

OF THE THIRD PETITION IN THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTH. vi. 10. *Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.*

WE come next to the third petition, 'Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.' This petition consists of two parts.

I. The matter, "Doing of God's will."

II. The manner, "As it is in heaven."

I. The matter of this petition is, "The doing of God's will." "Thy will be done."

Qu. 1. *What is meant by the will of God?*

Ans. There is a twofold will. (1.) *Voluntas decreti*, God's secret will, or the will of his decree; we pray not that God's secret will may be done by us. This secret will cannot be known, it is locked up in God's own breast, and neither man nor angel hath key to open it. (2.) *Voluntas revelata*, God's revealed will. This revealed will is written in the book of scripture, the scripture is a declaration of God's will, it discovers what he would have us do in order to our salvation.

Qu. 2. *What do we pray for in these words, 'Thy will be done?'*

Ans. We pray for two things; 1. For active obedience; that we may do God's will actively in what he commands. 2. For passive; that we may submit to God's will patiently in what he inflicts. We pray, that we may do God's will actively, subscribe to all his commands, believe in Jesus, the cardinal grace, lead holy lives. So Austin upon the petition, *Nobis a Deo precamur obedientiam*; we pray that we may actively obey God's will. This is the sum of all religion, the two tables epitomized, the doing of God's will: 'Thy will be done.' We must know God's will before we can do it: knowledge is the eye which must direct the foot of obedience. At Athens there was an altar set up, 'To the unknown God,' Acts xvii. 23. It is as bad to offer the blind to God as the dead. Knowledge is the pillar of fire to give light to practice; but tho' knowledge is requisite, yet the knowledge of God's will is not enough without doing his will: 'Thy will be done.' If one had a system of divinity in his head; if he had all knowledge, 1 Cor. xiii. 2. yet, if obedience were wanting, his knowledge were lame, and would not carry him to heaven. Knowing God's will may make a man admired, but it is doing God's will makes him

bleſſed : knowing God's will without doing it, will not crown us with happineſs.

1. The bare knowledge of God's will is inefficacious, it doth not better the heart. Knowledge alone is like a winter-ſun, which hath no heat or influence ; it doth not warm the affections, or purify the conſcience. Judas was a great luminary, he knew God's will, but he was a traitor.

2. Knowing without doing God's will, will make one's caſe worſe ; it will heat hell the hotter, Luke xii. 47. ' The ſervant which knew his Lord's will, and did not according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes.' Many a man's knowledge is a torch to light him to hell. Thou who haſt knowledge of God's will, but doſt not do it, wherein doſt thou excel an hypocrite ? nay, wherein doſt thou excel the devil, ' who transforms himſelf into an angel of light ?' It is improper to call ſuch Chriſtians, who are knowers of God's will, but not doers of it. It is improper to call him a tradesman who never wrought in his trade ; ſo to call him a Chriſtian, who never wrought in the trade of religion. Let us not reſt in the knowing of God's will. Let it not be ſaid of us, as Plutarch ſpeaks of the Grecians, ' They knew what was juſt, but did it not.' Let us ſet upon this, the doing of God's will, ' Thy will be done.'

Qu. 3. *Why is the doing of God's will ſo requiſite ?*

Anſ. 1. Out of equity. God may juſtly claim a right to our obedience ; he is our founder, and we have our being from him ; and it is but equal that we ſhould do his will, at whoſe word we were created. God is our benefactor ; it is but juſt, that, if God give us our allowance, we ſhould give him our allegiance.

2. The great deſign of God in the word is, to make us doers of his will. *1ſt*, All God's royal edicts and precepts are to bring us to this, to be doers of his will ; what needed God been at the pains to give us the copy of his law, and write it out with his own finger elſe ? The word of God is not only a rule of knowledge, but of duty, Deut. xiii. 4. and xxvi. 16. ' This day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do theſe ſtatutes ; thou ſhalt therefore keep and do them.' If you tell your children what is your mind, it is not only that they may know your will, but do it. God gives us his word, as a maſter gives his ſcholar a copy, to write after it ; he gives it as his will and teſtament, that we ſhould be the executors to ſee it performed. *2dly*, This is the end of all God's promiſes, to draw us to God's will ; the promiſes are loadſtones to obedience, Deut. xi. 27. ' A bleſſing if ye obey ;' as a father gives his ſon money to bribe him to obedience, Deut. xxviii. 1. ' If thou ſhalt hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and do all his commandments, the Lord thy God will ſet thee on high above

all the nations of the earth ; blessed shalt thou be in the city and in the field.' The promises are a royal charter settled upon obedience. *3dly*, The minatory part of the word, the threatenings of God, stand as the angel with a flaming sword to deter us from sin, and make us doers of God's will, Deut. xi. 28. 'A curse if ye will not obey.' Psal. lxxviii. 21. 'God shall wound the hairy scalp of every one that goes on still in his trespasses.' These threatenings do often take hold of men in this life : they are made examples, and hung up in chains to scare others from disobedience, *4thly*, All God's providences are to make us doers of his will. As God makes use of all the seasons of the year for harvest, so all his various providences are to bring on the harvest of obedience.

1. Afflictions are to make us do God's will, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12. 'When Manasseh was in affliction, he besought the Lord, and humbled himself greatly.' The rod hath this voice, 'be doers of God's will.' Affliction is called a furnace, Isa. xxxvii. 19. 'The furnace melts the metal, and then it is cast into a new mould.' God's furnace is to melt us and mould us into obedience.

2. God's mercies are to make us do his will, Rom. xii. 1. 'I beseech you by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice.' Body is by Synecdoche put for the whole man ; if the soul should not be presented to God as well as the body, it could not be reasonable service ; now, saith the apostle, 'I beseech you by the mercies of God, present yourselves a living sacrifice.' Mercies are the strongest obligations to duty, Hol. xi. 4. 'I drew them with the cords of a man ;' that is, with golden cords of my mercy. In a word, all that is written in the law or gospel tends to this, that we shall be doers of God's will, 'Thy will be done.'

3. By doing the will of God, we evidence sincerity. As Christ said in another sense, John x. 25. 'The works which I do, bear witness of me :' So, it is not at all our golden words, if we could speak like angels, but our works, our doing of God's will, which bears witness of our sincerity. We judge not of the health of a man's body by his high colour, but by the pulse of the arm, where the blood chiefly stirs ; so a Christian's soundness is not to be judged by his profession ; what is this high colour ? but the estimate of a Christian is to be taken by his obediential acting, his doing the will of God ; this is the best certificate, and letters testimonial to shew for heaven.

4. Doing God's will much propagates the gospel ; this is the diamond that sparkles in religion. Others cannot see what faith is in the heart ; but when they see we do God's will on earth, this makes them have a venerable opinion of religion, and become proselytes to it. Julian, in one of his epistles,

writing to Arsatius, saith, “ that the Christian religion did much flourish, by the sanctity and obedience of them that professed it.”

5. By doing God’s will, we shew our love to Christ, John xiv. 21. ‘ He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.’ What greater love to Christ, than to do his will, though it cross our own? Every one would be thought to love Christ; but, how shall that be known but by this; Do you do his will on earth? *Neque principem veneramus, si odio ejus leges habemus*, I side. It is a vain thing for a man to say he loves Christ’s person, when he flights his commands. Not to do God’s will on earth, is a great evil. It is (1.) Sinful. (2.) Foolish. (3.) Dangerous.

(1.) It is sinful. (1.) We go against our prayers; we pray, *fiat voluntas tua*, thy will be done, and yet we do not obey his will; we confute our own prayer. (2.) We go against our vow in baptism; we have vowed to fight under the Lord’s banner, to obey his sceptre, and this vow we have often renewed in the Lord’s supper: if we do not God’s will on earth, we are forsworn, and God will indict us of perjury.

(2.) Not to do God’s will on earth, is foolish; (1.) Because there is no standing it out against God. If we do not obey him, we cannot resist him, 1 Cor. x. 22. ‘ Are we stronger than he? Job xl. 9. ‘ Hast thou an arm like God?’ Canst thou measure arms with him? To oppose God, is, as if a child should fight with an archangel; as if a heap of briars should put themselves into a battalia against the flame. (2.) Not to do God’s will is foolish, because, if we do not God’s will, we do the devil’s will. Is it not folly to gratify an enemy? To do his will that seeks our ruin?

Qu. *But are any so wicked as to do the devil’s will?*

Ans. Yes: John viii. 44. ‘ Ye are of your father the devil, and the lust of your father you will do.’ When a man tells a lie doth he not do the devil’s will? Acts v. 3. ‘ Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie unto the Holy Ghost?’

(3.) Not to do God’s will is dangerous; it brings a spiritual *premunire*. If God’s will be not done by us; he will have his will upon us; if we obey not God’s will in commanding, we shall obey his will in punishing, 2 Theff. i. 7. ‘ The Lord Jesus shall be revealed with his mighty angels in flames of fire, taking vengeance on them that obey not his gospel.’ Either we must do God’s will, or suffer it.

6. Whatever God wills us to do, is for our benefit: behold here self interest. As if a king commands his subject to dig in a mine of gold, and then gives him all the gold he had digged: God bids us do his will, and this is for our good, Deut. x. 13. ‘ And now, O Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of

thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, and keep the commandments of the Lord, which I command thee this day for thy good?' It is God's will that we should repent, and this is for our good, repentance ushers in remission, Acts iii. 9. 'Repent, that your sins may be blotted out.' It is God's will that we should believe; and why is it, but that we should be crowned with salvation? Mark xvi. 16. 'He that believes shall be saved.' What God wills is not so much our duty, as our privilege; he bids us obey his voice, and it is greatly for our good, Jer. vii. 23. 'Obey my voice and I will be your God.' I will not only give you my angels to be your guard, but myself to be your portion; my Spirit shall be yours to sanctify you, my love shall be yours to comfort you, my mercy shall be yours to save you, 'I will be your God.'

7. To do God's will, is our honour. A person thinks it an honour to have a king speak to him to do such a thing: the angels count it their highest honour in heaven to do God's will; *servire Deo regnare est*, to serve God, is to reign. *Non onerant nos, sed ornant*, Salvian. How cheerfully did the rowers row the barge that carried Cæsar: to be employed in his barge was an honour: to be employed in doing God's will is *insigne honoris*, the highest ensign of honour that a mortal creature is capable of. Christ's precepts do not burden us, but adorn us.

8. To do God's will on earth, makes us like Christ, and akin to Christ. (1.) It makes us like Christ: is it not our prayer that we may be like Christ? Jesus Christ did his Father's will, John vi. 38. 'I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.' God the Father and Christ, as they have but one essence, so but one will; Christ's will was melted into his Father's, John iv. 34. 'My meat is to do the will of him that sent me.' By our doing God's will on earth, we resemble Christ, nay, we are akin to Christ, and are of the blood-royal of heaven. Alexander called himself cousin to the gods; what honour is it to be akin to Christ! Mat. xii. 50. 'Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.' Did king Solomon arise off his throne to meet his mother and set her on a throne by him? 1 Kings iii. 19. Such honour will Christ bestow on such as are doers of God's will, he will salute them as his kindred, and set them on a glorious throne in the amphitheatre of heaven.

9. Doing God's will on earth brings peace in life and death. (1.) In life, Ps. xix. 11. 'In keeping thy precepts there is great reward,' not only after keeping them, but in keeping them; when we walk closely with God in obedience, there is a secret joy let into the soul, and how swiftly and cheerfully do the wheels of the soul move when they are oiled with the oil of

gladness? (2.) Peace in death. When Hezekiah thought he was about to die, what gave him comfort? This, that he had done the will of God, Isa. xxxviii. 3. ‘Remember, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and have done that which is good in thy sight.’ It was Augustus’ wish, that he might have an easy death, without much pain. If any thing make our pillow easy at death, it will be this, ‘we have endeavoured to do God’s will on earth.’ Did you ever hear any cry out on their death-bed, that they have done God’s will too much? No, hath it not been that they have done his will no more, that they come so short in their obedience? Doing God’s will, will be both your comfort and your crown.

10. If we are not doers of God’s will, we shall be looked upon as contemners of God’s will: let God say what he will, yet men will go on in sin; this is to contemn God, Ps. x. 13. ‘Wherefore do the wicked contemn God?’ To contemn God is worse than to rebel. The tribes of Israel rebelled against Rehoboam, because he made their yoke heavier, 1 Kings xii. 16. But to contemn God is worse, it is to slight him: to contemn God is to put a scorn upon him, and affront him to his face; and an affront will make God draw his sword. Thus I have answered that question, why doing God’s will on earth is so requisite? It is as necessary as salvation.

4. Qu. *In what manner are we to do God’s will, that we may find acceptance?*

Ans. The manner of doing God’s will is the chief thing. The schoolmen say well. *Modus rei cadit sub precepto*, ‘The manner of a thing is as well required as the thing itself:’ If a man build an house, if he doth it not according to the mind of the owner, he likes it not, but thinks all his charges lost? so if we do not God’s will in the right manner, it is not accepted; we must not only do what God appoints, but as God appoints: here lies the very life-blood of religion. So I come to answer this great question, ‘In what manner are we to do God’s will, that we may find acceptance?’

Ans. We do God’s will acceptably, when we do duties spiritually, Phil. iii. 3. ‘We worship God in the spirit.’ To serve God spiritually, is to do duties *ab interno principio*, from an inward principle; The pharisees were very exact about the external part of God’s worship; how zealous were they in the outward observation of the sabbath, charging Christ with the breach of it? But all this was but outward obedience, there was nothing of spirituality in it: then we do God’s will acceptably, when we serve him from a renewed principle of grace. A crab-tree may bear as well as a pearmain, but it is not so good fruit as the other, because it doth not come from so sweet a root: an unregenerate person may do as much external obedi-

ence as a child of God, he may pray as much, hear as much, but his obedience is harsh and sour, because it doth not come from the sweet and pleasant root of grace ; the inward principle of obedience is faith, therefore it is called ' the obedience of faith,' Rom. xvi. 26. But why must this silver thread of faith run through the whole work of obedience ?

Ans. Because faith looks at Christ in every duty, it toucheth the hem of his garment ; and through Christ, both the person and the offering are accepted, Eph. i. 6.

2. We do God's will acceptably, when we prefer his will before all other ; if God wills one thing, and man wills the contrary, we do not obey man's will, but rather God's Acts iv. 19. ' Whether it be right to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.' God saith, ' Thou shalt not make a graven image,' king Nebuchadnezzar set up a golden image to be worshipped ; but the three children, or rather champions, resolve God's will shall take place, and they would obey him, though with the loss of their lives, Dan. iii. 19. ' Be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.'

3. We do God's will acceptably, when we do God's will as it is done in heaven, that is, as the angels do it : to do God's will as the angels *similitudinem notat, non aequalitatem*, Brugen-sis : denotes this much, that we are to resemble them, and make them our pattern. Though we cannot equal the angels in doing God's will, yet we must imitate them ; a child cannot write so well as the scrivener, yet he imitates the copy. In particular.

1. We do God's will as the angels do it in heaven, when we do God's will regularly, *sine deflexu*, we do according to the divine institutions, not decrees of councils, or traditions : this is to do God's will as the angels ; they do it regularly, they do nothing but what is commanded ; angels are not for ceremonies ; as there are statute-laws in the land which bind, so the scripture is God's statute-law, which we must exactly observe, The watch is set by the dial ; then our obedience is right, when it goes by the sun-dial of the word. If obedience hath not the word for its rule, it is not doing God's will, but our own : it is will-worship, Dent. xii. 32. The Lord would have Moses make the tabernacle according to the pattern, Exod. xxv. 40. If Moses had left out any thing in the pattern, or added any thing to it, it would have been very provoking ; to mix any thing of our own devising in God's worship, is to go beside, yea, contrary to the pattern ; God's worship is the apple of his eye, that which he is most tender of ; and there is nothing he hath more shewed his displeasure against, than the corrupting his worship. How severely did God punish Nadab

and Abihu for offering up strange fire ? Lev. x. 2. that is, such fire as God had not sanctified on the altar : whatever is not divinely appointed, is offering up strange fire. There is in many, a strange itch after superstition ; they love a gaudy religion, and are more for the pomp of worship than the purity ; this cannot be pleasing to God ; for, as if God were not wise enough to appoint the manner how he will be served, man will be so bold as to prescribe for him. To thrust human inventions into sacred things, is a doing our own will, not God's ; and he will say, *quis quæ sivit hoc ?* Who hath required this at your hand ? Isa. i. 12. Then we do God's will as it is done in heaven, when we do it regularly, we reverence God's institutions, and the mode of worship, which hath the stamp of divine authority upon it.

2. We do God's will as it is done by the angels in heaven, when we do it entirely, *sine mutilatione*, we do all God's will. The angels in heaven do all that God commands, they leave nothing of his will undone, Ps. cxxx. 20. 'Ye his angels that do his commandments.' If God sent an angel to the virgin Mary, he goes on God's errand ; if he gives his angels a charge to minister for the saints, they obey, Heb. i. 14. It cannot stand with angelical obedience, to leave the least *iota* of God's will unfulfilled : this is to do God's will as the angels, when we do all his will, *quicquid propter Deum fit æqualiter fit*. This was God's charge to Israel, Numb. xv. 40. 'Remember to do all my commandments.' And it was spoken of David, Acts xiii. 22. 'I have found David, a man after mine own heart, who will perform all my will,' Gr. all my wills. Every command hath the same authority ; and if we do God's will uprightly, we do it uniformly, we obey every part and branch of his will, we join first and second table. Surely we owe that to God our Father, which, the papists say, we owe to our mother the church, unlimited obedience ; we must incline to every command, as the needle moves that way which the loadstone draws.

(2.) This discovers the unsoundness of many, who do God's will by halves, they pick and chuse in religion, they in some things comply with God's will, but not in others ; like a foundered horse, who sets but some of his feet on the ground, he favours one foot. He who is to play upon a lute, must strike upon every string, or he spoils all the music. God's commandments may be compared to a ten-stringed lute, we must obey God's will in every command, strike upon every string, or we can make no good melody in religion. The badger hath one foot shorter than the other ; hypocrites are shorter in some duties than others ; some will pray, not give alms ; hear the word, not forgive their enemies ; receive the sacra-

ment, not make restitution : how can they be holy, who are not just ? Hypocrites profess fair, but when it comes to sacrificing the Isaac, crucifying the beloved son, or parting with some of their estate for Christ, here they stick, and say as Naaman, 2 Kings v. 18. ' In this thing, the Lord pardon thy servant.' This is far from doing God's will as the angel do ; God likes not such as do his will by halves if your servant should do some of your work, which you set him about, but not all ; how would you like that ?

Obj. *But who is able to do all God's will ?*

Ans. Though we cannot do all God's will legally, yet we may evangelically : which is,

(1.) When we mourn that we can do God's will no better : when we fail, we weep, Rom. vii. 24.

(2.) When it is the desire of our soul to do God's whole will, Ps. cxix. 5. ' O that my ways were directed to keep thy precepts.' What a child of God wants in strength, he makes up in desire, *in magnis voluisse sat est*.

(3.) When we endeavour *quod conatum* to do the whole will of God. A father bids his child lift such a burden, the child is not able to lift it, but he tries and does his endeavour to lift it ; the father accepts of it, as if he had done it : this is to do God's will evangelically, and God is pleased to take it in good part ; though it be not to satisfaction, yet it is to acceptance.

3. We do God's will as it is done in heaven by the angels, when we do it sincerely, *sine fuco*. To do God's will sincerely, lies in two things ;

1. To do it out of a pure respect to God's command.

2. With a pure eye to God's glory.

1. To do God's will out of a pure respect to God's command. Abraham's sacrificing Isaac was contrary to flesh and blood : to sacrifice the son of his love, the son of the promise, and that no other hand but the father's own should do this, here was hard service : but, because God commanded it, out of pure respect to the command, Abraham obeyed : this is to do God's will aright, when though we feel no present joy or comfort in duty, yet, because God commands, we obey ; not comfort, but the command is the ground of duty : thus the angels do God's will in heaven ; God's command is the weight sets the wheels of their obedience a-going.

2. To do God's will sincerely, is to do it with a pure eye to God's glory. The Pharisees did the will of God in giving alms ; but that which was a dead fly in the ointment, was, that they did not aim at God's glory, but vain glory ; they blew a trumpet. Jehu did the will of God in destroying the Baal-worshippers, and God commended him for doing it ; but because he aimed more at settling himself in the kingdom, than

at the glory of God, therefore God looked upon it no better than murder, and said he would avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, Hof. ii. 4. Let us look to our ends in obedience : though we shoot short let us take a right aim ; one may do God's will, yet not with a perfect heart, 2 Chron. xxv. 2. ' Amaziah did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart.' The action was right for the matter, but his aim was not right ; that action which wants a good aim, wants a good issue ; he doth God's will rightly, that doth it uprightly, his end is to honour God, and lift up his name in the world. A gracious soul makes God his centre. As Joab, when he had taken Rabbah, sent for king David, that he might carry away the glory of the victory, 2 Sam. xii. 27. so when a gracious soul hath done any duty, he desires that the glory of all may be given to God, 1 Pet. iv. 11. ' That in all things God may be glorified.' This is to do God's will as the angels, when we not only advance God's glory, but design his glory ; the angels are said to cast their crowns before the throne, Rev. iv. 10. Crowns are signs of greatest honour, but these crowns the angels lay at the Lord's feet, to shew they ascribe the glory of all they do to him.

3. We do God's will as it is done in heaven by the angels, when we do it willingly, *sine murmuratione*. The angels love to be employed in God's service ; it is the angels' heaven to serve God : they willingly descend from heaven to earth, when they bring messages from God, and glad tidings to the church ; now, heaven being a place of such joy, the angels would not leave it a minute of an hour, only that they take such infinite delight in doing God's will. We do resemble the angels, when we do God's will willingly, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. ' And thou Solomon, my son, serve the Lord with a willing mind.' God's people are called a willing people, Ps. cx. 3. Heb. a people of willingness ; they give God a free-will offering ; though they cannot serve him perfectly, they serve him willingly : a hypocrite, though he doth *facere bonum*, yet not *velle*, he hath no delight in duty ; he doth it rather out of fear of hell, than love to God ; when he doth God's will, yet it is against his will, *virtus nolentium nulla est*. Cain brought his sacrifice, but grudgingly ; his worship was rather a task than an offering, rather penance than a sacrifice ; he did God's will, but against his will ; we must be carried upon the wings of delight in every duty, Israel were to blow the trumpets when they offered burnt-offerings, Num. x. 10. Blowing the trumpets was to shew their joy and cheerfulness in serving God ; we must read and hear the word with delight, Jer. xv. 15. ' Thy word was found, and I did eat it, and it was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.' A pious soul goes to the word as to a feast, or as one would go

with delight to hear music. Sleidan reports, that the Protestants in France had a church they called Paradise, because, when they were in the house of God, they thought themselves in paradise: the saints flock as doves to the windows of God's house, Isa. lx. 8. Who are these that flock as doves to the windows? Not that a truly regenerate person is always in the same cheerful temper of obedience; he may sometimes find an indisposition and weariness of soul, but his weariness is his burden, he is weary of his weariness, he prays, weeps, useth all means to regain that alacrity and freedom in God's service, that he was wont to have: this is to do God's will acceptably, when we do it willingly; it is this crowns all our services; delight in duty is better than duty. The musician is not commended for playing long, but well; it is not how much we do, but how much we love, Ps. cxix. 97. 'O how love I thy law!' Love is as musk among linen, that perfumes it; love perfumes obedience, and makes it go up to heaven as incense. This is doing God's will as the angels in heaven do it; they are ravished with delight while they are praising God, therefore the angels are said to have harps in their hands, Rev. xv. 2. as a sign of their cheerfulness in God's service.

4. We do God's will as the angels in heaven, when we do God's will fervently, *sine remissione*, Rom. xii. 11. 'Fervent in spirit, serving God;' a metaphor from water when it seethes and boils over; so our affections should boil over in zeal and fervency: the angels serve God with fervour and intenseness; the angels are called seraphims, from an Hebrew word which signifies to burn, to shew how the angels are all on fire, Psalm civ. 4. they burn in love and zeal in doing God's will; grace turns a saint into a seraphim; Aaron must put burning coals to the incense, Exod. xvi. 12. Incense was a type of prayer, burning coals of zeal, to shew that the fire of zeal must be put to the incense of prayer. Formality starves duty; when we serve God dully and coldly, is this like the angels? Duty without fervency is as a sacrifice without fire; we should ascend to heaven in a fiery chariot of devotion.

5. We do God's will as the angels in heaven, when we give God the best in every service, Numb. xviii. 29. 'Out of all your gifts, ye shall offer of all the best thereof,' Num. xxviii. 7. 'In the holy place shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto the Lord for a drink-offering.' The Jews might not offer to the Lord wine that was small or mixed, but the strong wine, to imply, that we must offer to God the best, the strongest of our affections: if the spouse had a cup more juicy and spiced, Christ should drink of that, Cant. viii. 2. 'I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate.' Thus the angels in heaven do God's will: they serve him in the best

manner ; they give him their seraphic high-stringed praises : he who loves God, gives him the cream of his obedience. God challenged the fat of all the sacrifice as his due, Levit. iii. 16. Hypocrites care not what services they bring to God, they think to put him off with any thing, they put no cost in their duties, Gen. iv. 3. ‘ Cain brought of the fruit of the ground.’ The Holy Ghost took notice of Abel’s offering, that it was costly. ‘ He brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof,’ Gen. iv. 4. But when he speaks of Cain’s offering, he only saith, ‘ He brought of the fruit of the ground.’ Then we do God’s will aright, when we do offer *pinguia*, we dedicate to him the best. Domitian would not have his image carved in wood or iron, but in gold. God will have the best we have, golden services.

6. We do God’s will as the angels in heaven, when we do it readily and swiftly : the angels do not dispute or reason the case, but as soon as they have their charge and commission from God ; they immediately obey : and, to shew how ready they are to execute God’s will, the cherubims representing the angels, are described with wings, to shew how swift and forward they are in their obedience, it is as if they had wings, Dan. ix. 21. ‘ The man Gabriel (that was an angel) being caused to fly swiftly.’ Thus should we do God’s will as the angels ; as soon as ever God speaks the word, we should be ambitious to obey : alas ! how long is it sometimes ere we can get leave of our hearts to go to a duty ? Christ went more readily *ad crucem*, than we to the throne of grace ; how many disputes and excuses have we ? is this to do God’s will as the angels in heaven do it ? O let us shake off this backwardness to duty, as Paul shook of the viper, *Nescit tarda mollimina spiritus sancti gratia* ; Zech. v. 9. ‘ I saw two women, and the wind was in their wings.’ Wings are swift, but wind in the wings is great swiftness ; such readiness should be in our obedience. As Peter, as soon as ever Christ commanded him to let down his net, at Christ’s word he presently let down the net, and you know what success he had, Luke v. 4. It was prophesied of such as were brought home to Christ, Ps. xviii. 44. ‘ As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me.’

7. We do God’s will as the angels in heaven, when we do it constantly ; the angels are never weary of doing God’s will, they serve God day and night, Rev. vii. 17. thus must we imitate the angels, Ps. cvi. 3. ‘ Blessed is he that doth righteousness at all times.’ Constancy crowns obedience. *Non cepisse, sed persequisse, virtutis est*, Cypr. Our obedience must be like the fire of the altar, which was continually kept burning, Lev. vi. 13. Hypocrites soon give over doing God’s will ; like the Chrysolite which is of a golden colour, in the morning it is very

bright to look on, but towards evening it grows dull ; and hath lost its splendor. We should continue in doing God's will, because of that great loss that will befall us if we give over doing God's will.

(1.) A loss of honour, Rev. iii. 11. ' That no man take thy crown ; ' implying, if the church of Philadelphia left off her obedience, she would lose her crown, viz. her honour and reputation. Apostacy creates infamy : Judas came from an apostle to be a traitor, it was a dishonour.

(2.) If we give over our obedience it is a loss of all that hath been already done ; as if one should work in silver, and then pick out all the stitches. All a man's prayers are lost, all the sabbaths he hath kept are lost, he doth unravel all his good works, Ezek. xviii. 24. ' All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned. ' He undoes all he hath done ; as if one draws a curious picture with the pencil, and then come with his sponge and wipe out all again.

(3.) A loss of the soul and happiness : we were in a fair way for heaven, but, by leaving off doing God's will, we miss the excellent glory, and are plunged deeper in damnation, 2 Pet. ii. 21. ' It had been better not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment. ' Therefore let us continue in doing God's will ; constancy sets the crown upon the head of obedience. Thus you see how we are to do God's will acceptably.

Use I. Branch 1. See hence our impotency, we have no innate power to do God's will ; what need we pray ' Thy will be done,' if we have power of ourselves to do it ? I wonder free-willers pray this petition.

2. *Branch.* If we are to do God's will on earth, as it is done by the angels in heaven, see then the folly of those who go by a wrong pattern ; they do as the most of their neighbours do ; if they talk vain on the sabbath, they do but as their neighbours do ; if now and then they swear an oath, it is the custom of their neighbours to do so ; but we are to do God's will, as the angels in heaven : do the angels do such things ? We must make the angels our patterns, and not our neighbours : if our neighbours do the devil's will, shall we do so too ? if our neighbours go to hell, shall we go thither too for company ?

3. *Branch.* See here that which may make us long to be in heaven, then we shall do God's will perfectly, as the angels do : alas, how defective are we in our obedience here ! how far do we fall short ? We cannot write a copy of holiness without blotting ; our holy things are blemished, like the moon, which, when it shines brightest, hath a dark spot in it ; but in heaven we shall do God's will perfectly, as the angels in glory.

Use II. Of reproof.

1 *Branch.* It reproves such as do not God's will : they have the knowledge of God's will, (knowledge they count an ornament) but though they know God's will, yet they do it not.

(1.) They know what God would have them avoid : they know they should not swear, Mat. v. 34. "Swear not at all." Jer. xxiii. 10. 'For this sin the land mourns.' Yet though they pray 'hallowed be thy name,' they profane it by shooting oaths like chain-bullets against heaven : they know they should abstain from fornication and uncleanness, yet they cannot but bite at the devil's hook, if he bait it with flesh, Jude 7.

(2.) They know what God would have them practise, but they "leave undone those things which they ought to have done." They know it is the will of God they should be true in their promises, just in their dealings, good in their relations ; but they do not the will of God : they know they should read the scriptures, consult with God's oracle ; but the Bible, like rusty armour, is hung up, and seldom used ; they look oftener upon a pack of cards than a Bible ; they know their houses should be *palestræ pietatis*, nurseries of piety, yet have no face of religion in them ; they do not perfume their houses with prayer. What hypocrites are these to kneel down in the church, and lift up their eyes to heaven, and say, 'Thy will be done,' yet have no care at all to do God's will ? What is this but to hang out a flag of defiance against heaven, and rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.

2. *Branch.* It reproves those who do not God's will in a right acceptable manner.

(1.) They do not God's will entirely, all God's will : they will obey God in some things, but not in others ; as if a servant should do some of your work you set him about, but not the rest. Jehu destroyed the idolatry of Baal, but let the golden calves of Jeroboam stand, 2 Kings x. 30. Some will observe the duties of the second table, but not of the first. Others make an high profession, as if their tongues have been touched with a coal from God's altar, but live idly, and out of a calling ; these the apostle complains of, 2 Thess. iii. 11. 'We hear there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all.' Living by faith, and living in a calling, must go together : this is an evil thing, not to do all God's will.

(2.) They do not God's will ardently nor chearfully ; they do not put coals to the incense ; they bring their sacrifice, but not their heart : this is far from doing God's will as the angels ; this loseth the reward : how can God like this, to serve him as if we served him not ? How can God mind our duties, when we ourselves scarce mind them ?

Use III. Of examination.

Let us examine all our actions, whether they are according

to God's will. The will of God is the rule and standard, it is the sun dial by which we must set all our actions : he is no good workman, that doth not work by rule ; he can be no good Christian who goes not according to the rule of God's will. Let us examine our actions whether they do *quadrare*, agree to the will of God : are your speeches according to God's will ? are our words favoury, being seasoned with grace ? is our apparel according to God's will ? 1 Tim. ii. 9. ' In like manner, that women adorn themselves with modest apparel ;' not wanton and garish to invite comers. Our diet, is it according to God's will ? do we hold the golden bridle of temperance, and only take so much as may rather satisfy nature than surfeit it ? Too much oil chokes the lamp. Is our whole carriage and behaviour according to God's will ? are we patterns of prudence and piety ? do we keep up the credit of religion, and shine as lights in the world ? We pray ' Thy will be done' as it is in heaven ; are we like our pattern ? would the angels do this if they were on earth ; would Jesus Christ do this ? This is to christianize, this is to be saints of degrees, when we live our prayer, and our actions are the counter-pane of God's will.

Use IV. Of exhortation.

Let us be doers of the will of God, ' Thy will be done.'

1. It is our wisdom to do God's will, Deut. iv. 6. ' Keep and do these statutes, for this is your wisdom.'

2. It is our safety. Hath not misery always attended the doing of our own will, and happiness the doing of God's will ?

(1.) Misery hath always attended the doing of our own will. Our first parents left God's will to fulfil their own, ' in eating the forbidden fruit ;' and what came of it ? The apple had a bitter core in it, they purchased a curse for themselves and all their posterity. King Saul left God's will to do his own ; he spares Agag, and the best of the sheep, and what was the issue, but the loss of his kingdom ?

(2.) Happiness hath always attended the doing of God's will. Joseph obeyed God's will, in refusing the embraces of his mistress ; and was not this his preferment ? God raised him to be the second man in the kingdom. Daniel did God's will contrary to the king's decree ; he bowed his knee in prayer to God, and did not God make all Persia bow their knees to Daniel ?

(3.) The way to have our will, is to do God's will. Would not we have a blessing in our estate ? then let us do God's will, Deut. xxviii. 1, 3. ' If thou shalt hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, to do all his commandments, the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth : blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.' This is the way to have a good harvest. Would we have a blessing in our souls ? then let us do God's will, Jer. vii. 23.

‘Obey my voice, and I will be your God;’ I will entail myself upon you, as an everlasting portion; my grace shall be yours to sanctify you, my mercy shall be yours to save you. You see you lose nothing by doing God’s will, this is the way to have your will; let God have his will in being obeyed, and you shall have your will in being saved.

Qu. How shall we come to do God’s will aright?

Ans. 1. Get sound knowledge; we must know God’s will before we can do it; knowledge is the eye to direct the foot of obedience. The papists make ignorance the mother of devotion, but Christ makes ignorance the mother of error, Matth. xxii. 29. ‘Ye err, not knowing the scripture.’ We must know God’s will before we can do it aright. Affection without knowledge, is like a horse full of mettle, but his eyes are out.

2. If we would do God’s will aright, let us labour for self-denial; unless we deny our own will, we shall never do God’s will; God’s will and ours are like the wind and tide when they are contrary; God wills one thing, we will another; God calls us to be crucified to the world; by nature we love the world; God calls us to forgive our enemies, by nature we bear malice in our hearts: God’s will and ours are contrary, like the wind and tide; and till we can cross our own will, we shall never fulfil God’s.

3. Let us get humble hearts: pride is the spring of disobedience, Exod. v. 2. ‘Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?’ A proud man thinks it below him to stoop to God’s will. Be humble; the humble soul saith, ‘Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?’ He puts as it were, a blank paper into God’s hand; and bids him write what he will, he will subscribe to it.

4. Beg grace and strength of God to do his will, Pf. cxliii. 10. ‘Teach me to do thy will:’ as if David had said, Lord, I need not be taught to do my own will, I can do it fast enough, but teach me to do thy will. And that which may add wings to prayer, is God’s gracious promise, ‘I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes;’ Ezek. xxxvi. 27. If the loadstone draw the iron, it is not hard for the iron to move; if God’s Spirit enable, it will not be hard, but rather delightful to do God’s will.

II. In this petition, ‘Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven,’ we pray “That we may have grace to submit to God’s will patiently in what he inflicts.” The text is to be understood as well of suffering God’s will as of doing it; so Maldonet, and the most judicious interpreters. I shall speak now of patient submission to God’s will in whatever he inflicts, ‘thy will be done.’ This should be the temper of a good Chris-

tian, when he is under any disastrous providence, to lie quietly at God's feet, and say, 'thy will be done.'

Qu. 1. *What this patient submission to God's will is not?*

Ans. There is something looks like patience which is not; namely, when a man bears a thing because he cannot help it; he takes affliction as his fate and destiny, therefore he endures that quietly which he cannot avoid; this is rather necessity than patience.

Qu. 2. *What it is may stand with patient submission to God's will?*

Ans. 1. A Christian may be sensible of affliction, yet patiently submit to God's will, we ought not to be Stoics, insensible and unconcerned with God's dealings; like the sons of Deucalion, who (as the Poets say) were begotten of a stone. Christ was sensible when he sweat great drops of blood, but there was submission to God's will, Mat. xxvi. 39. 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.' We are bid to humble ourselves under God's hand, 1 Pet. v. 6. which we cannot do unless we are sensible of it.

2. A Christian may weep under an affliction, yet patiently submit to God's will. God allows tears; it is a sin to be 'without natural affection,' Rom. i. 31. Grace makes the heart tender; *strangulate inclusus dolor*; weeping gives vent to sorrow, *expletur lachrymis dolor*. Joseph wept over his dead father; Job, when he had so much ill news brought him at once, rent his mantle, an expression of grief, but did not tear his hair in anger; only worldly grief must not be immoderate; a vein may bleed too much; the water riseth too high when it overflows the banks.

3. A Christian may complain in his affliction, yet be submissive to God's will, Psal. cxlii. 2. 'I cried to the Lord with my voice, I poured out my complaint before him.' We may (being under oppression) tell God how it is with us, and desire him to write down our injuries. Shall not the child complain to his father when he is wronged? An holy complaint may stand with patient submission to God's will: but, though we may complain to God, we must not complain of God.

Qu. 3. *What is it cannot stand with patient submission to God's will?*

Ans. 1. Discontentedness with providence. Discontent hath a mixture of grief and anger in it, and, both these, must needs raise a storm of passion in the soul. God having touched the apple of our eye, and smitten us in that we loved, we are touchy and sullen, and God shall not have a good look from us, Gen. iv. 6. 'Why art thou wroth?' Like a sullen bird, that is angry, and beats herself against the cage.

2. Murmuring cannot stand with submission to God's will; murmuring is the height of impatience, it is a kind of mutiny in the soul against God, Numb. xxi. 5. 'The people spake against God.' When a cloud of sorrow is gathered in the soul, and this cloud doth not only drop into tears, but out of this cloud comes hail-stones, murmuring words against God, this is far from patient submission to God's will. When water is hot the scum boils up; when the heart is heated with anger against God, then this scum boils up. Murmuring is very evil; it springs, 1. From pride: men think they have deserved better at God's hand; and, when they begin to swell they spit poison. 2. Distrust; men believe not that God can make a treacle of poison, bring good out of all their troubles, therefore they murmur, Psal. cvi. 24. 'They believed not his word, but murmured.' Men murmur at God's providences, because they distrust his promises; God hath much ado to bear this sin, Numb. xiv. 27. This is far from submission to God's will.

3. Discomposedness of spirit cannot stand with quiet submission to God's will. When a man saith, I am so encompassed with trouble, that I know not how to get out: head and heart are so taken up, that a person is not fit to pray. When the strings of a lute are snarled, the lute can make no good music; so, when a Christian's spirits are perplexed and disturbed, he cannot make melody in his heart to the Lord. To be under a discomposure of mind, is as when an army is routed, one runs this way, and another that, the army is put into disorder; so, when a Christian is in an hurry of mind, his thoughts run up and down distracted, as if he were undone; this cannot stand with patient submission to God's will.

4. Self-apology cannot stand with submission to God's will; instead of being humbled under God's hand, a person justifies himself. A proud sinner stands upon his own defence, and is ready to accuse God of unrighteousness, which is, as if we should tax the sun with darkness: this is far from submission to God's will. God smote Jonah's gourd, and he stands upon his own vindication, Jonah iv. 9. 'I do well to be angry to the death.' What, to be angry with God! and to justify this, 'I do well to be angry!' this was strange to come from a prophet, and was far from this prayer, Christ hath taught us, 'Thy will be done.'

Qu. 4. *What this patient submission to God's will is?*

Ans. It is a gracious frame of soul, whereby a Christian is content to be at God's disposal, and doth acquiesce in his wisdom, 1 Sam. iii. 18. 'It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.' Acts xxi. 14. 'The will of the Lord be done.' That I may further illustrate this, I shall shew you wherein

this submission to the will of God lies; it lies chiefly in three things.

(1.) In acknowledging God's hand; seeing God in the affliction, Job v. 6. 'Affliction ariseth not out of the dust;' it comes not by chance. Job did eye God in all that beset him, Job i. 22. 'The Lord hath taken away:' He complains not of the Chaldeans or the influence of the planets; he looks beyond second causes, he sees God in the affliction, 'The Lord hath taken away.' There can be no submission to God's will, till there be an acknowledging of God's hand.

(2.) Patient submission to God's will lies in our justifying of God, 'Psal. xxii. 2. 'O my God, I cry unto thee, yet thou hearest not, thou turnest a deaf ear to me in my affliction;' ver. 3. 'But thou art holy.' God is holy and just, not only when he punisheth the wicked, but when he afflicts the righteous. Tho' God put wormwood in our cup, yet we vindicate God, and proclaim his righteousness. As Mauritius the emperor, when he saw his son slain before his eyes, *justus es, Domine*, righteous art thou, O Lord, in all thy ways. We justify God, and confess he punisheth us less than we deserve, Ezra ix. 13.

(3.) Patient submission to God's will lies in the accepting of the punishment, Lev. xxvi. 41. 'And they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity.' Accepting the punishment: that is, taking all that God doth in good part. He who accepts of the punishment, saith, 'good is the rod of the Lord;' he kisseth the rod, yea, bleisseth God that he would use such a merciful severity, rather to afflict him than to lose him. This is patient submission to God's will.

This patient submission to God's will in affliction shews a great deal of wisdom and piety. The skill of a pilot is most discerned in a storm, and a Christian's grace in the storm of affliction; and indeed this submission to God's will is most requisite for us while we live here in this lower region. In heaven there will be no need of patience more than there is need of the star-light when the sun shines. In heaven there will be all joy, and what need of patience then? It requires no patience to wear a crown of gold; but while we live here in a valley of tears, there needs patient submission to God's will, Heb. x. 36. 'Ye have need of patience.'

1. The Lord sometimes lays heavy affliction upon us, 'Psal. xxxviii. 2. 'Thy hand presseth me sore.' The word in the original for 'afflicted,' signifies to be 'melted.' God sometimes melts his people in a furnace.

2. God sometimes lays divers afflictions upon us, Job ix. 17. 'He multiplies my wounds.' God shoots divers sorts of arrows:

(1.) Sometimes God afflicts with poverty. The widow had

nothing left her save a pot of oil, 1 Kings xvii. 12. Poverty is a great temptation. To have an estate almost reduced to nothing, is hard to flesh and blood, Ruth i. 20. 'Call me not Naomi, but Marah; I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty.' This exposeth to contempt; when the prodigal was poor, his brother was ashamed to own him, Luke xv. 30. 'This thy son;' he said not, this my brother, but this thy son; he scorned to call him brother. When the deer is shot and bleeds, the rest of the herd push it away; when God shoots the arrow of poverty at one, others are ready to push him away. When Terence was grown poor, his friend Scipio cast him off. The muses (Jupiter's daughters) the poets feign, had no suitors, because they wanted a dowry.

(2.) God sometimes afflicts with reproach. Such as have the light of grace shining in them, yet may be eclipsed in their name. The primitive Christians were reproached as if they were guilty of incest, saith Tertullian. Luther was called a trumpeter of rebellion. David calls reproach an heart-breaking, Psal. lxxix. 20. this God lets his dear saints be oft exercised with. Dirt may be cast upon a pearl, those names may be blotted, which are written in the book of life. Sincerity, though it shields from hell, yet not from slander.

(3.) God sometimes afflicts with the loss of dear relations, Ezek. xxiv. 16. 'Son of man, behold I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke.' This is like pulling away a limb from the body. He takes away an holy child; Jacob's life was bound up in Benjamin, Gen. xlv. 30. and that which puts teeth into the cross, and is worse than the loss of children, is, when they are continued as living crosses; where the parents expected honey, there to have wormwood. What greater cut to a godly parent, than a child who disclaims his father's God; a corrosive applied to the body may do well, but a bad child is a corrosive to the heart. Such an undutiful son had David, who conspired treason, and would not only have taken away his father's crown, but his life.

(4.) God sometimes inflicts with infirmness of body; scarce a well day. Sicknes takes away the comfort of life, and makes one in deaths oft. Thus God tries his people with various afflictions, so that there is need of patience to submit to God's will. He who hath divers bullets shot at him needs armour; when divers afflictions assault, we need patience as armour of proof.

3. God sometimes lets the affliction continue long, Psal. lxxiv. 9. As it is with diseases, there are some chronical, that linger and hang about the body several years together; so it is with affliction, the Lord is pleased to exercise many of his precious ones with chronical affliction, such as lie upon them a

long time : So that in all these cases we need patience and submission of spirit to God's will.

Use I. It reproves such as have not yet learned this part of the Lord's prayer, 'Thy will be done;' they have only said it, but not learned it. If things be not according to their mind, if the wind of providence crosseth the tide of their will, they are discontented and querulous. Where is now submission of will to God? To be displeased with God, if things do not please us, is this to lie at God's feet and acquiesce in his will? This is a very bad temper of Spirit, and God may justly punish us by letting us have our will. Rachel cried out, 'give me children or I die,' Gen. xxx. 1. God let her have a child, but it cost her her life, Gen. xxxv. 8. Israel not content with manna (angel's food) they must have quails to their manna, God punished them by letting them have their will, Numb. xi. 31. 'There went forth a wind from the Lord and brought quails.' ver. 33. 'And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against them, and the Lord smote them with a great plague.' They had better been without their quails, than had such sour sauce to them. Many have importunately desired the life of a child, and could not bring their will to God's, to be content to part with it : and the Lord hath punished them by letting them have their will ; the child hath lived and been a burden to them. Seeing their wills crossed God, their child shall cross them.

Use II. Of exhortation. Let us be exhorted, whatever troubles God doth exercise us with, *æquo animo ferre*, to resign up our wills to God, and say, 'Thy will be done.' Which is fittest, that God should bring his will to ours, or we bring our will to his? Say, as Eli, 1 Sam. iii. 18. 'It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good :' and as David, 2 Sam. xv. 26. 'Behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.' It was the saying of Harpukas, *placet mihi quod regi placet* that pleaseth me which pleaseth the king : so should we say, that which pleaseth God pleaseth us, 'Thy will be done.' Some have not yet learned this art of submission to God ; and truly he who wants patience in affliction, is like a soldier in battle who wants armour.

Qu. When do we not as we ought, submit to God's will in affliction?

Ans. (1.) When we have hard thoughts of God, and our hearts begin to swell against him.

2. When we are so troubled at our present affliction, that we are unfit for duty. We can mourn as doves, but not pray or praise God. We are so discomposed, that we are not fit to

hearken to any good counsel, Exod. vi. 9. ‘ They hearkened not to Moses for anguish of spirit.’ Israel was so full of grief under their present burdens, that they minded not what Moses said, though he came with a message from God to them ; ‘ They hearkened not to Moses for anguish of spirit.’

3. We do not submit as we ought to God’s will, when we labour to break loose from affliction by indirect means. Many, to rid themselves out of trouble, run themselves into sin ; when God hath bound them with the cords of affliction, they go to the devil to loosen their bands. Better is it to stay in affliction, than to sin ourselves out of affliction. O let us learn to stoop to God’s will in all afflictive providences.

Qu. *But how shall we bring ourselves to this Christian temper in all occurrences of providence, patiently to acquiesce in God’s will, and say, ‘ thy will be done ?’ We know not what trials personal or national we may be exercised with. We seem now to be under the planet Saturn, which hath a malignant aspect. Our ship is steered so strangely, that we are in danger, on one hand, of the sands, on the other hand, of the rocks. If affliction comes, how shall we keep a Christian decorum ? How shall we bear things with equanimity of mind, and say, ‘ thy will be done ?’*

Ans. The means for a quiet resignation to God’s will in affliction are,

1. Judicious consideration, Eccl. vii. 14. ‘ In the day of adversity consider.’ When any thing burdens us, or runs cross to our desires, did we but sit down and consider, and weigh things in the balance of judgment, it would much quiet our minds, and subject our wills to God ; ‘ In the day of adversity consider.’ Consideration would be as David’s harp, to charm down the evil spirit of frowardness and discontent.

Qu. *But what shall we consider ?*

Ans. That which may make us submit to God in affliction, and say, ‘ thy will be done,’ is,

1. To consider, that the present state of life is subject to afflictions, as a seaman’s life is subject to storms ; *ferre quam sortem omnes patiuntur nemo recusat* : Job v. 7. ‘ Man is born to trouble ; he is heir apparent to it ; he comes into the world with a cry, and goes out with a groan.’ *Ea lege nati sumus.* The world is a place where much wormwood grows, Lam. iii. 15. ‘ He hath filled me with bitterness,’ Heb. with bitter-nesses ; he hath made me drunk with wormwood. Troubles arise like sparks out of a furnace. Afflictions are some of the thorns which the earth after the curse brings forth. We may as well think to stop the chariot of the sun when it is in swift motion, as put a stop to trouble : the consideration of this, our life is exposed to eclipses and sufferings, should make us say

with patience, 'thy will be done.' Shall a mariner be angry that he meets with a storm at sea?

2. Consideration, God hath a special hand in the disposal of all occurrences that fall out. Job eyed God in the affliction, chap. i. 21. 'The Lord hath taken away.' He doth not complain of the Sabeans, or the influences of the planets; he looked beyond all second causes, he saw God in the affliction, and that made him cheerfully submit, 'blessed be the name of the Lord.' And Christ looked beyond Judas and Pilate, he looked to God's determinate counsel in delivering him up to be crucified, Acts iv. 27. this made him say, Mat. xxvi. 39. 'Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt.' It is vain to quarrel with instruments: wicked men are but a rod in God's hand, Isa. x. 5. 'O Assyrian, the rod of my anger.' Whoever brings an affliction, God sends it: the consideration of this would make us say, 'thy will be done;' what God doth, he sees a reason for. We read of a wheel within a wheel, Ezek. i. 15. The outward wheel, which turns all, is providence; the wheel within this wheel, is God's decree; this believed, would rock the heart quiet. Shall we mutiny at that which God doth? We may as well quarrel with the works of creation, as the works of providence.

3. Consideration, which may make us humbly submit to God's will, is, that there is a necessity of affliction, 1 Pet. i. 6. ' (if need be) ye are in heaviness.' It is needful some things be kept in brine: afflictions are needful upon several accounts.

(1.) To keep us humble. Oft-times there is no other way to have the heart low, but by being brought low, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12. 'When Manasseh was in affliction he humbled himself greatly.' Corrections are corrosives to eat out the proud flesh, Lam. iii. 19. 'Remembering my misery, the wormwood and the gall, my soul is troubled in me.'

(2.) It is necessary that there should be affliction; for if God did not sometimes bring us into affliction, how could his power be seen in bringing us out? Had not Israel been in the Egyptian-furnace, God had lost his glory in their deliverance.

(3.) If there were no affliction, then many parts of scripture could not be fulfilled. God hath promised to help us to bear affliction, Pl. xxxvii. 24, 39. how could we experience God's supporting us in trouble, if we did not sometimes meet with it? God hath promised to give us joy in affliction, John xvi. 20. how could we taste this honey of joy, if we were not sometimes in affliction? Again, God hath promised to wipe away tears from our eyes, Isa. xxv. 8. how could God wipe away our tears in heaven, if we never shed any? So that, in several respects, there is an absolute necessity that we should meet with

affliction ; and, shall not we quietly submit ? and say, Lord, I see there is a necessity of it ; ‘ thy will be done.’

4. Consideration, to make us submit to God’s will in affliction, is, that whatever we feel, it is nothing but what we have brought upon ourselves ; we put a rod into God’s hand to chastise us. Christian, God lays thy cross on thee, but it is of thy own making. If a man’s field be full of tares, it is nothing but what he hath sown in it : if thou reapest a bitter crop of affliction, it is nothing but what thou thyself hast sown. The cords that pinch thee are of thy own twisting ; *meme adsum que feci*. If children will eat green fruit, they may thank themselves if they are sick ; if we eat the forbidden fruit, no wonder to feel it gripe. Sin is the Trojan horse, that lands an army of afflictions upon us, Jer. iv. 15. ‘ A voice publisheth affliction :’ ver. 18. ‘ Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee ; this is thy wickedness.’ If we by sin run ourselves into arrears with God, no wonder if he set affliction as a serjeant on our back to arrest us. This may make us patiently submit to God in affliction, and say, ‘ Thy will be done.’ We have no cause to complain of God, it is nothing but what our sins have merited, Jer. ii. 17. ‘ Hast not thou procured this unto thyself ?’ The cross, though it be of God’s laying, it is of our own making ; say then, as Micah vii. 9. ‘ I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.’

5. Consideration, to cause submission to God’s will in affliction, God is now about to make an experiment, he doth it to prove and try us, Ps. lxvi. 10. ‘ Thou, O God hast tried us as silver is tried, thou laidst affliction upon our loins.’ If there were no affliction, how should God have opportunity to try men ? Hypocrites can sail in a pleasure boat, serve God in prosperity ; but when we can keep close to God in times of danger, when we can trust God when we have no pawn, and love God when we have no smile, here is the trial of sincerity ! this may make us say, ‘ thy will be done.’ God is only trying us ; what hurt is in that ? What is the gold worse of being tried ?

6. Consideration, to make us submit to God in affliction, and say, ‘ thy will be done,’ is, that in all our crosses God hath a kindness for us. As there was no night so dark, but Israel had a pillar of fire to give light ; so there is no condition so cloudy, but we may see that which gives light of comfort : David would sing of mercy and judgment, Ps. ci. 1. This may make our wills cheerfully submit to God’s to consider in every path of providence we may see a foot-step of kindness.

Qu. *What kindness is there in affliction, when God seems most unkind ?*

Ans. 1. There is kindness in affliction, in that there is love in it. God’s rod, and God’s love may stand together, Heb.

xii. 6. 'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth : ' whom he cockereth above the rest ; so Mercer. As Abraham, when he lift up his hand to sacrifice Isaac, loved him ; so when God afflicts his people, and seems to sacrifice their outward comforts, yet he loves them : the husbandman loves his vine, when he cuts it and makes it bleed ; and, shall not we submit to God ? shall we quarrel with that which hath kindness in it, which comes in love ? The chirurgeon binds the patient, and lanceth him, but no wise man will quarrel with the chirurgeon, it is in love, and in order to a cure.

2. There is kindness in affliction, in that God deals with us now as children, Heb. xii. 7. ' If you endure chastening, God deals with you as sons ; ' God hath one Son without sin, but no son without stripes. Affliction is a badge of adoption ; it is *Dei signillum*, saith Tertullian, it is God's seal by which he marks us for his own. When Munster, that holy man, lay sick, his friends asked him how he did ? He pointed to his sores, saying, *Hæ sunt gemmae Dei*, these are the jewels with which God decks his children. Shall not we then say, ' thy will be done ? ' Lord, there is kindness in the cross, thou usest us as children. The rod of discipline is to fit us for the inheritance.

3. There is kindness, that God hath, in all our afflictions, left us a promise ; in the most cloudy providences, the promise appears as a rain-bow in the cloud.

(1.) Then we shall have God's promise with us, Ps. xci. 15. ' I will be with him in trouble. ' It cannot be ill with that man with whom God is ; I will be with him, *i. e.* to support, sanctify, sweeten ; God's presence is a sweetening ingredient into every affliction. I had rather be in prison, and have God's presence, than be in a palace, and want it.

(2.) Promise, that he will lay no more upon us than he will enable us to bear, 1 Cor. x. 13. God will not try us beyond our strength ; either God will make the yoke lighter, or our faith stronger : may not this make us submit our wills to God, when afflictions have so much kindness in them ? In all our trials, God hath left us promises, which are like manna in the wilderness.

4. This is great kindness, that all the troubles that befall us shall be for our profit, Heb. xii. 10. ' He for our profit. '

Qu. *But what profit is in affliction ?*

Ans. 1. Afflictions are disciplinary, they teach us, *Schola crucis*, *Schola lucis*. Many psalms have this inscription : *Majchil*, a psalm giving instruction : affliction may have this inscription upon it, *Majchil*, an affliction giving instruction, Micah vi. 9. ' Hear ye the rod. ' Luther saith, he could never rightly understand some of the psalms, till he was in affliction, Judges viii. 16. ' Gideon took thorns of the wilderness, and briars, and

with them he taught the men of Succoth :’ God by the thorns and briars of affliction teacheth us.

(1.) Affliction shews us more of our own heart than ever. Water in a glass-vial looks clear ; but set it on the fire, and the scum boils up ; when God sets us upon the fire, then we see that corruption boils up which we did not discern before. Sharp, afflictions are to the soul as a soaking rain to the houses, we know not that there are such holes in the house, till the shower comes, and then we see it drop down here and there ; so, we before did not know that there were such unmortified lusts in the soul, till the storm of affliction comes, then we spy unbelief, impatience, carnal fear, we see it drop down in many places. Thus affliction is a sacred *collyrium*, it clears our eye sight ; the rod gives wisdom.

(2.) Affliction brings those sins to remembrance, which before we buried in the grave of forgetfulness. Joseph’s brethren, for twenty years together, were not at all troubled for their sin in selling their brother ; but when they came into Egypt, and began to be in straits, then their sin in selling their brother came into their remembrance, and their hearts did smite them, Gen. xlii. 21. ‘ They said one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our brother.’ When a man is in distress, now his sin comes fresh into his mind ; conscience makes a rehearsal sermon of all the evils which have passed in his life ; now his expence of precious time, his sabbath-breaking, his flighting of the word, come into his remembrance, and he goes out with Peter and weeps bitterly. Thus the rod gives wisdom, it shews the hidden evil of the heart, and brings former sins to remembrance.

2. There is profit in affliction, as it quickens a spirit of prayer, *premuntur iusti ut preffi clament*. Jonah was asleep in the ship, but at prayer in the whale’s belly. Perhaps, in a time of health and prosperity, we prayed in a cold and formal manner, we put no coals to the incense, we did scarce mind our own prayers, and how should God mind them ? Now, God sends some cross or other to make us stir up ourselves to take hold of God : when Jacob was in fear of his life by his brother, then he wrestles with God and weeps in prayer, and would not leave God till he blessed him, Hos. xii. 4. It is with many of God’s children, as with those who formerly had the sweating sickness in this land, it was a sleepy disease, if they slept they died ; therefore to keep them waking, they were smitten with rosemary branches ; so, the Lord useth affliction as a rosemary branch to keep us from sleeping, and to awaken a spirit of prayer, Isa. xxvi. 16. ‘ They poured out a prayer, when thy chastening hand was upon them ;’ now their prayer pierced the heavens : in times of trouble we pray feelingly, and we never

pray so fervently as when we pray feelingly ; and, is not this for our profit ?

3. Affliction is for our profit, as it is a means to expectorate and purge out our sins, Isa. xxvii. 9. ' By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged.' Affliction is God's phyfic to expel the noxious humour, it cures the imposthume of pride, the fever of lust ; and, is not this for our profit ? Affliction is God's file to fetch off our rust, his flail to thresh off our husks : the water of affliction is not to drown us, but to wash off our spots.

4. To be under the black rod, is profitable, in that hereby we grow more serious, and are more careful to clear our evidences for heaven : in times of prosperity, when the rock poured out rivers of oil, Job xxix. 6. we were careless in getting, at least clearing our title to glory. Had many no better evidences for their land, than they have for their salvation, they were but in an ill case ; but when an hour of trouble comes, we begin to look after our spiritual evidences, and see how things stand between God and our souls ; and, is it not for our profit to see our interest in Christ more cleared than ever ?

5. Affliction is for our profit, as it is a means to take us more off from the world ; the world oft proves not only a spider's web, but a cockatrice egg : pernicious worldly things are great enchantments ; they are *retinacula spei*, Tertull. They hinder us in our passage to heaven. If a clock be overwound, it stands still ; so, when the heart is wound up too much to the world, it stands still to heavenly things : Affliction sounds a retreat to call us off the immoderate pursuit of earthly things : when things are frozen and congealed together, the only way to separate them, is by fire ; so, when the heart and the world are congealed together, God hath no better way to separate them than by the fire of affliction.

6. Affliction is for our profit, as it is a refiner ; it works us to further degrees of sanctity, Heb. xii. 10. ' He for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' The vessels of mercy are the brighter for scouring ; you pour water on your linen when you would whiten it ; God pours the water of affliction upon us, to lay our souls a-whitening. The leaves of the fig-tree and root are bitter, but the fruit is sweet : afflictions are in themselves bitter, but they bring forth the sweet fruits of righteousness, Heb. xii. 11. ' This may make us submit to God and say, ' Thy will be done ; ' there's kindness in affliction, it is for our spiritual profit.

7. There's kindness in affliction, in that there is no condition so bad, but it might be worse ; when it is duskish it might be darker ; God doth not make our cross so heavy as he might, he doth not stir up all his anger, Pl. lxxviii. 38. He doth

not put so many nails in our yoke, so much wormwood in our cup as he might. Doth God chastise thy body ? He might torture thy conscience. Doth he cut thee short ? He might cut thee off ; the Lord might make our chains heavier. Is it a burning fever ? It might have been the burning lake : Doth God use the pruning knife to lop thee ? he might bring his axe to hew thee down, Ezek. xlvii. 3. ‘ The waters were up to the ancles.’ Do the waters of affliction come up to the ancles ? God might make them rise higher ; nay, he might drown thee in the waters. This may make us submit quietly, and say, ‘ Thy will be done,’ because there is so much kindness in it ; whereas God useth the rod, he might use the scorpion.

8. There is kindness in affliction, in that your case is not so bad as others ; they are always upon the rack, they spend their years with sighing, Pf. xxxi. 10. Have you a gentle fit of the ague ? Others cry out of the stone and strangulation : Do you bear the wrath of men ? Others bear the wrath of God : you have but a single trial, others have them twisted together : God shoots but one arrow at you, he shoots a shower of arrows at others : is there not kindness in all this ? We are apt to say, never any suffered as we : Was it not worse with Lazarus, who was so full of sores, that the dogs took pity on him, and licked his sores ? Nay, was it not worse with Christ, who lived poor, and died cursed ? May not this cause us to say ‘ thy will be done ?’ There is kindness in it, that God deals not so severely with us as with others.

9. There is kindness in affliction, in that (if we belong to God) it is all the hell we shall have. Some have two hells, they suffer in their body and conscience ; here is one hell, and another hell is to come, unquenchable fire. Judas had two hells, but a child of God hath but one hell. Lazarus had all his hell here ; he was full of sores, but had a convoy of angels to carry him to heaven when he died. Say then, Lo, if this be the worst I shall have, if this be all my hell, I will patiently acquiesce. ‘ Thy will be done.’

10. There is kindness, in that God gives gracious supports in affliction ; if he strikes with one hand, he will support with the other, Deut. xxxiii. 27. ‘ Underneath are the everlasting arms.’ There is not the least trial, but if God would desert us, and not assist us with his grace, we should sink under it : the frown of a great man, the fear of reproach ; Peter was frightened at the voice of a maid, Matt. xxvi. 69. O therefore what mercy is it to have Christ strengthen us, and as it were bear the heaviest part of the cross with us. One said, I have no ravishing joys in my sickness, but, I bless God, I have sweet supports : and should not this cause submission to God’s will, and make us say, Lo, if thou art so kind as to bear us up in

affliction, that we do not faint, put us into what wine-press thou pleasest, 'Thy will be done.'

11. There is kindness in affliction, in that it is preventive.

(1.) God by this stroke of his would prevent some sin: 'Paul's thorn in the flesh,' was to prevent his being lifted up in pride, 2 Cor. xii. 7. As affliction is sometimes sent for thy punishing of sin, so sometimes for the preventing of sin. Prosperity exposeth to much evil; it is hard to carry a full cup without spilling, and a full estate without sinning. God's people know not how much they are beholden to their affliction, they might have fallen into some scandal, had not God set an hedge of thorns in their way to stop them: what kindness is this? God lets us fall into sufferings, to prevent falling into snares: say then, Lord, do as it seems good in thy sight, 'Thy will be done.'

(2.) God by affliction would prevent damnation, 1 Cor. xi. 32. 'We are corrected in the world, that we may not be condemned with the world.' A man by falling into the briars, is saved from falling into the river; God lets us fall into the briars of affliction, that we may not drown in perdition. It is a great favour when a lesser punishment is inflicted, to prevent a greater; is it not clemency in the judge, when he lays some light penalty on the prisoner, and saves his life? so, when God lays upon us light affliction, and saves us from wrath to come. As Pilate said, Luke xxiii. 16. 'I will chastise him, and let him go;' so God chastiseth his children, and lets them go, frees them from eternal torment. What is a drop of sorrow, the godly taste, to that sea of wrath the wicked shall be drinking of to all eternity? O what kindness is here; may not this make us say, 'Thy will be done?' It is preventing physic.

12. There is kindness, in that God doth mix his providences, Hab. iii. 2. 'In anger he remembers mercy.' Not all pure gall, but some honey mixed with it. Ather's shoes were iron and brass, but his foot was dipped in oil, Gen. xxxiii. 24. Affliction is the shoe of brass, but God causeth the foot to be dipped in oil. As the limner mixeth with his dark shadows bright colours; so the wise God mingles the dark and bright colours, crosses and blessings. The body is afflicted, but within is peace of conscience: there is a blessing. Joseph was sold into Egypt, and put in prison: there was the dark side of the cloud. Job lost all that ever he had, his skin was clothed with boils and ulcers; here was a sad providence. But God gave a testimony from heaven of Job's integrity, and did afterwards double his estate, Job xlii. 10. 'The Lord gave Job twice as much;' here was the goodness of God seen towards Job. God doth chequer his works of providence, and shall not we submit

and say, Lord, if thou art so kind, mixing so many bright colours with my dark condition, 'thy will be done.'

13. There is kindness in affliction, in that God doth moderate his stroke, Jer. xxx. 11. 'I will correct thee in measure.' God will in the day of his east-wind stay his rough wind, Isa. xxvii. 8. The physician that understands the crasis and temper of the patient will not give too strong physic for the body, nor will he give one drachm or scruple too much : God knows our frame, he will not over-afflict ; he will not stretch the strings of his viol too hard, lest they break. And is there not kindness in all this ? May not this work our hearts to submission ? Lord, if thou usest so much gentleness, and correctest in measure, 'thy will be done.'

14. There is kindness in affliction, in that God often sweetens it with divine consolation, 1 Cor. i. 4. 'Who comforteth us in all our tribulation.' After a bitter potion, a lump of sugar. God comforts in affliction.

(1.) Partly by his word, Ps. cxix. 50. 'This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me.' The promises of the word are a shop of cordials.

(2.) God comforts by his Spirit. Philip, landgrave of Hesse, said, that in his troubles, *Se divinas martyrum consolationes sensisse*, he felt the divine consolations of the martyrs. David had his pilgrimage songs, Ps. cxix. 54. and St. Paul his prison songs, Acts xvi. 25. Thus God candies our wormwood with sugar, and makes us gather grapes of thorns. Some of the saints have such ravishing joys in affliction, that they had rather endure their sufferings than want their comforts. O how much kindness is in the cross ! In the belly of the lion is an honey-comb ; may not this make us cheerfully submit to God's will, when God lines the yoke with comfort, and gives us honey at the end of the rod ?

15. There is kindness in affliction, in that God doth curtail and shorten it ; he will not let it lie on too long, Isa. lvii. 16. 'I will not contend for ever, lest the spirit should fail before me.' God will give his people a writ of ease, and proclaim a year of jubilee ; the wicked may plow upon the backs of the saints, but God will cut their traces, Ps. cxxix. 4. The goldsmith will not let his gold lie any longer in the furnace than till it be purified. The wicked must drink a sea of wrath, but the godly have only a cup of affliction, Isa. li. 17. and God will say 'Let this cup pass away.' Affliction may be compared to frost, it will break, and spring-flowers will come on, Isa. xxxv. 10. 'Sorrow and sighing shall fly away ; Affliction hath a sting but withal a wing, sorrow and sighing shall fly away ; this land-flood shall be dried up. If then there be so much

kindness in the cross, God will cause a cessation of trouble : say, then *fiat voluntas tua*, 'thy will be done.'

16. *Ult.* 'There is kindness in affliction, in that it is a means to make us happy, Job v. 17. 'Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth.' This seems strange to flesh and blood, that affliction should make one happy : when Moses saw the bush burning and not consumed, 'I will (saith he) turn aside and see this strange sight.' Exod. iii. 3. So here is a strange sight, a man afflicted yet happy. The world counts them happy, who can escape affliction, but happy is the man whom God correcteth.

Qu. But how do afflictions contribute to our happiness ?

Ans. 1. As they are a means to bring us nearer to God ; the loadstone of prosperity doth not draw us so near to God, as the cords of affliction : when the prodigal was pinched with want, then, saith he, 'I will arise and go to my father,' Luke xv. 18. The deluge brought the dove to the ark : the floods of sorrow make us hasten to Christ.

2. Afflictions make us happy, as they are maunductions to glory. The storm drives the ship in the harbour : happy is that storm which drives the soul into the heavenly harbour. Is it not better to go through affliction to glory, than through pleasure to misery ? Not that afflictions merit glory : no cross ever merited, but that which Christ endured, but they do *disponere* and prepare us for glory. Think, O Christian, what affliction leads to, it leads to paradise, where are rivers of pleasure always running : may not this make us cheerfully submit to God's will, and say, Lord, if there be so much kindness in affliction, if all thou dost, is to make us happy, 'thy will be done.'

7. Consideration, it is God's ordinary course, to keep his people to a bitter diet-drink, and exercise them with great trials. Affliction is the beaten road all the saints have gone in : the lively stones in the spiritual building have been all hewn and polished ; Christ's lily hath grown among the thorns, 2 Tim. iii. 12. 'All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.' It is too much for a Christian to have two heavens, that is more than Christ had. It hath been ever the lot of the saints to encounter with sore trials ; both of the prophets, James v. 10. 'Take my brethren, the prophets, for an example of suffering affliction ;' And of the apostles ; Peter was crucified with his head downwards, James beheaded by Herod, John banished into the isle of Patmos, the apostle Thomas thrust through with a spear. Matthias (who was chosen apostle in Judas' room) was stoned to death, Luke the evangelist hanged on an olive-tree. Those saints, of whom the world was not worthy, did pass under the rod, Heb. xi. 36.

Christ's kingdom is *regnum crucis*, this is the way God hath always gone in : such as God intends to save from hell, yet he doth not save from the cross. The consideration of this should quiet our minds in affliction, and make us say, 'thy will be done.' Do we think God will alter his course of providence for us? why should we look for exemption from trouble more than others? why should we think to tread only upon roses and violets, when prophets and apostles have marched through the briars to heaven?

8. Consideration, God hath done that for thee, Christian, which may make thee content to suffer any thing at his hand, and say, 'thy will be done.'

(1.) He hath adopted thee for his child, David thought it no small honour to be the king's son-in-law, 1 Sam. xviii. 18. What an honour is it to derive thy pedigree from heaven, to be born of God? why then art thou troubled, and murmurest at every slight cross? As Jonadab said to Amnon, 2 Sam. xiii. 4. 'Why art thou, being the king's son lean?' So, why art thou, who art son or daughter to the king of heaven, troubled at these petty things? What, the king's son, and look lean! This may quiet thy spirit, and bring thy will to God's; he hath dignified thee with honour, he hath made thee his son and heir, and will entail a kingdom on thee.

(2.) God hath given thee Christ. Christ is *communis thesaurus* a magazine or store-house of all heavenly treasure; a pearl of price to enrich; a tree of life to quicken; he is the quintessence of all blessings: why then art thou discontented at thy worldly crosses? They cannot be so bitter as Christ is sweet. As Seneca said once to Polybius, "Why dost thou complain of hard fortune, *salvo Cæsare*? Is not Cæsar thy friend?" So, is not Christ thy friend? He can never be poor who hath a mine of gold in his field; nor he who hath the unsearchable riches of Christ: say then, Lord, 'thy will be done;' though I have my cross, yet I have Christ with it. The cross may make me weep, but Christ wipes off all tears, Rev. vii. 17.

(3.) God hath given thee grace. Grace is the rich embroidery and workmanship of the Holy Ghost; it is the sacred unction, 1 John ii. 27. The graces are a chain of pearl to adorn, and beds of spices, which make us a sweet odour to God: grace is a distinguishing blessing, Christ gave Judas his purse but not his spirit. May not this quiet the heart in affliction, and make it say, 'thy will be done?' Lord, thou hast given me that jewel which thou bestowest only on the elect: grace is a seal of thy love, it is both food and cordial, it is an earnest of glory.

9. Consideration. When God intends the greatest mercy to any of his people, he brings them low in affliction. God seems to go quite cross to sense and reason; when he intends to raise

us highest, he brings us lowest. As Moses' hand, before it wrought miracles, was leprous; and Sarah's womb before it brought forth the son of the promise, was barren; God brings us low before he raiseth us, as water is at the lowest ebb before there is a spring tide.

(1.) It is true in a temporal sense. When God would bring Israel to Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey, he first leads them through a sea and a wilderness. When God intended to advance Joseph to be the second man in the kingdom, he cast him first into prison, and the iron entered into his soul, Ps. cv. 18. God usually lets it be darkest before the morning-star of deliverance appears.

(2.) It is true in a spiritual sense. When God intends to raise a soul to spiritual comfort, he first lays it low in desertion, Isa. xii. 1. As the limner lays his dark colour first, and then lays his gold colour on it; so God first lays the soul in the dark of desertion, and then he lays his golden colour of joy and consolation. May not this make us cheerfully submit, and say, 'Thy will be done?' Perhaps now God afflicts me, he is about to raise me, he intends me a greater mercy than I am aware of.

10. Consideration, the excellency of this frame of soul, to lie at God's feet, and say, 'Thy will be done.'

(1.) A soul that is melted into God's will shews variety of grace. As the holy ointment was made up of several aromatic spices, myrrh, cinnamon, cassia, Exod. xxx. 23. so this sweet temper of soul, submission to God's will in affliction, hath in it a mixture of several graces: in particular, it is compounded of three graces, faith, love, humility. 1. Faith: faith believes God doth all in mercy, that affliction is to mortify some sin, or exercise some grace; that God corrects in love and faithfulness, Ps. cxix. 75. The belief of this causeth submission of will to God. 2. Love: love thinks no evil, 1 Cor. xiii. 5. Love takes all God doth in the best sense, it hath good thoughts of God; this causeth submission, 'Thy will be done.' Let the righteous God smite me (saith love) it shall be kindness yea, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head. 3. Humility: the humble soul looks on its sins, and how it hath provoked God; he saith not his afflictions are great, but his sins are great; this makes him lie at God's feet, and say, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him,' Micah vii. 9. Thus a submissive frame of heart is full of grace, it is compounded of several graces; it pleaseth God to see so many graces at once sweetly exercised; he saith of such a Christian, as David of Goliath's sword, 1 Sam. xxi. 9. 'None like that, give it me.'

(2.) He who puts his *fiat* & *placet* to God's will, and saith, 'Thy will be done,' shews not only variety of grace, but strength

of grace. It argues much strength in the body, to be able to endure hard weather, yet not to be altered by it ; so to endure hard trials, yet not faint or fret, shews more than ordinary strength of grace. You that can say, you have brought your wills to God's ; God's will and yours agree, as the copy and the original ; let me assure you, you have outstript many Christians, who perhaps shine in an higher orb of knowledge than you. To be content to be at God's disposal, to be any thing that God will have us, shews a noble heroic soul. It is reported of the eagle, it is not like other fowls ; they, when they are hungry, make a noise, the ravens cry for food, but the eagle is never heard to make a noise, though it wants meat, and it is from the nobleness and greatness of its spirit ; the eagle is above other fowls, and hath a spirit suitable to its nature ; so it is an argument of an holy gallantry and magnitude of spirit, that whatsoever crosses providences befall a Christian, he doth not cry and whine as others, but is silent, and lies quietly at God's feet : here is much strength of grace in such a soul, nay, the height of grace. When grace is crowning, it is not so much to say, ' Lord, thy will be done ; ' but when grace is conflicting, and meets with crosses and trials, now to say, ' Thy will be done, ' is a glorious thing indeed, and prepares for the garland of honour.

11. Consideration, persons are usually better in adversity than in prosperity, therefore stoop to God's will. A prosperous condition is not always so safe : it is true, it is more pleasing to the palate, and every one desires to get on the warm side of the hedge, where the sun of prosperity shines, but it is not always best ; in a prosperous estate, there is more burden : many look at the shining and glittering of prosperity, but not at the burden, *plus oneris*.

(1.) The burden of care, therefore Christ calls riches, ' cares, ' Luke viii. 14. A rose hath its prickles, so have riches ; we think them happy that flourish in their silks and cloth of gold, but we see not the troubles and cares that attend them. A shoe may have silver lace on it, yet pinch the foot. Many a man that goes to his day-labour, lives a more contented life than he that hath his thousands *per annum*. Disquieting care is the *malus genius*, the evil spirit that haunts the rich man : when his chests are full of gold, his heart is full of care how to increase, or how to secure what he hath gotten : he is sometimes full of care whom he shall leave it to. A large estate, like a long trailing garment, is oft more troublesome than useful.

2. In a prosperous estate there is the burden of account. Such as are in high places, have a far greater account to give to God than others, Luke xii. 48. ' Unto whomsoever much is given, of

him much shall be required.' The more golden talents any are entrusted with, the more they have to answer for; the more their revenues, the more their reckonings. God will say, I gave you a great estate, what have you done with it? how have you employed it for my glory? I have read of Philip king of Spain, when he was to die, he said. "O that I had never been a king! O that I had lived a private solitary life! Here is all the fruit of my kingdom it hath made my accounts heavier." So then, may not this quiet our hearts in a low averse condition, and make us say, 'Lord, thy will be done?' as thou hast given me a less portion of worldly things, so I have a less burden of care, and a less burden of account.

3. A prosperous condition hath *plus periculi*, more danger in it. Such as are on the top of the pinnacle of honour, are in more danger of falling, they are subject to many temptations; their table is oft a snare. Heliogabalus made ponds of sweet water to bathe in; millions are drowned in the sweet waters of pleasure. A great sail overturns the vessel; how many, by having too great sails of prosperity, have had their souls overturned? It must be a strong head that bears heady wine; he had need have much wisdom and grace that knows how to bear an high condition. It is hard to carry a full cup without spilling, and a full estate without sinning. Agur feared, if he were full, he would deny God and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Prov. xxx. 9. Prosperity breeds, 1. Pride: the children of Korah were in an higher estate than the rest of the Levites, they were employed in the tabernacle about the most holy things of all, Numb. iv. 4. they had the first lot, Josh. xxi. 10. but as they were lifted up above others of the Levites in honour, so in pride, Numb. xvi. 3. In the Thames, when the tide riseth higher, the boat riseth higher; so, when the tide of an estate riseth higher, many men's hearts rise higher in pride, 2. Prosperity breeds security. Samson fell asleep in Dalilah's lap, so do men in the lap of ease and plenty: the world's golden sands are quick-sands. 'How hard is it for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven?' Luke xviii. 24. The consideration of this should make us submit to God in adversity, and say, 'thy will be done.' God sees what is best for us; if we have less estate, we are in less danger; if we want the honour of others, so we want their temptations.

12. Consideration, the having of our wills melted into God's, is a good sign that the present affliction is sanctified: then an affliction is sanctified, when it attains the end for which it was sent. The end why God sends affliction, is to calm the spirit, to subdue the will, and bring it to God's will, when this is done, affliction hath attained the end for which it came; it is sancti-

fied, and it will not be long ere it be removed. When the fore is healed, the smarting plaister is taken off.

13. Consideration, how unworthy it is of a Christian to be froward and unsubmissive, and not bring his will to God's.

(1.) It is below the spirit of a Christian. The spirit of a Christian is dove-like, it is meek and sedate, willing to be at God's disposal; 'Not my will, but thy will be done,' Luke xxii. 42. A Christian spirit is not fretful, but humble; not craving, but contented. See the picture of a Christian spirit in St. Paul, Phil. iv. 12. 'I know how to be abased, and how to abound.' Paul could be either higher or lower, as God saw good; he could sail with any wind of providence, either a prosperous or boisterous gale, his will was melted into God's will: now to be of a cross spirit, that cannot submit to God, is unworthy of the spirit of a Christian; it is like the bird, that, because he is pent up in the cage, and cannot fly in the open air, beats himself against the cage.

(2.) A froward unsubmissive frame, that cannot submit to God's will, is unworthy of a Christian's profession: he professeth to live by faith, yet repines at his condition, 'Faith lives not by bread alone,' it feeds on promises, it makes future glory present; faith sees all in God; 'When the fig tree doth not blossom, faith can joy in the God of its salvation,' Hab. iii. 17. Now, to be troubled at the present estate, because low and mean, where is faith? Sure that is a weak faith, or no faith, which must have crutches to support it. O be ashamed to call thyself believer, if thou canst not trust God and acquiesce in his will, in the deficiency of outward comforts.

(3.) To be of a froward unsubmissive spirit, that cannot surrender its will unto God, is unworthy of the high dignities God hath put upon a Christian. 1. He is a rich heir; he is exalted above all creatures that ever God made, except the angels; yea, in some sense, as his nature is joined in an hypostatical union to the divine nature, so he is above the angels: O then, how is it below his dignity, for want of a few earthly comforts, to be froward, and ready to quarrel with the Deity? is it not unworthy of a king's son, because he may not pluck such a flower, to be discontented and rebel against his royal father? 2. A Christian is espoused to Jesus Christ: what, to be married to Christ, yet froward and unsubmissive? hast not thou enough in him? as Elkanah said to Hannah, 1 Sam. i. 8. 'Am not I better than ten sons?' is not Christ better than a thousand worldly comforts? *Omnia bona in summo bono*. It is a disparagement to Christ, that his spouse should be froward, when she is matched into the crown of heaven.

(4.) To be of a froward unsubmissive spirit, is unsuitable to the prayers of a Christian; he prays, 'thy will be done:' it is

the will of God he should meet with such troubles, whether sickness, loss of estate, crosses in children, God hath decreed, and ordered it; why then is there not submission? why are we discontented at that which we pray for? It is a saying of Latimer, speaking of Peter, who denied his master, Peter, saith he, forgot his prayer, for that was, 'hallowed be thy name.' So, oft we forget our prayers, nay, contradict them; for we pray, 'thy will be done.' Now, if unsubmitivenes to God be so unworthy of a Christian, should not we labour to bring our wills to God's, and say, Lord, let me not disparage religion, let me do nothing unworthy of a Christian.

14. Consideration, frowardness and unsubmitivenes of will to God, is very sinful.

(1.) It is sinful in its nature; to murmur when God crosseth us in our will, shews much ungodliness. The apostle Jude speaks of ungodly ones, ver. 15. and that we may better know who these are, he sets a mark upon them, ver. 16. 'These are murmurers.' Some think they are not so ungodly as others, because they do not swear, nor get drunk, but you may be ungodly in murmuring; there are not only ungodly drunkards, but ungodly murmurers: nay, this is the height of ungodliness, namely, rebellion. Korah and his company murmured against God, and see how the Lord interprets this, Numb. xvii. 10. 'Bring Aaron's rod to be kept for a token against the rebels;' to be a murmurer and a rebel, is, in God's account, all one; Numb. xx. 13. 'This is the water of Meribah, because the children of Israel strove with the Lord.' How did they strive with God, because they murmured at his providence, ver. 3. What! wilt thou be a rebel against God? It is a shame for a servant to strive with his master, but what is it for a creature to strive with its maker.

(2.) To quarrel with God's providence, and be unsubmitive to his will, is sinful in the spring and cause; it ariseth from pride. It was Satan's temptation, 'ye shall be as gods,' Gen. iii. 5. A proud person makes a god of himself, he disdains to have his will crossed; he thinks himself better than others, therefore he finds fault with God's wisdom, that he is not above others.

(3.) Quarrellousness and unsubmitiveness to God's will, is sinful in the concomitants of it. 1. It is joined with sinful risings of the heart. (1.) Evil thoughts arise. We think hardly of God, as if he had done us wrong, or, as if we had deserved better at his hands. (2.) Passions begin to arise; the heart secretly frets against God. Jonah was crossed in his will, and passion began to boil in him, Jonah iv. 1. 'He was very angry.' Jonah's spirit, as well as the sea, wrought, and was tempestuous. 1. Unsubmitiveness of will is joined with unthankfulness,

because in some one thing we are afflicted, we forget all the mercies we have ; we deal with God, just as the widow of Sarepta did with the prophet ; the prophet Elijah had been a means to keep her alive in the famine, but as soon as her child dies, she quarrels with the prophet, 1 Kings xvii. 18. ‘ O thou man of God, art thou come to slay my son ? ’ So do we deal with God ; we can be content to receive blessings at his hand, but as soon as he doth, in the least thing, cross us in our will, we grow touchy, and are ready in a passion to fly out against him : thus God loseth all his mercies, and is not this high ingratitude ?

(4.) Frowardness and unsubmitiveness to God’s will, is evil in the effects. 1. It unfits for duty : it is bad sailing in a storm, and it is ill praying when the heart is stormy and unquiet : it is well if such prayers do not suffer shipwreck. (2.) Unsubmitiveness of spirit, sometimes unfits for the use of reason. Jonah was discontented, because he had not his will ; God withered the gourd, and his heart fretted against God ; and in the midst of his passion, he spake no better than nonsense and blasphemy, Jonah iv. 9. ‘ I do well to be angry to the death.’ Sure he did not know well what he said : what ! to be angry with God, and die for anger ? He speaks as if he had lost the use of his reason. Thus unsubmitiveness of will is sinful in its nature, causes, concomitants, effects ; may not this martyr our wills, and bring our wills to God in every thing, making us say, ‘ thy will be done.’

15. Consideration, unsubmitiveness to God’s will is very imprudent, we get nothing by it, it doth not ease us of our burden, but rather makes it heavier. The more the child struggles with the parent, the more it is beaten : when we struggle with God, and will not submit to his will, we get nothing but more blows. Instead of having the cords of affliction loosened, we make God tie them the straiter. Let us then submit, and say, ‘ Lord, thy will be done.’ Why should I spin out my own trouble by impatience, and make my cross heavier ? What got Israel by their frowardness, they were within eleven days journey of Canaan, they fell a murmuring, and God leads them a march of forty years longer in the wilderness.

16. Consideration, the mischief of being unsubmitive to God’s will in affliction, it lays a man open to many temptations. When the heart frets against God by discontent, here’s good fishing for Satan in these troubled waters. He usually puts discontented persons upon indirect means. Job’s wife fretted (so far was she from holy submission) and she presently puts her husband upon cursing of God, Job ii. 9. ‘ Curse God and die.’ What is the reason why some have turned witches, and given themselves to the devil, but out of envy and discontent, because they have not

had their will. Others being under a temptation of poverty, and and not having their wills in living at such an high rate as others, have laid violent hands upon themselves. O the temptations that men of discontented spirits are exposed to ! Here (saith Satan) is good fishing for me.

17. Consideration how far unsubmitiveness of spirit is from that temper of soul which God requires in affliction. God would have us in patience possess our souls, Luke xxi. 19. The Greek word for patience, signifies to bear up under a burden without fainting or fretting ; but to be froward in affliction, and quarrel with God's will, where is this Christian patience ? God would have us rejoice in affliction, James i. 2. ' Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations ; ' that is, afflictions, count it joy, be as birds that sing in winter, 1 Thess. i. 6. ' Ye received the word in affliction with joy.' Paul could leap in his fetters, and sing in the stocks, Acts xvi. 25. How far is a discontented soul from this frame ; he is far from rejoicing in affliction that hath not learned to submit.

18. Consideration, what is it makes the difference between a godly man and an ungodly man in affliction, but only this, the godly man submits to God's will, the ungodly man will not submit : a wicked man frets and fumes, and is like a wild bull in a net. He in affliction blasphemes God, Rev. xvi. 9. ' Men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God.' Put a stone in the fire, and it flies in your face ; stony hearts fly in God's face. A stuff that is rotten, the more it is rubbed, the more it frets and tears. When God afflicts the sinner, he tears himself in anger ; but a godly man is sweetly submissive to God's will : this is his speech, ' Shall I not drink the cup which my Father hath given me ? ' Spices, when they are bruised, send out a sweet fragrant smell ; when God bruise his saints, they send out the sweet perfume of patience. Servulus, an holy man, long afflicted with the palsy, yet this was his ordinary speech, *laudetur Deus*, let God be praised ; O let us say, ' Thy will be done ; ' let us bear that patiently which God inflicts justly, else how do we shew our grace ? What difference is there between us and the wicked in affliction ?

19. Consideration, not to submit to God's providential will, is highly provoking to God. Can we anger God more than by quarrelling with him, and not let him have his will ? Kings do not love to have their will opposed, though they may be unjust ; how ill doth God take it, when we will be disputing against his righteous will ? It is a sin God cannot bear, Numb. xiv. 26, 27. ' How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me ? ' May not God justly say thus, how long shall I bear with this wicked person, who, when any thing falls out cross, murmurs against me ? Ver. 28. ' Say

unto them, as truly as I live faith the Lord, as ye have spoken in my ears, so will I do unto you.' God swears against a murmurer, 'as I live;' and what will God do as he lived? Ver. 29. 'Your carcases shall fall in the wilderness.' You see how provoking a discontented quarrelsome spirit is to God, it may cost men their lives, nay, their soul. God sent fiery serpents among the people for their murmuring, 1 Cor. x. 10. He may send worse than fiery serpents, he may send hell-fire.

20. Consideration, how much doth God bear it at our hand, and shall not we be content to bear something at his hand? It would tire the patience of angels to bear with us one day, 2 Pet. iii. 9. 'The Lord is long-suffering towards us.' How oft do we offend in our eye by envious impure glances? in our tongues by rash censuring? but God passeth by many injuries, he bears with us. Should the Lord punish us every time we offend, he might draw his sword every day, shall God bear so much at our hands, and can we bear with nothing at his hands? shall God be patient with us, and we impatient with him? Shall he be meek, and we murmur? Shall he endure our sins, and shall not we endure his strokes? O let us say 'Thy will be done.' Lord, thou hast been the greatest sufferer, thou hast born more from me, than I can from thee.

21. Consideration, submitting our wills to God in affliction disappoints Satan of his hope, and quite spoils his design. The devil's end is in all our afflictions to make us sin. The reason why Satan did smite Job in his body and estate, was to perplex his mind, and put him into a passion; he hoped that Job would have been discontented, and in a fit of anger, not only have cursed his birth-day, but curse his God. But Job lying at God's feet, and blessing him in affliction, disappointed Satan of his hope, and quite spoiled his plot. Had Job murmured he had pleased Satan; had he fallen into an heat, and sparks of his anger flown about, the devil had warmed himself at this fire of Job's passion; but Job quietly submitted and blessed God; here Satan's design was frustrated, and he missed of his intent. The devil hath oft deceived us; the best way to deceive him, is by quiet submission to God in all things, saying 'thy will be done.'

22. Consideration, it may rock our hearts quiet in affliction, to consider, that to the godly the nature of affliction is quite changed; to a wicked man it is a curse, the rod is turned into a serpent; affliction to him is but an effect of God's displeasure, the beginning of sorrow: but the nature of affliction is quite changed to a believer, it is by divine chymistry turned into a blessing; it is like poison corrected, which becomes a medicine; it is a love token, a badge of adoption, a preparatory to glory; should not this make us say, 'thy will be done?'

The poison of the afflicted is gone ; it is not hurtful but healing. This hath made the saints not only patient in affliction, but have sounded forth thankfulness : as bells, when they have been cast in the fire, do afterwards make a sweeter sound ; so the godly, after they have been cast into the fire of affliction, have sounded forth God's praise, Pl. cxix. 71. ' It is good for me that I have been afflicted.' Job i. 21. ' Blessed be the name of the Lord.'

23. Consideration, to make us submit our will to God in affliction, is, to think how many good things we receive from God, and shall not we be content to receive some evil ? Job ii. 10. ' Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil.' In the Hebrew, shall we receive good from God, and not evil. This may make us say, ' thy will be done.' How many blessings have we received at the hand of God's bounty ? We have been bemiracled with mercy ; what sparing, preventing, delivering mercy have we had ! the honey-comb of mercy hath continually dropped upon us, Lam. iii. 23. ' His mercies are new every morning.' Mercy comes in as constantly as the tide ; nay, how many tides of mercies do we see in one day ? We never feed, but mercy carves every bit to us ; we never drink but in the golden cup of mercy ; we never go abroad, but mercy sets a guard of angels about us ; we never lie down in our bed, but mercy draws the curtains of protection close about us ; now, shall we receive so many good things at the hand of God, and shall not we receive evil ? our mercies far outweigh our afflictions ; for one affliction we receive a thousand mercies ; O then let us submit to God, and say, ' thy will be done ;' the sea of God's mercy should swallow up a few drops of affliction.

24. Consideration, to bring our wills to God in affliction doth much honour the gospel : an unsubmitive Christian reproacheth religion, as if it were not able to subdue an unruly spirit ; it is weak physic, which cannot purge out ill humours ; and sure it is a weak gospel, if it cannot master our discontent, and martyr our wills ; unsubmitiveness is a reproach, but a cheerful resignation of our will to God sets a crown of honour upon the head of religion, it shews the power of the gospel, which can charn down the passions, and melt the will into God's will : therefore in scripture submissive patience is brought in as an adorning grace, Rev. xiv. 12. ' Here is the patience of the saints.'

25. Consideration, the example of our Lord Jesus ; how flexible and submissive was he to his Father ! he who taught us this prayer, ' thy will be done,' had learned it himself ; Christ's will was perfectly turned to his Father's will ; it was the will of his Father that he should die for our sins, and he ' endured the

cross,' Heb. xiii. 2. 'It was a painful, shameful, cursed death;' he suffered the very pains of hell equivalently, yet he willingly submitted, Isa. liii. 7. 'He opened not his mouth,' he opened his sides when the blood ran out, but he opened not his mouth in repining, his will was resolved into the will of his Father, John xviii. 11. 'Shall not I drink the cup which my Father hath given me?' Now the more our wills are subject to God's will in affliction, the nearer we come to Christ our pattern; is it not our prayer we may be like Christ? by holy submission we imitate him; his will was melted into his Father's will.

26. Consideration to submit our wills to God is the way to have our will; every one would be glad to have his will; the way to have our will is to resign it; God deals with us as we do with froward children; while we fret and quarrel God will give us nothing, but when we are submissive and say, 'Thy will be done,' now God carves out mercy to us: the way to have our will is to submit it. David brought his will to God, 2 Sam. xv. 26. 'Here am I, let him do to me as seems good to him.' And after he resigned his will he had his will; God brought him back to the ark, and settled him again in his throne, 2 Sam. xix. Many a parent that hath had a dear child sick, when he could bring his will to God to part with it, God hath given him the life of his child; there's nothing lost by referring our will to God, the Lord takes it kindly from us, and it is the only way to have our will.

27. and *ult.* Consideration, we may the more cheerfully surrender our souls to God when we die, when we have surrendered our wills to God while we live. Our blessed Saviour had all along submitted his will to God, there was but one will between God the Father and Christ. Now Christ in his life-time having given up his will to his Father, at death he cheerfully gives up his soul to him, Luke xxiii. 46. 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' You that resign up your wills to God, may at the hour of death comfortably bequeath your souls to him.

II. The second means to bring our will to God in affliction is, study the will of God.

(1.) It is a sovereign will, he hath a supreme right and dominion over his creatures, to dispose of them as he pleaseth; a man may do with his own as he lists, Matth. xx. 15. 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?' A man may cut his own timber as he will. God's sovereignty may cause submission, he may do with us as he sees good; God is not accountable to any creature for what he doth, Job xxxiii. 13. 'He giveth not account of any of his matters.' Who shall call God to account? Who is higher than the Highest? Eccl. v. 8. What man or angel dare summon God to his bar? 'He giveth

not account of any of his matters.' God will take an account of our carriage towards him, but he will give no account of his carriage towards us : God hath an absolute jurisdiction over us ; the remembrance of this, God's will is a sovereign will, to do with us what he pleases, may silence all discontents, and charm down all unruly passions ; we are not to dispute but to submit.

(2.) God's will is a wise will, he knows what is conducing to the good of his people, therefore submit, Isa. xxx. 18. ' The Lord is a God of judgment,' that is, he is able to judge what is best for us ; therefore rest in his wisdom, and acquiesce in his will ; we rest in the wisdom of a physician, we are content he should scarify and let us blood, because he is judicious, and knows what is most conducive to our health : if the pilot be skilful, the passenger saith, ' let him alone, he knows best how to steer the ship ;' and shall we not rest in God's wisdom ? Did we but study how wisely God steers all occurrences, and how often he brings us to heaven by a cross wind, it would much quiet our spirits, and make us say, ' Thy will be done.' God's will is guided by wisdom ; should God sometimes let us have our will, we would undo ourselves ; did he let us carve for ourselves, we would choose the worst piece : Lot chose Sodom because it was well watered, and was as the garden of the Lord, Gen. xiii. 10. but God rained fire upon it out of heaven, Gen. xix. 24.

(3.) God's will is a just will, Gen. xviii. 25. ' Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ?' God's will is *regula et mensura*, it is the rule of justice ; the wills of men are corrupt, therefore unfit to give law ; but God's will is an holy and unerring will, which may cause submission, Psal. xcvi. 2. God may cross, but he cannot wrong us ; severe he may be, not unjust ; therefore we must strike sail, and say, ' Thy will be done.'

(4.) God's will is a good and gracious will, it promotes our interest : if it be God's will to afflict us, he shall make us say at last, it was good for us that we were afflicted. God's flail shall only thresh off our husks. That which is against our will shall not be against our profit ; study what a good will God's is, and we will say, *fiat voluntas*, ' Thy will be done.'

(5.) God's will is an irresistible will ; we may oppose it, but we cannot hinder it ; the rising of the wave cannot stop the ship when it is in full sail ; so the rising up of our will against God cannot stop the execution of his will, Rom. ix. 19. ' Who hath resisted his will ?' Who can stay the chariot of the sun in its full career ? Who can hinder the progress of God's will ? Therefore it is in vain to contest with God, his will shall take place ; there is no way to overcome God, but by lying at his feet.

3. Means to submission to God in affliction is, get a gracious heart ; all the rules and helps in the world will do but little

good, till grace be infused ; the bowl must have a good bias, or it will not run according to our desire ; so till God put a new bias of grace into the soul, which inclines the will, it never submits to God ; grace renews the will, and it must be renewed before it be subdued : grace teacheth self denial, and we can never submit our will till we deny it.

4. Means, let us labour to have our covenant-interest cleared, to know that God is our God, Psal. xlviii. 14. ‘ This God is our God.’ He whose faith doth flourish in assurance, that can say, God is his, will say, ‘ Thy will be done.’ A wicked man may say, God hath laid this affliction upon me, and I cannot help it : but a believer faith, my God hath done it, and I will submit to it. He who can call God his, knows God loves him as he loves Christ, and designs his salvation ; therefore he will, with St. Paul, take pleasure in reproaches, 2 Cor. xii. 10. and in every adverse providence yield to God, as the wax to the impression of the seal.

5. Mean to submission to God in affliction, get an humble spirit : a proud man will never stoop to God, he will rather break than bend ; but when the heart is humble, the will is pliable. What a vast difference was there between Pharaoh and Eli ? Pharaoh cries out, ‘ Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice ?’ Exod. v. 2. But Eli faith, ‘ It is the Lord, let him do what seems good in his sight,’ 1 Sam. iii. 18. See the difference between an heart that is swelled with pride, and that which is ballasted with humility ; Pharaoh faith, ‘ Who is the Lord ?’ Eli, ‘ It is the Lord.’ An humble soul hath a deep sense of sin, he sees how he hath provoked God, he wonders he is not in hell ; therefore, whatever God inflicts, he knows it is less than his iniquities deserve ; this makes him say, ‘ Lord, thy will be done.’ O get into an humble posture, the will is never flexible till the heart be humble.

6. Means, get your heart loosened from things below ; be crucified to the world : whence is children’s frowardness, but when you take away their play-things ? When we love the world, and God takes away these things from us, then we grow froward and unsubmitive to God’s will. Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd ; and when God smote it, he grew froward, and because God had killed his gourd, kill me too, faith he, Jonah iv. 8. He who is a lover of the world, can never pray this prayer heartily, ‘ thy will be done ;’ his heart boils with anger against God : and when the world is gone, his patience is gone too. Get mortified affections to these sublunary things.

7. Means for submission to God’s will, get some good persuasion your sin is pardoned ; *feri, Domine, feri, quia peccata mea, condonata sunt* : smite, Lord, smite where thou wilt, said Luther, because my sins are pardoned ; pardon of sin is a crown-

ing blessing; hath God forgiven my sin, I will bear any thing, I will not murmur, but admire; I will not complain of the burden of affliction, but bless God for removing the burden of sin: the pardoned soul saith this prayer heartily, 'Thy will be done.' Lord, use thy pruning-knife, so long as thou wilt not come with thy bloody axe to hew me down.

8. Means, if we would have our wills submit to God, let us not look so much on the dark side of the cloud as the light side; that is, let us not look so much on the smart of affliction, as the good of affliction; it is bad to pore all on the smart, as it is bad for sore eyes to look too much on the fire; but we should look on the good of affliction; Samson did not only look on the lion's carcase, but on the honey-comb within it, Judg. xix. 8. 'He turned to see the carcase of the lion, and behold, there was honey in the carcase.' Affliction is the frightful lion, but see what honey there is in it: affliction humbles, purifies, fills us with the consolations of God; here is honey in the belly of the lion; could we but look upon the benefit of affliction, stubbornness would be turned into submissiveness, and we should say, 'thy will be done.'

9. Means, pray to God that he would calm our spirits, and conquer our wills. It is no easy thing to submit to God in affliction, there will be risings of the heart; therefore let us pray, that what God inflicts righteously, we may bear patiently. Prayer is the best spell or charm against impatience; prayer doth to the heart as Christ did to the sea, when it was tempestuous, he rebuked the wind, and there was a great calm; so, when the passions are up, and the will is apt to mutiny against God, prayer makes a gracious calm in the soul: Prayer doth to the heart as the sponge doth to the cannon, when hot, cools it.

10. Means, if we would submit to God's will in affliction, let us make a good interpretation of God's dealings, take all God doth in the best sense, we are apt to misconstrue God's dealings, and put a bad interpretation upon them, as Israel, Numb. xx. 4. 'Ye have brought the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness, that we should die there.' So God hath brought this affliction upon us, because he hates us, and intends to destroy us; and such hard thoughts of God cause sullenness and stubbornness: O let us make a fair and candid interpretation of providence. Doth God afflict us? Say thus, perhaps he intends us mercy in this; he will try us whether we will love him in afflictions; he is about to mortify some sin, or exercise some grace; he smites the body, that he may save the soul. Could we put such a good meaning upon God's dealings, we should say, 'thy will be done; let the righteous God smite me,

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,