingdoms of the Earth may become the Kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ.

2. Secondly, That his Ordinances may be purely and powerfully administred; his word truly preached, which is the Law of his Kingdom, and his Sacraments duely dispens'd, which are the Seals of it.

3. Thirdly, That God would send into his Church able and faithfull Ministers, to be faithfull Stewards of the Myseries of the Gospel.

4. Fourthly, That the Ministry of the Word may be successfull to the Conversion of those that hear it.

5. Fifthly, That all the Churches of Christ may be kept from Error, Schism, Superstition and Idolatry, and that true Doctrine and due Discipline may be continued in them to the End of the World.

Q. But may we not pray also for the Church Triumphant in Heaven?

A. We may for the fulfilling of what is promised.

1. First, That the Number of them may be compleated.

2. Secondly, That their Persons may be compleated. That the Bodies of those Saints which now sleep in the Dust, may be raised, united to their Souls, and both made Eternally glorious in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Q. Is not this praying for the Dead so, justly condemned of Popish Superstition?

A. No: for we pray not for another State, as the Papists do, when they pray for Souls to be delivered out of Purgatory, but we pray for the Perfection of the same State, in which the Souls of the Faithful already are; we

pray not for their Release out of Torments, but for a joyfull Resurrection, which both they and we expect; and whatsoever may be the Object of our Faith and Hope, may well be the Subject of our Prayers.

Q. Which is the third Petition?

A. Thy VWill be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.

Q. How is the Will of God distinguished?

A. Into the Will of his Purpose, or the Will of his Precept; or into his secret and revealed Will.

Q. What is the Will of God's Purpose?

A. His Eternal Counsels and Decrees whereby he hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass.

Q. What is the Will of God's Precept?

A. His holy Laws contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; wherein he hath revealed to us the Duties we ought to perform for the obtaining of Eternal Life.

Q. How do these two Wills differ?

A. 1. First, In that there are many things which God wills by his VWill of Purpose, that he hath not willed by his VWill of Precept. For God commands nothing but what is Holy, yet he purposeth to permit many things that are Evil.

2. Secondly, In that we may effectually resist his Will of Precept, so as to hinder the Accomplishment of it, as we do whensoever we sin; but we cannot resist the Will of God's Purpose, though many times to endeavour it, is our indispensable Duty.

Q. Ought not the Will of the Creature to be conformed to the Will of God in all things?

A. Yes to the Will of his Precept; for that alone is the Rule of our Obedience: But in all things to conform to the Will of his Purpose may involve us in the greatest Guilt.

Guilt. Acts 2. 23. *Being delivered by the determinate Counsel, and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.*

Q. Is there not then a manifest repugnance between God's Will of Purpose, and of Precept?

A. No: for the Object of God's Will of Purpose is Event; but of his Will of Precept, Duty; and it is no contradiction for God to will, or permit that to be which he hath willed, or commanded us not to do.

Q. Which of these do we pray may be done?

A. We especially and absolutely pray, that the Will of God's Precept, may be done in Earth as it is in Heaven.

Q. What considerations may excite us to be earnest in this Request?

A. First, because there is a great reluctancy in our corrupt Nature, against the holy Will of God; therefore we ought earnestly to pray, that he by his Grace would subdue it.

Secondly, because the Glory of God is deeply concern'd in doing his Will, for by this we own his Sovereignty, and our Subjection to his Laws and Kingdom.

Thirdly, because our own Interest is deeply concern'd in it; for it is onely by doing his Will we can inherit the Promises. Rev. 22. 14. *Blessed are they that do his Commandments.*

Q. Ought we not absolutely to pray, that God's Will of Purpose may be done?

A. No: And that because many things are brought to pass by this Will, which we ought to pray against; as Temporal Evils, and the Permission of Sin.

Q. How then do the Saints in Scripture pray for the Accomplishment of this Will of God; as in 1 Sam. 3. 18. And Samuel

Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him : and he said, It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good. *2 Sam. 15. 26.* But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee ; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him. *Acts 21. 14.* And when he would not be perswaded, we ceased, saying, The Will of the Lord be done. And our Saviour, *Luke 22. 42.* Saying, Father if thou be willing, remove this Cup from me ; nevertheless, not my Will, but thine be done.

A. These are not so much Prayers, as Declarations of their Submission unto, and Patience under the Hand of God.

Q. *May we not pray at all, that God's Will of Purpose may be done ?*

A. Yes, it is for Temporal, or Spiritual, or Eternal Blessings on our selves or others.

Q. *What force doth the Particle Thy carry in it, when we pray, Thy will be done ?*

A. It may be taken either emphatically, or exclusively.

1. First, It signifies that God's Will ought to be preferred above, and before all others. *Acts 4. 19.* *But Peter and John answered and said unto them, whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.* Both because it is most Sovereign, and because it is most Holy and Perfect ; so that we act most like Men, when we act most like Christians.

2. Secondly, It signifies exclusively that God's Will, and not our own, may be done. For ours being carnal and corrupt, we pray for the subduing it to his.

Q. *What mean you by praying that God's Will be done in Earth ?*

A. First,

A. First, I pray that it may be done by my self, and all others living on the Earth. Psal. 67. 2. *That thy way may be known upon Earth, thy saving Health among all Nations.*

Secondly, We pray that we may improve the few Days, of this Mortal Life, in the Service of God; for there is no Device nor Operation in the Grave.

Q. Having given this Account of the Petition in the Matter of it, what is next observable?

A. The Proportion of it, *As it is in Heaven.*

Q. But is it not impossible to do the Will of God in Earth as it is done in Heaven, where the Holy Angels do perfectly perform it?

A. It is as to the Equality of Perfection, but not as to the Similitude and Proportion of our Endeavours after it. For we are commanded to be holy as God is holy, and perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect: Matt. 5. 48. *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect:* Which Command we obey when we seriously endeavour it.

Q. How then is the Will of God done in Heaven?

A. First, Their Obedience is absolutely perfect, both as to Parts and Degrees; that is to say, they obey all God's Will enjoined them, and that with all their might; and after this Perfection we ought to strive, and in this Petition pray for a greater Measure of it.

Secondly, Their Obedience is chearfull, not extorted by Fears or Sufferings.

Thirdly, They do the Will of God with Zeal and Ardency. Psal. 104. 4. *Who maketh his Angels spirits, his Ministers a flaming Fire.*

Fourthly, They do it with Celerity and ready Dispatch; and therefore the Angels are often in Scripture described to have Wings.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, The Will of God is done in Heaven, with all possible Prostration and Reverence. Rev. 4. 10. *The four and twenty Elders fall down before him that sat on the Throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their Crowns before the Throne, saying.*

Sixthly, The Will of God is done in Heaven with Constancy and Perseverance. Rev. 7. 15. *Therefore are they before the Throne of God, and serve him Day and Night in his Temple; and he that sitteth on the Throne shall dwell among them.* And thus we ought to pray and endeavour, that we may do the Will of God on Earth.

Q. What learn you from this ?

A. That we ought not to satisfy our selves in comparing our Obedience with other Mens, as the boasting Pharisee did; but to take the Examples for our Holiness from Heaven, and to endeavour to imitate the Purity of Angels, and the God of Angels: For St. Paul himself when he prescribes his Life as an Example for Christians, doth it onely as he followed the Pattern of Christ, 1 Cor. 11. 1. *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*

Q. We have already considered the three first Petitions, which immediately related to God's Glory; it remains now to treat of those which immediately concern our own Good; Which is the first of them ?

A. That, wherein we beg the good things of this present Life, in these words, *Give us this Day our daily Bread.*

Q. What is here meant by Bread ?

A. All Temporal and Earthly Blessings that contribute, either to our being, or well being: For Bread being the most usual and usefull Support of Life, it is often in Scripture put for all kind of Provision necessary for natural Life. Gen. 3. 19. *In the Sweat of thy Face shalt thou eat Bread, till thou return into the Ground, for out of it wast thou taken, for Dust thou art, and unto Dust shalt thou return.*

Q. What

Q. What learn we hence ?

A. That it is not below a Spiritual Christian to pray for Temporal Mercies, both because they are needfull for us. Matt. 6. 32. (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things: And God hath promised to bestow them. Phil. 4. 19. But my God shall supply all your need according to his Riches in Glory, by Christ Jesus.

Q. How ought we to pray for them ?

A. Onely conditionally; if it may consist with God's good Pleasure to bestow them, otherwise we do not pray but invade; and if it may consist with our good to receive them, otherwise we ask a Curse instead of a Blessing.

Q. What learn you from the word Give ?

A. That God is the Giver of every Temporal Mercy.

Q. How is God said to give us our daily Bread ?

A. First, by producing it, and bringing it to us; for though the Chain of natural Causes be never so long, yet God holds the first Link of it in his own hand; Hosea 2. 21, 22. And it shall come to pass in that Day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the Heavens, and they shall hear the Earth. Vers. 22. And the Earth shall hear the Corn, and the Wine, and the Oil, and they shall hear Jezreel.

Secondly, by blessing it to us, without which our daily Bread can never nourish us; Deut. 8. 3. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with Manna, (which thou knowest not, neither did thy Fathers know) that he might make thee know, that Man doth not live by Bread onely, but by every word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of the Lord, doth Man live.

Q. What mean you when you pray for daily Bread ?

A. By this we pray, That God would bestow upon us daily those Mercies which are sufficient for the Day.

Q. What learn you hence ?

A. That, as in praying for Bread, we pray for Conveniencies;

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niencies; not for Superfluities or Delicacies: So in our daily Bread, we pray for present supplies; not Goods laid up for many Years. Which teacheth us to moderate our Cares and Desires after Earthly Things, and to rest satisfied in God's Providence and present Blessings.

Q. May we not then carefully provide for the Time to come, and the Support of our Dependents?

A. We may, and ought; but our Care must be onely prudent, and provident, not perplexing, and desponding.

Q. Why is that Expression, this Day, added?

A. To shew us, that every Day we stand in need of Supplies from God; and therefore should daily pray to receive them.

Q. Since we pray for daily Bread, why is it called our Bread?

A. To note, that we ought to use lawfull Means to acquire what we pray for.

Q. What pray you for in this Petition?

A. 1. That God would give us the good Things of this Life, as the Acquisitions of our lawfull Endeavours.

2. That he would bless the Increase of what is lawfully ours.

3. That he would bestow upon us a spiritual Right, in whatsoever we enjoy, through Jesus the Heir of all Things.

4. We pray, that we may not desire nor covet what is anothers.

5. We pray for Life it self, that it may be prolonged, whilst God hath any Service for us to do in this World.

6. For all the Means that may lawfully preserve our Life and Health.

7. That he would strengthen our Faith and Dependence on his Providence, who is the giver of all good.

8. That he would give us Contentment in that Portion of Earthly Blessings, which he allots us.

Q. What is the fifth Petition of the Lord's Prayer?

A. For...

A. Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors.

Q. *What things are observable in this Petition ?*

A. The Order, and the Matter of it.

Q. *What observe you from the Order of it ?*

A. That after we have prayed for our daily Bread, we are taught to pray for Pardon of Sin. Which Method is most rational.

1. Because the Guilt of Sin many times, with-holds from us those Temporal Comforts which we stand in need of. *Isaiah 59. 2. But your Iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your Sins have hid his Face from you, that he will not hear.*

2. Because without Pardon of Sin, our Temporal Injoyments, are but Snares and Curses.

Q. *What observe you in the Matter of this Petition ?*

A. Two things: The Petition it self, *Forgive us our Debts*: And the Condition, or Proportion, or Plea, and Argument for obtaining this Forgiveness; *As we forgive our Debtors.*

Q. *What mean you here by Debts ?*

A. The same which St. *Luke 11. 4. Calls Sins. And forgive us our Sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.*

Q. *How stand we indebted to God ?*

A. We stand indebted to God, both as we are his Creatures; and as we are Offenders; on the former Account, we owe God the Debt of Obedience; on the latter, the Debt of suffering Punishment.

Q. *Which Debt do we pray God to forgive ?*

A. The latter onely; for the former is irremissibly due to our great Creator.

Q. *How come we to be thus indebted unto God ?*

A. By the Sentence of the Law, which condemneth every Transgressour of it, to undergo the Penalty it threatens, which Penalty is all manner of Woes and Curses,

and Everlasting Death. Gal. 3. 10. *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.* Rom. 6. 23. *For the wages of Sin is Death.* Ezek. 18. 4. *The Soul that sinneth, it shall die.*

Q. Since the Suffering of these, is the Debt we owe to Divine Justice, why say you that Sin is that Debt ?

A. Because Sin alone is the meritorious Cause of these, and we owe the Suffering of them onely as we are Sinners.

Q. Are there no Sins venial in their own Nature, so as not to deserve Eternal Damnation ?

A. No, not the least; for the wages of every Sin is Death. All therefore are Mortal in their own Nature, and all are Venial through the Mercy of God in the Merits of Christ, excepting onely the Sin against the Holy Ghost.

Q. Can we no way pay off these Debts, so as to satisfie the Justice of God ?

A. No: for neither can we do it by Obedience, nor yet by Sufferings. Not by the Duties of Obedience, for these are a Debt we owe to God's Holiness and Sovereignty; and therefore cannot pay the Debts we owe to his Justice, and we cannot pay Debts by Debts: Not by suffering; for Sin being an infinite Evil, must be punish'd with an infinite Punishment; but we cannot suffer a Punishment infinite in Degrees, therefore it must be infinite in Duration; so that the Damned in Hell shall never be able to say, It's finish'd.

Q. How then may we hope to be acquitted of our Numberless Debts ?

A. Onely through the free Mercy and Grace of God, pardoning them in Jesus Christ; and therefore we pray, *Forgive us our Debts.*

Q. What is Pardon, or Forgiveness of Sin ?

A. It

A. It is the removal of the Guilt of Sin.

Q. *What is the Guilt of Sin ?*

A. The Guilt of Sin, is either the intrinsical Desert of Punishment; or else an Obnoxiousness and Liableness to it, through God's Designation of the Sinner to undergo it.

Q. *Doth pardon of Sin remove both these Guilts ?*

A. No: it removes not the former, for still the Sins of those who are pardoned, do in themselves deserve Eternal Death: But it removes the latter, viz. it takes away our Appointment unto Death. 2 Sam. 12. 13. *And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord, and Nathan said unto David, the Lord also hath put away thy Sin, thou shalt not die.*

Q. *How is it consistent with the Justice of God, to pardon Offenders without Punishment ?*

A. Though Believers are not personally appointed to Punishment; yet Mystically they are; which Punishment they have already suffered in Christ their Surety, with whom they are made one by Faith.

Q. *To whom is this Prayer for Pardon of Sin directed ?*

A. To God onely, whose Royal Prerogative is to forgive Sins, Isa. 43. 25. *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy Transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.* Mark 2. 7. *Who can forgive sins, but God only ?*

Q. *Have not the Ministers of the Gospel power to forgive sins, according to that of St. John 20. 23. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted ?*

A. They have a ministerial and declarative Power, as Officers; not an authoritative and judicial Power, as Sovereigns: As the Prince onely pardons, the Herald proclaims it: So God alone by the Prerogative of his Grace grants pardon, the Minister by his Office publisheth it to all that repent and believe.

Q. *What*

Q. What then must we judge of that absolute and plenary Power, which the Pope assumes of pardoning Sins?

A. That it proves him to be Antichrist, in exalting himself above God; 2 Thess. 2. 4. Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped: so that he as God sitteth in the Temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. For whosoever can forgive wrongs done against another, must be superiour to him, and have Authority to cause the Person offended to surcease the Prosecution, and sit down by the wrong done him.

Q. If God onely can forgive Sins, how then are we bound to forgive those who trespass against us.

A. We ought to forgive them so far forth as they have wronged us, but we cannot forgive the wrong they have done to God in wronging us, but must leave them to his Mercy, and their Repentance.

Q. Since it is God's Prerogative and Glory to pardon sins, what Inferences may we collect from hence?

A. First, That our pardon is free, and gratuitous, without respecting former Deserts, or expecting future Recompence.

Secondly, That our pardon is full and compleat, because it is an Act of God within himself; whereas what he works in us, is in this Life imperfect; Nothing of Guilt is left upon the Soul when God pardons it, though still there is something of Filth left in it when he sanctifies it; God does not pardon by halves, nor leaves any Guilt to be expiated by Purgatory.

Thirdly, That upon our Faith and Repentance, our sins, whether greater or less, fewer or more, shall be forgiven; for this makes no difference in infinite Grace and Mercy.

Q. But may not this encourage Men to continue in sin?

A. Many do so abuse it, but their Damnation is sure and just. Deut. 29. 19, 20. And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this Curse, that he blesseth himself in his heart,

heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the Imagination of mine heart, to add Drunkenness to Thirst. Ver. 10. The Lord will not spare him.

Q. You have formerly observed, that it is God alone who can forgive sins, and from thence inferred both the freeness and fulness of pardoning Grace. What observe you farther?

A. 1. That though God's pardoning Grace be altogether freely bestowed in respect of us, Isaiah 43. 25. *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy Transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy Sins.* Yet in respect of Christ's Purchase, it is not free, but cost him the Price of his Blood, Heb. 9. 22. *And almost all things are by the Law purged with Blood, and without shedding of Blood is no remission.* Matt. 26. 29. *But I say unto you, I will not drink hence-forth of this Fruit of the Vine, untill that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom.*

2. That the obtaining of Pardon is not free from the Performance of Conditions on our Part.

Q. What are the Conditions upon which Pardon is granted?

A. They are two; Faith and Repentance. Acts 10. 43. *That through his Name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive Remission of Sins.* Acts 3. 19. *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out.*

Q. Is therefore a mere sorrow that we have sinned, a sufficient qualification for obtaining Pardon?

A. No: for so Judas is said to repent. Matt. 27. 3. *Then Judas which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief Priests and Elders.* But as true Repentance includes in it a Sorrow of Heart, so Reformation of Life, and Manners is always joined with a lively Faith.

Q. Is pardon of sin an Act onely of God's Mercy?

A. It is likewise an Act of God's Justice to pardon the Sins of those, who perform the Conditions of the Covenant of Grace.

Q. How

Q. How prove you this ?

A. Both by express Scripture: 1 Epistle of John 1. 9. *If we confess our Sins, he is faithfull and just to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* And likewise by Scripture-Reason; because Believers being made mystically one with Christ; therefore their Sins being already punish'd in him their Surety, and their Debts paid by him, cannot be again justly punish'd in their own Persons, nor demanded from them.

Q. Is pardon of sin our intire Justification ?

A. No: but it is one principal part of it. For Justification consists both in Remission of Sins, and Acceptation of our Persons; the former depends upon Christ's Passive, the other upon his Active Obedience; his Satisfaction applied by Faith, makes us accounted guiltless of Death, and his Obedience worthy of Life; both which compleat our Justification, Ephes. 1. 6, 7. *To the Praise of the Glory of his Grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved. Ver. 7. In whom we have Redemption through his Blood, the Forgiveness of Sins according to the Riches of his Grace.*

Q. We have thus considered the Petition, Forgive us our Debts, what remains further considerable ?

A. The Condition upon which we ask it, or the Plea we urge for obtaining it; *As we forgive our Debtors.*

Q. Who are meant here by Debtors ?

A. Other Men.

Q. How are Men Debtors one to another ?

A. Either, 1. By owing them a Debt of Duty, and thus all Men are mutually Debtors to one another: Superiours to Inferiours, and Inferiours to Superiours, and Equals owe one another Love, Respect, and Kindness.

2. By owing them a Debt of Satisfaction for Injuries, and Wrongs done to others.

Q. Which of these Debts is here meant ?

A. The

A. The latter onely, for we are bound to forgive those who owe us Satisfaction and Reparation.

Q. *What learn you from hence, that those who have wronged others, are called their Debtors?*

A. That they who in any kind wrong others, are obliged to make them satisfaction: If in their good Names, by acknowledging the Offence and stopping slanderous Reports: If in their Goods and Estates, by a full Restitution.

Q. *Is Restitution necessary to the obtaining of Pardon?*

A. It is: For unjust Detainure is as Evil, as unjust Seizure, and it is a continued Theft. And our Repentance can never be true, while we continue in the Sin we seem to repent of; and without true Repentance, there can be no Pardon or Salvation.

Q. *But what if those we have wronged, be since dead?*

A. We ought to make Restitution to those, to whom it's to be supposed, what we have detained would have descended.

Q. *If none such can be found, what must we then do?*

A. Then God's Right takes place, as the Universal Lord of all, and we are obliged to restore it to him, that is, to his Servants; and to his Family, and in the Works of Piety and Charity.

Q. *We have already considered the Debtor's Duty, which is to make Satisfaction and Restitution; what is the Duty of the Creditor or Person wronged?*

A. To forgive his Debtors. For we pray that God would forgive us, as we forgive them.

Q. *Wherein doth this Forgiveness consist?*

A. In two Things.

1. First, In abstaining from the outward Acts of Revenge upon them.

2. Secondly, In the inward Frame and Temper of our Hearts

Hearts towards them, bearing them no Grudge nor Ill-will; but being as much in Charity with them, as though they had never offended us.

Q. Must we then sit quiet under every petulant Wrong that is done us, and so tempt others to the Sport of abusing us?

A. Private Revenge is in no Case whatsoever to be allowed. Rom. 12. 19. Dearly beloved, avenge not your selves, but rather give place unto Wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine, and I will repay, saith the Lord. Revenge onely belongs to God, and the Magistrate to whom he hath delegated it. Rom. 13. 4. For he is the Minister of God, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil.

Q. But if the Wrong done us tend to the Loss of our necessary Subsistence, or our Life; may we not resist it, and require satisfaction for it?

A. We may: But it must be onely in a publick and legal Way; and even then we must harbour no Malice against them, but be ready to perform all the Offices of Charity, and Kindness within our Power.

Q. May we not prosecute those who have wronged us, unless the Injury be intolerable?

A. We may when we cannot pass by the Wrongs without wronging others: But where the Injuries are supportable, and we may forgive them without injuring of others, the Law of Christianity commands us so to do. Matt. 5. 39. But I say unto you, that ye resist not Evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy Right Cheek, turn to him the other also. Where the Scope of our Saviour is, that we should rather be willing to suffer a second Injury, than to revenge the first in Matters tolerable.

Q. But since this is a Duty so contrary to the revengefull Humour of Flesh and Blood, what Arguments can you produce to perswade the Practice of it?

A. I. First,

A. 1. First, That it is far more honourable to forgive a Wrong, than to revenge it.

Q. *How does that appear?*

A. 1. First, Because by pardoning Wrongs we act like God, and imitate him in that Attribute, wherein he chiefly glories. Exod. 34. 6. *The Lord, the Lord God, mercifull and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth.*

2. Secondly, Because to pardon is always the Act of a Superiour, and a Christian expresseth the Royalty of his Calling, by issuing out of Pardons.

Q. *What is the second Motive?*

A. Consider how many Offences God hath forgiven us, though the Distance between him and us, is infinitely greater, than onely can be between fellow Creatures; and though our Offences against him are infinitely more, and greater, than which we are to forgive to others. Ours against him are but a few Pence.

Q. *Which is the third Motive to enforce this Duty?*

A. The Consideration of that binding Particle, *As*: Forgive us as we forgive others.

Q. *Wherein lies the force of this?*

A. By this we seal the Guilt of our Sins upon our own Souls, unless we be ready and willing to forgive others. And so we turn our Prayers not onely into Sin, but into a direfull Tremendous Curse.

Q. *Which is the sixth and last Petition of the Lord's Prayer?*

A. Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.

Q. *What learn you from the Method of this Petition?*

A. In that it immediately follows the Petition, wherein we prayed for Pardon of Sin; I learn that it should be our Care, not onely to seek for the Pardon of past Sins, but the Prevention of Future.

Q. How is this Petition divided ?

A. Into two Branches, the one Negative, *Lead us not into Temptation*; the other Positive, but *deliver us from Evil.*

Q. What signifies the Word Temptation ?

A. It signifies proving or trying. Which sometimes is done onely by way of Search and Exploration; and sometimes is joined with Suasion and Inducement; so that Temptations are either merely probatory, or else they are likewise suafory.

Q. How many Sorts of Temptations are there ?

A. Five in the general.

1. Whereby one Man tempts another.
2. Whereby a Man tempts himself.
3. Whereby we tempt God.
4. Whereby God tempts us.
5. Whereby the Devil tempts us.

Q. How is one Man said to tempt another ?

A. When either he perswades him to what is Evil. Prov. 1. 10. *My Son, if Sinners intice thee consent thou not. Or to do that which may bring him into danger,* Luke 20. 23. *Why tempt ye me ?*

Q. How is Man said to tempt himself ?

A. Two ways.

1. First, When he unnecessarily rusheth into Danger, and ventures upon the next Occasions of Sinning.

2. Secondly, When he is drawn away by his own Lust, and inticed. James 1. 14. *But every Man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own Lust, and inticed.*

Q. How are we said to tempt God ?

A. Two ways.

1. First,

1. First, When we by our Sins provoke him to take Vengeance upon us. *Psal. 95. 8. Harden not your Hearts, as in the Provocation: and as in the Day of Temptation in the Wilderness.*

2. Secondly, When we presumptuously try the Providence of God, having no Warrant nor Necessity to cast our selves upon the extraordinary Effects of it. *Mat. 4. 6, 7. And saith unto him, if thou be the Son of God, cast thy self down. Vers. 7. Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*

Q. How is God said to tempt us?

A. When in the Method of his holy Providence, he brings us into such Circumstances, as will discover either our Graces, or Corruptions. Gen. 22. 1, 2. And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Vers. 2. Take now thy Son, and offer him for a burnt-offering, upon one of the Mountains which I will tell thee of. 2 Chr. 32. 31. God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart.

Q. How doth the Devil tempt us?

A. Alway by Suasion, inducing us by his Art and Subtilty, to the Commission of Evil.

Q. What Temptations do we especially pray against in this Petition?

A. Three Sorts.

1. First, Such as proceed from our own Lusts and Corruption.

2. Secondly, Such as proceed from other Mens enticing us to Evil, or insnaring us to Danger.

3. Thirdly, Such as proceed from the great Tempter, the Devil.

Q. What

Q. What learn we hence ?

A. That it is a Christian's Duty, not onely to keep himself from Sin, but also from Temptations to Sin.

Q. What Reasons confirm this ?

A. First, Because it is designed of a rotten and corrupt Heart, to be content to lie under a Temptation, though it consents not to the Sin. That Soul is not chaste to God, that is well-pleas'd with Sollicitations to violate its Duty.

Secondly, Because while a Temptation dwells upon our Hearts, we are in imminent Danger of committing the Sin to which we are tempted.

Thirdly, Because most Temptations, are not onely Temptations, but Sins too, as all evil Thoughts and Desires. And as long as these abide in us with any Complacency and Delight ; so long are we in the actual Commission of Sin.

Q. How is God said to lead Men into Temptation ?

A. Three ways.

1. First, When he providentially presents outward Objects and Occasions, which do sollicite and draw forth our inward Corruptions.

2. Secondly, When he permits Satan, or wicked Men, his Instruments to tempt us. And in these two Sences there is no Temptation whatsoever that befalls us, but God leads us into it.

3. Thirdly, When he withdraws the Influences of his Grace, and Spirit from us, without which Dereliction no Temptation could prevail over us. 2 Chr. 32. 31. *God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his Heart.*

Q. What therefore do we pray for, when we pray, Lead us not into Temptation ?

A. We pray for three Things.

1. First,

1. First, That God by his Providence would so order and dispose all the Occurrences of our Lives, as not to lay before us those Objects, nor offer us those Occasions which might excite or call forth our inbred Corruptions.

2. Secondly, That he would not permit the Devil to assault us, nor any of his Instruments.

3. Thirdly, That he would continue the Influences of his Grace unto us, to enable us to stand when we are tempted.

Q. For what ends doth God thus lead Men into Temptation?

A. For many wise and holy Ends : especially Four.

1. First, To exercise and breath forth our Graces, to teach us the Wars of the Lord, to administer Matter for our Victory, and Occasion for our Crown and Triumph.

2. Secondly, To engage us to depend upon his Help and Assistance, and earnestly to implore Divine Succours and Supplies.

3. Thirdly, To glorifie his Justice and his Mercy ; his Justice in giving up wicked Men to the Rages of Temptations, to be hurried by them from Sin to Sin, punishing one Iniquity with another, till at last he punisheth all in Hell. And his Mercy in supporting his Children under them, and delivering them out of all their Temptations, making his Strength perfect in their Weakness. 2 Cor. 12. 9. *And he said unto me, my Grace is sufficient for thee ; for my Strength is made perfect in Weakness.*

4. Fourthly, That by our Victory over Temptations, he may confound the Malice of the Devil, and commend the Excellency of his own Ways and Service. Job 2. 3. *And the Lord said unto Satan, hast thou considered my Servant Job, that there is none like him in the Earth, a perfect and an upright Man, one that feareth God, and escheweth Evil?*

Q. Which?

Q. Which is the positive part of this Petition ?

A. But deliver us from Evil.

Q. What observe you from the Order and Connexion of this Branch of the Petition with the former ?

A. I observe, that the best Security against Sin, is to be secured against Temptations to Sin.

Q. Are not strong Temptations to Sin, an Excuse for sinning ?

A. No: for the Devil can onely persuade, he cannot constrain; for if he could compell, he would likewise Justifie; since there is no Sin, where there is no Liberty. All our Sins are of our own free Choice, and so by Consequence is the Eternal Misery thy expose unto. Hof. 13. 9. O Israel thou hast destroyed thy self, but in me is thine help. John 5. 40. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have Life. Matt. 23. 37. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy Children together, even as the Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, and ye would not.

Q. Wherein consists the great Danger of being tempted ?

A. In the Sympathy and Suitableness that is between Temptations, and our corrupt Natures, whereby they are apt to excite our Affections, and our Affections will sway our Actions.

Q. What mean you by the word Evil, when you pray, Deliver us from Evil ?

A. First, Satan whose Stile it is to be the Evil, or the Wicked One. Matt. 13. 19. When any one beareth the word of the Kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his Heart. John 2. 13, 14. I write unto you, Fathers, because ye have known him, that is from the Beginning. I writ unto you young Men, because you have overcome the wicked one. Vers. 14. I have written unto you, Fathers, because you have known

known him that is from the beginning; I have written unto you young Men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

Secondly, All other Evils, whether they be of Sin, or for Sin; whether Transgressions or Punishments. But especially Sin, which is the greatest of all Evils.

Q. Why call you Sin the greatest of all Evils?

A. Because it is so both in its Nature and Consequents.

1. First, In its Nature, it is wholly defect and irregularity, and that onely thing which he always hates, and never made.

2. Secondly, Because all other Evils are but the Effects and Consequents of Sin; since the Devil could not hurt us but by Sin, and no other Evils befall us but for Sin.

Q. What collect you hence?

A. That in praying to be delivered from Sin, we pray to be delivered from all Evils whatsoever.

Q. What observe you from our Saviours teaching us to direct our Prayers to our Father in Heaven, that he would Deliver us from Evil?

A. I learn hence, that it is onely the Almighty Power of God, that can keep us from Sin.

Q. Whence doth that appear?

A. First, From the Consideration of the Almighty Advantages, that our great Enemy the Devil hath against us.

Secondly, From the Consideration of the Disadvantages we lie under, to oppose his Temptations.

Q. What are his Advantages, and our Disadvantages?

A. He is a Spirit, we are but Flesh; he is wise and subtle, we foolish and ignorant; he long experienced, we raw and unpractised; he is diligent and watchfull, we careless and negligent: He lays a close Siege to us without, and we betray our selves within.

Q. What ways doth God take to keep Men from Sin?

A. In the General three.

1. First, He doth it by restraining Providence.
2. Secondly, By common and restraining Grace.
3. Thirdly, By renewing and sanctifying Grace.

Q. What are the Methods of God's Providence, whereby he delivers Men from the Evil of Sin?

A. They are manifold and various; but Five are most especially remarkable.

1. First, Sometimes Providence cuts short their Power, whereby they should be enabled to Sin; Thus God withered *Jereboam's* hand, which he stretch'd forth against the Prophet.

2. Secondly, Sometimes God cuts off their wicked Instruments either for Counsel, as he did *Achitophel* from *Ab-salom*; or else for Execution, as he did the Host of *Sennacherib*.

3. Thirdly, Sometimes by raising up another opposite Power, to withstand the Sinner. Thus the Rulers would have put Christ to Death, but durst not for fear of the People.

4. Fourthly, By casting in seasonable Diversions. Thus the passing by of Merchants, altered the Patriarchs Resolution from killing *Joseph*, to sell him.

5. Fifthly, Sometimes God removes the Object against which they intended to sin. Thus he delivered *David* from *Saul*, and *Peter* from *Herod*.

Q. We have seen how God preserves Men from Sin, by his restraining Providence, shew now how he doth it by his restraining Grace?

A. By restraining Grace God deals with the very Heart of a Sinner; and although he doth not change the habitual, yet he changeth the actual Inclination of it, and takes away the Desire of committing those Sins, which are unmortified and reigning.

Q. To whom doth God vouchsafe this Grace?

A. To many unregenerate Persons. As he did to *Esau* and *Abimelech*.

Q. To

Q. To what End doth he vouchsafe it ?

A. That their Lives may be more plausible, their Gifts more serviceable, and their Condemnation at last the more tolerable.

Q. How doth God keep Men from Sin, by his special Grace ?

A. By exciting the inward Principle and Habit of Grace implanted in his Children, to the actual Use and Exercise of it ?

Q. Is not inherent Grace alone sufficient to keep the Godly from sinning ?

A. It is not without the continual Influence of God's quickning Grace ; 2 Cor. 12. 7. There was given to me a Thorn in the Flesh, the Messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above Measure.

Q. What are those Graces that God doth especially excite, to keep his Children from Sin ?

A. They are Three, Faith, Fear and Love.

Q. How doth Faith keep them from sinning ?

A. Many ways, but more especially by Two.

1. First, As it lively represents unto us Eternal Rewards and Punishments ; and make them as real as they are certain. Heb. 11. 1. *Now Faith is the Substance of things hoped for, the Evidence of things not seen.*

2. Secondly, As it represents unto us, God to be the Observer of our Actions, who must hereafter be the Judge of them. For by Faith we see him who is invisible.

Q. How doth the Fear of God keep Men from Sin ?

A. By possessing our Hearts with awfull Thoughts of his dread Majesty, whose Power is infinite, and whose Justice is strict and impartial. Psal. 4. 4. Stand in awe and sin not.

Q. How doth the Love of God keep Men from Sin ?

A. By working in them an holy Ingenuity, and Sympathy of Affection with God : Loving what he loves, and

hating

hating what he hates ; and therefore those who love God, will certainly hate Iniquity. Psal. 97. 10. *Ye that love the Lord hate Evil.*

Q. What do we pray for in this part of the Petition, Deliver us from Evil ?

A. We pray,

1. That if it shall please God to lead us into Temptation, yet he would not leave us under the Power of Temptation, but would make a way for us to escape, that we might be able to bear it.

2. That if at any time Temptations should prevail over us, God would not leave us under the Power of Sin, but raise us again by true Repentance ; that so we may at last be delivered from the great Evil of Obduration and Impenitency.

3. That God would not onely deliver us from gross and self condemning Sins, but from every evil Way and Work.

4. That he would be pleased to deliver us not onely from what is in it self sinfull ; but from all the Occasions and Appearances of Evil.

Q. After the Petitions of the Lord's Prayer, what next followeth to be considered ?

A. The Doxology or Praise, in these words, For thine, &c.

Q. Of what consisteth this Doxology ?

A. Of four of God's most glorious Attributes. His Sovereignty, Thine is the Kingdom ; His Omnipotence, Thine is the Power ; His Excellency, Thine is the Glory ; His Eternity, All these are Thine for ever.

Q. What observe you in the Manner of our Saviour's ascribing these Attributes to God ?

A. First, The Eminency of them, intimated in the Particle, The ; The Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory ; signifying his the Highest and Chiefest of all these.

And,

Secondly,

Secondly, The Propriety of them in the Particle, *Thine*, to note to us that they are God's onely Originally, Independently, and Unchangeably.

Q. What observe you from the illative Particle, For, when ye say, For thine is the Kingdom, &c.

A. This word carries in it the Force of a Reason, both why we should pray unto God, and why we may expect to be heard when we pray.

Q. How is it a Reason for us to pray unto God?

A. We pray unto God, because he alone is able to relieve us, *For his is the Kingdom, and the Power and the Glory for ever.*

Q. How is it a Reason for us to expect, that God should hear our Prayers?

A. Many ways.

1. His is the Kingdom, and we his Subjects; and therefore we may depend on him as our King, for Help and Protection.

2. His is the Power, and therefore he is able to do for us abundantly above what we are able to ask or think.

3. His is the Glory, and therefore what we ask for his Honour and Praise shall be granted us.

4. All these are his for ever, and therefore we may be assured, that at no time, the Prayer of Faith shall be in vain.

Q. What observe you from our Saviour's teaching us, to use these Arguments and Pleas in our Prayers to God?

A. Two things.

1. In our Prayers we ought to plead with God, by weighty and inforcing Reasons.

2. That the most prevailing Arguments in Prayer, are to be taken from the Attributes of God.

Q. What benefit is there in using such Reasons, since God cannot by them be moved to alter his Purposes?

A. The stronger our Reasons are to sue for Mercies, the more fervent will our Prayers be, and the more confirmed our Faith.

Q. How

Q. How doth the Consideration of the Kingdom's being God's, confirm our Faith that we shall obtain what we pray for?

A. Many ways.

1. The Kingdom is God's, and therefore he will see that his Name be hallowed in it; for he is a King jealous of his Honour.

2. The Kingdom is God's, therefore he will take care for the Establishment and Enlargement of it; since it is his own Interest and Concern.

3. The Kingdom is God's, and therefore he will look to be obeyed in it, without which Royalty is but Pageantry.

4. The Kingdom is God's, and therefore we may expect our daily Bread, and temporal Accommodations; for it is a Kingly Office to provide things necessary for their Subjects.

5. The Kingdom is God's, and therefore we pray to him for Pardon and Forgiveness, since it is a Royal Prerogative to forgive Offenders.

6. The Kingdom is God's, and therefore we may pray in Faith, that he would deliver us from Temptations, and the Evils to which we are tempted; for one great End of Government is to protect the Subjects from the Assaults of their cruel Enemies.

Q. Which is the second Attribute ascribed unto God in the Doxology of the Lord's Prayer?

A. Power; in these words, And the Power.

Q. How is the Power of God distinguished?

A. Into his absolute and his ordinate Power.

Q. What call you the absolute Power of God?

A. The absolute Power of God is that whereby he is simply able, to produce whatsoever is possible to be, i. e. all things which imply not Contradiction.

Q. What call you God's ordinate Power?

A. God's ordinate Power, is that whereby he is able to produce those things, which according to his Will shall come to pass.

Q. Why

Q. Why is it called God's ordinate Power ?

A. Because the Effects of it are limited by the Ordination of his Wisdom, and Will. *Pfal. 115. 3. But our God is in the Heavens, he hath done whatsoever he pleased. Psal. 135. 6. Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in Heaven and Earth, in the Seas and all deep Places.*

Q. Is God's Power in it self infinite ?

A. It is, for his Power is his Essence.

Q. How doth it appear that God's Power is infinite ?

A. 1. By the Works of Creation, for it requires an infinite Power to bring something out of nothing.

2. By the many Miracles which have been wrought in the World, above and contrary to the Course of Nature.

Q. How then have many Men wrought Miracles, as Moses, Elijah, and the Apostles ?

A. They wrought them not by any proper Vertue of their own, but onely as the Moral Instruments at whose Presence or Intercession, God was pleased to manifest his Power, as a Seal to that Commission they had received from him.

Q. Is God's Power infinite likewise in the common Effects of Nature ?

A. It is, for it is no less Power that preserves and moves the Creatures, than did at first Create them.

Q. Is there nothing impossible with God ?

A. Yes, there are several things which God cannot do, because he is Omnipotent.

Q. What are they ?

A. Such as in the General, the doing of them would deny him to be God ; or to be holy, or to be wise.

Q. What are they more particularly ?

A. God cannot do things that are contradictory, or rather such things cannot be done, as to make the same thing to be, and not to be at the same time ; or that the same Body should at once have quantity and extension in Heaven,
and

and no quantity nor extension in the Host, as the Papists affirm of their bready God, for this were contrary to his Wisdom.

2. God cannot do any thing that may justly bring upon him the Imputation of Sin ; for this were contrary to his Holiness.

3. God cannot do any thing that may argue him mutable and inconstant, for this were contrary to his Being. 2 Tim. 2. 13. *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithfull ; he cannot deny himself.* Heb. 6. 18. *That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lye.*

Q. Is it not a Diminution of the Power of God, that he cannot do those things ?

A. No ; for these things argue Weakness, and Defect, not Power.

Q. Why hath our Saviour taught us to subjoin this Acknowledgment of the Power of God to our Petitions ?

A. To encourage our Faith, by considering that whatsoever we ask, we ask it of a God who is able to give it us, yea, and to do for us abundantly above whatsoever we are able to ask or think.

Q. What is the third Attribute ascribed to God in the Doxology ?

A. Glory in these words, And the Glory.

Q. What is Glory ?

A. Glory is any Perfection or Excellency that either is, or deserves to be accompanied with Fame and Renown.

Q. How is God's Glory distinguished ?

A. Into his Essential and Declarative Glory.

Q. What is the Essential Glory of God ?

*A. All those Attributes, which Eternally and Immutably belong unto the Divine Nature : So Holiness is his Glory. Exod. 15. 11. *Glorious in Holiness.* His Power is his Glory. 2 Thes. 1. 9. *They shall be punished from, i. e. by the Glory of his Power.* His Majesty is his Glory. Psal. 145. 11. *I will speak**

of the glorious Honour of thy Majesty: His Grace and Mercy is his Glory. Ephes. 1. 6. *To the Praise of the Glory of his Grace.* And from all these united, results the Glory of his Name. Deut. 28. 58. *That thou mayest fear this Glorious and Fearfull Name, the Lord thy God.*

Q. *What is the Declarative Glory of God ?*

A. The Manifestation of his Attributes, so that they are observed to his Praise and Honour.

Q. *What is it to glorify God ?*

A. To glorify God, is to admire, and celebrate the Divine Attributes, shining forth in those ways and works, wherein he is pleased to express them.

Q. *Do we by glorifying God add any thing to his Glory ?*

A. We can neither add unto, nor diminish from the Essential Glory of God, for his infinite Perfections are the same for ever. But we may add to his Declarative Glory, by setting forth his Attributes; and we detract from it by hindering the Manifestation of them.

Q. *By what Means doth God declare his Glory ?*

A. By three especially.

1. By his Works. Psal. 19. 1. *The Heavens declare the Glory of God: and the Firmament sheweth his handy Work.*

2. By his Word, which discovers to us those Attributes, which we could never have known by the Works of Creation and Providence; and therefore both Law and Gospel, are said to be glorious. 2 Cor. 3. 9. *For if the Ministration of Condemnation be Glory, much more doth the Ministration of Righteousness exceed in Glory.*

3. By his Son, who is the Brightness of his Glory. Heb. 13. *Who being the Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person.* And in whom the Perfections of the God-head are most visibly displayed.

Q. *Why doth our Saviour in the Doxology, peculiarly appropriate Glory unto God: Thine is the Glory ?*

A. For three Reasons.

1. Because all that is excellent and glorious in the Creatures,

tures, is in God infinitely more perfect than in them; being neither limited by his Nature, nor allayed with Contraries. 1 John 1. 5. *That God is Light, and in him is no Darknefs at all.*

2. Because all Glory in respect of God, is but Darknefs and Obscurity: Job 25. 5. *Behold even to the Moon, and it shineth not; yea, the Stars are not pure in his Sight.*

3. Because all the Excellencies and Glories of Creatures, serve onely to set forth, and declare the Glory of God.

Q *Why hath our Saviour added the Acknowledgment of God's Glory, at the End of the Petitions he hath taught us to present?*

A. That the Consideration thereof may be a Means to strengthen our Faith, for the obtaining those good things which we pray for.

Q. *How is the Consideration of the Glory of God an Argument to strengthen our Faith in Prayer?*

A. Many ways, according to the Petitions we prefer.

1. The Glory is God's, therefore his Name shall be hallowed; for to sanctifie the Name of God is to glorifie him: Lev. 10. 3. *I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the People I will be glorified.*

2. The Glory is God's, and therefore his Kingdom shall come; for where should a King be honoured, but in his Kingdom?

3. The Glory is God's, therefore his Will shall be done, for our Obedience is the greatest Glory we can give. John 15. 8. *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much Fruit; so shall ye be my Disciples.*

4. The Glory is God's, and therefore he will provide for us daily Bread; for it is not God's Honour, that any of his Family should want things convenient for them. Exod 16. 7. *And in the Morning, then shall ye see the Glory of the Lord.*

5. The Glory is God's, and therefore he will forgive our Trespases, for it is his Honour and Royalty to pardon penitent Offenders. Prov. 19 11. *And it is his Glory to pass over a Transgression.* Ephes. 1. 6, 7. *To the Praise of the*
Glory

Glory of his Grace. Vers. 7. *In whom we have Redemption through his Blood, the Forgiveness of Sins, according to the Riches of his Grace.*

6. The Glory is God's, and therefore he will deliver us from the Assaults of our Enemies ; for it is his Honour to protect his own Subjects.

Q. What observe you from that Particle, For ever ?

A. That God and his Attributes are Eternal.

Q. What is Eternity ?

A. Eternity is a Duration, that hath neither Beginning nor End, nor Succession of Parts : or it is the compleat Possession of an endless Life all at once.

Q. What collect you hence ?

A. Two things.

1. The Duration of God is not to be measured by Days, or Years ; and that he waxeth not elder, neither hath continued longer this Day, than from the beginning of Time.

2. That in strict propriety of Speech, God onely is, and that it is onely allowable for want of Expressions, to say, that he either was, or shall be ; and therefore he calls his Name, *I am.* Exod. 3. 14. *I am, hath sent me unto you.*

Q. How prove you that God is Eternal ?

A. Both by Scripture, and Reason.

Q. What Scriptures prove the Eternity of God ?

A. Several ; especially Psalm 102. 25, 26, 27. *Thou art the same, and thy Tears shall have no End.* Psal. 90. 2. *From everlasting to everlasting thou art God.* 1 Tim. 1. 17. *To the King eternal, immortal, be Honour and Glory.*

Q. How do you demonstrate the Eternity of God by Reason ?

A. There must of necessity be a first Cause of all things : But that which is the first Cause of all things cannot be made by any, and therefore is from everlasting : Neither can it cease to be, because it is not dependent on any, and therefore must be to Everlasting.

Q. What Duties doth the serious Consideration of God's Eternity oblige us to ?

A. 1. To venerate and adore so great and inconceivable an Attribute.

2. To leave the Care of all future Events, whether concerning our own private or the publick Interests, to his Eternal Wisdom and Providence, who for ever lives to mind them.

3. To give unto him the same Honour, Respect and Service, as his Saints have done in former Generations.

Q. What encouragement hath our Faith to expect the Mercies we pray for, from the Consideration of God's Eternity?

A. That because he is the same God, who in all Ages hath heard the Prayers of those who trust in him; therefore we may be assured, that if we have the same Dispositions and Affections with the Saints of Old, we shall obtain the same Mercies and Favours. Heb. 1. 12. *But thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.*

Q. What signifies that Particle Amen, which is the End and Close of the Lord's Prayer?

A. As in the beginning of a Speech it is Assertory, and signifies, *so it is*; so in the end of it, it is Precatory, and signifies, *so be it*; which denotes our earnest Desires, to have our Prayers heard, and our Petitions granted.

Q. What learn you from hence, that our Saviour hath taught us to conclude our Prayers with, Amen?

A. I learn two things.

1. That we ought to pray with understanding, and therefore not in an unknown Tongue: for who can say *Amen*, to what he understands not? 1 Cor. 14. 16. *How shall he that occupieth the Room of the unlearned, say Amen at the giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?*

2. That all our Prayers ought to be presented to God, with fervent zeal and affection. 1 Thel. 5. 17. *Pray without ceasing.*

Q. What is Prayer?

A. Prayer is an humble representation of our wants and desires to God, through the assistance of the Holy Ghost in the Name of Christ, for things according to his Will, with reference to his Glory.

Q. What

Q. What is it to pray by the Spirit, or by the assistance of the Holy Ghost ?

A. To pray by the Spirit, is to present our requests to God, with holy and fervent affections excited in us by the Holy Ghost. Rom. 8. 26. But the Spirit it self maketh intercession for us with groanings, which cannot be uttered.

Q. May those have the Spirit of Prayer, who have not the Gift of Prayer ?

A. Yes, they may ; and on the contrary, some may have the Gift of Prayer, who pray not by the Spirit, for they who use prescribed and set Forms of Prayer, pray by the Spirit, when their Petitions are accompanied with fervent affections, stirred in them by the Holy Ghost ; and again some who are most fluent in conceived Prayer, may pray onely from the strength of their natural parts and endowments.

Q. But doth not the use of Forms damp and quench the Spirit of Prayer ?

A. Forms indeed are too often used formally, and so is any other kind of Prayer ; yet it is the truest Test, and the highest Excellency of praying by the Spirit, when we are fervent in putting up these requests to God, where neither Novelty, Variety, nor Copiousness of Expressions can be suspected to move our affections, but onely the genuine Importance of the matter which we pray for, though in prescribed words.

Q. To whom must our Prayers be directed ?

A. To God onely, and not to Saints, or Angels.

Q. How ought we to conceive of God when we pray to him ?

A. As an infinitely glorious, wise, powerfull and gracious Being, whose presence is every where, whose providence and goodness is over all things, and thus we pray at once, to each Person of the ever blessed Trinity.

Q. May we not particularly address our Prayers, to some one Person of the Trinity ?

A. We may ; especially in those Cases wherein their parti-

particu'ar Offices and Dispensations are more immediately concerned.

Q. What things ought we to pray for ?

A. Onely such as are according to the Will of God. 1 John 5. 14. That if we ask any thing according to his Will, he beareth us.

Q. What are those things which are according to the Will of God ?

A. Chiefly spiritual Blessings. 1 Theſ. 4. 3. For this is the Will of God, even our ſanctification, that we ſhould abſtain from Fornication. And for theſe we ought to pray abſolutely and importunately.

Q. May we not alſo pray for Temporal Mercies ?

A. We may : but as theſe are promiſed onely conditionally, ſo we ought to pray, that God would be pleaſed to beſtow them upon us, if it may ſtand with his Will and Glory, and our good and benefit.

Q. How muſt we direct our Prayers to God ?

A. 1. In the Name of Chriſt, truſting onely in his Merits and Mediations, for acceptance and anſwer. John 15. 16. That whatſoever ye ſhall ask of the Father in my Name, he may give it you.

2. In Faith and Perſuaſion of being heard. James 1. 6. But let him ask in Faith, nothing wavering. Mark 11. 24. What things ſoever ye deſire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye ſhall have them.

3. With Fervency and Affection. James 5. 16. The effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous Man availeth much.

Q. What ends ought we to propound to our ſelves in begging Bleſſings at God's hands ?

A. Chiefly the Glory of God, ſincerely purpoſing to improve thoſe Bleſſings, which by our Prayers we ſhall receive in his Service, and to his Praise. Pſal. 50. 15. And call upon me in the Day of Trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorifie me.

Q. What directions have we concerning the Seasons, and Frequency of praying ?

A. The

A. The Scripture commands us to pray without ceasing. *1 Thes. 5. 17. Pray without ceasing.* To pray always and not to faint. *Luke 18. 1. And he spake a Parable to this end, that Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.* To pray always with all Prayer and Supplication. *Ephes. 6. 18. Praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit.*

Q. Must we therefore be always so actually engaged in this Duty, as to do nothing but pray?

A. No: For therefore we pray that we may obtain Grace from God, to perform other Duties of Religion, and a Christian Life; neither ought the Duties of our particular Callings to be neglected by us, for we juggle out one Duty by another; besides the sinfull Omision of what we should perform, that which we do perform becomes unacceptable, because unseasonable; and so we commit two Sins in doing one Duty.

Q. What then is it to pray without ceasing?

A. Prayer may be said to be without ceasing four ways.

1. When we observe a constant Course of a Prayer at ~~fixt~~ and appointed Times. Thus *Gen. 8. ult.* God promised that *Winter and Summer, Day and Night, should not cease.* And so the daily Sacrifice is called a continual burnt-offering, *Exod. 29. 42.* And yet it was offered onely Morning and Evening.

2. When we are frequent and importunate in our Prayers, so *Acts 12. 5.* The Church is said to make Prayers for *Peter* without ceasing. And our Saviour spake the Parable of the importunate Widow to this end, *That men ought always to pray and not to faint,* *Luke 18. 1.*

3. When we frequently dart up short mental Prayers and Ejaculations unto God; which we may and ought to do, whatsoever else we are employed about. *Neh. 2. 4. So I prayed to the God of Heaven.*

4. When we keep our hearts in a praying Frame and Temper, so that they are on all Occasions fit and ready

to

to pour out themselves before God in Prayer; and thus we habitually pray always.

Q. What must we observe to maintain and cherish such a praying Spirit?

A. Two things especially.

1. That we ingulf not our selves too deeply in the Bu-
sineses and Pleasures of this Life, for these will dark and
deaden the heart to Prayer.

2. That we fall not into the Commission of any known
and presumptuous Sin. For guilt will fill us with slavish
Fear and Shame, and both will drive us from God.

Q. What are the kinds of Prayer?

A. Three.

1. Publick, As we are Members of the Church.

2. Private, As we stand engaged in Family Relation. And,

3. Secret, As we are particular Christians.

Q. Who is to send up publick Prayers?

A. The Minister, and all the Congregation joining with
him. And these Prayers, though they must needs be more
general, yet with all are more effectual than any other.
Matt. 18. 19. *Again, I say unto you, that if two of you shall
agree on Earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it
shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven.*

Q. Who is to make private or family Prayers?

A. Every Master and Governour of a Family. And
this he is not to do seldomer than every Morning and Even-
ing. In the Morning, Prayer is the Key that opens the
Treasury of God's Mercies: In the Evening it is the Key
that shuts us up under his Protection and Safe-guard.

T W O
S E R M O N S
Preached by the same
A U T H O R.

A Discourse upon Providence.

Matth. x. 29, 30.

Are not two Sparrows sold for a Farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

But the very Hairs of your Head are all numbered.

THe Mystery of God's Providence, next to that of Man's Redemption, is the most Sublime and Inscrutable. 'Tis easie in both to run our selves off our Reason. For as Reason confesseth it self at a loss when it attempts a search into those Eternal decrees of electing Sinners to Salvation, and designing Christ to save them, so must it likewise when it attempts to trace out all those entangled Mazes and Labyrinths wherein the Divine Providence walks. We may sooner tire reason in such a pursuit than satisfy it, unless it be some kind of satisfaction when we have driven it to a Non-plus, to relieve our selves with an *is satis*; O the depth of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments and his ways past finding out! This knowledge therefore being too wonderful for us, I shall not presume to conduct you into that secret Place, that pavillion of Clouds, and surrounding Darkness where God sits holding the Rudder of the World, and steering it through all the Floatings of Casualty and Contingency to his own foreordained ends, where he grasps and turns the great Engine of Nature in his hands, fastening one Pin, and loosing another, moving and removing the several Wheels of it, and framing the whole according to the Eternal Idea of his own under-

standing. Let us content us, to consider so much of God's Providence as may affect us with comfort in reflecting on that particular care which he takes of us, rather than with wonder and astonishment by too bold a prying into those hidden methods whereby he exerciseth it.

Our Saviour Christ in this Chapter giving Commission to his Apostles, and sending them forth to preach the Gospel, obviates an Objection they might make, concerning the great danger that would certainly attend such an undertaking. To send them upon such an hated employment, would be no other than to thrust them upon the Rage and Malice of the World, to send them forth as Sheep into the midst of Wolves, who would doubtless worry and devour them; sure we are to have our Message derided, our Persons injured, and that holy name of thine on which we summon them to believe, Blasphemed and Reviled; and tho our word may prove a word of life to some few of the Hearers, yet to us who are the Preachers of it, it will prove no other than Death. A vile and wretched world the whilest, when the Gospel of Peace and Reconciliation shall thus stir up Enmity and Persecution against the Embassadors, who are appointed to Proclaim it!

Now to this our Saviour Answers.

First, By shewing what the extent of their Adversaries power is, how far it can reach, and what mischief it can do when God permits it to rage to the very utmost. And this he doth in the 28th. Verse, the verse immediately foregoing the Text: *Fear not them who kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul.* Or as St. Luke expresseth it, Chap. 12. 4. *They can kill the Body, but after that, have no more they can do.* Alas, are such Men to be feared, who when they do their worst, can only destroy your worst part, which if they do not, yet Accidents or Diseases will? What, are your Bodies but Cloggs to your Spirit, and Prisons to your Souls? And certainly those Enemies are not very formidable,

midable, who when they most think to hurt you, only knock off your Clogg, or break open your Prison and let your Souls escape to their desired liberty.

Secondly, Our Saviour answers that though they can Kill the body when God permits them; yet they cannot so much as touch it without his permission. And this he doth in the words of my Text, by shewing how punctual and particular God's providence is, even over the smallest, and those that seem the most trifling occurrences of the World; a Sparrow, whose price is but mean, two of them valued at a Farthing, which some make to be the tenth part of a *Roman* penny, and was certainly one of their least Coins, whose life therefore is but contemptible, and whose flight seems but giddy and at random; yet it falls not to the ground, neither lights any where without your Father. His all-wise providence hath before appointed what bough it shall pitch on; what grains it shall pick up, where it shall lodge, and where it shall build, on what it shall live, and when it shall die. And if your Fathers providence be so Critical about the small concernments even of Sparrows; fear not ye, for you are of more value than many Sparrows, yea, of more value than many Men.

Our Saviour adds, The very hairs of your head are all numbred: God keeps an account even of that stringy Excrement. He knows how many fall off, and the precise number of those that remain: and no wonder that he knows the number of our Sins, which are far more.

Hence we learn that God governs the meanest, the most inconsiderable, and contemptible Occurrences in the World by an exact and particular Providence. Do you see thousand little Motes and Atomes wandring up and down in a Sun-beam? It is God that so peoples it; and he guides their innumerable and irregular strayings. Not a Dust flies in a beaten Road; but God raiseth it, conducts its uncertain motion, and by his particular care conveys it to the certain

certain place he had before appointed for it, nor shall the most fierce and tempestuous wind hurry it any farther. And if God's care and providence reacheth thus to these minute things, which are but as it were the circumstances of Nature; and little accessaries to the World, certainly Man who is the head and Lord of it, for whose sake and service other Creatures were formed, may very well be confident that God exerciseth an especial and most accurate providence over him, and his affairs.

By this you see what the subject is intended to treat of, even the over-ruling and all disposing providence of God, not a Sparrow, not a hair of your heads falls to the ground without your Father.

But before I proceed farther, I must take notice of two things in the words.

First, That our Saviour speaking here of the providence of God, ascribes to him the name of our Father: God hath many names and titles attributed unto him in the Scriptures; as Father, Lord, Creator, Redeemer, Judge, King and God. But God is a word that denotes his Essence, Lord is a title of his Dominion, Creator marks out his omnipotence, Redeemer commends his Love, Judge is a name of fear and astonishment, and King is a title of Royal Majesty: But this indearing name of Father signifies unto us his providence, for from him as from a Father do we expect and receive guidance and government.

Secondly, Whereas nothing comes to pass without our Heavenly Father, this may be understood three ways; without his permission, without his ordination, and concurrence, without his over-ruling and directing it to his own ends.

First, No evil comes to pass without his permissive providence.

Secondly, No good comes to pass without his ordaining and concurring providence.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Nothing whether good or evil comes to pass without the over-ruling Providence of our Father, guiding and directing it to his own ends. But concerning this distinction of permissive, concurring and over ruling Providence, I shall have occasion to speak more hereafter. My work at present shall be,

First, To describe unto you what the providence of God is in the general notion thereof.

Secondly, To prove that all affairs and occurrences in the World, are guided and governed by Divine Providence.

Thirdly, To answer some puzzling questions and doubts concerning the Providence of God, and some objections that may be made against it.

First, Let us see what providence is. Take it in this description: Providence is an Act of God, whereby according to his eternal and most wise Counsel, he preserves and governs all things, and directs them all to their ends, but chiefly to his own glory.

This providence consisteth in two things. Preservation and Government of his Creatures.

First. One remarkable Act of the Providence of God is the preservation of his Creatures in their beings, He preserves them,

First, In their species and kind, by the constant succession of them one after another; so that though the individuals of them are mortal and perish, yet the species or kind is immortal. There is no kind of Creature that was at first made by God, but it still continueth to this very day, and shall so do to the end of the World. And truly it is the wonderful Providence of God thus to perpetuate the Creation; that whereas we see an imbred enmity in some sorts of Creatures against others, yet his Wisdom so sways their mutual antipathies, that none of them shall ever prevail to a total Extirpation and Destruction of the other.

Secondly, He preserves them likewise by his providence
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in their individual and particular beings, while they have a room to fill up, and an Office to discharge in the Universe. Each Fly and Worm, as well as Man (who is but the greater Worm of the two) hath a work to do in the World; and till that be finish'd God sustains its being: Nor shall the weakest Creature be destroyed, within the prefixed time that God hath set to its duration. There are none of us here alive this day but have abundant cause thankfully to acknowledge the powerful and merciful providence of God in preserving us in, and rescuing us from many dangers and deaths to which we stood expoted. It is only his Visitation that hath hitherto preserved our Spirits, and to his never failing providence we owe it that such frail and feeble Creatures, who are liable to be crush'd before the Moth, liable to so many diseases and accidents, have yet a name among the Living, and have not yet failed from off the face of the Earth.

Secondly, As God preserves, so he governs all things by his providence; and this Government consists in two things. Direction of the Creatures actions, and distribution of rewards and punishments according to the Actions of his rational Creatures.

First, God by his governing providence directs all the Actions of his Creatures, yea, and by the secret, but efficacious illapse and penetration of the Divine Influence; he powerfully sways and determines them which way he pleaseth. And from this part of his Providence, brancheth forth his permission of Evil Actions, and his concurrence to good, both by the assistance of his common and likewise of his special Grace; and lastly, his general influence into all the Actions of our Lives; all which we are inabled to perform by the Almighty power of the Divine Providence, which as at first it bestowed upon us natural faculties; so by a constant concurrence doth exite and assist those faculties to their respective operations.

Secondly,

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Secondly, God by his governing providence distributes rewards and punishments according to our actions: And this part of his providence is oftentimes remarkable even in this present Life, when we see retributions of Divine Mercy and Vengeance, signally proportioned according to Mens demerits, but the more especial manifestation and execution of it is commonly adjourned to the Life to come; and then all the seeming inequalities of God's dispensations here will be fully adjusted in the eternal recompence of the Godly, and eternal punishment of the wicked and impenitent.

Now by this Almighty providence God over-rules and sways all things to his own glory. There is nothing comes to pass, but God hath his ends in it, and will certainly make his own ends out of it; though the World seem to run at random, and affairs to be hudled together in blind confusion and rude disorder; yet God sees and knows the Concatenation of all causes and effects, and so governs them, that he makes a perfect harmony out of all those seeming Jarrings and Discords. As you may observe it in the wheels of a Watch, though they all move with contrary motions one to the other, yet they are useful and necessary to make it go right: so is it in these inferiour things, the proceedings of Divine providence, are all regular and orderly to his own ends, in all the thwartings and contrarieties of second causes. We have this express'd in that mysterious Vision, *Eccles. i. 18.* where the providences of God are set forth by the Emblem of a Wheel within a Wheel, one intersecting and crossing another; yet they are described to be full of eyes round about. What is this, but to denote unto us, that though providences are as turning and unstable as Wheels; though they are as thwart and cross as one Wheel within another, yet these Wheels are all Nailed round with Eyes; God sees and chules his way in the most intricate and intangled providences that are; and so governs

all things, that whilst each pursues its own inclination, they are all over-ruled to promote his glory. This is providence, the two great parts of which are preservation and Government; and the great end of both these the glory of the Almighty and All-wise God. And this is it which our Saviour speaks of when he tells the *Jews*, *John* 5. 17. *My Father worketh hitherto (viz. in preserving and governing his Creatures) and I work.*

Secondly, The second General propounded, was to demonstrate to you, That all things in the World are governed by the Divine Providence. The Old Philosophers among the *Heathens*, had very different notions concerning the Government of the World. Some held that all things were governed by an imperious and inevitable fate to which God himself was Subject: So *Chrysisippus*, and the *Stoicks*. Others thought that all was left to blind chance, and whatsoever came to pass here below was only casual and fortuitous; so the *Epicureans*: Others that the great God regarded only the more glorious affairs of Heaven, but had committed the care of Earthly concerns unto inferiour Spirits as his under Officers and Deputies: So most of the *Platonists*, though their master was Orthodox. Others, that God's providence reached only to the great and important matters of this World; but that it was too much a disparagement to his infinite Majesty to look after the motion of every Straw and Feather, and to take care of every trivial and inconsiderable Occurrence in this World. So speaks *Cicero* in his Book *de natura Deorum*, *Magna Dei curant, parva negligunt.* [*vide Ariani Epictet. lib. 1. cap. 12.*] How much better is that most excellent saying of *St. Austin*, *Tu sic curas unumquemq; nostrum, tanquam solum curas, & sic omnes tanquam singulos.* God takes as much care of every particular, as if each were all, and as much care of all, as if all were but one particular.

And

And to demonstrate this all-disposing providence of God, I shall take two ways.

First, From the consideration of the nature and perfection of the Deity.

Secondly, From the contemplation of that beauty and order which we may observe in the World.

It is most necessary that we should have our hearts well Establish'd in the firm and unwavering belief of this truth, that whatsoever comes to pass, be it good or evil, we may look up to the hand and disposal of all, to God; and if it be good, may acknowledge it with praise; if evil, bear it with patience; since he dispenseth both the one and the other; the good to reward us, and the evil to try us.

Now first, To demonstrate it from the being and nature of God.

This I shall do in these following Propositions, which I shall lay down as so many steps and gradations.

First, That there is a God is undoubtedly clear by the light of Nature. Never was there any People so barbarous and stupid, but did firmly assent to this truth without any other proof than the deep impress upon their hearts, and the observation of visible objects, that there was a Deity. 'Tis neither a Problem of reason, nor yet strictly an Article of Faith, but the unforced dictate of every Man's Natural Conscience; where Conscience is not violently perverted, and under the force of those vices, whose interest it is that there should be no God. Never was there any Nation that worshipp'd none, but their great sottishness was, that they worshipp'd many.

Secondly, As all confess there is a God, so likewise that this God must necessarily have in himself all perfections, as being the first Principle and Source of all things. All these perfections of Wisdom, Power, Knowledge, or the like, that we see scattered up and down among the Creatures, must all be concentred in God; and that in a far more

eminent degree, because whatever is found in Creatures is but derived and borrowed from him, and therefore it must needs follow, that because it is of more perfection to be infinite in each perfection, therefore God is infinite in them all.

Thirdly, Among all the perfections that are dispersed among the Creatures, the most excellent is knowledge and understanding: For this is a property that agrees only to Angels and Men, who are the top and flower of the Creation; and therefore certainly this perfection of the Creatures is to be found in God: yea, and that infinitely. His knowledge and wisdom therefore is infinite.

Fourthly, His knowledge being thus infinite, he both knows himself, and all other things in himself.

First, God perfectly knows himself, he knows the boundless extent of his own being, and though he be infinite and incomprehensible to all others, yet is he finite and comprehended to himself: and hence it follows,

Secondly, That he knows particularly all other things. For if he knew himself perfectly, he must needs know all things besides himself; because none can perfectly know himself, that doth not fully know all that his power and strength can reach unto. But now there is nothing which the power of God cannot reach, for by his power he Created all things. And therefore knowing his own Essence which is the cause of all, he knows every thing in the fecundity of his Essence. Thus we have demonstrated it from the principles of Reason, that God necessarily knows all things. But providence denotes more than knowledge. And therefore,

Fifthly, This knowledge that is in God, is not like that which we acquire; 'tis not a knowledge that depends upon the objects known, and forms Ideas from the contemplation of things already existing. But it is like the knowledge of an Artificer which causeth and produceth
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the things it comprehends. God knows them before they are; and by knowing them brings them to pass. God knows all things saith St. *Austin, de Trinitat.* 15. *Not because they are, but therefore they are because God knew them.* So that his eternal knowledge and understanding gives being to every thing in the World.

Sixthly, It appertains to him who gives being to a thing to preserve and govern it in its being. And therefore God giving being to all things, he also doth maintain and provide for them. 'Tis the very Law of Nature that he hath imprinted upon all his Creatures, to provide for their own Offspring. We see with what sollicitous affection and tenderness, even brute and irrational Creatures do it. We are all the Offspring of God, and he our common Parent. And therefore certainly he who hath inspired such Parental care in all things else, doth himself much more take care to give Education to all to which he hath given being.

Thus you see is proved that God's Providence reacheth unto all things. It might likewise be demonstrated from God's omnipresence. He is present every where, with, and in all his Creatures, and certainly he is not with them as an idle and unconcerned spectator, but as the director, and governour of their Actions. But I shall proceed to the second sort of Arguments to prove the Divine providence.

And those are taken from the consideration of the frame and *Compages* of the World, the beauty and harmony which we see in Nature. The World is a Book wherein we may clearly read the wonderful Wisdom of God. There is no Creature that doth not proclaim aloud, that God is the wise Creator and Governour of it. Who hath Gilded the Globe of the Sun and put on his Rays? Who hath set its bounds, and measured out its race, that it should without failing, without error or mistake, know how to make its daily and Annual

Annual returns, and divide out times and seasons to the World? Who hath given a particular Motion to all the Voluminous Orbs of Heaven, and beat out a path for every Star to walk in? Who hath swathed in the great and proud Ocean, with a Girdle of Sand, and restrains the Waves thereof, that though they be higher than the Land, yet they shall not overflow it? Who posseth the oppositions and contrarieties that are in Nature in so even a balance, that none of them shall ever prevail to a total Destruction of the other? Who brings up the great Family of brute Beasts without tumult and disorder? Do not all these great and wonderful works speak forth the watchful Providence of God; who as he makes them by his word, so still governs them by his Power? Therefore whatsoever we receive beneficial from them, whatsoever seems to provide for our necessities or conveniencies; it is God that hath so dispensed the Government of the World as to make it serviceable. If the Heavens turn and move for us, if the Stars as so many burning Torches light us in the obscurity of the Night; if the Angels protect and defend us, let us acknowledge all this from the Providence of God only. It is he that turns the Heavens round their Axis: He lights up the Stars, he commands the Angels to be Ministring Spirits, Guards, and Centinels about us. If the Fire warm us, the Air refresh us, the Earth support us, it is God that hath kindled the Fire, that hath spread forth the Air, stablish'd the Earth upon the Pillars of his own decree that it should not be shaken. And let us know too that when we want these Creatures for our sustentation, if the Heavens, if the Angels, if the Earth, if the Sea, if all things should fail us, yea, bandy and set themselves against us, yet God who provides for us by them, can also if he please provide for us without them.

Thus we have dispatch'd the two general inquiries, and have described and demonstrated unto you the Divine Providence. The

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The third which remains, is to answer some questions and doubts which may be made, and have indeed been strongly urged against the Government of the World by Providence.

As First, If the World be governed by Providence, whence comes it that wicked and ungodly Men flourish and prosper? that God shines upon their Tabernacles, and drops fatness upon all their paths? Whereas on the contrary the Godly are often exposed to Poverty, Contempt, Reproaches, persecuted by Men, afflicted by God. Would it not be as agreeable to the Divine goodness, to cast abroad the Wealth, the Pomp, and Glory of this World with an undeciding hand, leaving Men to scramble for them as they can, as that he should with a particular and studied care advance those who contemn him, and crush those who humbly trust and depend upon him? Can I think the World is governed by the Providence of a just God, when usually unjust Men govern the World under him? When swaggering Sinners, who despise him have power likewise to controul others? Is it Wisdom to put a Sword into that hand which will turn the point of it against the giver? Or Justice to impower them to all those Acts of Rapine, Violence, and Oppression, which they commit? And shall we call that Providence which is neither wise nor just? One hath an unexhausted store to supply his dissolute Luxury and Riot, another scarce necessaries to maintain a poor Life spent in the commands of God. Here a wicked *Dives*, who worshipped no other God but his own Belly, feasts deliciously every day; whilst a Godly *Lazarus* starves at this glutton's Gate, and entertains the Dogs with licking of his Sores. And what, doth God's particular care furnish the glutton's Table with dayly excess, who will not give the remaining Scraps to God's Children? If there be Divine Providence in this, what is become of the Divine Equity? This inequality of Affairs seems to per-

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swade that it is not the Holy and Righteous God of Heaven, but rather the God of this World, that Governs the concerns of it, and that he spoke truth, when he told our Saviour, *Luke 4. 6. The Power and Glory of this World is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it.*

Now to Answer this. First, This quarrel is not only of late commenced against Heaven; but it hath been the complaint of all Ages. It raised controversies among the very Heathens themselves, some of them upon this ground denying, and others again by whole treatises defending the Government of the World by Providence. And no wonder it should puzzle them, since the very best of God's Saints and Servants have likewise stumbled at this stone of offence. Thus the Psalmist, *Psalms. 73. 2, 3, &c. As for me my Feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipt: For I was envious at the Foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the Wicked.* So likewise the Prophet *Jeremy, 12. 1. Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee, yet let me talk with thee of thy Judgment: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?* This therefore is an old grief, which in all Ages of the World hath been complained of. And though at first sight it seems to confute the Providence of God, yet if we more narrowly consider it, 'tis a strong confirmation of it. For since vertue and goodness is so despicable a thing in the World; since holy and good Men have been always injured and persecuted, certainly were there not an all-wise providence that finds out ways and means of its own to counterpoise these disadvantages, and to preserve them amidst the rage and hatred of their implacable Enemies, long ere this there had been none of them left, either to have suffered, or complained. Were there no other argument to prove that God governs the World, this would suffice, even, That his Servants have been continually oppressed in it, yet never could be rooted

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out of it. Though Men and Devils have combined together against them, and God (as they have complained) hath deemed to abandon them; yet such a fenceless and forlorn generation as this, hath been hitherto, and shall still be preserved to the very end of the World. Doth not this speak forth the Power and care of Almighty God, thus to keep a bush unconsumed in the midst of fire? to preserve fuel untouch'd in the very embraces of flames?

Secondly, God doth chastise his own People, and prosper the wicked, that he might thereby rectifie our Judgments, and teach us not to account adversity the greatest Evil, nor yet prosperity the chiefest Good. For certainly were they so, only the Righteous should enjoy the Grandeur, Pomp, and Glory of this World, and only the wicked and ungodly become miserable. Concerning this, *St. Austin*, speaks excellently in his 70th. Epistle, "Worldly things, saith he, are in themselves but indifferent, and good and evil only as they are improved, but least they should be thought always evil, therefore God sometimes gives them to those who are good, and least they should be thought the highest and the chiefest good, they are sometimes given to those who are evil. And a like saying to this hath *Seneca*, in his Book *de provident. cap. 5*. There is no such way to traduce the Riches, the Honours, the Pleasures of this Life, those vain nothings which are so earnestly desired, and eagerly pursued by the most, no such way to beat down their price in the esteem of all wise and good Men, as for God to bestow those upon the vilest, which he sometimes denies to the best and Holiest.

Thirdly. When God bestows any temporal good thing upon wicked and ungodly Men, he gives it as their Portion; and when he brings any calamity on his own Children, he inflicts it for their tryal. Is it not ordinary that a Servant receives more for wages, than a Son may have for the present at his own command? God is the
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Father, and bountiful maintainer of the whole Family both in Heaven and Earth; a Father to the Faithful, a Lord and Master over all. He may give his Slaves large wages, when his own Children possibly have not so much in hand. Is he therefore hard or unjust? No: The inheritance is theirs, and that is kept in reversion for them. What wicked Men possess of this World, is all that ever they can hope for. Why should we grudge them filled bags, or swelling Titles! 'Tis their whole Portion. They now receive their good things. Hast thou Food and Cloathing? That is Childrens fare: Envy not ungodly Men, who flaunt it in the Gallantry of the World. They have more than you; but 'tis all they are like to have. The Psalmist gives us an account of their Estate, *Psalm. 17. 14. They are the Men of this World, who have their Portion in this Life, whose bellies God filleth with his hid Treasure*: whereas thou, O Christian, who possessest nothing, art Heir apparent of Heaven, Coheir with Jesus Christ, who is the heir of all things, and hast an infinite Mass of Riches-laid up for thee: So great and infinite that all the Stars of Heaven are too few to account it by. You have no reason to complain of being kept short; for all that God hath is yours: Whether Prosperity or Adversity, Life or Death, all is yours. What God gives is for your comfort, what he denies or takes away is for your tryal; it is for the increase of those graces which are far more gracious than any temporal enjoyment. If by seeing wicked and ungodly Men flow in wealth and ease, when thou art forced to struggle against the inconveniencies and difficulties of a poor Estate, thou hast learnt an Holy contempt and disdain of the World, believe it God hath herein given thee more, than if he had given thee the World it self.

Fourthly, God doth many times even in this World expound the mystery of his Providence, by the fatal and dreadful overthrow of those wicked Men whom he for a while sus-

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suffered to prosper. *The triumph of the wicked, saith, Job, 20. 5. is short.* At longest it is but short, because measured out by a short Life. Now is their triumph, hereafter their torment: But many times God brings them to ruine even in this Life. He turns the Wheel of Providence and makes it pass over those who but a while before set vaunting a top of it. And then wilt thou doubt whether God governs the World by Providence? Wilt thou doubt whether God be just in suffering wicked Men to prosper and flourish? God lifts them up on high, only that he may cast them down with the more terrible fall. When the workers of iniquity prosper (saith the Psalmist *Psalm. 97. 2.*) it is that they might be destroyed for ever. Now when God comes thus to execute Judgment upon them those who questioned the Providence of God in their advancement, will the more glorifie it in their downfall. The Righteous shall see it and be glad, and shall say, verily there is a reward for the Righteous, verily there is a God that Judgeth in the Earth, *Psalm 58. 11.*

Fifthly, If God doth not clear up this inequality of his providence in this Life, yet he will certainly do it at the day of Judgment. And indeed the strange dispensation of Affairs in this World, is an Argument that doth convincingly prove that there shall be such a day, wherein all the *Involucra* and intanglements of providence shall be clearly unfolded. Then shall the riddle be dissolved, why God hath given this and that profane wretch so much Wealth, and so much power to do mischief. Is it not that they might be destroyed for ever? Then shall they be called to a strict account for all that plenty and prosperity for which they are now envied: and the more they have abused, the more dreadful will their condemnation be. Then it will appear that God gave them not as mercies, but as snares. 'Tis said *Psalm. 11. 6. That God will rain on the wicked Snares, Fire, and Brimstone, and an horrible tempest.* When he

he scatters abroad the desirable things of this World: Riches, Honours, Pleasures, &c. then he rains snares upon them: and when he shall call them to an account for these things, then he will rain upon them Fire and Brimstone, and an horrible tempest of his wrath and fury. *Dives* who carowed on Earth, yet in Hell could not obtain so much as one poor drop of Water to cool his scorch'd and flaming Tongue. Had not his excess and intemperance been so great in his Life, his fiery thirst had not been so tormenting after Death. And therefore in that sad Item that *Abraham* gives him, *Luke* 16. 5. he bids him remember, that thou in thy Life time receivest thy good things, and likewise *Lazarus* Evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou tormented. I look upon this as a most bitter and a most deserved Sarcasme, upbraiding him for his gross folly, making the trifles of this Life his good things: *Thou hast received thy good things, but now thou art tormented.* Oh, never call *Dives's* Purple and delicious fare good things, if they thus end in torments! Was it good for him to be wrapt in Purple, who is now wrapt in Flames? Was it good for him to fare deliciously, who was only thereby fatted up against the day of slaughter? Could you lay your Ears to Hell Gates, you might hear many of the Grandees and Potentates, the great and Rich ones of this World Cursing all their Pomp and Bravery, and wishing they had been the most despicable of all those whom they once hated, oppress'd and injured: And as it will appear at that day that none of the enjoyments of this World are good to wicked Men; so that none of those Afflictions and Calamities which good Men suffer are Evil. *Lazarus's* Sores are not Evil, since now every Sore is turned into a Star. His lying prostrate at the Rich Misers door is not Evil, since now he lies in *Abraham's* Bosom: And this day all these intricacies of Providence will be made plain, and we shall have other apprehensions of things, than

than what we have at present. Now we call Prosperity, Riches, and Abundance, Good things; and Want, and Affliction, Evil. But when we come to consider these with relation to Eternity, the true standard to measure them by, then Poverty may be a Mercy, and Riches a Judgment; God may bless one by Afflictions, and Curse another by Prosperity: he may bestow more upon us in suffering us to want, than if he should give us the store and treasures of all the Earth. And certainly whatever our thoughts of it are now, yet within awhile this will be the Judgment of us all. When we are once lodged in our Eternal State, then we shall acknowledge that nothing in this World deserved the name of good; but as it promoted our eternal Happiness, nor of evil, but as it tends to Eternal misery.

And thus you see this grand Objection answered, and the Providence of God cleared from that injustice which we are apt peevishly to impute unto it.

Other doubts are of less moment, and therefore shall be brieflier resolved.

As Secondly, If God's Providence ordains all things to come to pass according to the immutable Law of his purpose, then what necessity is there of Prayer?

We cannot by our most fervent Prayers alter the least circumstance, or punctilio in God's Decrees. If he hath so laid the method of his Providence in his own Counsels as to prepare mercies and blessings for us, our Prayers cannot hasten, nor maturate them before their time: Or if he determine by his Providence to bring Afflictions upon us, our Prayers cannot prevent, nor adjourn them beyond their prefixed time. Now to this *Aquinas* 2. 29. 83. *Art. 2.* Answers well, that the Divine Providence doth not only ordain what Effects shall come to pass, but also by what means and causes, and in what order they shall flow. God hath appointed, as the effect it self, so the means to accomplish it. Now Prayer is a means to bring to pass that which God hath determined shall be.

Pray.

Pray out of hope to alter God's Eternal purposes, but we Pray to obtain that which God hath ordained to be obtained by our Prayers: We ask that thereby we may be fit to receive what God hath from all Eternity determined to give by Prayer, and not otherwise. And therefore when we lie under any Affliction, if we languish under pain or sickness, if we are pinch'd by Want or Poverty, if we are oppress'd by the injuries and persecutions of others, Prayer is necessary, because as God by his Providence hath brought these things upon us, so likewise possibly the same Providence hath determined not to remove them, till we earnestly and fervently Pray for our deliverance from them. And therefore when God had promised great mercies to the Jews, he tells them by the Prophet *Ezek. 36. 37. Yet will I for this be enquired of by the House of Israel to do it for them.* Prayer therefore doth not incline God to bestow that which before he was not resolv'd to give, but it capacitates us to receive that which God will not give otherwise.

Thirdly, Another Objection may be this. If Providence ordereth and disposeth all the Occurrences of the World, then there can nothing fall out casually and contingently.

I Answer. In respect of God it is true, there is nothing casual nor contingent in the World. A thing may be casual in respect of particular causes; but in respect of the universal, and first cause nothing is such. If a Master should send a Servant to a certain place, and command him to stay there till such a time, and presently after should send another Servant to the same, the meeting of these two is wholly casual in respect of themselves, but ordained and foreseen by the Master that sent them. So is it in all fortuitous events here below: They fall out unexpectedly as to us, but not so as to God; he foresees and he appoints all the vicissitudes of things, and all the surprises of hu-
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mane Accidents. So that you see there may be contingencies in the World, though God's Providence be most particular and punctual.

Fourthly, Some may object that this would destroy the liberty of Man's will, and subject all things to a fatal necessity, even humane actions themselves. For if Man can do nothing but what God hath by his Providence fore-appointed shall be done, how then is Man free either to do, or not to do?

This question requires much more time to answer it at large than I can allow it. Some seeing it a very difficult thing to reconcile Providence and Liberty, have presumed to deny that Providence intermeddles at all in such affairs as depend upon the free will of Man. And of this opinion *Tully* seems to have been; for which *St. Austin* chastiseth him as injurious to God; when he saith, *Voluntatem dum faceret liberam, fecit Sacrilegam*. I shall not here stand to distinguish of a necessity of Coaction, and a necessity of Infallibility, and that the Providence of God doth not bring upon the will a necessity of Coaction, but only of infallibility, which very well consists with the liberty of the will. All that I shall at present answer, is, That God doth indeed efficaciously determine the will to do what it doth, yet this determination leaves it in a perfect State of liberty, because the liberty of the will doth not so much consist in indifferency to Act, or not to Act, as in a rational spontaneity. When we do what we have an appetite to do upon grounds that to us seem rational, then we Act freely. Now though God doth absolutely sway the will which way he pleaseth, yet he never forceth it contrary to its own inclinations. For that to which God determines it by his Providence seems at that present most rational to be done: and upon that representation of good in the Object, the will embraceth it and acts accordingly. So that, its Providence is not violated by any boisterous and compulsive.

compulsive sway, that the first cause hath over it, but God attracts it with such a powerful and insinuating sweetness, that though the will can incline to nothing but what it seems to have reason for; yet withall it wills nothing but what God by Providence over-rules it unto. So *Austin De Civitate Dei*, lib. 5. Cap. 9. *Nos dicimus & Deum scire omnia antequam fiant, & voluntate nos facere quicquid à Nobis non nisi volentibus fieri sentimus & novimus.* Though God foresees and decrees all things before they are, yet we do that with a free will, which we do not otherwise than willingly.

Fifthly, The last doubt and query is this: If God govern all Actions, and all Affairs, by an exact and critical Providence; how then comes it to pass that there is so much Evil, Villainy and Wickedness committed in it? The Disquisition of this is the more obscure and intricate, because it is hard to conceive how God, who is infinite goodness it self, should interest his Providence in what is so contrary to his Nature.

Now here we must affirm that there is no Evil whatsoever, whether it be of Sin, or of suffering, that comes to pass without the Providence of God. As for the Evil of punishment or suffering, it is clear, *Amos*, 3. 6. *Shall there be Evil in the City, and the Lord hath not done it?* But for the Evil of Sin it is not effectively from God; yet doth he by his Providence, for most Holy and wise ends, permit wicked Men to commit those sins which his Law prohibits, and his nature abhors. Though they refuse to be subject to the Written Law, yet they are and must be subject to the eternal Law of his own Councils, and there is not a sin they commit, but as his Authority condemns, and his purity hates it; so his Wisdom both suffers it to be, and over-rules it when it is, to his own ends. 'Tis true, all Men naturally are Slaves to their Lusts, but God holds their Chain in his own Hands; sometimes slackening it by
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his permission, and sometimes straitning it by his powerful restraint. And therefore to plead Providence the warrant of our Actions (a boisterous argument which of late hath been most used amongst us, until Providence it self had signally confuted it) is to plead that for the justification of our Actions without which they could not be sinful. Thus *Cain* killed his Brother by a Providence, and *Achan* Stole the Wedge of Gold, and *Judas* betrayed Christ, and the *Jews* Crucified him by a Providence, yea and all the Villainy that was ever acted under the Sun, was all brought forth out of the Cursed Womb of Mens Lusts, by the Providence of God, that is, by his permission to the Evil, and concurrence as to the Act: neither is this any stain at all to the infinite Holiness and Purity of his nature; for though we sin, if we hinder not the Commission of Sin in others when it is in our power to do it, because we are commanded and obliged to it both by the care we ought to have of his Honour, and the Charity we owe unto the Souls of others; yet no such obligation lies upon God, who may justly give Men over to their perverted inclinations. And though he can easily keep the most Wicked Man in the World, from rushing into those Sins which he daily commits, yet not being bound to interpose his power to hinder them, he permits them holily, and at last will punish them justly.

But the question is not so much whether God doth not by his Providence permit sin, as why he doth it. And St. *Austin* answers it excellently in that known saying of his; God, saith he, who is infinitely good, would never permit Evil were he not also infinitely wise, and knew how to bring good out of Evil. It is the primary object of his hatred, and that alone for which he hates wicked Men. As he is an Holy God, so he hates it, and as he is a wise God, so he permits it. And there is a twofold good for which God doth sometimes permit Evil.

First, The manifestation of his own Glory.
 Secondly, The exercise of his Peoples Graces.

First, God by permitting sin manifests the glory of many of his Attribute. *Surely the wrath of Man shall praise thee,* saith the Psalmist, Psalm. 76. 10. Every Sin strikes at some of the Divine Attributes. One denies his Justice, another his Mercy; one his Power, another his Wisdom, and all are contrary to his Purity. But yet God hath in his own Councils such secret Screws and Wiers whereby he doth so wreath and invert these Pins, that eventually they advance what they seem directly to oppose. A Child perhaps would think when he sees an Husbandman cast Dung and Soil upon his Field, that it were but improvidently done thus to spoil the flourishing verdure and gayety of the Grass and Flowers. Why, that very Dung which covers them, makes them afterwards sprout up more fair and fresh. So God permits wicked Men to Dung the Earth with their filth, that those Attributes of his which seem to be buried under them, may afterwards spring up with the greater lustre and Glory. From hence he will reap the richer crop of praise to himself. Sometimes he glorifies the severity of his Justice, by hardening them in their Sins to their own destruction; sometimes the riches of his mercy, by calling the greatest and most flagitious Sinners to Repentance, and granting them Pardon; and always his infinite patience and forbearance in not executing present Vengeance upon those who so daringly provoke him. But although we cannot now so clearly, comprehend the advantages that God makes out of the Sins of Men, yet when we come to stand in the general Assembly at the day of Judgment; God will then comment upon, and explain the mysteries of his Providence, and make us understand how those Sins for which he will then

then condemn the World, put a gloss and shine upon his Attributes.

Secondly, God by permitting sin exerciseth the Graces of his People. The sins of others give us matter for the exercise of an Holy zeal; for God who is daily affronted by them, of an Holy Pity and Commiseration over those who like Mad-men wound, and gash, and destroy themselves: for the exercise of an Holy caution over our selves, least we be induced to sin after their Example. Our own Sins give us daily occasion to renew our Repentance to humble our Souls before God, to fortifie our resolutions, to double the guards we set upon our own hearts and ways, to watch over our selves more circumspectly, that we relapse not into the Commission of them again. Thus a true Christian may gain some advantage by his very falls. As Husbandmen make use of the very Thorns and Briars that grow in their Fields to stop the Gaps, and strengthen the fences about them, so should we improve our very Sins and failings, to fence our Souls that we lie not open to the like temptations for the future.

Thus, you see that God brings good out of all the Evil which he permits, he glorifies his own Attributes, and exerciseth his Peoples Graces. And thus you see likewise, God's Providence both Proved and Vindicated; asserted to be particular and punctual over all Occurrences that happen in the World, and cleared from all the Imputations of Injustice, that the Folly or Atheism of Man can lay against it. I shall conclude with two or three Inferences or Corollaries.

First, If the accurateness of God's Providence reach unto all the little concernments of the World, we may be well assured, that those which are the more considerable and important Occurrences of it, are all guided and governed by a special hand of Providence. And thus our Saviour himself urgeth as a strong encouragement for our

confidence and trust in God: *Not a Sparrow falls to the ground without your Father; fear not ye therefore, you are of more worth than many Sparrows.* Yea, not an Hair of your head falls without a Providence, and think ye that the head it self shall? Certainly, God doth not like *Domitian*, busie himself about Flies, and neglect the great and weighty Affairs of his Government. And this is the reason of that question the Apostle Asks, *1. Corinth. 9. 9. Doth God take care for Oxen:* Yes, certainly he doth, nor did the Apostle intend to deny it, but thereby to inferr that certainly his care is much more particular towards us. This then may establish our hearts under any personal Sufferings or publick Calamities, when evil is upon our selves or the Nation, when Uproars and Confusions seem to reduce the World back to its Ancient Chaos, when Storms and Waves over-whelm the Ship, and we with the Disciples think our God asleep, and begin to cry out with the Psalmist, *Awake, O Lord, why sleepest thou:* Our God is not sleeping, but even then at the Helm, he Steers, he Governs and Guides all these Disorders, and will conduct the whole Tumult and Hurry of Affairs to his own Glory and our Good.

Secondly, If God's Providence hath the command and sway even over the Sins of Men, this then may be abundant matter of Peace and Satisfaction in the worst of times, when wickedness doth most of all rage and abound; let us then consider, that if God permits them, he also can when he pleaseth Check, put a Stop and Period to their Rage and Madness. Their hands are Fettered by the adamantine Chains of a most strong Decree, which they can neither reverse nor exceed; whatsoever they do, is but by permission; a limited, and a limiting Permission. Our Saviour tells us, *Pilate, thou couldest have no power over me, except it were given thee from above.* The very power that Men have to Sin against God, is from God; and therefore cer-
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tainly he will withdraw it, when it doth not work out his own ends. This was it that satisfied *David*, when *Shimei* pelted him with Stones and Curfes, 2 *Sam.* 16. 10. *Let him alone, let him Curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David.*

Thirdly, Hence see to what we ought to ascribe it, that there is no more notorious wickedness committed in the World; when we hear of any prodigious Villainy, we are apt to wonder that ever such abominations should be incident to the Sons of Men. Wonder not at the matter as if any strange thing were happened to them, but rather wonder at the goodness of God which is the sole cause that such things as these are wonders. Were his permissive Providence as large as Mens lust are outrageous, these things would soon cease to be wonders, and become the common and ordinary practice of all Men. Why are not our Streets continually filled with Violence, Rapine, Murthers, and Out-cries? Whence is it that we enjoy our Possession, and our Lives in Safety? The wickedness of Men lies hard, and presseth upon God's restraints, and wheresoever there are any gaps in it, it breaks forth naturally and violently, and if this Dam and Mound of Divine Providence, were but broken down, it would break out till it had overflowed the whole face of the Earth, and covered it with a Deluge of Impiety and Profaneness. But that God who sets bounds to the raging of the Sea, and saith hitherto shall thy proud Waves come and no farther, doth by the same Almighty Providence, set bounds to the Lusts and Corruptions of Men, which are altogether as unruly, and curbs in the fury of their madness, which else would drown the whole World in Perdition and Destruction.

Fourthly, Lastly, This should teach us, to acquiesce and rest satisfied in every Providence of God, as that which will certainly in the end redound to his own Glory. When we see disorders and confusions abroad in the World, we are apt
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to despond and to cry out, Lord, what wilt thou do for thy great Name, thy Honour, thy Glory lies bleeding, and suffers through the Sins of Men? Why, commit thy care to God: He will certainly so weild their Lusts, as that they shall bring about and effect his own ends. God is glorifying himself, even by these things; and why then should we be troubled? This thought kept alive on our hearts would cause us to rest satisfied amidst all the tumults we observe and hear of in the World. For though we know not how to unwind these ravelled dispensations to the bottom of his Glory, yet he can and will. There is an invisible and wise hand that moulds and fashions all; and though the parts by themselves may appear rude and unpolish'd, yet put the whole frame and series of Providence together, and that will appear most admirable and glorious.

Now to the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the only wise God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, be honour and glory for ever, and ever, *Amen.*

The End of the first Sermon.

A Discourse concerning the use of the Holy Scriptures.

Colossians III. 16.

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all
Wisdom.*

THis Epistle, if any other, is a rich mine of Heavenly Treasure, and abounds both in the discovery of Gospel Mysteries, and the injunction of Christian Duties. It is furnished throughout with that which may either instruct us in Knowledge, or direct us in Practice: And the Apostle having already laid down many Excellent things in order to both these; and seeing it would be an endless task to discourse unto them all the Truths, or exhort them to all the Duties of Religion in particular; he therefore speaks compendiously in the words of my Text, and refers them to the perfect Systeme in which is contained an account of what a Christian ought to know or do; and that is the Holy Scriptures. *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.*

The words of this Exhortation are very full and laden with weighty Sence. We may resolve them into two parts.

First, Here is the Nature and Substance of the Exhortation, which is to a diligent Study, and plentiful knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.

Secondly :

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Secondly, The manner how we ought to be Conversant in them; *So that it may dwell in us richly in all Wisdom.*

In the former, we may take notice that the Scripture is called the word of Christ; and that upon a double account: both because he is the Author that composed it, and likewise, he is the subject matter of which it principally treats. Now though in both these respects, the Scriptures of the New Testament be more especially the word of Christ; yet also may the Scriptures of the Old Testament as truly and properly go under his Name. For,

First, He is the Author of them all: He may well write this Title upon our Bibles, *The Works of Jesus Christ*. All the Prophets before his Incarnation, were but his Amanuenses, and wrote only what he by his Spirit dictated to them, *2 Pet. 1. 21. Prophecy came not in old time by the will of Man, but holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*, and certainly the Holy Ghost inspired them by Christ's Authority and Commission; and what he declared, he took from him, *and shewed it unto them, John 16. 14, 15. He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*

Secondly, Christ also is the principal subject and matter of the whole Scripture. The sending Christ a Saviour into the World, is that great Business which hath employed the Counsel of the Father, the Admiration and Ministrati-
on of Angels, the Tongues and Pens of Prophets, Apostles, and holy Men of all Ages, before the Scriptures were Written, when Revelation or Tradition were yet the only positive Rules for Faith and Practice. The Patriarchs saw him by these. *Abraham saw my day and was glad, Joh. 8. 56.* Afterwards the People of the Jews saw him by Types, Promises, and Prophecies recorded in the Scriptures. He was that Excellent Theme that hath filled up many Chapters of the Old Testament; as the first draught
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of a Picture represents the features and proportion of the Person, but afterwards is added the complexion and life to it. So is it here, the Pens of the Prophets drew the first Lineaments and Proportion of Christ in the Old Testament, and the Pens of the Apostles and Evangelists have added the Life and Sweetness to it in the New. Yea, Christ is so truly described in the Old Testament, by his Life, by his Death, by all the greater Remarks of either, that in his Contest with the Jews, he appeals thither for a Testimony, *John 5. 39. Search the Scriptures, for they are they which testify of me.* And St. Peter, *Acts 3. 24. Affirms, That all the Prophets, as many as have spoken, have foretold of these days.* And *Acts 10. 43. To him give all the Prophets Witness.* Christ who is the true Expositor, being himself the true Author, makes them all speak his Sense. *Luke 24. 27. Beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures, the sayings concerning himself.* So that St. Chrysostom's Observation holds true, that the Gospel was in the World before Christ. ἔρριζώθη μὲν ἐν τοῖς βιβλοῖς τῶν προφητῶν, ἐβλάστησε δὲ ἐν τῷ Κηρύγματι τῶν ἀποστόλων. It took root in the writings of the Prophets, but flowed forth in the preaching of the Apostles; so that in both these respects, the Holy Scripture may well be called the Word of Christ; of Christ as the Author, and as the Subject of it.

And in both these lies coucht a very cogent Argument, that may inforce this exhortation of the Apostle, and excite them to a diligent study of the Scriptures. For,

First, Is Christ the Author of them, and shall we not with all care and diligence peruse these Books which he hath Composd? The writings of Men are valued according to the Abilities of their Authors. If they be of approved Integrity, profound Knowledge, solid Judgment, their works are Esteemed and Studied. And shall we not be much more Conversant in these, which are set forth by

the Author, who is truth it self, and the essential wisdom of the Father? These that were dictated by the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and writ as it were with a Quill of the Heavenly Dove?

Secondly, Christ is the subject of the Scriptures: And what is all other Learning and Knowledge but beggarly Elements, if compared with this? Here we have the Cabinet of God's Counsels unlockt, the Eternal purposes of his Grace, in sending his Son into the World publickly declared. Here we have the Stupendous History of God's becoming Man, of all the Miracles this God-man did upon Earth; of all the Cruelties he Suffered. Here we have the Description of his Victory in his Resurrection, of his Triumph in his Ascension, of his Glory in his Session at the right hand of the Majesty on High. *Surely, great is the Mystery of Godliness, God manifested in the Flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the World, received up into Glory,* as the Apostle with admiration recounts it, *1 Tim. 3. 16.* And of all these wonderful passages, the Scripture gives us a perfect Narrative. And what have the great Wits of the World ever treated on like this, either for Strangeness or Truth? All their Learning is but idle and contemptible Speculation, compared to this great Mystery of a Crucified Saviour; who subdued Death by dying, and without force, converted the World to believe a Doctrine above Reason. It was a very odd saying of *Tertulian, de carne Christi cont. Marc.* and yet there is something in it that strikes, *Natus est Dei filius, non pudet, quia pudendum est,* the Son of God was Born, we blush not at it, because it is shameful. *Mortuus est Dei filius, prorsus credibile est, quia ineptum est:* The Son of God dyed; it is credible, because it is unfit and unlikely it should be so: *Sopultus resurrexit, certum est, quia impossibile est;* he rose from the Dead, it is certain, true, because it is impossible. Now these unlikely and

and impossible things, judged so by humane Reason; these deep things of God, the Scripture declares, and declares them in such a manner as convinceth even Reason it self to assent to them, though it cannot comprehend them. If therefore you desire to know Christ and him Crucified, and those Mysterious Doctrines which the Wit of Man could not invent, for it can hardly receive them, be conversant in the Holy Scriptures; for they are the word of Christ, and reveals all the wonders of Wisdom and Knowledge, to which all the Wisdom of the World is but folly. This therefore I suppose lies in the expression, the word of Christ, *viz.* the word of which he is both the Author, and the Subject.

Secondly, We may observe in the Text, the manner how we ought to be Conversant in the Scriptures, and that is set forth very significantly.

First, Let the Word of Christ dwell in you. Do not only give it the hearing, as a strange and marvellous story: let not the memory of it vanish out of your minds, as soon as the sound of the Words vanisheth out of your Ears, but lay it up and lodge it in your Hearts, make it familiar and Domestick to you; that it may be as well known to you, as those that live in the same House with you. Read it, ponder and meditate upon it, till you have transcribed the Bible upon your hearts, and Faithfully printed it in your memories:

Secondly, Let it dwell in you Richly or Copiously, which may be taken either Objectively, or Subjectively: Objectively, and so the sense is, that all the word of God should dwell in us. Content not your selves with some part of it; that you read the Gospel, or New Testament, but neglect the Old, as is the practice of some flush Notionists: Or that you know the Historical part of both, but neglect the Doctrinal, which is the fond and Childish custom of some, who read the Scripture as they would Romances,

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mances, skipping over the moral discourses as impertinent to the story. But when we receive the whole Doctrine contained in it, and are diligent in revolving the Prophets, Evangelists, Apostles, every part and parcel of the Heavenly revealed truth.

Again the Word of Christ may dwell in us richly in the latter sense, or Subjectively. And so it doth when not only every part of it dwells in us, but when it dwells also in every part of us. In our memories to retain, it in our minds to meditate on it, in our affections to love it, and in our Lives to practise it. Then doth the Word of Christ dwell richly, or abundantly in us.

Thirdly, Let it dwell richly in all Wisdom.

The highest Wisdom is truly to know, and to serve God in order to Eternal Life.

Now saith the Apostle, so acquaint your selves with the Scriptures, that you may from thence learn true Wisdom, the saving knowledge both of what is to be believed, and what is to be done, in order to the obtaining of everlasting happiness.

To be conversant in it only, to know what it contains, is not Wisdom but folly. But then it dwells in you in Wisdom, when you study it, to practise it, when you endeavour to know the rule that ye may obey it. This is Wisdom here, and will end in happiness hereafter. And thus you have the words of my Text explained.

In handling this Subject, I shall only pursue the design of the Apostle, and endeavour to press those exhortations upon you. And indeed I need not many Arguments to persuade those who have already any acquaintance, with these Sacred Oracles, still to be conversant in them. Have you not your selves found such clear light, such Attractive sweetness, and persuasive Eloquence in the words of God, that all that the Tongue of Man can utter for it, falls infinitely short of what it speaks on in its own behalf? Who

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of us have not found direction from it in cases of difficulty, Solution of doubts, support under Afflictions, comfort under sadness, strength against temptation, quicknings of Grace, warmth of affection; and in brief, whatsoever we could expect from the mercy of God have we not found it in the Scriptures? And shall we need further to commend it to you by Arguments, since it hath commended it self by manifold experiences? But so it is that the Devil knows we are disarmed and disabled if once he can wrest the Sword of the Spirit from us, as the Apostle calls it, and therefore labours all he can to strike the Bible out of our hands: Or if we do read it, he strives to put on such false Spectacles as shall misrepresent every thing to us, and possess us with prejudice and Objections against it. I shall therefore before I proceed any farther, encounter with some of those prejudiced opinions, which make this a Clasp'd and Sealed Book to many.

First, Some may fear lest the study and knowledge of the Scriptures, should only aggravate their Sin and Condemnation. On the one hand the precepts of the Law are so various, the duties so difficult, and Flesh and Blood so infirm and opposite; that they cast a despairing look at them, as impossible to be fulfilled. On the other hand they have been told that knowledge without practice will expose them to damnation without excuse. They have read, *Ja. 4. 17. To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is Sin*: it is an Emphatical and weighty Sin, and *Luke, 12. 47. He that knew his Masters Will, and did it not shall be beaten with many stripes.* This they have read, and this deterrs them from reading any farther. If they cannot practise what they know; and if to know and not practise, be only to inflame their last reckoning, and make their torments more intolerable, it is best for them to muffle up themselves in a safe ignorance.

To this I Answer.

First, Though the word abounds with multitudes of sublime precepts, and difficult duties, yet this is no discouragement from the study of it. For consider that this same word is not only a light to discover what you ought to do, but an help to enable you to do it. It is the very means that God appointed to overcome your averfensels, and assist your weakness. And if ever this be effected, it must in an ordinary way, be by conversing with the Scriptures. That Sick Man hath lost his Reason, as well as his Health, who should refuse to take Physick, because if it doth not work, it will but make him the worse. Why the way to make it work is by taking it. So it is a distempered kind of arguing, against the word of God, the Physick of our Souls, that it is mortal and deadly if it doth not work into practice. The way to make it work into practice, is to take it first into our knowledge; 'tis true, it were a great discouragement if the Scripture only shewed you how much work you have to do, what Temptations to resist, what Corruptions to mortifie, what Graces to exercise, what duties to perform, and left all that upon your own hands. But the Leaves of the Bible, are the Leaves of the Tree of Life, as well as of the Tree of Knowledge; they strengthen as well as enlighten, and have not only a Commanding, but an assisting Office. And this the Scripture doth two ways.

First, It directs where we may receive supplies of ability for the performance of whatsoever it requires. It leads thee unto Christ, who is able to furnish thee with supernatural strength, for supernatural duties. His treasury stands open for all concerns; and his Almighty Power stands engaged to assist those who relie upon it. Be not discouraged therefore, he that finds us work, finds us strength: and the same Scripture that enjoyns us obedience, exhibits God's promise of bestowing upon us the power of obeying. *Thou who werkest all works in us and for us, Isaiah, 26.*

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12. *And work out your own Salvation*, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do, *Phil. 2. 12, 13.* Why then should we so complain of hard sayings, and Grievous Commandments? Have we not God's Omnipotence obliged by promise to assist in the same words, wherein we are commanded to obey? What saith the Apostle, *I am able to do all things through Christ strengthening me*, *Phil. 4. 13.* When in reading the Scripture, thou meetest with difficult and rigorous Duties, the severity of Mortification, the self-cruelty of plucking out right Eyes, and cutting off right Hands; commend they self to these promises of aid and assistance, that the same Scripture holds forth, and lift up thy heart in that divine Meditation of *St. Augustine, Lord, give what thou Commandest, and command what thou pleasest.* Whilst thou thus duly dependest on Christ's strength, and makest use of thine own, it is as much his Honour and Office to inable thee, as it is thy Duty to perform what he requires.

Secondly, The Scripture as it directs us to rely on the strength of Christ; so it is a means that God hath appointed to quicken and excite our own strength and Power, to the discharge of those Duties it Discovers. Wherefore are those pressing Exhortations, and those dreadfull Threatnings, every where so dispersed up and down in the Book of God, but that when we are slow and dull and drowsie, the Spirit may by these, as by so many goads, rowze us, and make us start into Duty? Such a spiritual sloath hath benumb'd us, that without this quickening, we should not be diligent in the Work of the Lord, and therefore *David prays, Psalm. 119. 88: Quicken me, so shall I keep the Testimonies of thy Mouth*, but yet it is also the word it self that quickens us to the Obedience of the word, *Psal. 119. 50: Thy word hath quickened me.* And indeed, if you can come from reading the word, that so abounds with Promises, with Threatnings, with rational

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Arguments, with pathetick Expostulations, winning Insinuations, importunate Intreaties, heroick Examples propounded to our Imitation, with all the perswasive Art and Rhetorick that becometh the Majesty of the great God to use; if you can read this word, and yet find from it no warmth of Affection, no quickening to Duty; let me tell you, you either read it without attending to it, or else attend without believing it. It is therefore no discouragement from searching and studying the Scriptures, that its commands be many and difficult, for it directs you whither to go for promised strength, and the more you converse with it, the more will you find your hearts quickened to a due Obedience of it. That's the first Answer.

But then secondly, Whereas many think that it is better not to know, than not to practise; we must here distinguish of Ignorance, which is of too kinds, either invincible, or else affected: Invincible ignorance is such as is conjoynd with, and proceeds from an utter impossibility of right information, and it ariseth only from two things.

First, Absolute want of necessary Instruction: or,

Secondly, Want of natural capacity to receive it.

Affected Ignorance, is an ignorance under the means of Knowledge, and always ariseth from the neglect, or contempt of them. Such is the ignorance of those who do, or may live where the Gospel is preached, and where by pains and industry they may arrive to the knowledge of the truth.

Now here for ever to answer this Objection, and to shew you how necessary knowledge is, I shall lay down these two particulars.

First, I grant indeed, that unpractis'd knowledge is a far greater sin than invincible Ignorance, and exposeth to a much sorer Condemnation. Hell Fire burns with Rage, and meets with fuel fully prepared for it, when God

dooms

dooms unto it an head full of Light, and an heart full of Lusts. Those who know God's will, but do it not, do but carry a torch with them to Hell, to fire that Pile that must for ever burn them. We have a common Proverb, That knowledge is no Burthen: But believe it, if your knowledge in the Scripture be merely Speculative, and overborn by the violence of unruly Lusts; this whole Word will be no otherwise to you, than the burthen of the Law, as the Prophets speak, a Burthen that will lie insupportably heavy upon you for ever. Better far you were born under Barbarism in some dark Corner of the Earth, where the least gleame of Gospel-light never shone, and where the name of Christ was never mentioned, than to have this weighty Book, a Book which you have read and known, hung about you to sink you infinitely deeper in the Burning Lake, than a Mill-stone hung about you can do in the midst of the Sea. What St. Peter speaks of Apostates, *2 Pet. 2. 21.* is but too well applicable to the knowing Sinner. *It had been better for them not to have known the way of Righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn aside from the Commandments delivered to them.* How? Better not to have known it? Why, is there any possibility to escape the Condemnation of Hell without the knowledge of the way of Righteousness revealed in the Scriptures? No, Damnation had been unavoidable without this knowledge; yet it had been better they had not known it. For here is the Hyperbole of their Misery; better they had been Damned than to have known these Truths, and this rule of Righteousness, and yet turn from the Obedience and practice of it. O fearful state! O dreadful doom! when a simple and genuine damnation shall be reckoned a gain and favour in comparison of that exquisite one which God will with all his Wisdom prepare, and all his power inflict on those who knowing the righteous Judgment of God, *that they who commit such things are worthy of*

Death, do notwithstanding, persevere in them, *He that knew his Masters will and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes, Luke 12. 47.* And, *if I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had Sin, but now they have no Cloak for their Sins, saith our Saviour, John, 15. 22.* The Sin and punishment of those who are invincibly ignorant, is as nothing compared to what the knowing Sinners lie under.

But do not flatter your selves, your ignorance is not invincible. Are you not called to the knowledge of Christ? Do you not read or hear the Scriptures? Do you not enjoy Gospel Ordinances and Ministry? May you not, if you will be but diligent and industrious, understand what you are ignorant of? Certainly there is nothing that can prove your ignorance invincible, unless it be your obstinacy, that you will not be prevailed with to be instructed by all the means of Instruction. Your Ignorance must therefore be affected. Well then attend unto

The second particular. *Affected Ignorance* is a greater Sin, and will be more sorely punished at the day of Judgment, than unpractised knowledge. This kind of ignorance is so far from being pleadable as an excuse, that it is an aggravation of Mens guilt, and will be so of their Condemnation. There be but two things that compleat a Christian, Knowledge and Practice. Both these God doth strictly require. Knowledge may be without practice, but the practice of Godliness cannot be without knowledge. God, I say, requires them both. Now Judge ye which is the greater Sinner, he that labours after knowledge, though he neglect practice, or he that neglects them both: He that fulfills some part of God's will, or he that fulfills nothing of it. Certainly in your own Judgment, this latter deserves to be doubly punish'd; once for not doing his duty, and again for not knowing it when he might. Truly it is but just, and righteous that God should with
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the highest disdain and indignation, say unto them, Depart from me, ye Cursed, I know you not, since they have audaciously said unto him, Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. The Apostle, speaking of God's patience towards Heathens, who were invincibly ignorant of the truth, tells us, *Acts 17. 30. That the times of this ignorance* (and yet an ignorance it was that put them upon no less than brutish Idolatry) *God winked at.* Ignorant persons, in ignorant times, whilst as yet the World was destitute of the means of knowledge, and darkness over-spread the face of it, God connived and winked at. But ignorant persons in knowing times, God doth not wink at but frown upon. I am the more earnest in pressing this, because I perceive that vile and rotten principle, unworthy of a Christian who is a Child of light and of the day, is taken up by many, That it is no matter how little we know, if we do but practise what we know. What a cheat hath the Devil put upon them! Hath not God commanded you to know more, as well as to practise what you know? Is it likely you should practise what you know upon God's command, who will not upon his command increase your knowledge? And yet this is the usual Plea of profane Men. Ask them why they frequent the publick Ordinances so seldom, they will tell you, they know more by one Sermon, than they can practise. But how can such make Conscience of practising, who make none of knowing, though the same God hath enjoined them both? Yea, though they cannot practise what they know, yet let me tell them, that for those who live under the means of Grace, and may be instructed if they will, it may be as great a Sin to omit a duty out of neglect of knowing it, as out of neglect of doing it; yea and much greater. We should our selves Judge that Servant, who while we are speaking to him, stops his Ears on purpose that he might not hear what we command him; we should, I say, Judge

him worthy of more stripes, than he who gives diligent ear to our commands, although he will not obey them. So it is in this Case. Thou who stoppest thine Ears, and will not so much as hear what the will of thy Lord and Master is, deservest much more punishment, than he who takes pains to know it, although he doth it not. It is damnable not to give God the service that he requires. But O Insolence! not to give God thy Lord and Master so much as the hearing? Hath God sent Man into the World, and sent the Scriptures after, as Letters of instruction, what we should do for him here, and will it think'st thou be a sufficient excuse when thou returnest to thy Lord, that it is true thou hadst instructions, but never opened'st them, never looked'st into them? What a fearful contempt is this cast upon the great God, never so much as to enquire what his will is? Whether or no he commands that which is fit and reasonable for us to perform? And therefore refuse not to search and study the Scriptures, upon pretence that the knowledge of what you cannot fulfill, will but aggravate your Sin and Condemnation. For be assured of it, greater Sin, and sorer Condemnation can no Man have, than he who neglects the means of knowledge, thereby to disoblige himself from practice. And again the Scriptures were given to assist us in the performance of those duties which it requires from us. They do not only inform the judgment, but quicken the will and affections, and strengthen the whole Soul to its duty. And this is in answer to the first Objection.

Secondly, Some will say the reading of the Scriptures possesseth them with strange fears, and fills them with incredible terrors. It raiseth up such dreadful Apparitions of Hell, and the wrath of God, as makes them a terror to themselves.

To this I Answer, First, It may be thy condition is such as requires it. Possibly thou art in a state of wrath, and
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of the Holy Scriptures.

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would'st thou not be under the apprehensions of it? Thou art under the guilt of thy Sins, and then no wonder that the voice of God should be terrible unto thee. It is most unreasonable to hate the word, as *Ahab* hated *Micajah*, because it prophesieth no good concerning thee. Alas! What good can it speak, as long as thou thy self continuest in Evil?

Secondly, It is not so much the Scripture, as thine own evil Conscience that haunts and terrifies thee. When thou readest that dreadful Threatning, *Ezek. 18. 4. The Soul that sinneth it shall die*, there were nothing of terror in it, did not thy guilty Conscience witness against thee, that thou art the Man: 'Tis this that turns and levels all God's Artillery against thee. Get therefore a Conscience pacified upon good Grounds, and the very threatning of the Word will speak to thee, not so much terror from the dreadful-ness of the Wrath, and Condemnation denounced, as Joy, that thou hast escaped it.

Thirdly, It may be, the Word of God by working in thee, the Spirit of fear, is preparing thee for the Spirit of Adoption; for that usually ushers in this. We find the Gaoler trembling, before we find him rejoycing: There were mighty and rending Winds, Earth-quakes, and Fire, all Terrible; before these came *the still voice*, in which God was, *1 Kings 19. 12*. So God in Convictions many times prepares the way by Thunders, and Earth-quakes, by the Thundering of his Word, and the Trembling of our own Consciences, before he comes to us in the still and sweet voice of Peace and Comfort. And certainly they are much more afraid than hurt, whom God by his Terrours thus frights into Heaven.

But, Thirdly, Some may still say, their Fears are so strong that they will drive them into Desperation, or Distraction, if they longer pore on those dreadful things, the Scripture contains.

I answer,

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I answer, there is not one line or syllable in the whole Book of God that gives the least ground for Despair. Nay, there are the most supporting Comforts a poor Fearful Trembling Soul can desire; *Come unto me all that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Come unto me and I will in no wise cast you out, return unto the Lord and he will abundantly Pardon*, Isaiah 55. 7. *I, even I, am he that blots out and forgets your Sins*; and innumerable such like. Now if Men will only take the Sword of the Spirit to wound them, and not also the Balm of the Spirit to heal them, they may through their own fault, especially when they read the Scriptures with the Devil's Commentaries, fret themselves into Despair.

Fourthly, Some may say, certainly it cannot be thus necessary that the word of Christ should dwell thus richly and abundantly in all Christians. It is requisite indeed for Ministers, whose calling it is to Teach and Instruct others, that they should have this abundance of Scripture dwelling in them; but for us who are to receive the Law at their Mouth, a competent knowledge in the Fundamentals of Religion may well be sufficient. We know that Christ is the Son of God, that he came into the World to save Sinners, and that if we would be saved by him, we must believe in him, and such chief points of Christianity which are sufficient to Salvation.

To this I answer, First, God may well expect a more plentiful measure of the Word to dwell in Ministers; because it is not only their General, but particular calling to peruse and study it. There is therefore a twofold fullness, a fullness of the private Christian, and a fullness of the treasurer or steward, to whose charge the Oracles of God are committed, and who is to communicate Knowledge to the People. This being the Minister's Office, it is his Duty especially to abound and be enriched in the knowledge of the Scripture.

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But Secondly, Wherefore must the word of Christ dwell so richly in Ministers, is it for themselves only, or is it to instruct their Flock? What? And can it be necessary for them to Teach, and yet unnecessary for you to Learn? Are they bound to search into the depth of Gospel Mysteries to inform you of them, and is it enough for you only to know the first Principles and Rudiments? Certainly, whatsoever God requires the Minister to Teach, that he requires you to Learn. Now would you your selves Judge the Minister to have sufficiently discharged his Duty, that should only in the general preach, that we are all Sinners; that Christ the Son of God came into the World to save us, that the Glory of Heaven, and the Torments of Hell, shall be the rewards of Obedience, or Disobedience? If these few absolutely necessary and fundamental Truths were all, you might well think the Ministry to be a very easie, or a very needless Office.

If then it is our Duty to reveal to you the whole Counsel of God, and to withhold nothing from you of all those Mysteries which the Scripture contains, whereof some give Life, others Light, some are Vital, others Ornamental; you cannot with Reason but conclude, that if we are obliged to Teach these things, you also are obliged to learn and know them.

Thirdly, It is a most destructive Principle that many have through Sloath and Laziness taken up, That a little knowledge will suffice to bring them to Heaven. Certainly God would never have revealed so many deep and profound Mysteries in his Word, if it were not necessary they should be known and believed. Shall we think all the rest of the Bible superfluous, except a few plain practical Texts? What God hath recorded in the Scripture, is written for our Instruction. 'Tis true if we have not the means of instruction, nor are in a possibility of attaining it, a less measure of knowledge, answered by a Conscientious practice.

Etice may suffice for our Salvation. But for us we have line upon line, and precept upon precept, for us to satisfy our selves with a few of the common Principles, slighting the rest as nice and unnecessary points, for us to neglect knowledge, argues defect of Grace. For wheresoever true Grace is, there will be a most earnest endeavour to grow daily in both; and yet multitudes every where, even of those who abhor grosser Sins, as Swearing, Drunkenness and the like, yet take up with a few Notions of Religion that all are Sinners and all must perish, unless Christ save them, &c. This they knew, as soon as they knew any thing; and more than this, they will not know: They will not trouble their heads with any farther discoveries, nor look deep into the Mysteries of Godliness; contenting themselves that they have, as they think, knowledge enough to bring them to Heaven. Let me tell them, that though where there is not means of knowledge, a little may suffice for Salvation; yet where God doth afford plentiful means, the knowledge of these very things becomes necessary to them, which others might safely be ignorant of. This is in answer to the 4th. Objection.

Fifthly, Some may object that they have found by Experience, that the study of Scripture hath many times made them the worse, it hath alarmed their Lusts, and put them in an Uproar. Such and such Suits were quiet, till they read in the Word a command against them; therefore they are discouraged and think it best to forbear the study of the Scripture, since they find that by forbidding Sin, it only rowseth and awakens it.

First, I answer, First this was *St. Paul's* very Case, *Rom. 7. 8. Sin taking occasion by the Command, wrought in me all manner of Concupiscence*; now this effect is merely accidental, and is not to be imputed unto the Holy Word of God, but to the wicked Heart of Man, which takes an hint (so desperately corrupt is it) from God's
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forbidding Sin, to put it self in Mind of committing it.

Secondly, Thou complainest that the Word exciteth to Corruptions, but it doth it no otherwise than the Sun draws Smoak, and stink out of a Dunghill. It doth increase but unhappily excite them. The very same Lusts lay hid in their Hearts before. There they lay like so many Vipers and Serpents asleep till the Light and Warmth of the Word makes them stir and crawl about. And this Advantage thou mayest make of it, that when thy Corruptions swarm thick about thee, upon the disturbance the Law of God hath made among them, thou mayest thence see what a wicked Heart and Nature thou hast, how much Filth and Mud there lyeth at the bottom of it, which presently riseth upon the first stirring. This may make thee vile in thine own Eyes, and deeply humbled under the sad and serious Consideration of thy indwelling Sin. 'Tis the very use the Apostle makes in the same Case. *Rom. 7. 24. O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death!* When Humors are in Motion, we soon perceive what is the state of our Body, and when Corruptions are once stirred, we may thereby easily know the State and Condition of our Souls.

Thirdly, The same Word that doth thus occasionally stir up Sin, is the best means to beat it down. You may perceive by this, there is somewhat in the Word that is extremely contrary to their Sins, since they do so rise and arm against it, their great Enemy is upon them, and this alarm that they take, is but before their overthrow. It may be the Mud is only stirred that it might be cast out, and their Hearts cleansed from it. Be not discouraged therefore, for there is no Means in the World so apposite to the destruction and subduing of Sin as the Scripture, though at first it may seem instead of subduing of Sins to strengthen them.

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Sixthly,

Sixthly, Many are discouraged from studying the Scriptures, because their Memories are so treacherous and unfaithfull they can retain nothing; when they have read the Scripture, and would recollect what they have read, they can give no account of it either to themselves or others. Nothing abides upon them, and therefore they think it were as good give over as thus continually pour Water into a Sieve, and inculcate Truths upon such a leaky Memory, where all runs out. This is indeed the Complaint of many. But,

First, This should put thee on a more frequent and diligent study of the Scripture than discourage thee from it. More pains will supply this Defect, thou must the oftner prompt, and the oftner examine thy Self, the more forgetful thou art. Memory is the Soul's Steward, and if thou findest it unfaithful, call it the oftner to account. Be still following it with Line upon Line, and Precept upon Precept, and continually instill somewhat into it. A Vessel set under the fall of a Spring, cannot leak faster than it is supplied. A constant dropping of this Heavenly Doctrine into the Memory, will keep it that though it be leaky, yet it never shall be empty.

Secondly, Scripture Truths, when they do not enrich the Memory, yet they may purifie the Heart. We must not measure the Benefit we receive from the Word according to what of it remains, but according to what effect it leaves behind. Lightning you know than which nothing sooner vanisheth away, yet it often breaks and melts the hardest and most firm Bodies in its sudden Passage. Such is the irresistable force of the Word; the Spirit often darts it through us; it seems but like a flash and gone, and yet it may break and melt down our hard Hearts before it, when it leaves no impression at all upon our Memories. I have heard of one who returning from an affecting Sermon highly commended it to some, and being demanded what

what he remembered of it, answered, truly I remember nothing at all, but only while I heard it, it made me resolve to live better than ever I have done, and so by God's Grace I will. Here was now a Sermon lost to the Memory, but not to the Affections. To the same Purpose, I have somewhere read a story of one that complained to an aged Holy-Man, that he was much discouraged from reading the Scripture, because his Memory was so slippery he could fasten nothing upon it that he read. The old Hermet (for so as I remember he was described) bid him take an earthen Pitcher and fill it with Water; when he had done it, he bid him empty it again, and wipe it clean that nothing should remain in it, which when the other had done, and wondered to what this tended; now saith he, though there be nothing of the Water remaining to it, yet the Pitcher is cleaner than it was before; so though thy Memory retain nothing of the word thou readest, yet thy Heart is the cleaner for its very passage through.

Thirdly, Never fear your Memory, only pray for good and pious Affections. Affection to the truths we read or hear, makes the Memory retentive of them. Most Mens Memories are like Jett, or Electrical Bodies, that attract and hold-fast only straws or Feathers, or such vain and light things; discourse to them the Affairs of the World, or some idle and romantick story, their Memories retain this as faithfully as if it were engraven on leaves of Brass. Whereas the great important truths of the Gospel, the great Mysteries of Heaven, and concernments of Eternity, leave no more impression upon them, than words on the Air in which they are spoken; whence is this, but only that the one sort work themselves into the Memory through the interest they have got in the Affections which the other cannot do. Had we but the same delight in Heavenly Objects, did we but receive the Truth in the love of it, and mingle it with Faith in the hearing, this would fix that

Volatileness and Flittiness of our Memories, and make every truth as indelible, as it is necessary. That's in Answer to the 6th. Objection.

Seventhly, others complain that the Scripture is obscure and difficult to be understood; they may as well, and with as good success, attempt to spie out what lies at the Centre of the Earth; as search into the deep and hidden Mysteries, which no humane understanding can fathom or comprehend. And this discourageth them.

To this I answer First, 'tis no wonder if there be such profound depths in the word of God, since it is a System and Compendium of his Infinite and unsearchable Wisdom; that Wisdom which from the beginning of the World hath been hid in God: Those deep Truths which your understanding cannot reach, require your humble Veneration:

Secondly, The Scripture is suited to every Capacity. It is (as it is commonly exprest) a Ford wherein a Lamb may wade, and an Elephant swim; and herein is the infinite Wisdom of God seen, in wreathing together plain Truths with obscure, that he might gain the more Credit to his Word, by the one instructing the ignorance of the weakest; by the other puzzling and confounding the understanding of the wisest. This also adds a Beauty and Ornament to the Scripture.

As the Beauty of the World is set off by a gracefull variety of Hills and Valleys, so is it in the Scripture. There are sublime Truths, that the most aspiring reason of Man cannot over-top, and there are more plain and easie Truths in which the weakest Capacity may converse with Delight and Satisfaction. No Man is offended with his Garden, for having a shady thicket in it, no more should we be offended with the word of God, that among so many fair and open Walks, we here and there meet with a Thicket that the Eye of Humane Reason cannot look through.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Those Truths that are absolutely necessary to Salvation, are as plainly without either Obscurity or Ambiguity recorded in the Scripture as if they were (as the *Mahumetans* think concerning their *Alcoran*) written with Ink made of Light, there's the necessity of Faith in Jesus Christ, of repentance for dead works, of an holy and mortified Life, so clearly set down, that scarce have there any been found so impudent as to raise Controversies about them, and is it not peevish to quarrel at the word for being obscure in those things, which if thou hast used thy utmost Diligence to understand, the ignorance of them shall not at all prejudice thy Salvation? Bless God, rather that he hath so clearly revealed the necessary and practical Duties of a Christian Life, that those are not involved in any mystical or obscure Intimations, but thou mayst without doubt or dispute, know what is of absolute necessity to be either believed or practised in order to Salvation. Be assured of this, that what with all thy Labour and Diligence thou canst not understand thou needest not, and what is needful, is plain and obvious, and thou mayest easily understand it.

Fourthly, the Scripture is obscure, but hath not God offered us sufficient helps for the unfolding of it? Have you not the promise of his Spirit to illuminate you? *1 Cor. 2. 10. God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God.* Have we not his Minister, whose Office it is to instruct us, and lead us into the inmost Sence of the Scriptures? Nay, have we not the Scripture it self, which is the best interpreter of its own meaning; usually it speak more darkly in one place, it speaks the same truth more clearly in another. Now compare Scripture with Scripture, you will find it holds a Light unto its self. The oftner you read, and the more you ponder on those passages that are abstruse, the more you will find them clear up to your understanding. So that neither is this any reasonable discouragement from studying the Holy Scriptures.

Eighthly,

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Eighthly, Others may say, they are doubtful, because they see many of those who have been most **Conversant** in the Scripture, how they have been perverted and carried aside into damnable Errors, and yet still have pleaded Scripture for the defence of them.

I answer, True, the Devil hath in these our days busied himself to bring a reproach upon Scripture, through the whimsies and giddiness of those who have pretended most acquaintance in it. But let not this be any discouragement, for this ariseth not directly from the influence the Scripture hath on them, which is the rule of truth only; but from the pride and self conceit of a few **Notionists**, who wrest it to their own Perdition. And though they boast much of Scripture to countenance their **Opinions**; yet Scripture misunderstood and misapplied is not Scripture. Indeed there is no other way to discern truth from Error, but only by the Scripture rightly understood, and there is no way rightly to understand it, but diligently to search it.

But to say that therefore we must not read the Scripture because some wrest it to their own Destruction, is alike reasonable, as to say that therefore we must not Eat nor Drink, because that some eat to Gluttony, and others drink to Giddiness and Madnes. The Apostle *St. Peter* tells us, *Epist. 1 Chap. 3. v. 16.* that in *St. Paul's* Epistles there were some things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. Shall we therefore conclude, that neither his Epistle nor any other of the Scriptures should be read by us; because that in some, instead of Nourishment, they have occasioned onely Wind, Flatulency and ill humours? If this had been his purpose, it had certainly been very easie for him to have said, Because they are hard to be understood, and many wrest them to their own destruction, therefore beware that you read them

them not. But in stead of this, he draws another inference, *verse 17. Ye therefore beloved, beware, least ye also being led away with the Errors of the Wicked fall from your own stedfastness, but grow in grace and in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* He saith not, beware that you read them not, but, beware how you read them: This is the true Apostolical Caution, which tends not to drive us from the Scriptures, but to make us more studious and inquisitive in them, least we also be perverted by the cunning craftiness of Men, who lie in wait to deceive. And this the Primitive Parents thought the best and surest means, to preserve their People from Error and Seduction. It were almost endless to recite to you those many passages wherein they do most Pathetically exhort all, of all Ranks and Conditions, of each Sex, of all Ages, to a diligent perusal of the Holy Scriptures. And so far were they from taking it up in a Language unknown to the Vulgar, or debarring the Laity from Reading it, that the Translations of it into the common Tongue of each Country were Numerous, and their Exhortations scarce more vehement and earnest in any thing, than that the People would employ their time and thoughts in revolving them. It is therefore a most certain sign, that that Church hath false wares to put off, which is of nothing more careful than to darken the Shop. And assuredly the wresting the Scriptures by some who read them, cannot occasion the Destruction of more, than that damnable Idolatry, and those damnable Hereses have done, which have been brought into, and are generally owned and practised by the Church of *Rome*, through the not reading of them.

Thus you see (as it was in *Josiah's* time) how much dust and Rubbish this Book of the Law lies under. I have endeavoured to remove it. And shall now proceed to those Arguments, that may persuade you to a diligent search and perusal of the Scriptures. The *Jews* indeed

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were so exact, or rather Superstitious in this, that he was judged a despiser of those Sacred Oracles, who did not readily know how often every Letter of the Alphabet occurred in them. This preciseness God hath made use of to deliver down his word to us, unvaried and uncorrupted. It is not such a scrupulous search of the Scripture, I now exhort you to: but as God hath left it to us a rich Depositum, a dear pledge of his Love and care, so we should diligently attend to a rational and profitable study of it.

There are but two things in the general that commend any writing to us, either that it discovers knowledge, or directs practice; that it informs the Judgment, or reforms the Life. Both of these are eminently the Characters of this Book of God. And therefore *David* tells us, *Psal.* 19. 7. *The Law of God converts the Soul, and makes wise the simple. It is a light not only to our heads, but it is a Lamp unto our Feet, and a light unto our paths, Psal.* 119. 105. Let us consider it as to both.

First, In point of knowledge, as it perfects the understanding, and so it will appear in sundry particulars how excellent a study it is. For

First, The Scripture discovers unto us the knowledge of those truths that the most improved natural Reason could never sift out; and are intelligible only by Divine Revelation. God hath Composed two Books, by the diligent study of which, we may come to the knowledge of himself. The Book of the Creatures, and the Book of the Scriptures. The Book of the Creatures is written in those great Letters of Heaven and Earth, the Air and Sea, and by these we may spell out somewhat of God. He made them for our instruction, as well as our service. There is not a Creature that God hath breathed abroad upon the face of the Earth, but it Reads us Lectures, of his infinite Power and Wisdom. So that it is no absurdity to say that they are
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all the Works of his mouth. so they are all the works of his Hands. The whole World is a speaking workmanship, *Rom. 1. 20. The invisible things of God, are clearly seen by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead.* And indeed when we seriously consider how God hath poised the Earth in the midst of the Air, and the whole World in the midst of a vast and boundless nothing; how he hath hung out those glorious lights of Heaven, the Sun, the Moon, and Stars, and made paths in the Sky for their several courses, how he hath laid the Sea on heaps, and so girt it in, that it may possibly overlook, but not overflow the Land, when we view the Variety, Harmony, and Law of the Creation, our Reason must needs be very short, if we cannot from these collect the infinite Wisdom, Power, and Goodness of the Creator. So much of God as belong to these two great Attributes of Creator and Governour of the World, the Book of Nature may plainly discover to us. But then there are other more retired, and reserved Notions of God, other truths that nearly concern our selves and our eternal Salvation to know and believe, which nature could never give the least glimpse to discover. What Signature is there stamp't upon any of the Creatures of a Trinity in Unity, of the eternal Generation, or temporal Carnation of the Son of God? What Creature could inform us of our first fall, and guilt contracted by it? Where can we find the Copy of the Covenant of Works, or of grace printed upon any of the Creatures? All the great Sages of the World, though they were Nature's Secretaries, and ransack'd its abstrusest mysteries, yet all their Learning and Knowledge, could not discover the Sacred Mystery of a Crucified Saviour. These are truths which Nature is so far from searching out, that it can scarce receive them when revealed. *1. Corinth. 2. 14. The natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of*

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God, neither can he know them, because they are Spiritually discerned. The light that can reveal these, must break immediately from Heaven it self. And so it did upon the Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles; the Pen-men of the Holy Scriptures.

And if it were their singular Privilege, that the Holy Ghost should descend into their breasts, and so possess them with Divine inspirations, that what they spake, or wrote, became Oracular, how little less is ours; since the Scriptures reveal to us the very same truths which the Spirit revealed to them. God heretofore spake in them, and now he speaks by them unto us. Their Revelations are become ours; the only difference is, that what God taught them by extraordinary inspiration, the very same truths he teacheth us in the Scripture, by the ordinary, illumination of his Spirit. Here, therefore whilst we diligently converse in the Book of God, we enjoy the privilege of Prophets. The same word of God which came unto them, comes also unto us; and that without those severe preparations, and strong agonies, which sometimes they underwent, before God would inspire them with the knowledge of his Heavenly truth. That is the first Motive and Argument.

Secondly, The knowledge which the Scripture teacheth, is for the matter of it the most sublime and lofty in the World. All other sciences are but poor and beggarly Elements, if compared with this. What doth the Naturalist, but only busie himself in digging a little drossie knowledge, out of the Entrails of the Earth. The Astronomer, who ascends highest, mounts no higher than the Cœlestial Bodies, the Stars and Planets; which are but the out-works of Heaven. But the Scripture pierceth much farther, and lets us into Heaven it self. There it discovers the Majesty and Glory of God upon his Throne; the Eter-
nal

nal Son of God sitting at his right hand, making a prevailing and Authoritative intercession for us: The glittering train of Cherubims and Seraphims, an innumerable company of Angels, and the Spirits of Just Men made perfect. So that indeed when you have this Book laid open before you, you have Heaven it self, and all the inconceivable glories of it laid open to your view. What can be more sublime than the nature of God? And yet here we have it so plainly described by all its most glorious Attributes and Perfections, that the Scripture doth but beam forth light to an Eye of Faith, whereby it may be enabled to see him who is invisible. But if we consider those Gospel Mysteries the Scripture relates, the Hypostatical Union of the Divine, and Humane Nature in Christ's incarnation, the Mystical Union of our persons to his, by our believing, that the Son of God should be Substituted in the stead of guilty Sinners; that he who knew no sin, should be made a Sacrifice for sin, and the Justice of God become reconciled to Man, through the blood of God: these are Mysteries so infinitely profound as are enough to puzzle a whole College of Angels. Now these the Scripture propounds unto us, not only to pose, but to perfect our understanding. For that little knowledge we can attain unto in these things, is far more excellent than the most comprehensive knowledge of all things else in the World. And where our scanty apprehensions fall short of fathoming, these deep mysteries, the Apostle hath taught us to seek it out with an, *ὡς βυθός*, Rom. II. 33. *O the depth of the Riches, both of the Knowledge and Wisdom of God! how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his ways past finding out!*

Thirdly, The Scripture is an inexhaustible Fountain of Knowledge, the more you draw from it, the more still springs up. It is a deep Mine, and the farther you search

into it, still the richer you find it. It is tedious to read the works and writings of Men often over, because we are soon at the bottom of what they deliver, and our understanding hath nothing new to refresh it. But in reading the Scripture it fares with us as it did with those whom Christ miraculously fed, the bread multiplied under their Teeth, and increased in the very chewing of it. So here, while we ruminare and chew on the truths of the Scripture, they multiply and rise up thicker under our meditation. One great cause of the neglect that many are guilty of in reading the Holy Scripture, is a fear that they shall but meet with the same things again, which they have already read and known; and thus they account tedious and irksome. Indeed if they read it only Superficially and slightly, it will be so. But those who fix their minds to ponder and meditate upon the word, find new truths arising up to their understanding, which they never before discovered. Look as it is in a Starry night, if you cast your Eyes upon many spaces of the Heavens, at the first glance perhaps you shall discover no Stars there; yet if you continue to look earnestly and fixedly, some will emerge to your view, that were before hid and concealed: So is it with the Holy Scriptures. If we only glance curiously upon them, no wonder we discover no more Stars, no more glorious truths beaming out their light to our Understanding. St. *Augustine*, found this so experimentally true, that he tells us in his third Epistle, that though he should with better capacity, and greater diligence, study all his Life time, from the beginning of his Childhood to decrepit Age nothing else but the Holy Scriptures; yet they are so compacted, and thick set with truths, that he might daily learn something, which before he knew not. God hath as it were studied to speak compendiously in the Scriptures. What a Miracle of brevity is it, that the whole

whole Duty of Man, relating both to God and his Neighbour, should be all comprised in ten words? Not a word but were the fence of it drawn out, were enough to fill whole Volumes, and therefore the Psalmist, *Psal. 119. 96. I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy Commandments are exceeding broad.* When we have attained the knowledge of those things that are absolutely necessary to Salvation, there yet remain such depths of Wisdom, both in the manner of Scripture expression, and in the mysteriousness of things express'd, that after our utmost industry, still there will be left new truths to become the discovery of a new search.

Fourthly, The Scripture exhibits to us that knowledge which is necessary to Eternal Salvation. *This is Life Eternal to know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent, John 17. 3. And this knowledge the Scriptures alone can afford us, John, 5. 39. So 2 Tim. 3. 15.* We need not therefore enquire after blind traditions, or expect any whimsical Enthusiasms: the written word contains whatsoever is necessary to be known in order to Eternal Salvation, and whosoever is wise above what is written, is wise only in impertinences. Now hath God contracted whatever was necessary for us to know, and summed it up in one Book, and shall not we be diligent and industrious in studying that which doth so necessarily concern us? Other knowledge is only for the adorning and embellishment of Nature; this is for the necessity of Life, of Life Eternal. I have before spoken enough concerning the necessity of knowledge unto Salvation, and therefore shall not farther enlarge. Therefore as St. Peter said to Christ, *Lord whither shall we go, thou hast the words of Eternal Life:* So let us Answer whatsoever may seem to call us off from the diligent study of the Scriptures, Whither shall we go, to this we must cleave, with this we will

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will converse, for here alone are the words of Eternal Life.

Fifthly, The Knowledge that the Scripture discloseth is of undoubted Certainty, and perpetual Truth; it depends not upon Probabilities or Conjectures, but the infallible Authority of Christ himself; he hath dictated it, for whom it is impossible to lye. The rule of our Veracity or Truth, is the conformity of our Speech to the existency of Things; but divine Truth and Veracity hath no other Rule besides the Will of him that speaks it. He must needs speak infallible Truth, who speaks things into their beings, such is the omnipotent Speech of God. Whatsoever he declares, is therefore true, because he declares it. Never matter how strange and impossible Scripture-Mysteries may seem to Flesh and Blood, to the corrupt and captious understandings of natural Men; when the word of God hath undertaken for the Truth, it is as much impiety to doubt of them, as it is Folly to question the reality of what we see with our very Eyes. Nay the information of our Senses, what we see, what we hear, what we feel, is not so certain, as the truth of those things which God reveals and testifies in the Scriptures. And therefore the Apostle *2 Pet. 1. 18, 19. Speaking of that Miraculous Voice that sounded from Heaven. Matth. 17. 5. This is my beloved Son in whom I am well Pleas'd.* We, saith the Apostle, heard this Voice when we were with him in the Holy Mount, but we have also a more sure word of Prophecy; or as the Greek may well be rendred, We account more sure the word of Prophecy, unto which ye do well, that ye take heed. What a more sure word than a Voice from Heaven? When God himself shall vocally bear witness to the Truth? Yes, we have a more sure Word, and that's the Word of Prophecie, recorded in the Old Testament. And hence it will follow, that because the Prophecies concerning Christ, may seem somewhat obscure in Comparison with this audible Voice from

from Heaven; therefore the testimony of obscure Scripture, is to be preferred before the testimony of clear Sense. Now therefore if you would know things beyond all danger, either of Falshood or Hesitation, be Conversant in the Scripture, where we may take all for certain upon the Word and Authority of that God, who neither can deceive, nor be deceived.

Sixthly, The Scripture alone gives us the true and unerring Knowledge of our Selves. Man that busies himself in knowing all things else, is of nothing more ignorant than of himself, the Eye that beholds other things, cannot see its own shape; and so the Soul of Man, whereby he understands other objects, is usually ignorant of its own Concernments. Now as the Eye that cannot see it self directly, may see it self reflexively in a Glafs; so God hath given us his Scripture, which St. James compares to a Glafs, *James 1. 23. and holds this before the Soul, wherein is represented our true State and Idea.*

There is a four-fold state of Man, that we could never have attained to know, but by the Scriptures.

His state of Integrity.
 His state of Apostacy.
 His state of Restitution.
 His state of Glory.

The Scripture alone can reveal to us, what we were in our Primitive Constitution. Naturally, Holy bearing the Image and Similitude of God, and enjoying his Love, free from all inward perturbations or outward Miseries; having all the Creatures subject to us, and what is much more, our selves.

What we were in our state of Apostacy or Destitution, despoiled of all our Primitive Excellencies, dispossest'd of all the
 Happiness,

Happiness we enjoy'd, and of all hopes of any for the future; lyable every Moment to the revenge of Justice, and certain once to feel it.

What we are in our state of Restitution, through Grace, begotten again, to a lively hope, Adopted into the Family of Heaven, Redeem'd by the Blood of Christ, Sanctified and Sealed by the Holy Spirit, restored to the Favour and Friendship of God, recovering the initials of his Image upon our Souls here on Earth, and expecting the perfection of it in Heaven.

What we shall be in our final State of Glory, cloathed with Light, Crowned with Stars, inebriated with pure spiritual Joys. We shall see God as he is, know him as we are known by him, love him ardently, converse with him eternally, yea a state, it will be so infinitely happy, that 'twill leave us nothing to hope for.

This Four-fold state of Man the Scripture doth evidently express. Now these are such things as could never have entred into our Hearts to have imagined, had not the word of God described them to us, and thereby instructed us in the knowledge of our selves, as well as of God and Christ.

Now let us put these six particulars together. The Scripture instructs us in the knowledge of such things as are intelligible only by divine Revelation, it teacheth us the most sublime and lofty Truths, 'tis a most inexhaustible Fountain of Knowledge, the more we draw, the more still springs up; it teaches that Knowledge that is necessary to Salvation. It is of undoubted certainty, and perpetual Truth. And Lastly, it informs us in the knowledge of our Selves; and certainly, if there be any thirst in you after Knowledge, there needs no more be spoken to persuade you to the diligent study of the Scripture, which is a rich Store and Treasury of all Wisdom and Knowledge. Thus

Thus we have seen how the Scriptures inform the Judgment. Let us now briefly see how they reform the Life, and what practical influence they have upon the Souls of Men. Now here the word of God hath a mighty Operation, and that in sundry particulars.

First, This is that word that convinceth and humbles the stoutest and proudest Sinners. There are two sorts of secure Sinners. Those who vaunt it in the Confidence of their own Righteousness; and those who are secure through an insensibility of their own Wickedness. Both these the word when it is set home with Power, convinceth, humbles, and brings to the Dust. It despoils the Self-Justiciary of all that false Righteousness he once boasted of and trusted to. *I was alive once without the Law* (saith St. Paul) *but when the Commandment came, sin revived and I dyed*, Rom. 7. 9. It awakens and alarms the senseless; feared Sinner. How many have there been, that have scorned God, and despised Religion, whom yet one curse or threat of this word hath made to tremble and fall down before the convincing Majesty and Authority of it?

Secondly, This is that word that sweetly comforts and raiseth them after their Dejections; All other Applications to a wounded Spirit are improper and impertinent. 'Tis only Scripture Consolation that can ease it. *The leaves of this Book are like the leaves of that Tree*, Rev. 22. which were for the healing of the Nations. The same Weapon that wounds must here work the cure.

Thirdly, This is that word that works the mighty change upon the heart in Renovation. Take a Man that runs on in vile and desperate Courses, that sells himself to do Iniquity, and commits all manner of Wickedness with Greediness, and makes use of all the Arguments that reason can suggest; these seldom reclaim any from their Debaucheries. Or if in some few they do reform the Life, yet

they can never change the heart. But now that which no other means can effect, the Word of God can, *Psal. 19. 7, The Law of God is perfect converting the Soul.*

Fourthly, This is that word that strengthens and arms the People of God to endure the greatest temporal Evils, only in hope of that future reward which it punisheth.

Fifthly, This is that word that contains in it such a Collection of Rules and Duties, that whosoever observes and obeys, shall in the end infallibly obtain everlasting life. Though I can but just mention these Heads unto you, yet there is enough in them to persuade you to be diligent in the Scriptures. *In them* (saith our Saviour); *ye shall have Eternal Life.*

We are all of us guilty Malefactors; but God hath been pleased to afford us the Mercy of the Book: And what shall we not so much as read for our Lives?

This is that Book according to which we must either stand or fall, be acquitted or condemned Eternally. The unalterable Sentence of the last day will pass upon us, as it is here recorded in this Scripture. Here we may beforehand know our Doom, and what will become of us to all Eternity. *He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.* 'Tis said, *Rev. 20. 12.* That when the dead stood before God to be Judged, the Books were opened: That is, the Book of Conscience, and the Book of the Scripture. Be persuaded to open this Book, and to judge your selves out of it before the last day: 'Tis not a sealed Book to you, you may there read what your present State is, and foretell what your future will be. If it be a State of Sin and Wrath, search farther; there are Directions how you may change this wretched State for a better. If it be a State of Grace and Favour, there are Rules how to preserve you in it. 'Tis a word suited to all Persons, all Occasions, all Exigencies. It informs the Ignorant,

Ignorant, strengthens the Weak, comforts the Disconsolate, supports the Afflicted, relieves the Tempted, resolves the Doubtful, directs all to those ways which lead to endless Happiness; where, as the Word of God hath dwelt richly in us, so we shall dwell for ever gloriously with God.

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F I N I S.
