

THE
RIGHT USE
OF THAT
ARGUMENT IN PRAYER,
FROM THE
NAME OF GOD;
ON BEHALF OF A PEOPLE THAT PROFESS IT.

Jer. 14. 21.

DO NOT ABHOR US FOR THY NAME'S SAKE.

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PREFACE.

NO sort of men have ever pretended to religion, who have not allowed unto prayer a very eminent place in it. And so much a deeper and more potent principle is religion in the nature of man than reason, (though both are miserably perverted and enfeebled) that the former doth secretly prompt men (especially in great distresses) to pray, and expect relief by prayer, when the way wherein it is efficacious cannot so well be explicated or apprehended by the other.

And as prayer hath ever been reckoned a very principal part of religion; so hath intercession for others been wont to be accounted a very fit and profitable part of prayer.

In the general, prayer is most evidently a duty of natural religion, a dictate of nature, which every man's own mind suggests to him, or may be appealed to about it (should not a people seek unto their God? Whence that personated, eloquent patron of the Christian cause, urging for the conviction of his heathen adversaries, the common practice of people in their extremities, to lift up (even untaught) their hands and eyes to heaven fitly says of it * *Vulgi iste naturalis est sermo, that they do herein, as it were, but speak the language of nature.*

Now hereupon, the impression of that primitive law of nature, (not quite worn out from the mind of man, even in this his very degenerate state) to love our neighbours as ourselves, doth as a natural instinct, secretly prompt us to pray for others, whom we cannot otherwise help, (especially such to whom we have more peculiar obligations, who are in a more especial sense our neighbours) as (at least in our last necessities) we do for ourselves.

In which recourse to God, whether for ourselves or others, we are led by a sense of our own impotency and dependent state from a deeply inward apprehension of a Deity, that is (as Epicurus himself seems constrained to acknowledge concerning the idea of God) even

* Octav. apud Min. F.

PREFACE.

proleptical, or such as prevents reason. So that we do not, being urged by the pinching necessity of the case, stay to deliberate and debate the matter with ourselves how this course should bring relief, do but even take it for granted, that it may; by an apprehension that is earlier in us, than any former reasoning about it, and being prior to it, is also not suppressed by it, but prevails against it, if there be any thing in reason objected, which we cannot so clearly answer.

Yet, when we do bring the matter to a rational discussion, we find that in our conception of God we have the apprehension of so perfect and excellent a nature, that we cannot suppose we should be moved by any thing foreign to himself, or that we can inform him of any thing he knew not before, or incline him to any thing to which his own nature inclines him not. And therefore that though the wise and apt course of his government over intelligent creatures requires that they should be apprehensive of their own concerns, (whether personal or that belong to them, as they are in communities) and pay a solemn homage to his sovereign power and goodness, by supplicating him about them, yet that if he hear their prayers, it must not be for their sakes, but his own. Therefore also, it cannot upon strictest reasoning, but seem most dutiful to him and hopeful for ourselves, that our prayers should be conceived after such a tenor, as may be most agreeable unto that apprehension.

The Holy Scriptures, and the Divine Spirit do both aim at the recovery of apostate man, and the repairing the decays of his degenerate nature, and do therefore (besides what was necessary to be added) renew the dictates of the law of nature, the one more expressly representing them, the other impressing them afresh, and re-implanting them in the hearts of all that are born of God. Therefore, that external revelation of the mind and will of God doth direct, and his blessed Spirit, (which is pleased to be in all his children the Spirit of grace and supplication) doth inwardly prompt them, not only to pray (in reference to their single and common concerns) but to form their prayers after this tenor; which is to be seen in their so frequent use of this argument in prayer, from the name of God.

Whereupon, in a time when we are so much concerned to be very instant in prayer, not only each of us for himself, but for the body of a people, upon whom that holy name is called; I reckoned it seasonable to shew briefly the import and right use of this argument; and to that purpose have taken for the ground, the following text of Scripture.

PRAYER
FROM THE
NAME OF GOD.

Jer. 14. 21.

Do not abhor us for thy name's sake.

WHERE we have a petition and the argument enforcing it.

I. A very serious petition, or a deprecation of the most fearful evil imaginable. Do not abhor us. The word * doth not merely signify abhorrence but disdain : a displeasure prevailing to that degree, and so fixed, as to infer rejection, even from a just sense of honour. So some of the †versions read, reject us not, or cast us not forth, as we would do what (or whom) we despise and scorn to own ; as if it were feared the holy God might count it ignominious, and a reproach to him, to be further related to such a people, and might even be ashamed to be called their God. And consequently that the following argument is used not without some suspence of mind and doubt lest it should be turned against them, whereof more hereafter. Here it is implied,

First. To be no impossible thing that God should reject with abhorrence a people once his own, or that have been in peculiar, visible relation to him. Prayer is conversant about matters of divine liberty, that is, that are not known to us to be already determined this way or that ; but that may be, or may not be, as he pleases and sees fit ; consistently with the settled course and order of things, not about things that he had before made ordinarily necessary, nor about things that are simply or in or-

* Naatz Sprevit contempsit.

† Vulg. Lat. and Chald. Par.

dinary course impossible. In the former case prayer would be needless, in the latter to no purpose. We do not pray that the sun may rise to-morrow at the usual hour, or that the sea may ebb and flow, nor that they may be prevented doing so. But we must distinguish such necessity and impossibility from a mere certainty that things shall either be, or not be. We are to pray in the present case, with a deep apprehension that this is perfectly a matter of liberty with the great God, and that as he took such a people to be his, of mere good pleasure, (Deut. 7. 7. ch. 10, 15.) so it depends wholly upon his mere pleasure, that he continues the relation, when he might abandon and cast them off. It is further implied,

Secondly. That the more serious and apprehensive among such a people, do understand it (at sometimes more especially) a thing very highly deserved, that God should abhor and reject them. The deprecation is a tacit acknowledgment, that the deprecated severity was reasonably to be feared, not only from sovereign power, but offended justice. This is indeed expressed in the next foregoing words. We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers: for we have sinned against thee, do not abhor us, &c. So that this ought to be the sense of the supplicants in the present case, that they are herein perfectly at mercy, that if they be heard it is undeserved compassion, if they be rejected, it is from most deserved displeasure. And if it were not expressed yet the supplication must be understood to imply it. For when the great God hath vouchsafed to limit his sovereign power, and antecedent liberty by his promise and covenant, such a prayer were itself reflecting, and an affront, if it should proceed upon a supposition, or but intimate, that he should ever be inclined to do such a thing, without an excepted cause. Such as that his rejecting them upon it, might consist with his being faithful to his word: when he values himself so much upon his faithfulness, and seems even to lay his very Godhead upon it: as those strangely emphatical words import (Deut. 7. 9.) Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them, that love him, and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations; implying that he would even yield himself not to be God, if he did not in all points vindicate and demonstrate his faithfulness. Nor indeed do we properly crave for any thing, but we therein disclaim a legal right to it, and acknowledge it to be rightfully in his power, to whom we apply ourselves, to grant or deny; we make demands from justice, and are supplicants for mercy. And with this sense the spirits of holy men have abounded, when they have taken upon them to intercede in the like case, as we see Dan. 9. 7. O Lord

righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day, &c. And to the same purpose, Ezra 9. Nehem. 9. at large, and in many other places: as though he had said: "Our only resort, O Lord, is to thy mercy: thou mightest most justly abhor and abandon us, and say to us, Loammi, ye are none of my people;" but in the multitude of thy tender compassions and mercies, do it not. It is again further to be collected,

Thirdly. That this is a thing which holy and good men do most vehemently dread and deprecate, namely, that God should thus abhor and reject a people so related to him. It is that which the very genius and spirit of holiness in the sincere, regret beyond all things for themselves. They have taken the Lord to be their God, for ever and ever; their hearts have been attempered to the tenour and constitution of an everlasting covenant, which they entered with no design, or thought of ever parting; but that it should be the ground of an eternal relation. And the law of love written in their hearts, prompts them to desire the same thing for others too; especially such to whom they have more especial, endearing obligations; and (if it were possible) that the whole body of a people to whom they are themselves united, might all be united to God upon the same terms, even by the same vital and everlasting union; and therefore also, that same divine, and soul-enlarging love; being a living principle in them, makes them have a most afflicting sense of any discerned tendencies to a rupture and separation that might prevent, and cut off the hope of his drawing still more and more of them into that inward living union, and intercourse with himself. These things it may suffice briefly to have noted from *the petition* in the text. That which I principally designed, is what we have next coming under our view, namely,

II. The argument brought to enforce it; "for thy name's sake." About which, what I shall observe, shall be with special reference to the case which the prophet refers unto, in his present use of it. Namely, that in praying for a people professing the name of God, that he would not reject and cast them off, the fit and proper argument to be insisted on is that from his own name. (see ver. 1, 9.) And here it will be requisite,—to have some very brief consideration of this argument in the general: though—we principally intend to treat of it, as it respects this present case.

First. In the general, we are to consider both what the name of God in itself imports, and what is signified by using it as an argument in prayer. And,

1. As to what is imported by the name of God, in itself

considered. We shall not trouble this discourse with the fancies of the rabbins; of whom yet one * very noted, soberly and plainly tells us the name of God is wont to signify his essence and truth, though the instance he gives, shews he means it of the Nomen Tetragrammaton (the name Jehovah) which indeed more eminently doth so. To our purpose it is obvious, and sufficient to note, that by his name, more generally, is signified both the peculiar excellencies of his nature and being, which are himself, as the use of a man's name is to notify the man. So when he is pleased himself to proclaim his own name, thus it runs; the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin. &c: Exod. 34. 6, 7: And again, that by his name is meant his glory, and most especially the honour, and reputation of his government. For so too, a man's name signifies his fame and repute in the world (as they whom our translation calls men of renown, Gen. 6. 4. the Hebrew text says only, (but plainly, meaning the same thing,) they were men of name. And if he be a public person, a prince, and ruler over others, it must more peculiarly signify his reputation and fame as such. Thus Moses designing to celebrate the unexceptionable equity, and awful majesty of the divine government begins thus: Because I will publish the name of the Lord; ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are judgment, Deut. 32. 3, 4.

2. As an argument used in prayer, it may accordingly either signify the principle from which it is hoped and requested he should do what we desire, or the end for which. For as his name signifies his nature, which himself hath taught us primarily to conceive under the notion of goodness, mercy, love, in that forementioned Exod. 34. 7. and 1 John 4. 16. so when we pray he would do this or that for his name's sake, the meaning may be, that we request he would do it for his mercy's sake, even in compliance with himself, and as it were to gratify his own nature, which, as nothing is more Godlike, is wont to be delighted in acts of goodness towards all, of compassion and mercy to the miserable, and of special favour to them that more peculiarly belong to him. And again, as his name signifies his glory, and principally the honour and reputation of his government; so when we pray he would do this for his name's sake, we further must be understood to mean, we desire he would do it to prevent his own dishonour, to augment his glory and further to recommend himself to the world. And I conceive it must be meant in both these senses taken together, namely, that we pray he would do this, or that, both from himself, and for him-

* Maimon. Mo. Nevoch.

self, from his goodness, or indeed the general perfection of his nature, and for his glory, and that he may represent himself such, as he truly is. But some circumstances in the coherent verses, afterwards to be particularly noted, seem to intimate that the honour and dignity of his government are here more directly meant. His glory is indeed the end which he cannot but design in all that he does. For inasmuch as he is said to do all things according to the counsel of his will; Eph. 1. his will must be principally of the end, which is ever the highest and most excellent good, and that can be no other than himself, and that only as he is capable of greatening himself by his own action; which cannot be in respect of intrinsic excellency, that being already perfect and capable of no addition, therefore it must be in point of glory and reputation only. And so, as it is said, having no greater to swear by, he swears by himself. Heb. 6. 13. So having no greater to act for, it is most just, and most worthy of him, and but a Godlike owning of himself, to act only to and for himself. And then whereas, having this constant, just and holy will, he doth all things according to counsel in pursuance of it, it must signify that he ever takes the aptest, and most proper methods for the advancing of his own glory; the choosing the fittest and most suitable means to a fore-resolved end, being the proper business and design of consultation. Though that be spoken of God but allusively, and after the manner of men, who by slow degrees, and by much deliberation arrive to the very imperfect knowledge of things, which at one view he perfectly beholds from all eternity.

But also how the great God designs his own glory in all that he doth, we must take great care, be duly and decently understood. It were low and mean to think that the design of his mighty works, and accurate dispensations is only that he may fill men's minds with wonder, be highly thought of, admired, and celebrated in the world, which even a wise and virtuous man would think an end much beneath him. But the glory of his name must be understood to be primarily an objective glory, that shines with a constant, and equal lustre in all his dispensations, whether men observe, or observe it not. And shines primarily to himself, so as that he hath the perpetual self-satisfaction of doing as truly becomes him, and what is in itself reputable, worthy of him, and apt to approve itself to a right mind, as his own ever is, let men think of his ways as they please. Thus it was in his creating the world, when he had not yet made man, nor had him to look on, as a witness and admirer of his other glorious works, it was enough to him to be self-pleased that he saw them to be good, and that they had his own most just and complacential approbation. Nor is he less

pleased with himself, in his governing the world, than he was in the making of it. As also good men, by how much the more they excel in goodness, have herein the greatest resemblance and imitation of God, doing good for goodness sake, and pleasing themselves with the lustre and beauty of their own actions, shining to their own mind and conscience, and their discerned conformity to the steady rules of righteousness; without being concerned, whether perverse and incompetent judges approve, or disapprove, them. Though also, because the blessed God delights in propagating blessedness, and imparting it to his intelligent creatures, he is pleased in recommending himself, so far, to their estimation and love, as is necessary to their own felicity, wherein also he doth as it were but enjoy his own goodness, as his own felicity can only be in himself, and is pleased with the self-satisfying beauty, pleasantness and glory of it.

Yet further also we are to consider that though it be most suitable to the majesty, and the independent, self-sufficient fulness of God, to take pleasure only in the real goodness, excellency, decency, and glory of whatever he is, and doth: yet it belongs to, and becomes the dutiful affection of his people towards him, to be deeply concerned, how he is thought and spoken of in the world. Dishonourable reflections upon him are therefore as a sword in their bones. What cannot hurt him ought to wound them. Which dutiful love also cannot but make them highly covet that his name might be known, and renowned all the world over, knowing that the reproach that is no real damage, is a wrong to him; and that universal praise is his right, though it cannot be an advantage. And this love to his name they cannot more fitly express, than in praying to him. And here we are further to note that this argument, thus generally considered hath, when we use it in prayer, a twofold aspect, that is we are to consider it as an argument both to God, and to ourselves. To God, as whereby we expect to prevail with him to hear our prayers. To ourselves, as whereby we are to be urged, and excited to pray with the more importunity and confidence, so as not to faint in prayer. Thus much as to what is more general. We are now

Secondly. To consider it in reference to this present case. Where we are to shew,—how the name of God may be understood to be concerned, in his abhorring, so as to forsake a people more peculiarly related to him, and —the fit and right use of this argument in deprecating his doing so.

1. How the name of God may be understood concerned in this matter. Taking his name to signify not only his nature, and the attributes of his being themselves, but also the glory and lustre of those his attributes, especially, which are to have a more principal exercise and demonstration in the course of his

government over mankind, and more particularly, over such a select, peculiar people. It may seem greatly to reflect upon, his governing attributes, and detract from the glory of them, and consequently to lessen the honour and dignity of his government, if having taken such a people into near, and peculiar relation to him, he should grow into that dislike of them, as at length, quite to reject and cast off them, as if he now disdained the relation. That such a contemptuous rejection of this people is the thing here deprecated by the prophet, is evident (besides what hath been noted of the true import of the word rendered abhor) from other expressions in the context, that plainly speak this very sense, and shew this to be the matter about which he was so deeply concerned. Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? hath thy soul loathed Zion? ver. 19. And then presently is added, to the same sense, do not abhor us, &c. As when a man's heart is full of a thing, and the sense of it abounds, he varies expressions and from the abundance of the heart, as from a fountain, the matter streams from him several ways. His iterations, and varied forms of speech to the same purpose, shew what urged him, and about what his mind was engaged and taken up. It is plain that, at this time, that which this holy man was in this agony for, was not a lighter, temporary anger, but so settled a displeasure, as upon which a final rejection was likely to ensue.

And he apprehends the name of God to be concerned in it. Which it appears also lies with great weight upon his spirit, our iniquities testify against us, but do thou it, that is, save us, as afterwards, for thy name's sake, ver. 7. And again, ver. 9. Thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not. Which also shews how he understood it to be concerned, namely, as the great God was not only the common Ruler of the world, but a Governor over them, in a way, and upon terms that were very peculiar, namely, by covenant and compact. Such whereof the nuptial contract, is the usual resemblance; by which the related persons mutually pass into each others right, and whereupon, the inferior person in the relation takes the name of the superior, as Isa. 4. 1. We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel, only let us be called by thy name. So the great God entering that covenant with a people; "I will be your God, and you shall be my people," speaks of himself as conjugally related to them. Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord; and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed; forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed, desolate; but thou shalt be called Hephzi-

lah, and thy land Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. Isa. 62. 4. Thy Maker is thine husband. Isa. 54. 5 Who being the governing relative, the phrase of being called by his name imports the agreed, voluntary subjection of such a people to his government, and his vouchsafing to be their Governor, upon the special terms of his own covenant, whereupon another prophet, pleading for his special favour, and protection unto this people, against their heathen adversaries, uses this phrase. We are thine, thou never barest rule over them, they were not called by thy name. Isa. 63. 19. Therefore this prophet understood his name to be concerned, if he should reject them, as it signified his honour and reputation as their Governor by covenant, which further appears by the immediate connection of these words "Do not abhor us for thy name's sake," with those that next follow, Do not disgrace the throne of thy glory: remember, break not thy covenant with us; as if he had said, "Thou hast covenanted to be our Governor, and hast erected, accordingly, thy glorious throne among us. How canst thou sustain, or endure to break thy covenant, and dishonour thy own throne! to draw a disreputation upon thy government; or cast a dark shadow upon those famed excellencies, which were wont to recommend thee in the sight of all nations as the best Ruler that ever people had; and might make the sons of men apprehend it the most desirable thing in all the world to be, on the same terms, under thy government!" Particularly of his attributes that have more special relation to his government, such as these may seem (and have been apprehended) liable to be reflected on in this case.

(1.) His power, as if he had designed to do some great thing for them, which he could not bring about, and therefore he casts them off, and will seem no further concerned for them. Or as if his power were confined within such limits, that it would suffice him to destroy them once for all, but not constantly to preserve and prosper them. So when God threatened to smite his people Israel with the pestilence, and disinherit them, (Num. 14, 12.) Moses urges on their behalf, then the Egyptians shall hear it, for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them, and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou, Lord, art among this people, that thou Lord art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day-time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if thou shalt kill all this people, as one man; then the nations which heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he swore unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilder-

ness: ver. 13, 14, 15, 16, or rather he had said, "That thou hast peculiarly owned them, and concerned thyself for them cannot be hid. It hath made a great noise in the world, and been the common talk of all nations, and made a more special impression of awe and terror upon the Egyptians (against whom thou first tookest part with them) that thou wast usually seen face to face among them; that most extraordinary tokens of a divine presence, the miraculous pillar of a cloud by day, and of fire by night, were constantly afforded them. There is no coming off (so far and so openly hast thou been concerned for them) but this construction will be made of it, that though very great difficulties have been overcome for them, there was a prospect of yet greater, that could not be overcome, and therefore, that whereas less power was required to make a present end of them, thou didst rather choose to do that. And this consideration seems sometimes to have weighed much with God himself, as we find he is brought in speaking (Deut. 32. 26. 27) I said I would scatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men; were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, and lest they should say our hand is high, &c. Whence also

(2.) His wisdom must, by consequence, be exposed too: that this was not foreseen, and considered, when he first undertook their conduct, and espoused their interest.

(3.) His goodness and benignity, his propensity to do good, and bestow favours, that it was not so unexhausted a fountain as might seem suitable to a God; and to him, whom his wonderful noted acts of favour towards that people, had made to be vogue among the nations as the only one.

(4.) His clemency and unaptness to be provoked; the great commendation of rulers: who ought to be *legum similes, likenesses of the laws*, as little moved with passions, as the laws they govern by. A thing especially to be expected in a divine Ruler, and most agreeable to the serenity of the nature of God. According not only to what men are commonly wont to apprehend of his nature, but what he had been pleased to declare of himself, as is alleged Num. 14. 17, 18. Let the power of my Lord be great intimating that to appear hurried with passions would seem an un-Godlike impotency, and it is added, according as thou hast spoken, saying the Lord is long-suffering and of great mercy, &c. Whereupon therefore

(5.) His sincerity, another great excellency in a governor, seems liable to be suspected too. That he should not be what he seemed, had given out of himself, or was taken, at least to be the import and signification of his former dispensations.

Which is the scope of Moses's reasoning, Ex. 32. 12. Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, for mischief did he bring them out to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? As if he had said, why shall the Egyptian enemy have occasion to apprehend, that God did only hide mischievous intentions towards this people, under an appearance and shew of kindness to them; that he only drew them hereby to trust in him, and commit themselves to his care and protection, that he might, when he saw his time, the more please and as it were sport himself in having deceived them, and in disappointing and destroying them. That therefore the God of Israel was not such a one as he seemed willing to be thought, nor a relation to him so covetable a thing. Or else,

(6.) His constancy, and faithfulness to himself. He may be thought, in this case more mutable, and unsteady in his own designs than is worthy of a God. Even Balaam's notion of the Deity could not allow him to think either, first, that as a man he could lie, or next, that as the son of man he could repent. Num. 23. The former he thought not agreeable to the sincerity, nor the latter to the constancy which he reckoned must belong to the nature of God. That he should appropriate a people to himself, remarkably own them by a long-continued series of eminent favours; and at length seem to grow weary of them, and his own design, and throw them off! How un-God-like a levity doth this seem to import? and how contrary to the encouragement which we sometimes find given to such a people, even from the regard he would have to his own name in this respect, The Lord will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake; because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people. 1. Sam. 12. 22.

(7.) His righteousness in reference to his promise and covenant with such a people, or his faithfulness unto them. For, as considering only his purpose, and his having begun a design his pursuing of it is but faithfulness (or a being true) to himself and his own design; so when his purpose hath expressed itself in a promise to a people; to make it good is to be faithful and true to them. And is therefore a part of righteousness, his promise having created a right in them to whom he made it. By his purpose he is only a debtor to himself, by his promise he is a debtor to them too. Upon this account his name seems liable to be reflected on, if he should reject such a people. As the words following the text intimate. Do not abhor us for thy name's sake, do not disgrace the throne of thy glory, break not thy covenant with us. And such is the import of Moses's plea, Num. 14. 16. Because the Lord was not able to bring

this people into the land which he swa unto them; therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness. Which pleading of his he himself also recites, (Deut. 9. 28.) with little variation; and implies in it, that if God should reject this people, it would turn greatly to the prejudice of his name and repute in the world, in respect of his truth and fidelity which made so great a part of his name and glory. That in his anger he neither regarded his word, nor his oath. No bond was sacred with him. Than which, what could make a prince more inglorious, and infamous? And how gladly would those more implacable enemies out of whose hands he had rescued his people, catch at such an occasion of traducing and defaming him! We see then how the name of God may appear concerned in this matter. It seems indeed in all these respects very deeply concerned, and much exposed to obloquy, if he reject such a people. Though if he should, it can never be, but upon such terms, as that all that can be objected, will appear to be but groundless cavil and calumny, and admit of easy answer as we shall see anon. In the mean time, while the matter admits of any hope, we are

2. To shew the fitness and right use of this argument for the preventing of it. We are indeed manifestly to distinguish these two things.—The general fitness of this argument to be used, and—wherein stands the fit and due use of it. As any thing else, though in itself very fit to be used for such and such purposes (as meat and drink for instance, or learning, or speech) may yet notwithstanding be used very unfitly. Therefore we shall speak to both these severally, and shew—how fit an argument this is to be insisted on in prayer, even to the purpose we are now speaking of; and what is requisite to the due and right use of it to this purpose.

(1.) That it is in itself an argument very fit to be insisted on in prayer, to this purpose, or to any other in reference whereto it is fit for us to pray, is most evident; for it is most likely to prevail with God, being an argument taken from himself, and most fit to move and affect us; for it hath most weight in it. And we ought in prayer as much as is possible, to conform our minds to God's; so as not only to pray for the things which we apprehend him most likely to grant, but upon the same grounds, and with the same design, which he must be supposed to have in granting them, and that there be but one end and aim common to him and us. We are told that if we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us. 1 John 5. 14. This is to ask according to his will, in the highest and most certain sense. For the first and most fixed object of any will whatsoever is the end: of any right will, the best and most excellent end, which can be but one. The divine will we are

sure, is ever right, and must so far as it is known be directive, and a rule to ours. Concerning the end it is most certainly known, he doth all things (as he made all things) for himself. Concerning the means and way to his end, we are often ignorant, and in doubt; and when we are, we then are to will nothing but upon condition, that it will conduce to the great and common end of all things, and do interpretatively, retract and unpray every petition in the very making it, which shall be really repugnant thereto. Nothing can move God besides. He is eternally self-moved. Our attempt will be both undutiful and vain, if we suffer our spirits to be engaged, and moved by any thing which will not be a motive unto him. Therefore no argument can be fit besides this, for his own name, or that cannot be reduced to it. But the fitness of this argument may be more distinctly shewn and discerned from the following considerations, namely, that is most suitable

[1.] To the object of prayer; the glorious ever-blessed God. To whom it belongs as the appropriate, most incommunicable prerogative of the Godhead to be the last, as well as the first, the Alpha, and the Omega; the end, as he is the Author of all things. Of whom, and through whom, and to whom all things are; and unto whom must be all glory for ever. Rom. 11. 36. So that to pray to him that he would do this or that, finally and ultimately for any thing else than his own name; is humbly to supplicate him that he would resign the Godhead; and quit his throne to this, or that creature.

[2.] To the right subject of prayer, considered whether according to its original or renewed state. According to primitive nature, or renewing grace. To primitive nature, which was no doubt pointed upon God as the last end. Otherwise a creature had been made with aversion to him, and in the highest pitch of enmity and rebellion. Since there can be no higher controversy than about the last end. And to renewing grace, the design whereof, as it is such, can be no other than to restore us to our original state; to bring us back, and state us where, and as we were, in that absolute subordination to God that was original and natural to us. Which therefore stands in repentance towards God as our end, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ as our way, wherein alone we can acceptably return and render ourselves back unto him. We through the law are dead to the law, being humbled, broken, macerated, mortified by it, we are become dead to it, exempt from its execrating condemning power and dominion, that we might live to God, (Gal. 2. 19.) that a new divine life and nature might spring up in us, aiming at God, tending and working entirely, and only towards him. We have been reduced to a chaos, to utter confusion,

or even brought to nothing, that we might be created anew, with a re-implanted disposition to serve the ends and purposes for which we were first made. And therefore are to yield ourselves to God as those that are alive from the dead, Rom. 6. 13. that is, (as ver. 11.) alive to God through Jesus Christ. In him we are created to good works (that are principally to be estimated from the end) which God had before ordained that we should walk in them. Eph. 2. 10. Thus we are reconciled to God. The controversy is taken up, which was about no lower thing than the Deity; who should be God, he or we: whether we should live and be for ourselves, or him. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are past away, behold, all things are become new; and all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ. 2 Cor. 5. 17, 18. Hereupon this is, in prayer, the only proper genuine con-natural breath of the new creature, the most inward habitual sense of a devoted soul "To thee, O Lord, be all things, mayst thou ever be the all in all. Let the creation and all things be nothing, otherwise than in thee and for thee!"

[3.] To the Mediator in whose name we pray. Who never undertook that part of mediating between God and us, with a design to alienate, and give away from God the natural rights of the Godhead; but to assert them to the highest, to repair unto God and expiate by his blood the encroachments we had made upon them, and provide we might do so no more: that we might be forgiven what was past, and be dutiful and subject for the future. His principal design was to salve the injured honour and dignity of the divine government, and to reconcile therewith our impunity, and felicity, to make them consist. He was therefore to redeem us to God by his blood, Rev. 5. 9. How immodest, and absurd a confidence were it, for any to make use of the Mediator's name in prayer against his principal and most important design?

[4.] To the Spirit of prayer who, we are told (Rom. 8. 27.) makes intercession for the saints *κατὰ Θεου*. We read *according to the will of God*, but no more is in the text than *according to God*, that is, in subserviency to him, and his interest, so as that in prayer, by the dictate of that Spirit, they supremely mind the things of God, and are most intent upon his concernments, and upon their own only in subordination to his. As it may well be supposed his own Spirit will be true to him, and not act the hearts which it governs, otherwise; and that the prayers that are from himself, and of his own inspiring, will be most entirely loyal, and import nothing but duty and devotedness to him.

[5.] To the most perfect model and platform of prayer given

us by our Lord himself. In which the first place is given to the petition, Hallowed be thy name, and the two next are about God's concerns, before any are mentioned of our own. So that the things we are to desire, are digested into two tables, as the decalogue is containing the things we are to do. And those that respect God (as was fit) set first.

[6.] To the constant tenour of the prayers of holy men in Scripture. We have seen how earnestly Moses presses this argument in the mentioned places, Exod. 32. and Num. 14. And so doth Samuel express his confidence in it, when he promises, upon their desire, to pray for the trembling people of Israel. 1. Sam. 12. 22, 23. The Lord will not forsake his people *for his great name's sake*, because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people. Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you. And this was a pair whom God hath himself dignified as persons of great excellency in prayer, and whose prayers he would have a value for, if for any man's. Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, &c. Jer. 15. 1. Thus also doth Joshua insist, upon occasion of that rebuke Israel met with before Ai. Josh. 7. 8. 9. O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies? For the Canaanites, and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name? And so doth Daniel plead (one of a famous triad too, of potent wrestlers in prayer. Ezek. 14. 14.) O Lord hear, O Lord forgive, O Lord hearken and do: defer not for thine own sake, O my God; for thy city and thy people *are called by thy name*. Dan. 9. 19.

[7.] To the highest example and pattern of prayer (fit to be mentioned apart) our Lord himself; who, in some of his last agonies, praying, Father save me from this hour, represses that innocent voice. But therefore came I to this hour, and add Father glorify thy name, (Joh. 12. 27. 28.) intimating that the sum of his desires did resolve into that one thing, and contented to suffer what was most grievous to himself that so, that might be done which should be finally most honourable to that great name.

[8.] To the design and end of prayer, which is partly and principally to be considered as an act of worship, a homage to the great God, and so the design of it is to honour him. And partly as a means, or way of obtaining for ourselves the good things we pray for, which therefore is another, but an inferior end of prayer. Whether we consider it under the one notion, or the other, or propound to ourselves the one or the other end in praying; it is most agreeable to pray after this tenour, and to insist most upon this argument in prayer.

First, Do we intend prayer as a homage to the great God, and to give him his due glory in praying to him? How fitly doth it fall in with our design, when not only our praying itself but the matter we chiefly pray for have the same scope and end. We pray that we may glorify God. And the thing we more principally desire of him in prayer, is that he would glorify himself, or that his name be glorified. And square all other desires by this measure, desiring nothing else but what may be, or as it is subservient hereto. And

Secondly, If we intend and design any thing of advantage to ourselves; we can only expect to be heard, and to obtain it upon this ground. The great God deals plainly with us in this, and hath expressly declared that if he hear, and graciously answer us, it will only be upon this consideration, as is often inculcated, Ezekiel 36. 22. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God, I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for my holy *name's* sake, And I will sanctify my great *name*, which was profaned among the heathen, and again, Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you; be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. ver. 32. This every way then appears a most fit argument to be insisted on in prayer; and to this purpose as well as to any other; many of the instances mentioned from Scripture, having an express and particular reference to this very case, of praying for a people related to God, and upon whom his name was called. It remains then to shew

(2.) What is requisite to the right and due use of this argument unto this purpose. Where we may sum up all in two words, sincerity and submission. The former whereof belongs to this case in common with all others, wherein we can use this argument, or, which is all one, wherein we can pray at all. The other hath somewhat a more peculiar reference to this case considered apart by itself. And indeed that the one and the other of these are requisite in the use of this argument, are both of them corollaries from the truth itself we have been hitherto insisting on, and that have the very substance and spirit of it in them. For if this be an argument fit to be used in prayer at all, it is obvious to collect, that it ought to be used with great sincerity in any case; and with much submission, especially, in such a case as this.

[1.] It is requisite we use this argument with sincerity, that is, that we have a sense in our hearts correspondent to the use of it, or that the impression be deeply inwrought into our spirits of the glorious excellency of the name of God. So as it be

really the most desirable thing in our eyes, that it be magnified and rendered most glorious whatsoever becomes of us, or of any people or nation under heaven. Many have learned to use the words "for thy name's sake," as a *formula, a plausible phrase*, a customary, fashionable form of speech, when first, there is no inward sense in their hearts that doth *subesse, lies under* the expression, so as that with them it can be said to signify any thing, or have any meaning at all. Or, secondly, they may have much another meaning from what these words do import, a very low, self-regarding one. As when in praying for a people that bear this name, of whom themselves are a part, these words are in their mouths, but their hearts are really solicitous for nothing but their own little concerns, their wealth, and peace, and ease, and fleshy accommodations. Apprehending a change of religion cannot fall out among such a people, but in conjunction with what may be dangerous to themselves in these respects: Whereupon it may fall out that they will pray earnestly, cry aloud, be full of concern, vehemently importunate, and all the noise and cry, mean nothing but their own corn, wine, and oil. They mention the name of the Lord, but not in truth. It appears the servants of God in the use of this argument have been touched in their very souls with so deep and quick a sense of the dignity and honour of the divine name, that nothing else hath seemed considerable with them, or worth the regarding besides: As in those pathetic expostulations, "What wilt thou do to thy great name? What will the Egyptians say, &c.?" This alone, apart from their own concerns, was the weighty argument with them. For it weighed nothing with Moses on the contrary, to be told, "I will make of thee a great nation." To have himself never so glorious a name, to be spread in the world and transmitted to all after-ages as the root and father of a mighty people, was a light thing in comparison of the injury and dis-reputation that would be done to God's own name, if he should desert or destroy this people. Or, thirdly, they may have a very wicked meaning. The name of God may be invoked, religious solemnities used as a pretence and colour to flagitious actions. *In nomine Domini—&c. in the name of the Lord.* Most execrable villainies have been prefaced with that sacred, adorable name. As when a fast was proclaimed, but a rapine upon Naboth's vineyard was the thing designed. And the awful name of God was indifferently used in prayer and in perjury to serve the same vile purpose. In which soever of those degrees this venerable name is *insincerely* mentioned, we ought to account a great requisite is wanting to a right use of it as an argument in prayer. And

should consider both the absurdity and the iniquity of our so misusing it.

First. The absurdity, for who can reasonably think him capable of hearing our prayers, whom at the same time he thinks incapable of knowing our hearts? Am I consistent with myself when I invoke, worship, trust in him as a God, whom I think I can impose upon by a false shew? Is it likely, if I can deceive him, that he can help and succour me?

Secondly. The iniquity. For this can be no low (though it be not the peculiar) sense of taking the name of the Lord our God in vain. And we know with what awful words that great precept is enforced. The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Nor can any man devise to put a greater affront upon him than to approach him with insincerity. For it is to use him as a senseless idol, and signifies as if I counted him as the vanities of the Gentiles, one of their inanimate or brutal gods; denies his omniscience to discern, and his justice and power to revenge the indignity, all at once. And what now is to be expected from such a prayer wherein I both fight with myself and him at the same time. With myself, for the same object that I worship, I affront in the same act, and with him; for my worship is but seeming, and the affront real.

Such a disagreement with myself were enough to blast my prayer. The *ἀνὴρ διψυχος*, the man with two souls, Jam. 1. the double-minded man is said to be *ἀνελασπίτος*, *unstable (inconsistent with himself* the word signifies) and let not such a man think saith the apostle, that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. Much more when his prayer is not only not acceptable to God, but offensive. And by which he is so far from pleasing that he provokes.

It is then of unspeakable concernment to us in the use of this argument, that we well understand ourselves. Let us search our hearts. And see that we mean as we speak, that we do not pretend a concernedness, and zeal for the name of God, when he that knows all things, knows that we lie; and that we do but flatter him with our mouth, and lie unto him with our tongues when our heart is not right with him. Ps. 78. 36, 37. That we do not seem to be in great perplexity about the name and glory of God, when we are quite unconcerned what becomes of his name, are only solicitous lest we should suffer ourselves, afraid of being undone, of losing our estates, or of being driven from our dwellings, or perhaps but of being abridged somewhat of our conveniences, and more delectable enjoyments. As if (not the fortunes of Cesar, and the empire but) the mighty and all comprehensive name of the great Lord of heaven and

earth did depend upon our being rich or quiet, and at our ease, and having our sense and fancy gratified. As if the heavens rested upon our shoulders, and the frame of the universe were sustained by us, who ourselves need such pitiful supports, lean upon shadows, and if they fail us are ready to sink and drop into nothing!

[2.] Submission is highly requisite especially in a case of this nature, that is, we are to submit to his judgment the disposal both of his concerns, which this argument directly intends, and our own which we are too apt, indirectly to connect with his, so as to be more principally solicitous about them.

First. His concernment in this case must (as is fit) be submitted with all humble deference to his own judgment, it being really a doubtful case, not whether it be a desirable thing, that the name and honour of God should be preserved and advanced, or whether we should desire it? But whether his continuing such a people in visible relation to himself, or rejecting and casting them off, will be more honourable and glorious to him? Where the doubt lies, there must be the submission, that is, this matter must be referred to himself, it being such as whereof he only is the competent judge and not we. The thing to be judged of, is not whether occasion may not be taken by men of short discourse, and of profane minds, to think and speak reflectingly of such a piece of providence, that is, if a people whom God had long visibly owned and favoured should be, at length, rejected with detestation, and exposed to ruin. It is like, the heathen nations were very apt so to insult, when God did finally abandon and give up that people of the Jews, and make them cease at once to be his people, and any people at all. As we know they did before, when they gained any temporary advantage upon them, upon their being able to spoil their country, to reduce them to some distress; and straiten their chief city with a siege, as if they had them totally in their power, they presently draw the God of Israel into an ignominious comparison with the fictitious deities of other vanquished countries: the gods of Hamath, Arphad, Sepharvaim, Isa. 36. 19. (who are also stiled their kings as is thought, 2 King. 19. 13. * though the destruction of their kings may also admit to be meant as an argument of the impotency of their gods. And they are mentioned distinctly, as perhaps was not observed, in both those cited books of Scripture where that history is more largely recorded; 2 Kings 18. 34. ch. 19. 13. and Isa. 36. 19. ch. 37. 12, 13.) as if he were able to do no more for the protection of his people, than they for their worshippers. And so, for a few moments, he remains

* Selden. de Diis Syris. 2. Cap 16.

under the censure of being an impotent God. But that momentary cloud he knew how soon to dispel, and make his glory shine out so much the more brightly unto, not only a convincing, but an amazing confutation of so prophane folly; yielded the short sighted adversary a temporary victory, which he could presently redeem out of their hands, that he might the more gloriously triumph in their surprising, unfear'd ruin; and so let them and all the world see that those advantages were not extorted, but permitted upon considerations that lay out of their reach to comprehend; and that they proceeded not from want of power, but the excellency of other perfections, which would in due time be understood by such as were capable of making a right judgment. His wisdom, holiness and justice which appeared in putting a people so related to him, under seasonable rebukes and discountenance, when the state of the case, and the methods of his government required it. And so much the rather because they were so related. According to that you only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities. Amos. 3. 2. The matter here to be disputed, was not whether it did not occasion a present dishonour to the God of Israel, to let the enemy have such a seeming ground of spiteful suggestions concerning him, as if he were impotent, or variable, or false to them that had intrusted themselves to his protection and care; but whether that dishonour were not recompensed with advantage, by the greater glory that accrued to him afterwards. And this also is the matter that must come under judgment, if at length he should finally cast off such a people; whether upon the whole, all things being considered and taken together, it be not more for the honour of his name, and the reputation of his rectoral attributes, to break off such a relation to them, than continue it. Wherein he is not concerned to approve himself to the opinion of fools, or half-witted persons: and whose shallow judgment too, is governed by their disaffection; but to such as can consider. Perhaps, to such as shall hereafter rise up in succeeding ages. For he is not in haste. His steady duration, commensurate with all the successions of time, and which runs into eternity, can well admit of his staying till this or that frame and contexture of providence be completed, and capable of being more entirely viewed at once, and till calmer minds, and men of less interested passions shall come to have the considering of it. And in the mean time he hath those numberless myriads of wise and holy sages in the other world, the continual observers of all his dispensations, that behold them with equal, unbiassed minds, and from the evidence of the matter, give their concurrent approbation and applause, with all the true members of the

church on earth, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints. Rev. 15. 3. But it is enough and much more considerable to approve himself to himself; and that all his dispensations are guided according to the steady, eternal reason of things, which is an inviolable law to him, from which he never departs, and from the perpetual uniform agreement of all his providences whereto, an indubious glory will result unto him, that will never admit the least eclipse, or ever be capable of being drawn into dispute. And according whereto it will appear, if ever he forsake such a people, the concernment of his name and glory in the matter, was the great inducement to it, that he did even owe it to himself, and had not, otherwise, done right to his own name. And whatsoever might be argued from it to the contrary will be found capable of a clear and easy answer, so as that the weight of the argument will entirely lie on this side. For

As to his power, he hath reason to be ever secure concerning the reputation of that, having given, and knowing how further to give, when he pleases, sufficient demonstrations of it otherways. Nor was it ever his design to represent himself as a Being of mere power, which of itself, hath nothing of moral excellency in it, nor do the appearances of it tend to beget that true notion of God in the minds of men which he designed to propogate; otherwise than as the glory of it should shine in conjunction with that of his other attributes that are more peculiarly worthy of God, more appropriate to him, and more apt to represent him to the world as the most suitable object of a religious veneration. Whereas mere power is capable of having place in an unintelligent nature, and in an intelligent, tainted with the most odious impurities. He never desired to be known among men by such a name, as should signify power only unaccompanied with wisdom, holiness, &c. And

For his wisdom; it is seen in pursuing valuable ends, by methods suitable to them, and becoming himself. It became the absolute sovereignty of a God, to select a nation, that he would favour more than other nations, but would ill have agreed with his wisdom to have bound himself absolutely to them, to favour them, howsoever they should demean themselves.

His bounty and goodness, though it found them no better than other people, was to have made them better. Nor was it any disreputation to his goodness to divert its current, when they after long trial, do finally resist its design.

His clemency must not be made liable to be mistaken for inadvertency, or neglect: and to give the world cause to say,

tush, God seeth not, neither is there knowledge in the most high. Nor for indifferency, and unconcernedness what men do, as if good and bad were alike to him. And that such as do evil were good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighted in them; words wherewith he sometime complained that men wearied him Mal. 2. 17. He is not to redeem the reputation of one attribute by the real prejudice of another; that is, the offence and grievance to it, which acting directly against it (if that were possible) would occasion.

His sincerity will be highly vindicated and glorified, when it shall be seen that there is nothing more of severity in such a dispensation, whenever it takes place, than was plainly expressed in his often repeated fore-warnings and threatnings, even long before. And therefore

He is herein but *constant to himself*, and should be more liable to the charge of mutability, and inconstancy, if finally, when the case should so require, he should not take this course. And

As to his *righteousness and fidelity* towards such a people, even those to whom he more strictly obliged himself than ever he did to any particular nation besides. Let but the tenour of his covenant with them be consulted, and see whether he did not reserve to himself a liberty of casting them off, if they revolted from him. And whether these were not his express terms that he would be with them while they were with him, but that if they forsook him, he would forsake them also.

Therefore much more is he at liberty, as to any other people, to whom he never made so peculiar promises of external favours as he did to this people. Nor hereupon can any thing be pleaded from his name, or that is within the compass of its signification, with any certainty, that it shall conclude, and be determining on the behalf of such a people. There is a real, great doubt in the case, whether the argument may not weigh more the other way. And whether the wickedness of such a people may not be grown to such a prodigious excess, that whereas none of these his mentioned attributes do make it necessary, he should continue his relation, some other, that could not be alleged for it, may not be alleged against it, and do not make it necessary he should break it off. The glory of his holiness (which if we consider it in itself, and consider the value, and stress he is wont to put upon it, we might even reckon the prime glory of the Deity) is not, perhaps, to be sufficiently salved and vindicated without, at length, quite abandoning and casting them off. There seems to be somewhat very awful and monitory in those most pleasant, gracious words, and that breathe so sweet a savour. But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: where-

fore God is not ashamed to be called their God. Heb. 11. 16. that is, that if a people that have long enjoyed brighter discoveries of heaven, and the way to it, do yet generally bear a disaffected heart to the design of that revelation, remain habitually terrene like the rest of the world, governed by the spirit of it, ingulfed in the common pollutions, sensualities, impieties of the wicked atheistical inhabitants of this earth. God will be even ashamed to be called their God. He will reckon it ignominious, and a reproach to him (though he will save such as are sincere among them) to stand visibly related to such a people as their God. What to have them for a peculiar people, that are not peculiar? to distinguish them that will not be distinguished? To make a visible difference by external favours and privileges, where there is no visible difference in practice and conversation, that might signify a more excellent spirit. This is not only to lose the intended design, but to have it turn to a disadvantage. And whom he expected to be for a name and a praise to him, a crown and a royal diadem, to become to him a dishonour and a blot. And we do find that such severities as have been used towards such a people, are declared to have been so, even for the sake of his name, Jer. 34. 16, 17. But ye turned and polluted my name,—Therefore I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. And when therefore a remnant of this people, rebelliously, against God's express word, went down into Egypt, preferring a precarious subsistence, under tyranny and idolatry, at the cruel mercy of a long since baffled enemy before the true religion, and liberty, under the divine protection, see how God expresses his resentment of this dishonour done to his name, and the affront offered to his government. Jer. 44. 26. Therefore hear ye the word of the Lord, all Judah that dwell in the land of Egypt, Behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith the Lord, that my name, shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah, in all the land of Egypt, saying; the Lord God liveth.

And when the time drew nearer of God's total rejection of that people, as in the time of Malachi's prophecies; they are charged with despising and profaning his name, (chap. 1. 5, 6, 12.) and are told God had now no pleasure in them, nor would accept an offering at their hands, but that his name should be great among the Gentiles, (ver. 10, 11.) even from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, intimating that (excepting those few that thought on his name. (chap. 3. 16.) and that feared his name, (ch. 4. 2,) who he says should be his, when he made up his jewels and the Sun of righteousness should rise upon them) he would have no more to do with them, but in the

day that should burn as an oven, (when the whole hemisphere should be as one fiery vault) they should be burnt up as stubble and neither root nor branch be left of them, and all this upon the concern he had for his name, which was reproached by such a people's pretending to it. Whereupon, they had been threatened (ch. 2. v. 2.) that except they did give glory to his name he would curse them, and their blessings, corrupt their seed, spread dung upon their faces, even that of their solemn feasts, and they should be taken away therewith.

It is therefore possible the whole force of this argument may lie against us, in praying for such a people, I say, it is possible it may, whether actually it do or no, we can never be competent judges. Our knowledge is not large enough, nor our minds enough comprehensive. Our wisdom is folly itself to the estimating such a case. We are capable of pronouncing hastily, it would in this, or that particular respect, be dishonourable, and an obscurement of God's name, if he should cast off England. But he that pronounces hastily, considers but a few things and looks but a little way.

The question is whether all things compared and considered together, that belong to such a case, it will be more honourable to God or dishonourable, and more or less recommend him to intelligent minds, get him a greater and more excellent name and renown in the world, when it shall be enlightened to consider the case, to break off his relation or continue it? We know his own judgment is according to truth, and hope he will judge the way, that will be more favourable to us. But we cannot be certain of it. It is a case that requires the judgment of his all comprehending mind, whose prospect is large every way; and takes in all the decencies and indecencies that escape our notice. As we know in viewing things with the eye, a quick and clear sight. (Especially helped with a fit instrument) will discern many things, so fine and minute, as to be, to a duller eye, altogether invisible. It is the work of wisdom, and judgment, to discern exactly the critical seasons, and junctures of time, when to do this or that. And the wise God in his dispensations, especially towards a great community, or the collective body of a people, takes usually a vast compass of time, within which to select the apt and fit season, for this or that act, whether of severity, or mercy towards them. And it is more fit, as by the coincidence of things, it contributes more to the greater glory of his name. We cannot discern the things, the concurrence whereof, makes this a fitter season than another, that such an event should be placed just there, within so large a tract of time. What mortal man, or indeed what finite mind, was capable of judging some hundreds of years before, what was just

wanting to the fulness of the Amorites sin, so as that it should be more honourable, and glorious to the divine justice, not to animadvert thereon, till that very time when he did it. Or why he chose that time which he pitched upon, wherein to come down, and deliver his Israel from their Egyptian oppressors. Or when (without inspiration) to be able to say the time to favour Zion, even the set time is come. Nor are we to resolve the matter only into the absoluteness of his sovereignty, upon the account whereof he may take what time he pleases, but the depth of his hidden wisdom, for he doth all things according to the counsel of his will, having reasons to himself, which our shallow, dim, sight perceives not, and whereof we are infinitely less able to make a sure judgment, than a country idiot of reasons of state. He may (as to the present case) think it most fit, most honourable, and glorious, so often to forgive, or so long to forbear such a delinquent people; and may, at length, judge it most becoming him, and most worthy of him, as he is the common Ruler of the world, and their injured despised Ruler, to strike the fatal stroke, and quite cut them off from him.

Now here, it is therefore necessarily our duty, to use this argument with him of his name, so, as wholly to submit the matter to his judgment, and but conditionally, if it will indeed make most for the glory of his name, that then he will not abhor and reject such a people even for his name's sake. Nor can we herein be too importunate, if we be not peremptory, not too intent upon the end, the glory of his name; for about the goodness, excellency and desirableness of that we are certain; if we be not too determinate about the means, or what will be most honourable to his name, concerning which we are uncertain. Neither is it disallowed us to use the best judgment we can, about the means, and the interest of God's name in this case. It is not our fault to be mistaken, he expects us not to use the judgment of gods. But it will be our fault to be peremptory and confident in a matter, wherein we may be mistaken; and must signify too much officiousness, as if we understood his affairs better than himself, and a bold insolence to take upon us to be the absolute judges of what we understand not; and to cover our presumption with a pretence of duty. Therefore though such a people be dear to us, yet because his name ought to be infinitely more dear, than in the settled bent of our hearts we ought to prefer; and be patient of his sentence, whatever it prove to be, with deep resentment of our own desert but with high complacency that his name is vindicated and glorified, and with a sincere, undissembled applause of the justice of his proceedings; how severe soever they may be towards us: especially if we have reason to hope, that severity

will terminate, but in a temporary discountenance and frown; not in a final rejection.

Secondly. Much more are we to submit our own secular concerns, which may be involved. That is, we ought only to pray, we may have the continued, free, profession and exercise of our religion, in conjunction with the comfortable enjoyment of the good things of this life, if that may consist with, and best serve the honour of his great name. But if he do really make this judgment in our case, that we have so misdemeaned ourselves, and been so little really better to common observation, in our practice and conversation, than men of a worse religion, that he cannot without injury to his name, and the reputation of his government, countenance us against them, by the visible favours of his providence: that it will not be honourable for him to protect us in our religion, to so little purpose; and while we so little answer the true design of it; that if we will retain our religion (which we know we are upon no terms to quit) we must suffer for it, and sanctify that name before men by our suffering, which we dishonoured by our sinning. We have nothing left us to do but to submit to God, to humble ourselves under his mighty hand, to accept the punishment of our sin, to put off our ornaments, expecting what he will do with us. And be content that our dwellings, our substance, our ease and rest, our liberties and lives, if he will have it so, be all sacrifices to the honour of that excellent name. Nor can our use of this argument want such submission without much insincerity. Concerning this therefore look back to what was said on the former head.

Nor is there any hardship in the matter, that we are thus limited in our praying, for what even nature itself teacheth us to desire; our safety, peace and outward comforts; unless we count it a hardship that we are creatures, and that God is God, and that ours is not the supreme interest. The desires of the sensitive nature are not otherwise to be formed into petitions than by the direction of the rational, that also, being governed by a superadded holy, divine nature; unto which it is a supreme and a vital law, that God is to be the first-eyed in every thing. Reason teaches that so it should be, and grace makes it be so. And it ought to be far from us to think this a hardship; when in reference to our greater, and more considerable concerns, those of our souls, and our eternal states, we are put upon no such (dubious suspenceful) submission. He hath not, in these, left the matter at all doubtful, or at any uncertainty, whether he will reckon it more honourable to his name to save, or destroy eternally, a sincerely penitent, believing, obedient soul. He hath settled a firm connection between the felicity of such

and his own glory. And never put it upon us, as any part of our duty, to be contented to perish for ever, that he may be glorified; or ever to ask ourselves whether we are so content or no. For he hath made such things our present, immediate, indispensable duty, as with which our perishing is not consistent and upon supposition whereof, it is impossible we should not be happy. If we believe in his Son, and submit to his government, his name pleads irresistibly for our being saved by him. He can have no higher glory from us, than that we be to the praise of the glory of his grace, being once accepted in the beloved. Neither is it disallowed us to do the part of concives, fellow-members of a community, civil, or spiritual, to pray very earnestly for our people, city, country that are so justly dear to us. Only since prayer itself is an acknowledgment of his superiority to whom we pray: and we have no argument, that we ought to hope should prevail, but that of his own name; we can but pray and plead as the nature of prayer, and the import of that argument will admit, that is, with entire subjection to his holy and sovereign will, and subordination to his supreme interest, to whom we address ourselves in prayer.

III. And now the use this will be of to us, is partly to correct and reprehend our prayers, wherein they shall be found disagreeable to the true import of this argument, and partly to persuade unto, and encourage such praying, as shall be agreeable to it,

First. It justly and aptly serves to reprehend and correct, such praying as disagrees with it: especially the carnality and the selfishness of our prayers. The use of this argument implies that the glory of God, and the exultation of his name, should be the principal design of our prayers. Is it not in these respects much otherwise? We keep fast after fast, and make many prayers. And what is the chief design of them? or the thing we are most intent, and which our hearts are principally set upon? We see how God expostulates this matter, Zech. 7. 5. When ye fasted and mourned, in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did you at all fast unto me, even unto me? Why to whom can it be thought this people did keep fasts but unto God? Yes no doubt they did eye him, as the object, but not as the end. They were kept to him, but not for him, so as that his interest and glory was the thing principally designed in them, nor can it be, if the things we chiefly insist upon, be such as have no connection with his true interest, or subserviency to it. And let us inquire upon these two heads, whether our prayers, in these respects, do not run in such a strain, as that they cannot possibly be understood to mean him, or have a true reference to him.

1. In respect of the carnality of them. When we pray for the people of our own land, or for the Christian church more generally, what sort of evils is it that we find our hearts most feelingly to deprecate, and pray against? what are the good things we chiefly desire for them? We find ourselves, it is likely, to have somewhat a quick sense, and dread of the calamities of war, depredation, oppression, persecution, and we feel, probably, somewhat of sympathy within ourselves, when we hear of any abroad, professing true, reformed Christianity, that suffer the spoiling of their goods, are banished from their pleasant homes, dragged to prisons, pressed with pinching necessities, for the sake of their religion; and it were well if our compassions were more enlarged in such cases. And if we should hear of nations depopulated, cities sacked, towns and countries deluged with blood and slaughter, these things would certainly have an astonishing sound in our ears. But have we any proportionable sense of the spiritual evils that waste and deform the Christian church, exhaust its strength and vigour, and blemish its beauty and glory? Ignorance, terrene inclination, glorying in the external forms of religion, while the life and power of it are unknown and denied, estrangement from God, real infidelity towards the Redeemer, veiled over by pretended, nominal christianity, uncharitableness, pride, wrath, strife, envy, hatred, hypocrisy, deceitfulness towards God and man? We ought to lament and deprecate the former evils without over-looking these, or counting them less, or being less affected with them. We are apt to pray for peace unto the Christian community, for halcyon days, prosperity, the abundance of all outward blessings, in conjunction with the universal reception of such forms of religion, as are most agreeable to our minds and inclinations. But do we as earnestly pray for the reviving of primitive Christianity, and that the Christian church may shine in the beauties of holiness, in heavenliness, faith, love to God, and one another, in simplicity, meekness, patience, humility, contempt of this present world, and purity from all the corruptions of it. This we chiefly, ought to have done, without leaving the other undone. Which while it is left out of our prayers, or not more principally insisted on in them, how ill do they admit of enforcement by this argument from the name of God? For do we think it is so very honourable to his name, to be the God of an opulent, luxurious, voluptuous, proud, wrathful, contentious people, under what religious form or denomination soever?

2. But also do not our prayers chiefly centre in ourselves? while we make a customary (not understood) use in them of the name of God? And when we principally design ourselves

in our prayers, what is it we covet most for ourselves? it is not agreeable to the holy, new divine nature, to desire to engross spiritual good things to ourselves; when for others, we desire only the good things of this earth. But if our prayers do only design the averting from ourselves outward calamities, or inconveniencies, and the obtaining only of ease, indulgence, and all grateful accommodations to our flesh, how absurd an hypocrisy is it to fashion up such a petition, by adding to it for thy name's sake? As if the name of God did oblige him to consult the ease and repose of our flesh! when our souls, thereby, are made, and continued the nurseries of all the evil, vicious inclinations, which shew themselves in our practice, most of all to the dishonour of that name! what subordination is there here? Manifest is the opposition of our carnal interest, to the interest and honour of the blessed name of God. If a malefactor, convicted of the highest crimes against the government, should petition for himself to this purpose, that it will bring a great disreputation upon authority, and detract from the famed clemency and goodness of the prince, if any punishment should be inflicted on him for his offences, or if he be not indulged and suffered to persist in them. How would this petition sound with sober, intelligent men? It is no wonder our flesh regrets suffering, but it is strange our reason should be so lost, as to think, at random, that right or wrong the name of God is not otherwise to be indemnified than by its being saved from suffering. As if the gratification of our flesh, and the glory of God's name were so very nearly related, and so much akin to one another! And now this carnal self-interest, insinuating itself, and thus distorting our prayers, is the radical evil in them, and the first and original part of their faultiness. For it is not likely we should love others, better than ourselves; therefore we cannot go higher in supplicating for others. But yet we inconsiderately mention the name of God for fashion's sake, though it be no way concerned in the matter, unless to vindicate and greatness itself, in rejecting us and our prayers together.

Secondly. The further use of what hath been said upon this subject, will be to persuade and engage us to have more regard to the name of God in our prayers, especially in praying about national and public concernments; or such external concernments, of our own as are involved with them. That, in the habitual temper of our spirits, we be so entirely and absolutely devoted to God, and the interest of his great name, that our prayers may savour of it, and be of an agreeable strain; that the inward sense of our souls, may fully correspond to the true import of this argument, and our hearts may not reproach us, when we use it, is

only pretending God, but meaning ourselves, and that only our carnal self, the interest whereof alone, can be in competition with that of God's name; and which, while it prevails in us, will be the measure of our prayers for others also; that the meaning of our words may not be one, and the meaning of our hearts, another, that we may truly mean as we speak, when we use the words for thy name's sake. And that our hearts may bear us this true testimony, that we desire nothing but in due subordination to the glory of his name; external favours, with limitation; only so far as they may; and spiritual blessings, absolutely, because they certainly will, admit of this subordination. And to this purpose let it be considered,

1. How unsuitable it is to the condition of a creature, that it should be otherwise. That were certainly, a most uncreaturely prayer, that should be of a contrary tenour. Let us but digest and state the case aright in our own thoughts. Admit we are praying with great ardency, on the behalf of a people to which we are related, and who are also related to God. It can scarce be thought we are more concerned for them, than for ourselves; or that we love them more than we do ourselves. Our love to ourselves is the usual measure of our love to others. And that is higher in the same kind, which is the measure of all besides, that belongs to that kind. When therefore we are much concerned for the external felicity of such a people, it is very natural to be more deeply concerned for our own. Now if the sense of our hearts, in such a prayer, will not agree with the true import of these words, "for thy name's sake;" because indeed, we are more concerned for our own carnal peace, ease, and accommodation than we are for the name of God; let us, that we may have the matter more clearly in view, put our request into such words, as wherewith the sense of our hearts will truly agree, and will it not be thus "Lord, whatever becomes of thy name," let nothing be done that shall be grievous, and disquieting to my flesh which is as much as to say, Quit thy throne to it, resign thy government, abandon all thy great interest for the service, and gratification of this animated clod of clay; and do we not now begin to blush at our own prayer? We easily slide over such a matter, as this, while our sense is more latent, and not distinctly reflected on, but let us have it before us *conceptis verbis*; let it appear with its own natural *face* and *look*; and now see what horror and detestableness it carries with it! And dare we now put up so treasonable a prayer? It would puzzle all our arithmetic, to assign the *quota pars*, or the *proportional part* any of us is, of the universe of the whole creation of God! And do I then think it fit that the heavens should roll for me? or all the mighty wheels of providence move only with regard to my

convenience? If a worm in your garden were capable of thoughts, and because it is permitted to crawl there, should think, this garden was made for me, and every thing in it ought to be ordered for my accommodation and pleasure, would you not wonder that such insolence, and a disposition to think so extravagantly, should be in conjunction with the thinking power or an ability to think at all. If we allow ourselves in that far greater (infinitely more unbecoming, and disproportionable) petulance do we think when the roller comes it will scruple to crush us, or have regard to our immodest, pretenceless claim? Let us consider what little minute things, how next to nothing we are, even compared with all the rest of the world: what are we then compared with the Maker and Lord of it, in comparison of whom the whole, is but as the drop of a bucket, or the small dust of the ballance, lighter than nothing and vanity! We should more contemplate ourselves in such a comparison; many comparing themselves with themselves are not wise. While we confine and limit our eye only to ourselves, we seem great things, fancy ourselves very considerable. But what am I? What is my single personality? ipseity, selfhood (call it what you will) to him who is the all in all; whose being (actually, or radically) comprehends all being, all that I can conceive, and the infinitely greater all, that I cannot. If therefore I take in, with myself, the whole body of a people besides, that I am concerned for, and admit that a generous love to my country, should make me prefer their concerns to my own; or that upon a higher account, as they are a people related to God, I could even lay down my life for them. What are we all, and all our interests to that of his name? And if we should all agree in a desire, that our interest should be served upon the dishonour of that name, it were but a treasonable conspiracy against our common, rightful Lord. And a foolish one, being expressed in a prayer; as if we thought to engage him, by our faint breath, against himself. We are to desire no more for them, than they may for themselves. And if we have joined in open sinning against him, to that height that he shall judge he is obliged for the vindication, and honour of his name, (by which we have been called) of his wisdom, holiness, and punitive justice, as openly to animadvert upon us, can we gainsay? If we knew of such a judgment nothing could remain for us but shame and silence, conviction of ill desert, and patient bearing the punishment of our sin. And while we know it not, yet because it is possible; we ought no otherwise to deprecate such a procedure against us, than as will consist with that possibility. To pray otherwise, if we make no mention of his name, is absurd presumption, that we should wish, or imagine, he will prefer any concerns

of ours, to the steady order and decorum of his own government. But if we do make mention of it, it is a more absurd hypocrisy, to seem concerned for his name when we intend only our own external advantages! as if we thought he that could answer our prayers, could not understand them. It is surely very unbecoming creatures, to bear themselves so, towards the God that made them.

2. Consider, that to have a sense in our hearts truly agreeable to the proper meaning of this argument for thy name's sake, is very suitable to the state of returning creatures, who are gathering themselves back to God, out of the common apostacy, wherein all were engaged, and combined against that great Lord and Ruler of the world. In that defection every one did principally mind and set up for himself. Each one would be a God to himself, but all were, by consequence against God. Whom to be for, they were divided, and of as many minds as there were men. Whom to be against, they were agreed, as if their common Lord, was the common enemy. For his interest, and theirs were opposite and irreconcilable. They were sunk and lost in sensuality, and had no other interest, than that of their flesh. When man hath made himself a brute, he then thinks himself fittest to be a God. The interest of our souls must unite us with him: that of our flesh engages us against him. Some are through the power of his grace returning. What a pleasure would it be to us to behold ourselves among the reduces! those that are upon their return. That are, again, taking the Lord only to be their God, and his interest for their only interest!

3. Consider that our very name, as we are christians, obliges us to be of that obedient, happy number. For what is Christianity but the tendency of souls towards God, through the mediation, and under the conduct of Christ? Therefore is the initial precept of it, and the condition of our entrance into that blessed state, self-denial. We answer not our own name, further than as we are revolving, and rolling back, out of our single and separate state, into our original, most natural state, of subordination to God; wherein only we are capable of union with him, and final blessedness in him. This is discipleship to Christ, and the design of the Christian religion to be subdued in our spirits, and wrought down into compliance with the divine will, to be meek, lowly, humble, patient, ready to take up the cross, to bear any thing, lose any thing, be any thing, or be nothing, that God may be all in all. This is our conformity, not to the precepts only, but to the example too, of our great Lord. Who when he was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God: made himself of no reputa-

tion, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man; and being found in fashion, as a man, humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Phil. 2. 6, 7, 8. And hereupon, because, he was so entirely devoted to the honour and service of God's great name (Father glorify thy name summed up his desires) therefore God highly exalted him, and gave him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, &c. ver. 9. 10. And whenever he shall have a church in the world, that he will think it fit to own with visible, unintermitted favours, it must consist of persons formed according to that pattern. And then, by losing their own name and little interests for God's, they will find all recovered, when their glorious Redeemer shall write upon them the name of his God, and the name of the city of his God, and his own new name. Rev. 3. 12.

4. Let it be further (in the last place) considered, with what cheerfulness and confidence, we may then pray; when our hearts are wrought to this pitch, that we sincerely design the honour of the divine name, as the most desirable thing; and which name above all things we covet to have glorified. For we are sure of being heard, and to have the same answer, which was given our Lord by a voice like that of thnnder, from heaven, when he prayed Father glorify thy name, (Joh: 12.) I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. Our hearts are not right in us, till we can count this a pleasant, grateful answer. And if we can, we can never fail of it. For we are told 1 Joh. 5. 14. That whatsoever we ask according to his will he heareth us. This will deliver our minds from suspence. When we pray for nothing whereof we are uncertain, but with great deference and submission, and for nothing absolutely, and with greatest engagement of heart; but whereof we are certain. Upon such terms we may pray with great assurance, as Daniel did, O Lord hear, O Lord forgive, O Lord hearken and do; defer not for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city, and thy people are called by thy name. ch. 9.19. And though an angel be not thereupon sent to tell us, as was to him, so many weeks are determined upon thy people and thy holy city (so the matter is expressed; as it were kindly giving back the interest in them to Daniel, with advantage, that he had before acknowledged unto God) to finish the transgression, and to make an end of of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, &c. yet we are assured, of what reasonably ought to be as satisfying, that whatsoever shall befall our city, or our people, shall end in the eternal glory of God, and of the city of God.