

and it shall be a kindness, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head, Psal. cxli. 5.

11. and *ult.* Means, if you would submit to God in affliction, believe that the present condition is best for you. We are not competent judges; we fancy it is best to have ease and plenty, and have the rock pour out rivers of oil; but God sees affliction best; he sees our souls thrive best upon the bare common; the fall of the leaf is the best spring of our grace. Could we believe the present condition is best, which God carves out to us, the quarrel would soon be at an end, and we should sit down satisfied with what God doth, and say, 'thy will be done.' So much for this third petition.



## OF THE FOURTH PETITION IN THE LORD'S PRAYER.

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

IN this petition there are two things observable, I. The order. II. The matter.

I. The order. First we pray, 'hallowed be thy name,' before, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' Hence we learn, Doct. 'That the glory of God ought to be preferred before our own personal concerns.'

First we pray, 'hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done,' before we pray 'give us this day our daily bread.' God's glory ought to weigh down all before it; it must be preferred before our dearest concerns: Christ preferred his Father's glory before his own glory as he was man, John viii. 49, 50. 'I honour my Father, I seek not my own glory.' God's glory is that which is most dear to him; it is the apple of his eye; all his riches lie here. As Micah said, Judges xviii. 24. 'What have I more?' So I may say of God's glory, what hath he more? God's glory is the most orient pearl of his crown, which he will not part with, Isa. xlii. 8. 'My glory will I not give to another.' God's glory is more worth than heaven, more worth than the salvation of all men's souls; better kingdoms be demolished, better men and angels be annihilated, than God lose any part of his glory. First we pray that God's name may be hallowed and glorified before we pray, 'give us our daily bread.' We are to prefer God's glory before our nearest concerns: before there can be a preferring God's glory before our private concerns, there must be a new birth wrought, the natural man seeks his own secular interest before God's glory,

John iii. 31. 'He is of the earth, earthly.' Let him have peace and trading, let the rock pour out rivers of oil, Job xxix. 6. and let God's glory go which way it will, he minds it not. A worm cannot fly and sing as a lark: a natural man, whose heart creeps upon the earth, cannot admire God, or advance his glory, as a man elevated by grace doth.

*Uſe.* Of trial. Do we prefer God's glory before our private concerns? Doth God's glory take place? *Minus te amat qui aliquid tecum amat, quod non propter te amat,* Aug. 1. Do we prefer God's glory before our own credit? *Fama pari paſſu ambulat cum vita.* Credit is a jewel highly valued; like precious ointment, it caſts a fragrant ſmell: but God's glory muſt be dearer than credit and applauſe: we muſt be willing to have our credit trampled upon, if God's glory may be raiſed higher, Acts v. 41. 'The apoſtles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to ſuffer thame for his name;' that they were graced ſo far as to be diſgraced for Chriſt. 2. Do we prefer God's glory before our relations? Relations are dear, they are of our own fleſh and bone: but God's glory muſt be dearer, Luke xiv. 46. 'If any man come after me, and hate not father and mother, he cannot be my diſciple.' Here, *odium in ſuos, is pietas in Deum.* "If my friends (ſaith Jerom) ſhould perſuade me to deny Chriſt, if my wife ſhould hang about my neck, if my mother ſhould ſhew me her breaſts that gave me ſuck, I would trample upon all, and flee to Chriſt." 3. We muſt prefer God's glory before eſtate: gold is but ſhining duſt, God's glory muſt weigh heavier. If it comes to this, I cannot keep my place of profit, but God's glory will be eclipsed; here I muſt rather ſuffer in my eſtate, than God's glory ſhould ſuffer, Heb. x. 34. 4. We muſt prefer God's glory before our life, Rev. xii. 11. 'They loved not their own lives to the death.' Ignatius called his fetters his ſpiritual jewels, he wore them as a chain of pearl. Gordius the martyr ſaid, it is to my loſs, if you bate me any thing of my ſufferings. This argues grace creſcent, and elevated in an high degree. Who but a ſoul inflamed in love to God, can ſet God highelt on the throne, and prefer him above all private concerns?

II. The ſecond thing in the petition, is the matter of it. 'Give us this day our daily bread.' The ſum of this petition is, that God would give us ſuch a competency in theſe outward things, as he ſees moſt expedient for us: It is much like that prayer of Agur, Prov. xxx. 8. 'Feed me with food convenient for me:' give me a *viaticum*, a bait by the way, enough to bear my charges till I come to heaven, and it ſufficeth. Let me explain the words, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' [Give] Hence note, that the good things of this life are the gifts of God: he is the donor of all our bleſſings, 'Give us:' not only

faith, but food is the gift of God ; not only daily grace, is from God, ‘ but daily bread ;’ every good thing comes from God, James i. 17. ‘ Every good gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights.’ Wisdom is the gift of God, Isa. xxviii. 26. ‘ His God doth instruct him to discretion.’ Riches are the gift of God, 2 Chron. i. 12. ‘ I will give thee riches.’ Peace is the gift of God, Pf. cxlvii. 14. ‘ He makes peace in thy borders.’ Health, which is the cream of life, is the gift of God, Jer. xxx. 17. ‘ I will restore health to thee.’ Rain is the gift of God, Job v. 10. ‘ Who giveth rain on the earth,’ All comes from God ; he makes the corn to grow, and the herbs to flourish.

*Use 1.* See our own poverty and indigence : we live all upon alms, and upon free gift, ‘ give us this day.’ All we have is from the hand of God’s royal bounty ; we have nothing but what God gives us out of his storehouse ; we cannot have one bit of bread but from God. The devil persuaded our first parents, that, by disobeying God, they should ‘ be as gods,’ Gen. v. 3. but we may now see what goodly gods we are, that we have not a bit of bread to put in our mouth, unless God give it us : here is an humbling consideration.

*Branch 2.* Is all a gift ? Then we are to seek every mercy from God by prayer, ‘ Give us this day.’ The tree of mercy will not drop its fruit, unless shaken by the hand of prayer. Whatever we have, if it do not come in the way of prayer, it doth not come in the way of love ; it is given, as Israel’s quails, in anger. If every thing be a gift, we do not deserve it, we are not fit for it, unless we ask for this alms. And must we go to God for every mercy ? How wicked are they, who instead of going to God for food when they want, they go to the devil, they make a compact with him ; and if he will help them to a livelihood, they will give him their souls ? Better to starve than go to the devil for provender. I wish there be none in our age guilty of this, who, when they are in want, use indirect means for a livelihood ; they consult with witches, who are the devil’s oracles ; the end of these will be fearful, as that of Saul was, whom the Lord is said to have killed, because he asked counsel at a familiar spirit.

3. If all be a gift, then it is not a debt, we cannot say to God, as that creditor said, Mat. xviii. 28. ‘ Pay me what thou owest.’ Who can make God a debtor, or do any act that is obliging and meritorious ? Whatever we receive from God is a gift ; we can give nothing to God but what he hath given to us, 1 Chron. xxix. 14. ‘ All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.’ David and his people offered to the building of God’s house gold and silver, but they offered nothing but what God had given them, ‘ of thine own have we given

thee.' If we love God, God it is that hath given us an heart to love him : if we praise him, he both gives us the organ of the tongue, and puts it in tune : if we give alms to others, God hath given alms to us first, so that we may say, ' we offer, O Lord, of thine own to thee.' Is all of gift, how absurd then is the doctrine of merit ? That was a proud speech of a friar, that said, *redde mihi Vitam Aeternam quam debes* ; give me, Lord, eternal life, which thou owest me. We cannot deserve a bit of bread, much less a crown of glory. If all be a gift, then merit is exploded, and shut out of doors.

4. If all be a gift, ' give us this day,' then take notice of God's goodness : there is nothing in us can deserve or requite God's kindness ; yet such is the sweetness of his nature, he gives us rich provision, and feeds us with the finest of the wheat. Pindar saith, it was an opinion of the people of Rhodes, that Jupiter rained down gold upon the city. God hath rained down golden mercies upon us ; he is upon the giving hand. Observe three things in God's giving ;

(1.) He is not weary of giving ; the springs of mercy are ever running. God did not only dispense blessings in former ages, but he still gives gifts to us ; as the sun not only enriches the world with its morning-light, but keeps light for the meridian. The honey-comb of God's bounty is still dropping.

(2.) God delights in giving, Micah vii. 18. ' He delighteth in mercy.' As the mother delights to give the child the breast, God loves we should have the breast of mercy in our mouth.

(3.) God gives to his very enemies. Who will send in provisions to his enemy ? Men use to spread nets for their enemies, God spreads a table. The dew drops on the thistle as well as the rose ; the dew of God's bounty drops upon the worst. Those who have their mouths opened against God, yet God puts bread in those mouths. O the royal bounty of God ! Ps. li. 1. ' The goodness of God endureth continually.' Swinish sinners God put jewels upon, and feeds them every day.

5. If all be a gift, see then the odious ingratitude of men, who sin against their giver. God feeds them, and they fight against him ; he gives them their bread, and they give him affronts. How unworthy is this ? Would we not cry shame of him, who had a friend always feeding him with money, and he should betray and injure that friend. Thus ungratefully do sinners deal with God, they do not only forget his mercies, but abate them, Jer. v. 7. ' When I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery.' O how horrid is this, to sin against a bountiful God ! To strike (as it were) those hands that relieve us ! this gives a die and tincture to men's sins, and makes them crimson. How many make a dart of God's mercies, and shoot

at him? he gives them wit, and they serve the devil with it; he gives them strength, and they waste it among harlots; he gives them bread to eat, and they lift up the heel against him, Deut. xxxii. 15. 'Jeshuran waxed fat and kicked.' These are like Absalom, who as soon as David his father kissed him, plotted treason against him, 2 Sam. xv. 10. Like the mule, who kicks the dam after she hath given it milk. Those who sin against their giver, and abuse God's royal favours, the mercies of God will come in as witnesses against them. What smoother than oil? but if it be heated, what more scalding? What sweeter than mercy? but if it be abused what more dreadful? It turns to fury.

6. If God gives us all, let God's giving excite us to thanksgiving; he is the founder and donor of all our blessings, let him have all our acknowledgments. 'All the rivers come from the sea. And thither they return again,' Eccl. i. 7. All our gifts come from God, and to him must all our praises return. We are apt to 'burn incense to our own drag,' Hab. i. 16. To attribute all we have to our own second causes.

(1.) Our own skill and industry. God is the giver: he gives daily bread, Ps. cxxxvi. 35. he gives riches, Deut. viii. 18. 'He it is that giveth thee power to get wealth.'

Or, (2.) We oft ascribe the praise to second causes, and forget God. If friends have bestowed an estate to look at them and admire them, but not God who is the great giver; as if one should be thankful to the steward, and never take notice of the master of the family that provides all. O if God gives all, our eye-sight, our food, our clothing, let us sacrifice the chief praise to him; let not God be a loser by his mercies. Praise is a more illustrious part of God's worship. Our wants may send us to prayer, nature may make us beg daily bread; but it shews an heart full of ingenuity and grace, to be rendering praises to God. In petition we act like men, in praise we act like angels. Doth God sow seeds of mercy? Let thankfulness be the crop we bring forth. We are called the temples of God, 1 Cor. iii. 16. and where should God's praises be founded forth, but in his temples? Ps. cxlvi. 2. 'While I live will I bless the Lord, I will sing praises to my God while I have any being.' God gives us daily bread; let us give him daily praise. Thankfulness to our donor is the best policy; there is nothing lost by it; to be thankful for one mercy is the way to have more. Musicians love to sound their trumpets where there is the best echo, and God loves to bestow his mercies where there is the best echo of praise; and it is not only offering the calves of our lips is enough, but we must shew our thankfulness by improving the gifts which God gives us, and as it were putting them out to use. God gives us an estate, and we honour the

Lord with our substance, Prov. iii. 9. He gives us the staff of bread, and we lay out the strength we receive by it in his service; this is to be thankful; and that we may be thankful, be humble. Pride stops the current of gratitude: a proud man will never be thankful; he looks upon all he hath, either to be of his own procuring or deserving. Let us see all we have is God's gift, and how unworthy we are to receive the least favour: and this will make us much in doxology and gratitude, we will be silver trumpets sounding forth God's praise.

First, *Give*, Hence I note, 1. That the good things of this life are the gifts of God: he is the founder and donor. 2. From this word give, I note, that it is not unlawful to pray for temporal things; we may pray for daily bread, Prov. xxx. 8. 'Feed me with food convenient for me;' we may pray for health, Ps. vi. 2. 'O Lord heal me, for my bones are vexed.' As these are in themselves good things, so they are useful for us; they are as needful for preserving the comfort of life, as the oil is needful for preserving the lamp from going out. Only let me insert two things.

1. There is a great difference between our praying for temporal things and spiritual. In praying for spiritual things, we must be absolute: when we pray for pardon of sin, and the favour of God, and the sanctifying graces of the Spirit, these are indispensibly necessary to salvation, and here we must take no denial: but when we pray for temporal things, here our prayers must be limited, we must pray conditionally so far as God sees them good for us; God sometimes sees cause to withhold temporal things from us: they may be snares, and draw our hearts from God, therefore we must pray for these things with submission to God's will. This was Israel's sin; they would be peremptory and absolute in their desire of temporal things: God's bill of fare did not please them, they must have dainties, Numb. xi. 18. 'Who shall give us flesh to eat?' God hath given them manna, he fed them with a miracle from heaven, but their wanton palates craved more, they must have quails; God let them have their desire, but they had sour sauce to their quails, Ps. lxxviii. 31. 'While the meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them and slew them.' Rachel was importunate in her desires for a child, Gen. xxx. 1. 'Give me children or I die:' God let her have a child, but it was a *Benoni*, a son of sorrow, it cost her her life in bringing forth, Gen. xxxv. 18. We must pray for outward things with submission to God's will, else they come in anger.

2. When we pray for things pertaining to this life, we must desire temporal things for spiritual ends; we must desire these things to be as helps in our journey to heaven. If we pray for health, it must be that we may improve this talent of health,

for God's glory, and may be fitter for his service : if we pray for a competency of estate, it must be for an holy end, that we may be kept from the temptations which poverty usually exposeth to, and that we may be in a better capacity to sow the golden seeds of charity, and relieve such as are in want. Temporal things must be prayed for, for spiritual ends. Hannah prayed for a child, but it was for this end, that her child might be devoted to God, 1 Sam. i. 11. ' O Lord, if thou wilt-remember me, and wilt give unto thine hand-maid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life.' Many pray for outward things only to gratify their sensual appetite ; ' the ravens cry for food,' Ps. cxlvii. 9. To pray for outward things only to satisfy nature, is to cry rather like ravens than Christians. We must have an higher end in our prayers, we must aim at heaven, while we are praying for earth. And must we pray for temporal things for spiritual ends, that we may be fitter to serve God ? Then, how wicked are they, who beg temporal mercies that they may be more enabled to sin against God, James iv. 3. ' Ye ask, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.' One man is sick, and he prays for health, that he may be among his cups and harlots ; another prays for an estate ; he would not only have his belly filled, but his barns ; and why would he be rich, that he may raise his name, or that, having more power in his hand, he may now take a fuller revenge on his enemies ? This is impiety joined with imprudence ; to pray to God to give us temporal things, that we may be the better enabled to serve the devil.

*Use.* If we are to pray for temporal good things, then how much more for spiritual ? If we are to pray for bread, then, how much more for the bread of life ? if for oil, then, how much more for the oil of gladness ? If we pray to have our hunger satisfied, much more should we pray to have our souls saved. Alas ! what if God should hear our prayers, and grant us these temporal things, and no more, what were we the better ? What is it to have food, and want grace ? What is it to have the back clothed and the soul naked ; to have a south land, and want the living springs in Christ's blood ; what comfort could that be ? O therefore let us be earnest for spiritual mercies ; Lord, do not only feed me, but sanctify me ; rather an heart full of grace, than an house full of gold : if we are to pray for daily bread, the things of this life, much more for the things of the life that is to come.

3. From this word *give*, I note, that they whom God hath given a large measure of outward things to, yet must pray, ' Give us daily bread.' And this may answer a question.

*Qa.* Some may say, we have an estate already, and what need we pray, ' Give us daily bread ?'

*Ans.* Supposing we have a plentiful estate, yet we need make this petition, 'Give us bread;' and that upon a double account,

(1.) That we may have a blessing upon our food, and all that we enjoy, Pl. cxxxii. 5. 'I will bless her provision. Man lives not by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of God's mouth.' Matth. iv. 4. What is that but a word of blessing? Though the bread is in our hand, yet the blessing is in God's hand, and it must be fetched out of his hand by prayer: Well therefore may rich men pray, 'Give us our bread,' let it be seasoned with a blessing. If God should withhold a blessing, nothing we have would do us good; our clothes would not warm us, our food would not nourish us, Pl. cvi. 15. 'He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul;' that is, they pined away, and their meat did not nourish them. If God should withhold a blessing, what we eat would turn to bad humours, and hasten death. If God do not bless our riches, they will do us more hurt than good, Eccl. v. 13. 'Riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.' So that, granting we have plentiful estates, yet we had need pray, 'Give us our bread;' let us have a blessing with what we have.

(2.) Though we have estates, yet we had need pray, *give*, that we may hereby engage God to continue these comforts to us. How many casualties may fall out? How many may have had corn in their barn, and a fire hath come on a sudden and consumed all? How many have had losses at sea, and great estates boiled away to nothing? Ruth i. 21. 'I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty.' Therefore, though we have estates, yet we had need pray, 'give us,' Lord, give a continuance of these comforts, that they may not, before we are aware, take wings and fly from us. So much for this first word in the petition, *give*.

Secondly, *us*, 'Give us.'

*Qu.* Why do we pray here in the plural? Why 'Give us?' Why is it not said, *give me*?

*Ans.* To shew that we are to have public spirits in prayer; we must not only pray for ourselves, but others: both the law of God, and the law of love bind us to this, 'we must love our neighbour as ourselves;' therefore we must pray for them as well as ourselves. Every good Christian hath a fellow-feeling of the wants and miseries of others, and he prays God would extend his bounty to them, especially, he prays for the saints, Eph. vi. 18. 'Praying always for all saints.' These are the children of the family.

*Use* I. Should we have public spirits in prayer, 'give us?' It reproves such narrow-spirited men as move only within their own sphere; they look only at themselves, but mind not the

case of others ; they leave others out of their prayers ; if they have daily bread, they care not though others starve ; if they are clothed, they care not though others go naked. Christ hath taught us to pray for others, ‘ give us : ’ but selfish persons are shut up within themselves, as the snail in the shell, and never speak a word in prayer for others : these have no commiseration or pity ; they are like Judas, whose bowels fell out.

*Use II.* Let us pray for others, as well as for ourselves, ‘ give us : ’ *vir bonus aliis prodest æquæ ac sibi.* Spiders work only for themselves, but bees work for the good of others ; the more excellent any thing is, the more it operates for the good of others. The springs refresh others with their crystal streams ; the sun enlightens others with its golden beams : the more a Christian is ennobled with grace, the more he besiegeth heaven with his prayers for others ; if we are members of the body mystical, we cannot but have a sympathy with others in their wants, and this sympathy sets us a praying for them. David had a public spirit in prayer, Ps. cxxv. 4. ‘ Do good, O Lord, unto those that be good : ’ though he begins the psalm with prayer for himself, Ps. li. 1. ‘ Have mercy upon me, O God ; ’ yet he ends the psalm with prayer for others, ver. 18. ‘ Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion.’

*Use III.* It is matter of comfort to the godly, who are but low in the world, yet they have the prayers of God’s people for them ; they pray not only for the increase of their faith, but their food, that God will give them ‘ daily bread.’ He is like to be rich, who hath several flocks going ; so they are in a likely way to thrive, who have the prayers of the saints going for them in several parts of the world. So much for this second word in the petition, ‘ Give us.’

*Thirdly,* The third word in the petition is, ‘ This day.’ We pray not, Give us bread for a month, or a year, but a day ; ‘ Give us this day.’

*Qu.* *It is not lawful to lay up for afterwards? Doth not the apostle say, He who provides not for his family, is worse than an infidel,* 1 Tim. v. 8.

*Ans.* It is true, it is lawful to lay up for posterity ; but our Saviour hath taught us to pray, ‘ Give us this day our bread,’ for two reasons ;

(1.) That we should not have carking care for the future. We should not set our wits upon the tentor, or torment ourselves how to lay up great estates ; if we do *vivere in diem*, if we have but enough to supply for the present, it may suffice ; ‘ Give us this day : ’ take no thought for to-morrow, Matt. vi. 34. God fed Israel with manna in the wilderness, and he fed them from hand to mouth : sometimes all their manna was spent ; and if any one had asked them where they would have

their breakfast next morning, they would have said, our care is only for this day, God will rain down what manna we need: if we have bread this day do not distrust God's providence for the future.

(2.) Our Saviour will have us pray, 'Give us bread this day,' to teach us to live every day as if it were our last. We are not to pray, give us bread to-morrow, because we do not know whether we shall live while to-morrow: but, Lord, 'give us this day;' it may be our last day we shall live, and then we shall need no more.

*Use.* If we pray for bread only for a day, 'Give us this day,' then you who have great estates have cause to be thankful: you have more than you pray for: you pray but for bread for one day, and God hath given you enough to suffice you all your life. What a bountiful God do you serve! Two things may make rich men thankful; 1. God gives them more than they deserve. 2. God gives them more than they pray for.

*Fourthly,* The fourth thing in the petition is, 'Our bread.'

*Qu.* Why is it called, 'Our bread,' when it is not ours, but God's?

*Ans.* 1. We must understand it in a qualified sense: it is our bread, being gotten by honest industry. There are two sorts of bread that cannot properly be called our bread. (1.) The bread of idleness. (2.) The bread of violence.

(1.) The bread of idleness, Prov. xxxi. 27. 'She eateth not the bread of idleness.' An idle person doth *vivere aliena quadra*, he lives at another body's cost, and is at their finding, Prov. i. 25. 'His hands refuse to labour.' We must not be as the drones which eat the honey that other bees have brought into the hive: if we eat the bread of idleness, this is not our own bread, 2 Thess. iii. 11, 12. 'There are some that walk disorderly, working not at all; such we command that they work, and eat their own bread.' The apostle gives this hint, that such as live idly do not eat their own bread.

(2.) The bread of violence. We cannot call this 'our bread,' for it is taken away from others: that which is gotten by stealth or fraud, or any manner of extortion, is not 'our bread,' it belongs to another. He who is a bird of prey, who takes away the bread of the widow and fatherless, he eats that bread which is none of his, nor can he pray for a blessing upon it: can he pray God to bless that which he hath gotten unjustly?

2. It is called our bread, by virtue of our title to it. There is a twofold title to bread. (1.) A spiritual title: in and by Christ we have a right to the creature, and may call it 'our bread.' As we are believers, we have the best title to earthly things, we hold all *in capite*, 1 Cor. iii. 22. 'All things are yours;' by what title, 'ye are Christ's.' (2.) A civil title,

which the law confers on us: to deny men a civil right to their possessions, and make all common, it opens the door to anarchy and confusion.

*Use.* See the privilege of believers, they have both a spiritual and a civil right to what they possess: they who can say, 'our Father,' can say 'our bread.' Wicked men, though they have a legal right to what they possess, yet not a covenant-right; they have it by providence, not by promise; with God's leave, not with his love. Wicked men are in God's eye no better than usurpers; all they have, their money and land, is like cloth taken up at the drapers, which is not paid for; but this is the sweet privilege of believers, they can say, 'our bread;' Christ being theirs, all is theirs. O how sweet is every bit of bread dipped in Christ's blood! How well doth that meat relish, which is a pledge and earnest of more! The meal in the barrel is an earnest of our angels food in paradise. Here is the privilege of saints, they have a right to the earth and heaven.

*Fifthly,* The fifth and last thing in this petition is, the thing we pray for 'daily bread.'

*Qu.* What is meant by bread?

*Ans.* Bread here, by a synecdoche, *speciei pro genere*, is put for all the temporal blessings of this life, food, fuel, clothing. *Quicquid nobis conducit ad bene esse*, *Austin*. Whatever may serve for necessity or sober delight.

*Use.* Learn to be contented with that allowance God gives us. If we have bread, a competency of these outward things, let us rest satisfied. We pray but for bread, 'Give us our daily bread;' we do not pray for superfluities, not for quails or venison, but for bread, that which may support life. Though we have not so much as others, so full a crop, so rich an estate, yet if we have the staff of bread to shore us from falling, let us be content. Most people are herein faulty: though they pray that God would give them bread (so much as he sees expedient for them) yet they are not content with God's allowance, but overgreedily covet more, and with the daughters of the horse-leech, cry, 'Give, give,' *Prov. xxx. 15*. This is a vice naturally ingrafted in us. Many pray Agur's first prayer, 'give me not poverty,' but few pray his last prayer, 'give me not riches,' *Prov. xxx. 8*. They are not content with 'daily bread,' but have the dry drop of covetousness; they are still craving for more, *Hab. ii. 5*. 'Who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied. There are (saith Solomon) four things say it is not enough, *Prov. xxx. 15*. the grave, the barren womb, the earth, the fire;' and I may add a fifth thing, the heart of a covetous man. Such as are not content with daily bread, but thirst insatiably after more, will break over the hedge of God's command; and to get riches will stick at no sin.

*Cui nihil satis est, eidem nihil turpe*, Tacitus. Therefore covetousness is called a radical vice, 1 Tim. vi. 10. 'The root of all evils.' *Quid non mortalia pectora cogit auri sacra fames?* The Greek word for covetousness *pleonexia*, signifies an inordinate desire of getting. Covetousness is not only in getting riches unjustly, but in loving them inordinately: this is a key opens the door to all sin. It causeth, 1. Theft; Achan's covetous humour made him steal that wedge of gold which cleft asunder his soul from God, Josh. vii. 21. (2.) It causeth treason. What made Judas betray Christ? It was the thirty pieces of silver, Mat. xxvi. 5. (3.) It produceth murder. It was the inordinate love of the vineyard made Ahab conspire Naboth's death, 1 Kings xxi. 13. (4.) It is the root of perjury, 2 Tim. iii. 3. Men shall be covetous; and it follows, truce-breakers. Love of silver will make men take a false oath, and break a just oath. (5.) It is the spring of apostacy, 2 Tim. iv. 10. 'Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.' He did not only forsake Paul's company, but his doctrine. Demas afterwards became a priest in an idol-temple, saith Dorotheus. (6.) Covetousness will make men idolaters, Col. iii. 5. 'Covetousness which is idolatry.' Though the covetous man will not worship graven images in the church, yet he will worship the graven image in his coin. (7.) Covetousness makes men give themselves to the devil. Pope Sylvester II. did sell his soul to the devil for a popedom. Covetous persons forget this prayer. 'Give us daily bread,' that which may satisfy nature, but they are insatiable in their desire. O let us take heed of this dry-dropsy, Heb. xiii. 5. Be content with such things as ye have.' *Natura parva dimittitur*, Senec. That we may be content with 'daily bread,' that which God in his providence carves out to us, and not covet or murmur; let me propose these things,

1. God can bless a little, Exod. xxiii. 24. 'He will bless thy bread and thy water.' A blessing puts sweetness into the least morsel of bread, it is like sugar in wine, Psal. cxxii. 15. 'I will bless her provision.' Daniel, and the three children, ate pulse, (which was a coarse fare,) yet they looked fairer than those who did eat of the king's meat, Dan. i. 15. Whence was this? God did infuse a more than an ordinary blessing into the pulse: God's blessing was better than the king's venison: a piece of bread with God's love is angel's food.

2. God, who gives us our allowance, knows what quantity of these outward things is fittest for us: a smaller provision may be fitter for some; bread may be better than dainties; every one cannot bear an high condition, no more than a weak brain can bear heady wine. Hath one a larger proportion of worldly things? God sees he can better manage such a condition; he

can order his affairs with discretion, which perhaps another cannot; as he hath a large estate, so he hath a large heart to do good, which perhaps another hath not; this should make us content with a shorter bill of fare: God's wisdom is what we must acquiesce in, he sees what is best for every one: that which is good for one, may be bad for another.

3. In being content with daily bread, that which God carves for us, though it be a lesser piece, much grace is seen in this; all the graces act their part in a contented soul. As the holy ointment was made up of several spices, myrrh, cinnamon, cassia, Exod. xxx. 23. So contentment hath in it a mixture of several graces; there is faith, a Christian believes God doth all for the best; and love, which thinks no evil, but takes all God doth in good part; and patience, submitting cheerfully to what God orders wisely: God is much pleased to see so many graces at once sweetly exercised, like so many bright stars shining in a constellation.

4. To be content with daily bread, the allowance God gives, though but sparingly, doth keep us from many temptations, which discontented persons fall into; when the devil sees a person just of Israel's humour, not content with manna, but must have quails, saith Satan, here is good fishing for me. Satan oft tempts discontented ones to murmuring, and to unlawful means, cozening and defrauding; and he who increaseth an estate by indirect means, stuffs his pillow with thorns, and his head will lie very uneasy when he comes to die: if you would be freed from the temptations which discontent exposeth to, be content with such things as ye have, bless God for 'daily bread.'

5. What a rare and admirable thing is it to be content with 'daily bread,' though it be coarse, and though there be but little of it! a Christian though he hath but a *vaticum*, a little meal in the barrel, yet he hath that which gives him content; what he hath not in the cupboard, he hath in the promise: that bit of bread he hath, is with the love of God, and that sauce makes a relish sweet, that little oil in the cruse is a pledge and earnest of those dainties he shall taste of in the kingdom of God, this makes him content: What a rare and wonderful thing is this! It is no wonder to be content in heaven, when we are at the fountain-head, and have all things we can desire; but to be content when God keeps us to short commons, and we have scarce 'daily bread,' this is a wonder: when grace is crowning, it is no wonder to be content; but when grace is conflicting with straits, now to be content is a glorious thing indeed, and deserves the garland of praise.

6. To make us content with 'daily bread,' though God straitens us in our allowance, think seriously of the danger that is in an high prosperous condition: some are not content with

‘daily bread,’ but desire to have their barns filled, and heap up silver as dust; this proves a snare to them, 1 Tim. vi. 10. ‘They that will be rich fall into a snare.’ Pride, idleness, wantonness, are the three worms that usually breed of plenty. Prosperity oft deafens the ear against God, Jer. xxii. 21. ‘I spake to thee in thy prosperity, but thou saidst, I will not hear.’ Soft pleasures harden the heart. In the body, the more fat, the less blood in the veins, and the less spirits; the more outward plenty, often the less piety. Prosperity hath its honey, and also its sting: prosperity, like the full of the moon, makes many lunatic. The pastures of prosperity are rank and surfeiting. Anxious care is the *malus genius*, the evil spirit that haunts the rich man, and will not let him be quiet: when his chests are full of money, his heart is full of care, either how to manage, how to increase, or how to secure what he hath gotten. Sunshine is pleasant, but sometimes it scorseth. Should not this make us content with what allowance God gives, if we have daily bread, though not dainties? Think of the danger of prosperity: the spreading of a full table may be the spreading of a snare; many have been sunk to hell with golden weights. The ferry-man takes in all passengers, that he may increase his fare, and sometimes to the sinking of his boat, 1 Tim. vi. 9. ‘They that would be rich fall into many hurtful lusts, which drown them in perdition.’ The world’s golden sands are quick-sands; this may make us take our daily bread, though it be but coarse, contentedly: what if we have less food, we have less snare; if less dignity, less danger: as we want the rich provisions of the world, so we want the temptations.

7. If God keeps us to a spare diet, if he gives us less temporals, he hath made it up in spirituals; he hath given us the pearl of price, and the holy anointing. (1.) The pearl of price, the Lord Jesus, he is the quintessence of all good things. To give us Christ, is more than if God had given us all the world. God can make more worlds, but he hath no more Christs to bestow: he is such a golden mine, that the angels cannot dig to the bottom, Eph. iii. 8. From Christ we may have justification, adoption, coronation. The sea of God’s mercy in giving us Christ (saith Luther) should swallow up all our wants. (2.) The holy unction; God hath anointed us with the graces of his Spirit. Grace is a seed of God, a blossom of eternity; the graces are the impressions of the divine nature, stars to enlighten us, spices to perfume us, diamonds to enrich us; and if God hath adorned the hidden man of the heart with these sacred jewels, it may well make us content, though we have but most commons, and that coarse too. God hath given his people better things than corn and wine; he hath given them that which he cannot give in anger, and which cannot stand with reprobation.

tion; and they may say as David, Pſal. xvi. 6. 'The lines are fallen to them in pleaſant places, and they have a goodly heritage.' I have read of Didimus and Anthony, Didimus was a blind man, but very holy; Anthony asked him, if he was not troubled for the want of his eyes, he told him he was: why (ſaith Anthony) are you troubled, you want that which flies and birds have, when you have that which angels have? So I ſay to Chriſtians, if God hath not given you the purſe, he hath given you his Spirit; if you want that which rich men have, God hath given you that which angels have, and are you not content?

8. If you have but daily bread enough to ſuffice nature, be content. Conſider it is not having abundance makes the life always comfortable; it is not a great cage will make the bird ſing: a competency may breed contentment, when having more may make one leſs content: a ſtaff may help the traveller, but a bundle of ſtaves will be a burden to him. A great eſtate may be like a long trailing garment, more burdeſome than uſeful. Many that have great incomes and revenues have not ſo much comfort in their lives, as ſome that go to their hard labour.

9. If you have leſs daily bread, you will have leſs account to give. The riches and honours of this world, like Alchymy, make a great ſhew, and, with their gliftering, dazzle mens' eyes: but they do not conſider the great account they muſt give to God, Luke xvi. 2. 'Give an account of thy ſewardſhip.' What good haſt thou done with thy eſtate? Haſt thou, as a good ſeward, traded with thy golden talents for God's glory? haſt thou honoured the Lord with thy ſubſtance? The greater revenues the greater reckonings: This may quiet and content us, if we have but little daily bread, our account will be leſs.

10. You that have but a ſmall competency in theſe outward things, your proviſions are ſhort, yet you may be content to conſider how much you look for hereafter: God keeps the beſt wine till laſt. What though now you have a ſmall pittance, and are fed from hand to mouth? you look for an eternal reward, white robes, ſparkling crowns, rivers of pleaſure. A ſon is content tho' his father give him but now and then a little money, as long as he expects his father ſhould ſettle all his land upon him at laſt: if God give you but a little at preſent, yet you look for that glory which eye hath not ſeen; may not you be content? The world is but a *diverſorium*, a great inn: if God give you ſufficient to pay for your charges in your inn, you may be content, you ſhall have enough when you come to your own country.

Qu. *How may we be content, though God cut us ſhort in theſe externals; though we have but little daily bread and coarſe?*

*Ans.* 1. Think with ourselves, some have been much lower than we, who have been better than we. Jacob, an holy patriarch, goes over Jordan with his staff, and lived in a mean condition a long time; he had the clouds for his canopy, and stone for his pillow. Moses, that might have been rich, some historians say, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him for her son, because king Pharaoh had no heir, and to Moses was like to have come to the crown, yet leaving the honour of the court, in what a low mean condition did he live in, when he went to Jethro his father-in-law? Mulcilius, famous for learning and piety, was put to great straits, he was put to dig in a town ditch, and had scarce daily bread, yet content. Nay, Christ, who was heir of all, yet, for our sakes, became poor, 2 Cor. viii. 9. Let all these examples make us content.

2. Let us labour to have the interest cleared between God and our souls. He who can say, 'My God hath enough to rock his heart quiet in the lowest condition: what can he want who hath *El-Shaddai*, the all-sufficient God for his portion? Though the nether-springs fail, yet he hath the upper-springs: though the bill of fare grow short, yet an interest in God is a pillar of support to us, and we may, with David, encourage ourselves in the Lord our God.



## OF THE FIFTH PETITION IN THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTH. vi. 12. *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*

BEFORE I speak strictly of the words, I shall take notice, 1. That in this prayer there is but one petition for the body, 'Give us our daily bread,' but two petitions for the soul, 'Forgive us our trespasses, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:' Hence observe, that we are to be more careful for our souls, than for our bodies: more careful for grace than for daily bread; more desirous to have our souls saved, than our bodies fed. In the law, the weight of the sanctuary was twice as big as the common weight, to typify that spiritual things must be of far greater weight with us than earthly. The excellency of the soul may challenge our chief care about it.

1. The soul is an immaterial substance; it is an heavenly spark, lighted by the breath of God. It is the more refined spiritual part of man, it is of an evangelical nature; it hath some faint resemblance of God. The body is the more dreggish part, it is but the cabinet, which though curiously wrought,