

I William H. H. H.
from the same place
June 1840.



Thomas Michael Loomis



SACRA PRIVATA.

THE
PRIVATE MEDITATIONS, DEVOTIONS,
AND PRAYERS

OF THE
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LORD BISHOP OF SODOR AND MAN.

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BENI PRUPERES ANIMO.

PREFACE.

No words are necessary to introduce the name of Bishop Wilson to the members of that Church, of which he was in his day, and has been since, in sacred language, “a burning and a shining light.” Burning indeed and shining, like the Baptist, in an evil time, he seemed as if a beacon lighted on his small island, to shew what his Lord and Saviour could do in spite of man;—how He could at will make for Himself a dwelling-place upon the waves, and a garden in the barren sea, and, when a nation had

fallen into His enemies' hands, could preach to it even off its shores, and be nigh at hand, when they would fain leave Him "not so much as to set His foot on." The English soil indeed had its own witnesses and teachers at the time ; but none at once so exalted in station and so saintly in character, so active and so tried in his lifetime, and so influential in his works, as Bishop Wilson.

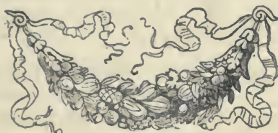
Of these works not the least important is that which is now submitted to the reader entire ;—those Devotional Exercises, which or the like of which were the groundwork of whatever name and influence he has attained in the Church of God. These Exercises, while edifying on their own account, are valuable also, as affording a model of what good judges have pronounced to be the best form in which serious persons may keep a record

of their own spiritual state; in that prayers against particular failings, such as are here found, at once suggest to the framer what his failings are and have been, and yet are secure, as being prayers, from the various dangers to which the direct enlarging upon failings, without the immediate thought of God's presence, is likely to lead.

J. H. N.

ORIEL COLLEGE,

July 5, 1838:







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ON

DEVOTION AND PRAYER.

TRUE devotion consists in having our hearts always devoted to God, as the sole Fountain of all happiness; and who is ready to hear and help His otherwise helpless, miserable creatures.

It is to be attained,

1st. By earnest prayer: "He that hungers after righteousness, will certainly be filled."

2dly. By possessing our hearts with a deep sense of our own misery, our wants, and danger:—This is the grace of humility.

3dly. By considering God's goodness, power, and readiness to help us:—This is called faith in God.

Lastly. By convincing our hearts of the vanity of every thing else to afford us any real help or comfort:—This is to be effected by self-denial.

Dying persons are generally more devout than others, because they then see their own misery, that nothing in this world can help them, and that God is their only refuge.

We must change our lives, if we desire to change our hearts. God will have no regard to the prayers of those who have none to his commands.

The Spirit of God will not dwell in a divided heart. We cannot feel the pleasures of devotion, while the world is our delight. Not that all pleasures are criminal, but the closer union we have with the world, the less is our union with God. A Christian, therefore, who strives after devotion, should taste sensual pleasures very sparingly, should make necessity, not bodily delight, his rule.

In order to dispose our hearts to devotion, the active life to be preferred to the contemplative.

To be doing good to mankind, disposes the soul most powerfully to devotion. And indeed, we are surrounded with motives to piety and devotion, if we would but mind them.

The poor are designed to excite our liberality; the miserable, our pity; the sick, our assistance; the ignorant, our instruction; those that are fallen, our helping hand. In those that are vain, we see the vanity of this world. In those that are wicked, our own frailty. When we see good men rewarded, it confirms our hope; and when evil men are punished, it excites us to fear.

He that would be devout, must beware of indulging a habit of wandering in prayer. It is a crime that will grow upon us, and will deprive us of the blessings we pray for.

Avoid, as much as may be, multiplicity of business: neither the innocency, nor the goodness of the employment, will excuse us, if it possess our hearts when we are praying to God.

When our Lord bids us to take no thought for the morrow, he intended to hinder those

cares and fears which are apt to distract our devotions,—which are the more unreasonable, because they never can change the state of things.

Never be curious to know what passes in the world, any further than duty obliges you ; it will only distract the mind when it should be better employed.

Never intermit devotion, if you can help it ; you will return to your duty, like Samson, when his locks were cut, weak and indifferent as other people of the world.

The oftener we renew our intercourse with God, the greater will be our devotion.

Frequent prayer, as it is an exercise of holy thoughts, is a most natural remedy against the power of sin.

Importunity makes no change in God, but it creates in us such dispositions as God thinks fit to reward.

Make it a law to yourself to meditate before you pray ; as also to make certain pauses, to see whether your heart goes along with your lips.

They whose hearts desire nothing, pray for nothing.

Give me, O God, the spirit of true devotion, such as may give life to all my prayers, so that they may find acceptance in Thy sight, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

N. B. The Meditations and Prayers which are proper for the Clergy only, or which were suitable peculiarly to the Author, are printed between crotchets [] for the sake of assisting the private devotions of the pious reader.



SACRA PRIVATA.

“Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret ; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.”—Matthew vi. 6.

How good is God ! who will not only give us what we pray for, but will reward us for going to Him, and laying our wants before Him.

May I always present myself before God—with a firm faith and hope in his promises and mercy ; with great reverence to His infinite Majesty ; with the humility of an offender ; and with a full purpose of keeping all God’s commands.

May the thoughts of eternity quicken my devotions ; my wants make me earnest ; my backslidings make me persevere ; and may I

never wilfully give way to any distracting thoughts !

May I wait with patience, and leave it to Thee, my God and Father, how and when to grant my petitions !

He that has learned to pray as he ought, has got the secret of an holy life.

It is of greater advantage to us than we imagine, that God does not grant our petitions immediately. We learn by that, that whereunto we have already attained, it was the gift of God.

The best way to prevent wandering in prayer is, not to let the mind wander too much at other times ; but to have God always in our minds in the whole course of our lives. The end of prayer is not to inform God, but to give man a sight of his own misery ; to raise his soul towards heaven, and to put him in mind that there is his Father and his inheritance.

“ Ask, and it shall be given you,” Matthew vii. 7. Grant me, Lord, a faith which shall make me know my wants, that I may ask them

with earnestness and humility, and depend upon Thy gracious promise.

THE DUTIES OF A CHRISTIAN.

That man leads a sincere Christian life,

1st, Who endeavours to serve and obey God to the best of his understanding and power.

2dly. Who strives to please his neighbour to edification.

3dly. Who endeavours to do his duty in that state of life unto which it has pleased God to call him.

Whoever would continue in the practice of these things unto his life's end, it is necessary that he should call himself often to an account, whether he does so or not; constantly pray for grace to know, and to do his duty; and preserve himself in such a teachable temper as to be always ready to receive the truth, when it is fairly proposed to him.

[THE DUTIES OF A BISHOP,

(The state of life unto which it has pleased God to call me.)

By the laws of God and the Church, are,
To instruct the people committed to his charge,
out of the holy scriptures; and to teach,
or maintain, no doctrine but what may be
proved from thence. *Sunday.*

To exercise himself in those holy scriptures;
to call upon God for the true understanding of
the same. *Monday.*

To use all faithful diligence in driving away
all doctrines contrary to God's Word, and to
encourage others so to do. *Tuesday.*

To deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts,
and to live a sober, righteous, and godly life,
so as to be an example unto others. *Wednesday.*

To maintain and set forward, as much as
may be, quietness, love, and peace, among all
men; and to correct and punish the unruly,
criminous, and disobedient, as far as God's
Word, and the laws of the land, do require
and will warrant. *Thursday.*

To be faithful in ordaining, sending, or laying hands upon others. *Friday.*

To be gentle and merciful, for Christ's sake, to poor and needy people, and to all strangers destitute of help. *Saturday.*

THE PRAYER.

Almighty God, give me grace and power faithfully to perform these duties of my high calling ; that I may be found perfect and irreprehensible at the last day, through Jesus Christ. Amen.]

Prevent, O Lord, the wants of an heart which knows not even how to lay them open before Thee ; which does not so much as think of doing it ; and which does too often shut out the light and consolation of which it stands in need.

It is a rudeness amongst men to ask a favour, and not stay for an answer. And do we count it no fault to pray for blessings, and never to think of them afterwards,—never to wait for them, never to give God thanks for them?

Let us not run over our prayers with an insensible and distracted mind.

Let your prayers be as particular as may be, against the sins of your particular state, and for the graces which you in particular do most stand in need of. This is the best preservative against sin; makes us best acquainted with our condition; puts us continually in mind of mending what is amiss; lets us see what particular graces we most want, what are most needful for the cure of our own particular corruption and disorder; and is the best trial of our hearts. For example; if I pray for charity, and for every instance which is necessary to render me truly charitable, I pray for grace to avoid evil-speaking,—to pray for my enemies,—to do them good, &c. and so of all other sins and graces.

God grant that I may never seek Thy face in vain!

[“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”—James v. 16.]

This ought to make me aspire after every possible degree of holiness, that God may hear

my prayers for my flock, and for such as have desired my prayers.

“When thou didst pray, I did bring the remembrance of your prayers before the Holy One; and when thou didst bury the dead, I was with thee.”—Tobit xii. 12.

May the good Spirit of God assist me in the performance of my duty. Fix my attention, excite my affections, and inflame my devotions, that I may attend upon the Lord with pleasure and without distraction.

Let us make prayer familiar to us; for without the help of God, we are every hour in danger.

“And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breast-plate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually.”—Exodus xxviii. 29.

Let Thy merciful ears, O God, be open unto the prayers of Thy servant for himself, and for the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made him overseer, for the Lord Jesus' sake. Amen.

O Lord, say Amen to our prayers, and grant

that my whole flock may be partakers of the blessings we have now prayed for ; and may Thy blessings be upon them for ever. Amen.

The devil knows, that when we have a relish for prayer, and apply ourselves in good earnest to it, we are in the way of life ; he therefore strives by all ways possible to divert us.]

“ Lord, teach us to pray.”—Luke xi. 1.

Pour upon us the spirit of supplication and prayer.

God will deny us nothing that we ask in the name of His Son.

PRAYERS THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

When we offer our prayers through His mediation, it is then He that prays, His love that intercedes, His blood that pleads, it is He who obtains all from His Father.

PREPARATORY PRAYER.

O holy Spirit of grace ! give us a true sight of our miseries, and a sincere shame and sorrow when we make confession of our sins ; a

feeling sense of our need of mercy, and a hope of obtaining pardon, when we beg it for Thy Son's sake. May we resign our wills to Thee and to Thy goodness, when we pray for temporal things ; and when we pray for spiritual graces, may we hunger and thirst after righteousness. Give us a real love for Thy Holy Word, and grace to hear it with attention. May we thankfully close with all the means of grace and salvation. When we praise Thee for Thy works of nature and of grace, and give Thee thanks for Thy mercies, let us do it with high esteem and gratitude. Cause us to hear Thy Holy Word with faith and attention, and to profit by what we hear, that we may return from Thy church with a blessing.

MORNING PRAYER.

“ Choose you this day whom you will serve.”—Joshua xxiv. 15.

WHOM have I in heaven but Thee, O Lord ? and there is none on earth that I desire besides Thee. Thou art my God, and I will thank

Thee : Thou art my God, and I will serve Thee.
Be Thou my only Ruler and Governor.

They that have a convenient place to sleep in, and they that have the comfort of sleep, have both great reason to be thankful. And even they that want these mercies, ought to bless God, if in the midst of their afflictions He is pleased to refresh them with the comforts of grace.

Gracious God, continue to me these favours so long, and in such a measure, as shall most contribute to Thy honour, and my salvation. And in great mercy support and relieve all that want these blessings.

What shall I offer unto the Lord for His mercies renewed unto me every morning?—

“The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; a broken and contrite heart God will not despise.^a

But most unfit is mine to be to God presented until I have obtained His pardon, through the merits of the Lord Jesus, for the many sins by which it hath been defiled.

“I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I

will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God.”—Jeremiah iii. 12.

“I acknowledge my sin unto Thee, O God, and mine iniquities will I not hide.”—Psalm xxxii. 5.

I do therefore implore Thy pardon, and plead Thy gracious promises, with full purpose of heart, by the assistance of Thy grace, never again to return to folly.

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked : who can know it ?”—Jeremiah xvii. 9.

I cannot answer for my own heart,—but there is no word, O Lord, impossible with Thee ; in Thee I do put my trust ; let me never be put to confusion.

Keep it ever in the heart of Thy servant, “that it is indeed an evil thing and bitter to offend the Lord.”

Keep me from presumptuous sins ; that I may never grieve Thy Holy Spirit, nor provoke Thee to leave me to myself.

“ Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.”—Matthew xxvi. 41.

Lord, make me ever mindful of my infirmities and backslidings, that I may be more watchful, and more importunate for grace for the time to come.

“ Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”—1 Peter v. 8.

O Lord, grant that this adversary of our souls may never find me off my guard, or from under Thy protection.

“ If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”—Matthew xvi. 24.

O my Saviour! how long have I professed to follow Thee, without following the blessed steps of Thy most holy life,—Thy patience and humility,—Thy great disregard for the world, its pleasures, profits, honours, and all its idols.

O Lord, obtain for me the spirit of mortification and self-denial, that I may follow Thee, as I hope to live with Thee for ever. Amen.

“No man can serve two masters. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”—Matthew vi. 24.

May my fear and love never be divided between Thee and the world. May I never set up any thing, O God, in competition with Thee in the possession of my heart. May I never attempt to reconcile Thy service with that world which is at enmity with Thee, my God and Father.

“What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?”—Mark x. 17.

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

O that this love of God may be the commanding principle of my soul! May I always have this comfortable proof of His love abiding in me, that I study to please Him and to keep His commandments. And may my love to my neighbour be such as He has commanded, that I may forgive, and give, and love, as becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ. Amen.

“Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man;” that is, the happiness of man.—Ecclesiastes xii. 13.

May I, great God, continue in thy fear all the day long. May I keep thy statutes, and observe thy laws.

“All things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”—Hebrews iv. 13.

Grant that I may always live and act as having Thee, O God, the constant witness of my conduct, for Jesus Christ’s sake.

[“Take heed unto yourselves, and unto all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.”—Acts xx. 28.

Make me, O Lord, a faithful Overseer, and all those that labour with me in the work of the ministry, every day more worthy of our calling. And grant unto the people of our flock, that they may profit by us daily, for Jesus Christ’s sake, the supreme Bishop and Pastor.

“The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”—John x. 11.

O Sovereign Pastor! who gavest Thy life

for Thy sheep, grant that I may never sacrifice Thy flock to my own ease, convenience, profit, or pleasure. But that I may employ my time, my substance, my care, my labours, my prayers, for their welfare continually, and thus, at least, “give my life for my sheep.”

“I send you forth as sheep among wolves ; be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.”—Matthew x. 16.

Give me, O Jesus, this wisdom and simplicity, that the cause of God may never suffer by my ignorance or perverseness. Take me and my flock under Thy protection ; and abandon us not to the rage of wolves. Let me never oppose any thing to the violence of man but meekness of spirit.

“If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God ?”—1 Timothy iii. 5.

Grant, O Lord, that my care and conduct in the church of God may appear in the order and piety of my own family. O heavenly Lord and Master, bless us, and take us under Thy gracious protection ; make us an household

fearing God, and examples to others of order, diligence, faithfulness, and piety.]

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for the night cometh when no man can work.”—Ecclesiastes ix. 10.

Make me, O Lord, ever sensible of the great evil of delaying the work in its season, which Thou hast appointed, lest the night surprise me unawares.

“This is the confidence we have in God, that if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us.”—1 John v. 14.

That it may be unto Thy servant according to this word, I beseech Thee to hear me in the full importance of that holy prayer which Thy blessed Son hath taught us:—

OUR FATHER, WHICH ART IN HEAVEN;

In whom we live, and move, and have our being; grant that I, and all Christians, may live worthy of this glorious relation, and that we may not sin, knowing that we are accounted Thine.

We are Thine by adoption ; O make us Thine by the choice of our will.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME.

O God, whose name is great, wonderful, and holy, grant that I, and all Thy children, may glorify Thee, not only with our lips, but in our lives ; that others, seeing our good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven.

THY KINGDOM COME.

May the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ. And may all that own Thee for their King, become Thy faithful subjects, and obey Thy laws. Dethrone, O God, and destroy Satan and his kingdom ; and enlarge the kingdom of grace.

THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH, AS IT IS IN
HEAVEN.

We adore Thy goodness, O God, in making Thy will known to us in Thy Holy Word. May this Thy Word be the rule of our will, of our desires, of our lives, and actions. May we ever sacrifice our will to Thine ; be pleased with

all Thy choices for ourselves and others, and adore thy providence in the government of the world.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

O heavenly Father, who knowest what we have need of, give us the necessities and comforts of this life with Thy blessing; but above all, give us the bread that nourisheth to eternal life.

“O God, who giveth to all life, and breath, and all things,” give us grace to impart to such as are in want, of what Thou hast given more than our daily bread.—Acts xvii.

AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES AS WE FORGIVE THEM THAT TRESPASS AGAINST US.

Make us truly sensible of thy goodness and mercy and patience towards us, that we may from our hearts forgive every one his brother their trespasses.

May my enemies ever have place in my prayers, and in Thy mercy.

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION.

Support us, O heavenly Father, under all our

saving trials, and grant that they may yield us the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.

From all sin and wickedness, from our ghostly enemy, and from everlasting death, good Lord deliver us.

Deliver us from the evil of sin, and from the evil of punishment.

Deliver us, O heavenly Father, from our evil and corrupt nature, from the temptations and snares of an evil world, and from falling again into the sins we have repented of.

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, THE POWER, AND
THE GLORY, FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.

By Thy Almighty power, O King of heaven, for the glory of Thy name, and for the love of a Father, grant us all these blessings which Thy Son has taught us to pray for.

Unto Him that is able to do for us abundantly more than we can ask or think, unto Him be glory, in the church by Christ Jesus,

throughout all ages, world without end.
Amen.^b

To God the Creator, the Preserver, and Disposer of all things, be the glory of all the good wrought in us, by us, and upon us.

Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

Thine infinite power, wisdom, goodness, faithfulness, and truth, are the only foundation on which we may surely depend. O give us a firm faith in these thy glorious perfections.

With angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious name, evermore praising Thee, and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to Thee, O God most high. Amen.

“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory

and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”—Jude 24, 25.

“For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.”—Romans xi. 36.

“To God only wise be glory through Jesus Christ, for ever and ever. Amen.”—Romans xvi. 27.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”—Matthew v. 16.

O my great Master! may I edify others by my example; dispense the light which Thy grace shall vouchsafe me, and in all humility direct all the glory to God.

“Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”—Matthew v. 48.

All my endeavours without Thy assistance, O Jesus, will be ineffectual.]

“All things are possible to Him that believeth.”—Mark ix. 23.

Yes, Lord, and therefore I beg that faith of Him to whom all things are possible, that I

may be able to discover, to avoid, to resist, and to root out, whatever is evil in me.

O Jesus, obtain this grace for Thy otherwise helpless creature.

Grant that I may this day escape all the snares laid for me, by the Devil, the world, or mine own corrupt heart.

Grant that I may this day omit no part of my duty.

“Give thyself wholly to these things, that Thy profiting may appear to all.”—1 Timothy iv. 15.

God grant that I may do so; and I pray God preserve me from ease, idleness, and trifling away my precious time.

“I thank my God, making mention of Thee always in my prayers.”—Philemon 4.

[O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, have respect unto the prayer of Thy servant on behalf of himself and of his people. Lord, give us true repentance for our great and crying sins, root out all growing vices, and avert the judgments which we have justly deserved.]

Put Thy fear into our hearts, and preserve this church in the midst of this uncertain world. Keep us from all wild and dangerous errors, and prepare us for what Thy providence shall bring forth.

Bless the Lord of this isle with a spirit of wisdom, justice, and the fear of God; provide his offices and council with able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness.

Endue the clergy with all those graces and abilities, that are necessary to fit them for their high calling.]

Extend and suit Thy graces to all conditions of men amongst us, that we may all be upright in our dealings, obedient to our governors, peaceable in our lives, sober, honest, temperate, chaste in our conversation, and charitable to the poor, and one towards another.

Increase the number and the graces of all such as love and fear Thee. Enlighten the minds of the ignorant, awaken the consciences of the careless, silence the gainsayers, convert the profane, and all that hold the truth in unrighteousness.

Rebuke the spirit of antichrist, idolatry, and libertinism,—the sins of drunkenness, whoredom, litigiousness, and defrauding the public.

In tender mercy, remember, O God, all sick and dying persons, that they may omit nothing that is necessary to make their peace with Thee. Be gracious unto all that are in affliction of mind or body, or under any pressing calamity, all desolate widows and fatherless children, all that call upon Thee in their distress, and have none else to help them.

“The King’s heart is in the hand of the Lord; as the rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever he will.”—Proverbs xxi. 1.

Let this Thy power, O Lord, be magnified on his Majesty, and on all that are put in authority under him, that we may be governed with truth and justice, by men fearing and honouring God, protecting the Christian religion, and punishing evil-doers. To this end vouchsafe them, I beseech Thee, all the graces necessary for their high station, and for their eternal happiness.

“Masters, give unto your servants that

which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven."—Colossians iv. 1.

O heavenly Lord and Master, direct me to, and bless me with, good and faithful servants. Let Thy blessing be upon them, and upon my affairs committed to their care; and may I never be wanting in any part of my duty to them, for Jesus Christ's sake.

RELATIONS, BENEFACTORS, &c.

Be gracious, O Lord, unto my relations, benefactors, enemies, and all that have desired my prayers; all who, by their own labours, do minister to our necessities; together with all our known and unknown benefactors. Render, O God, a good reward, and a plentiful return, to all those who have been kind and charitable. Grant that we may all so live here, as that we may meet hereafter in the paradise of God.

[FOR MYSELF AND LABOURS.]

Bless all my labours for Thy glory, O Lord, and for the good of Thy Church.]

“ Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.”—John xvi. 23.

These are what I ask, O God and Father, above all things, for myself, and for all that have desired my prayers:—That we may be restored to Thy likeness, and never deface it by our sins; that the image of Satan may be destroyed in us, that all carnal affections may die in us, and that all things belonging to the Spirit may dwell in our hearts by faith; that Thy name, and the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, may be glorified in us, and we in him; that our hearts may be entirely, Thine; that we may never grieve Thy Holy Spirit; but that we may continue Thine for ever, for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

“ Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”—Ephesians iv. 29.

Grant, O God, that I may delight in Thy law; that my conversation may be truly Christian. [Enable me to speak of Thy divine per-

fections as becomes a Christian bishop, that I may minister grace unto the hearers.]

May I never hear with pleasure, nor ever repeat, such things as may dishonour God, or injure my neighbour, or my own character.

“Speak not evil one of another.”—James iv. 11.

“Foolish talking or jesting are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks.”—Eph. v. 4.

“Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and keep the door of my lips.”—Ps. cxxxiii. 3.

“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. How can ye, being evil, speak good things?”—Matthew xii. 34.

O Holy Spirit of grace, enable me to overcome the shame of a degenerate age, which will hear nothing with delight, but what concerns this world. O touch my heart with the true love of God, the excellencies of His laws, the pleasantness of His service, the wonders of His providences, &c. [that I may edify those that hear me.] This I beg for Jesus Christ’s sake.

“Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”—John xv. 7.

These, O Jesus, are the things that I ask. Intercede for me! That I may be truly sensible of the diseases I labour under, and thankfully embrace the means which Thy goodness hath ordained for my recovery.

Grant that the end of all my actions and designs, may be the glory of God.

Enable me to resist all the sinful appetites of my corrupt nature.

Grant that I may hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Vouchsafe me the spirit of adoption—of supplication and prayer—of praise and thanksgiving.

Obtain for me, O Jesus, the graces of mortification and self-denial; the graces of a true humility, and the fear of God.

Grant, O God, that I may never knowingly live one moment under Thy displeasure, or in any known sin.

Grant, O God, that as I have been regenerate, and made Thy child by adoption and grace, I may daily be renewed by Thy Holy Spirit, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Enable me, gracious God, to escape the corruption that is in the world through lust, that I may be partaker of the divine nature.

Lord, grant me grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and with a pure heart and mind to follow Thee, the only God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let Thy love, O God, be shed abroad in my heart, by the power of the Holy Ghost, and grant that it may appear in my life, my conversation, my words, and actions, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Blessed be God that I was admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion. Grant, O God, that I may eschew all those things that are contrary to my profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Keep me, I beseech Thee, O heavenly Father, under the protection of Thy good providence, and make me to have a perpetual fear and love of Thy holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Put away from me all hurtful things, and give me those things that be profitable for me, through Jesus Christ.

Mercifully grant unto me, O God, such a measure of Thy grace, that running the way of Thy commandments, I may obtain Thy gracious promises, and be made partaker of Thy heavenly treasure, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Forgive me those things whereof my conscience is afraid, and give me those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the merits and mediation of Thy Son Jesus Christ.

That I may obtain that which Thou dost promise, make me to love that which Thou dost command, through Jesus Christ.

Keep me from all things hurtful, and lead me to all things necessary to my salvation, through Jesus Christ.

The Lord deliver me from every evil work, and preserve me to His heavenly kingdom; to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

O that Thy Holy Spirit may direct and rule my heart, O God, through Jesus Christ.

Of Thy bountiful goodness, O Lord, keep me, I beseech Thee, from all things that may hurt me, that I may cheerfully accomplish those things which Thou wouldest have done, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Grant, O God, that I may be cleansed from all my sin, and serve Thee with a quiet mind, through Jesus Christ.

Deliver me, O Lord, from the bonds of those sins, which, through my frailty, I have committed, for Jesus Christ's sake.

FAITH.

O that I may believe in Thee, O God, and put my whole confidence and trust in Thee alone, and not in any thing that I myself can do.

Grant, O God, that I may so perfectly, and without all doubt, believe in Thy Son Jesus Christ, that my faith in Thy sight may never be reproved, for the sake of the same Jesus Christ.

AGAINST WAVERING.

Grant, O God, that we may not be carried about with every blast of vain doctrine, but

that we may be firmly established in the truth of Thy holy Gospel, through Jesus Christ.

Grant, O God, that I may perfectly know Thy Son Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life—the Author of the way, the Teacher of the truth, and the Giver of life; that I may steadfastly walk in the way that leadeth to eternal life, through the same Jesus Christ.

COVETOUSNESS.

Give me grace to forsake all covetous desires, and inordinate love of riches and pleasures, through Jesus Christ.

Grant that I may both perceive and know what things I ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same, through Jesus Christ.

Grant me, O God, the true circumcision of the Spirit, that my heart, and all my members, being mortified from all carnal lusts, I may in all things obey Thy blessed will.

O that we, who know Thee now by faith, may, after this life, have the fruition of Thy glorious Godhead!

In all our dangers and necessities, stretch forth Thy right hand to save and defend us.

CHARITY.

O, send Thy Holy Ghost, and pour into my heart that most excellent gift of charity, that very bond of peace and of all virtue, without which, whosoever liveth is counted dead before Thee.

Grant, I do most humbly beseech Thee, O God, that as by Thy special grace preventing me, Thou dost put into my mind good desires, so by Thy continual help I may bring the same to good effect, through Jesus Christ.

O everlasting God, grant that as Thy holy Angels always do Thee service in heaven, so by Thy appointment they may succour and defend us on earth, through Jesus Christ.

Grant me grace so to follow Thy blessed saints in virtuous and godly living, that I may come to those unspeakable joys, which Thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly love Thee.

I pray God that my whole spirit, (my understanding, will, and conscience,) my soul,

(my appetites, affections, and passions,) and my body, (the tabernacle of my soul,) be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.^d

May I take pleasure in abiding in Thy presence, O God, in depending upon Thee; in leaving myself entirely to Thy disposal, as a continual sacrifice to Thy will.

Give me a victory over all my sins and imperfections, increase in me the graces of faith, hope, and charity, of humility, meekness, patience, and resignation, and all other Christian virtues, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Preserve me, gracious God, from spiritual pride, from ascribing any thing I have done, or can do, to myself, and robbing Thee of the glory of saving me from eternal ruin.

Take possession, O Jesus, of Thy right in my soul, which thou hast redeemed with Thy most precious blood, and root out all self-righteousness, self-interest, and self-will;—that Thou mayest be my righteousness, and all in me.

REPENTANCE.

Give me, O God, such a true sorrow for my sins, as shall enable me to embrace all the necessary means, how bitter soever, for rooting sin out of my soul.

HUMILITY.

“God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.”—1 Peter v. 5.

I have all the reason in the world to be humble. Without God I am nothing. Without His help and grace, I can do nothing that is good. Without His word, I know nothing. Of myself, I deserve nothing but punishment. Of my own, I have nothing but faults, imperfections, and sins, an inclination to evil, an aversion to good, unruly senses, ungovernable passions, unreasonable affections.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who art made unto us of God, our wisdom, by revealing Him and His glorious perfections; our righteousness, by satisfying the justice of God in our nature; our sanctification, by procuring for us the Holy

Ghost, and by restoring us, being sinners, to God's favour; our redemption, by redeeming us from death eternal. O Jesus, for these mighty favours, all love and glory be to Thee, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, for ever. Amen. 1 Cor. i. 30.

THE WAY OF AN HAPPY LIFE.

LAY nothing too much to heart; desire nothing too eagerly; rejoice not excessively, nor grieve too much for disasters; be not violently bent on any design; nor let any worldly cares hinder you from taking care of your soul; and remember, that it is necessary to be a Christian (that is, to govern one's self by motives of Christianity) in the most common actions of civil life.

“Whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”—Col. iii. 17.

He that would not fall into temptation, must have a presence of mind, a watchful eye

over himself; he must have great things in view, distinguish betwixt time and eternity, or else he will follow what passion, not what reason and religion, suggest.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

Whoever aspires after, (that is, in being so united to God as to be one spirit with him,) must resolve to do all things with this sole view, to please God. This I purpose, this I forbear, this I undertake, this I do, this I suffer, in obedience to the will of God; and because I believe it will be for His glory. This should be our express purpose, at all times, when we have time to make it; and should be often renewed, lest our own will come to be the rule of our actions. If I am careful to do this, I shall always have my end, whether I succeed or be disappointed, being convinced it is God's will.

“Put ye on the Lord Jesus, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”—Romans xvi. 14.

Grant, O Lord, that “I may keep under

my body, and bring it into subjection, lest by any means, [when I have preached to others] I myself should be a castaway." ^e

"Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile. Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it."—1 Peter iii. 8—11.

Give me, O Lord, a wise, a sober, a serious, a religious heart, [that I may do Thee honour in a faithful discharge of the duties of my calling.

Give me true Christian courage, that I may never faint in the way of my duty.]

Preserve me from evil councils and rash enterprises. O make Thy way plain before my face.

Support me this day under all the difficulties I shall meet with.

I offer myself to Thee, O God, this day, to

do in me, and with me, as to Thee seems most meet.

Vouchsafe me, gracious God, the spirit of adoption, whereby I may cry, Abba, Father, and apply to Thee, through Jesus Christ, not as an angry judge, but as to a merciful and loving father.

Remember, that the life of man is only to be valued for its usefulness.

[“Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”—Matthew vii. 13, 14.

Grant, O Jesus, that I may never flatter myself or others on this subject.]

“This is my commandment, that ye love one another.”—John xv. 12.

O Thou, who hast given me this command and pattern, give me a sincere desire of following, and grace and power to do it.

“And the prayer of faith shall save the sick; and the Lord shall raise him up; and if

he have committed sins, (*ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ*,) he shall be absolved," i. e. upon his confession.—James v. 15.

O Lord of life and death! have mercy upon all those who are visited with sickness; sanctify this Thy fatherly correction, that they may search their ways, and see whence this visitation cometh. Have mercy upon all that are appointed to die, and grant that they omit nothing that is necessary to make their peace with Thee, and that they may be delivered from death eternal. And God grant that we may apply our hearts to that holy and heavenly wisdom, while we live here, which may in the end bring us to life everlasting, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

NOON.

"I exhort, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men."—1 Timothy ii. 1.

"For we are all of one blood."—Acts xvii. 26.

And charity, that more excellent way, is a tender affection for the whole creation of God.

[To promote the kingdom of God, is to increase and hasten one's own happiness.

That "man is born to trouble," I see wherever I turn my eyes. I know what pain is by experience; and though I was never in want, yet, from the complaints of others, I see it is grievous, and fit are those things to be laid before the throne of grace.

And since many have desired my prayers, and others have been my benefactors, and do constantly pray for me, I should not neglect to pray for them.

There are also many who cannot, and many who forget to pray for themselves, for whom charity should oblige one to pray.

And I should by no means forget the place of my birth, education, and preferment, that I may be some way useful to them, at least desire that God will accept my prayers for them.]

O God, almighty and merciful, let Thy fatherly kindness be upon all whom Thou hast made. Hear the prayers of all that call upon

Thee ; open the eyes of them that never pray for themselves : pity the sighs of such as are in misery : deal mercifully with them that are in darkness, and increase the number of the graces of such as fear and serve Thee daily. Preserve this land from the misfortunes of war ; this church from all dangerous errors ; this people from forgetting Thee, their Lord and Benefactor. Be gracious to all those countries that are made desolate by the sword, famine, pestilence, or persecution. Bless all persons and places to which Thy providence has made me a debtor ; all who have been instrumental to my good by their assistance, advice, example, or writings. And make me in my turn useful to others. Let none of those that desire my prayers want Thy mercy, but defend, and comfort, and conduct them through to their lives' end.

“ In every thing give thanks ; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”—1 Thess. v. 18.

[SPECIAL FAVOURS.

That I was born of honest and religious parents, and in a Christian and Protestant country.

That I had an early right to the covenant of grace.

That I had an education and preferment beyond the abilities of my father's house.

That I had the advantage of honourable and worthy friends; an excellent wife, and four lovely children.

EXTRAORDINARY DELIVERANCES.

From dangerous wounds I received in my head and thigh, when a child;

From gunpowder;

From fire;

From the dangers of the sea.

MERCIFUL VISITATIONS AND CHASTISEMENTS.

A fever in 1693.

A long indisposition, of which I recovered in 1698.

The loss of three children, at such a time as evidently shewed the reason of the visitation.

The loss of my dearest wife, with a very peculiar circumstance at the funeral, which shewed at once the love and the justice of God.]

Cause us, O God, to profit by all the visitations of Thy grace and mercy.

It becometh well the just to be thankful.

O Lord and Father, I am not worthy of the least of all Thy mercies, which Thou hast shewed Thy servant, neither can I render due thanks and praise for them; but, O Lord, accept of this my sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

For all the known, and for all the unobserved favours, deliverances, visitations, opportunities of doing good, chastisements, and graces of Thy Holy Spirit, vouchsafed to myself and to my family, I bless Thy holy providence; beseeching Thee to pardon my ingratitude, that I have passed so many days and years without observing and without acknowledging Thy great goodness to Thy unworthy servant.

For when I soberly consider my depend-

ence upon Thee, for my life, welfare, health of body, peace of mind, grace, comfort, and salvation, I ought to be very thankful.

Glory be to God, my Creator; glory be to Jesus, my Redeemer; glory be to the Holy Ghost, my Sanctifier, my Guide, and Comforter:—All love, all glory, be to God most high. Amen.

Let us never ascribe any thing to ourselves, but all to the grace of God, and render to Him all the glory of His works.

Preserve me, O God, from the insensibility of those who receive Thy favours without being affected with them, and from the ingratitude of those who look upon them as a debt.

“It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord; and to sing praises unto Thy name, O Most High! To shew forth Thy lovingkindness in the morning, and Thy faithfulness every night.”—Psalm xcii. 1, 2.

Many and great have been the favours and blessings which Thou hast bestowed upon these nations; for which, O Lord, in conjunction with those who praise Thee for them, and in

the stead of those who forget to praise Thee, I bless and praise Thy holy name.

“ Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.”

OUR FATHER, WHICH ART IN HEAVEN ;

“ In Thee we live, and move, and have our being.”—Acts xvii. 28.

Grant, O Father, that all Christians may live worthy of this glorious relation.

O that we may not sin, knowing that we are accounted Thy children.^f

Grant that we may love Thee with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength.

Blessed be God, who dealeth with us with the tenderness of a father.

O that we may remember that our Father and our inheritance is in heaven.

I commit myself, and all that belongs to me, to Thy fatherly care and love.

Verily, whatever ye ask the Father in My name, He will give it you.^g This is the great support and comfort of sinners. Hear us, for

^f Wisdom xv.

^g John xvi. 23.

Thy Son's sake; for as sinners, we have no right to ask any favour.

What manner of love is it, that we should be called the sons of God!^h

HALLOWED BE THY NAME:

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive honour, and power, and glory; for Thou hast created all things.

“In this is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit.”

May Thy children have a great regard for every thing that belongs to Thee.

May I never dishonour Thee, O heavenly Father, by word or deed.

May I glorify Thee daily by a good life. Fill my heart with a great concern and zeal for Thy glory.

“Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord.”

“They that honour me, I will also honour.”

How little have I done to promote Thy glory! God be merciful unto me.

THY KINGDOM COME.

May all the kingdoms of the world obey Thy laws, and submit to Thy providence, and become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of His Christ!

May all that own Thee for their King, become Thy faithful subjects!

Bless the pious endeavours of all those that strive to propagate the gospel of Thy kingdom.

Vouchsafe to reign in my heart; and let not Satan ever have dominion over me.

Fit us, O God, for the coming of Thy kingdom. May I submit and rejoice to be governed by Thee.

O that Thy Holy Spirit may direct and rule my heart; subdue in me all pride and covetousness, hatred, malice, envy, lust, and all uncleanness, and whatever shall offend Thee.

THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH AS IT IS
IN HEAVEN.

“This is the will of God, even your sanctification.”—1 Thessalonians iv. 3.

Thou hast sent us into the world, not to do our own will, but Thine.

May Thy name be honoured by the good lives of Christians.

O that I may have respect unto all Thy commands.

May Thy will, revealed to us in Thy holy Word, be the rule of my will, of my desires, of my words, life, and actions.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

“Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life.”—John vi. 27.

Give us the bread which came down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

Lord, give us evermore this bread. May we never deprive ourselves of this food, which will preserve our souls from death, and restore life unto our bodies.

AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES AS WE FORGIVE THEM THAT TRESPASS AGAINST US.

“Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.”—Luke vi. 37.

Grant, O heavenly Father, that I may close with this merciful condition of pardon.

Thou hast been all mercy to me, O God, grant that I may be so to all others.

Blessed be the Lord, who has put our salvation into our own hands. May Thy grace, O Father, give me an heart ever ready to forgive!

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION.

“ Let him that thinketh he standeth (firm), take heed lest he fall.”—1 Corinthians x. 13.

Let not any confidence in ourselves provoke Thee, O God, to leave us to ourselves.

“ The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation.”—2 Peter ii. 9.

Thou, O Father, knowest my infirmities, and the power of my enemies; be not wanting to me in the hour of temptation.

“ Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.”—Matthew xxvi. 41.

Make me mindful of my weakness, that I may be more watchful and importunate for grace.

Fortify my soul against the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, for Jesus Christ's sake.

BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.

“Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.”—1 Peter v. 8.

Grant, O heavenly Father, that this adversary may never find me off my guard, or from under Thy protection.

In all my saving trials, give me grace and power to overcome, to Thy glory.

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.

To Thee, to Thee alone, and to Thy Son, and Holy Spirit, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

EVENING

“Let my prayer be set forth in Thy sight as

the incense ; and let the lifting up of my hands be as an evening sacrifice."—Psalm cxli. 2.

That it hath pleased God to add another day to the years of my life ; that none of his judgments, to which for my sins I am justly liable, have fallen upon me ; that by His grace He hath kept me from all scandalous sins, and from the dangers of an evil world ; that He has given me occasions of doing good, and grace to make use of them ; that He hath supplied me and my family with the necessaries of this life, and with means of attaining a better :—

Accept, O God, of my unfeigned thanks for these, and for all Thy mercies from day to day bestowed upon me. Add this to all Thy favours, I beseech Thee, that I may never forget to be thankful.

Possess my heart with such a deep sense of my obligations to, and dependence upon Thee, for life, and health, and grace, and salvation, that religion may be my delight, as well as my duty.

But that I may serve Thee with a quiet mind, forgive me the things whereof my con-

science is afraid, and avert the judgments which I have justly deserved. Remember not the offences of my youth; and in mercy blot out those of my riper years. Pardon my sins of the day past, and of my life past, and grant that they may never rise up in judgment against me. Amen.

“If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins.”—1 John ii. 1.

O most powerful Advocate, I put my cause into Thy hands; let Thy blood and merits plead for me, and by Thy mighty intercession procure for me a full discharge of all my sins.

“Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.”—John v. 14.

Lord, the frailty of man without Thee cannot but fall. In all temptations, therefore, I beseech Thee to succour me, that no sin may ever get the dominion over me.

[“Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.”—1 Peter i. 7.

May God give me a salutary dread of the unfaithfulness of my own heart; and while my

duty obliges me to promote the salvation of others, make me always consider my own frailty, and fear for myself.

“As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.”—John xx. 21.

O my Saviour! I acknowledge Thy goodness in appointing unworthy me a successor of Thy Apostles. Cause me thoroughly to weigh the sanctity of my calling, and to discharge it faithfully.

I have given you an example.

Yes, my Lord and Master, but I am ashamed when I consider how far I come short of this example; how poor my pains have been; how little of my time, my labour, my care, my thoughts, have been spent in Thy service.

O Lord, pardon what is past, and give me grace to study Thy spirit and conduct, and follow them more faithfully for the time to come.

“My sheep hear My voice; and I know them, and they follow Me.”—John x. 27.

And may I, O Sovereign Pastor, always so speak, as that my flock may hear and under-

stand me; so converse with them, as that I may know *them*; and lead such a life, as that *they* may safely follow me.

“Take heed unto thyself, and to thy doctrine; in so doing, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”—1 Timothy iv. 16.

Amen.—The good Lord grant that I may edify the Church both by my life and doctrine; that I may faithfully teach the mysteries, defend the faith, and maintain the truths of the Gospel.

“In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.”—2 Timothy ii. 25.

O Jesu, impart to me a portion of that Spirit which prevailed with Thee to preach to a people who regarded Thee not, who rejected, who crucified Thee. Make me always sensible of my own infirmities, that I may treat others with compassion.

O God, engrave this truth upon my heart, that every moment of my life belongs to Thee. That I may preach Thy Word; and may my prayers be evermore acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer!

“When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing?”—Luke xxii. 35.

O bountiful Lord and Master! Who hast prevented all my wants and necessities to this day, grant that no anxious thoughts and fears for the future, no spirit of infidelity, may ever tempt me to distrust Thy providence, or to better or secure my condition by any unworthy means.

“Remember the word that I said unto you; the servant is not greater than his lord.”—John xv. 20.

My Lord and Master, may I never forget this truth, and then I shall never fear, never complain of injuries, evil treatment, or afflictions.

“They watch for your souls, as they that must give account.”—Hebrews xiii. 17.

We cannot answer for ourselves, and yet we stand charged and are accountable for others. Who can think of this without trembling? In mercy, O God, communicate to me a degree of grace, and a zeal answer-

able to the work I have undertaken, and the account I am to give.

“Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching.”—Luke xii. 37.

The good Lord grant that I may be ever watchful in the way of my duty, and faithful in performing it. That I may live in the daily expectation of my Lord's coming; and that when I die, I may be made partaker of that blessedness which God hath promised His faithful servants.]

“Whoso dwelleth under the defence of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”—Psalm xci. 1.

May the Almighty God take me, my family, my friends, my relations, my benefactors, and my enemies, under His gracious protection; give His holy angels charge concerning us; preserve us from the prince and powers of darkness, and from the dangers of the night; and keep us in perpetual peace and safety; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hear me, O God, not according to my weak understanding, but according to the full importance of that holy prayer, which Jesus Christ has taught us, and which I presume to offer :—

Our Father, which art in heaven, &c.

OUR FATHER, WHICH ART IN HEAVEN ; HALLOWED
BE THY NAME.

God will be glorified in the salvation of souls.

If the Almighty God were not my Father,
I might expect vengeance instead of mercy.

May I glorify Thee in a faithful discharge of
the duties of my calling.

May I shew by my life that God is my
Father.

This earth is not the inheritance of the
children of God.

Blessed be God, who dealeth not with us
with the authority of a lord over his servants,
but with the tenderness of a father over his
children.

THY KINGDOM COME.

Establish Thy kingdom in my heart, O God. I own Thee for my King; do Thou make and own me for Thy faithful subject. Enlarge Thy kingdom, for the honour of Thy great Name. May I preserve Thy kingdom within me, the government of Thy Spirit. Bring me into subjection to Thyself, by Thy grace.

THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

That Thou mayest have a Church on earth as obedient to Thy will as that is in heaven.

A Christian prayer is always answered, because nothing is asked but that God's will be done.

O heavenly Father, subdue in me whatever is contrary to Thy holy will. Grant that I may ever study to know Thy will, that I may know how to please Thee.

Thy will, O God, is the perfection of justice; let me never prescribe to Thee what Thou oughtest to give me. What Thou doest will, we may be sure, be best for us; we cannot be

sure of what we will for ourselves. Hearken not to the corrupt desires of my heart, but to the voice of Thy own mercy.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

Yes, my God, I will have recourse to Thee daily; for on Thee I depend daily for life, and breath, and grace, and all things.

Give me a true understanding of, and love for, Thy Word, the bread which nourisheth to eternal life.

For Thou, O Lord, hast taught us not to seek that bread which perisheth, but that which endureth to eternal life.¹

AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES, AS WE FORGIVE THEM THAT TRESPASS AGAINST US.

May I ever shew mercy to men, that I may receive it from Thee, my God.

Do I value my soul, and think this too hard a condition?

May I never pray with a spirit of malice or revenge, lest I obtain nothing but mine own condemnation.

¹ John vi. 27.

Thou art all mercy to me ; grant that I may be all mercy to my brethren, for Thy sake, O Father.

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT
DELIVER US FROM EVIL.

For Thou knowest our infirmities, and the power and malice of our enemies.

Thou knowest how to deliver the godly out of temptation.^k

Grant, O God, that I may never run into those temptations, which in my prayers I desire to avoid !

Vouchsafe me the gift of perseverance, on which my eternal happiness depends.

Lord, never permit my trials to be above my strength.

O Holy Spirit of grace, be not wanting to me in the hour of temptation. And in all temptations, give us power to resist and overcome. Leave us not in the power of evil spirits to ruin us. Support us under all our saving trials and troubles.

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, THE POWER, AND
THE GLORY, FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.

Let Thy fatherly compassion grant what
the Son of Thy love has encouraged us to
pray for.

By Thy Almighty power make good what-
ever is defective in me.

EXAMINATION.

“Before judgment, examine thyself; and
in the day of visitation thou shalt find mercy.”
—Ecclesiasticus xviii. 20.

Discover to me, O Thou searcher of hearts,
whatever is amiss in me, whether life or
principle.

“If our heart condemn us not, then have
we confidence towards God.”—1 John iii. 20.

“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit
sin (so as to be a servant of sin¹). In this
the children of God are manifest, and the
children of the devil.”—1 John iii. 9, 10.

“I will hear what the Lord God will say
concerning me.”—Habakkuk ii. 1.

¹ 1 John viii. 34.

“If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? If thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.”—Genesis iv. 7.

[“We will give ourselves over continually unto the ministry of the word, and to prayer.”—Acts vi. 4.

Have I done so this day?

Have I been mindful of the duties of my proper calling?

Do I make it the great concern of my life to promote the eternal interest of my flock?

Have I read the Holy Scriptures, in order to instruct my people, and to preserve them from error?

Do I call upon God for the true understanding of the Holy Scriptures?

Do I deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, so as to be an example unto others?

Have I endeavoured to keep up the discipline of this church, by correcting the criminal?

Have I an eye to such as are in holy orders, and to such as are designed for the ministry?

Have I been charitable and kind to poor and needy people?

Do I make the Gospel the rule of my private life, and Jesus Christ my pattern?

Do I endeavour after holiness?

Do I live as in God's presence?

Is my conversation unblamable?

Do I give the praise of this to God, through Jesus Christ?]

DEATH.

From sudden, from unprepared death, good Lord deliver me, my children, and family, and all that desire my prayers. May we never be surprised in sin; and may Thy mercy supply whatever shall be wanting in our preparation for death.

For myself, with the submission of a penitent sinner, under the righteous sentence of death passed upon all mankind, I beg that I may so live, as that I may with joy resign my life a sacrifice of obedience, in union with that

of my Saviour's, to Thee, O Father, trusting in Thy mercy and goodness, and promises in Jesus Christ, at the hour of death, and in the day of judgment. Amen.

“ Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.”
—Ephesians iv. 6.

Lord, grant that I may lie down to sleep with the same charitable dispositions with which I desire and hope to die.

I beseech Thee for all that are my enemies, not for judgment and vengeance, but for mercy, for the remission of their sins, and for their eternal happiness.

“ Lighten mine eyes, O Lord, that I sleep not in death.”—Psalm xiii. 3.

Deliver me from the terrors of the night, and from the pestilence that walketh in darkness.^m

Let my sleep be free from sin ; preserve me, O Lord, from evil dreams and evil demons.

Into Thy hands I commend myself, my spirit, my soul, and body, O Lord, thou God of truth.

Grant that I may remember Thee upon my bed.

“I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest; for it is Thou, Lord, only that makest me dwell in safety.”—Psalm iv. 9.

May the Saviour and Guardian of my soul take me under His protection this night and evermore!





SUNDAY MEDITATIONS.

EPISCOPACY.*

Question from the Office of Consecration.—Are you persuaded that you be truly called to this ministration, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the order of this realm?

Answer.—I am so persuaded.

ALMIGHTY God, who by Thy providence hast brought me into Thine immediate service, accept of my desire of serving Thee! and grant, that in the sincerity of my soul I may perform the several duties of my calling, and the vows that are upon me.

Blessed be Thy good Spirit, that ever it came into my heart to become Thy minister.

May the same good Spirit make me truly

* These Meditations, and those for the six following days, on the Offices of Consecration and Ordination, are adapted peculiarly to the Clergy only.

sensible of the honour and danger of so great a trust, and of the account I am to give.

And give me grace to make amends, by my future diligence, for the many days and years that I have spent unprofitably. And this I beg for Jesus Christ's sake.

He that doth not find himself endued with a spirit of his calling, hath reason to fear that God never called him.

He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door, is the shepherd of the sheep. The sheep hear his voice; he calleth his own sheep by name. He goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice. A stranger will they not follow. I am the door of the sheep. By me, if any man enter, he shall be saved. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. The hireling seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, for he careth not for them.—John x. 1, &c.

MARKS OF A TRUE PASTOR.

A lawful entrance, upon motives which aim at the glory of God, and the good of souls.
An external call and mission, from the apostolic authority of bishops.

The sheep hear his voice; that is, when he speaks to their hearts, and to their capacities.

He calleth his sheep by name; that is, he knows them so well as to know all their wants.

He goeth before them, and they follow him. He leads such a life as they may safely follow.

A stranger will they not follow; that is, they ought not to follow such as break catholic unity.

I am the door. It is by Jesus Christ, not by us, that the flock is kept in safety; without Him we can do nothing; neither by our learning, our eloquence, or our labours.

The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep; either by spending it in the ministry, or suffering, if there be occasion; never sacrificing the flock to his own ease, avarice, or humours.

The hireling careth not for the sheep. He lords it over them, makes what advantage he can of them, and counts them his own no longer than they are profitable to him. *He leaves them;* that is, when dangers threaten. Then the good shepherd and the hireling are discovered.

“No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.”—Hebrews v. 4.

“High priest: who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.”—Hebrews v. 2.

A pastor, who is sensible of his own infirmities, will not fail to treat sinners with meekness and compassion.

“They watch for your souls as they that must give account.”—Hebrews xiii. 17.

A most dreadful consideration this; inso-much as that St. Chrysostom said, upon reflecting upon it, “It is a wonder if any ruler in the church be saved.”

It will be work enough for every man to give an account for himself; but to stand

charged, and to be accountable for many others, who can think of it without trembling? O God! how presumptuous was I, to be persuaded to take upon me this charge!

Who will value himself upon ecclesiastical dignities, who considers that Judas was chosen to be an apostle?

O good Shepherd! I beseech Thee, for myself and for my flock, to seek us, to find us, to lead us, to defend us, and to preserve us to life eternal.

If God be satisfied with a pastor, it is of little importance whether he please or displease men.

“These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise Thee;” that is, for want of exercising ecclesiastical discipline.—Titus ii. 15.

The following are truths which cannot be preached too often; viz. the bondage of man by sin—the necessity of a Deliverer—the manner of our redemption—the danger of not closing with it—the power of grace to deliver us, &c.

A pastor should do all this, and act with

the dignity of a man who acts by the authority of God.

BISHOPS, &c.

We are willing enough to desire to imitate Jesus Christ and his Apostles in their authority, without thinking of following them in their humility, their labours, self-denial, &c.

A bishop is a pastor set over other pastors. They were to ordain elders. They might receive an accusation against an elder. They were to charge them to preach such and such doctrines; to stop the mouths of deceivers; to set in order the things that were wanting; and lastly, this was the form of church government in all ages. So that to reject this, is to reject an ordinance of God.

“Whosoever shall do, and teach the commandments, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of God.”—Matthew v. 19.

It is in this, the true greatness of a Bishop does consist; not in eminence of his see, multitude of attendants, favour of princes, &c.

Bishops were called to sit in parliament, to

give their counsel according to God's law, as the Civil Judges were to give their advice according to the temporal laws in matters of difficulty.

“Whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.”—Mark x. 44.

The greatest prelate in the Church is he who is most conformable to the example of Christ, by humility, charity, and care of his flock; and who, for Christ's sake, will be a servant to the servants of God.

O Sovereign Pastor of souls! renew in Thy church, and especially in me, this spirit of humility; that I may serve Thee in the meanest of Thy servants. If I lie under the necessity of being served by others, let it be with regret, and let me exact no more service than is necessary.

“Behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.”—Luke x. 3.

It belongs to Thee, O Lamb of God, to guard both me and my flock from wolves who assault us, either openly or in sheep's clothing. I depend entirely upon Thee, in

whatever relates to my own preservation, or that of the people committed to my care.

“ Lord, behold, here is Thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin.”—Luke xix. 20.

O my Saviour, I tremble to think how I have followed the example of this slothful servant; and what reason I have to dread his doom. Rest is a crime in one who has promised to labour all the days of his life. And in me, therefore, it is a great evil, not to be always doing good. Pardon me, my God, for what is past; and let me not imagine, that because I am free from gross and scandalous crimes, that therefore I lead a good life.

O Lord, give me grace proportionable to the talents I have received, and to the account I am to give; that I may faithfully perform all the duties belonging to my state. Amen.

Whoever is associated to the priesthood of Christ, ought, in imitation of Him, to sacrifice

himself for the advantage of His Church, and for all the designs of God.

“ But ye shall not be so ; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger ; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.”— Luke xxii. 26.

A Bishop does not know his office in the church, if he pretends to distinguish himself by power, imperiousness, and grandeur ; or by any other way than by humility, and by a great concern for souls. Marks of distinction are rather a burden which he bears out of necessity, but complains of them secretly to God. He considers himself as the servant, not as the lord of souls. Even Jesus Christ made Himself our pattern in this. .

TRANSLATION OF

BISHOPS AND PASTORS.

Self-love is too often at the bottom, and not the glory of God, or the good of souls.

When men's labours are attended with tolerable success, yet, because either they can

better their temporal condition, or think that a more public station would be more suitable to their great capacities, they leave their station for one more full of dangers, without any prospect of being more serviceable to God, or to his church, and the souls of men; not considering, that this is the voice of pride, self-love, and covetousness, and an evil example to others, to whom we do or should preach humility, as the very foundation of Christianity.

The greater share we have in the authority of Jesus Christ, the greater must we expect to have in His sufferings; the cross being the reward of faithful pastors.

To leave a clergy and a people to whom one is perfectly well known, to go to another to whom one is a stranger, and this for the sake of riches, which are supposed to have been renounced, this was unknown to the first ages of Christianity.

He is but the vain image of a pastor, an idol shepherd,^o who chooses to abandon his flock, and leave them to the conduct of those

^o Zechariah xi. 17.

who have no concern for them ; and entrust the salvation of those souls to others, for whom he himself is responsible to God. He may be learned, he may be employed, &c. but he cannot be a good shepherd.

“ Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us ? And they cast him out.”
—John ix. 34.

This is the character of a wicked pastor ; —to treat their flock with imperiousness, and ill language ; to be impatient to be told their duty, and to be overhasty in turning men out of communion, and breaking unity.

From the time a pastor is mercenary, he has an indifferency for the interests of Christ and His church, and is ready to give all up upon the prospect of worldly honour and advantage.

On the other hand, nothing renders a pastor more amiable in the sight of God, or draws down more graces and blessings, than a contempt of earthly things, and of the conveniences of life, that he may approve himself a faithful minister of Christ.

He lays down his life, who lays down the love thereof, for his flock.

“ If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.”—John x. 37.

Since Jesus Christ put his doctrine upon this issue, let me not expect to be His minister, if I do not shew forth, in my life, the works becoming such a person.

A minister of state talks of nothing but of the interests of his prince, &c. ; so should we, if this were most at our hearts.

“ He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me ; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.”—John xiii. 20.

“ It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.”—Acts vi. 2.

That is, spiritual affairs must not be left for the sake of temporal.

They who are the first in authority ought to be the first in discharging their duty, and in setting a good example to others.

“ Ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.”
—2 Corinthians iv. 5.

An air of imperiousness does not become a servant.

“ They are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.”—2 Cor. viii. 23.

A faithful pastor is the glory of Christ, because his whole life is a continual sacrifice to the glory of Him who has sent him ; and because Christ Himself has made him faithful, &c.

A true pastor has but one thing at heart, which is the performance of his duty ; and this is that which secures his peace, his confidence, his hope, &c.

“ That thou mayest charge some that they teach no other doctrine.”—1 Timothy i. 3.

This is one of the chief duties of a bishop, to be watchful concerning the purity of the doctrine, that none corrupt it, but that they confine themselves to the truths taught by the apostles, (verse 4,) that they avoid such as only minister to questions [disputes], rather than to godly edifying.

“ A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober (modest), of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach ;

not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre ; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous ; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity ; not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without ; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."—1 Tim. iii. 2—7.

My God, what qualifications are these ! and how rash was I to undertake such a work, without sitting down and counting the cost, whether I was able to finish it ! Thou only canst supply all my defects, which I beseech Thee to do.

Enable me, I beseech Thee, to come as near as possible to this character ; that I may teach the mysteries, defend the faith, maintain the truths of the gospel ; that I may be a pattern to my flock, edify the church, both by my discourses and example, and hearty zeal for the salvation of souls, and a care to secure my flock from the corruptions of the age. Amen.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

“Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.”—Col. iv. 5.

Prudence is very necessary in dangerous times; it being no small fault to give occasion to the raising of storms against the church and her ministers, for want of having a due regard to the times, and to the passions of carnal men.

“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”—1 Timothy iv. 16.

That is, endeavour first to establish the kingdom of God in yourself, and then you will be able to do it in your flock; and so both shall be saved.

“Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.”—Matthew xx. 26, 27.

God give me a true and prudent humility, to have nothing of the air of secular governors, to attend the flock of Christ as a servant,

to look on him as my pattern, to study his conduct and spirit, to spend and be spent for my flock, that I may never desire to increase my burden, that I may be better qualified to be ministered unto ; and that I may never strive to live at ease, in plenty, in luxury, repose, and independence. Amen.

The name of a servant ought to be esteemed honourable to the eye of faith, and a real privilege, since Jesus Christ took upon him the nature of a servant.

Bishops and priests (saith St. Ambrose) are honourable, on account of the sacrifice they offer.

The power of the keys, and the exercise of that power ; the due use of confirmation and (previous to that) examination ; a strict examination into the learning, lives, and characters of such as are designed for holy orders, are matters of infinite and eternal concern. As also the visitation of parishes, and exercise of church discipline upon all offenders.

A man may be ruined by those very means which were designed to enable him to discharge

his duty with more convenience. And bishops have too often been put into such easy circumstances, as to forget that they were bishops.

A bishop who has more regard to his temporalities than to the souls of his flock, is fallen into this sad condition.

“Behold my servant, whom I have chosen ; he shall not strive, nor cry ; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench,” &c.—Matthew xii. 18, 19, &c.

How lovely is this meekness of Christ ! how worthy to be imitated by his ministers ! their ministry not being a ministry of pride, contention, imperiousness, and violence, but of humility, peace, mildness, and moderation.

“And he had in his right hand seven stars.”—Revelation i. 16.

Make me, O Jesus, a shining star in thy church ; support me by thy right hand, guide and direct me by thy light ; let me never become a wandering star.

A primitive bishop will be careful to avoid, as much as possible, worldly equipage and

retinue, excess, pomp, and ostentation. To do otherwise would be to establish the kingdom of Satan, which we would destroy; and to destroy the kingdom of Jesus, which we would establish.

MISSION.

May I, gracious Lord, take all opportunities of shewing my mission, by edifying my neighbour, and shewing him the Saviour on which his salvation depends.

Bishops are called *angels* in the Revelations, intimating that they should have no interest on earth at heart so much as that of the good of the church, and the honour of God.

RESIDENCE.

Nothing can supply the want of a pastor's presence.

INTERCESSION FOR MY FLOCK.

He who bewails not the sins of his people, and does not, by his own tears, make as it were some amends for their impenitency, is not worthy to be their mediator with God.

God often grants, to the faith and prayers

of others, the conversion of a sinner, who himself doth not think of God.

Gracious God, look down in mercy upon the miserable case of these whom I now present before Thee. Touch their hearts most powerfully from above, that they may see, before it be too late, the danger of living without God in the world, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

FOR A CRIMINAL UNDER THE SENTENCE OF
DEATH.

O merciful God, our only help in time of need, hear me, I beseech Thee, for this miserable sinner.

Touch his heart most powerfully from above, that he may give glory to Thee in a full and free confession of his crimes, and of Thy justice and mercy in bringing them to light.

Give him a true sense and knowledge of all his sins, and true repentance for them, that they may be done away by Thy mercy, and his pardon sealed in heaven before he go hence, and be no more seen.

Grant that with a firm faith and trust in Thy mercy, he may lay hold of Thy promises, for Jesus Christ's sake, to all that repent and believe.

Look upon the work of Thine own hands. Let not his sins obstruct Thy mercy. Suffer him not to overlook this day of visitation, nor to die in his sins.

O blessed Jesus, O powerful Advocate, undertake for this sinner by Thy cross and passion; deliver him from the bitter pain of eternal death, as Thou didst the penitent thief, even at the last hour. Amen.

BRIEFS.

Consider the uncertainty of human affairs. Who knows whose turn it may be next, to suffer by fire, by loss of friends, sickness, &c. so as to want the charity of others?

LORD'S SUPPER.

BEFORE SERVICE BEGINS.

May it please Thee, O God, who hast called

us to this ministry, to make us worthy to offer unto Thee this sacrifice for our own sins, and for the sins of Thy people.

Accept our service and our persons, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

O, reject not this people for me, and for my sins.

UPON PLACING THE ALMS UPON THE ALTAR.

All that we possess is the effect of Thy bounty, O God; and of Thy own do we give Thee. Pardon all our vain expenses; and accept of this testimony of our gratitude to Thee, our Benefactor, for the Lord Jesus' sake.

UPON PLACING THE ELEMENTS UPON THE ALTAR.

Vouchsafe to receive these Thy creatures from the hands of us sinners, O Thou self-sufficient God!

IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE CONSECRATION.

We offer unto Thee, our King and our God, this bread and this cup.

We give Thee thanks for these and for all Thy mercies, beseeching Thee to send down Thy Holy Spirit upon this sacrifice, that he may make this bread the Body of Thy Christ, and this cup the Blood of Thy Christ: and that all we, who are partakers thereof, may thereby obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of his Passion.

And, together with us, remember, O God, for good, the whole mystical body of Thy Son; that such as are yet alive may finish their course with joy; and that we, with all such as are dead in the Lord, may rest in hope and rise in glory, for Thy Son's sake, whose death we now commemorate. Amen.

May I atone unto Thee, O God, by offering to Thee the pure and unbloody sacrifice, which thou hast ordained by Jesus Christ. Amen.

But how should I dare to offer Thee this sacrifice, if I had not first offered myself a sacrifice to Thee, my God.

May I never offer the prayers of the faithful with polluted lips, nor distribute the bread of life with unclean hands!

I acknowledge and receive Thee, O Jesus, as sent of God, a Prophet, to make His will known to us, and His merciful purpose to save us : as our priest, who offered Himself an acceptable sacrifice for us, to satisfy the divine justice, and to make intercession for us ; and as our King, to rule and defend us against all our enemies.

May I always receive the holy Sacrament in the same meaning, intention, and blessed effect, with which Jesus Christ administered it to His apostles in His Last Supper.

CONFIRMATION.

By faith we receive the Spirit, which is of God. "I will put my Spirit within you," saith God.

We are truly Christians, by receiving the Spirit of Christ.

This is the great blessing of the gospel, the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, with the desire of which we conclude our daily prayers, with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The love of God will be shed abroad in your hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given you, if you do not resist nor grieve him, but follow the good thoughts he puts in your hearts.

This love of God for you will lead you to the love of your neighbour. By the same Spirit you will be led to every good work, to be just to all, charitable, &c. &c. "The fruits of the Spirit are these; love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

By the same Holy Spirit, you will be kept from pride, lust, malice, and every evil temper which makes God our enemy. It is by this good Spirit that you will be taught to pray, and to do every thing which you believe will please God, and avoid what you know will offend him.

THE EFFECT AND BLESSING OF CONFIRMATION.

It is to convey the inestimable blessing of the Holy Spirit of God by prayer, and the imposition of the hands of God's minister, that he may dwell in you, and keep you from the

temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Confirmation is the perfection of baptism. The Holy Ghost descends invisibly upon such as are rightly prepared to receive such a blessing, as at the first He came visibly upon those that had been baptized.

“Then laid they” (that is, Peter and John) “their hands on them,” (namely, whom Philip had baptized,) “and they received the Holy Ghost.”—Acts viii. 7.

O God, who hast called me to this high office, to confirm and bless the people in Thy name, let Thy blessing be dispensed, not according to my unworthiness, but according to Thine own goodness, and the appointments of Thy church.

O Lord, graciously behold Thy servants, on whom I am now going to lay my hands.

Possess their hearts with a lively sense of Thy great mercy, in bringing them from the power of Satan, in giving them an early right to the covenant of grace; that with the full consent of their will they may devote them-

selves to Thee, and to Thy service; that they may receive the fulness of Thy grace, and be able to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Keep them, O Lord, in the unity of the church, and grant that they may improve all the means of grace vouchsafed them in this church, of which they are now to be made complete members.

Increase their knowledge, confirm their faith, and strengthen them in all goodness. Preserve in their minds a constant remembrance of that vow which they are going to renew before Thee and Thy church; that knowing that they are the servants of the living God, they may walk as in Thy sight, avoid all such things as are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable unto the same.

O Lord, who hast made them Thy children by adoption, bring them in Thy good time to Thine everlasting kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Jews' custom was, when children were

thirteen years old, and had learnt the law, &c. and their prayers, to bring them before the congregation, upon which they were declared sons of the precept, and were now to answer for their own sins, &c.

This usage was so reasonable and necessary, that it is probable it had its origin from God Himself; as we are sure confirmation had from Christ.

Bishops shall confirm in their visitation. Ministers shall prepare children for confirmation. Can. 61.

Ministers shall give the names of such as are to be confirmed to the Bishop, and if the Bishop approve of them, he shall confirm them. *See Rubrick after the Catechism.*

If you ask, where this is ordered, I refer you to the Acts of the Apostles. But if the sacred Scriptures were silent, the consent of all the world in this particular is instead of a command.

Acts viii. 14. It appears from hence, that even in the Apostles' times, confirmation was necessary, as well as baptism, that per-

sons might become complete members of the church, and partakers of the grace of Christ ; and that these graces were conferred by peculiar hands ; for though Philip had the power of miracles, yet he could not do that which belonged to an higher order :—So great a regard had the Spirit of God to order and discipline.

As the Holy Spirit is present in our baptism, to seal the remission of sins, and to infuse the seeds of Christian life ; so is he present in confirmation, to shed further influences on those that receive it, for stirring up the gift of God bestowed in baptism, &c.

PRAYER AFTER CONFIRMATION.

“ And he laid his hands on them.”—
Matthew xix. 15.

O Holy Spirit of Grace ! I make my humble supplication to Thee, in behalf of those Thy servants on whom I have this day laid my hands. Be Thou their *wisdom*, to give them the knowledge of religion ;—their *under-*

standing, to know their duty;—their *counsel*, in all their doubts;—their *strength*, against all temptations;—their *knowledge*, in what belongs to the state of life in which Thy providence shall place them;—their *piety* and *godliness* in all their actions; and be Thou their fear, all their life long, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

EXHORTATION AFTER IMPOSITION OF HANDS.

You have this day publicly acknowledged and declared the Lord to be your God, and that you will walk in His ways, and keep His commands, and hearken unto His voice. And the Lord hath owned and received you to be His servants, and to reward you with eternal life and happiness, if you continue to serve Him faithfully unto your life's end.

To enable you to do so, He hath given you His Holy Spirit, who will assist and govern you all your days, that you may be holy unto the Lord, and be for ever happy when you die.

Take heed, therefore, that you do not

grieve that Holy Spirit, nor force Him to forsake you, and leave you to yourselves, which will be the greatest judgment that can befall you; for then the evil spirits will get power over you, and without a speedy repentance, and return to God, they will at last bring you to destruction both of soul and body.

The only way to prevent this sad judgment is, to beg of God every day to keep you from all wilful and known sin. For he that liveth in any known sin, the good Spirit of God will at last forsake him most certainly.

When the Holy Ghost puts into your heart any good thought, or good purposes, or your conscience tells you that you have done, or are going to do, any thing that will displease a holy God, be assured it is the voice of God, and have a care of neglecting to hear, as you value your salvation.

Lastly; Remember to beg of God to direct and bless you in all your ways. And forget not this safe direction and rule:—That if you cannot have the confidence to pray for God's blessing upon any work you are about,

or going to undertake, *that* work is unlawful, and will be unprosperous, and a curse, and not a blessing to you.

ANOTHER EXHORTATION.

The church, dear children, takes this way to convince you, that the service which we owe to God should be free and voluntary.

You have promised with your own mouths, to serve God faithfully all your days.

It behoves you, therefore, to have these promises always before your eyes, that you may remember and perform them ; otherwise it would have been better for you that you had never been baptized—never been born.

Your everlasting salvation or damnation depends upon your keeping or forgetting the promise you have made this day.

Your duty, therefore, is to pray daily to God for grace and strength to fulfil the same unto your lives' end, that you may be happy for ever ; which God grant, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

You are come into a very corrupt world ;

you will meet with very many temptations; you are naturally weak, and prone to evil continually; so that, without God's assistance, you are sure to be undone.

“Which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?”—Luke xiv. 28.

You are much likelier to become apostates than good Christians, if you have not well considered, and understand, the faith and duties of Christianity.

God stands in need of nobody's service in this world; it is for our sake alone, that He calls us to His service; but then He would have none but such as engage themselves in His service freely, and of their own choice.



MONDAY MEDITATIONS.

HOLY SCRIPTURES. PREACHER. SERMONS.

Question from the Office of Consecration.—Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity to eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ? And are you determined out of the same Holy Scriptures, to instruct the people committed to your charge, and to teach or maintain nothing as required of necessity to eternal salvation, but that which you shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the same?

Answer.—I am so persuaded and determined by God's grace.

Question.—Will you then faithfully exercise yourself in the same Holy Scriptures, and call upon God by prayer for the true understanding of the same; so as you may be able by them to teach and exhort with wholesome doctrine, and to withstand and convince gainsayers?

Answer.—I will so do by the help of God.

O God, the fountain of all wisdom, enlighten my mind, that I myself may see, and be able to teach others the wonders of Thy Law; that I may learn from Thee, what I ought to think and speak concerning Thee;

and that whatever in Thy holy Word I shall profitably learn, I may indeed fulfil the same.

Direct and bless all my labours. Give me a discerning spirit, a sound judgment, and an honest and a religious heart, that in all my studies, my first aim may be, to set forth Thy glory, by setting forward the salvation of men.

And if, by my ministry, Thy kingdom shall be enlarged, let me, in all humility, ascribe the success, not unto myself, but unto Thy good Spirit, which enables us both to will and to do what is acceptable to Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

“But we will give ourselves continually unto prayer, and to the ministry of the word.”
—Acts vi. 4.

“Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch?”—Luke vi. 39.

“Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”—1 Timothy iv. 13.

Quesnel says, Not to read, is to tempt God; to do nothing but study, is to forget the ministry. To read, in order to appear more

learned, is a sinful vanity. But to read, in order to exhort, and to instruct with wholesome doctrine, this is according to God's will and word.

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to every man liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.”—James i. 5.

Wisdom being the gift of God, and this gift the fruit of prayer, a prayer that is humble, earnest, and persevering, will assuredly be blessed with this excellent gift.

O Jesus, cause me to read, to understand, to love, to practise, and to preach Thy Word.

“If any man will do” (that is, is disposed, desires to do) “his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.”—John vii. 17.

Light and truth discover themselves to such as desire to follow them.

“The secret of the Lord is among them that fear Him, and He will shew them His covenant.”—Psalm xxv. 14.

It was the saying of a learned man, saith

Dr. Lightfoot, that he got more knowledge by his prayers than by all his studies.

“ I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.”—Matthew xi. 25.

My God and Saviour, imprint on my heart the amiable characters of simplicity and humility, which are the marks of Thy elect, of such to whom Thou wilt reveal Thyself.

It is a dangerous mistake to think that any man can have a right understanding of divine things, without being illuminated by divine grace, and without leading an holy life.

“ I have more understanding than my teachers, because I keep Thy commandments.”—Psalm cxix. 19.

There is a light arising from a sincere good life, which dispelleth all darkness, and is the best defence against error and sophistry.

“ All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies.”—Psalm xxv. 10.

That is ; to such as do so, all the ways of

God, and whatever He hath revealed, will appear to be the effect of infinite wisdom, goodness, justice, and truth.

He giveth light and understanding unto the simple.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”—Matthew v. 8.

“When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”—Luke xxii. 32.

God grant that we may all of us consider the absurdity of going about to convert others, without being converted ourselves.

To understand the Holy Scriptures aright, is to understand them as the Primitive Church did.

“Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.”
Speak to my heart, that I may obey Thy word.
“Teach me to do Thy will, for thou art my God.”

It belongs to God to give the true understanding of His own Word.

“Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.”—Matthew vii. 5.

That is; purify your own heart from all worldly aims; mortify your own passions, which are the cause of your blindness; study that Word which alone can enlighten you; and lay aside all prejudices which are contrary to piety.

A pastor should never undertake to teach a virtue which he has never practised himself.

“ We have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing.”—Luke v. 5.

So does every preacher, who does not beg God’s blessing upon his labours.

It is impossible for any man to *teach* well, who does not *live* well.

“ My people perish for want of knowledge.”

The design of religion being to lead men to God, how He is to be served, appeased, attained; the business of a preacher should be, to shew how all the parts of religion contribute to these ends.

He that reads the Sacred Scriptures, and understands the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the way of conducting men thither, need not complain for want of learning.

In preaching, we must speak to the heart, as well as to the understanding and to the ear.

The end of preaching is, to turn men from sin unto God, that they may be saved. He that has not this in his view, will do little good.

A preacher should accustom himself to give a practical turn to every thing.

He that leaves it to his hearers to apply what he has said, leaves to them the greatest part of his own duty.

To be heartily in love with the truth one recommends, is the great secret of becoming a good preacher.

“ My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent me.”—John vii. 16.

To preach our own thoughts, forsaking God’s word, is like an ambassador who neglects his prince’s instructions, and follows his own fancy.

With what truth can it be said, that the sheep hear his voice, when the shepherd speaks of things, or in such a manner, as is above their capacity ?

Grant, O Lord, that I may read Thy Word

with the same spirit with which it was written.

Learning does not always lead men to God ; it often carries them from Him.—Indeed, when they study to find out, and correct their own weaknesses, their folly, and the corruption of their nature ; to be convinced of the evil of sin, of the vanity of the world ; to fill their souls with heavenly wisdom and devout affections towards God ; and all this, that they may be better able to convince and edify their neighbour ; such learning leads men indeed to God :—The rest is folly.

Have mercy upon all that sit in darkness ; and may the saving truths of the Gospel be received in all the world !

He that sets his heart upon the world, is not in a capacity of understanding the Gospel.

Give me that true wisdom which consists in knowing how to save myself and them that hear me.

Remember, that a man may have the knowledge of the Word, without the Spirit.

OBSCURITY OF THE SCRIPTURES

Serves to subdue the pride of man ; to convince us, that to understand them, we have need of a light superior to reason, and that we may apply to God for help.

May I ever understand the true language of Thy word, O Lord, and profit by it !

Vouchsafe, O God, to give me a love for Thy sacred Scriptures, and a true understanding of them, that I may see therein the wonders of Thy conduct, and Thy love for us, Thy miserable creatures.

SERMONS

Should be instructions, not declamations, or displaying curious thoughts, which may amuse, but not edify Christians.

If God suffers even an holy pastor not presently to see the fruits of his labours, it is to convince him, that the success of his labours belongs to God ; that he ought to humble himself, and pray much, and fear, lest the fault should be in himself.

Pride and irreligion meet with darkness in

the midst of light, raise vain disputes, unprofitable reflections and inquiries; while humility attains to light, in the midst of darkness and difficulties.

Whenever God vouchsafes to open the heart, be the understanding and parts never so small, we see the reasonableness and beauty of His Word, we taste the sweetness and feel the power thereof.

“These things understood not His disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things unto Him.”—John xii. 16.

We often read the scripture, without comprehending its full meaning; however, let us not be discouraged; the light, in God’s good time, will break out, and disperse the darkness, and we shall see the mysteries of the gospel.

Grant me, O Lord, a persevering love of Thy word, and so much light as is necessary for myself, and those that hear me.

“Jesus said, This voice came not for Me, but for your sakes.”—John xii. 30.

The way to profit by reading the scriptures is, to apply to ourselves that which is spoken in general to all; this truth, this command, this threat, this promise, this intimation, is to me.

“I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father which sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say, and how I should speak.”
—John xii. 49.

He preaches with a well-grounded confidence, who advances nothing merely of his own head, but what he has received from God. He may then expect a blessing. But then, let him take care not to disguise it by a language foreign from God’s word.

O Holy Spirit of grace, causé me both to understand and love Thy word.

“The former treatise have I made of all that Jesus began both to do and teach.”—
Acts i. 1.

This is the whole of a Pastor’s life. For a man to preach the gospel before he has practised it, is to be a very bad imitator of the Prince of Pastors.

Lord, grant that I may imitate Thee, by a life conformable to Thine ; by all ways becoming my station in the church ; and lay hold of all the opportunities which Thou shalt put into my hands.

It is God who does all good by the labours of His ministers. To Him, therefore, must be all the praise.

More sinners are converted by holy, than by learned men.

Inflame my heart, O God, with an ardent love for Thy word, an ardent zeal for Thy glory, with a pure and disinterested love for Thy Church, and with an hearty desire of establishing Thy kingdom.

Who can say, it is not owing to himself that his flock are ignorant of their duty ?

“Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?”—Romans ii. 21.

Unhappy that person who has in his hands the rule of knowledge and of the truth, and makes no other use thereof, but to set up for a teacher of others, without applying to himself those truths with which his mind is filled. A mind

full of light, and a heart full of darkness, how dreadful is that man's condition !

“Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.”

In all our studies, we should take care to beg of God to preserve us from error, and to lead us to, and keep us in, all truths necessary to salvation, by His Holy Spirit.

“That I may make it manifest, (that is, the mystery of the gospel,) as I ought to speak.”
—Colossians iv. 4.

All preachers do not speak as they ought. A man may have the skill to give Christian truths a turn agreeable to the hearers, without affecting their hearts. Human learning will enable him to do this. It is prayer only that can enable him so to speak as to convert the heart.

May I ever speak to the hearts, and to the capacities of my flock.

“I charge thee, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, preach the Word. Be instant in season, out of season ;—reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and gravity.

For the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, make full proof of (or fulfil) thy ministry."—2 Timothy iv. 1, 2, 3, &c.

N. B. Preaching is a duty, but not the only duty of a Pastor. He is to take all occasions to instruct those that seek the truth; refute such as oppose it; reprove those that do not practise it; and confirm such as have embraced it. And the more we perceive the times of apostasy approaching, the more zealous ought we to be to defend sound doctrine.

We deceive ourselves, if we fancy that we have done our duty when we have given our people a sermon one day in seven: we must try all ways to gain a soul.

"It will be no comfort to a pastor, that the world praises him for some one part of his duty, while God condemns him for the neglect of another.

"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God."—1 Peter iv. 11.

That is, worthy of God, not weakening it by softening interpretations, nor altering it by human inventions, nor degrading it by a profane eloquence.

If we find that people do not attend to the sacred Scripture, as the Word of God, with eagerness and attention, we ought to fear that the fault is in those that preach it after such a manner as is not proper or likely to make them believe it to be the word of God.

It is good to know what God has revealed, and to be ignorant of what he has not thought fit to make known to us.

EJACULATIONS BEFORE READING THE HOLY
SCRIPTURES.

Give me, O God, a love for Thy Scriptures, and a true understanding of them.

O Jesus, open my understanding, cause me to love Thy word, and to order my faith and life according to it.

May I, O Jesus, love Thy word, make Thy Gospel my delight, and continue in the practice of Thy law unto my life's end.

“The Holy Spirit shall guide you into all truth.”—John xvi. 13.

O Holy Spirit, make me to understand, embrace, and love the truths of the Gospel.

Give, O God, Thy blessing unto Thy word, that it may become effectual to my conversion and salvation, and to the salvation of all that read or hear it.

Give me grace to read Thy holy word with reverence and respect becoming the gracious manifestation of Thy will to men; submitting my understanding and will to Thine.

Let Thy gracious promises, O God, contained in Thy word, quicken my obedience. Let Thy dreadful threatenings and judgments upon sinners fright me from sin, and oblige me to a speedy repentance, for Jesus Christ His sake.

Cause me, O God, to believe Thy word, to obey Thy commands, to fear Thy judgments, and to hope in, and depend upon Thy gracious

promises, contained in Thy holy word, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Grant, O Lord, that in reading Thy holy word, I may never prefer my private sentiments before those of the Church in the purely ancient times of Christianity.

Give me a full persuasion of those great truths, which Thou hast revealed in Thy holy word.

The gospel will not be a means of salvation to him who reads or hears it only, but to him who reads, loves, remembers, and practises it by a lively faith.

Cause me, O God, rightly to understand, and constantly to walk in, the way of Thy commandments.

Grant us in this world knowledge of Thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

From hardness of heart, and contempt of Thy word, good Lord, deliver us.

Give us all grace to hear meekly Thy word, to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, to amend our lives according to Thy holy word.

“Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.”—Luke xxiv. 45.

Unless Thou, O Jesus, openest our understanding, all our pains, all our learning, will signify little.

“Declare unto us this parable.”—Matthew xiii. 36.

This should instruct us, that the knowledge of God’s word, and the mysteries of the gospel, are favours which we must always beg of God.



TUESDAY MEDITATIONS.

FALSE DOCTRINE.

Question from the Office of Ordination.—Are you ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine, contrary to God's word; and both privately and openly to call upon and encourage others to do the same?

Answer.—I am ready, the Lord being my helper.

BLESSED be the good providence of God, Who, in great compassion for this church and nation, has hitherto preserved us from heresies and schisms.

O Lord, continue to us this great mercy, and grant that we, who are appointed to watch over Thy flock, may employ our learning and our time in promoting of true piety; that we may never grow secure and careless, but that

we may endeavour to secure the power, as well as the form of godliness.

Have pity upon all Christian churches, that are distracted by contending parties, and reduce all that wander out of the way.

Enable us to preserve this church in peace and unity, by all means becoming the spirit of the gospel.

Keep us steadfast in the faith, that we may never be tossed about with any wind of doctrine, or the craft of men.

Let the zeal and industry of those that are in error provoke us to be zealously affected in a righteous cause ; in labouring to make men good, and in converting sinners from the error of their ways ; which God grant for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Sed et ipsum Episcopum (quantum per arduas occupationes licuerit) summo studio contendere, ut docendo, persuadendo, modisque blandis et benignis omnibus, tum dictos recusantes, tum omnes infra suam diocesin sic affectos, a suis erroribus deducat. p

“The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.”—2 Timothy iv. 3.

N. B. We are now in these sad times, and it behoves all faithful Pastors to know it. It is not the doctrine of the gospel, if it favour men's lusts. They that will not receive, or who reject the truth, are often judicially punished with a greediness to receive errors, falsehoods, and fables.

“Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, make full proof of (or fulfil) thy ministry.”—2 Timothy iv. 5.

He that is wanting in any essential part is wanting to his own salvation.

Lord, Thou art just in all the troubles which Thou hast brought upon this church and nation: yet, O Lord, have mercy upon us, and restore to us that peace and unity which we once enjoyed.

“By their fruits ye shall know them.”—Matthew vii. 20.

This rule, though given by Christ Himself, is

seldom observed. The best fruits are counted as nothing, are overlooked, and often condemned by those who have none good to shew. Hence all the evils the church suffers.

“ But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat.”—Matthew xiii. 25.

O Jesu, awaken the pastors of Thy flock, and open their eyes, that they may perceive the tares which choke the seed, the wolves which destroy Thy sheep.

A mixture of good and bad in the church is necessary to instruct, exercise, purify, sanctify, and keep the righteous in humility.

“ Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.”—Matthew xiii. 29.

A zeal not regulated by this prohibition allows no time to the good to grow strong in goodness, or to the wicked to forsake their evil ways ; but chooses rather to destroy the good, provided they can but destroy the bad.

“ I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of

Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication.”—Revelations ii. 14, 20.

How dreadful is the government of the church, wherein a man must answer for those sins which he does not hinder !

To tolerate by silence those who favour and promote sin, Jesus Christ rebukes in the persons of these bishops.

O my Saviour ! Thou who givest me this warning, enable me to profit by it. Assist me, in this day of trial, effectually to oppose and suppress that spirit of impurity, idolatry, profaneness, and irreligion, which is broken in upon us.

If for fear of offending men, or from a false love of peace, we forbear to defend the truth, we betray and abandon it.

“ And when he had said these things, the Jews had great reasonings among themselves.”
—Acts xxviii. 29.

A preacher of the truth is not to be blamed for the contests which it gives occasion to carnal men to raise. Even Christ Himself could not preach without disturbing sinners; and if He came not to bring peace on earth, but a sword of division, His ministers ought to expect to do the same.

It is not by the heat of disputation, but by the gentleness of charity, that souls are gained over to God.

And when controversy is necessary, as sometimes it is, let it never be managed with harshness, bitterness, or severity, lest it exasperate and harden, more than convert and edify.

A prudent condescension has often prevailed upon the weak, and rendered them capable of hearkening to reason, when the contrary conduct would have removed them farther from the light.

We ought to avoid evil men and seducers, in order to shame them; to deprive them of that credit whereby they may do hurt; to make them to return to a right mind; and that we may avoid the snare ourselves.

DISPUTES.

The primitive fathers were ever modest upon religious questions. They contented themselves with resolving such questions as were proposed to them, without starting new ones; and carefully suppressed the curious, restless temper.

May I receive from Thee, O God, at all times, the rules of my behaviour on these occasions.

God judges otherwise than we do of these things. He knows the good He intends to bring out of evil, either for the sanctification of the righteous, or conversion of the wicked, by His goodness in bearing with them, or leaving them without excuse.

One single soul is worth the utmost pains of the greatest minister of Christ. But then let us take care, when it is brought into the fold, that he be a better Christian than before, that he be not twofold more the child of hell than before.

THE LORD'S PRAYER PARAPHRASED.

OUR FATHER, WHICH ART IN HEAVEN.

MAY we ever love, and serve, and fear Thee, not as slaves, but as children.

We depend upon Thy fatherly goodness, to do ever what is best for us, upon Thy wisdom to choose for us, and upon Thy power to help us.

My Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in Thy sight, and am not worthy to be called Thy son.

Look upon us, O Father, as poor, weak, ignorant, froward, and helpless children, and pity us according to Thy goodness, for Jesus Christ's sake, the Son of Thy love.

As a father pitieth his own children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.

Be ye followers of God, as dear children.^q

In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil. Whoever doth not righteousness, is not of God.^r

q Ephesians v. 1.

r 1 John iii.

As He that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation ^s.

Blameless as the sons of God, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation ^t.

What love, O God, is due from us to Thee, for so much love to us ?

HALLOWED BE THY NAME.

O that I, and all His children, may give the Lord the honour due unto His name, which is great, wonderful, and holy.

Increase the number and the graces of all such as love, and fear, and honour Thy holy name.

May Thou, O heavenly Father, have the glory of saving a miserable sinner, such as I have been.

O that we may glorify Thy name, by walking before Thee in righteousness and holiness all our days.

That men may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven, do all to the praise and glory of God. A son honour-

^s 1 Peter i.

^t Phil. ii. 15.

eth his father, and a servant his master. If I be a father, where is my honour; if I be master, where is my fear?ⁿ

In this my Father is glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit.^x

May we thus glorify Thee, O heavenly Father; not only with our lips, but in our lives, walking before Thee in righteousness and holiness all our days.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

May the end of all our designs and actions be to the glory of God.

THY KINGDOM COME.

O that the saving laws of Thy kingdom may be received in all the world.

Take possession of my heart, O King of heaven, and subdue whatever is amiss in me.

Make me instrumental in promoting the interests of Thy kingdom, zealous in advancing Thy honour, and the welfare of all Thy subjects.

Do Thou, O King of saints, establish Thy kingdom of grace in all our hearts, that we may be Thy subjects out of choice, and ever yield Thee willing obedience.

Rebuke all the enemies of Thy kingdom, all such as would not have Thee to reign over them.

May the heathen fear Thy name, O God, and all the kings of the earth Thy Majesty.

May all that own Thee for their King, become Thy faithful subjects.

Bless the pious endeavours of all such as strive to propagate the Gospel of Christ; and may its saving truths be received in all the world.

Deliver the world, O Jesus, in Thy good time, from the tyranny of Satan, that all nations may obey and glorify Thy holy name.

O that Satan may never set up his kingdom in this place.

O God, recover Thy whole right and dominion over my soul, and rule in me by Thy holy, all-powerful spirit.

Set up, O God, Thy throne in our hearts, and reign for ever and ever.

THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH, AS IT IS IN
HEAVEN.

O heavenly Father, give us light to see, an heart to close with, and a power to do Thy will at all times.

Grant that we may cheerfully accomplish those things which Thou wouldest have done, through Jesus Christ.

Subdue in us that natural aversion which we have to do Thy holy will, O God.

May Thy will, made known in Thy threatenings and promises, have its saving effects upon our hearts.

Keep our minds in such a temper, that we may close with Thy will whenever it is made known to us.

Not my will, but Thine be done.^y

It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good.^z

I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because it was Thy doing.^a

y Luke xxii. 42.

z 1 Samuel iii. 18.

a Ps. xxxix. 10.

Thou art righteous in all Thy ways, and holy in all Thy works.

Keep us, O Lord, from having our own wills, whenever they are not agreeable to Thine.

Grant that we may be filled with the knowledge of Thy will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.^b

We adore Thy goodness in making Thy will known to us, and the way to attain everlasting life.

May we never question the goodness of Thy will and choices, but ever close with Thy will, as the best that can be ordered for ourselves or others.

What are we, that we should make exceptions against the will of a God infinitely wise, and just, and good?

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

Give us grace, that we may never use any unlawful ways to get our daily bread.

That we may be content and thankful for

^b Colossians i. 9.

our present condition, to which, as sinners, we have no right.

O that we may seek Thy kingdom, and the righteousness thereof, and then we are sure we shall want nothing that is necessary for this life. We will cast all our care upon Thee, for Thou carest for us.

Having food and raiment, let us be there-with content.^c

We beseech Thee, O Father, not for ourselves only, but for all our brethren.

Thou, O heavenly Father, knowest what we have need of.

AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES, AS WE FORGIVE THEM THAT TRESPASS AGAINST US.

O that we may be kindly affectioned one towards another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven us.^d

May we ever remember Thy goodness, Thy mercy, Thy patience towards us, and the mul-

c 1 Timothy vi. 8.

d Ephesians iv. 3.

titude of our offences against Thee, that we may, from our hearts, forgive all that have offended us.

Grant, O God, that I make all my prayers in the spirit of love and charity.

O that that mercy and pardon, which we hope for from Thee, may lead us to forgive all that have injured or offended us.

Give us grace to imitate Thy goodness, that we may forgive, and give, and love, as becomes the disciples of Jesus Christ.

Even the power to perform this must be from Thy grace.

“Even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.”—Colossians iii. 13.

“If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”—Matthew vi. 14, 15.

“Judge not, and ye shall not be judged. Condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned.—Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.—Give, and it shall be given unto you. For with the

same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again."—Luke vi.

Thou, O God, art all mercy towards us, O make us all so to one another, for Thy sake, and for our own.

We beseech Thee for all that are our enemies, not for judgment and vengeance, but for mercy, for the remission of their sins, and for their eternal happiness.

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION. BUT
DELIVER US FROM EVIL.

May we never provoke Thee to withdraw Thy grace, and permit us to be tempted above what we are able to bear.

Give us, O heavenly Father, grace to flee from all occasions of sin, and be not wanting to us in the hour of temptation. Leave us not to ourselves, and to our own choices.

Enable us to make the right use of all Thy trials, and to profit by them.

Restrain the power of Satan, and the many temptations we are liable to, and grant that

we may never be found from under Thy protection.

In all temptations, we beseech Thee, O heavenly Father, to succour us, that no sin may ever get the dominion over us.

Let not our faith fail us in the day of temptation and trial.

Thou, O Lord, only knowest how to deliver the godly out of temptation.

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER,
AND THE GLORY, FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.

May all that own Thee for their King, become Thy faithful subjects.

By Thine Almighty power subdue whatever is amiss in us.

To the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.^e

Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory.^f

Let my whole dependance be upon Thee, and Thy grace, O heavenly Father.

c 1 Timothy i. 17.

f Isaiah vi. 3.

To Thee, O King of Heaven, we pray ; on Thee we depend ; for Thou only hast power to help and defend us. To Thee, therefore, we give the glory of all the blessings we enjoy or hope for in this world, or in the world to come, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.





WEDNESDAY MEDITATIONS.

SOBER LIFE.

Question from the Office of Consecration.—Will you deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, that you may shew yourself in all things an example of good works unto others, that the adversary may be ashamed, having nothing to say against you?

Answer.—I will so do, the Lord being my helper.

ALMIGHTY God, who hast made me a guide to others, suffer me not to go astray myself; give me grace that I may never follow the inclinations of corrupted nature, nor govern myself according to the maxims of an evil world; but give me the spirit, as well as the character, of a minister of Jesus Christ.

O Holy Spirit of Grace, sanctify my heart, that no base or impure thoughts, no mean and covetous affections, may lodge there. Govern my tongue, that no corrupt communication may proceed out of my mouth.

Guard my eyes, purify my hands, guide my feet. Conduct my whole life, that by all instances of a good example, I may lead the people committed to my care in the ways of truth, and of eternal life; and that no irregularity in my conversation may ever make my instructions ineffectual, or the ways of religion to be evil spoken of.

O Lord Jesus Christ, without whom we can do nothing, be Thou my advocate with God, as well as my example, that I may live and be as Thou wouldest have me. Amen.

“ I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest, by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away.”—1 Corinthians ix. 27.

Εἰ δὲ Παῦλος, τὶ ἂν εἴποιμεν ἡμεῖς.

When a man has given himself to the im-

mediate service of God, he is no longer at liberty to follow his own inclinations, whether in study, profit, recreation, &c.

“ They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”—Galatians v. 24.

Nature is content with a little, grace with less.

“ Who is a wise man, let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom ;” (James iii. 13.) that is, let him shew his wisdom in his life.

Temperance consists in neither eating nor drinking more than is necessary, and in not seeking for exquisite dainties and liquors.^g

“ A man’s attire, excessive laughter, and gait, shew what he is.”—Ecclus. xix. 30.

“ But ye are departed out of the way ; ye have caused many to stumble at the law ; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of Hosts ; therefore have I made you contemptible and base before all the people ; according as ye have not kept my

ways, but have been partial in the law," &c.
—Malachi ii. 8, 9.

O good Lord, keep Thy servant from bringing contempt upon the Clergy, by any irregularity or fault of mine.

“Let no man despise thee.”—Titus ii. 15.

That is; demean thyself agreeable to the authority which thou hast received from Jesus Christ, not making thy office contemptible by any mean action, but act with the dignity of one who stands in the place of God.

They that recommend eternal possessions and happiness to others, ought to shew, that they are verily persuaded themselves of the vanity of all earthly enjoyments, avoiding superfluities, and not being over concerned for necessities. Jesus Christ thus preached the contempt of the world, by contemning it himself.

“Which of you convinceth me of sin?”—
John viii. 46.

O Jesus, the only Priest free from all sin, make me, Thy servant, as blameless and holy as the frailty of my nature will suffer me to be.

The reputation of a Minister is not his own but the Church's, as the reputation of an ambassador is his prince's.

“ If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people ; then let him bring a sin offering.”—Leviticus iv. 3.

N. B. That the same sin in a single priest, is to have as great a sacrifice as a sin of the whole people of Israel.

The flesh never thrives but at the cost of the soul.

Let us ever remember, that mortification must go further than the body.

Self-love, pride, envy, jealousy, hatred, malice, avarice, ambition, must all be mortified, by avoiding and ceasing from the occasions of them.

The sobriety of the soul consists in humility, and in being content with necessities.

O Thou, who hast made me a servant in Thy house, give me grace that I may never dishonour Thy service.

FAILINGS OF GOOD MEN.

God permits these, that we may plainly see that there is no person in whom nature is not corrupted.

A man may hide from the world some of his good works ; but a Christian life ought to be seen ; it is a public testimony which we owe to our faith, and an example which Christianity requires of us. “ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”—Matthew v. 16.

It is not only in the church that a minister of Christ should be mindful of his character, but in his converse with the world.

“ If thou givest thy soul the desires that please her, she will make thee a laughingstock to thine enemies that malign thee.”—Ecclesiasticus xviii. 31.

“ He that resisteth pleasures, crowneth his life.”—Ecclesiasticus xix. 5.

SELF DENIAL.

Vouchsafe me, gracious God, the graces of

mortification and self-denial, that my affections and flesh being subdued unto the Spirit, and my heart and all my members being mortified from all carnal and worldly lusts, I may ever obey Thy blessed will, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

“ If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”—Matthew xvi. 24.

O my Saviour ! let me not profess to follow Thee, without complying with the terms which Thou requirest of them that desire to do so sincerely.

“ Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”—Matthew vii. 14.

But if the difficulties of an holy life affright us, let us consider, who can dwell with everlasting burnings ?

All mankind being under the sentence of death, certain to be executed, and at an hour we know not of ; a state of penance and self-denial, of being dead and crucified to the world, is certainly the most suitable, the most

becoming temper that we can be found in, when that sentence comes to be executed; that is, when we come to die.

Especially when we consider, that this short and uncertain time, allowed us betwixt the sentence and execution, will determine our condition for eternity.

If this be the case of fallen man, as most certainly it is, then thoughtless pleasure is the greatest indecency; a fondness for the world, the greatest folly; and self-indulgence, downright madness.

And consequently, the contrary to these, namely, a constant seriousness of temper, an universal care and exactness of life, an indifference for the world, self-denial, sobriety and watchfulness, must be our greatest wisdom.

And this discovers to us the reason and the necessity of all the duties of Christianity, and of God's dealings with fallen man in this state of trial.

For instance :—Jesus Christ commands us to deny ourselves, and to take up our cross daily, not because He can command what He

pleases, (for He is infinite goodness, and can command nothing but what is good for His creatures,) but because the corruption of our nature requires that we should be forbidden every thing which would increase our disorder.

And, because this disorder has spread itself through all the powers of our souls and bodies, and inclines us to evil continually, He requires that our self-denial should reach as far as our corruption.

He commands us, therefore, to deny our own wisdom, because we are really blind as to what concerns our own true good, and should infallibly ruin ourselves, if left to our own choices.

He commands us to deny our appetites, because intemperance would ruin us.

He forbids us to give way to our passions, because a thousand evils will follow if we should do so.

He obliges us to keep a very strict watch over our hearts, because from thence proceed hypocrisy, covetousness, malice, and a thousand other evils.

We are forbid to set our hearts upon the world, and every thing in it, because our eternal happiness depends upon loving God with all our heart and soul.

We are obliged to love our neighbour, and our very enemies ; and are forbid to hate, to contend, to hurt, to go to law with him, because this would exasperate our minds, and grieve the Holy Spirit of God by which we are sanctified, being against that charity which God delights in.

We are forbid all repining when God afflicts us, because, as sinners, suffering is due to us. And, because our bodies have a very great influence over our souls, we are commanded to fast, to be strictly temperate at all times, and to deny ourselves the love of sensual pleasures and self-indulgence.

We are commanded to deny all the ways of folly, vanity, and false satisfactions, that we may be able to take satisfaction and pleasure in the ways of God.

In short:—In whatever instances we are commanded to deny ourselves, it is because

it is absolutely necessary, either to cure our corruption, or to qualify us for the grace of God, or to hinder us from grieving God's Holy Spirit, and forcing Him to forsake us.

The more we deny ourselves, the freer we shall be from sin, and the more dear to God.

God appoints us to sufferings, that we may keep close to Him, and that we may value the sufferings of His Son, which we should have but a low notion of, did not our own experience teach us what it is to suffer.

They that deny themselves will be sure to find their strength increased, their affections raised, and their inward peace continually advanced.

Had there been any better, any easier way to heaven, Jesus Christ would have chosen it for Himself and for his followers.

The more you love God, expect you must give the greater proofs of it; and you may expect greater assistance and consolation.

“Woe unto you that are full, for ye have received your consolation.”—Luke vi. 25.

If this be the life of the reprobate, who

would not dread the pleasures of a prosperous condition?

“ Having food and raiment, let us be there-with content.”—1 Timothy vi. 8.

Let us not imagine that excess, luxury, and superfluity, and the love of pleasures, are less criminal because they are so common.

TAKE UP THE CROSS.

This is designed as a peculiar favour to Christians, as indeed are all Christ's commands. Miseries are the unavoidable portion of fallen man. All the difference is, Christians suffering in obedience to the will of God, it makes them easy: unbelievers suffer the same things, but with an uneasy will and mind.

To follow our own will, our passions, and our senses, is that which makes us miserable. It is for this reason, and that we may have a remedy for all our evils, that Jesus Christ obliges us to submit our will, our passions, &c. to God.

The good Christian is not one who has no

inclination to sin, (for we have all the seed of sin in us,) but who, being sensible of such inclinations, denieth them continually, and suffers them not to grow into evil actions.

No pleasure can be innocent which hinders us from minding our salvation.

We need but taste any pleasure a very little while, to become a slave to it.

The only way to overcome our corrupt affections, is absolutely to deny their cravings.

We have reason to suspect every doctrine which would teach us to avoid sin without suffering, since the Holy Scriptures speak so much of self-denial, of the difficulty of working out our salvation.

Self-denial is absolutely necessary to prepare us to receive the grace of God; it was therefore necessary that John the Baptist should prepare the way, by preaching repentance and self-denial.

Men need not be at pains to go to hell; if they will not deny themselves, if they make no resistance, they will go there of course.

It will be great presumption to go to the

utmost bounds of what is allowed, because the bounds which separate what is allowed and forbidden, are often not perceived.

One does not begin to fall, when the fall becomes sensible.

Diversions are too apt to make us lose the remembrance of the dangers that encompass us, which is the ready way to ruin, fear being as necessary as any other grace.

Where there is a real abhorrence of evil, there will be a proportionable care to avoid it.

“ They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.” This is the only true test of being truly Christians.

Afflictions may make men esteem us less; but God loves us the more for them, if we bear them with resignation; which if we do, it is a certain sign of His grace and care of us.

The yoke of Christ is not only safer, but even easier than that liberty we are naturally fond of. It makes the practice of virtue pleasant; frees us from the violence of corruption, from being ruined by false pleasures.

Crosses make death less frightful. And

indeed, he that will not obey Jesus Christ, must obey his own passions, the world, its customs, humours, which are the worst of tyrants, and downright slavery.

Every day deny yourself some satisfaction; your eyes, objects of mere curiosity; your tongue, every thing that may feed vanity, or vent enmity; the palate, dainties; the ears, flattery, and whatever corrupts the heart; the body, ease and luxury; bearing all the inconveniences of life, (for the love of God,) cold, hunger, restless nights, ill health, unwelcome news, the faults of servants, contempt, ingratitude of friends, malice of enemies, calumnies, our own failings, lowness of spirits, the struggle in overcoming our corruptions; bearing all these with patience and resignation to the will of God. Do all this as unto God, with the greatest privacy.

All ways are indifferent to one who has heaven in his eye, as a traveller does not choose the pleasantest, but the shortest and safest way to his journey's end; and that is, if we were to choose for ourselves, the way of

the cross, which Jesus Christ made choice of, and sanctified it to all his followers.

It being much more easy to prevent than to mortify a lust, a prudent Christian will set a guard upon his senses. One unguarded look betrayed David. Job made a covenant with his eyes : " Evil communications corrupt good manners." ^h

Sensuality unfits us for the joys of heaven.

If that concupiscence which opposes virtue be lessened, a less degree of grace will secure our innocence.

All ways are indifferent to one who has heaven in his eye.

Self-denial has respect to the good estate of the soul, as it hinders her from being carried away to the lower pleasures of sense, that she may relish heavenly pleasures.

" The Son of Man has not where to lay his head."—Matthew viii. 20.

This should fill us with confusion, whenever we are over much concerned for the conveniences of life.

Our affections being very strongly inclined to sensible good, for the sake of which we are often tempted to evil, and fall into great disorders, we should resolve to sacrifice our will to reason, and reason to the word of God.

God does not require it of us, that we should not feel any uneasiness under the cross, but that we should strive to overcome it by his grace.

VIRTUES OF AN HOLY LIFE.

Fervency in devotion ; frequency in prayer ; aspiring after the love of God continually ; striving to get above the world and the body ; loving silence and solitude, as far as one's condition will permit ; humble and affable to all ; patient in suffering affronts and contradictions ; glad of occasions of doing good even to enemies ; doing the will of God, and promoting his honour to the utmost of one's power ; resolving never to offend him willingly, for any temporal pleasure, profit, or loss. These are virtues highly pleasing to God.

There is no pleasure comparable to the not being captivated by any external thing whatever.

Self-denial does not consist in fasting and other mortifications only, but in an indifference for the world, its profits, pleasures, honours, and its other idols.

It is a part of special prudence, never to do any thing because one has an inclination to it; but because it is one's duty, or it is reasonable; for he who follows his inclination because he wills, in one thing, will do it in another.

He that will not command his thoughts and his will, will soon lose the command of his actions.

Always suspect yourself, when your inclinations are strong and importunate.

It is necessary that we deny ourselves in little and indifferent things, when reason and conscience, which is the voice of God, suggests it to us, as ever we hope to get the rule over our own will.

Say not, it is a trifle, and not fit to make

a sacrifice of to God. He that will not sacrifice a little affection will hardly offer a greater. It is not the thing, but the reason and manner of doing it, namely, for God's sake, and that I may accustom myself to obey His voice, that God regards, and rewards with greater degrees of Grace.¹

“ Even Jesus Christ pleased not Himself.” —Romans xv. 3. As appears in the meanness of his birth, relations, form of a servant, the company he kept, His life, death, &c.

The greater your self-denial, the firmer your faith, and more acceptable to God. The sincere devotion of the rich, the alms of the poor, the humility of the great, the faith of such whose condition is desperate, the contemning the world when one can command it at pleasure, continuing instant in prayer even when we want the consolation we expected: these, and such like instances of self-denial, God will greatly reward.

They who imagine that self-denial intrenches upon our liberty, do not know that

¹ Life of Mr. Bonnel, p. 122.

it is this only that can make us free indeed, giving us the victory over ourselves, setting us free from the bondage of our corruption, enabling us to bear afflictions, (which will come one time or other,) to foresee them without amazement, enlightening the mind, sanctifying the will, and making us to slight those baubles which others so eagerly contend for.

Mortification consists in such a sparing use of the creatures, as may deaden our love for them, and make us more indifferent in the enjoyment of them. This lessens the weight of concupiscence, which carries us to evil, and so makes the grace of God more effectual to turn the balance of the will.^k

It is the greatest mercy, that God does not consult our inclinations, in laying upon us the cross, which is the only way to happiness. Jesus Christ crucified would have few imitators, if God did not lay it upon us, by the hands of men, and by His providence.

“ Let him deliver him now, if he will have him.”—Matthew xxvii. 43.

^k Norris's Christian Prudence, p. 300.

Carnal man cannot comprehend that God loves those whom he permits to suffer; but faith teaches us, that the cross is the gift of His love, the foundation of our hope, the mark of His children, and the title of an inheritance in heaven. But unless God sanctify it by His Spirit, it becomes an insupportable burden, a subject of murmuring, and an occasion of sin.

“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day, &c.”—Luke xvi. 19.

For a man then to be rich, to be clothed magnificently, to fare sumptuously, and to take no care of the poor, is sufficient to send him to hell, because he cannot lead a Christian life. Repentance, mortification, and the cross, are utterly inconsistent with a soft, sensual, voluptuous life; the desire of happiness, with the love of this present life.

It is therefore a most miserable state, for a man to have every thing according to his desire, and quietly to enjoy the pleasures of life. There needs no more to expose him to eternal misery.

“ He that loveth his life, shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.”—John xii. 25.

He that loveth life (that is, is fond of it) for the sake of the pleasures, advantages, it affords, will soon lose the love of heavenly things; the love of God, of his soul, and of the duty he owes to them. He hates it, who does not value it in comparison of eternal life, which he hopes for. A Christian gives proof of this, by mortifying himself; a Pastor, in spending his life in the works of the ministry, &c.

Those whom God loves in order to an happy eternity, he weans from the pleasures of this present life.

Temperance consists in a sober use of all earthly, visible things, and in confining ourselves within the compass of what is necessary.

“ With God all things are possible.”

The Almighty God enable me to conquer the temptations of riches, and to get above the allurements of this present life.

There is much more reason for a man to

humble himself, on account of his self-denial, than to boast of it, since the corruption of his nature is so great, that he cannot follow even the lawful dictates of nature, without hazarding his soul.

Christian self-denial is, to resist and crucify in ourselves the spirit and inclinations of Adam,—the flesh, its affections and lusts,—to die to our passions, in order to follow the motions of the Spirit.

FASTING

Necessary to bring our hearts to a penitent, holy, and devout temper; and to perform the vows that are upon us.

Our church requires this; and appoints days, and times, &c.; and it has been the honour of this church, that she hath kept up to her rules, when others have shamefully neglected them.

By fasting, by alms, and by prayers, we dedicate our bodies, goods, and souls to God in a particular manner.

LENT.

MEDITATIONS PROPER FOR A CLERGYMAN AT
THAT SEASON.

The primitive bishops had places of retirement near their cities, that they might separate themselves from the world, lest teaching others they should forget themselves; lest they should lose the spirit of piety themselves, while they were endeavouring to fix it in others.

Prosper, O God, the good thoughts, the good purposes, which Thou Thyself shalt inspire!

I acknowledge Thy goodness, which has raised me above my brethren, and appointed me a successor to Thy apostles. O may I ever act agreeably to this character. May I never profane a character so holy and so divine, lest God should pour down His vengeance upon my ungrateful head. Pardon me whereinsoever I have been wanting in the several duties

of my calling ; and give me grace to be more careful for the time to come. Amen.

How am I bound to adore Thy goodness, my great Master ! Thou hast set me in office amongst the chief of Thy servants ; but I will, for Thy sake, make myself the servant of the meanest of Thy servants.

By me Thou communicatest Thy grace in the Sacrament ; by me Thou teachest Thy people the truth ; by my hands Thou adoptest them Thy children in baptism, feedest them with Thy Body, comfortest them in affliction, armest them against the fear of death, and fittest them for a blessed eternity.

Grant that I may truly weigh the sanctity of my calling, and faithfully discharge it ; and that others may weigh it, and bless Thee, for so great a blessing.

I am appointed to sanctify others. O grant that I may first sanctify myself ; that I may separate myself from this world, its profits, pleasures, honours, and all its idols. Amen.

Let my zeal, O my Lord and Master, be answerable to that account which I must one

day give. Let me not see Thy laws broken, hear Thy name blasphemed, Thy word set at nought, Thine Ordinances despised, with patience. And O, may I never, by any neglect or sinful silence of mine, contribute to these crimes ; but employ my authority to suppress them.

Let me remember what was once said by Christ Himself to a Christian bishop ; “ Because thou art lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.”

Inspire my heart with such holy resolution and courage, that I may not fear any man when Thy honour and my duty call me ; that no worldly considerations may hinder me, when my office obliges me to stand in the gap. Amen.

Give me such holy dispositions of soul, whenever I approach Thine altar, as may in some measure be proportionable to the holiness of the work I am about, of presenting the prayers of the faithful, of offering a spiritual sacrifice to God, in order to convey the body and blood of Jesus Christ—the true

bread of life—to all His members. Give me, when I commemorate the same sacrifice that Jesus Christ once offered, give me the same intentions that He had, to satisfy the justice of God, to acknowledge His mercies, and to pay all that debt which a creature owes to his Creator. None can do this effectually but Jesus Christ: Him, therefore, we present to God, in this Holy Sacrament.

O Thou, who hast made me a servant in Thy house, give me such dispositions as that I may never dishonour Thy service. Amen.

I am a sinner, and yet I am appointed to offer up prayers for others. It is the great God to whom I offer these prayers. To me the church, the spouse of Christ, entrusts her desires, her interests, her necessities, and her thanks.

What a trust is this! O may I never betray it, may I never obstruct Thy mercies to Thy church by a formal service! Let me ever speak to God, and from God, with attention, with love, with respect, with fear, with purity of heart, and with unpolluted lips! Amen.

The office of a shepherd of souls is full of difficulty. Consider what toil Jesus Christ underwent, what reproaches, what contempt, what despite!—and from those persons to whom He preached the most concerning truths; and, last of all, laying down His life for His sheep.

I am astonished, and greatly ashamed, when I consider how very far I come short of this pattern, how poor my pains have been, how little of my time, my care, my thoughts, have been spent in this service.

O Chief Shepherd, and Bishop of souls, communicate to me, the meanest of Thy herdsmen, such a degree of concern as may thoroughly qualify me for this great work; pardon my past negligence, and lay not to my charge the evils which may have happened thereby! Amen.

Consider the patience of your great Master, with what compassion He treated sinners; transcribe His example; and if any of your flock are perverse, froward, obstinate, bear with them, condescend to their weakness, and

strive to reduce them even against their wills.

But has this been my way? Very far from it. I have been impatient when any of my flock have not been bettered by my care and pains. And this, not from a true zeal for the glory of God, and the good of souls, but too often alas! from a principle of self-love; angry, because I have been so conceited as to think that my labours should not be in vain.

And yet how often has God spoken to me myself, and I regarded it not! How long was His grace ineffectual even with myself!

O Jesu, impart to me a portion of that spirit of meekness which prevailed with Thee to preach to a people who regarded Thee not, who despised, who crucified Thee. Then why should I, who am a sinner, complain of my unsuccessful labours?

Forgive, gracious God, the faults I have committed in this great work of the ministry; and let no unworthiness in me hinder Thy blessings from descending upon the souls committed to my care. Amen.

Reflect seriously what a dreadful account you have to give, if you say, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace;" or if you give the children's bread to dogs; that is, admit to the Lord's table those that are unworthy of such a favour. This would be to lay men asleep in their sin. Lord, preserve Thy servant from this sin! Amen.

"I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done."

O, Lord, that I could say this to the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made me overseer. That I could say, Be ye devout, as ye see me devout; do ye forgive one another, as ye see me ready to forgive; despise the world, &c. as ye see me do it.

Let me seriously consider, that I am not only answerable for my own personal offences; I sin every time I cause others to sin by my example. What reparation can be made, what answer can be given, when Christ requires our flock at our hand?

Lord, suffer me not to follow my own will; reform me, that I may reform others; give

me light to discover, and grace to amend, where I have done amiss. Amen.

Let your conversation be such as becomes not only the Gospel, but ministers of the Gospel, to whom all that is curious, useless, light, and vain, is forbidden; all scurrilous language, idle stories, &c.

Endeavour to leave some impression of piety upon the minds of those with whom you converse. Jesus Christ did so always.

Make no distinction betwixt the rich and the poor, as to converse with one, and not with the other.

Lord, grant that Thy example may ever be before me; and my conversation holy, useful, and edifying. Amen.

As to the disposal of the church's revenues, the suggestions of avarice, of vanity, of pleasure, and of the world, ought not to govern me. I am only a steward, not a proprietor, and should be as criminal as those laymen that invade them, if I convert them to lay and secular uses; which sin of sacrilege, very probably, took its rise from others ob-

serving the church's revenues put to secular uses.

Grant, O my Lord, who hast given me much more of this world's goods than Thou tookest Thyself, grant that I may apply the goods of the church to Thy glory, and to the support of Thy poor members ; and pardon all my vain expenses. Amen.

“ He,” and especially that minister, “ that has not the Spirit of Christ, is none of His.” He ought to perform all his duties in Christ's name, by His authority and power ; and offer all to God through Him ; adore Jesus Christ as preaching, praying, absolving, and comforting, by you His minister.

Lord, grant that I may set Thee ever before me, that I may direct all my labours to Thy glory ; let me so speak, and so live, that my words and actions may be worthy of Thee, that Thou mayest call them Thine. Amen.

THE PRIEST'S LIPS SHOULD KEEP KNOWLEDGE.

Whence this knowledge but from the holy

Scriptures, which alone make us sound in doctrine, and able to convince gainsayers?

But even these are not to be understood without the light of God's Spirit, a diligent reading of them, and a knowledge of the maladies men are subject to, in order to apply them wisely and safely.

Men read the Gospel rather as judges than as disciples, which is the rise of all errors, both in life and doctrine.

Grant, O Lord, that when I read Thy Word, I may do it with a spirit crucified to the world, to my curiosity, to my vanity, to my interests, and to my prejudices! Cure me, O blessed Physician, first, and then teach me to know and relieve the maladies of my flock, that I may present them sound and lovely in Thy sight! Amen.

Covetousness is idolatry in every man; but it is abominable in a minister of Jesus Christ, Who ever affected poverty rather than wealth, Who lived upon charity, and forbad His disciples superfluities, when He sent them to preach the Gospel.

He that takes care of the fowls of the air will never fail to provide for His own ministers. It is therefore infidelity to be over-careful for this world.

God grant that I may ever depend upon the providence of God !

Purity of soul and body is a most necessary qualification in a minister of Jesus Christ. To offer the prayers of the faithful to God with polluted lips, to break the bread of life with unclean hands, to receive that bread into a soul defiled with unchaste thoughts ; how dreadfully provoking must it needs be !

A blindness of spirit, an alienation from divine things, an incapacity to receive them, are the necessary effects of impurity.

The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit. Into a malicious soul, wisdom and piety cannot enter.

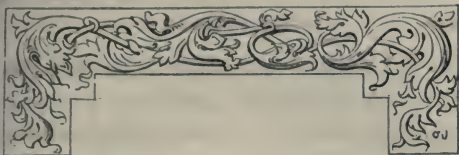
“ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”—Matthew v. 8.

A priest who, in the exercise of his function, has an eye to the grandeur, repute, esteem of great men, presumptuous authority over the

consciences of others, worldly advantages, &c. perverts the design of the ministry.

Grant, O Lord, that I may regard nothing but Thy glory ; that I may act and live for Thee alone ; that my zeal for Thy glory, and the good of souls, may be the chief motive of all my actions !





THURSDAY MEDITATIONS.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

Question from the Office of Ordination.—Will you maintain and set forward, as much as in you lieth, quietness, love, and peace, among all men; and such as be unquiet, disobedient, and criminous, within your diocese, correct and punish, according to such authority as you have by God's Word, and as to you shall be committed by the Ordinances of this realm? ¹

Answer.—I will do so, by the help of God.

O GOD of peace and love, make me, Thy minister, a messenger and instrument of peace to this people to whom I am sent; that by Thy gracious assistance, I may root out all

¹ This can never be looked upon as any limitation of the power received from Christ, but only as directing the exercise thereof, as to the manner, form, and circumstance.

strife and variance, hatred and malice, and that this church and nation may enjoy a blessed tranquillity.

Bless the discipline of this church in my hands, and make it effectual for the conviction of wicked men and gainsayers.

Assist me, by Thy good Spirit, that I may apply a proper cure to every disorder; that I may reprove with mildness, censure with equity, and punish with compassion.

O merciful God, who wouldest not the death of a sinner, but that he should be converted and live, bring into the right way all such as are gone astray from Thy commandments.

Vouchsafe unto all penitents (and especially unto all such as are now under the censures of the church) a true sense of their crimes, true repentance for them, and Thy gracious pardon, that their souls may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Amen.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

However the church be, in some respects,

incorporated with the commonwealth in a Christian state, yet its fundamental rights remain distinct from it. Of which this is one of the chief: to receive into, and to exclude out of the church, such persons as, according to the laws of the Christian society, are fit to be taken in or shut out.

And when temporal laws interpose, it is temporal punishment only which they design to inflict, or set aside.^m

“ And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words; thou shalt speak My words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear,”
—Ezekiel ii. 6.

“ Lest I should use sharpness, according to the power (namely, of binding and loosing) which God hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.”—2 Cor. xiii. 10.

“ Whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may not blaspheme.”—1 Tim. i. 20.

O admirable use and command of Satan!
He is God's enemy, and yet does Him service;

^m Bishop Stillfleet.

and an adversary to man, and yet helps to save him. He is the author of blasphemy, and yet teacheth not to blaspheme; that is, one that is stronger than he directs his malice to ends which he did not intend. Satan is set on work to take him down by terror and despair, whom he before had tempted to sin. But while Satan thinks to drive him to destruction by despair, God stops his course, when the sinner is sufficiently humbled: and then, as it was with Christ, Satan is dismissed, and angels come and minister unto him.ⁿ

What great man shall we now find, who will not take it ill to be reprov'd? And yet David, a prince and favourite of God, when he was reprov'd even by a subject, did not turn away in a rage, but confessed his fault, and repented truly of his sin.^o

The very Office of Consecration, so often confirmed by acts of parliament, does warrant every Bishop, in the clearest and most express terms, to claim authority, by the Word of

ⁿ Rouse.

^o St. Ambrose. ap. David.

God, to exercise all manner of spiritual discipline within his own diocese.^p

Men should be persuaded, not forced, to forsake their sins; because God rewards not those who through necessity forsake their sins, but such as do so voluntarily.^q

Be steady and fearless in the discharge of your duty, without failing in that respect which is due to higher powers.

Grant, O God, that I may have an eye to duty only, that I may fear no temporal evil, and be concerned only lest I should not, in all respects, please Thee, my God.

“The judgment is God’s.”—Deut. i. 17.

As this should oblige all people to be afraid of a judgment or censure passed by men commissioned by God, so it should make us very careful that our judgment be such as is worthy of God, and agreeable to His will and word.

“If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha.”—1 Cor. xvi. 22.

Here is a positive direction to the Church to excommunicate all such as plainly discover that they have no love for Jesus Christ, who are scandalous or profane.

Since we are to give an account of the souls committed to our charge, we cannot be debarred of making use of all the means enjoined us by the Gospel to reduce sinners.

We ought to be thankful for the favours which we have received from religious princes; but if our benefactors require of us what is inconsistent with our trust, we then know whom we are to obey.

“If there come any of you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds.”—2 John x. 11.

Not to shew our abhorrence of sin, is to consent to it. Men do not sufficiently consider the guilt of this, when they converse with notorious offenders without scruple. They partake with them in their sins; they harden the sinner; they forget the fidelity they owe

to God and to His laws ; and greatly hazard their own salvation.

Excommunication never pronounced except where the case was desperate, by the obstinacy of the party in refusing admonition, and to submit to discipline.^r

“ The Scribes and the Pharisees murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.”—Luke xv. 2.

On some occasions, we ought to avoid sinners, for fear of being corrupted, or to put them to shame, in order to their conversion. But to converse with them as our Lord did, in order to teach them their duty, to encourage them in the way of piety, &c., this is godlike.

“ Get thee behind me, Satan, thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.”—Mark viii. 33.

How dangerous is tenderness in matters of salvation ! To spare a penitent, is to ruin him by a fatal kindness.

How perilous is the government of the

Church, wherein a man becomes guilty of those things which he does not hinder.^s

“ For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds.”—2 Cor. x. 4.

We surely mistake the spirit of the Gospel, when we would establish and defend the Church by human policy and carnal means, by friendship of great men, credit, reputation, splendour, riches, &c.

God will have us to use other sort of arms ; namely, patience, humility, meekness, prayers, suffering, and spiritual censures, to which God will join His own almighty power.

All mankind are agreed, that human legislators can only dispense and make laws, in cases purely human.

There is a public absolution, which is no more than a relaxation of a censure. There is no relation betwixt that and the absolution of sins.

God ratifies in heaven the judgments of His ministers upon earth, when they judge by the rules prescribed by His word.

Whenever church discipline meets with discountenance, impieties of all kinds are sure to get head and abound. And impieties unpunished, do always draw down judgments.

The same Jesus Christ who appointed baptism, for the receiving of men into His church and family, has appointed excommunication to shut out such as are judged unworthy to continue in it.

“ If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church : but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven ; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”—Matthew xviii. 15, &c.

So that if baptism be a blessing, excommunication is a real punishment ; there being the same authority for excommunication as for baptism. And if men ridicule it, they do it at the peril of their souls.

In short ; this authority is necessary, if it be necessary to preserve the honour of religion. It is appointed by Jesus Christ. The ends proposed by it are, to reform wicked men, and to remove scandals. If the sentence be duly executed, the offender is really deprived of the ordinary means of salvation.

It is indeed a sentence passed by men, but by men commissioned by God Himself ; that is, by the Holy Ghost.

The authority of Christ is to be respected in the meanest of His ministers.

Excommunication, the most dreadful punishment which a Christian can suffer, becomes less feared than it ought to be, through the countenance which excommunicated persons meet with, contrary to the express command of God, *With such a one, no not to eat.*

A true penitent will be willing to bear the

shame of his sins (where he has given offence) before men, that he may escape the confusion of them hereafter. But then he ought to know, that to submit to the outward part of penance, is not to submit to God, unless it proceed from the fear and love of God.

A man may see his sin, confess it, abhor it, and yet be a false penitent. Judas did all this. What he wanted was the grace of God, to see the mercy of God, as well as His justice.

Those who are the first to lead men into sinful courses, seldom trouble themselves to recover them out of them. The ministers of Christ must do it, or they must die in their sin.

“And they laughed Him to scorn.”—
Mark v. 4.

O my Lord and Master! let me not be driven from my duty, by the infidelity and scoffs of the world.

How desperate soever the condition of a sinner may appear, we must neither insult over it, nor despair of his conversion.

A person who has offended and scandalized others by his sins ought, before he be admitted to the peace of the church and to receive the sacrament, to give some good assurance, by a sober life, that he is a true penitent.

“ Shake off the dust under your feet, for a testimony against them.”—Mark vi. 11.

Jesus Christ permits not his apostles to avenge themselves by their apostolical power, nor even to desire that he should do it ; but to leave their cause to God, with full confidence in Him.

“ And if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold.”—Luke xix. 8.

The judgment which, of his own accord, this penitent passes upon himself, will condemn those who reject all the remedies offered, and all methods made use of, for their conversion, and who will not make the least atonement for their crimes.

Men shew very plainly that they love sin, when they will not suffer any one to put a stop to it, to remove the occasions thereof,

and to shame, to reprove, and to punish the sinner. This is a sin which draws after it great judgments.

If a pastor hopes to do his duty without reproving the world, (without testifying that the works thereof are evil,^t) or to reprove it without being hated by it, he will deceive himself; he may carry it fair with men, but will be condemned by Jesus Christ.

“He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone.”—John viii. 7.

They whose duty it is to punish offenders, should take great care not to be influenced by pride, hypocrisy, passion, false zeal, or malice; but to punish with reluctancy, with compassion, as having a sense of their own misery and weakness, which, perhaps, render them more guilty in the sight of God.

Let ecclesiastical judges always remember, that the Holy Ghost, to whom it belongs to bind and loose, never makes Himself the minister of the passions of men.

t John vii. 7.

“ They loved the praise of men more than the glory of God.”—John xii. 43.

And this is the cause that men count it more shameful to acknowledge their crimes than it was to be guilty of them.

We must never insult a sinner ; but, without extenuating his sin, we must comfort him, by shewing him the good which God may bring out of it.

“ As for Saul, he made havock of the church.”—Acts viii. 3.

The designs of God towards Saul should teach us not to despair of any man’s conversion, but to pray for it, and to use our best endeavours, instead of being angry, and using them ill.

“ And Saul was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.”—Acts ix. 9.

Jesus Christ Himself, in this instance, teaches His ministers not to be hasty in receiving penitents, but to let them fast and pray, and bear the sense of their sin, and of their bad condition, before they be reconciled. It teaches penitents to fast and pray, and to

bear with patience the fruit of their own doings.

“ Many that believed came, and confessed their deeds,” &c.—Acts xix. 18.

The Spirit of Grace always inclines men to confess their evil deeds, and humble themselves for their sins. There could not be a more shameful one than dealing with the devil, &c. yet this did not hinder them, or from sacrificing the most valuable things that had been instruments in their wickedness. This is a proof of a true conversion.

The fall of others is for us a great instruction, and a lesson which we ought to study, not in order to insult our neighbour, but to fear for and amend ourselves.

Let us not despise any sinner; God has sometimes very great designs in relation to those who are at present most opposite to Him.

To reprove, when persons are not in a proper disposition for amendment, would be to give both them and ourselves trouble without any prospect of advantage.

To make reproof beneficial, they to whom it is given should see that it does not proceed from humour, or from a design to vex them, but from a true zeal and love for their souls.

A true charity will never insult those that are gone astray, but will use the greatest sinners mildly, lest they should be driven to despair by too great severity.

The church forgives sins in the person of Christ.^u She remits the temporal punishments of them also, because Christ is the sovereign High Priest, and because it belongs to God alone to recede from the strictness of His justice, in what manner He thinks fit.

An ecclesiastical governor should endeavour to preserve discipline, and the esteem of his people at the same time, by acts of tenderness, charity, &c.

“For though I should boast of my authority, (which the Lord hath given us for edification and not for destruction,) I should not be ashamed.”—2 Cor. x. 8.

^u 2 Corinthians ii. 10.

It is necessary, sometimes, to extol the dignity of our office.

N. B. Pastors are appointed by Christ to edify the church; they must therefore be honoured and obeyed.

The disorders which a good pastor observes in his flock, will always be matter of humiliation to him, because he will always impute them to himself.

A pastor, a priest, who does not with tears and supplications bewail the sins of his people, cannot call himself their mediator with God.

It is the greatest comfort of a good pastor, to find himself obliged to use nothing but good advice, and the mild part only of his authority; but when that will not do, he must use sharpness; but still with this view, that it be for their edification, not for their destruction.

It seldom happens that great men, whether clergy or laity, reform their lives, because they seldom meet with persons of courage to oppose them or to tell them of their faults.

A bishop who is not restrained by any earthly engagements, will not spare any man whose conduct is prejudicial to the faith.

“I would they were even cut off which trouble you.”—Gal. v. 12.

To wish shame, or some temporal evil, for the salvation of my neighbour's soul, is not contrary to charity. It seems, matters were come to a great height of evil, when St. Paul was forced to wish that to be done, which he did not in prudence think fit to do.

“Reproach not a man that turneth from sin, but remember that we are all worthy of punishment.”—Ecclus. viii. 5.

“Now we command you, (and the same authority subsists still in the governors of the church,) in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which ye received from us.”—2 Thess. iii. 6.

Nothing is there which the faithful ought more carefully to avoid, than disorderly livers ;

nothing which pastors ought more earnestly to warn their flocks of.

May I ever observe the rules of a holy and charitable severity.

“ If any obey not our word, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed ; yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”—2 Thessalonians iii. 14.

Excommunication is only for the contumacious, not to insult, but to cure.

“ Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.”—1 Timothy v. 19.

A pastor ought not lightly to be exposed to the revenge of those whom it is probable he has or shall have occasion to reprove.

“ Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.”—1 Timothy v. 20.

That is, who sin grievously, and are convinced before two or three witnesses ; let such be censured before, or by the consent of all the congregation.

“ In meekness instructing (reproving) those

that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."—2 Timothy ii. 25.

When we consider that repentance is the gift of God, that the wiles of the devil are many, and corruption of nature very strong, we shall compassionate instead of insulting a sinner.

We shall adore the mercy of God towards ourselves, and hope for it for others. We shall fear for ourselves, and pray for them. They may recover, and be saved: we may fall, and be lost for ever.

When men will not take care of their own salvation, the church owes this care to her children, to hinder them as much as possible from ruining others.

If excommunication be perpetual, it is caused by the obstinacy of the offender, not by the laws of Christ or His church, which only deprive wicked men of the benefit of

communion for a time, to bring them to a sense of their duty.

Church discipline is for the honour of God, for the safety of religion, the good of sinners, and for the public weal ; that Christians may not run headlong to ruin without being made sensible of their danger ; that others may see, and fear, and not go on presumptuously in their evil ways ; that the house of God may not become a den of thieves ; and that judgments may not be poured down upon the whole community. “ Did not Achan commit a trespass, and wrath fell on all the congregation ?^u

The most effectual way of answering these ends is, to exercise a strict impartial discipline. First, to withhold from Christians the benefit of the holy Sacrament, till they behave themselves so as to be worthy of so great a blessing. And, secondly, if they continue obstinate, (all proper methods being used to reclaim them,) to excommunicate them ; and to oblige all sober Christians not to hold familiar conversation with them.

^u Joshua xxii. 20.

But first of all, Christians should be made sensible of what blessings they are deprived, when they are debarred the communion, even the greatest on earth—the hopes of salvation. “Jesus said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.”^x

He that understands and believes this, will submit to any hardships, rather than incur, rather than continue under a sentence so full of terror : and a sentence passed by one commissioned by God, and bound, at the peril of his soul, to pass it ; it being the greatest indignity to Christ and the divine ordinance, to prostitute the body and blood of Christ to notorious evil livers.

God has therefore lodged a power in the pastors of His church to repel all such ; and it is a mercy even to them to be hindered from increasing their guilt and their damnation.

Nor can any prince, governor, or human law, hinder a Christian bishop from exercising

this power, because he is under an obligation to the King of kings, and Lord of lords, to do his duty in this respect.

Nor must it be pretended, that the punishment which Christian magistrates inflict may supersede this discipline.

Those punishments only affect the body, and keep the outward man in order. These are designed to purify the soul, and to save that from destruction.

Excommunication, as St. Paul tells us, is "for the destruction of the flesh, that the soul may be saved;" that is, to mortify the corruptions of nature, lust, pride, intemperance, &c.; this being the only way to save the soul of the sinner, and to bring him to reason; that is, to repentance.

For upon a sinner's repentance, (unless where he has incurred this sentence more than once,) the church is ready to receive him into her bosom with open arms.

But then by repentance must be understood, not a bare change of mind, not an acknowledgment of the sin and scandal, not

a serious behaviour for a few days, all which may soon wear off; but a course of public penance, a long trial of sincerity, such as may satisfy a man's self, and all sober Christians, that the sinner is a true penitent, that he has forsaken all his evil ways, evil company, evil habits, that he is grown habitually serious, devout, and religious, and that by fasting and prayer he has in some good measure got the mastery of his corrupt nature, and has begun a repentance not to be repented of.

For want of this care and method, many Christians are ruined eternally. They sin, and repent, and sin again, and think all is safe, because they have repented, as they think, and are pardoned.

There are people who are in the same sad case with those that stand excommunicated, though no sentence has passed upon them; namely, such as live in a contempt of the public worship of God. They cannot properly be turned out of the church, who never come into it; but they keep themselves out of the ark, and consequently must perish.

Excommunication, in the primitive times, was pronounced in the congregation to which the offender belonged. After which, they gave notice to all other churches; namely, Let no temple of God be open to him; let none converse with him; &c.

“And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child that is born unto thee shall surely die.”—2 Samuel xii. 13, 14.

The Divine Justice punisheth every sin, either in this world or in the next.

A sinner's willingness to undergo any punishment which shall be appointed by the minister of God, in order to make proof of and to establish his repentance, is a sure sign that God has not withdrawn His grace, notwithstanding his sin.

“Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”—Hebrews xiii. 4.

You dare not say that this is not true. What can you say to your own mind to make it easy? Nothing but this can make you easy; to take shame to yourself, to confess your sin, to fast, and to pray earnestly to God for pardon, &c., and to let others know “ what an evil thing and bitter it is to forsake the Lord.”

This visitation will either do you much good or much hurt; you will from this time grow much better or much worse.

Since you did not blush to sin, do not blush to own your faults.

Let it be matter of joy and thankfulness to you, that we are concerned for you so much.

Grace, indeed, we cannot give; that is the gift of God. We can only pray for you, and do our duty in admonishing you, &c.

If you submit for fear only, and not for conscience sake, you will suffer both here and hereafter.

When men, and especially men in any authority, are not content to neglect their

own salvation, but are industrious to ruin others, they may depend upon it, they are very near filling up the measure of their iniquities, and consequently their destruction is not far off.

Our charity to offenders ought to be like that of God, not in flattering them by a cruel indulgence, but in putting them, by a merciful severity, in the way of obtaining pardon.

In the primitive church, great offenders were not restored to communion till they had, by their behaviour, given all possible demonstrations of the sincerity of their repentance not to be repented of; and this by a long trial of mortification, &c., for a short repentance too seldom ends in amendment of life; and he who fancies that his mind may effectually be changed in a short time, will deceive himself and the church, unless he shews this change by fasting, alms-deed, retirement, &c., and that for a considerable time.

Will any man say that he loves Christ, and

His church, when he opposes the authority of her pastors ; when he opposes her discipline ; or when he weakens her unity ?

When we consider, that God is absolute Master of men's hearts, we should not think any man incapable of salvation.

My God ! let me always fear for myself, when I am labouring to promote the salvation of others.

Remissness in church discipline is owing, sometimes, to indulgence and an easy temper, not caring to trouble others, or be troubled ; sometimes by being satisfied to go on in the track trodden by their predecessors, not considering what duty obliges them to, but what was done before ; others, out of downright neglect, not caring how things go, give opportunity to the enemy to sow tares while they are thus asleep. Thus corruption gets head, and is like to do so, until God awakens the governors both in church and state, and makes them see, that they are answerable for all the sins occasioned by their negligence ; and that they have more souls besides their

own to account for ; which is one day to fall heavy upon them.

Lord, awaken all that are in power ; and me, Thy unworthy servant ; that we may all discharge our duty more faithfully.

There may be people bold enough to make a mock of sin, to submit to public penance with contempt of the authority that enjoins it, and not to be bettered by such Christian methods for the restoring sinners to the peace of God ; but it is to be hoped all are not so hardened ; and that church discipline is, notwithstanding, a mighty check upon sin, and keeps many under a fear of committing such crimes as must oblige them to take shame to themselves before the face of men.

That perfect penance which Christ requireth, consists of contrition, confession, and amendment of former life, and an obedient reconciliation to the laws and will of God.^x

^x Convocatio, 1536. See also the Homilies.

ABSOLUTION.

Our church ascribeth not the power of remission of sin to any but to God only. She holds, that faith and repentance are the necessary conditions of receiving this blessing. And she asserts, what is most true, that Christ's ministers have a special commission, which other believers have not, authoritatively to declare this absolution, for the comfort of true penitents; and which absolution, if duly dispensed, will have a real effect from the promise of Christ. John xx. 23.y

Authority of the church is only spiritual and ministerial, (the Head and Authority being in heaven.) She does not, therefore, call her orders laws, but rules, canons; and her inflictions, not punishments but censures. She acknowledges, that whatever power she has besides spiritual, is either from the favour or injunctions of princes. But [Art. 37] we give not our princes (and they have always disclaimed it) the power of administering God's

word or the sacraments. And although our spiritual power be from God, yet is this power subject to be inhibited, limited, regulated, in the outward exercises, by the laws and customs of the land. By this moderation both powers are preserved entire and distinct. We neither claim a power of jurisdiction over the prince, nor pretend to be exempt from his.

The greatest care ought to be taken concerning the sincerity of penitents ; till that be done, penance will only be a form without a power, or any real benefit.

In the primitive church, every thing was done with advice, because their great aim was to have reason and the will of God prevail. A despotic power was forbid by Christ Himself : “ It shall not be so among you.” He that is humble and charitable will take the mildest and surest way, and will not be troubled, provided the end be obtained.

PENANCE.

Sin is the disease of the soul. Diseases are not to be cured in a moment ; it will take time

to root out their causes, and to prevent their effects; so will it require time to prove the sincerity of our resolutions. We solemnly profess that we repent, and we are not sure but that we lie to God.

DISCIPLINE.

As discipline slackened, men's manners grew more and more corrupt, even in the primitive times. There were never more infidels converted (saith Fleury) than when catechumens were most strictly examined, and baptized Christians put to open penance for their sins.

They that are for making still more concessions to human frailty, will at last set aside the Christian religion, which is established upon maxims of eternal truth, and not on human policy; and instead of gaining or securing the bad, they will lose the better sort.

A flattering physician is for giving palliating medicines to ease the pain, without taking away the cause, which will occasion relapses,

until at last they destroy the patient. But a good man will prescribe what he believes necessary to remove the cause, though uneasy to his patient, and will have nothing to do with such as will not submit to the necessary methods of cure.

Penances, in the primitive church, were never granted but unto such as desired them, and such as desired to be converted. None were forced; but such as would not submit were excommunicated.

DISCIPLINE IMPRACTICABLE.

This cannot be, when it was practised for so many years in the primitive church. And what if it be one of those things which Christ has commanded His followers to observe so strictly,^z and which He had learned of the Father!^a The commands of Christ cannot be impracticable. That would be to tax Him with ignorance or weakness. When He promised to be with His church to the end of the world, He engaged to give such graces as

^z Matthew xxviii. 19, 20.

^a John xv. 15. xvi. 13.

were necessary to raise us above our natural weaknesses.

Penances forced are seldom lasting.

The priest, under the law, could not accept the offering of a leper, nor allow him to partake of the sacrifice, till he had received convincing tokens of his cleanness; no more ought the Christian priest to treat sinners as cured till he sees the proof.^b

“Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”—Matthew xvi. 19.

Those ministers that know not what it is to bind and loose sinners, reject one half of their commission.

Excommunication is the last remedy reserved for the incorrigible, in case of enormous sins. They who despise it, know not what it is to be a heathen in God's sight, to be without God for a Father, Christ for a Saviour, the Church for a mother, and Christians for brethren.

^b Quesnel.

A true penitent is always willing to bear the shame and confusion of his sin and folly before men, that he may escape the anger of God.

“Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled. Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.”—Heb. xii. 15; that is, such as for a short pleasure, forfeit their eternal inheritance.

Happy that sinner, whom God does not abandon to the hardness of his heart, but awakens him by His judgments, or the visitations of His grace.

“I beseech thee, torment me not.”—Luke viii. 28.

These were the words of the devil to our Lord, and these are the suggestions in the hearts of all sinners, wherever he has got possession. When a minister of Christ, by his sermons, rebukes, &c., or the church by her discipline, attempts to disturb the sinner, they

are looked upon as his mortal enemy; and they treat both the church and her ministers worse than this legion did Jesus Christ. They despise their power, set at nought their persons, and threaten and persecute them for their good-will.^c

There is not any greater or more dreadful sign of the wrath of God, than when he abandons a sinner to his lusts, and permits him to find means of satisfying them.

The public good is the sole end of church discipline. The interest of the governors of the church is no way concerned in it, but only the advantage of their flock, that sinners may be converted; that contagion may be hindered from spreading; that every one may be kept to his duty, and in obedience to the laws of God; that judgments may be averted from the public; and that God in all things may be glorified; that differences among neighbours may be made up, and charity improved, &c.

Discipline (saith our Homily of the right use of the Church, part 2) in the primitive

church was practised, not only upon mean persons, but upon the rich, the noble, and the mighty; and "such," as St. Paul saith, "were even given to Satan for a time."

Those that make a mock, a sport, a jest of sin, too plainly betray a love of wickedness in themselves.

EXEMPTION.

A legal exemption cannot free a man from guilt, beyond the extent of that power which grants the exemption. If it be a human power, it can extend no further than to exempt a man from human penalties, not from those that are purely spiritual.

"Reproach not a man that turneth from sin."—Ecclus. viii. 5.

They whom fear renders cowardly in the exercise of their ministry, forget that they act in the name and place of Christ, and are to account to Him for the mischief the church receives thereby.

"Ye shall not be afraid of the face of man, for the judgment is God's."—Deut. i. 17.

O righteous Judge of the world, give me and my substitutes grace patiently to hear, and impartially to weigh, every cause that shall come before us in judgment.

Give us a spirit to discern, and courage to execute true judgment, that all our sentences may be approved by Thee our Lord and Judge. Amen.

“Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the stranger, nor of the fatherless.”—Deut. xxiv. 17.

“Every one loveth gifts: they judge not the fatherless.”—Isaiah i. 23; that is, they are poor, and cannot bribe them.

“Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause, to decline after many, to wrest judgment. Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause.”—Exodus xxiii. 2, 3.

“Thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.”—Deuteronomy xix. 15.

The judgment of the multitude is no rule

of justice. "Then cried they all, Not this man, but Barabbas."

"If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: when Pilate heard that saying," (John xix. 12,) then he resolved to sacrifice his conscience, rather than lose his prince's favour.

"And he said unto the judges, Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment."
—2 Chronicles xix. 6.

"He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are an abomination to the Lord."—Proverbs xvii. 13.

"Except it were given thee from above."
—John xix. 11.

Although the magistrate's authority is from God, yet he is answerable to God for the due execution of it.

"To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice."—
Proverbs xxi. 3.

"To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? saith the Lord:

I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats."—Isaiah i. 11.

"For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God, more than burnt-offerings."—Hosea vi. 6.

"Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"—Micah vi. 7, 8.

The Jews had a rule, that if a rich man and a poor man had a controversy, they must both of them stand or sit, to avoid partiality.

Virtue would hardly be distinguished from a kind of sensuality, if there were no labour, no opposition, no difficulty, in doing our duty.
Dulce est periculum sequi Deum.

The duty of a judge may oblige him to

punish according to the law ; but it is the part of a Christian injured to forgive according to the charity of the Gospel.

A judge is not the master but the minister of the law—for the public good, not for his own interest, passion, or will.

A good judge will never desire to make himself feared by his power ; but will rather be afraid of abusing it.

The civil magistrate is liable to be excluded from church communion for such reasons as the spiritual governors shall judge necessary ; they are to determine for him, and not he for them, in matters merely spiritual.

Give me, O Lord, the spirit of judgment, that I may govern this church with wisdom.^d

“ Be not faint-hearted when thou sittest in judgment.”—Ecclus. iv. 9.

A lover of the law will always have an eye to the intent of the law.^e

^d Isaiah xxviii. 6.

^e Matthew xii. 3.



FRIDAY MEDITATIONS.

ORDINATION.

Question from the Office of Ordination.—Will you be faithful in ordaining, sending, or laying hands upon others?

Answer.—I will so be, by the help of God.

ALMIGHTY God, who knowest the hearts of men, govern my mind, that I may faithfully discharge this great trust; that neither through fear, favour, interest, or negligence, I may ever promote any person to the sacred charge of Christ's flock.

Bless all those who have already given themselves to Thy immediate service, and labour with me in this ministration; be with us, and guide us, and help us, for Thy promise sake, for Thine honour's sake, and for the sake of Jesus Christ, that we may teach well, and that we may be examples of all the graces and virtues which we recommend to others.

Direct all such as are designed to serve at Thine altar; sanctify their persons, their studies, their intentions, and affections.

And grant that no unworthiness in me may ever hinder Thy gifts and graces from descending upon those whom I shall ordain to Thy service, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

“O Lord, give us pastors according to Thine own heart, which shall feed us with knowledge and understanding.”—Jeremiah iii. 15.

Ministers being the officers of God's household, we must depend upon Him in the choice of them, and not upon human motives.

“And when they had fasted and prayed, and layed their hands on them, they sent them away.”—Acts xiii. 3.

All Christians being concerned in this affair, all ought to fast and pray, in order to have faithful pastors.^f

Apostolical usages ought to be kept up to, as proceeding from Jesus Christ Himself.

“Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that He

will send forth labourers into His harvest.”—
Matthew ix. 38.

O gracious Lord, look down in mercy upon this church, at this time. Provide it with faithful labourers, such as shall have a true compassion for the souls committed to their care, and a knowledge and zeal answerable to the account they are to give.

Grant that we may all preach “the truth as it is in Jesus.”

Give a blessing to our labours, that we may see the fruits of them in the repentance and conversion of ourselves and of all sinners.

Make us truly sensible, that when we labour for our flock, we labour for ourselves, and for Thy glory.

And pardon us, gracious God, whereinsoever we have been wanting in any part of our duty.

Awaken, and touch all our hearts most powerfully from above, that we may not forget our ordination vows.

And for Jesus Christ’s sake, grant that I may not be answerable for the sins, and the

dreadful mischiefs that may follow, if not hindered by Thy grace. Amen.

The conversion of souls is Thine, O Lord, and not ours; prosper Thou Thine own work. It is not in us to save souls.

Let us not sacrifice to our own net, but use the means, and ascribe all the glory to God; we of ourselves have nothing whereof to glory.

“And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called unto Him His disciples: and of them He chose twelve, whom He also named Apostles;” (Luke vi. 12, 13.) viz. That their very title might put them in mind of their mission.

O blessed Lord and Master, let Thy tender regard for Thy church make me ever solicitous at the throne of grace, in behalf of those I send into Thy vineyard; and grant that no unworthiness in me may hinder Thy gifts and graces from descending upon those whom I shall ordain to Thy service.

For the sake of this church, which Thou

hast purchased with Thy most precious blood, enable them for the work unto which they are called, that they may teach well, and that they may live well, and be examples of all the holy graces and virtues which they shall recommend to others.

Sanctify their persons and their labours, that they may be respected by their people : and, for Thy authority in them, be heard and obeyed, that they may be able to give a comfortable account at the great day. Amen.

“ Jesus said unto Peter, Lovest thou Me ? Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He said unto him, Feed My sheep.” — John xxi. 15.

O Sovereign Pastor, Who lovest and gavest Thy life for us, make our love for Thee, and our care of Thy sheep, so great and sincere, that we may feed them constantly, and diligently watch over them, that not one of them may be lost through my neglect, or the fault of those whom I send into Thy service.

Make us every day mindful of our charge ; and every day more able to perform it, remembering the account we must give. Grant

this for the glory of Thy grace, and the good of Thy church, which Thou hast purchased with Thy most precious blood.

“Jesus said unto him the third time, Lovest thou Me?”—John xxi. 7.

Though Jesus Christ knew Peter's heart, yet he asked him three times *whether he loved Him*? To teach those to whom the power of ordaining belongs, to be very solicitous and careful, and not content themselves with a slight inquiry into the dispositions and qualifications of those who are to have the care of souls committed to them.

It being entirely at the bishop's discretion whether he will admit any one to the order of priest or deacon, and being not obliged to give any reason for his refusal;g he will be more accountable to God, both for ordaining unfit persons, and for any prejudice against such as are worthy.

As we consult God, as Jesus Christ Himself did, when we ordain men to His service, so should we consult Jesus Christ, when we

assign them a place in His family. Would Jesus Christ have given this man the charge of the souls of this parish?

That we may have the comfort of knowing that we enter into the ministry by a choice which proceeded from God, we must have some assurance from our own hearts, that the glory of God, the good of souls, was in our intention, and that we were called regularly, and according to the intention of the church.

EMBER WEEK.

All persons being concerned in the choice of pastors, every body ought to pray for good pastors.

“ Paul called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother.”—1 Cor. i. 1. Not through his own will—not through motives of worldly lucre, &c.

DEACONS.

“ Let these first be proved ; then let them

use the office of a deacon, being found blameless."—1 Timothy iii. 10.

It is not sufficient to secure the dignity of the ministry even in its lower ministries, that men have taken up virtuous resolutions, unless they be also proved to see whether those resolutions will continue, &c.

N. B. To give every person I ordain some short hints, in writing, of the nature, dignity, several branches, hazard of not discharging them faithfully, &c. of the ministry.

"Lo! I am with you."—Matt. xxviii. 20.

The chief care of a minister of Christ should be, not to render himself unworthy to have Christ present with him in the exercise of his ministry.

"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."—John xvii. 16.

The repetition of this truth ought to make us sensible how different our life ought to be from that of worldly people.

THE TRUE PASTOR.

“ The elders I exhort : Feed the flock of God, which is among you, taking the oversight thereof not by constraint, but willingly ; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind ; neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. —1 Peter v. 1, 2, 3, 4.

N. B. We must feed the flock, not live in idleness ;—not with imperiousness as over subjects, but with love as over brethren ; not with an eye to self-interest, but with regard to an heavenly reward.

APOSTLES, (ENVOYS.)

So Jesus Christ called the twelve ; that the world might know from whom they had their mission, and that such as are not sent by Him, and by those that have their powers from Him, are not His Apostles.

"And Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor."—Luke vi. 16.

A man may have a lawful call to the priesthood, to dignities and benefices ; and yet, for want of answering the ends of his calling, may be a traitor to the church, to Christ, and to his own soul. The good Lord grant that I may often think of this with great seriousness !

"Can the blind lead the blind?"—Luke vi. 39.

It belongs to Thee, O Holy Spirit of Grace, to send such guides into Thy church, as may lead Thy people in the right way, and to be the guide of those guides. O do so, for Thy mercies' sake, to this church and people.

Ignorance in pastors, forasmuch as it is likely to destroy the foundation, is sometimes worse than vice itself, being the occasion of superstition, disorders, and infinite evil consequences, taking error for truth, and truth for error.

N. B. Remembering, that a minister of Christ can save himself but only by labouring to save others.

The business of the ministry is to preach, to make men love, and to confirm them in the truths of the Gospel.

Happy that pastor, whose life and zeal and labours do all testify that he loves his flock, and that he loves them for Christ's sake.

Nothing can supply the want of such a pastor's presence.

They whom God, by a terrible judgment, leaves to enter into the ministry solely of themselves, are generally puffed up with a carnal notion of its dignity; while they that through His mercy are called to it, at the same time that they know its dignity, are humbled under a sense of its weight, and the account they must one day give.

Such as the heart of the pastor is, such is his behaviour.

He who suffers the priesthood to become vile in his own person, does not remember that he is an ambassador of Christ. The dignity is great, and so ought the sanctity to be, of one who is in Christ's stead.^h

“ Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed.”—2 Corinthians vi. 3.

A pastor's life must not contradict his doctrine. He must preach by his actions.

“ In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings ; by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, [preaching it sincerely,] by the power of God, [depending entirely upon His assistance,] by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, [defending us both in prosperity and adversity,] by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report ; as deceivers, and yet true ; as unknown, but yet well known ; as dying, and behold we live ; as chastened, and not killed ; [believing that God chastens His servants not to destroy them ;] as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing ; [rejoicing in afflictions ;] as poor, yet making many rich ; [with true, not perishing riches ;]

as having nothing, and yet possessing all things;" [possessing all things in depending upon God.]—2 Corinthians vi. 4, 5, &c.

"Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partakers of other men's sins: keep thyself pure."—1 Timothy v. 22.

A bishop engages to answer before God for such persons as he by advice, ordination, &c. causes to enter into a state of life so very hazardous, and which requires so great a stock of virtues.

It is happy for a minister of God, that the life he is to lead, and the very outward acts he has vowed to perform, will help to change his heart, and create in him those dispositions which will make him like his Great Master.

For instance; he has solemnly promised to read the Holy Scriptures daily; he will therefore have daily before his eyes the precepts, the instructions, the example of Christ; the rewards and punishments of the life to come.

He is obliged to catechize; and the more careful he is to instruct others, the more

effectually he will learn himself how far we are fallen from God, and what pains we must take to be restored to the image and favour of God.

He has promised to lead an holy and exemplary life. If he does not do this sincerely, he will be the scorn of men now, and of devils hereafter.

It will be impossible to converse with poor and needy people, and to seek out for help for them, without partaking of the spirit and compassion of the blessed Jesus, who laid down His life for them.

If he is careful to read Divine service distinctly, with deliberation and gravity, it will beget devotion in himself, as well as in those that hear him.

If his sermons be plain and practical, they will affect his own heart, as well as the hearts of those he preaches to.

Every child he baptizes puts him in mind of the vows that are upon himself.

And he cannot administer the other sacrament as he ought to do, but it must needs

fill his soul with a thousand holy ideas and devout thoughts;—with an holy fear lest he should offer the prayers of the faithful with polluted lips, or distribute the bread of life with unclean hands;—with an ardent love for Jesus Christ, whose love and death he commemorates;—with a perfect charity for all the world for whom He died. And the oftener he administers this sacrament, the more he will find his graces increased.

In visiting sick and dying persons, he will be put in mind of his own mortality; and in fitting them as he ought to do for the account they are going to give, he will be put in mind of the much greater he is himself to give.

When he exhorts, reproves, admonishes others, it will bring to his mind the words of the Apostle, “Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?”

When he calls to mind, that he has promised all faithful diligence, &c. he will give himself wholly to these things, and will be ashamed to be found wholly taken up with business which no way relates to the salvation of souls.

If he is diligent in prayer, which he promised to be, God will certainly enlighten his mind with saving truth and grace.

In short, if he has an ardent desire to save souls, and really strives to do it as effectually as he can, he will be beloved of God, assisted by His Spirit; he will see the fruit of his labours; he will secure his own peace and hope, and will give an account with joy when his Lord calls for him.

One of the most certain marks of a Divine call is, when it is the full purpose of a man's heart to live for Jesus Christ and His Church.

“They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”—John xvii. 16.

O Lord, make us truly sensible how very different our lives ought to be from the lives of worldly people, that we may avoid their maxims, all that is curious, useless, light, and vain, and live up to our character.

Mercy and tenderness for sinners, and faithfulness to the justice of God, are characters inseparable in a true pastor.

“The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep.”—John x. 11.

He gives his life by giving his labour, in taking all occasions of instructing them; in employing his thoughts for their good; in praying for them continually, and rendering God propitious to them; in sacrificing his ease and peace for them, by delivering truths which the world will not receive without unkind returns; he gives up the dearest friendships, when they stand in competition with truth and righteousness; he gives up all worldly satisfactions, when he does not look upon what is lawful, but what is expedient; he sacrifices his inclinations, though never so innocent, rather than offend any; he submits to the humility and poverty of the Gospel, that he may give no example of pride and luxury to his flock; he dares not be even a witness of disorders, lest he should encourage them by his presence. It is thus he must be the light of the world, and without this he cannot satisfy the duties of his charge; and it is thus he is to give his life for his sheep.

“Take nothing for their journey save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse.”—Mark vi. 8.

The ecclesiastical ministry requires a great disengagement from the world, to take away all suspicion, that the clergy act only out of self-interest. Whoever is not ready to part with all, rather than be wanting to his duty, is not worthy to be a successor to the Apostles.

We shall never be able to establish the kingdom of God in the hearts of men, so long as we do not appear fully persuaded of those truths which we preach.

FEES.

Can. 135. No fee or money shall be received, either by the archbishop or any bishop, either directly or indirectly, for admitting of any into sacred orders, nor any to his servants or officers above ten shillings for parchment, wax, &c.

For letters testimonial of ordination are

no part of the ordination, but only taken afterwards for the security of the person ordained, which if he neglect to take, it is at his own peril.ⁱ

ORDINATION.

The example of Jesus Christ, before he ordained the Apostles, shews us, that in this choice we ought to depend upon God, and pray for His direction and blessing.

CATECHIZING.

Can. 59. Ministers shall, every Sunday evening and holy-day, for half an hour at least, examine and instruct in the Church Catechism; and he that neglects to do so, after reproof, to be first suspended, afterwards excommunicated.

The neglect of this duty makes the discourses of the pulpit of very little use. People do not understand the very words made use of in the Gospel.

ⁱ Codex Can. Eccl. Ang. p. 177.

INSTITUTION.

Persons to be instituted shall exhibit orders and testimonials, and be examined.^j

REASONS FOR REFUSING INSTITUTIONS.

Lack of learning ; of which the bishop is the sole judge, and not accountable to any temporal court, but only to a superior Spiritual Judge. And a person's being ordained, licensed, and approved by another bishop, does not take away the right which every bishop has to examine and judge.^k

Lack of Language ; which renders a person incapable of the cure. Nor does it avail, that the language may be learnt, or that the duty might be discharged by a curate. And the Canon Law requires, that where there is a mixture of languages, the priest shall understand both.^l

j Can. 39

k Codex p. 850.

l Codex p. 851.

OTHER CAUSES.

Whatever is sufficient to deprive, is sufficient cause to refuse institution.

Mala in se :—Incontinence, drunkenness, murder, manslaughter, heresy, schism, simony, perjury.

The bishop must signify the cause of his refusal specially, that the proper court, if application be made elsewhere, may be able to judge whether the refusal be just, 'except in the case of insufficiency; for it has been judged in parliament, that it is sufficient to set forth—*Quod persona in literaturâ minus sufficiens seu capax ad habendam dictam ecclesiam.*

The bishop, having the care of all the souls in his diocese, is bound in conscience to see them well taken care of, by committing them to fit persons.

“ And they prayed and said, Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two Thou hast chosen.”—
Acts i. 24.

Should not this make patrons and bishops to tremble, to see with what caution, devotion, &c. even the Apostles themselves proceeded in the choice of fit persons to serve in the sacred ministry of the church !

A CHRISTIAN PRIEST.

Let him remember, that he himself is a man and a sinner ; that he is ordained for men only in things pertaining to God ; that he is not to live an idle life, but to offer, &c. that is, to perform the duties of his calling ; to appease the justice of God, by offering the prayers, the oblations, &c. of the people ; to have bowels of compassion towards sinners : to instruct the ignorant, and them that are out of the way ; never to forget his own infirmities, that he may treat sinners with compassion ; to pray much for himself and for his people ; to stay till he is called into the ministry : it is an honour, and to be conferred as it was on Aaron ; to keep his flock, by his vigilance, from falling into ignorance in relation to the truths of Christianity ; to suit his instructions

to the capacities of his hearers, and to their peculiar wants; and not to fill their heads with vain amusements, which signify little to their salvation.^m

O Lord, abandon not Thy flock to wolves, but send them pastors after Thine own heart.

“The Lord said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary.”—Numbers xviii. 1. That is, they shall carry them away by the sacrifices which they shall offer for them, especially on the day of expiation.

“Fear the Lord with all thy soul, and reverence his priests.—Love Him that made thee, with all thy strength, and forsake not His ministers; but give the priest his portion as it is commanded.”—Ecclus. vii. 29.

A lawful call affords us a good ground to hope for all necessary assistance, and grace to do our duty, and for mercy for all our involuntary defects.

^m Hebrews v.

CLERGY.

I beseech Thee, O God, for them, and for myself; that, in the exercise of our ministry, we may depend much upon Thee; that we may learn from Thee what we ought to speak concerning Thee; that we may constantly speak the truth, boldly rebuke vice, and patiently suffer for righteousness sake; that we may live and act as in the place of Christ, doing nothing unbecoming that character; and that we may preserve an apostolical firmness of mind under the vexations and persecutions of this world. Amen.

FAULTS OF THE CLERGY.

Let it be considered what is the great design of the generality of the clergy of these days:—To appear learned rather than pious; to get preferment, riches, and to live at ease. This makes them satisfied with a mere speculative knowledge in divinity.

“We have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing.”—Luke v. 5.

And it is much to be feared that the little good we see done by our sermons is owing to the neglect of praying for God's blessing upon our labours.

Sermons should be plain, practical, and tending to the salvation of those that hear them.

Remember, that all useful truths must come from the Spirit of truth, and therefore are to be prayed for.

Do holy things after an holy manner. He that reads the service negligently, betrays a great want of piety in himself, and begets contempt and indevotion in others.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Christians are too often admitted without knowing the meaning of this holy institution. The consequence is, they fancy they are good Christians, and are in danger of perishing without knowing it.

LIVES OF THE CLERGY.

They should consider, that they are taken

from amongst men, to minister in things pertaining to God, and therefore are not to live like those from whom they are taken. They are restrained from many things which others practise without reproach or scruple.

The maxims of the world are not to be our rule.

To desire to be esteemed, to get as much of this world as we well can; to stick at nothing to gain an end, to despise those below us; to live without taking the cross, without self-denial, &c.; to admire what the world admires. By these things the ministry is blamed and brought into contempt.

Look at home! a sad reproach where occasion is given.

Remember that a contempt of the Clergy will be attended with a contempt of the Gospel, and of God Himself at last. More sinners have been converted by holy than by learned men. It is the greatest presumption to pretend to heal others of a distemper I labour under myself.

“Which of you convinceth me of sin?”—
John viii. 46.

Here is a pattern of a pastor.

He who would edify by his sermons, must be that same virtuous, sober, serious, pious man in his life and conversation ; he will then be heard with respect and reverence.

If a Clergyman is eager after pleasures, the world and its idols, trifling and vain in life, all he says from the pulpit will signify nothing.

He that religiously practises himself what he teaches others, preaches effectually.

No man can teach well, who does not live well.

It is true, the faith is not built upon the lives of those that preach it, but upon the word of God. A bad life exposes Christians to great temptations, &c.

“ Simon, lovest thou Me ? &c.”—John xxi. 16.

This should teach us, that nothing but a sincere love for God, and for the souls of men, which He loved so well as to redeem them by His own Son, can carry us through the work of the ministry.

How shall we attain to such a love ? By prayer ; by reading the scriptures ; by instructing the poor, the young, after such a manner as to affect our own hearts ; by visiting, relieving, comforting sick and needy people, &c. These will pray for you, and God will hear their prayers, and increase His love, &c.

DIFFICULTIES.

If the motives which determined you to take holy orders were the glory of God, and the good of souls, He will enable you to bear and get the better of all difficulties.

PREACHER.

SERMONS:

The design of religion being to lead men to the knowledge of God, how He is to be worshipped, appeased, honoured ; and to make men holy, that they may be happy when they die ; the great business of a preacher should be, to shew how the Christian religion and all its parts contribute this end.

They that recommended eternal possession to others, ought to shew by their lives that they

are themselves verily persuaded of the vanity of all earthly pleasures, avoiding superfluities, &c. Jesus Christ preached up the contempt of the world, by contemning it Himself.

A pastor's knowledge need not extend so far as is imagined. If he knows the Scriptures, and what concerns the kingdom of God, and the way of leading souls thither, he knows sufficient.

We must speak to the heart as well as to the understanding. While we attack men's reason only, they will hear with patience; but when we attack the heart and its corruption, then they are uneasy.

I would rather send away a hearer smiting his breast, than please the most learned audience with a fine sermon against any vice.

Let people feel that you are in earnest, that you believe and are deeply affected with the great truths you would recommend.

Avoid such discourses and subjects as would divert the mind without instructing it.

Never consult your own fancy in the choice of subjects, but the necessities of your flock.

NECESSARY SUBJECTS.

A concern for what may come hereafter ; a firm hope of immortality ; a fear of a judgment to come, and of hell torments.

Remember, that your own salvation depends very much upon the salvation of your flock.

A man may flatter himself with keeping fair with the world, by not telling them the danger they are in. This was not the way of Jesus Christ. "

A preacher ought to advance nothing but what he has received from Jesus Christ. " My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me. " "

With what truth can it be said, that your sheep hear your voice, when you speak of matters above their capacity, or in a language or terms which they do not understand ?

Can any man imitate a greater master of eloquence than Jesus Christ was, whose great excellence appears in making great truths understood by the meanest capacity ?

The great end of our ministry, and our great delight, should be to destroy the kingdom of Satan.

To have an eye to the learned part of our audience, who will not very likely profit by you, rather than to the poor in spirit, whom God designs to save, is very wrong.

He that considers that he is God's ambassador to His people; that he speaks from God to them; that Jesus Christ speaks by him; will labour with sincerity and devotion for the salvation of souls. P

God would have all men see that the success of the Gospel depends upon His grace, and therefore preachers should be humble, meek, charitable, &c.

It is too often that preachers perplex those whom they should instruct, either by proving things which want no proof—the being of a God, &c. or by proposing useless questions and doubts; or speaking of things above the capacities of the common people.

There is a great deal of difference betwixt

people admiring a preacher, and being edified by his sermons.

TEST OF A GOOD PREACHER.

We count him a good physician whose patients we see cured. If the people are cured of their intemperance, lying, &c. his works will speak for him.

“Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.”—1 Cor. iii. 7.

We must depend on God for success, not take that to ourselves which belongs to God alone.

It is God who gives His ministers, such as are humble, power over the hearts and souls of men; when distrusting themselves, they ascribe all the glory to God.

We take the work out of the hands of God, when we are pleased with what we have done, and rob Him of the honour due to Him alone.

There have been many, who, without any great learning or eloquence, yet by their

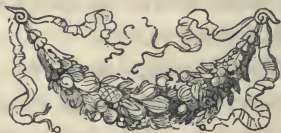
communication in a humble and low way, have instructed and converted more than famous preachers; for that they preached not themselves, but Christ Jesus, placing all their confidence in God.

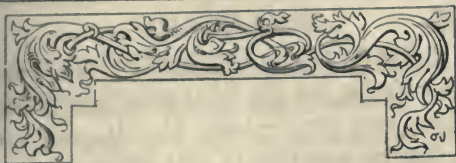
THE BLESSING OF LEVI.

“ Bless, Lord, his substance, and accept the work of his hands. Smite through the loins of them that rise up against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again.”

—Deut. xxxiii. 11.

This is a prophetic declaration of the dreadful punishment of such as shall oppose the priesthood.





SATURDAY MEDITATIONS.

ALMS.

Question from the Office of Ordination.—Will you shew yourself gentle, and be merciful for Christ's sake to poor and needy people, and to all strangers destitute of help ?

Answer.—I will so shew myself, by God's help.

UPON one of the days of the week, (*κατὰ μίαν Σαββάτων*,) let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him. ^q

“ Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, then shall the Lord be my God ; and of all that Thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto Thee.”—Genesis xxviii. 20.

“ But rather give alms of such things as you have, (or as you are able,) and all things are clean unto you.”—Luke xi. 41. That is, proportion your alms to your estate, lest God proportion your estate to your alms.^r

“ Sell that ye have, and give alms : provide yourselves bags which wax not old ; a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”—Luke xii. 33.

This is still a necessary Christian duty, whatever men think of it ; to part with our worldly enjoyments for the sake of Christ.

To sell all ; that is, to renounce all the pleasures, and pomp, and enjoyment, which wealth affords, as if we had actually parted with it ; to take to a man's self no more of his estate than necessity requires ; and to make the remainder the support of the poor and distressed :—It being utterly impossible to take delight in the enjoyments of riches, and to love God with all the soul.

If God is our only happiness, we shall of course be dead, crucified, to the world.

Give to the poor, said our Lord to the rich young man whom He loved. Had there been a better way of disposing of his estate, He would certainly have told him.

“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them. Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth. Thy Father, which seeth in secret, Himself shall reward thee openly.”—Matthew vi. 1, 2.

By vanity we lose both our riches and our reward. It is vanity to boast of our alms, and it is vanity to take pleasure in reflecting upon them. It is sufficient that God will remember them.

“It is better to give alms than to lay up gold.”—Tobit xii. 8.

“If there shall be a poor man within any of thy gates, thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother; but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt freely lend him sufficient for his need. Thine heart shall not be grieved when thou

givest unto him, because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works.”—Deuteronomy xv. 7.

“Blessed be the man that provideth for the sick and needy : the Lord shall deliver him in the time of trouble.”—Psalm xli. 1.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”—Matthew v. 7.

“Bow down thine ear to the poor, and give him a friendly answer with meekness ; be as a father unto the fatherless, and as a husband to the widow ; so shalt thou be as the Son of the Most High, and he shall love thee more than thy mother doth.”—Ecclesiasticus iv. 8.

“Lay up thy treasure according to the commandment. It shall bring thee more profit than gold, it shall deliver thee from all afflictions, it shall fight for thee against thine enemies.” &c.—Ecclesiasticus xxix. 11.

“If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day. And the Lord shall guide thee

continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."—Isaiah lviii. 10, 11.

Do not imagine that all that belongs to your church belongs to you. You have indeed a right to live by the altar, but not in luxury.^s

The church has not had worse enemies, than such as have been raised to estates out of her patrimony. This should open the eyes of those who make no other use of church livings than to provide portions, raise estates and families, enrich relations, &c. from which practices the good Lord keep me.

The goods of this world, much more the goods of the church, are mere depositums, put into the hands of men for the common good—of the church and of mankind.^t

"Set your affections on things above."—Colossians iii. 2.

It is more to our advantage to have the prayers of a poor, good man, than the smiles of the greatest man on earth.

^s St. Bernard, Ep. 2.

^t Dr. More's Divine Dialogues.

“The Lord loveth the stranger; love ye therefore the stranger; give Him food and raiment,” &c.—Deuteronomy x. 18, 19.

“Sell what thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.”—Mark x. 21.

My God! we think we love Thee above all things, when, without being sensible of it, we love a thousand things better; but as we hope for heaven, we must sacrifice even what we love most. This is a necessary duty now; and though it be a very, very difficult one, yet to Thee all things are possible.

To sell is only an expression for a disregard for riches; such as are, being dead to the world, crucified, born again, overcome the world; all which denote that temper which Christianity requires.

“Inasmuch (for as often) as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me.”—Matthew xxv. 40.
As often!—Who then would miss any occasion? The least:—Who then would

despise any object? To me:—So that in serving the poor, we serve Jesus Christ. O comfortable declaration!

It is not out of cruelty or indigence, that Christ suffers any of His members to want or be in misery, but to give others an opportunity of exercising their faith and their love, and of making some amends for their mis-expenses by their alms.

“Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My name, because ye belong to Christ; verily (with an oath he assures us) he shall not lose his reward.”—Mark ix. 41.

This should always, if possible, be our intention:—This poor, oppressed, this miserable man, belongs to Christ. This would wonderfully enhance the value of our good deeds before God.

Mercy is a natural debt, not left to our discretion. He that stands in need of our help is to have it. Inclination, friendship, vain generosity, are selfish motives.

The last refuge of a sinner is Alms: it is an art of turning our master's goods inno-

cently to our own advantage, and “making to ourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness;” heaven being the patrimony and inheritance of the poor, by our alms we engage them to solicit the mercy of God for us. This is the only way to sanctify riches which are almost always either the fruit, or the seed of unrighteousness and injustice. And indeed we are more obliged to the poor than they to us.

Earthly riches are almost always abused without an extraordinary grace.

“I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess.”—Luke xviii. 12.

Be very careful not to be puffed up with the thoughts of your alms. “I give tithes of all that I possess,” was the effect of a pride more prejudicial than the sins of a publican. It is a stratagem of the devil to set before us a sight of our own good works, and to deprive us of that humility which alone can render us acceptable to God.

“And Jesus said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more

than they all : for all these of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God ; but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had."—Luke xxi. 3.

God judges not by the greatness of the gift, but by the heart that offers it.

The applause which the great gifts of the rich receive, the complacency they take in them, and the little religion wherewith they are too often companied, lessen them in the sight of God.

The rich indeed may give much, and reserve much for themselves. The poor, who gives all, reserves nothing to himself, but faith in God's providence.

God magnifies the power of His grace in disengaging a soul from the love of riches : O my God ! manifest this power upon me : raise my soul above the fears of poverty, and let me have the greatest part of my treasure in heaven.

Shut my heart, O Jesus, against the love of worldly riches.

" But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister

(that is, to carry alms) unto the saints."—
Romans xv. 25.

So great an Apostle is not at all afraid that he should debase his character in carrying of alms.

A Christian, who considers all other Christians as one body in Jesus Christ, will cheerfully contribute even to the necessities of the greatest, remotest strangers.

God often spares the rich for the sake of the poor. To the poor, therefore, the rich stand indebted.

A rich man, if a good man, is more afraid of not finding fit persons to receive his alms, than a poor man is of not finding persons to bestow alms upon him.

We honour Jesus Christ in His poor, when we treat them kindly and help them.

The very best of men are only instruments in God's hands, to receive and to give what God bestows upon them. And this they should do without any desire of glory or self-interest.

Let us make light of money and riches,

and send before us into the heavenly treasures, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt; where neither tyrants nor thieves can take it from us; but where it will be kept to our eternal advantage, under the custody of God himself.^u

Thou, O Lord, hast been all mercy to me; grant that I may be all mercy to others for Thy sake.

UPON GIVING OF ALMS.

Not unto me, but unto Thee, O God, be the thanks and praise and glory.

TITHES.

“So hath the Lord (viz. Jesus Christ^v) ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.”—1 Cor. ix. 14.

That is, out of the labours and revenues of those to whom they preach the Gospel. And this (upon principles of justice as well as of religion: if thou hast much, give plentifully) as God has prospered you, that is,

^u Lactantius.^v Matthew x. 10.

proportionably to your incomes). This no human law can set aside.

There is a great deal of difference betwixt being exempt by law and exempt in conscience.

O Lord, who hast graciously allowed us a recompense for our labours, make me a faithful steward of that part of Thy revenues committed to my charge, that I may give Thy servants their portion of meat in due season ; and that I may not feed myself or family with that which belongs to Thy poor.

But, above all, I pray God give me grace to preach the Gospel as well as live of it ; and that when my Lord cometh, He may find me so doing. Amen.

By what right can those who do nothing at all claim a share of those tithes which are by Jesus Christ appointed for the propagation of the Gospel ? —To satisfy avarice, ambition, luxury, or pleasures, with these, is no better than sacrilege.^w

^w Can. Apost. "Omnium negotiorum ecclesiasticorum episcopus habeat, et ea, velut Deo contemplante, dispenset."

“When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave-offering of it for the Lord, even a tenth part of the tithe.”—Numb. xviii. 26.

“The Lord (that is, that which God hath reserved unto Himself) is their inheritance.”—Deut. xviii. 2.

This is said to shew, that the priests had as good a right to the tithes and offerings as any of the other tribes had to their land, they being both the gift of God.

“When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled; “then thou shalt say before the Lord thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all Thy commandments.” Deut. xxvi. 12, 13.

“ Look down from Thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Thy people Israel.”—Deut. xxvi. 15.

What care is here taken, that men shall not confound the things that belong to God with those that they may lawfully convert to their own use; and indeed a great deal more depends on this than men are aware of, or are willing to believe.

“ The workman is worthy of his meat.”—Matthew x. 10.

This is a matter of justice as well as of Divine right; but then observe, it is only he that labours, not he that is idle, who has a right to the revenues of the church.

Men that are liberal, even to profuseness, to the ministers of their pleasures, that think nothing too much which is laid out upon the body, upon trifles and vanity, will yet grudge him that has the care of their souls, and who stands accountable for them, a very small part of their incomes. After all, it is God who maintains His own ministers, and not the people; He who gives all, having reserved to

His own disposal a part of every man's estate, labour, &c.

“Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits (the best) of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty.”—Prov. iii. 9, 10.

“And the first of all the firstfruits of all things, &c. ye shall give unto the priest, that he may cause the blessing to rest in thine house.”—Ezek. xlv. 30.

“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”—Mal. iii. 10.

“Let him (that is, he is bound by his Christianity) that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things.”—Gal. vi. 6.

May my gracious God who has blessed me with wealth, may He bless me with humility

and gratitude, and with a perseverance in the most lovely grace of charity.

When God left out the tribe of Levi in the division of the land, He did it for his advantage: for He gave him a tenth instead of a twelfth part; and even this under such conditions as freed him from bodily labour.

Every one is bound to help the poor, not just as he is assessed by human laws, but according to his ability, as God has prospered him; and if he will do no more than he can be compelled by law, he will have but a bad account to make.

Prescriptions are therefore unlawful.

ALMS.

“Say not, God will look upon the multitude of my oblations, (that is, if we wilfully break his laws,) and when I offer to the Most High God, he will accept it.”—Ecclus. vii. 9.

God has no need of our help to relieve the poor. He commands us, for our own profit, to help one another; that we help the poor

with our riches, they us with their prayers. We give nothing to the poor but what we have received from God. How well is a man paid for his alms, when they obtain for him the grace of God, not to mention a reward in temporal blessings.

The administering of charity not only supplieth the wants of the poor, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God, and by their prayers for you. ^x

“But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house (kindred), he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”—1 Tim. v. 8.

A very terrible sentence! And will not this awaken pastors, masters, parents, now fast asleep in a deplorable neglect of those who stand related to them, both as to temporals and spirituals?

We rob the poor, when we leave to others the care of maintaining our poor relations, when we ourselves are able to do it; and

thereby deprive those charitable persons of the means of supporting other poor persons.

Remember to give to those that are ashamed to ask ; and do not forget your poor relations, lest you be worse than an infidel.

“This Judas said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare (the money) which was put therein.”—John xii. 6.

Our Lord trusts a thief with the little money that he had for his own, or his disciples' necessities, and for the poor, because he values it not much. My Saviour, Thou who hast entrusted me with the revenues of Thy poor, make me a faithful steward ; let me not be proud of the trust, since Judas himself had once the same office ; but let me dread being unfaithful, lest I draw upon me his cursed fate and end !

They who are united in an expectation of an eternal reward, ought to have very little regard to those external advantages which distinguish men.

We ought to look upon it as a certain

truth, that it is God who sends to us His friends in the persons of the poor and strangers.

“In all thy gifts shew a cheerful countenance, and dedicate thy tithes with gladness.”

—Ecclus. xxxv. 9.

Give unto the Most High according as He hath enriched thee. For the Lord thy God recompenseth, and will give thee seven times as much. But do not think to corrupt (viz. God) with gifts, nor trust to unrighteous sacrifices, for the Lord is judge.

“He that sheweth mercy, let him do it with cheerfulness.”—Rom. xii. 18.

The good Lord preserve me from vanity, and from seeking applause for my charity.

N.B.—To lend is sometimes better than to give, because it flatters not our vanity; it puts not the receiver to the blush, and gives not encouragement to idleness and sloth.

Jesus Christ has left the poor in His place, and has in them continual wants and necessities to be supplied.

There is danger in letting our thoughts

run too much upon the good we do, lest we should at last come to fancy that God is in our debt ; and that He should reward us in this life.

The merits of the poor are not to be the rule of our charity. " If thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink." " I was a stranger, and ye took me not in."

God Himself maketh His sun to shine upon the evil and upon the good.

We should always have enough for the poor, if we would but moderate our vanity, and live according to the spirit of the Gospel.

It will one day be found true, that the measure of the riches which any man possessed should have been the measure of his charity.

" Brethren and help are against the time of trouble ; but alms delivereth more than them both."—Ecclus. xl. 24.

" Manasses gave alms, and escaped the snares of death which they had set for him."
—Tobit xiv. 10.

He who gives to receive glory of men, is as great, but worse beggar than any he gives to.

Send Thy blessing upon my labours and my substance, and continue to me a willing mind to help such as have need according to my ability.

“ My son, blemish not thy good deeds, neither use uncomfortable words when thou givest any thing. Shall not the dew assuage the heat ? so is a word better than a gift. A word is better than a gift ; but both are with a gracious man.”—Ecclus. xviii. 15, 16, 17.

“ There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth ; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.”—Prov. xi. 24.

Whenever we relieve the wants of the body, we ought not to forget the necessities of the soul : good advice, and devout petitions for their eternal welfare, will then be most proper and acceptable to God.

O God, who knowest the necessities of all Thy creatures, give Thy poor the spiritual graces they stand in need of.

Lord Jesus, conduct this poor blind person in the way of light and peace everlasting.

Support Thy poor members, O Jesu, under all their difficulties, and sanctify their bodily wants to the salvation of their souls.

May Thy poor, O Lord, engage Thee, by a life of resignation and piety, to make them amends in the next world for what they want in this.

Let Thy poor have a particular share of Thy grace and mercy, that they may appear for me at the day of judgment.

Let these poor people have Thy grace, whatever else Thou deniest them.

May the wants of Thy poor here help to increase their happiness hereafter.

Lord, grant that these may bear their poor estate with patience and resignation, and that we may one day meet in the paradise of God.

“Freely ye have received, freely give.”—
Matthew x. 8.

Give me, O my Lord and Benefactor, an abhorrence of making a trade of Thy gifts, of which I am only a dispenser.

“ He that mocketh and he that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker.”—Prov. xiv. 31. xvii. 5.

As if He did not order what is best for all His creatures.

May this Thy poor member, O Lord, make a Christian use of this condition in which Thy providence hath placed him.

Jesus Christ is continually humbled in His members; some are poor, in prison, sick, naked, hungry, &c. Let me, O Lord, see and help Thee in all these objects.

A man that has faith will be glad to discharge himself of the burden (some part at least) of temporal goods, in order to secure those that are eternal; and to be in some sense the preserver of his brethren.

Charity treats the most unknown and remote like brethren, as being children of the same heavenly Father, and members of the same body.

CONVERSATION.

“ Let your speech be alway with grace,

seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."—Col. iv. 6.

One mild, prudent, and edifying conversation has often gained more souls than many sermons.

"Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another."—1 Thess. v. 11.

These are two express duties of Christian conversation.

May that good Spirit, which appeared in the likeness of tongues of fire, warm my heart, direct my thoughts, and guide my tongue, and give a power to persuade; that by my conversation and example, as well as by my sermons and writings, I may promote the kingdom and interests of my great Master. Amen.

"I will speak of Thy testimonies even before kings, and will not be ashamed."—Psalm cxix.

We, of all men, should desire to talk, and to be talked to, in our own way, and of things relating to our own profession; and so we should if our profession were most at our heart.

“ Behold, I send you forth as sheep among wolves.”—Matthew x. 16.

My Saviour, give me grace to oppose nothing to the violence of men, but the meekness and simplicity of that creature.

“ It is not ye that speak, but the Holy Spirit speaketh in you.”—Matthew x. 20.

O Holy Spirit, speak in me on all occasions, that I may always speak as a Christian.

“ It shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.”—Matthew x. 19.

Let no incredulity, O Jesus, hinder the effects of so positive a promise, that neither want of talents, nor any other defect or surprise, may hurt Thy cause.

“ Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you ; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also.”—John xv. 20.

O Thou great Master of humility and of suffering, how unwilling are we to follow this maxim, and imitate Thy conduct ! O let me learn from Thee never to murmur, never to

complain. I can never suffer any thing but what Thou hast suffered.

“ Carest Thou not that we perish ? ” —
Mark iv. 38.

Lord, give me always a great concern for the Church, a true compassion for its evils, and a sure confidence in Thee. O Lord Jesus, Thou seest our afflictions, our troubles, and our wants. Haste Thee to help us, O Lord God of our salvation.

PRAYER BEFORE STUDY.

O God, the fountain of all wisdom, in a deep sense of my own ignorance, and of that great charge which lies upon me, I am constrained to come often before Thee, from Whom I have learned whatever I know, to ask that help without which I shall disquiet myself in vain ; most humbly beseeching Thee to guide me with Thine eye ; to enlighten my mind, that I may see myself, and teach others the wonders of Thy law ; that I may learn from Thee what I ought to think and speak

concerning Thee. Direct and bless all the labours of my mind, give me a discerning spirit, a sound judgment, and an honest and religious heart. And grant that, in all my studies, my first aim may be to set forth Thy glory, and to set forward the salvation of mankind ; that I may give a comfortable account of my time at the great day, when all our labours shall be tried.

And if Thou art pleased that by my ministry sinners shall be converted, and Thy kingdom enlarged, give me the grace of humility, that I may never ascribe the success to myself, but to Thy Holy Spirit, which enables me to will and to do according to Thy good pleasure. Grant this, O Father of all light and truth, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

SUFFERINGS.

“ Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also.”—Luke ii. 35.

Thus God treated Mary, and thus He treats

those whom He loves ; He mingles bitters with their sweets.

He who is called to the ministry of the word, is called to suffer the contradiction of the world, and, if occasion be, to seal the truth with his blood.

This should always be our support and comfort, that the tongues, the ill-will, the evil designs of men, are always subject to the power of God ; let us therefore be intent upon our duty, and leave the rest to God, who continually watches over His faithful servants. “ Even the hairs of your head are all numbered.”

My God ! settle in my heart a firm belief in Thy providence, and dependence upon Thy will and designs, that I may consider nothing but my duty, and fear no evil ; but only lest I should not faithfully discharge my duty in all respects.

“ He preached boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus : but they went about to kill him.”—Acts ix. 29.

When a man is treated as Jesus Christ

was for preaching, it is a good sign that he preaches by His Spirit, and that this is the beginning of his reward ; and indeed opposition, and evil treatment, are less to be feared by a minister of Christ, than applause and condemnation. “ Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you.”

“ We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed ; we are perplexed, but not in despair ; persecuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed.”—2 Cor. iv. 8, 9.

Observe here an apostolical disposition in the midst of persecution :—Liberty of spirit and joy of heart ; an invincible courage ; a lively belief of the care of God ; a full trust in His assistance in the lowest abyss of trouble ; casting the eyes of faith upon the sufferings of the Lord Jesus ; counting himself happy in fulfilling them in His Mystical Body.

“ The things which happened unto me, have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel.”—Phil. i. 12.

He who loses courage under oppositions, is even yet a stranger to the ways of the

Gospel. God can and does make His greatest enemies contribute to His work and glory. Let us leave God to act, and follow His guidance.

“Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me.”—2 Tim. iv. 17.

The more a minister of Christ is forsaken by men, the more conformable he is to Christ, and the greater consolation he may expect from God.

“Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.”—Hebrews xii. 3.

If the world, which rose up against Christ, suffer us to be quiet, we should have reason to fear that we do not follow His steps, and that the world is pleased with us.

“Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.”—Hebrews xii. 6.

If nature were innocent, a Father so just and so good would not impose a condition so hard upon His children, were it not necessary

to our salvation. We are treated as bastards, if we are not chastened, but left to our own libertinism; too sure a sign of reprobation.

Grant, O Lord, that I may submit to, and even be pleased with, those temporal evils which lead to eternal happiness.

“This is thankworthy, if a man for conscience towards God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.”—1 Peter ii. 19.

He who can be content to have God for a witness of his patience and sufferings, has found the secret to make God his friend.

We complain of unjust sufferings, and they are the things which we ought most to value.

A Christian, whose whole care is to avoid sufferings, has forgot his pattern; and that we are Christians in order to be crucified with Christ.

We see in Jesus Christ innocence and holiness itself suffering; and yet we complain of hardships.

The meekness of Christ, when in the hands of His enemies, and when He had power to

have delivered Himself, is what we are always to remember.

“ If ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye ; and be not afraid of their terror.”—1 Peter iii. 14.

It is plain we do not know the happiness of suffering, when we speak of it with abhorrence, and shun it with all our might.

Nothing but Thy love, O Lord, can suppress in our hearts the fear of men.

“ If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye ; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.”—1 Pet. iv. 14.

No worldly glory equals this ; nothing causes His spirit to rest upon us more perseveringly ; God will not account of sufferings brought upon a man’s self by his own fault ; and yet Christian grace can sanctify even such crimes, when a criminal suffers in the spirit of repentance, and submission to the will of God.

To be purified by afflictions is a great mercy ; to be abandoned to prosperity till death, is an instance of God’s anger.

“Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.”—1 Peter iv. 19.

“Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.”—1 John iii. 13.

Let us rather fear that we do not belong to God, if the world spare us.

“As ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolations.”—2 Cor. i. 7.

O Lord, remove from me all inward disquiet, and grant that, with an entire submission to Thy will, I may ever preserve a peace of mind, and leave my deliverance to Thy choice.

The more the world deprives us of its protection for our adherence to God, the more He espouseth our interest, and declares on our side.

It is the part of the minister of Christ to labour without ceasing,—to suffer without resentment,—and to leave his cause in the hands of God, with full trust in Him.

A THANKSGIVING FOR ST. PETER'S DAY,

WHEN MY FATHER AND TWO OF MY BROTHERS MOST
WONDERFULLY ESCAPED BEING DROWNED.

O ETERNAL and most merciful God; Who hast made us happy in the knowledge of Thy providence, which governs and preserves all things both in heaven and earth; by whose goodness my father and two of my brothers were, as on this day, delivered from sudden and untimely deaths: accept of my hearty thanks and praise for this great mercy vouchsafed to the whole family; and grant that none of us may, while we live, forget these wonderful expressions of Thy loving-kindness *to us*, the most undeserving of all Thy people.

We had sinned many ways against Thee, O Lord, and this was a loud, a distinct, and merciful call of Thine, to every one of us, to repentance, which I most humbly beseech

Thee give us grace to hear, to remember, and obey:

The greatest happiness, O merciful Father, which I can desire, either for myself or those who were sharers in this great deliverance, is what I now humbly beg for; that we may all of us gratefully acknowledge Thy great love to us; meditate on Thy tender mercies; magnify Thy great and good providence; and by these mighty favours, be reduced to an obedience becoming our redemption.

Pass by and pardon the ingratitude we have any of us been guilty of; and give us grace to consider, that, by the merciful goodness of God, we are delivered from a world of dangers, which would otherwise overwhelm us.

And according to Thy wonted mercies, preserve us, for the time to come, to serve Thee. May the same watchful providence, which has aforetime defended us from such imminent dangers, guard us the remainder of our days, through all the changes and chances of this mortal life. This I most humbly beseech Thee to grant, for Thy own

goodness' sake, and for the merits of our Saviour Christ Jesus. Amen.

Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise His holy name.

Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits, Who saved thy life from destruction.

Lord, what is man, that Thou art mindful of him; or the sons of men, that Thou so regardest them?

But what is my father's house, that Thou shouldst have such respect to so poor, so sinful a cottage?

I am oppressed with the load of mercies which we have received from Thee.

“As every man has received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as stewards of the manifold grace of God.”
1 Peter iv. 10.

We have received them freely, not for ourselves, but for others; no man is excused; as stewards we are accountable. Every man should be content with his own talents.



SUNDAY MEDITATIONS.*

PRAYERS, THANKSGIVINGS, ETC.

A DAILY FORM OF THANKSGIVING.

O ALMIGHTY God and most merciful Father, Who, day after day, dost minister to sinful man infinite occasions of praising Thee, accept of my unfeigned thanks for all the blessings I have, and every day receive, from Thy good providence.

That of Thine own mere goodness, and without any merit of mine, or of my forefathers, Thou hast given me a being from honest and religious parents, and in such a

* These Meditations, and those that follow, are accommodated to general use.

part of the world where the Christian religion is purely taught, and Thy sacraments duly administered.

That Thou didst endue me with reason and perfect senses ; and, to make these more comfortable to me, didst give me a sound and healthful body.

That Thou didst preside over my education, and gavest me an early knowledge of Thee, my Creator and Redeemer.

That Thou hast preserved me ever since my birth, and vouchsafed me health and liberty, and a competency of means to support me.

That Thou hast redeemed me by Thy Son, and given me a share in His merits; sanctified me by Thy Holy Spirit ; and heaped many unexpected favours upon me.

That Thou hast given me honest friends to admonish, to counsel, to encourage, to support me, by their interest and advice.

That Thou hast been my refuge in tribulation, and my defence in all adversities, delivering me from dangers, infamy, and troubles. For all known or unobserved deli-

verances, and for the guard Thy holy Angels keep over me, I praise Thy good providence.

When I went astray, Thou didst reduce me ; when I was sad, Thou didst comfort me ; when I offended Thee, Thou didst forbear and gently correct me, and didst long expect my repentance ; and when, for the grievousness of my sins, I was ready to despair, Thou didst keep me from utter ruin ; Thou hast delivered me from the snares and assaults of the devil ; Thou hast not only preserved my soul, but my body, from destruction, when sicknesses and infirmities took hold of me.

O Lord and Father, I cannot render due thanks and praise for all these mercies bestowed upon me : such as I have, I give Thee ; and humbly beseech Thee to accept of this my daily sacrifice of thanksgiving.

Pardon, O God, all my former ingratitude ; and that I have passed so many days without observing, without admiring, without acknowledging and confessing, Thy wonderful goodness to the most unworthy of Thy servants.

For (now I soberly consider my dependence

upon Thee) as there is no hour of my life that I do not enjoy Thy favours, and taste of Thy goodness, so (if my frailty would permit) I would spend no part of my life without remembering Thee.

Praise the Lord, then, O my soul, and all that is within me praise His holy name.

Glory be to Thee, O Lord, my Creator. Glory be to Thee, O Jesus my Redeemer. Glory be to the Holy Ghost, my Sanctifier, my Guide and Comforter.

All love, all glory, be to the high and undivided Trinity, Whose works are inseparable, and Whose dominion endureth world without end. Amen.

When I seriously consider, great God, my dependence upon Thy providence, and that the favours and mercies I have received are infinitely more in number than the acknowledgments I have made, I am justly ashamed of my ingratitude, and afraid lest my unthankfulness should provoke Thee to hinder the current of Thy blessings from descending upon me.

Forgive me, O merciful Father, my past negligences, and give me grace for the time to come to observe and to value thy kindnesses, as becomes one who has received so much more than he deserves.

Preserve in my soul, O God, such a constant and clear sense of my obligations to Thee, that upon the receipt of every favour, I may immediately turn my eyes to Him from whom cometh my salvation. That Thy manifold blessings may fix such lasting impressions upon my soul, that I may always praise Thee faithfully here on earth, until it shall please Thee, of Thy unbounded mercy, to call me nearer the place of Thy heavenly habitation, to praise my Lord and Deliverer to all eternity. Amen.

PROVIDENCE.

God has more ways of providing for us, of helping us, than we can possibly imagine ; it is infidelity to desire to confine Him to our ways and methods.

“Lord, save us, we perish.”—Matthew viii. 25.

Nothing can better express our own inability, and our whole dependence upon God. Two sure conditions of obtaining help.

Since Thy mercy, O God, is ever ready to help all that call upon Thee in time of distress, let Thy goodness answer my wants.

Keep me under the protection of Thy good providence, and make me to have a perpetual fear and love of Thy holy name, through Jesus Christ.y

The more destitute we are of human aid, the more ought we to trust to that providence which God is pleased to exert in extreme necessity.

O God, give me grace never to condemn Thy providence; let me adore the wisdom of Thy conduct, the holiness of Thy ways, and the power of Thy grace.

How many sins should we commit, if God did not vouchsafe to oppose our corrupt will!

Blessed be His holy name, for not leaving me to my own choices.

“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”—
Psalm xc. 12.

BIRTH-DAY.

Blessed be God for my creation and birth; for giving me a being from honest parents, fearing God, and in a Christian and Protestant country; for giving me perfect members and senses, a sound reason, and an healthful constitution; for the means of grace, the assistances of the Holy Spirit, and for the hopes of glory; for my good education; for all the known or unobserved favours, providences and deliverances, by which my life has hitherto been preserved; most humbly beseeching Thee, my God and Father, to pardon my neglect or abuse of any of Thy favours, and that I have so very much forgotten Thee, in whom I live, and move, and have my being.

Good Lord, forgive me the great waste of my precious time; the many days and years of health, and the many opportunities of doing good, which I have lost; and give me grace, that for the time to come I may be truly wise, that I may consider my latter end, and work out my salvation with fear and trembling, ever remembering, "that the night cometh when no man can work;" and that the day of my death may be better to me than the day of my birth. .

O gracious God, grant that before Thou takest from me that breath which Thou gavest me, I may truly repent of the errors of my life past; that my sins may be forgiven, and my pardon sealed in heaven; so that I may have a place of rest in paradise with Thy faithful servants, till the general resurrection; when the good Lord vouchsafe me a better and an everlasting life, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

NEW-YEAR'S DAY.

Blessed be God, Who has brought me safe to the beginning of another year.

Blessed be God, that I am of the number of those who have time and space for repentance yet given them.

My God, make me truly sensible of this mercy, and give me grace to consider often how short and how uncertain my time is: that there is one year more of a short life passed over my head; and that I am so much nearer eternity; that I may in good earnest think of another life, and be so prepared for it, as that death may not overtake me un-awares.

Lord, pardon all my misspent time, and make me more diligent and careful to redeem it for the time to come, that when I come to the end of my days, I may look back with comfort on the days that are past.

Grant that I may begin this new year with new resolutions of serving Thee more faithfully; and if, through infirmity or negligence,

I forget these good purposes, the good Lord awaken in me a sense of my danger.

My heart is in Thy hands, O God, as well as my time ; O make me wise unto salvation ; that I may consider in this my day the things that belong unto my peace : and that I may pass this, and all the years I have yet to live, in a comfortable hope of a blessed eternity, for the Lord Jesus' sake. Amen.

LORD'S DAY.

“ When will the Sabbath be gone, that we may sell wheat ? ”—Amos viii. 5.

Deliver us, gracious God, from this sin of covetousness,—from being weary of Thy Sabbaths, which are ordained to preserve in our hearts the knowledge of Thee, and of Thy Son Jesus Christ.

O that we may desire, and rejoice in the return of this day, and serve Thee faithfully on it ; and that we may enjoy an everlasting Sabbath with Thy saints, for Jesus Christ His sake. Amen.

O that I may be glad when they say unto me, Come, let us go to the house of God!

PRAYER FOR ALL MANKIND.

“ I exhort, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men.”—1 Timothy ii. 1.

O God, almighty and merciful, let Thy fatherly kindness be upon all that Thou hast made.

Have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics; and grant that none may deprive themselves of that happiness, which Jesus Christ has purchased by His death.

Bless the pious endeavours of all those that strive to propagate the gospel of Christ; and may its saving truths be received in all the world.

Preserve Thy church in the midst of the dangers that surround it; purge it from all corruptions, and heal its divisions, that all Christian people may unite and love as becomes the disciples of Christ.

Grant that all bishops and pastors may be

careful to observe the sacred rights committed to their trust :—

That godly discipline may be restored and countenanced :—

That Christians may not content themselves with bare shadows of religion and piety ; but endeavour after that holiness, without which no man can see the Lord :—

That such as are in authority may govern with truth and justice ; and that those whose duty it is to obey, may do it for conscience sake.

Let all that sincerely seek the truth, be led into it by Thy Holy Spirit ; and to all such as are destitute of necessary instruction, vouchsafe a greater measure of Thy grace.

Support and comfort all that labour under trials and afflictions, all that suffer wrongfully ; and by Thy mighty grace succour all those that are tempted.

Give unto all sinners a true sense of their unhappy state, and grace and strength to break their bonds.

Visit, with Thy fatherly comforts, all such

as are now in their last sickness, that they may omit nothing that is necessary to make their peace with Thee.

Be gracious to all those countries that are made desolate by the sword, famine, pestilence, or persecution.

And sanctify the miseries of this life, to the everlasting benefit of all that suffer. Preserve this land from the miseries of war; this church from persecution, and from all wild and dangerous errors; and this people from forgetting Thee, their Lord and Benefactor.

Avert the judgments which we have justly deserved; and mercifully prevent the ruin that threatens us; and grant that we may be ever prepared for what Thy providence shall bring forth.

Bless all persons and places to which Thy providence has made me a debtor; all who have been instrumental to my good, by their assistance, advice, example, or writings; and make me in my turn useful to others.

Let none of those who cannot pray for themselves, and desire my prayers, want Thy

mercy ; but defend, and comfort, and conduct them through this dangerous world, that we may meet in paradise, to praise our God for ever and ever. Amen.

Enlighten the minds, and pardon the sin, of all that err through simplicity.

Let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but guide Thou the just.

Relieve and comfort all that are troubled in mind or conscience ; all that are in danger of falling into despair ; all that are in any dangerous error ; all that are in prison, in slavery, or under persecution for a righteous cause ; all that are in any distress whatever, that all may improve under their sufferings.

Have mercy upon and reclaim all that are engaged in sinful courses, in youthful lusts, in unchristian quarrels, and in unrighteous lawsuits.

Direct all that are in doubt, all that seek the truth.

O God, the Creator and Redeemer of all, have mercy upon all whom Thou hast made and redeemed. Amen.



MONDAY MEDITATIONS.

RESIGNATION.*

“NEVERTHELESS, not my will, but thine be done.”—Luke xxii. 42.

O God, who takest delight in helping the afflicted, help a soul too often distressed with an inward rebellion against Thy just appointments.

Who am I, that I should make exceptions against the will of God, infinitely great, and wise, and good?

I know not the things that are for my own good.

My most earnest desires, if granted, may prove my ruin.

* Written while the author was prisoner in Castle-Ryshen, August 5, 1722.

The things I complain of, and fear, may be the effects of the greatest mercy.

The disappointments I meet with may be absolutely necessary for my eternal welfare.

I do therefore protest against the sin and madness of desiring to have my will done, and not the will of God.

Grant, gracious Father, that I may never dispute the reasonableness of Thy will, but ever close with it, as the best that can happen.

Prepare me always for what Thy providence shall bring forth.

Let me never murmur, be dejected, or impatient, under any of the troubles of this life; but ever find rest and comfort in this; *this is the will of my Father, and of my God:* grant this for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

To the glory of God, and justification of His infinite goodness, I do here acknowledge, that in all the dispensations of Providence which have befallen me, to this day, however uneasy to flesh and blood, I have notwithstanding experienced the kindness of a father for his child; and am convinced, that it

would have been much worse for me, had I had my own choices.

O God, grant that for the time to come I may yield a cheerful obedience to all Thy appointments. Amen.

Corrupt nature cannot comprehend that afflictions are the effects of the Divine love. It must be Thy grace, O lover of souls, which must work in me this conviction, which I beseech Thee to vouchsafe me.

Never set a greater value upon this world than it deserves.

If a man is not eager or positive in his desires, he will more readily embrace the appointments of providence.

If we place our hopes, or our dependence, upon the power, the wisdom, the counsel, or the interest we have in man, and not in God only, we shall surely be disappointed.

“Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.”—Job xiii. 15.

O my crucified King and Saviour, let my submission to whatever afflictions shall befall me, for Thy sake, or by Thy appointment, be to

me a pledge and an assurance of my fidelity to Thee, and conformity to Thy sufferings.

It is a favour to be punished and to suffer in this life, when a man makes a good use of his sufferings. But to suffer by constraint, is to suffer without comfort and without benefit.

Our union and conformity with the will of God, ought to be instead of all consolation.

Grant, O God, that I may always accept of the punishment of my sins with resignation to Thy good pleasure.

Remember me, O Lord, in the day of trouble; keep me from all excess of fear, concern, and sadness.

Grant me an humble and a resigned heart, that with perfect content I may ever acquiesce in all the methods of Thy grace, that I may never frustrate the designs of Thy mercy, by unreasonable fears, by sloth, or self-love. Amen.

Think often of God, and of His attributes, His mercy, compassion, fidelity, fatherly care, goodness, protection. Dwell on these thoughts till they produce such a well-grounded confi-

dence as will support us under all difficulties, and assure us, that He cannot possibly forsake those that depend on Him.

When God deprives us of any thing that is most dear to us,—health, ease, conveniences of life, friends, wife, children, &c. we should immediately say, this is God's will; I am by Him commanded to part with so much; let me not therefore murmur or be dejected, for then it would appear that I did love that thing more than God's will.

When God thus visits us, let us immediately look inwards, and, lest our sins should be the occasion, let us take care that we seriously repent, and endeavour to make our peace with God, and then He will either deliver or support us, and will convince us, that we suffer in justice for our faults; or for our trial, and to humble us; or for God's glory, and to sanctify us.

“Be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.”—1 Peter v. 5.

Give me grace, O God, to study, to love,

to adore, and to imitate that humility which Thy blessed Son hath taught us both by His word and by His most holy example.

BUSINESS.

“ Understanding what the will of the Lord is.”—Ephesians v. 17.

To engage in any business of importance without knowing this, and taking counsel of God, may cost us dear.

“ Woe to them that take counsel, but not of Me, saith the Lord.”—Isaiah xxx. 1.

But then, let a man take heed that when he goes to inquire of the Lord, he does not set up idols in his own heart, lest God answer him according to his idols.

We are to pray for the direction of God's Spirit upon all great occasions, especially we are humbly to depend on His direction, and cheerfully to expect it, which He will manifest, either by some plain event of His providence, or by suggesting such reasons as ought to determine the will to a wise choice.

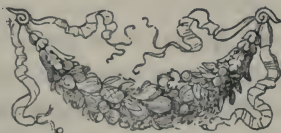
But to follow the inclinations of the will

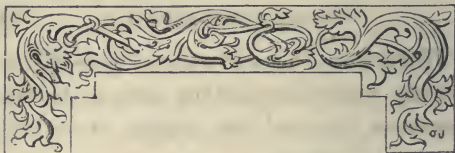
without reason, only because we find ourselves strongly inclined to this or that, is a very dangerous way, and may engage us in very dangerous practices.

MASTER.

SERVANT.

Death, in a very little time, may make the master and the servant equal. Let us anticipate this equality, by treating our servants with compassion; having respect to Christ in the person of our servant,—to Christ, who took upon Him the form of a servant for our sakes.





TUESDAY MEDITATIONS.

TROUBLE, PERSECUTIONS, AFFLICTIONS, ETC.

“ Call upon me in the time of trouble, so will I hear thee, and thou shalt praise Me.”—
Psalm l. 15.

O God, who seest all our weaknesses, and the troubles we labour under, have regard unto the prayers of Thy servant, who stands in need of Thy comfort, Thy direction, and Thy help.

Grant that I may suffer like a Christian, and not grieve like an unbeliever; that I may receive troubles as punishments due to my past offences, as an exercise of my faith, and patience, and humility, and as a trial of my obedience; and that I may improve all my afflictions to the good of my soul, and Thy glory.

Thou alone knowest what is best for us : let me never dispute Thy wisdom or Thy goodness.

Direct my reason, subdue my passions, put a stop to my roving thoughts and fears, and let me have the comfort of Thy promise, and of Thy protection, both now and ever, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

“ If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons ; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not ? But if ye are without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.”
—Hebrews xii. 7.

“ I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him.”—Micah vii. 9.

If I am despised or slighted, I ought to consider it as a favour, since this is a mark of God's children ; and therefore I ought to thank Him for it, and not be angry with those whom He makes His instruments to subdue and mortify my pride.

“ Rejoice, in as much as ye are made

partakers of the sufferings of Christ; that when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."—1 Peter iv. 13.—viz. because your reward will be proportionable to your sufferings.

"Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."—Matthew v. 11, 12.

The mystery of the cross is to be learned under the cross.

"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father. The very hairs of your head are all numbered."—Matthew x. 28, 29.

"Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, [under great afflictions which

he suffers to befall you,] that He may exalt you in due time : casting all your care upon Him ; for He careth for you.”—1 Peter v. 6, 7.

“ Thy will be done.”—Mathew vi. 10.

It is just, great God, it should be so ; for who should govern the world but He that made it ? And yet we poor creatures repine when any thing crosses our hopes or designs. What strange unthoughtfulness ! what presumption is this ! And it is Thy great mercy that any of us are sensible of this folly, and become willing to be governed by Thee.

With all my heart and soul, O God, I thank Thee, that in all the changes and chances of this mortal life, I can look up to Thee, and cheerfully resign my will to Thine.

It is the desire of my soul, and my humble petition, that I may always be ready and willing to submit to Thy providence, that Thou mayest order what thou judgest to be most convenient for me.

I have trusted Thee, O Father, with myself ; my soul is in Thy hand, which I verily

believe Thou wilt preserve to eternal happiness : my body, and all that belongs to it, are of much less value. I do therefore, with as great security and satisfaction, trust all I have to Thee, hoping Thou wilt preserve me from all things hurtful, and lead me to all things profitable to my salvation.

I will love Thee, O God ; being satisfied that all things, however strange and irksome they appear, shall work together for good to those that do so.

I know in whom I have believed ; I have a Saviour at Thy right hand, full of kindness, full of care, full of power ; He has prayed for me, that this faith fail me not ; and by this faith I am persuaded, that neither tribulation, nor anguish, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword, nor death which I may fear, nor life which I may hope for, nor things present which I feel, nor things to come which I may apprehend, shall ever prevail so far over me, as to make me not to resign my will entirely to Thee.

In an humble, quiet, and dutiful submission,

let me faithfully run the race that is set before me, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before Him, despised the shame, endured the cross, and is now seated at the right hand of God; to whom I most humbly beseech Thee to bring me in Thy good time; and for whatever shall fall out in the mean while, THY WILL BE DONE. Amen.

LOOK UNTO JESUS.

He was despised and rejected of men; His life was sought for by Herod; He was tempted by Satan; hated by that world which He came to save; set at nought by His own people; called a deceiver and a dealer with the devil; was driven from place to place, and had not where to lay His head; betrayed by one disciple, and forsaken by all the rest; falsely accused, spit upon and scourged; set at nought by Herod and his men of war; given up by Pilate to the will of his enemies; had a murderer preferred before Him; was condemned to a most cruel and shameful death;

crucified between two thieves ; reviled in the midst of His torments ; had gall and vinegar given Him to drink ; suffered a most bitter death, submitting with patience to the will of His Father.

O Jesu, who now sittest at the right hand of God, to succour all who suffer in a righteous way ; be Thou my advocate for grace, that, in all my sufferings, I may follow Thy example, and run with patience the race that is set before me. Amen.

Take all things that befall you as coming from God's providence, for your particular profit. And though they are evil in themselves, yet as He permits, nor does not think fit to hinder them, they may be referred to Him.

God no sooner discovers in your heart an ardent desire of well-doing, and of submitting to His will, but He prepares for you occasions of trying your virtue ; and therefore, confident of His love, receive cheerfully a medicine prepared by a physician that cannot be mistaken, and cannot give you any thing but what will be for your good.

See Eccclus. chap. ii. The whole chapter.^a

Lord, prepare my heart, that no afflictions may ever so surprise, as to overbear me.

Dispose me at all times to a readiness to suffer what Thy providence shall order or permit.

It is the same cup which Jesus Christ drank of; it is He sends it. He sees it absolutely necessary that I must be first partaker of His sufferings, and then of His glory.

“And ye shall be hated of all men for My name’s sake; but he that shall endure to the end shall be saved.”—Mathew x. 22.

It is indeed grievous to nature to be thus treated; but when it is for Thy name’s sake, O Jesus, and for the sake of Thy truth, and for being true to Thee; how lovely is this hatred; and how advantageous when salvation is the reward!

^a This chapter (says the author) was the lesson for the day, March 25th, 1727, at a time when I was much perplexed about the attempts made upon the Episcopal Jurisdiction; and this I cannot but remark, since to my exceeding great comfort and direction, it has often so happened, I am persuaded, by a special providence of God.

“The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.”—Matthew x. 24.

He who keeps this saying in his heart, will never complain of what he suffers, nor seek for any other way to save himself, but by humiliation and the Cross.

SUFFERING.

O Lord, grant that whenever I suffer, it may be for being faithful to Thee, and without drawing it unseasonably upon myself.

We are in God's hands; we often take ourselves out of His hands, by trusting to the help and protection of men, more than that of God.

God can render none miserable but those whom He finds sinners. Let us apply this to ourselves when in affliction, but not unto others, or to their personal faults.

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent.”—Rev. iii. 19.

Blessed be God, who vouchsafes, by salutary chastisements, to awaken us when we

fall asleep through sloth and lukewarmness. Grant that I may with a true zeal, and timely repentance, make good use of all Thy rebukes.

Grant, O God, that I may never murmur at Thy appointments, nor be exasperated against the ministers of Thy providence.

In Thee, O Jesus, we find matter of consolation in every affliction that can possibly befall us.

All visitations are from God. He is not delighted with the miseries of His poor creatures; afflictions are therefore designed for our good. He will either shew us the reason of this visitation, or make us reap the fruits of it.

People that may be well disposed, may yet live under the power of some evil custom, which is displeasing to God; a man may have been guilty of some great sin which he has yet never truly repented of, or been truly humbled for. This was the case of the sons of Jacob; they had attempted the life of, and afterwards sold, their brother, and en-

dangered the life of their aged father ; under which guilt they passed their life well enough for many years, till God visited them ; and then they thought of their sin, confessed, and repented.

God, by afflictions, often fits us for greater degrees of grace which He is going to bestow.

Though I suffer, yet I am well, because I am what God would have me to be.

Lord, do not permit my trials to be above my strength, and do Thou vouchsafe to be my strength and comfort in the time of trial.

Grant, O Lord, that I may never be wanting to the cause of truth, nor expose it by any indiscretion, or unseasonable transports of zeal.

Jesus Christ avoids persecution.^b To suffer for righteousness sake is well pleasing to God ; but then it must be done according to the appointment of God, not out of a proud zeal.

Give me grace to take in good part whatever shall befall me, and let my heart acknowledge it to be the Lord's doing, and to come from Thy providence, and not by chance.

God makes use of afflictions—sometimes by way of prevention; “lest I should be exalted,” said St. Paul;^c to reform them; “before I was afflicted, I went astray;”^d to perfect them; patience, courage, submission to the will of God, are graces not so much as understood by people who meet with no adversities; “we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God;”^e to prove men, and shew them for examples; if a man had no enemies, how could he shew his charity in forgiving them?

Never consider so much the instrument of your afflictions as the meaning of the good providence of God in these things.

Afflictions are no marks of God’s displeasure. Jesus loved Mary and Lazarus, yet they were both afflicted.—John xi. 5.

Punishment is due to sin. We must be punished here or hereafter; it is the cause of all afflictions, and designed by our gracious God to bring us to repentance.

Prosperity is a most dangerous state; we

c 2 Cor. xii. &c.

d Psalm cxix.

e Acts xiv. 22.

fancy it is owing to our merit, and it is followed with pride, neglect of duty, fearlessness.

It is happy for us when God counts us worthy to suffer for his name's sake; to contend with Satan, as Job did, and be able, through God's grace, to overcome so powerful a spirit.

Afflictions, undergone with resignation, are the great test of our love of God; when we love Him, then He chastens us. May God sanctify all our afflictions to us all.

May I receive every thing from Thy hand with patience and with joy!

Remember me, O God, in the day of trouble. Secure me, by Thy grace, from all excess of fear, concern, and sadness.

Let the afflictions I meet with be in some measure serviceable towards the appeasing of Thy wrath. Let them prove the happy occasion of forwarding my conversion and salvation.

TEMPTATION.

We are exposed to temptation all our days.

Men are never more dangerously tempted, than when they think themselves secure from temptation. This is a proof of the power the devil has over them.

We tempt God when we expose ourselves unnecessarily to dangers, through a false confidence of his assistance.

DESPAIR.

HOPE.

Grant, O God, that, amidst all the discouragements, difficulties, dangers, distress, and darkness of this mortal life, I may depend upon Thy mercy, and on this build my hopes, as on a sure foundation.

Let Thine infinite mercy in Christ Jesus deliver me from despair, both now and at the hour of death.

RESIGNATION.

Grant that I may receive the punishment of my sins with patience and resignation.

INJURIES.

PERSECUTION.

Give me, O God, a heart to consider, that

man could have no power against me, unless it were given from above.^f

ENEMIES.

A Christian should not discover that he has enemies any other way than by doing more good to them than to others. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink." He will therefore be careful not to lose such occasions.

O Jesu! whose charity all the malice of Thy bitterest enemies could not overcome, shed abroad in my heart that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace, and of all virtues.

"Rejoice not over thy greatest enemy being dead; but remember that we die all."—*Ecclus. viii. 7.*

Our enemies are our benefactors, procuring for us a new right to heaven.

I pray God convert all those who hate us without cause.

I beseech Thee for my enemies, not for

vengeance, but for mercy ; that Thou wouldst change their hearts by Thy grace, or restrain their malice by Thy power.

IN TIME OF WAR.

O sovereign Lord ! Who for our sins art justly displeased, I prostrate myself before Thee, confessing my own sin and the sin of this people ; acknowledging the justice of any scourge which Thou shalt think fit to bring upon us ; and trembling to think how much I may have contributed toward it.

Thou hast already spoken to us both by Thy judgments and mercies, both by the scarcity and plenty of bread ; and we have not regarded it. Thou hast taken away the lives of many, very many, in their very sins, by which numerous widows and fatherless children have been left miserable.

The sins of whoredom and drunkenness ; of swearing, lying, and perjury ; of litigiousness, injustice, defrauding the public, and sacrilege are made light of.

The sins of impiety, of profaneness, of

despising the means of grace and salvation, are too common amongst us.

What shall we say, to prevail with God to avert the judgments which these sins deserve ?

God be merciful unto us, and put a stop to this torrent of wickedness ; put Thy fear into all our hearts, that we may return to Thee ; that we may repent, and bring forth fruit meet for repentance ; and that iniquity may not be our ruin.

May the dread of Thy now threatened judgments deter us from evil ; may Thy goodness and patience lead us to repentance ; weaken the power of Satan ; take from among us the spirit of slumber, of ignorance, and inconsideration.

Let every one of us see and feel the plague of his own heart, and say, “ What have I done to bring these evils upon us ? ” So that bringing forth fruits answerable to amendment of life, we may escape Thy judgment now hanging over us ; and above all, Thy judgments against sinners in the world to come. And this I beg for Jesus Christ His sake. Amen.

JUDGMENT DAY.

Grant, O Lord, that I may be of the number of those that shall find mercy at that day.

ZACCHÆUS.

The good Lord grant that I may give a proof of the sincerity of my conversion by a change of life.





WEDNESDAY MEDITATIONS.

COVETOUSNESS, FASTING, DIFFICULTIES, ETC.

“ALL these things will I give thee. Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.”—Matthew iv. 9, 10.

Great and glorious God, Who alone art worthy of our love and service, cure me of, and preserve me from, the sin and vanity of admiring this world.

Give me grace to renounce all covetous desires, all love of riches and pleasures; to desire only what is necessary, and to be content with what Thou, O Lord, thinkest so;—

Not to be troubled at the loss or want of any thing besides Thy favour;—

That no business, no pleasures, may divert

me from the thoughts of the world to come ;—

That I may cheerfully part with all these things when Thou requirest it of me ;—

And that I may ever be prepared to do so, dispose me to a temperance in all things, and to lay up my treasure in heaven, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

“ Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation.”—Luke vi. 24.

A man must have but little faith, who can read these words, and yet love riches, and the pleasures they afford.

Lord, grant that I may resist every temptation to the love of creatures ; lest they steal my heart from Thee, my God, Whom I desire to love with all my soul.

I know that I must, in a great measure, renounce all other objects of my affection, in order to love Thee with all my heart. Lord, give me grace and strength to put this in practice.

“ Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world ; if any man love the world,

the love of the Father is not in him.”—
1 John ii. 15.

Grant, O Lord, that I may never hope to reconcile two things so inconsistent as the love of Thee and the world.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit ; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”—Matthew v. 3.

To be poor in spirit—is to be disengaged from wealth ; to look upon it as a burden, or as a trust.

“Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.”—1 Timothy vi. 8.

And yet even the Christian world is not content without superfluities and excess. These disorders are not less criminal because so common.

“Following the way of Balaam.”—2 Peter ii. 15.

Nothing is more to be dreaded than covetousness ; when a man has set his heart upon his own interests, he easily forgets those of his Great Master.

Give me, O Lord, the eyes of faith, that I may see the world just as it is ; the vanity of

its promises, the folly of its pleasures, the unprofitableness of its rewards, the multitude of its snares, and the danger of its temptations.

FASTING.

Jesus Christ spared not his innocent flesh, but fasted; the sinner cherisheth his continually, refusing it nothing.

Fasting is in some sense a punishment and expiation for past sins, a remedy for present temptations, and a preservative against future.

“My heart is smitten, and withered like grass, so that I forget to eat my bread.”—Psalm cii. 4.

The humble and afflicted soul is not much concerned to please the appetite.

“Woe unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger.”—Luke vi. 25. That is, ye whose daily meals are feasts, who make profession of a life of sensuality, who know not what it is to fast, even when the church requires it:—woe to such Christians!

If we judge ourselves with severity, we shall be judged with mercy.

IN TIME OF TROUBLE.

“When Thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, Thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth.”—Psalm xxxix. 11.

O merciful God, Who, in Thy wise providence, dost so order even natural events, that they serve both for the good of the universe, and for the conviction of particular sinners, so that men shall have reason to acknowledge Thy glorious attributes ; I do with great sorrow of heart, but with all submission to Thy good pleasure, confess Thy mercy as well as justice to me in the judgments, afflictions, sorrows, of this day.

I acknowledge Thy voice, O merciful God, I acknowledge my own transgressions, which have provoked Thee to speak to me after this manner, and at this very time.

O Lord, give me true repentance for all the errors of my life, and particularly for that which was, in all probability, the occasion of this affliction.

Blessed be God, that my punishment was not as great as my crime.

Blessed be God, that He has given me time to repent of the sin that provoked Him to deal with me after this manner.

Blessed be God, that when He spake to me once, yea twice, that I regarded it at last.

Good God of mercy, give me grace that I may not provoke Thee any more to repeat this word to me, but that I may faithfully perform those vows which are upon me. This I cannot do without Thy gracious assistance, which I most humbly beseech Thee to vouchsafe me, for Jesus Christ's sake, Who by His merits has purchased this grace for all that faithfully ask it of Thee; for His sake, O merciful God, grant me this grace. Amen.

I do, in all humility, accept of the punishment of mine iniquities.

I will hold my peace, and not open my mouth, because it is Thy doing and my deservings.

I know, O Lord, that it is good for me to

be in trouble, or Thou wouldest not suffer it so to be.

Let Thy merciful kindness be my comfort, according to Thy promise to all that love and serve Thee.

DIFFICULTIES.

We are to pray for the particular direction of God's Holy Spirit upon all great occasions ; we are humbly to depend upon and cheerfully to expect it, which He will manifest, either by some plain event or determination of His providence, or by suggesting such reasons as ought to determine the will to a wise choice.

But to follow the inclinations of the will, without reason, only because we are strongly inclined to a thing, is a very dangerous way, and will engage men in evil practices and endless scruples.

The Spirit of God brings into our minds new lights, sets them home, inclines us to attend to them, &c. But let men take heed of setting up idols in their hearts ; and then

go and inquire of the Lord—He will answer them.

IN A LAW-SUIT.

Convince me, O God, if I am under any mistake in this affair.

Direct, assist, and support me under all the difficulties I shall meet with.

Put a happy end, in Thy good time, to this troublesome controversy.

Dispose the hearts of those with whom we have to do to peace and justice.

Give me grace to rest satisfied with whatever shall be the issue, believing assuredly, that God can make good any loss I may sustain, or sanctify it to my eternal welfare.

Lord, in this and in all other things I undertake, "Thy will be done, and not mine."

O manifest Thy will to me, preserve me from evil counsels, and from rash enterprises.

Give me true Christian resolution, which will neither be tired nor discouraged with difficulties while I am in the way of my duty.

FAITH.

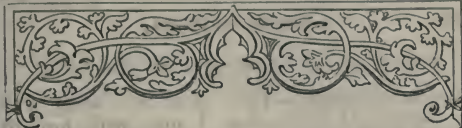
Grant, O God, that I may with humility receive, and with perseverance hold fast, all those truths which Thou hast revealed.

I thank Thee, O God, for Thy holy word, and for that Thou hast not left us, in the affair of eternity, to the uncertainty of our own reason and judgment.

Defend me against all delusions of error ; the snares of wit and learning ; the railleries of profane men ; and from deserting the truth under oppression.

Grant, O God, that neither education, interest, prejudice, or passion, may ever hinder me from discerning the truth.

Open the eyes of all that are in error ; heal the wounds of the divided church ; that we may be one fold under one Shepherd. Amen.



THURSDAY MEDITATIONS.

RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE, FORGIVENESS, ALMS,
CHARITY, ETC.

“LET no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”—Ephesians iv. 29.

“Foolish talking and jesting are not convenient.”—Ephesians v. 4.

Preserve me, O God, from a vain conversation. Give me grace never to be ashamed or afraid to speak of Thee, and of Thy law.

Give me a lively sense of the value of religion, and make it the delight of my heart; that I may speak of it with great judgment, seriousness, and affection, and at all seasonable times.

“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another.”—Malachi iii. 10.

“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.—How can ye, being evil, speak good things?—By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”—Matthew xii. 34.

We count words for nothing, and yet eternity depends upon them.

“Set a guard, O Lord, upon my mouth, and keep the door of my lips.”—Psalm cxli. 3.

“The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.”—Psalm xxxvii. 30.

The want of religious discourse in common conversation is one of the chief causes of the decay of Christian piety.

Hearts truly touched with the love of God, will communicate light and heat to others in their ordinary conversation,—will speak honourably of God, of His perfections, His justice, goodness, wisdom, and power; the excellency of His laws, the pleasantness of His service, the instances of His love, the rewards He has promised to His friends, and the punishments He has prepared for His enemies.

And by doing so, we shall recommend God and religion to those we converse with—win over subjects to Him, &c. and add to our own happiness.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”—Matthew v. 16.

“Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works.”—Heb. x. 24.

The more spiritual our minds are, the more heavenly will our conversation be with those we discourse with.

RULES.

Never talk of religion but when you think seriously of it. Not to betray the want of it by one's discourse of it, which should be decent, grave, sober, prudent.

That our discourse of religion be practical rather than notional, or disputing; that it be devout, edifying after a hearty and affectionate manner.

That it be seasonable ; that is, when men are like to be the better for it. Not in promiscuous company ; not mixed with sports, hurry, business, nor with drink.

And that we join a good life to our religious conversation ; and never contradict our tongue by our deeds.

“ As He sat at meat, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them, and their eyes were opened.”—Luke xxiv. 30.

We may know religious persons, not only in the exercise of religious actions, but even in the most common actions of life, which they convert into holy actions, by the manner of doing them, the holiness of their dispositions, by prayer, thanksgiving, &c.

We always do good or harm to others by the manner of our conversation ; we either confirm them in sin, or awaken them to piety.

It is too true, that some evil passion or other, and to gratify our corruption, is the aim of most conversations. We love to speak of past troubles ; hatred and ill-will make us

take pleasure in relating the evil actions of our enemies. We compare, with some degree of pride, the advantages we have over others. We recount, with too sensible a pleasure, the worldly happiness we enjoy. This strengthens our passions, and increases our corruption. God grant that I may watch against a weakness, which has such evil consequences.

“Refrain not to speak when there is an occasion to do good.”—Ecclus. iv. 23.

It is an extraordinary talent to be able to improve conversation to the advantage of religion, by taking some fit occasion to say something that is edifying and beneficial.

The great subject of a Christian's discourse should be, about the true way of attaining the grace of God, through the blood of Christ, and by the assistance of the Holy Spirit. But then they must say no more than what they are sure of, lest they should lead men into error. For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain, and speaketh not the truth as it is in Jesus.

Let us take all opportunities of communicating our belief of Christ to others, both to bear witness and confess Him before men, and to increase our own faith and reward.

May I never hear, never repeat with pleasure, such things as may dishonour God, hurt my own character, or injure my neighbour.

“ I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh ; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, &c.”—Joel ii. 28, 29.

That is ; their discourse shall be chiefly upon subjects of practical Christianity, of Jesus Christ and what he has done and suffered for us, and of the way to attain eternal happiness.

“ Speak not evil one of another.”—James iv. 11.

True humility makes us see our own faults, without concerning ourselves with the faults of others.

“ A word spoken in due season, how good is it ?”—Proverbs xv. 23.

AGAINST SLOTH.

“ Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep.”—
Proverbs xix. 5.

O God, who hast given me an active spirit, and many opportunities of doing Thee service, give me grace to make use of all occasions of serving Thee faithfully and doing good in my generation; make me to abhor that sloth which would lead me into an insensibility and forgetfulness of Thee and of my errand into the world; keep me from idleness, which would expose me to temptations, enfeeble my mind, and cover me with rags; make me ever sensible of the great evil of delaying to do the work in its season which Thou hast appointed me, that whatever my hand by Thy providence findeth to do, I may do it with all my might; so that whenever I am called to give an account of my labours to my great Master, I may not be judged an unprofitable servant. Accept of my ambition of serving Thee, great God; and O, grant, that when my Lord comes He may find me so doing. Amen.

AGAINST ANGER.

“ Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry, for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.”—Ecclesiastes vii. 9.

O Lord, who art a God ready to pardon, slow to anger, and of great kindness, remove far from me all occasions and effects of causeless and immoderate anger; all pride and prejudice, and too much concern for the things of this world; all intemperate speeches, and indecent passions.

Give me, O Lord, a mild, a peaceable, a meek, and an humble spirit, that, remembering my own infirmities, I may bear with those of others; that I may think lowly of myself, and not be angry when others also think lowly of me; that I may be patient towards all men, gentle and easy to be entreated; that God, for Christ's sake, may be so towards me. Amen.

“ Be angry, and sin not :—Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.”—Ephesians iv. 26.

“ The discretion of a man deferreth his anger.”—Proverbs xix. 11.

“ A soft answer turneth away strife.”

“ He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty ; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.”—Proverbs xvi. 32.

“ Be kindly affectioned one towards another.”—Romans xii. 10.

Suppress the very beginnings of anger.

Do not use to indulge it even where there are real faults ; but try the gentle way, which may probably succeed better, and, to be sure, with more ease by far.

Seldom do people vex us on purpose, and yet prejudice very often makes us think that they do.

A sense of one's own integrity will make one pass by injuries more easily.

Be not too much concerned to tell the injuries you have received.

Accustom yourself to silence, if you would learn to govern your tongue.

Nemo consilium cum clamore dat.—Seneca.

Deliver me, O God, from all violent and sinful passions, and give me grace to stand against them.

“Blessed are the meek.”—Matthew v. 4.
Instruct me, Lord, in this Christian virtue ;
Thou Who art the Master and Teacher of it.

FOR FORGIVENESS OF INJURIES.

“Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.”—
Luke vi. 37.

O God, Who alone canst order the unruly
wills and affections of sinful men, shew mercy
to Thy servant, in forcing my corrupt nature
to be obedient to Thy commands.

O God, Who hast made it my everlasting
interest, as well as my duty, to forgive my
neighbour whatever wrong he has done me ;
help me to overcome all the difficulties I have
to struggle with, all pride, prejudice, and
desire of rendering evil for evil, that I may
not deprive my soul of that mercy, which
Thine infinite goodness has offered to sinners.

“He shall have judgment without mercy,
that hath shewn no mercy.”—James ii. 13.

O blessed God, help me in this great con-
cern, that I may never fall under Thy wrath
for want of shewing mercy to others ; but

grant, O blessed Jesus, that in this I may be Thy disciple indeed. Amen.

SLANDER.

“The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.”—Matthew xi. 19.

Whatever measure a good man takes, he will hardly escape the censures of the world; the best way is, not to be concerned at them.

It is an instance of humility silently to bear the calumnies which are raised against us, when they relate to ourselves only; but it is a duty of prudence and charity modestly to vindicate ourselves, when the honour of God and the Church is concerned.

Both Jesus Christ and John the Baptist were slandered; who then will complain that they cannot satisfy the world, and stop men's mouths? g

“Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue.”—Psalm cxx. 2.

UNCHARITABLENESS.

Envy makes us see what will serve to accuse others, and not perceive what may justify them.^h

A truly good man is always disposed to excuse what is evil in his brethren, as far as truth will suffer him.

ALMS.

“ Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.”—1 Cor. xiii. 3.

If external acts of charity do not proceed from charity, that is, from a love of God, and of our neighbour for his sake, they are as nothing in the sight of God. My God, pour into my heart this most excellent gift, the very bond of peace and of all virtue.

The Apostles and their successors are the proper trustees for the charity of Christ.

“ Let us do good unto all men.”—Galatians vi. 10.

^h Matthew xii. 3.

He who seeks for Jesus Christ in the poor, in order to relieve and assist him, will not be too solicitous to find any other merit in them than that of Jesus Christ.

For our earthly things, O Lord, give us heavenly : for temporal, eternal.

“ He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none.”—Luke iii. 11.

That is, let him that hath plenty—to spare, of any thing necessary for life, let him give to him that wants.

The proportion of charity, appointed by God himself to His own people for the relief of the poor, was every year a thirtieth part of all their incomes, or a tenth every third year ; to be laid up every third year as a fund for charitable uses.ⁱ

This was the Jew's proportion. He that came short of this was a breaker of the law, and without repentance and restitution, had no hopes of pardon.

The Christian's proportion ought to be greater, as his hopes and rewards will be greater.

ⁱ Deuteronomy xxvi. 12, 13.

“ Whosoever shall give a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.”—Matthew x. 42.

We should, in all our charities, direct our eye towards Christ in His members; it is this which heightens the smallest gifts. Men reward what is done on human motives; God such as are done for His sake.

The more a man gives to the poor, the more he receives from God. The increase is like that of the five loaves and two fishes, which produced twelve baskets of fragments, after five thousand were filled.

He that for his good actions expects the applause of men, runs the hazard of losing the reward of God.

“ Whoso shall receive one such little child in My name, receiveth Me.”—Matt. xviii. 5.

Jesus Christ is received in the persons of the poor. These must be received not out of human respects, nor ostentation, nor for our own satisfaction, but in the name and

for the sake of Christ. This renders our hospitality truly Christian.

The poor are, as it were, the receivers of the rights and dues belonging to God; we must have a care of defrauding them.

“A good (a charitable) man will guide his affairs with discretion.”—Psalm cxii. 5. That is, he will cut off, and retrench all needless expenses in apparel, diet, diversions, &c. that he may give to him that needeth.

In alms and charity to the poor, and good works, a good Christian will always endeavour to be better than he appears to the world to be, that thine alms may be in secret as much as may be.

CHARITY; OR, THE LOVE OF GOD AND OUR
NEIGHBOUR.

It is but the first essay of charity to give alms.

Whoever shews mercy to men will certainly receive mercy from God.

“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.”—1 John iii. 15.

A man has already killed him in his heart, whose life is grievous to him, and at whose death he would rejoice.

“He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death.”—1 John iii. 14.

Can we believe that it is God that saith this, and delay one moment to be reconciled?

“And hereby (that is, by a true charity) we shall assure our hearts before him.”—1 John iii. 19. Namely, at his coming, when his sentence will be founded upon the exercise or omission of this duty.

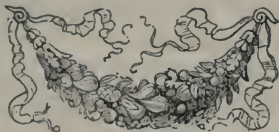
It is not enough to love our brethren; we must love them upon a principle of faith, in the name, for the sake, and as members of Jesus Christ.

Give me, O my God, an heart full of Christian meekness and charity, that I may willingly forgive the evil I have received, and be always disposed to do good to others.

We love our neighbour after a Christian manner, when we love him for God's sake, and for God's sake do him good.

HOSPITALITY.

Hospitality does not consist in keeping a plentiful table, and making great entertainments; but in providing a sober and suitable refreshment for such as are in want, and for such as come to visit us.





FRIDAY MEDITATIONS.

PENITENCE.

“THE publican standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes to Heaven ; but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.”—Luke xviii. 13.

What would become of me, if Thou, O God, shouldst not have mercy upon me ?

When I seriously consider these dreadful truths,—“That all they are accursed who do err and go astray from Thy commandments.”^j “That the unprofitable servant was cast into outer darkness.”^k When I think of these things, I cannot but fear for myself, and tremble to think of the account I have to give.

“To this man will I look, even to him that

j Psalm cxix. 21.

k Matt. xxv. 30.

is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word."—Isaiah lxvi. 2.

"The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart; and will save such as be of an humble spirit."—Psalm xxxiv. 18.

Look upon me, Gracious Lord, with an eye of mercy.

"For Thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquities, for they are great."—Psalm xxv. 2.

My only comfort is, they are not too great for Thy mercy.

And the Lord Jesus our Advocate has assured us, even with an oath, That all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men.¹ That is, if with hearty repentance and true faith they turn unto God.

O most powerful Advocate! I put my cause into Thy hands; let it be unto Thy servant according to this word; let Thy blood and merits plead for my pardon; say unto me, as Thou didst unto the penitent in Thy Gospel, Thy sins are forgiven. And grant that I may live to bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

¹ Mark lli. 22.

“If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive your trespasses.”—Matthew vi. 14.

Even the power to perform this most kind condition, must be from Thy grace, O Jesus!

And I trust Thou wilt grant me this grace, because the very will to ask it is from Thee, and from Thy will, which wills nothing in vain.

Perfect, therefore, O my Saviour, the work which Thou hast begun in me; and let me feel the effects of Thy grace in the constancy of my devotions,—in the care for my soul,—in the faithful discharge of my duty, and in all such acts of righteousness, piety, and charity, by which I shall be judged at the last day.

“Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.”—John v. 14.

Make me, O Lord, ever mindful of my infirmities and backslidings, that I may be more watchful, and more importunate for grace for the time to come.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”—Matthew v. 7.

Give me, O Lord, a true compassion for

the wants and miseries of others, that [Thou mayest have compassion upon me.

“There is joy in the presence of God over one sinner that repenteth.”—Luke xv. 10.

Lord, increase the number of penitents, and the joys of heaven, in delivering myself and all sinners from the power of the devil, and in vouchsafing us the grace of a true conversion.

“Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.”—Matthew v. 4.

O Lord, grant that I may seek for comfort, not in the things of this world, but by a sincere repentance for my sins, by which God is dishonoured, and His judgments hanging over my head.

“The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”—Luke xix. 10.

O comfortable words for lost sinners! God Himself seeks to save them. O Thou, who sought me when I was astray, save me for Thy mercy's sake, and preserve that which Thou hast sought and found.

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and

are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”—
Matthew xi. 28.

O Jesu, conduct and keep me to Thyself, or
I shall surely miss the way.

“ Work out your own salvation with fear
and trembling ; for it is God that worketh in
you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”
—Phil. ii. 12.

It was not in myself, O God, to begin the
work of my conversion ;—finish, I beseech
Thee, what Thou hast begun in me ;—may I
close with Thy grace, and persevere unto my
life’s end.

“ God retaineth not His anger for ever,
because He delighteth in mercy.”—Micah
vii. 18.

“ O Lord God, behold, we are before Thee
in our trespasses ; we cannot stand before Thee
for this.”—Ezra ix. 15.

“ Pardon, I beseech Thee, the iniquity of
Thy servant, according to the greatness of Thy
mercy.”—Numbers xiv. 19.

O say unto me as Thou didst unto Moses,
“ I have pardoned thee.”

“All his iniquities that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him.”—Ezekiel xviii. 22.

Lord, be merciful unto us, for we have sinned in the midst of light, and even against light; in contempt of the grace we received at our baptism.

“If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”—1 John i. 9.

These are comfortable words to one whom the sight of his sins has cast into a dread of the judgments of God. Both that dread, and the hatred of sin, and the dependence upon the promise of God, and the love that that produces in the soul, are owing entirely to the blood of Jesus Christ.

“What is Thy servant, that Thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?”—2 Samuel ix. 8.

My only support is, that my sins have not put me out of the reach of that mercy which is infinite.

Who can understand his errors? O cleanse Thou me from my secret faults.

O Lord, be favourable unto me; pardon and deliver me from all my sins.

Grant that my sins may never rise up in judgment against me, nor bring shame and confusion of face upon me.

My soul truly waiteth still upon God, for of Him cometh my salvation.

“It is I, be not afraid.”—John vi. 20.

Lord Jesus, in all the troubles that shall befall me, speak these comfortable words to my soul, *It is I, be not afraid*; and then I shall be secure both from presumption and despair.

“If ye believe not that I am He, (that is, the Messiah, the Son of God,) ye shall die in your sins.”—John viii. 24.

O Jesus, the only refuge of sinners, does the world know what it is to die in sin? I believe; Lord, increase my faith, and deliver us all from the dreadful state of final impenitency.

“If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed.”—John viii. 31.

May I, O Jesus, love the truths of Thy

word; make the Gospel my delight; and continue in the practice of them to my life's end.

“If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.”—John viii. 51.

O Jesus, Thou hast made known to us another death, besides that which separates the soul from the body. O may Thy grace and mercy secure us from the bitter pains of eternal death.

“Say the word, and my servant shall be healed.”—Luke vii. 7.

I acknowledge, O Jesu, the almighty power of Thy grace, to heal all the disorders of my soul; O deal with me according to the multitude of Thy mercies, and heal my soul of its sad disorders.

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”—John iii. 24.

Give me, O Jesus, an inward disposition to holiness, an humble and contrite heart, a dependence on the will of God, and acknowledgment of his goodness, and a zeal for his

glory ; to which all the ordinances of the law and gospel should lead us.

GOOD USE OF TIME.

Grant, O Lord, that as I have but a short time to live, and an eternal interest depending, I may not squander away one moment in vanity, or in that which will not profit me in the day of adversity.

“Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved.”—Romans xi. 16.

O God, the God of Abraham, look upon thine everlasting covenant;^m cause the captivity of Judah and of Israel to return. They were Thy people ; O be Thou their Saviour ! and may all who love Jerusalem and mourn for her, rejoice with her,ⁿ for Jesus Christ’s sake, their Saviour and ours. Amen.

IN TIME OF PUBLIC DISTRACTIONS.

O sovereign Lord ! I prostrate myself

^m Genesis xvii. 7.

ⁿ Isaiah lxvi. 11.

before Thee confessing my own sin, and acknowledging the justice of any scourge which thou shalt bring upon us; and trembling to think how much I may have contributed towards it; beseeching Thee to have compassion on us, in these days of confusion.

O Lord, prevent the judgments that threaten us; purge this nation from all such crimes as may be the cause of Thy heavy displeasure against us—from whoredom and drunkenness; from swearing, lying, and perjury; from sacrilege, injustice, fraud, disobedience, malice, and uncharitableness. Take from among us the spirit of atheism, irreligion, and profaneness; and in mercy rebuke and convert all such as give encouragement or countenance to any of these vices, which may provoke Thee to give us up to infidelity or destruction. O let Thine anger be turned away from us; give us not over unto the will of our adversaries, and unto such as strive to bring all things into confusion. Preserve this church in the midst of all dangers; and restore unto us peace and unity; and grant us grace to make

a better use of these blessings, for the time to come, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

We complain of oppression, of our laws being perverted and trampled upon; of arbitrary government, &c. Let us not be wiser than God, Who judges these things to be necessary—to exercise the good—to punish the wicked—to reclaim the sinner—to recover those that are going astray, to make all serious. Let us not impeach the ways of Providence, Who brings good out of evil; but reverence and submit to His will, His wisdom, and justice.

“For the transgression of a land, many are the princes thereof.”—Proverbs xxviii. 2.—that is, it is punished with a confused government.

“Ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, keep not silence; give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem (his church) a praise in the earth.”—Isaiah lxii. 6.

“Thy kingdom come.”—Though we are altogether unworthy of the good times thou

hast promised thy church, yet we beseech Thee deprive us not of them.

O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken, and do not defer these good days, for Thine own sake, oh! our God.

We hope a day is coming when all the world will come and worship Thee, O God.

See Jeremiah xxxi.—The whole chapter.

SCRIPTURE EXAMPLES.

“Persecuted for righteousness sake.”—
Such the Lord never forsakes.

“But the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.”—
Genesis xxxix. 21.

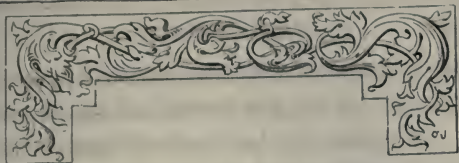
CHRIST'S PATIENCE.

What sorrows did He undergo, and with what patience did He suffer them! Patient when Judas unworthily betrayed Him with a kiss; patient when Caiaphas despitefully used

Him ; patient when hurried from one place to another ; patient when Herod with his men of war set Him at nought ; patient when Pilate so unrighteously condemned Him ; patient when scourged and crowned with thorns ; patient when His cross was laid upon Him, when He was reviled, reproached, scoffed at, and every way abused. Lord Jesus, grant me patience, after this example, to bear Thy Holy will in all things.

CHRIST'S LOVE AND CHARITY.

Where shall we take our pattern but from Thee ? Thou callest Thy followers Thy friends. Thou didst stoop down to wash their feet who were not worthy to untie Thy shoe. Thou didst forgive and restore Peter, when he had abjured Thee. Thou didst vouchsafe to satisfy Thomas, who would not believe but upon his own terms. Thou didst forgive and pray for Thy bloody persecutors. O thou fountain and pattern of love, grant that I may love Thee above all things, and my neighbour as myself.



SATURDAY MEDITATIONS.

PREPARATION FOR DEATH.

“O THAT they were wise, that they would consider their latter end!”—Deut. xxxii. 29.

“The night cometh, when no man can work.”—John ix. 4.

A very gracious intimation. Lord, grant that I may never forget it; and that now, now, is the time in which to provide for eternity.

What a wise man then when he comes to die, would wish he had done, that he ought to do forthwith, for death is at hand, and the consequences of a surprise most dreadful. He will then wish, if he has not done it, with all his soul,—

1st. That he had made a just and Christian settlement of his worldly concerns; so as not

to be distracted with the cares of this world, when all his thoughts should be upon another.

2dly. That he had made his peace with God by a timely repentance.

3dly. That he had faithfully discharged the duties of his calling.

4thly. That he had weaned his affections from things temporal, and loosened the ties which fasten us to the world.

5thly. That he had crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts ; so that being weary of this life, he might be more desirous of a better.

6thly. That by acts of justice, mercy, charity, and alms, he may be entitled to the mercy of God at the hour of death.

7thly. That he had got such habits of patience and resignation to the will of God, during his health, as may render death, with all the train of miseries leading to it, less frightful and amazing.

8thly and lastly. That by a constant practice of devotion preparatory for death, he had learned what to pray for, what to hope for, what to depend on, in his last sickness.

And this, gracious Lord, is what I wish for, what I pray for, and what I purpose shall be the constant practice of my life. Amen.

“Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live.”—2 Kings xx. 1.

May God, who has every way provided for me, and put it into my power to be just to all men, charitable to the poor, grateful to my friends, kind to my servants, and a benefactor to the public: may He add this to all His favours, and grant that in making my last will, I may faithfully discharge all these engagements; and that for want of that, no curse may cleave to myself, or to any thing I shall leave behind me. Amen.

But, above all things, I beg of Thee, O God, to enable me to set my inward house, my soul, in order, before I die.

Give me true repentance for all the errors of my life past, and steadfast faith in Thy Son Jesus Christ; that my sins may be done away by Thy mercy, and my pardon sealed in heaven.

“Whoso confesseth, and forsaketh his sin, shall have mercy.”—Proverbs xxviii. 13.

Behold, O God, a creature, liable every moment to death, prostrate before Thee begging, for Jesus Christ's sake, that faith and repentance to which Thou hast promised mercy and pardon.

Discover to me, O Thou searcher of hearts, the charge that is against me, that I may know, and confess, and bewail, and abhor, and forsake, and repent of all the evils I have been guilty of.

Have mercy upon me, have mercy upon me, most merciful Father, Who desirest not the death of a sinner; for Thy Son Jesus Christ's sake, forgive me all that is past.

And, O blessed Advocate, Who art able to save them for ever who come unto God by Thee, seeing Thou ever livest to make intercession for us, I put my cause into Thy hands; let Thy power defend me; Thy blood and merits plead for me; supply all the defects of my repentance; procure for me a full discharge of all my sins before I die; and by Thy mighty grace confirm and strengthen me in all goodness, during the remainder of my

life, that my death may be a blessing to me, and that I may find mercy at the great day. Amen.

“Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”—Ephesians iv. 24.

This, O God, is what I desire and purpose, by Thy grace, to do; and do again renew the vows which I have so often made, and too often broke.

I renounce the devil and all his works; the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh; resolving, by Thy grace, neither to follow nor be led by them,

I desire, and purpose, to redeem my misspent time.

And, O God, assist me, that neither sloth nor corruption may ever make me lay aside or forget these resolutions; but that I may live to Thee; be an instrument of Thy glory, by serving Thee faithfully, and by doing good in my generation; and that I may be found

so doing when Thou art pleased to call me hence, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

“Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.”—Colossians iii. 2.

And may Almighty God, who alone can do it, effectually convince me of the vanity of all that is desirable in this present life, that I may not, like an unbeliever, look for happiness here.

Give me, O Lord, a perfect indifference for the world, its profits, pleasures, honours, fame, and all its idols.

Represent Thyself unto me as my true happiness, that I may love Thee with all my heart, and soul, and strength; so that when I am called out of this world, I may rejoice in hope of going to the paradise of God, where the souls of the faithful enjoy rest and felicity, in hopes of a blessed resurrection, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”—Luke ix. 23.

Blessed Jesus, who pleasedst not Thyself, but tookest upon Thee the form of a servant, to teach mankind the great duty and blessings of self-denial; assist me to follow Thy commands and Thy holy example, though I should be obliged to lose any thing, as dear as a right hand or a right eye.

Give me resolution to deny my inclinations for the good things of this world, even while I may command them; to subdue my corrupt affections, and to take revenge upon myself—for my intemperance, by mortification; for misspending my time, by retirement; for the errors of my tongue, by silence; and for all the sins of my life, by a deep humiliation, patiently submitting to all the troubles with which Thou shalt think fit to exercise or punish me; so that being effectually weaned from this world, and weary of its corruptions, I may long to repose myself in the grave, in hopes of a better life, through Thy mercy and merits, O Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

“Charity covereth the multitude of sins.”
—1 Peter iv. 8.

Possess my soul, O God, with a sincere love for Thee, and for all mankind.

Let no malice or ill-will abide in me. Give me grace to forgive all that have offended me ; and forgive my many offences against Thee, and against my neighbour.

Make me ever ready to give, and glad to distribute, that Thy gifts, passing through my hands, may procure for me the prayers of the poor ; and that I may lay up in store for myself a good foundation against the time to come, that I may attain eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THY WILL BE DONE.

Fortify my soul, blessed Jesus, with the same spirit of submission with which Thou underwentst the death of the cross, that I may receive all events with resignation to the will of God ; that I may receive troubles, afflictions, disappointments, sickness, and death itself, without amazement ; these being the appointment of Thy justice for the punish-

ment of sin, and of Thy mercy for the salvation of sinners.

Let this be the constant practice of my life, to be pleased with all Thy choices, that when sickness and death approach, I may be prepared to submit my will to the will of my Maker.

And O that, in the mean time, my heart may always go along with my lips in this petition,—“Thy will be done.” Amen.

“It is appointed unto men once to die; but after this the judgment.”—Hebrews ix. 27.

May the thoughts of death, and of what must follow, by the grace of God, mortify in me all carnal security, and fondness for this world, and all that is in it, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. And O that I may make my calling and election sure, that I may die in peace, and rest in the mansions of glory, in hopes of a blessed resurrection, and a favourable judgment at the great day.

And may the consideration of a judgment

to come oblige me to examine, to try, and to judge myself, that I may prevent a severe judgment of God, by a true repentance, and lead a life answerable to amendment of life, and that I may find mercy at the great day.

“ All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”—John v. 28.

May that dreadful word oblige me to work out my salvation with fear and trembling, that through the merits of Jesus Christ, I may escape that dreadful doom.

And may the hopes of heaven and happiness sweeten all the troubles of this mortal life.

O Lord Jesus, who hast redeemed us with Thy precious blood, make me to be numbered with Thy saints in glory everlasting. Amen.

O let my name be found written in the Lamb's book of life at the great day.

I thank Thee, O Lord, for all the favours of my life, and especially for that Thou hast

vouchsafed me time and a will to think of and prepare for death, while I am in my full strength, while I may redeem my mis-spent time, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

Let us consider death as a punishment, to which, as sinners, we are justly condemned.

But then let us look on it in another view, namely, as a sacrifice for sin, which God will mercifully accept of, in union with that of His Son, if we submit to it as due to our offences.

It being a sacrifice, it ought to be voluntary ; being a debt, it ought to be made out of love to justice ; and being a satisfaction, we must be humbly resigned.

My God, I humbly submit to it, and to Thy justice ; and trust in Thy mercy and goodness and promises, both now and at the hour of death.

Death is inevitable ; the time uncertain ; the judgment which follows without appeal ; and followed by an eternity of happiness or misery.

Lord, grant that I may consider this as I ought to do.

Let me remember, that I shall come forth out of the grave, just as I go in; either the object of God's mercy, or of His wrath, to all eternity.

He lives to no purpose, who is not glorifying God.

Our greatest hopes should lie beyond the grave.

No man must go to heaven when he dies, who has not sent his heart thither while he lives.

Our greatest security is to be derived from duty, and our only confidence from the mercy of God, through Jesus Christ.

Sickness, if you consider it as painful to nature, and not as a favour from God, will be a torment to you. To make it really comfortable, believe it to be ordered by a loving Father, a wise Physician; that it is the effect of His mercy for our salvation; that, being fastened to the cross, you become dearer to God, as being most like His own

Son. God will loose you when it is best for you.

We often hinder our recovery by trusting to physic more than to God: means succeed just as far as God pleases; if He sends diseases as a remedy to cure the disorders of the soul, He only can cure them; while you are chastened, you are sure God loves you; you are not sure of that, when you are without chastisement.

A timely preparation for death frees us from the fear of death, and from all other fears.

A true Christian is neither fond of life, nor weary of it.

The sting of death is sin; therefore, an holy life is the only cure for the fear of death. We ought to fear sin more than death, because death cannot hurt us but by sin.

“To me to die is gain.”—Philippians i. 21.

O that I may be able to say this, when I come to die; and so I shall, if I live as becomes a Christian.

Holiness being a necessary qualification

for happiness, it follows, that the holiest man will be the happiest, for there are certainly degrees of glory, therefore a Christian should lose no time to gain all the degrees of virtue and holiness he possibly can ; and he that does not do so, is in a fair way of not being happy at all.

It concerns us more than our life is worth to know what will become of us when we die.

Who will pretend to say, that he is not in a very few days to die ?

The only happiness of this life is to be secure of a blessed eternity.

Now is the time in which we are to choose where and what we are to be to all eternity ; there is, therefore, no time to be lost to make this choice.

No kind of death is to be feared by him who lives well.

If we consider death as the night of that day which is given us to work in, in which to work out our salvation ; and that when the night is come, no man can work ; how frightful must death be to such as are not prepared

for it ! And if we consider it as the beginning of eternity, it is still more dreadful. It is for this reason called the “King of Terrors;”^o and the Psalmist, when he would express the worst of evils, saith, “The terrors of death are fallen upon me.”^p

“If the Lord were pleased to kill us, He would not have received a burnt offering at our hands, neither would He have shewed us all these things.”—Judges xiii. 23.

And this is the comfort of all God’s servants : if He gives them opportunities of renewing their vows, and a will to do them ; if He accepts their alms and their good deeds, that is, gives them a heart to do such ; if He touches their hearts with a sense of their unworthiness ; if He opens their ear to discipline ; if He chastises them with His Holy Spirit, &c. All these are reasons for a Christian to hope, that these graces are not in vain, but that God will crown them with pardon, favour, and happiness eternal.

“And at midnight there was a cry made,

^o Job xviii. 14.

^p Psalm lv. 4.

Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him"—Matthew xxv. 6.

A terrible voice to all such as shall meet Him, not as a Bridegroom, but as an inexorable Judge.

Grant, O Lord, that I may not be of the number of those who dread Thy coming, who cannot but with regret submit to the necessity of dying, and who have neglected to prepare for death, till the last hour.

"And the door was shut."—Matthew xxv. 10.

Death shuts the door. No more to be done. It is then too late to repent, to resolve, to promise, and to do any thing.

"Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh."—Matthew xxv. 13.

A person, whose life is full of good works, whose heart is devoted to God, whose faith and hope are pure and sincere, will never be surprised by death.

"Jesus Christ yielded up the ghost."—Matthew xxvii. 50.—and so His death became

a voluntary sacrifice. Let mine be so, O blessed Jesus! Let Thy death sanctify me; and let my spirit be received with Thine!

“ Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”—Romans v. 1.

Give me, O Lord, that desire and earnest longing, which I ought to have, for that happy moment, which is to release me from this state of banishment, and translate me to a better place; and grant, that I may never lose the sight of that important moment.

Let me, O God, have my lot and portion with Thy saints.

When we come to die, the great enemy of our souls will then attack us with all his stratagems. It is good therefore to be prepared.

If he attacks your faith, say with St. Paul, q
“ I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.”

I believe in God the Father, who hath made me and all the world.

I believe in God the Son, who hath redeemed me and all mankind.

I believe in God the Holy Ghost, who hath sanctified me and all the elect people of God.

I give Thee hearty thanks, O heavenly Father, that Thou hast vouchsafed to call me to the knowledge of Thy grace and faith in Thee. Confirm this faith in me evermore; grant that I may die in this faith, and in the peace and communion of Thy holy church; and that I may be united to Jesus, the Head of this church, and to all His members, by a love that shall never end. Amen.

“Whosoever believeth in Jesus Christ shall not perish, but have eternal life.”—John iii. 15.

I believe:—Lord, increase my faith; and let it be unto Thy servant according to this word.

“This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”—Luke xxiii. 43.

O blessed Jesu! support my spirit when I come to die, with this comfortable promise, “This day shalt thou be in paradise.”

We indeed suffer justly the sentence of death. O Thou, Who didst nothing amiss, and yet didst suffer for me ; remember me, O Lord, now that Thou art in Thy kingdom.

What terror, what affliction, can equal that of a Christian, who has never thought of weaning his heart from the world till he comes to die ? Who can find nothing in his life, but what must render him unworthy of mercy ? But the greatest of all miseries would be to despair of mercy, and not to have recourse to it.

Need a person, who has received the sentence of death, be persuaded to prepare for death ? And is not this our case ?

Consider death, as appointed by God, as a necessary penance, as the completion of the Christian sacrifice, as a passage to a better life, as the deliverance of a prisoner, as the recalling of an exile from banishment, as the end of all miseries :—and then you will strip it of much of that terror which it has when considered as an accident of nature only.

“And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord.”—Luke xii. 36.

He who waits for his master will always endeavour to be in that state in which he desires to be found.

A Christian should not look upon death with anxiety, but with the satisfaction of a good servant, who waits with impatience for his master's return, in hopes of being approved of.

“Be ye ready also, for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not.”—Luke xii. 40.

And are not so many sudden deaths sufficient to convince us of the folly of assuring ourselves of one day? Let every one of us, therefore, count himself of the number of those that are to be surprised by death; this will make us watchful.

“Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.”—Luke xii. 43.—that is, doing his duty.

And then, miserable will he be, whom death surpriseth either doing evil, or doing nothing,

or doing that which God does not require of him. Can one imagine, that the generality of Christians believe this truth? Suffer me not, O God, to fall into a forgetfulness of it.

We complain (saith Seneca) of the shortness of life; he answers, *Vita, si scias uti, longa est.* "Life is long, if you know how to use it." But then it is Christianity only can teach us how to use our life; namely, "in working out our own salvation:" and we are sure it is long enough for that, because God has appointed it for that very end.

As Christianity alone can take from us the love of life, so it is this alone that can free us from the fear of death.

It signifies little how a man spends his life and his time, if he does not employ them in securing a blessed eternity.

Eternity adds an infinite weight to all our actions, whether good or bad.

If we desire that our death should, like that of Jesus Christ, be a sacrifice of love and obedience, we must take care to make our life so too.

“This woman was full of good works and alms-deeds ; and she died.”—Acts ix. 39.

Happy that soul which death finds rich, not in gold, furniture, learning, reputation, or barren purposes and desires, but in good works.

“And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”—Acts vii. 59.

O my God, enable me to live to Thee, that when the hour of death shall come, I may thus with confidence offer up my spirit to Jesus Christ.

“Thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon Thee.”—Rev. iii. 3.

Is it not then the highest presumption to persuade ourselves that we have always time sufficient, when Jesus Christ himself declares that we have not one moment certain ?

Death being the effect and punishment of sin, we ought to expect it with great submission, since it honours God by expiating of sin, and saves the man by punishing the sinner.

It is purely for want of faith, that we tremble at the approach of our Deliverer ; and

which is to destroy in us the reign of sin, and instate us in that of glory.

Let us resign up ourselves to God, as to the manner in which it shall please Him to determine our lives, praying only that it may be to His glory and our salvation.

What does it signify how this house of clay perisheth, which hinders the perfect renovation of the soul, and the sight of God?

“For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”—2 Cor. v. 1.

We know, we believe, we promise ourselves this, but we think too seldom of it, and we still make less use of what we know, in order to wean our hearts from this world.

Would we look upon our bodies as houses of clay just ready to fall, we should think of that eternal house; we should sigh after our native country, and be willing to leave a place of misery and banishment.

Remember, that death is the punishment of sin; we ought therefore to resign ourselves

up to it in a Christian manner, looking upon ourselves as condemned to it in Adam.

Consider well, that life is given and continued for no other end, but to glorify God in working out our salvation.

He who has lived and looked on earth, as in a place of banishment, will look upon death as a gracious deliverance from it.

A man goes with confidence to meet the bridegroom, when he has been faithful to him, and believes him to be his friend.

“And deliver them who through fear of death were all their life long subject to bondage.”—Hebrews ii. 15.

Bondage is the sentence of rebellious slaves; we were condemned to it in Adam; and being under this sentence of death and the Divine justice, we ought to expect it with submission, and be always preparing for it. This is the only way to be secure, and from fearing death when it comes.

Gather us, O God, to the number of Thine elect, at what time and in what manner Thou pleasest; only let us be without reproach, and

blameless; let faith, and love, and peace, accompany our last periods.

We look upon a body without a soul with horror. We can see a body with a soul, which is like to die eternally, without concern.

“Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God (I am delivered) through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Grant, O Lord, that though my outward man decay daily, yet that my inward man may grow and increase in piety and virtue unto the day of my death.

He that hath lived best will stand in need of mercy at the hour of death, and in the day of judgment; and he that hath lived the worst has not sinned beyond the efficacy of the blood of Christ, provided his repentance be sincere.

My God! let Thy glory be magnified by saving a sinner, by redeeming a captive slave, by enlightening an heart overwhelmed in darkness, by changing a wicked heart, by pardoning innumerable transgressions, iniquities, and sins.

If my hopes were placed upon any thing but the infinite mercies of God, in Jesus Christ, which can never fail, I should utterly despair.

“Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.”—Acts ii. 21.

These, my God, are Thine own words; give me leave to trust in them, to depend on them, both now and at the hour of death.

“I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do.”—John xvii. 4.

O Lord, the very best of men come infinitely short of this pattern; how then shall I, an unprofitable servant, appear before my Lord and Judge?

“The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.”—Genesis iii. 15.

This, my God, is Thy sure, Thy eternal promise; I believe it; I trust in it; I will hold me fast by it.

“That I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not laboured in vain.”—Phil. ii. 16.

“Nevertheless not my will, but Thine be done.”—Luke xxii. 42.

May I, O blessed Jesus, when my death approaches, breathe out my last with these words, and with the same spirit of submission.

DEATH OF FRIENDS.

Let us cast our eyes upon sin, which is the cause of death, and then we shall weep with reason.

Preserve in us a lively sense of the world to come.

And when I shall not be able to pray for myself, the good Lord favourably hear the prayers of His Church for me.

Grant that the sins which I have committed in this world may not be imputed unto me; but that escaping the gates of hell, I may dwell in the regions of light, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, until the day of the general resurrection, and that I then may hear those joyful words of Thy Son,—“Come ye blessed children of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world.”

Grant that I may have a perfect conquest

over the world, sin, and death, through Christ, Who by His death hath overcome him who hath the power of death.

“This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise.”—Luke xxiii. 43.

O Jesus, Who hadst compassion on this thief, even at the hour of death, have mercy upon me, who now repent of all my misdoings. Suffer not the gates of paradise to be shut against me when I die, Thou that hast opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

Restore my soul at the great day to life eternal.

Give me the patience of Job, the faith of Abraham, the courage of Peter, and the comfort of Paul, and a true submission to Thy will.

Apply to my soul all the wholesome medicines of Thy Son's passion, death, and resurrection, against the powers of Satan, against all unreasonable fears and despair, and ease my fearful conscience.

Hear the prayers of Thy Church for me, and for all in my condition, for Jesus Christ's sake.

“Cast me not away in the time of age; forsake me not when my strength faileth me.”

—Psalm lxxi. 9.

Grant, O Lord, that the end of my life may be truly Christian; without sin, without shame, and, if it so please Thee, without pain.

“My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.”—Psalm lxxiii. 26.

“It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good.”—1 Samuel iii. 18.

Lord, be merciful unto me; heal my soul for I have sinned against Thee.

I confess my wickedness, and am sorry for my sin.

For Thy name's sake, O Lord, be merciful unto my sin, for it is great.

The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart, and will save such as are of an humble spirit.

“And now, Lord, what is my hope? truly my hope is in Thee.”—Psalm xxxix. 8.

“Lord, Thou knowest whereof we are made: that we are but dust.”—Psalm ciii. 14.

Let my misery, my fear, my sorrow, move
Thee to compassion.

Despise not, O Lord, the work of Thine
own hands.

I freely forgive all that have offended me.

O Thou that never failest them that seek
Thee, have pity on me.

Nevertheless, though I am sometimes
afraid, yet put I my trust in Thee.

O Lord, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul.
Gracious is the Lord and righteous, yea, our
God is merciful.

O go not far from me, for trouble is at
hand, and there is none to help me.

The sorrows of my heart are enlarged; O
bring Thou me out of my troubles!

O keep my soul, and deliver me; let me not
be confounded, for I have put my trust in Thee.

Withdraw not Thy mercy from me, O Lord;
let Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth alway
preserve me.

O Lord, let it be Thy pleasure to deliver
me; make haste, O Lord, to help me.

Shew Thy servant the light of Thy

countenance, and save me for Thy mercy's sake.

O deliver me, for I am helpless and poor, and my heart is wounded within me.

Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face, and forgettest our misery and trouble?

My God! save Thy servant, who putteth his trust in Thee.

Thou, O Lord, art full of compassion and mercy, long-suffering, plenteous in goodness and truth.

When I am in heaviness, I will think upon God; when my heart is vexed, I will complain.

Will the Lord absent Himself for ever? Will He be no more entreated?

Hath God forgotten to be gracious? And I said, it is mine own infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.

THE LITANY.

O God the Father of heaven; have mercy upon me, keep and defend me.

O God the Son, Redeemer of the world ;
have mercy upon me, save and deliver me.

O God the Holy Ghost ; have mercy upon
me, strengthen and comfort me.

Remember not, Lord, mine offences, nor
the offences of my forefathers ; neither take
Thou vengeance of our sins : Spare us, good
Lord, spare Thy people, whom Thou hast
redeemed with Thy most precious blood, and
be not angry with us for ever.

From Thy wrath and heavy indignation ;
from the guilt and burden of my sins ; from
the dreadful sentence of the last judgment ;

Good Lord, deliver me.

From the sting and terrors of conscience ;
from impatience, distrust, or despair ; from
extremity of sickness and pain, which may
withdraw my mind from God ;

Good Lord, deliver me.

From the bitter pangs of eternal death ;
from the gates of hell ; from the powers of
darkness ; and from the illusions of Satan ;

Good Lord, deliver me.

By Thy manifold and great mercies ; by

Thy manifold and great merits ; by Thine agony and bloody sweat ; by Thy bitter cross and passion ; by Thy mighty resurrection ; by Thy glorious ascension, and most acceptable intercession ; and by the graces of the Holy Ghost ;

Good Lord, deliver me.

For the glory of Thy name ; for Thy loving mercy and truth's sake ;

Good Lord, deliver me.

In my last and greatest need ; in the hour of death ; and in the day of judgment ;

Good Lord, deliver me.

As Thou hast delivered all Thy saints and servants which called upon Thee in their extremity,

Good Lord, deliver me ;—and receive my soul for Thy mercy's sake.

Be merciful unto me, and forgive me all my sins, which, by the malice of the devil, or by my own frailty, I have at any time of my life committed against Thee.

Lay not to my charge, what in the lust of the eye, the pride of life or vanity, I have committed against Thee.

Lay not to my charge, what by an angry

spirit, by vain and idle words, by foolish jesting, I have committed against Thee.

Make me partaker of all Thy mercies and promises in Christ Jesus.

Vouchsafe my soul a place of rest in the paradise of God, with all Thy blessed saints; and my body a part in the blessed resurrection.

O Lord God, Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world;

Have mercy upon me.

Thou that takest away the sins of the world,

Grant me Thy peace.

Thou that sittest at the right hand of God,

Have mercy upon me.

Have mercy upon me, and receive my prayer; even the prayer which Thou hast taught me:—

Our Father which art in heaven, &c.

O Lord, deal not with me after my sins; neither reward me after mine iniquities.

O God, merciful Father, that despisest not the sighing of a contrite heart, nor the desires of such as be sorrowful: mercifully assist my prayers which I make before Thee—at such

times especially as I am preparing for death and for eternity. And, O Lord, graciously hear me, that those evils, those illusions, and assaults, which my great enemy worketh against me, may be brought to nought, and by the providence of Thy goodness they may be dispersed; that Thy servant, being delivered from all temptations, may give thanks to Thee, with Thy holy church, to all eternity. Amen.

Let us endeavour, by a timely repentance, to prevent the reproaches which otherwise our consciences will cast upon us at the hour of death.

THE SUPPORT OF A PENITENT AT THE HOUR
OF DEATH.

“God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”—John iii. 16.

“We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,” (1 John. ii. 1.) Who came into the world to save sinners, Who died for us when we were His enemies, that He might offer us unto God.

It is our Judge Himself who hath assured us, that "all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men."

EJACULATIONS.

Take from me all evil imaginations, all impurity of thought, all inclinations to lust, all envy, pride, and hypocrisy, all falsehood, deceit, and an irregular life, all covetousness, vain-glory, and sloth, all malice, anger, and wrath, all remembrance of injuries, every thing that is contrary to Thy will, O Most Holy God !

LOVE OF GOD, ETC.

Bless me, O God, with the love of Thee, and of my neighbour. Give me peace of conscience, the command of my affections ; and for the rest, *Thy will be done !*

O King of peace, give us Thy peace, keep us in love and charity !

Make Thyself, O God, the absolute master of my heart !

“ They that be whole need not a physician.”
—It belongs to Thee, O sovereign Physician, to make us sensible of our maladies, and to go to Thee for help. O say unto my soul this word of salvation, “ Behold, thou art made whole !”

“ Without Me ye can do nothing.”—Miserable indeed is he who pretends to walk without Thee. O give me light to see, an heart to close with, and a power to do Thy will. From Thy Spirit I hope to receive these graces.

“ If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and him will My Father honour.”—John xii. 26.

Let me never flatter myself that I serve Thee, my Saviour, unless I follow Thy example at the expense of every thing I love or fear besides. O keep my heart fixed upon that honour which God has prepared for those that follow Thee.

O Divine Spirit, render me worthy of Thy presence and consolation.

Fill my heart with an holy dread of Thy judgments.

Give me a true sense and knowledge of the danger and the evil of sin ; and may I, with a prudent moderation only, be concerned for temporal things.

Jesus Christ is always in His temple, and near you, (if your soul be fit for Him to dwell in ;) to Him apply on all occasions :—

As your Master, for grace to study, to love, to teach, and to follow His instructions. He requires nothing but what He first practised Himself.

As your Lord ; that you may love and serve Him faithfully, and fulfil all His commands.

As your Pattern ; that you may follow His example, and imitate His virtues.

As your Saviour ; that He may be your refuge and confidence, your strength and support, your peace and consolation, your Saviour now and at the hour of death.

As your King ; that He may give laws to your soul, and that you may surrender yourself to His commands ; and never rebel or resist His authority.

As your Shepherd. Keep me in Thy flock

by Thy almighty grace. I am one of the lost sheep which Thou camest to seek. O take me under Thy care, and restore me to Thy fold. Increase Thy flock, for the honour of Thy name.

WILFUL SIN.

Let me rather choose to die, than to sin against my conscience.

PENITENT.

I am ashamed to come before Thee, but I must come or perish. I know that Thou art angry with me for my sins, but I know too that Thou pitiest me, or why do I yet live? Make me full of sorrow for my sin, and full of hopes of Thy mercy and pardon. Look upon the infirmities of Thy servant, and consider his weakness. Sensible of my own sad condition, weak and miserable, sinful and ignorant, liable to eternal death, I prostrate myself before Thee, imploring Thy help and pardon.

Gracious God, never abandon me to the opposition I shall at any time make to Thy grace.

Blessed be God, that He has so often prevented me, and not left me to the desires of my own heart.

Put a stop to the torrent of wickedness and profaneness which carries all before it.

I confess my sins unto Thee, my God; do Thou hide them from all the world.

ETERNITY.

Lord, imprint upon my heart a lively idea of eternity, that the sorrowful passages of this life, which are so uneasy and frightful to nature, may vanish, or be borne with patience.

EXAMPLE.

Pardon my sin, and forgive all such as have been misled by any evil example of mine.

“Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”—Matthew v. 48.

O Divine repairer of our corrupt nature, may Thy all-powerful grace make me as perfect as Thou hast commanded me to be.

HOLINESS.

O God, Who hast called me to holiness, give me a firm faith in Thy power, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that by His assistance I may get the mastery over all my sins and corruptions; that I may be redeemed from all iniquity; that I may be holy, as He who has called me is holy.

Possess my soul with an earnest desire of pleasing Thee, and with a fear of offending Thee.

Let me be ever ready to forgive injuries, and backward to offer any.

Give me, O Lord, faith and patience, that I may neither murmur at Thy appointments, nor be angry against the instruments of Thy justice.

Deliver me from the errors and vices of the age we live in; from infidelity, wicked principles, from profaneness, heresies, and schism.

I most heartily thank Thee, O God, for Thy perpetual care of me, for all Thy mercies

bestowed upon me, for the blessings of nature and of grace.

Give a blessing to those means which Thou Thyself hast appointed.

Grant, O God, that I may never receive Thy grace in vain, but that I may live like one who believes and hopes for the joys of heaven.

Let me ever be sorry for my sins, thankful for Thy blessings, fear Thy judgments, love Thy mercies, remember Thy presence.

Vouchsafe me Thy Holy Spirit to bear witness with my spirit, that I am Thy child.

Give me an humble mind, a godly fear, and a quiet conscience.

Weaken, O Lord, the power of Satan in this place, and the tyranny of his ministers.

IN TIME OF PESTILENCE OR DANGER.

Set Thy saving mark upon our houses, and give order to the destroyer not to hurt us.

“ Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you.”—John xvi. 3.

“ Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.—I will, be thou clean.”—Matthew viii. 2, 3.

Upon this promise, blessed Lord, I depend ; beseeching Thee, O heavenly Father, for Thy dear Son’s sake, to give me the graces I most stand in need of.

AFTER PRAYERS.

Vouchsafe us those graces and blessings which Thou knowest to be needful for us, notwithstanding our great unworthiness.

RICHES.

Shut my heart, O Lord, against the love of worldly riches, lest I betray Thee as Judas did.

May Thy Holy Spirit, O God, fill my heart, that it may appear in all my words and actions, that I am governed by it.

“ And when He saw him, He had compassion on him.”—Luke x. 33.

O Jesus, the true Samaritan, look upon the wounds which sin hath caused in my soul, and have compassion on me.

May I always resign my will and my desires to Him who knows what is good for us better than we ourselves do.

HOLY SCRIPTURES.

Give me, O God, a sincere love for the truths of the Gospel, a teachable heart, and an obedient will.

PERSEVERANCE.

Finish, O my God, the work of mercy and conversion, which Thou hast begun in me.

Save, O Lord Jesus, a soul which Thou hast redeemed by Thy blood.

There is no merit in me, O God, to attract Thy mercy and goodness, but only my great misery and blindness. May I make a suitable return by an holy life.

According to the greatness of Thy goodness, and the multitude of Thy mercies, look upon me.

Sanctify my soul and body with Thy hea-

venly blessings, that they may be made Thy holy habitation, and that nothing may be found in me, that may offend the eyes of Thy Majesty.

Protect and keep me in the midst of the dangers of this corrupt world; and by Thy light and grace direct me in the way to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ.

MORNING.

I laid me down and slept, and rose again, for the Lord sustained me. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Raise me up, O Lord, at the last day, to life and happiness everlasting.

Blessed be the Lord for His mercies renewed unto me every morning.

O that my eyes may ever be fixed upon the example that our blessed Lord hath left us, and that I may daily endeavour to follow him. Amen.

NIGHT.

May the Saviour and Guardian of my soul

take me under his protection this night and evermore.

“Attend upon the Lord without distraction.”—1 Cor. vii. 35.

O Holy Spirit of Grace, help my infirmities, that I may fix my thoughts upon my duty; and that I may serve Thee with all my heart and mind.

That I may never give way to wandering thoughts, but watch against them continually.

Look upon me, O Lord, and pity me; make me, and let me be Thine by the choice of my will!

Make me serious and thoughtful at all times, that I may not fail being so when I attend upon God.

Let not my heart, O God, be inclined to any evil thing. Keep me, O God, from every thing that may displease Thee. O make me wise unto salvation.

“For all seek their own, not the things which are Christ’s.”—Phil. ii. 21.

The good Lord deliver me from this dreadful judgment.

“ I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me.”—Phil. iv. 13.

O that I may never forfeit this power by presumption or want of faith.

“ Thomas said, My Lord and my God !”—John xx. 28.

Thou art indeed, O Jesus, my Lord, for Thou hast redeemed me by Thy precious blood; Thou art my God, for I am dedicated to Thee, and sanctified by Thy Spirit.

“ And all that believed were together, and had all things common.”—Acts ii. 44.

May God grant, that as we are all members of the same body, have one and the same Father, the same Saviour, the same Spirit, and hope to meet in the same paradise; that we may live in unity and godly love, and be charitable to the poor according to our ability, and as every one hath need.

The good Lord grant that in the day of Christ I may rejoice that I have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain.



COLLECTS :

THEIR TENDENCY.

Comfort of the Holy Ghost, { First Sunday after Ascension.

Humiliation, Whitsunday.

Direction of the Holy { Nineteenth Sunday after
Ghost, Trinity.

Manifold gifts of the Holy { St. Barnabas.
Ghost, }

Means of Grace; Hearing { St. Bartholomew.
St. Luke.

—————Reading .. Second Sunday in Advent.

—————Fasting { First Sunday in Lent.
Tenth and twenty-third
Sundays after Trinity.

To convert us from sin. . . { First Sunday in Advent.
First Sunday after Easter.
St. Andrew.
St. James.
St. Matthew.

Pardon of sin, and acceptance with God. { Twelfth, twenty-first, and
twenty-fourth Sundays
after Trinity.
Purification.
Second Sunday after Epiphany.

To rescue us from temptation, { Fourth Sunday in Advent.
Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.
Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity.

To enable us to do good, { Fifth Sunday after Easter.
First, ninth, eleventh, thirteenth, seventeenth, and
twenty-fifth Sundays
after Trinity.

To bring us to glory, . . . { Epiphany.
Sixth Sunday after Epiphany.

Regeneration, Christmas Day.

Charity, Quinquagesima.

Mortification, { Circumcision.
Easter Eve.

Contrition, Ash Wednesday.

Sincerity, Third Sunday after Easter.

Love of God and his laws, { Fourth Sunday after Easter.
Sixth and fourteenth Sun-
days after Trinity.

Heavenly desires, Ascension.

Faith right, Trinity Sunday.

Faith firm, { Seventh Sunday after Tri-
nity.
St. Thomas.
St. Mark.

Imitation of Christ, { Sixth Sunday in Lent.
Second Sunday after
Easter.

Imitation of saints, { St. Stephen.
St. Paul.
St. Philip and James.
St. John Baptist.
Innocents.
All Saints.

Guarding of angels and
God's providence, { Second, third, fourth, and
twentieth Sundays after
Trinity.
St. Michael.

Deliverance from enemies, Third Sunday in Lent.

Deliverance from judg- { Sexagesima.
ments, { Septuagesima.
Fourth Sunday in Lent.

Support under afflictions, { Third and fourth Sundays
after Epiphany.

Defence from evil, and { Eighth and fifteenth Sun-
supply of good, { days after Trinity.

For Jews, Turks, &c. .. Good Friday.

That ministers may be fit, { St. Matthias.
diligent, and successful, { St. Peter.
Third Sunday in Advent.

That the people may be { Good Friday.
kept in truth, unity, { St. John.
and peace, { St. Simon and Jude.
Fifth, sixth, and twelfth
Sundays after Trinity.



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