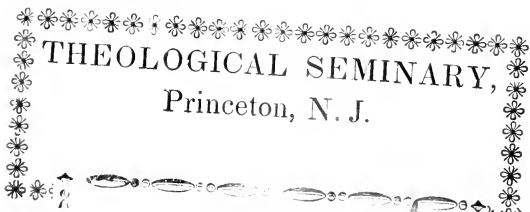


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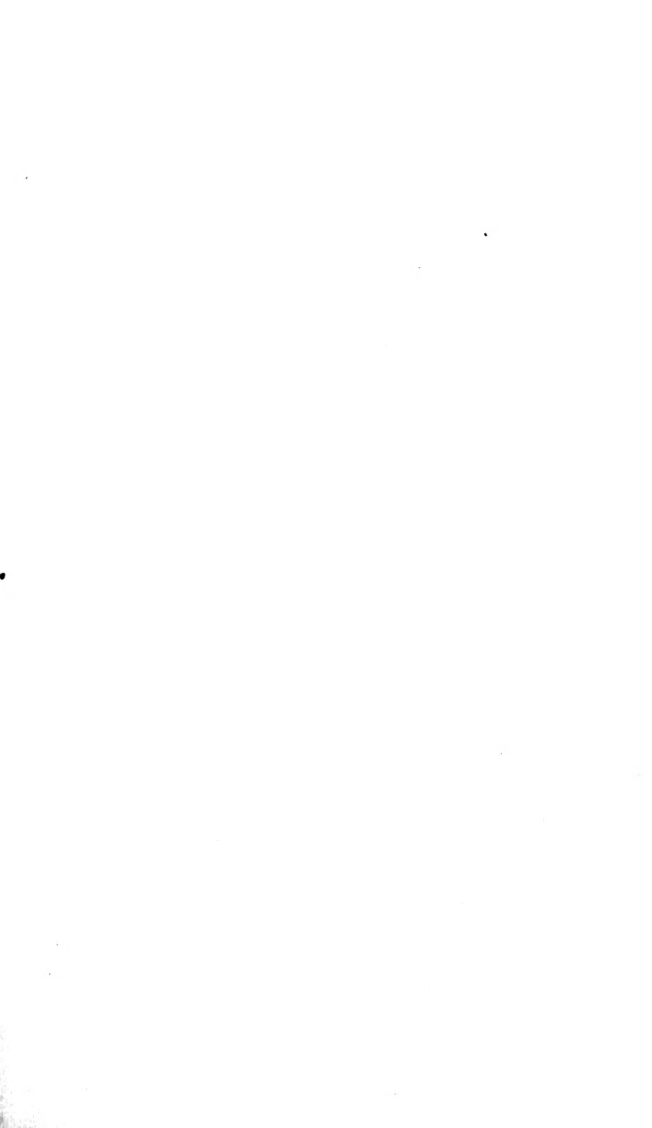


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Sacred dissertations on the
Lord's Prayer

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SACRED DISSERTATIONS

ON

THE LORD'S PRAYER,

TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN OF

HERMAN WITSIUS, D.D.

PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN THE UNIVERSITIES OF
FRANEKER, UTRECHT, AND LEYDEN ;

WITH NOTES,

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM PRINGLE,

AUCHTERARDER.

EDINBURGH :

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HERMAN WITSIUS

TO HIS PUPILS,

STUDENTS OF TRUE AND HEAVENLY WISDOM,¹

GREETING.

DEARLY-BELOVED YOUTHS, WHO HAVE BEEN CONSECRATED TO THE SERVICE OF GOD, AND WHOM I WARMLY ESTEEM AND LOVE, as I am employed every day in addressing you personally, so I take the present opportunity of addressing you by a written communication. All my prayers, desires, anxieties, and labours are directed to this one object, that you may be properly instructed in Divine truth, and somewhat prepared for conveying it to others. You will not, I trust, be displeased at being again requested to accept from my hand a small literary gift. I wrote to you formerly, and dedicated to you my Dissertations on the Apostle's Creed. That "labour," I have had abundant opportunities of knowing, was "not in vain in the Lord."² There were, and still are some persons who acknowledge that they derived from it some little assistance in explaining to the Christian people the most important myste-

¹ Veræ theosophiæ studiosis.

² 1 Cor. xv. 58.

ries of our religion, and in applying them to the practice of true virtue and ardent piety. These considerations, I am free to confess, gave me great comfort. No one was ever more deeply convinced than I am that very little proceeds from me which is fitted to advance the glory of God, or the increase of the Redeemer's kingdom. For this reason I am delighted to see other persons of higher ability devoting their utmost exertions, with remarkable success, to an object of surpassing worth. And whenever I perceive among those eminent persons some who had been placed under my own tuition, I feel myself excited to earnest gratitude and lively joy. Nor can I avoid regarding them as auxiliaries kindly granted to supply my weakness.

With what zeal, earnestness, and perseverance I frequently exhort you—to seek to obtain heavenly truths from the Holy Scriptures as from the mouth of God himself,—to preserve them carefully in the repository of a pure heart,—to express your belief of them by the whole course of your life,—to remember your professions and the expectations which your parents, and teachers, and the Church of Christ have formed respecting you,—to yield yourselves, during the present season of youth, as Nazarites to the Lord, separated from the pollution of the world, and purely devoted to the holy ministry,—you cannot but know and readily acknowledge. You

know also how far the course of instruction which I follow is adapted to that object. For the explanations I give you are never wasted on the trifling subtleties of laborious sophistry, or the bitterness of wrangling disputes, or the exaggerated language in which opposite sentiments are stated, or the reproaches of brethren whose views differ from our own, or the foolish announcement of my own discoveries, which I freely own to be of very little value. But those truths which I rejoice that I have learned from God,—to whom, by whatever human agency they may have been imparted, I freely ascribe them,—I take pleasure in communicating to you mildly, calmly, and with the Spirit of meekness,—endeavouring that, “by manifestation of the truth to the conscience,”¹ I may first approve myself to God, then to my own mind, and finally to you. And this manner of teaching, widely removed from all noise and pomp, though it may appear somewhat cold, wants not its own beneficial excitements, and is best of all adapted to promote that wisdom, which the Apostle James recommends, and which is “first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”² If the consideration of the Divine perfections, as they shine “in the face

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 2.² James i. 17.

of Jesus Christ,"¹ and of the other lofty truths which the Gospel has revealed, calmly contemplated in the light of the Holy Spirit, fail to excite a man to love them, and to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,"² though it were even to martyrdom and to death,—that man will not be powerfully affected by the warmest disputes on religious subjects. Or, if any warmth arise, I should suspect it to be "strange fire which the Lord commanded not,"³ and which he will not accept upon his altar.

Since, therefore, that wisdom which I am desirous to teach you, or rather to learn along with you, must be asked from God in pure and holy prayer, I was easily persuaded to commit to writing the illustrations which had been orally delivered on the exercise of prayer, and particularly on that prayer which was recommended to us by our Lord Jesus Christ. I am aware, indeed, that the most eminent men of every age and of every class, with whom nothing which I can produce could be at all compared, have already handled this subject. But if you are resolved to receive nothing from me which has not been formerly stated by others, and perhaps to better purpose, I shall be laid under the necessity of maintaining perpetual silence, and of

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 6.² Jude 3.³ Lev. x. 1.

sending you away, for the most part, with empty hands. And yet I would not have you to believe that I have done absolutely nothing. If information which was widely spread, and which could not be found out without toil and inconvenience, has been collected and arranged in a form not inelegant, I have certainly done something for your advantage. And why may I not venture to expect that you will be pleased and instructed by this work, as you assure me that you have been by my former productions? To instruct learned men, or proficients in those studies, is an undertaking which my slender attainments forbid me to attempt. And yet those very persons will not be displeased to see the Students in our University receiving from me those instructions which themselves, perhaps, when young, had learned from their teachers. For what else can they expect from one who pretends to nothing more than to discharge his official duties to you according to the measure of his ability?

But no one knows better than you do that we do not confine our whole attention to those elements of Christian doctrine. How often have I exhorted you to peruse with great earnestness and unwearied application all the inspired books both of the Old and New Testament,—and to bring to the examination of them, all that your industry could collect from a careful study of

the original languages,—from Hebrew, Greek, and Roman antiquities,—and from those writers of our own time, who have devoted their principal attention to the illustration of Scripture? How often have I complained that, through slothfulness or undue haste, those important aids have been wholly overlooked? How often have I exhorted you not to rest satisfied with what you have learned from common places, systems, summaries, and abridgments, of which you are required to give an account at the public examinations; but, nobly aspiring to higher attainments, to examine with the utmost industry the wisdom of God pervading the whole body of Scripture, not doctrines merely, but histories, ceremonial observances, and prophecies, with astonishing variety? How often, for this purpose, have I lent you the aid of my own hand, of which, if it is not the most skilful that could be desired, I can at least say that it has been honestly and frankly given, and that it need not excite wonder if they who are pleased to follow it shall in a short time outrun their guide?

Thus, my young friends, if you begin with God, if you resolutely pursue the work, if, in a word, you are not wanting to yourselves, you ought not to despair of eminent success in an age to which, there is reason to believe, the prediction of Daniel applies, *Many shall run to*

*and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.*¹ I close with this humble and earnest prayer, that God may make you “perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works,”² and stars of the first magnitude in the firmament of his church. And if I have done you any service, present your prayers for me, a wretched sinner, to our common Lord, through the only Saviour, Jesus Christ.

AT UTRECHT,
24th June, 1789.

¹ Dan. xii. 4.

² 2 Tim. iii. 17.



TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE name of Witsius is familiarly known to the English reader. His writings are destined to hold an enduring place among the stores of Christian theology. The high esteem with which he is regarded by various classes of readers, is founded on a combination of excellencies rarely meeting in the same individual. In extensive and profound acquaintance with the doctrines of scripture, powerful defence of the truth against the attacks of adversaries, and earnest exhortations to a holy and devout life, he has few equals. If strict justice shall award to him a small share of the censure, together with a large share of the praise, due to the Dutch school, his claims to admiration will be little abated. The undue attachment to human systems, with which he is occasionally chargeable, never hides from his view the paramount authority of Scripture, to which he bows with implicit and cordial deference. His acuteness as a logician, which rendered him a formidable antagonist, was regulat-

ed by a severe regard to truth, and disdained to exercise itself in that plausible sophistry in which almost all our controversial writers have largely indulged.

He ranks high as a Biblical Critic. Intimately conversant with the original languages, and with those aids which geography, natural history, antiquities, and other kindred sciences furnish to the interpreter, he was singularly prepared for that branch of study. Patiently employing his vast resources, he pursued with fearless intrepidity the inquiry, "What hath the Lord answered? and What hath the Lord spoken?"¹ Those critical researches, which, in our own times, have often been unwisely disjoined from systematic theology, receive at his hands their appropriate honours. Having given to each passage of holy writ a close and faithful scrutiny, he classifies the results, applies them to the various questions as they arise, and illustrates the harmony of divine truth. The lively devotion which pervades all his writings is their principal claim, and their highest recommendation to the followers of Christ.

I cannot allow myself to close this imperfect outline without laying before the reader the sentiments of the excellent Mr. Hervey, expressed with great beauty and nice discrimination: "*Witsii Animadversiones Irenicæ*, C. vii. A choice little piece of polemical divinity, perhaps

¹ Jer. xxiii. 35.

the very best that is extant : in which the most important controversies are fairly stated, accurately discussed, and judiciously determined, with a perspicuity of sense, and a solidity of reasoning, exceeded by nothing but the remarkable candour of the sentiments. The *Oeconomia Foederum*, written by the same hand, is a body of divinity ; in its method so well digested, in its doctrines so truly evangelical, and (what is not very usual with our systematic writers) in its language so refined and elegant, in its manner so affectionate and animating, that I would venture to recommend it to every young student of divinity. I would not scruple to risk all my reputation upon the merits of this performance ; and I cannot but lament it as one of my greatest losses that I was not sooner acquainted with this most excellent author ; all whose works have such a delicacy of composition, and such a sweet savour of holiness, that I know not any comparison more proper to represent their true character than *the golden pot which had manna*, and was, outwardly, bright with burnished gold ; inwardly, rich with heavenly food.”¹

Both of the works above referred to have appeared in an English dress. The *Conciliatory Animadversions* were translated by the Rev. Thomas Bell, Glasgow, whose pastoral labours are remembered by many Christians with the

¹ Theron and Aspasio, Letter V.

warmest regard. *The Economy of the Covenants* had been published earlier, and is perhaps more extensively known. But it was reserved for Dr. Frazer to give a translation of the *Dissertations on the Apostle's Creed*, at once faithful and elegant, worthy of that "refined language" to which all who were familiar with the original, in common with Mr. Hervey, had paid the tribute of their applause.

The *Dissertations on the Lord's Prayer* appear now, for the first time, in our language. How far they are a faithful copy it is not for me to determine. But I may be allowed to say what kind of work I have attempted to execute. A translation strictly literal would have been so glaringly absurd that it may be thought superfluous to disclaim such an intention. And yet the comparative advantages and disadvantages of a close verbal adherence must be viewed in the light of an open question. Principles of translation, which, if fairly acted on, would destroy all freedom and elegance, are every day defended by men whose classical acquirements, at least, are by no means inconsiderable.

The question turns wholly on the object for which the work happens to be designed. A translation intended to assist a schoolboy in parsing and construing a Greek or Latin author, ought to be exceedingly close. Modes of expression which would be offensive to good taste, or utterly un-

intelligible to the mere English reader, might detract little from the value of such a performance. But a translator who addresses the general reader is not entitled to disregard the proprieties of language, or the ordinary rules of composition.

In what manner would the author have expressed himself, if he had written in the language into which the translation is made? So far as this can be conjectured, a better guide cannot easily be imagined. An Englishman writes a Latin book. With what expressions would he have clothed his thoughts if he had employed his native tongue? It is reasonable to believe that he would not have offended his ear by barbarous or foreign idiom. The impression made by the two versions on one who fully understood them, would have been exactly alike.

A perfect translation will bring out every shade of the original, while the peculiarities of the two languages are completely exchanged. This would imply such talent and scholarship as may not easily be found. But an approach ought to be attempted, and a high standard is always advantageous. The general principle approves itself so completely to common sense, that every translator who wishes his work to be generally read will follow it out, whatever may be his favourite theory.

Laying aside the merits of the translation, the

Dissertations on the Lord's Prayer are well fitted to sustain the reputation of Witsius. The subject had been treated by the ablest hands. Few considerable writers had failed to bestow upon it a lengthened exposition. Yet our author has produced a work so delightfully fresh, so animated, solid, and judicious, that it may take its place by the side of any which had previously appeared. The quotations from the Fathers, some of them very brilliant, are equalled, if not exceeded by his own eloquence.

The preliminary discussions respecting prayer will be found to be highly instructive. To some they may appear superfluous, and such titles as *Gestures in Prayer*, or *Stated Seasons of Prayer*, may be not a little repulsive. But let those dissertations be carefully read, and they will be pronounced to be neither trivial nor uninteresting. To one who takes pleasure in the word of God, and who values highly every part of its contents, the light which is there thrown on many inspired passages must be very acceptable.

It may excite surprise that a doctrinal treatise should be so profusely garnished with Hebrew and Greek quotations. But it ought to be remembered that the work, as the author informs us in his preface, consists of Lectures which he had delivered to the students of theology placed under his care. They were supposed to be well acquainted with the original languages in which

the Scriptures were written. Under so able an instructor they ought to have made uncommon proficiency. With a view to that class of readers, the quotations have been retained, while, for the sake of others, they have been translated, and, for the most part, thrown to the bottom of the page.

I cannot but hope that the perusal of this work will cherish, through the Divine blessing, a devout and heavenly spirit. It will be strange if its lessons of wisdom, more valuable than all the stores of learning with which it is enriched, shall lead only to idle speculation. But our Great Teacher can alone instruct us in the divine art of holding communion with heaven, drawing down into the soul its choicest influences, and walking in the way that leadeth to life everlasting. Let us, therefore, "be careful for nothing; but in every thing, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let our requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."¹ Amen.

¹ Phil. iv. 6, 7.

DISSERTATION I.

ON PRAYER.

I HAVE undertaken to employ a few Dissertations in illustrating that form, or model of prayer, which the Lord Jesus recommended to his hearers and disciples. From the nature of the subject, prayer, viewed as a part of our religion, seems to demand, in the first instance, a careful examination. On many accounts these preliminary discussions are fitted to be useful. For the present, I shall say nothing of the light that will be thrown on some little understood customs of Christian and Jewish antiquity, and even on many passages of the sacred writings. My principal object is, to convey just views of a holy and reverent approach to God, and of the manner in which devout and acceptable prayers must be presented to the Supreme Being. The order to be observed is the following: First, to explain WHAT IS PRAYER; next, in what our OBLIGATION to it consists; and, lastly, IN WHAT MANNER it ought to be performed. These subjects will be separately treated under their respective heads.

It will be proper to explain, at the outset, those terms which the writers of the Old and New Testament, when treating of prayer, are accustomed to employ. Paul recommends *δεήσεις, προσευχάς, ἐντεύξεις*, 1 Tim. ii. 1, to which he adds, *αἰτήματα*, Phil. iv. 6, and to all he subjoins *εὐχαριστία*. In settling the distinction of these words interpreters differ, but agree that all of them denote various lights or aspects under which prayer is viewed. The view commonly entertained is, that they denote the distinct branches of prayer, which are included under the general name of *αἰτημάτα*, or *petitions*. *Δεήσεις* are understood to be *deprecations for removing evils*; *προσευχαι*, *prayers for obtaining benefits*; *ἐντεύξεις*, *intercessions for others*. Theodoret, for instance, says, *δεήσις ἐστὶν ὑπὲρ ἀπαλλαγῆς τινῶν λυπηρῶν ἰκετεία προσφερομένη*, *deprecation is a prayer presented for the removal of certain evils*. *Προσευχή ἐστὶν αἴτησις ἀγαθῶν*, *a petition for benefits*. "*Ἐντεύξις ἐστὶ κατηγορία τῶν ἀδικούντων*, *an accusation of persons who do an injury*, and, consequently, an intercession for others who are unjustly oppressed.

But, with all possible respect to these learned men, the solidity of such distinctions may be fairly questioned. For *δεήσις*, if we attend to its etymological import, is derived *ἀπὸ τοῦ δεῖσθαι*, *from being in want*, and is a petition for that *οὗ δεόμεθα*, *which we want*. It is very correctly defined by Gregory Nazianzen in his XV. Iambic ode: *Δέησιν οἴου τὴν αἴτησιν ἐνδεῶν*, *consider that when you are in want of any thing, your petition is δεήσις*. If we attend again to the customary usage of the word, it signifies a *petition for a*

benefit. Thus, when Zacharias prays for a son, the angel replies, *Fear not Zacharias, διότι ἐσηκούσθη ἡ δέησις σου, for thy petition has been heard.* The word προσευχή is very general, and denotes the expression of any wish whatever, which may relate either to averting an evil, or obtaining a benefit. Such, certainly, was the προσευχή (prayer) of Christ, when he said προσευχόμενος (praying), *Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.* Such, too, was the προσευχή to which he exhorted his disciples, προσεύχεσθε ἵνα μὴ ἐισέλθῃτε εἰς πειρασμόν. Lastly, when the Apostle requires us to present, in behalf of all men, every thing that is included under the various names of prayer, what reason can be assigned for interpreting the single word ἐντεύξις as meaning *intercession for others.* Certainly, that is not its meaning in 1 Tim. iv. 5, where the creatures of God, which have been given up for our use, and declared to be sanctified, διὰ λόγου Θεοῦ καὶ ἐντεύξεως.

My opinion is, that the various names express one and the same thing, viewed under various aspects. Our prayers are called δέησις, so far as by them we declare to God our *need*, for δεῖσθαι is *to be in need.* They are προσευχαί, as they contain our *wishes.* They are αἰτήματα, as they express *petitions* and desires. They are ἐντεύξεις, as we are permitted by God to approach Him, not with timidity and diffidence, but in a *familiar* manner. For ἐντεύξις is a familiar conversation and interview. That εὐχαριστία is *thanksgiving* for benefits already received, is hardly necessary to be mentioned.

Similar observations may be offered on the Hebrew

words, which are often found united or interchanged. The most important of them are שועה, רנה, שאלה, תפלה and תהנה, which must be explained in their order. Each of them expresses something which deserves our attention in prayer.

שאלה is ἀίτησις, a petition. Jehovah gave me את שאלתי אשר שאלתי מזמו, *my petition which I asked of him*, says Anna, 1 Sam. i. 27. By another word from the same root, David calls prayers משאלות לב, *petitions, wishes of the heart*.¹

רנה signifies a loud noise, sometimes in singing and mirth, sometimes in public speaking, but sometimes, also, in lamentation and prayers, לשמוע אל, *to hearken unto the cry*, 1 Kings viii. 28. David, Ps. xvii. 2, says הקשיבה רנתי, *give ear unto my prayer*. The mental anxiety expressed by it produces a powerful effect on the body and on the animal spirits, and strongly impells the tongue to ask assistance against pressing calamities. It corresponds to the phrase used by Paul, κρατερῆ ἰσχυρα, Heb. v. 7.

שועה is loud speaking employed in imploring safety. The eminent Cocceius chooses to translate it *Quiritatio*. A person was said among the Romans *Quiritare*, who implored with a loud voice, *Quiritium fidem*; from which Vossius conjectures that the Dutch word *Krytten* is derived, as if it had been written *Quiriten*. But these are only passing observations. To return to שועה, I cannot better express the force of this term than in the words of

¹ Ps. xxxvii. 4.

Cocceius:—"It is the language of a person placed in imminent danger, intimating the violence done to him, for the purpose of arousing those whom inclination or duty might prompt to ward off an injury from an innocent person. For such is the import of the word שׁוּעַ, which, as it is uttered for the sake of salvation, I have derived from יִשׁוּעַ or יְשׁוּעָה, *salvation*. For the cry uttered was הוֹשִׁיעָה *save*, or חַמֵּם *help*, or some such word. Just as among the Romans, *Io Quirites, Serva, Opprimor, and the like.*"

Of the Hebrew synonymes which we are now examining, the most important is תַּפְּלָה. It denotes that kind of prayer which, resting on the goodness of its cause, is addressed to God as *arbiter and judge*. It is derived from פָּלַל, *he judged*. An instance of the force of this verb occurs in that remarkable observation of the priest Eli, addressed to his sons, 1 Sam. ii. 25, "If one man shall sin against another, וּפְלַלּוּ אֱלֹהִים, *the magistrate shall judge him*; but if a man sin against the Lord, מִי יִתְפַּלֵּל לוֹ, *who shall entreat for him?*" Who shall present in his behalf that kind of prayer which implies confidence in the goodness of his cause as submitted to the Supreme Judge? In any other point of view, there is nothing to prevent the exercise of prayer to God, offered with that deep humility which springs from a just sense of the privilege of approach. Accordingly, Job says, לְמִשׁוּפְטֵי אֲתָחַן, *I will entreat my judge*, meaning that he would implore his favour. When, on the other hand, a worshipper draws near to God, animated by the confidence which springs from the conviction that his cause is good, and en-

treating that his integrity may be manifested in opposition to the wickedness of his enemies, his prayer may, in the full import of the term, be called תפלה. Such was the prayer of David, Psalm v. when, appealing to the holiness and justice of God, describing in forcible terms the fury of his enemies, declaring solemnly his innocence and the warmth of his devotion, he thus proceeds, ver. 2, *Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King and my God, בי אליך אתפלה, for to thee, as a just Judge, will I pray.* A parallel passage occurs Luke xviii. 7, 'Ο δὲ Θεὸς ὅτι μὴ πειρήσει τὴν ἐξότιζήσων, *Shall not God avenge his elect, who cry to him day and night?* It must at the same time be observed, that תפלה is applicable both to a demand of justice, and to a supplication for forgiveness. In this case, however, an appeal is made to the justice of God, on the ground of the satisfaction offered by Christ. It is, in some sort, a judicial proceeding at the bar of God. When a sinner acknowledges his guilt, betakes himself to the ark of salvation, and relies on the righteousness of Christ, the justice of God requires that he shall not only be dismissed with kindness and freed from punishment, but admitted to the enjoyment of his favour. Nay, more, when believers supplicate and expect, through Christ, the forgiveness of their sins, they have access to God as a righteous Judge. *If we confess our sins* (1 John i. 9), *he is faithful and JUST to forgive us our sins.* And thus even where the highest manifestation of free grace is made the subject of prayer, the justice of God is not overlooked. The two are beautifully joined by David, Psalm iv. 2, *Hear me when I call, O God of*

my righteousness : thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress. Have mercy upon me ושמע תפלותי, and hear my prayer.

Again, prayer may be viewed as a *supplication for favour* and kindness from Him to whose goodness, and not to our own merits, every benefit received from Him is gratefully ascribed. It is then called תְּהִנָּה. For while this term signifies *favour*, it signifies also, *supplication for favour* from Him who is rich in grace to pardon and bestow. Accordingly, this description of prayer is usually presented to God with the deepest humility. In תְּפִלָּה, viewed as such, the boldness of a good conscience is the prevailing sentiment. In תְּהִנָּה it is humility accompanied by an acknowledgment of unworthiness. This idea is more fully brought out when the תְּהִנָּה is said to *fall*, and when the worshippers are said to *cast it down*. תְּפִלַּתִּי נָא תְּהַנֵּנִי לְפָנֶיךָ, *Let my deprecation fall before thee*, said Jeremiah, xxxvii. 20. And again, Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, unto whom ye sent me, לְהַפִּיל הַנְּתַכְּם לְפָנָי (xlii. 9.) *to present*, literally, to throw down, *your supplication before him*. The reference is to the attitude of the suppliants, who, imploring the divine favour, fall down flat upon the earth. While they fall down, the words which they employ for obtaining the favourable regard of the Supreme Being are said to fall down along with them.

Perhaps, however, these explications of the terms will be regarded by some as pursued to a greater length than was necessary. Though nothing, certainly, should be thought superfluously minute which

contributes to the illustration of the inspired volume, nor will pious persons disrelish or undervalue that information which the diversity of terms is fitted to convey as to the nature of prayer, or the manner in which it should be offered. The following definition of prayer will be found, perhaps, not unsuitable. PRAYER IS THE ADDRESS OF A RATIONAL CREATURE TO GOD, EXPRESSING TO HIM THE DESIRES OF THE MIND, WITH THE HOPE OF OBTAINING THEM. Agreeably to this definition, we shall enquire, I. BY WHOM PRAYER IS OFFERED. II. TO WHOM PRAYER IS OFFERED. III. IN WHAT PRAYER CONSISTS.

Properly speaking, a *creature*, and a *rational* creature *only*, can pray. As there is nothing of which the Creator is in want, as there is none richer than himself from whom he can receive any thing, and no superior to whom he owes homage, to suppose it possible that he should pray would involve a denial of his Majesty. An irrational creature, on the other hand, has no perception of the Divine Majesty or of its own wants, and is, therefore, incapable of prayer. From rational creatures alone, angels and men, prayer, properly so called, can proceed.

These remarks are so obvious, that they might have appeared scarcely worthy of notice, were it not that they afford an opportunity of explaining some phrases used in the Scriptures. Two difficulties here present themselves, the latter of which is by far the more serious. First, It may be thought uncertain in what sense Scripture ascribes to *brute* animals prayer, crying, sighs, and hope in the Divine kind-

ness. Ps. cxlvii. 9; Joel i. 18; Ps. civ. 27. The other difficulty is, what is meant by the King of Nineveh ordering his *cattle* to fast, wear sackcloth, and cry aloud to God; Jon. iii. 7, 8. In the former case, the whole phraseology is manifestly metaphorical. Borrowing the language applied to men, it expresses the wants of the brute creatures, and their dependence on God, and reminds us of the watchful care of Providence, which, without their knowledge, provides for their necessities, as truly as if their earnest prayers were constantly offered to God.

The order of the Assyrian king had a different meaning. He issued it for the purpose of testifying the greatness of his grief and sorrow, which he wished to express by every means in his power. It was the common practice of antiquity, that during the deepest mourning, the cattle were driven away from their pasture, and the horses, camels, and cattle of that description, were stripped of their valuable ornaments and coverings, and assumed a black and filthy aspect when they appeared in public. An instance occurs in the fifth Eclogue of Virgil:—

Non ulli pastos illis egère diebus
 Frigida, Daphni, boves ad flumina : nulla neque amnem
 Libavit quadrupes, nec graminis attigit herbam.

The swains forgot their sheep, nor near the brink
 Of running waters brought their herds to drink.
 The thirsty cattle of themselves abstained
 From water, and their grassy fare disdained.—DRYDEN.

His design in issuing the edict was to produce a

powerful excitement of grief by means of such a spectacle, to enable them to see, as in a mirror, what they had themselves deserved, in the same manner as, by the ceremonial law, men were commanded to slay and burn their cattle, in order that they might perceive in them a lively image of their own condemnation. And what could be more suitable than to employ as an excitement to grief and repentance those beasts which they had often abused for the purposes of luxury and pride? Besides, all those animals are man's servants, and, when afflicted, must be understood to add to his affliction. They cherish also, the hope that, if the whole air were made to resound with the cries and wailings of men, and the bellowings, lowings, and bleatings of famishing cattle, the Supreme Being would be more easily moved to the exercise of mercy.

A more serious difficulty arises out of what we have formerly asserted, that God cannot pray. In what sense, then, is it that *ἐντεύξις* is ascribed by Paul to the Holy Spirit, and that the Son of God, even before the days of his incarnation, is said to have interceded for the Church? Concerning the Spirit, Paul thus writes; Rom. viii. 26, 27.—“The Spirit himself, *ὑπερβεντυγχάνει*, intercedes for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the heart knoweth *τι τὸ φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος*, what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” The intercession of the *Son* is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament. To omit other instances, we may refer to the vision of Zecha-

riah, (i. 12, 13.) where the angel of the Lord is represented as addressing to Jehovah this prayer:—“O Lord of Hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these three score and ten years? And the Lord answered the angel that talked with me with good words and comfortable words.” That angel of the Lord is the Lord Jesus Christ, the same “that stood among the myrtle trees,” (v. 11,) that is, who is present with his church during her deepest oppression, and yields to her a protection which, like the myrtle, is ever green. It is he whom Zechariah saw under the emblem of a man “riding on a red horse,” whom the “red, speckled, and white” horses followed as their leader, to whom they come and render an account of their actions, who, in fine, addresses the prophets, and suggests to him all that he is to say. Yet this angel of the Lord, who represents himself as Jehovah, is introduced as praying.

We shall give a separate reply to each. When the Spirit is said *ὑπερεντυγχάνειν* to *intercede* for us, the meaning is, not that he prays, but that our prayers are formed, dictated, and suggested by the Spirit, as the spirit of prayer; Zech. xii. 10. He is *παράκλητος*, our *advocate*, as he is often called in John's Gospel; not that he pleads our cause with God (in that sense Christ, who went for that purpose from us to the Father, is our advocate), but that he pleads the cause of God and Christ with us, to whom he is sent by the Father and Christ. He explains to us the success of Christ's satisfaction and advocacy,

excites us to faith in him, and furnishes us with arguments which enable us to maintain our rights and privileges in the presence of God, and in opposition to all our adversaries. Imagine to yourself a criminal, arraigned on accusations of awful moment, and required to present to the judge, in due form, a written petition, while he possesses neither materials for writing, nor the slightest acquaintance with the form in which it must be written. Imagine, farther, an advocate, endowed with the highest skill in his profession, who draws out the entire petition, which the criminal addresses, signs with his own hand, and presents to the judge. That petition is wholly the work of the advocate ; but it must be considered to be the petition of the suppliant, because the pleading is in his behalf, and because he receives the full benefit of the favour supplicated. We are that criminal. We have many things to say to God, and yet “ know not what we should pray for as we ought.” That advocate is the Holy Spirit. He suggests to us all our petitions, and the manner in which they should be offered. He opens the eyes of our mind to form a correct estimate of our own wants, and of the excellence of spiritual and heavenly objects. He excites in us ardent desires, and implants in us those affections which are suitable to the majesty of God, to our own worthlessness, and to the high value of the blessings sought. In short, he bestows on us a holy boldness, and so cries in us ; Gal. iv. 6, that by him *we cry, Abba, Father* ; Rom. viii. 15. Thus, by producing in us those sentiments and views, “ he

intercedes for us with groanings that cannot be uttered."

Nor is this all. Those groanings must be considered to be το φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος, containing the *mind*, the *wish*, the *desire* of the Spirit. So that whatever we ask in the exercise of that love which he kindles in our hearts, the Holy Spirit, we may rest assured, asks for us, or, in other words, he, in common with the Father and the Spirit, decrees that it shall be bestowed on us. There is an emphasis, too, in the word ὑπερεντυγχάνειν, which is applied to the Spirit. We, through the Spirit, ἐντυγχάνομεν, for ourselves. The Spirit, ὑπερεντύγγανει, adds something to our intercession, imparts to it fresh vigour, and causes our prayers to be accepted, not as our suggestions, but as his own. In all this there is nothing which is unworthy of the majesty of the Supreme Being. Every thing, on the contrary, demonstrates the amazing and inconceivable love of God, of which we are the objects.

As to the *Son of God* pleading for us, we must take into account that he may be viewed in a twofold aspect; I. As God. II. As a surety. As God, ὁμοούσιος καὶ ἰσότιμος, *one in nature, and equal in glory* to the Father, he does not pray, but is the object of prayer. As a Surety, in fulfilment of the Father's will and of his own, he had undertaken to perform, in time, all that was necessary for obtaining, in the fullest manner, our salvation. Of that mediatorial office, in almost all its parts, he had made trial, previous to his assumption of human nature. Such was the nature of that prayer which must be viewed

by us as the expression of the will of the Son of God as our surety that his people should then obtain the application of those benefits which he, as actual surety, would procure for them at the appointed time. This is not a prayer similar to ours, accompanied by an acknowledgment of want, and by homage to a superior. It is the glorious declaration of that will, which belongs exclusively to the Son of God, who alone is competent to sustain the mediatorial office.

Hitherto we have inquired *by whom* prayer is to be offered. We are now to enter on the inquiry *to whom* it must be offered. That we ought to pray to God only, is a statement which we think will not be disputed by any Christian. This appears from what our Lord said to the tempter, Matt. iv. 10, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." To God alone belongs that Supreme *Majesty* which we acknowledge and adore in our prayers, Jer. x. 6, 7. He alone is *omniscient*, and none else can hear the desires, wishes, and breathings *ἀνεκλάλητα* *which cannot be uttered*, from whatever place they may proceed. 1 Kings viii. 39, or possess a perfect knowledge of all our necessities, Matt. vi. 8, 32. He alone is *omnipotent*, and "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us," Eph. iii. 20. He alone is the *fountain of all good*, the Father of lights, "from whom cometh down every good and every perfect gift," James i. 17. From that fountain he causes to flow the river of his pleasures, of which his friends drink and are de-

lighted, while they are "abundantly satisfied with the fatness of his house," Ps. xxxvi. 9, 10. In him alone the whole confidence of the suppliant must be placed, Jer. xvii. 5, 7. To sum up all in a word, He it is to whom it is said, THOU HEAREST PRAYER, AND UNTO THEE SHALL ALL FLESH COME.

But something more is necessary than the general acknowledgment that God alone is the proper object of adoration. We must also inquire, under what aspect or relation the Deity will be contemplated by devout and intelligent worshippers? We answer, 1. According to his perfections, those especially the view of which is fitted to excite veneration, faith, hope, and love. 2. According to that wonderful distinction of persons, on which rests the structure of the economy of our salvation. They delight to address the Father as having, in a peculiar manner, originated the counsel of peace, and made arrangements for adopting us as his sons, through Jesus Christ, "according to the good pleasure of his will." They regard the Son as their eldest brother, who reconciles them to the Eternal Father, and who, by his testament sealed and ratified, admits us, in a manner altogether wonderful, to be fellow-heirs with himself. They regard the Holy Spirit as the Blessed Person, to whom, from first to last, the work of regenerating, sanctifying, and comforting our souls, must be ascribed. In this way the apostles Paul and John address separately the persons of the undivided Trinity, 2 Cor. xiii. 14. Rev. i. 4, 5. 3. They contemplate God as he is, and as he holds intercourse with men through the mediation of Christ, in whom he

commands us to worship him, and without whom he cannot be worshipped, in a proper manner, by a sinful man. For "this is the will of the Father, that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father : he that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him," John v. 23. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever," Rev. v. 12, 13. This is that "name which is above every name," which God hath given to Christ, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father," Phil. iii. 9, 10, 11.

From all these passages, it is evident that our prayers are chiefly influenced by the views we entertain respecting Christ as our Mediator and Lord. In what light he is to be regarded in prayer deserves our most earnest inquiry. We have no wish to enter, at present, on the question, which has agitated and divided our most eminent divines, *is Christ, as Mediator, the object of adoration?* This question, when the passions of the disputants have been laid aside, will be found to resolve itself into a logomachy, for all orthodox divines agree in holding the following propositions. I. The excellence of the Godhead is

alone the ground of adoration. It could not have been our duty to adore Jesus, had he not been God, equal with the Father. The adoration due to Jesus warrants us to infer his eternal Godhead. II. The mediatorial work itself contains *θεία ἀνζήματα*, proofs of divine excellence, and can be performed by no other than a divine person. Ἡ *παπένωσις*, the single act of *humbling himself*, and assuming our nature, could with propriety be affirmed of God only, and therefore involves and pre-supposes the infinite dignity of a Divine Person. III. That most excellent glory which has been conferred on Christ in human nature, is a mark and proof of the divinity of Christ. For even the human nature of Christ would not have been carried to that pitch of glory, and would not have been raised, *θεοπεπρωμένος*, to *godlike* honours, had it not been the human nature of the Son of God. IV. However highly we may represent that glory of the human nature, it does not entitle us to conclude that Christ, according to that human nature, or, as he is man, though a glorified man, is the object of adoration. V. Still, the Mediator, who is *θεάνθρωπος*, *God-man*, is the object of adoration. As Mediator, he must be viewed in prayer, and what he performs as Mediator it is our duty to ask from Christ. Any thing beyond this, in the controversy, turns on a subtle and scholastic interpretation of the particle *AS*, which Scripture never employs on this subject.

We come now to lay down the order of prayer addressed to Christ, and that, certainly, does not consist in minute scholastic subtleties. The prayer of pious persons may and ought to have a reference to Christ.

I. They must weigh devoutly the excellence of the Mediatorial office, and praise the Son of God as alone fit and worthy to undertake and perform a work of such magnitude. It is indeed a work of which it cannot be said, in the words of Moses, (Deut. xxxii. 27), "The Lord hath not done this." This is the glory of Christ the Mediator that, whoever shall say, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength, to him shall men come: in the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."

II. They ought to trust, hope, delight, and rejoice in that wonderful love, which led him to appear in their room, and to perform all that was necessary in that character. This is the new song with which the four and twenty elders honour the Lamb, "For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation: and hast made us unto our God, kings and priests," Rev. v. 9.

III. They ought to acknowledge gladly the pre-eminent glory, shining even in human nature, which he has obtained since his humiliation, being now "glorified with that glory which he had with the Father before the world was," John xvii. 6. I do not mean that his human nature is to be adored. That point I have already handled. My meaning is, that the brightness of incomparable glory, which Christ in human nature has received, may furnish subjects of pious meditations to the praise of the Father and the Son. That person whom we now behold thus glorified can be no other than the glorious and only begotten Son of God, whose Majesty, under the veil of flesh, and of the

form of a servant, was for a time concealed. IV. They ought to ask from him ἐπιζήτηση, *an additional supply* of those benefits which he has procured, according to the power given him by the Father. “Grace be to you and peace from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first born of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,” Rev. i. 4, 5. V. They ought to implore his intercession with the Father, which is all-powerful, and to which nothing can be denied. That which it is not unworthy of Christ to do—that which his people ought to believe, hope, and expect from Christ, may, with propriety, be the subject of prayer. Nor is there any force in the objection, that such a prayer views Christ under two opposite relations. Unquestionably, when we pray to him, we acknowledge him as the most high God; and, when we request him to pray, we ask from him what implies an acknowledgment of his inferiority. Our blessed Saviour is, indeed, to be viewed under two separate relations; one, as the Son of God, one in nature and equal in glory to the Father; the other, as Mediator, in respect of which he is subject to the Father. In the former character he receives, in the latter, he offers prayer. Such a prayer, offered by Christ, involves nothing inconsistent with the dignity of a Divine person, for while it carries in it a certain inferiority, as belonging to the human nature, it expresses, at the same time, the *princely* will of the Son of God, “Father, θελω, I WILL that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am,” John

xvii. 24. VI. They must go with their prayers to him as their High Priest, entreating that he will present them to the Father, and, by the efficacy of his sacrifice and intercession, render our prayers and our sacrifices of praise acceptable in the sight of God, Rev. viii. 3.

Origen expresses these sentiments beautifully, in his reply to Celsus, (Book VIII. p. 386, Cambridge Edition.)¹ *We worship, as far as we are able, the one God, and his only Son, and Word, and Image, by supplications and entreaties, offering our prayers to the God of all through his only-begotten, to whom we first present them, entreating him who is the propitiation of our sins, to offer, as High Priest, our prayers, and sacrifices, and intercessions to God, who is over all.*

The sentiments of piety which we owe to our Divine Saviour, call upon us to embrace the present opportunity of exposing the poison of Socinian theology. Those of that school, who choose to be regarded as paying the highest honours to Christ, are called by their own party *Invokers*. They make a distinction between *Adoration*, which they define to be the bowing to any one as an expression of respect, and *Invocation*, which is a religious act, and a supplication for assistance. Both, they tell us, are yielded

¹ Θεόν, καὶ τον ἕνα υἱὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ λόγον καὶ εἰκόνα, ταῖς κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἡμῖν ἰκεσίαις καὶ ἀξιώσεσι σέβομεν, προσάγοντες τῷ Θεῷ των ὄλων τὰς ἐυχὰς διὰ τοῦ μονογενοῦς αὐτοῦ ᾧ πρῶτον προσφέρομεν αὐτάς, ἀξιῶντες αὐτὸν ἰλασμὸν ὄντα περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, προσαγαγεῖν ὡς ἀρχιερεῖα καὶ τὰς ἐυχὰς, καὶ τὰς θυσίας, καὶ τὰς ἐντιεύξεις ἡμῶν τῷ ἐπὶ πᾶσι Θεῷ.

to Christ, who has no nature but that human nature which he derived from the Virgin Mary. But both, they contend, are rendered subordinately, and with an ultimate view, to the Supreme Being. Adoration, they add, must be performed by angels to Christ; invocation, by men only, who need Christ's assistance. The former is commanded and necessary; the latter, lawful and suitable.

In reply to those assertions, we offer the following contrasts. I. To render religious worship to any creature *besides* God is a mark of idolatry. Paul proves the idolatry of the Gentiles by this argument, that ἐσεβάσθησαν καὶ ἐλάτρευσαν τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα, "they worshipped and served the creature **BESIDES** the Creator." The particle *παρὰ*, *besides*, denotes here not the exclusion of the former, but the addition of the latter. As in I Cor. iii. 11. *Other foundation can no man lay παρὰ τὸν κείμενον besides that which is laid.* The apostle does not merely glance at those who passed by the Creator entirely, and transferred all religious homage to the creature. He reproveth those, also, who believed and acknowledged him to be the Creator of all things, and yet, *besides Him*, constituted, I know not how many δαίμονες or heroes, demigods, genii, dead men, the sun, the stars, and the universe itself, the objects of their religious veneration. Such as had the highest reputation for wisdom did, indeed, within their own circle, acknowledge τὸν ποιητὴν καὶ πατέρα τοῦ παντός, *the maker and father of all*, to use the language of Plato; but, as Josephus declares, (Lib. II. Cont. Ap.) εἰς πλῆθος δόξαισι προκατειλημένον τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ δογ-

ματος ἐξενεγκεῖν οὐκ ἐτόλμησαν. “To the prejudiced multitude they did not venture to bring forward the truth of this opinion.” In every thing else connected with religion they went along with the people. Seneca, speaking of the customary religious observances, says, “All which things a wise man will observe, not as agreeable to the gods, but as enjoined by the laws.” These coverings thrown over a wicked custom, as Grotius has excellently observed, are charged with unrighteousness by the Gospel and by Paul in the passage now quoted. From which we conclude that to pay religious worship to any besides the Creator is an unrighteous and idolatrous proceeding.

II. We do not deny that, in prayers *השתווה*. προσκύνησις, *adoration*, may be distinguished from *invoking* or *imploring*. The former denotes an humble acknowledgment of the Divine majesty, expressed by bodily gestures; the latter, a petition for aid. But we contend that both are so extensive that, in whatever instance the one is due, the other is also due between the same parties. He whom we *adore* as clothed with the highest majesty, must, likewise, be acknowledged by us to be full of unbounded goodness, and worthy to be approached in prayer for the supply of our wants. The converse of this proposition will also hold, for the two things are inseparable. Angels, when they acknowledge the majesty of the Son of God, acknowledge him, at the same time, as their Creator and Preserver, and the source of every thing good which they enjoy; Col. i. 16. No reason, therefore, can be assigned why they should not ask from him a continuation of their

happiness, and a manifestation of his attributes in the kingdom both of grace and of glory.

III. Religious adoration offered to one who is no God is expressly disallowed by God himself. Isa. xlii. 8. "I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another." Observe 1. Christ himself is addressed, in that passage, by God the Father, and receives from Him the honour that he is given *for a covenant of the people*, that he not only proclaims, but obtains and bestows the blessings of the covenant. He is given *for a light of the Gentiles*, whom the Gentiles will joyfully own, and continue to worship, and hold fellowship with, as the true God. He is *to open the eyes of the blind, to bring forth the prisoners out of the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house*, in all which acts it is implied that he bestows true and eternal salvation. 2. The glory of bestowing this salvation is so great that it cannot be yielded to one who is not God. For he who is the covenant of the people is the same person who will fulfil this promise of the covenant, "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." 3. That glory is included in the meaning of the name Jehovah. No other can be the great Saviour of the people. Thus Himself speaks, "I, even I am Jehovah, and besides me there is no Saviour," Isa. xliii. 11. Israel is not left at liberty to glory in any other Saviour, but in Jehovah, Isa. xlvi. 24, 25. 4. Since God affirms that he will not give his glory to another, who is not Jehovah, and, at the same time, declares that he has given this glory to Christ, it is obviously the will of God that

Christ, equally with himself, be acknowledged as Jehovah, and in that character receive honour and glory.

This express declaration of the eternal and unchangeable will of God our adversaries endeavour to set aside by fruitless cavils. The three following are those most frequently adduced:—1. By *another*, is meant one who is opposed to God, not one who is subordinate. 2. To *give*, means here to allow it to be given by others, contrary to the command of God. 3. The glory and praise which has been given to Christ is not that which belongs to the Father, but *another*, inferior, and *subordinate* glory. There is no difficulty in answering these objections. To the *first*, we say, when God affirms that he will not give to *another* the glory now in question, he employs a word of the utmost latitude of meaning, and excludes all those to whom the name Jehovah does not, in its fullest import, belong. He declares that those who are not Jehovah can have no share in that glory. As to the *second*, *I will not give*, means more than—I will not allow it to be given by others contrary to my command. It means, I will never order or allow any other to participate in my praise and glory. For the *third*, *subordinate* religious worship is not acknowledged in Scripture; certainly not in reference to Christ, to whom it ascribes worship of the same order with what belongs to God the Father. And truly, he whom God the Father admits to fellowship with him in the name Jehovah, and in those ἀρχήματα, those *displays of glory*, which are included in the meaning of that name, is at the same time,

admitted by him to share in that worship which is due to Jehovah.

Such worship, without sacrilege or robbery, Christ himself claims, when he says, THAT ALL MEN SHOULD HONOUR THE SON EVEN AS THEY HONOUR THE FATHER, John v. 23. The Father demands not only that his Son shall be honoured, but that he shall be honoured in the same manner as Himself. Our adversaries, I am aware, object that the particle *καθώς*, *like as*, does not always signify equality, but frequently the connection of things which are unequal. True, but it does sometimes signify equality; and there is nothing to prevent it from having that signification here. The subject, too, requires that it must here signify equality. Christ had made certain affirmations respecting himself, from which the Jews concluded that he had *made himself equal with God*, ver. 18. Hence arose their indignation, their wrath, their resolution to put him to death. What does the Lord Jesus Christ do? Does he refute it as a calumnious representation of his sayings? Does he make a contrary assertion? which he certainly ought to have done for the glory of his Father, and for removing the suspicion of blasphemy, if it be really blasphemy to make Christ equal with the Father.* Our Lord proceeds in a very different manner. He proves most carefully, by many arguments, that he had advanced nothing unworthy of God, and had made no rash claim for himself, when he declared that he is *equal with God*. If Christ does not mean equality to be understood, if he means to convict the Jews of a mistake in imagining that he made himself equal to

God, why does he speak in such a way, as to convey distinctly the idea of equality? If, therefore, the belief and opinion of equality were the object of his aversion, and if the assertion of it were regarded by him as robbery and sacrilege, would he not rather have said, that the Son is to be honoured according to the will of the Father, and not καθὼς, *like as*, the Father is honoured. Or, if he thought that he had claimed too much for himself, why did he not maintain perfect silence as to the honour of the Son? Plainly, therefore, our Lord's object, in this whole discourse, is to teach that the Son ought to receive the same kind of honour and worship which is rendered to the Father.

We have not leisure, at present, to examine all the ingenious contrivances of our opponents, by which they endeavour to impugn the honour due to Christ. We think it right, however, to throw back upon themselves this argument, of which they are accustomed to boast as having been suggested to them by the Apostle Paul, Phil. ii. 9, 10. If, say they, the glory of that highest religious worship be due to Christ, in virtue of his own eternal Godhead, why does Paul affirm that whatever honour, or whatever name belongs to Christ, was *νεχαρισμένον*, *freely given* to him by the Father? Why does he assert that it was given him as the *reward* of his previous humiliation and obedience, and with the view that this honour should ultimately tend *to the glory of God the Father*. This passage deserves our most attentive examination. And, first, it is worthy of our notice in what manner Paul describes the person

of whose honour he is now treating. He says, v. 6, Ὁς ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ ὑπέσχετο, ὁὐκ ἄρπαγμαδὸν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ. What is μορφῇ Θεοῦ, *the form of God*? What is it τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ, *to make himself equal to God*? What is it ὁὐκ ἡγήσασθαι ἄρπαγμαδὸν, *not to think it robbery*?

The meaning of the phrase, *the form of God*, must be learned, not from the glosses of philosophers, or of the schools, but from the sacred oracles. It answers to the Hebrew phrase, תמונת אלהים, which occurs, Num. xii. 8, תמונת אלהים יביט, *he shall see the face of God*, and again, Ps. xvii. 15, אשבעה בהקיץ תמונתך, *I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness*. “The form of God” signifies, in the passages now quoted, the Godhead itself, so far as it is exhibited by the brightest manifestations of the grace and majesty of God. It deserves inquiry whether “the form of God” does not signify, in both instances, that very manifestation of the Divine Majesty, which shines forth in the Son of God. In the former passage, something is ascribed to Moses which raises him above the other prophets. They obtained remarkable discoveries of the Divine Majesty. But “God spake to Moses, mouth to mouth, familiarly, and he beheld the form of God,” which was not the case with the others. Is there not reason to believe, that God appeared to him in that human likeness, in which the Son of God was afterwards seen, and that there shone in him the brightness of the only begotten of the Father? It forms, unquestionably, the blessedness of men that, when awaked from the sleep of death, they shall see Christ

as he is, and shall find in him the fulness of joy, 1 John iii. 2; Col. iii. 4. Whatever may be in this, the form of God is the Godhead, discovering itself by bright manifestations. When, therefore, Christ is said to have been in the form of God, it is intimated that, being the true God, he had showed himself as such at a former period, and had assumed that form which afforded the brightest exhibition of a present Deity.

Thus far we have spoken of the form of God. Let us now see what it is *εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ*. It is the acute observation of a very learned commentator, that there is a distinction to be observed between the two phrases, *εἶναι ἴσων Θεῷ* and *εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ*. The former, which occurs John v. 18, signifies *to be equal to God*. The latter signifies to appear as God, to act in a manner peculiar to God, by a manifestation of Divine majesty and glory. *Not to count it robbery* is to think that such an act is not sacrilege, that it does not take from God and give to another what ought to have continued to be the divine prerogative. Putting all these things together, the meaning of the Apostle's declaration will be this, "Christ is the true God. He formerly had exhibited, by singularly bright appearances, the visible likeness of the Godhead. He afterwards thought that he might, without the imputation of sacrilege, declare himself openly, by words and actions, to be God, and strike the eyes of all beholders with such splendour of divine majesty, as to remove all hesitation or denial. But there were reasons why he did not reckon it proper, at that time, to make such a manifestation." We have thus a dis-

tinct assertion that the Son is of equal rank with the Father. We have, at the same time, an unanswerable proof that equal honour, and equal worship, are due to both, for the equality of Godhead lays the foundation for equality of honour.

Another circumstance particularly worthy of our observation, is, that the *κένωσις καὶ ταπείνωσις*, is, of itself, a proof of the divinity of Christ. That *emptying* and *humiliation* is here described as the spontaneous act of Christ, springing from a deliberate purpose. That emptying of himself commenced at his birth, when he became man. For, when he began to be “made in the likeness of man,” he presently “took upon himself the form of a servant,” which he bore from the time when *σχήματι ἐωρέθη ὡς ἄνθρωπος*, “he was found in fashion as a man.” This observation suggests three inferences. 1. Christ pre-existed before he took upon him the form of a servant, together with the fashion and likeness of man. 2. He pre-existed in such a manner that his assuming this form was the result of his purpose. For *το φρόνημα*, *the mind* of Christ is exhibited to us as an example of humility. 3. Previous to his taking upon him the form of a servant, he was full of majesty and glory. Had it been otherwise, the taking upon him the form of a servant would neither have been a humiliation nor an emptying of himself. If, therefore, Christ existed previous to his being born in the flesh,—if it was in the execution of a purpose that he took upon him that form,—if he was clothed with extraordinary majesty,—if without the imputation of sacrilege, he might have abstained, had he so chosen, from concealing that majesty under

the veil of the flesh, and the form of a servant, it follows that he is the true God, for all these are so many proofs of divinity.

The third circumstance deserving notice is, that it was worthy of God, after the humiliation of his Son, and on account of it, to “exalt him highly, and to give him a name which is above every name.” His exaltation demonstrates, in a striking manner, the greatness of that glory which his voluntary humiliation had for a time concealed. The act of concealment was accomplished by means of the low, mean, and despicable condition in which he held his usual intercourse with men,—subject, however, to be interrupted by some gleams of a loftier rank which occasionally burst forth. In the same manner, the wonderful glorification of the human nature of Christ manifests his glory by proving clearly, and making evident to every beholder, that it is the human nature of the Son of God, and that the man who was almost reckoned as “no man,” is truly “God over all, and blessed for ever.” This is that “name which is above every name.” And thus we are again conducted to a view of that glory which is nothing less than divine. It was proper that it should be bestowed on Christ, on account of his previous humiliation. The glory of the Father, for which he had freely undergone that humiliation, made it necessary to show that the Son had not performed it in vain. He had been condemned for blasphemy by unjust judges, because he had professed to be the Son of God, and “thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” It was just that God the Father should declare, in the

most explicit manner, that his Son was fully entitled to make that profession,—should acquit him from the charge of blasphemy which his enemies had brought against him, and of which his low condition afforded a pretence. Here again, every thing is calculated to raise our thoughts to “that glory which Christ had with the Father before the world was,” and which it was proper should be manifested in the clearest manner after that, by a voluntary arrangement, it had for a time been concealed.

Another point which must not be overlooked, is the saying of Paul, that to Christ has been given “a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.” The words are a quotation from the prophecies of Isaiah (xlv. 23), which is elsewhere applied to Christ. Rom. xiv. 10, 11. The bestowing of this glory, he informs us, is the fulfilment of that prediction. We shall see, then, if the glory of which the prophet speaks be inferior and subordinate to the Divine glory. Let any one who has the smallest reverence for God or for the Lord Jesus Christ, ponder the following magnificent language used by the Divine Being: “Am not I the Lord? and there is no God else besides me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none besides me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” This, then, is “the name which is above every name;” **JEHOVAH, A JUST GOD, A SAVIOUR, BESIDES WHOM THERE IS NONE ELSE.** A name more majestic or venerable cannot be imagined. It belongs to Him, to whom, as the only Saviour, all the ends of the earth must

come. And who is this but the Son of God, whom the Father hath appointed “to be a light of the Gentiles, that he may be his salvation to the ends of the earth?” Isa. xlix. 6. That blessed Saviour goes on to say, “I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.” Add to this, the name which John saw inscribed on his vesture and on his thigh, ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΚΥΡΙΟΣ ΚΥΡΙΩΝ. This, too, was given as the reward of his previous humiliation, to Christ, who, when he rose from the dead, was declared to be THE PRINCE OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH, Rev. i. 5. That high rank is the foundation of the honour which shall be rendered when “every knee shall bow to him.” Can it be thought or said without blasphemy that this glory is less than Divine? Yet such is the glory which, throughout the whole passage, Paul ascribes to Christ.

The force of the argument is in no degree lessened by the declaration that the glory was *νεχαρισμένη*, *freely given* to Christ. For if we view Christ as the Son of God, by virtue of his eternal, wonderful, and incomprehensible generation from the Father, he is God the Son; and, by virtue of that same eternal generation, he possesses all those excellencies of the Godhead, from which the honour now under consideration cannot be separated. If, again, we view Christ as Mediator, he received it as a gift from the Father, after his humiliation, that those excellencies should shine forth, with the greatest brightness, in his human nature. Yet it was not by this means

deified, but declared, proved, and actually demonstrated to be the human nature of the Son of God, by being raised to the highest pitch of glory which it is possible for a creature to enjoy. All who are admitted to the privilege of beholding Christ thus glorified are constrained, by this unrivalled glory, to own that this man is the Great God, and is entitled to receive universal and lowly adoration. Such is the honour which was bestowed in time by the Father on Christ the Mediator.

That glory of Christ tends *to the glory of the Father*. For it is the glory of a Father to have such a Son, who has successfully accomplished the great work of our redemption, and now, as the glorious Prince of all his redeemed, shines with untarnished honours. I have now finished what I intended to say as to the adoration of Christ the Mediator. As to the adoration of the Holy Spirit, I shall make no additional observations, having handled that point at large in the *XXIII. Dissertation on the Creed*.

We have hitherto been employed in explaining *by whom prayer is offered*, and *to whom it is offered*, we come now to inquire **IN WHAT PRAYER CONSISTS**. It has been defined by us to be, "the address of a rational creature to God." Clemens Alexandrinus has given a similar definition, 'Ομιλία πρὸς τον θεόν, ἡ εὐχή, *Prayer is a discourse addressed to God*. And God himself bids us *take with us words*, Hos. xiv. 3. That discourse may be carried on in two ways, either *by the mind alone*, or by the addition of *spoken language*. God, who is infinite in knowledge, cannot but perceive all the thoughts of our mind as if they

were uttered aloud. Ps. xxxviii. 9, "Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee." The mind, unquestionably, is of chief importance in prayer. With that we must always begin. Prayer must be *found in the heart*, 2 Sam. vii. 27. It is not without reason that the Jews inscribe on the walls of their synagogues this seasonable warning to those who are employed in prayer, תפלה בלא תפילה כמו נוף בלא נשמה, PRAYER WITHOUT A MIND IS LIKE A BODY WITHOUT A SOUL.

I take this opportunity of throwing light on one or two phrases used in scripture, which relate to mental prayer; and which are not commonly brought forward in their full import. The Lord Jesus, in his familiar conversation with the Samaritan woman, gives her this instruction among others: "The hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." To worship in spirit and in truth may signify two things; one, which may apply to all times, and another, which applies exclusively to one particular time. In the sense applicable to all times, to worship God in the *spirit*, or in the *mind*, means that the worship is not confined to the outward gestures of the body; to worship him in *truth*, is to do so *sincerely* and without disguise. So that *the spirit* is contrasted with bodily gestures; the *truth*, with disguise and hypocrisy. In no age has any other worship than this been acceptable to God. The Jews knew this, and the Gentiles were not ig-

norant of it. A Jewish sentiment, not unlike our Lord's doctrine, is quoted by Ludovicus Capellus, במה אקדם פניו כי אם ברוחי כי אין לאיש נכבד כנפשו, *How shall I meet his face but by my spirit? For man has nothing so precious as his soul.* In a Latin verse, too, the sentiment that God is to be worshipped with a pure mind is declared by Persius to be *compositum jus fasque animi*. The inference they drew was, that God is a *mind*, or as our Lord expresses it, a *spirit*, and therefore delights in mind and sincerity. Hierocles, who is quoted by Grotius on this passage, says very beautifully, Τὸ ἐνθεον φρονήματα διάεγκῶς ἠδρασμένον συνάπτει Θεῶν· χωρῶν γὰρ ἀνάγκη τὸ ὅμοιον πρὸς τὸ ὅμοιον. *The inspired mind duly invigorated approaches to God, for like must draw to like.*

But there is something in our Lord's words which applies peculiarly to the New Testament economy. To worship God in spirit and in truth is to worship Him without the pompous ceremonial of worldly elements and of a carnal commandment, without figures and shadows, without regard to a prescribed place or prescribed rites. In this point of view, the *spirit* is contrasted with the *letter* and a *carnal commandment*: the *truth* is contrasted with *shadows*. It is given as an inference from the sublime truth that "God is a spirit," "a mind," as Cicero says, "uncontrolled and free, disengaged from all the grossness of mortality." Bodily worship, therefore, cannot separately or chiefly be the object of his delight. Nearly akin to this is what Grotius quotes from Philo. Γνησίους μὲν θεραπειᾶς ἀσπάζεται Θεός· γνήσιοι δὲ εἰσιν αἱ ψυχῆς ψιλὴν καὶ μόνην θυσίαν φερούσης

ἀληθείαν. *God delights in sincere homage, and sincere homage is that of a soul which offers the simple and naked sacrifice of truth.* And if there were reason, as there actually was, to anticipate a period of reformation, it was fitting that God should select that period for showing that the worship in which alone he delights is rational, and is not restricted to times or places. Menander goes beyond himself when he thus writes, πάντ' ἐστὶ τῷ καλῷ λόγῳ ἱερόν· ὁ νοῦς γάρ ἐστὶν ὁ λαλῆσων Θεῷ. “To good thoughts all places are a temple, for it is the mind that speaks to God.” Our Lord says that the hour *is coming*, because the time appointed for the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem was at hand; that it *now is*, because, on that subject, believers, at that very time, were beginning to receive instruction.

The phrase used by Paul, 1 Cor. xiv. 14, 15, is somewhat more obscure: “If I pray with the tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also.” What is it to pray with the *tongue*? with the *spirit*? with the *mind*? The *tongue* means here a language unknown to others, and employed by one who is endowed with a supernatural gift of the Holy Spirit. It is probable that those of the Corinthians who had received the gift of tongues, had a partiality for the Hebrew above all other languages, and, on that account, chose to employ it in their discourses and prayers, even in presence of their countrymen, who did not understand Hebrew. Attracted by the excellence of that language, and by its usefulness in

the investigation of the ancient oracles, they had also embraced the opinion, very prevalent among their countrymen, that the words of the law and the prophets ought, first, to be pronounced in Hebrew, and afterwards explained in the vernacular dialect. Prayers expressed in the Hebrew language were, in their opinion, by far the most acceptable to God, while all others were little short of profane. Public prayers in the synagogues are not allowed to be offered in the Syriac language, though very closely allied to Hebrew, and still less in other languages more widely removed from Hebrew. On that subject the reader may consult Ja. Capellus and Lightfoot. This opinion was not peculiar to the Hebrews. Speaking of other nations, Clemens Alexandrinus says, Ἐπει καὶ τὰς εὐχὰς ὁμολογοῦσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι δυνατωτέρας τὰς βαρβάρω φωνῇ λεγομένας : “As men imagine that those prayers which are uttered in a barbarous language are more powerful.” *To pray with the tongue*, therefore, is to pray in a language unknown to others; as, for instance, to pray in the Hebrew language in presence of Greeks. In that sense he had said, ver. 2, “He that speaketh with the tongue speaketh not unto me, but unto God; for no man understandeth him.” That is, he who speaks in a foreign tongue, the knowledge of which he has acquired by an extraordinary gift of the Spirit, has God only for a witness. He cannot reckon as his witnesses, or as persons aware of what he is doing, those who are ignorant of the language, and to whose edification he has contributed little or nothing. The *Spirit* means here that extraordinary gift by which a man is led to act in a cer-

tain way, accompanied by almost ecstatic emotions, so that sometimes he is neither aware what he says, nor do others understand what he means. *To pray with the Spirit* is to pray in such a manner as to show that you feel the presence of an extraordinary gift of the Spirit, which moves and hurries you along in a powerful manner to those actions which excite astonishment. *Νους, intelligence, mind*, seems here to be chiefly used in a transitive sense, to mean what we give another to understand. Such is the meaning of *הבונה* to which *νους* corresponds. *הט אונך לתבונתי*, *incline thine ear to my understanding*, that is, to those things which I shall give thee to understand, Prov. v. 1. *To pray with the mind* is to pray in such a manner that the prayers which you deliberately conceive may be conceived and understood by others. Paul, accordingly, proposes himself as an example of the proper manner of conducting prayers. *If I pray in a tongue* unknown to the assembly in whose presence I pray, but which I have learned by divine inspiration, *my spirit prayeth*, I am acting under the influence of that gift, which impells and arouses me to unusual and remarkable proceedings; *but my understanding is unfruitful*, I do not enable another to understand with advantage the conceptions of my mind. *What then? I will pray with the Spirit*; when the vehement emotion of the Spirit comes upon me, I will not struggle against it, *but I will pray with the understanding also*; I will show that I am not mad, but possessed of a sound understanding; and I will endeavour that others, as well as myself, be edified by my prayer. All those expressions, therefore, relate

to the times in which the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit flourished in the church, and have no application or analogy to the daily prayers of believers.

To return from this digression, let us inquire whether our prayer can or ought to terminate in groanings that cannot be uttered, or whether the words of the mouth ought to be added. The teachers among the Hebrews enjoin, that in every prayer speech be employed, so far, at least, as to be heard by the person praying. In this way we read that Anna prayed, speaking with the mind so that the lips moved, while the sound of the voice was not audible to others, 1 Sam. i. 13. Pythagoras taught his followers, *μετὰ φωνῆς εὐχεσθαι*, *to pray with an audible voice*. Not because he thought that the gods would not otherwise understand them, but ὅτι δικαίας ἐβούλετο εἶναι τὰς εὐχὰς, “because he wished that prayers should be strictly proper.” Expressions very similar are to be found in our Latin poets:

Si quis erit recti custos, imitator honesti,
Et nihil arcano qui roget ore Deus.

MARTIAL, Lib. I. Ep. XI.

—— non tu prece poscis emaci
Quae nisi seductis nequens committere divis,
Haut cuivis promptum est murmurque humilesque susurros,
Tollere de templis, et aperto vivere voto.

PERSIUS, Sat. II.

Seneca's observations on this subject are excellent. “Know then that you are free from unlawful passions when you have made this attainment, to ask

nothing from God but what you can ask openly. For what madness is there in men? The basest wishes are whispered to the gods; if any person listen, they are silent, but dare to relate to God what they are unwilling should be known to man." And again, LIVE WITH MEN AS IF GOD SAW YOU, AND SPEAK TO GOD AS IF MEN HEARD YOU. A golden saying, and one which deserves to be kept constantly before our minds.

But other matters claim our notice. We must attend to the distinction between public and private prayers. The former, which are offered in presence of the assembly by him who leads the devotion, ought to be pronounced aloud, in a language known to the assembly, so that all may be able to answer, Amen, 1 Cor. xiv. 16. This was promised by the church, וּנְשַׁלְמָה פְּרִים שְׁפֹתֵינוּ, *and we will offer bullocks, our lips*, Hos. xiv. 2. For such is the literal interpretation of the Hebrew words. The offering of bullocks implied an acknowledgment of guilt, a profession of faith in the offering of the Messiah, and a solemn declaration of readiness to perform every required service, even though the command of God should bear that death itself must be encountered. All this is fully expressed by prayers offered with sincere lips, and so, instead of bullocks, or along with bullocks, the lips are promised. In private prayers, speech is not absolutely necessary, but ought not to be entirely omitted. I. Because it is our duty to glorify God with our body also, which is God's property, 1 Cor. vi. 20. Among the members of our body, a high superiority belongs to the tongue, which is so noble,

excellent, and wonderful in its effects, that it is not exceeded, I do not say in the human body, but in the universe itself. Hence it is called the *glory* of man, Ps. xvi. 9, compared with Acts ii. 26. To the utmost possible extent, therefore, it ought to be employed for the glory of the Supreme Being, Ps. lvii. 8, 9. “Awake, my glory, I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people,” Ps. lxxi. 15. “My mouth shall show forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day, for I know not the numbers thereof.” II. Because, when the heart is full of spiritual emotions, that strong affection easily and naturally employs the instrumentality of the tongue, “for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,” Matt. xii. 34. III. Because it is advantageous even to ourselves, both for repressing the wanderings of the mind, and for calling forth the affections, by means of the close connection which subsists between the mind and the body.

In all our prayers, however, either public or private, we must avoid that *Βαττολογία*, or empty and ostentatious repetition of the same or similar words, which our Lord condemns, Matt. vi. 7. This does not forbid us, on some occasions, to continue and lengthen our prayer, which was done by Christ and his Apostles. Neither does it forbid us to convey our earnest requests by repeating the same words, or others of a like import, as frequently happens in the Psalms. But we are forbidden to deal out our words as if God were to estimate our prayers by their length and the labour of the outward performance, rather than by the inward affection of the

mind. Epiphanius has defined this vain repetition to be *διὰ λεπτολογίας προσεύχεσθαι*, which is done when many words are used, and to little purpose, in our prayers. He adduces the following instance, as if, says he, a person were to say, *Σὴ ἐστὶν ἡ δύναμις, σὸν τὸ κράτος, σὴ ἐστὶν ἡ τιμὴ, σὴ ἐστὶν ἡ δόξα, σὴ ἐστὶν ἡ εὐλογία, σὴ ἐστὶν ἡ ἰσχὺς, σὴ ἐστὶν ἡ δύναμις.* “Thine is the power, thine is the strength, thine is the honour, thine is the glory, thine is the blessing, thine is the strength, thine is the power.” An instance, equally in point, is given by Lampridius, “Let the parricide be dragged forth, we pray, O Augustus, let the parricide be dragged forth, this we pray, let the parricide be dragged forth.” This fault the Gentiles frequently committed in their prayers. They judged of God from their own capacity, as if nothing could be understood that was not a hundred times repeated. Against this foolish opinion Jesus warns his followers. The same advice had been formerly given by the Son of Sirach. *Μὴ δευτερώσης λόγον ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ σου.*

Prayer, we have said, is a discourse addressed to God. The suppliant lays before the Deity his wants and desires, Phil. iv. 6, accompanied by the hope of being heard, Ja. i. 6, which rests on the promise of God, Matt. vii. 7. This, however, must be understood with certain reservations. I. The person who prays must be in the exercise of a proper disposition for prayer, Job xi. 14; for God does not hear those who refuse to hear God, Pro. i. 24; xxviii. 28-9; Is. i. 15; John ix. 31. II. The prayer must be drawn up in a right manner, Ja. iv. 3; 1 John v. 14. III. We must not presume to restrict God to the time

which we think the most suitable, but leave the matter to God, that he may act in it according to his own wisdom, Ecc. iii. 11; Acts i. 7; Ps. xxii. 5, and lxix. 13; Is. xlix. 8, compared with 2 Cor. vi. 2. IV. We must not imagine that our prayer is heard only when God gives the thing sought, but also when, in place of it, he gives what, in his infinite wisdom, he knows to be more convenient for us, Gen. xvii. 18, 19; 2 Cor. xii. 8.

DISSERTATION II.

ON THE ADVANTAGE AND NECESSITY OF PRAYER.

WHAT we have said may suffice as to the definition of prayer. We are now to inquire into its ADVANTAGE and NECESSITY, or the nature of its obligation upon us. Here we must first dispose of the subtle, but delusive arguments of the flesh, and, next, establish the wholesome truth.

The flesh concludes that prayer is SUPERFLUOUS; for why should we lay before God a wearisome enumeration of our wants, which, in proportion to its length and frequency, must be the more offensive? The Divine Being knows much better than we ourselves do what we want. And such a conclusion, we are told, ought not to be considered as unfounded, for it is not unlike what is stated by our Lord, Matt. vi. 31, 32. "Take no thought, saying, what shall we

eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly father knoweth that ye have need of these things.”

It is also alleged that prayer is USELESS. Whatever shall happen to any man God has determined by an eternal and unchangeable decree. It is in vain, therefore, for you to weary him by a multitude of prayers. What has been decreed for you will happen whether you pray or not. What has not been decreed you will not obtain by thousands of prayers. It is the glory of God that he will not deviate a hair's breadth from a purpose which has once been formed. To importune him, and, for the sake of a feeble and wretched man, to make trial of his firmness, wears the aspect of impiety.

Prayer, it is thence argued, INSULTS the firmness of the Divine purpose. It insults, also, the *Majesty* of God, which we ought to hold in such reverence as not to venture to explain to him our desires. It is enough that we commit every thing to his disposal, and bow to his sovereign will. It insults even the *goodness* of God, for it is the glory of his goodness that he anticipates our wishes, and, out of the rich treasures of his kindness, bestows even on those who do not pray the enjoyment of himself and of his benefits, Isa. lxx. 1. “I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.” And, again, ver. 24, “and it shall come to pass that, before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear.”

Plausible as these arguments may appear, they want solidity, and are at utter variance with true piety towards God. It is true that God knows our necessities, and needs not to be informed of them by us; but it is his will that we should acknowledge them, and that our acknowledgment should be openly made in prayer. By an opposite course, we would expose ourselves to the charge brought against the church of Laodicea, "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." God sometimes acts as if he were ignorant of our affairs, and chose to remain in ignorance until we should lay them before him. A memorable passage of history, to this effect, occurs in Exodus ii. 23, 24, 25. "And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried; and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And GOD HEARD THEIR GROANING, and God REMEMBERED HIS COVENANT with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God LOOKED UPON the children of Israel, and God HAD RESPECT unto them." To the same purpose is the declaration of David, Ps. cvi. 44, 45. "Nevertheless, he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry: and he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies." Such expressions, no doubt, are applied to God after the manner of men, and must not be interpreted so as to lower the Divine perfections. But they clearly authorize us to

conclude that an humble declaration of our wants is highly pleasing in the sight of God, that he commands us to draw them out in language, and that when they are properly presented, and then only, can they be regarded as worthy of the divine acceptance.

It must also be admitted, that prayer cannot alter the decrees of God. We must never subject ourselves to the imputation of asking that on our account a change should be effected in the Divine purpose. We must only supplicate that God will freely bestow, for our benefit, what is agreeable to his will, and thus our prayers will contribute to the fulfilment of his purpose. Whatever benefits he has decreed to bestow upon us, he has decreed to bestow in answer to prayer. We are not at liberty to employ foolish and sophistical reasonings in opposition to God himself. Let us hear his own declaration, Ezek. xxxvi. 36, 37, “ Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the Lord build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate : I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it. Thus saith the Lord God, עוֹר זֹאת אֲרוֹשׁ לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל לַעֲשׂוֹת לָהֶם, YET THIS WILL I BE ENQUIRED OF BY THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL THAT I MAY DO IT FOR THEM. The firmness of the divine purpose to bestow the favour is first declared, after which Jehovah makes known his will that, as the means of obtaining the favour, the prayers of his people shall be employed. Again, Jer. xxix. 11—13, “ For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye

call upon me, and ye shall go, and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."

Those persons, accordingly, who have been most highly celebrated both for piety and for wisdom, when they had been informed of any divine purpose in their favour, devoted themselves most earnestly to prayer. David and Daniel are instances. When David has heard of any remarkable promises of God, and believes that they will be accomplished, he does not simply offer thanksgiving for that manifestation of the divine kindness, but prays, with all possible earnestness, that God will be pleased to show kindness, "according to his word." "And now," says he, "O Lord God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said. For thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house; THEREFORE HATH THY SERVANT FOUND IN HIS HEART TO PRAY THIS PRAYER UNTO THEE;" 2 Sam. vii. 25, 27. When Daniel had understood, by the prophecies of Jeremiah, that seventy years had been fixed for the duration of the Babylonish captivity, and perceived that that period was near a close, he immediately "set his face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications," that the restoration of his country might be accomplished, Dan. ix. 2, 3. In this manner these eminently wise and holy men thought themselves highly honoured in being permitted to contribute, by their prayers, to the execution of the divine

purpose. So remote were they from the employment of those sophistical reasonings which we have undertaken to refute.

Equally unfounded is the pretence, that the prayers of believers are an insult to the Deity. He testifies that they are, in the highest degree, acceptable in his sight, Cant. ii. 14. "Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." And how should they be otherwise? They are *φρόνημα πνεύματος*, *the mind of the Spirit*, suggested to us by himself, on account of which he chooses to be called the *Spirit of supplication*, Zech. xii. 10. And on what principle should prayers be disrespectful to the *Divine Majesty*? while every lawful prayer, such as that which Christ has taught us, contains an avowal of submission to the divine will. For we reckon no man to be at liberty so to narrow his prayer as to set limits to the Holy One of Israel.

The absurdity of this opinion must meet the convictions of Christians, when both Jews and Gentiles acknowledged it. Rabbi Simeon lays down this rule, *עבדך תפלתו עתה לא*, *do not make thy prayer fixed*. An ancient poet, quoted by Plato in his Alcibiades, recommended to his friends this form of prayer,

*Zēu Βασιλεῦ, τὰ μὲν εσθλὰ καὶ ἐυχομένοις καὶ ἀνεύκτοις
Αμμι δίδου, τὰ δὲ δεινὰ καὶ ευχομένοις ἀπαλέξῃς.

"Give us, O King Jupiter, what is good, whether we ask it or not; withhold what is evil, even though we ask it." Xenophon, in the first Book of the

Memorabilia of Socrates, says, "Ευχέτο δε πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς ἀπλῶς τ' ἀγαθὰ διδόναι ὡς τοὺς θεοὺς κάλλιστα εἰδότας ὅποια ἀγαθὰ ἐστὶ. " He simply prayed to the gods to give what is good, because the gods know best what is good." We shall subjoin a quotation from Valerius Maximus, Lib. vii. cap. ii. "Socrates, who was a sort of earthly oracle of human wisdom, thought that no petition ought to be offered to the immortal gods beyond this, that they would bestow what is good ; because they would know what was most advantageous to every one, while we, in most cases, ask what it would be better for us not to obtain. The minds of mortal men are shrouded in the thickest darkness. What mistakes, then, must you commit on every hand in scattering your blind prayers! You ask riches, by which many have been destroyed. You desire honours, by which vast numbers have been overthrown. You direct your views to political power, which has often led to most disastrous results. You resolve to make a splendid marriage, but this, too, if it has sometimes adorned, has often ruined families. Cease, then, foolishly to wish those possessions which, however desirable in themselves, will involve you in misery. Commit yourself wholly to the disposal of heaven, which is always ready to bestow blessings freely, and is competent to select what is most suitable." Juvenal had been indebted to this passage for what we find in his Tenth Satire. How much were it to be wished that his poetry had been always equally remarkable for wisdom and virtue.

Nil ergo optabunt homines ? Si consilium vis,
Permittes ipsis expendere numinibus, quid

Conveniat nobis, rebusque sit utile nostris.
 Nam pro jucundis aptissima quæque dabunt Dii.
 Charior est illis homo, quam sibi.

The majesty of God, therefore, does not require that we shall present no prayers or desires, but that we shall lay them before him with reverence, and heartily submit them to his wisdom and to his will.

With as little truth is it alleged that prayers are an insult to the *goodness* of God. We do not press them on the notice of God as the meritorious causes of the blessings he bestows, but view them rather as the marks and consequences of divine grace acting on our minds. The knowledge we have of what is good and desirable; the desire we have to obtain it, and the expression of that desire, accompanied by proper dispositions towards God, are themselves gifts which are usually followed up by another gift, the granting to us of the things desired, according to the saying in the Psalms, (lxxxi. 10,) "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." The gifts of God become usually the more delightful to us in consequence of our obtaining them by our prayers. We then find that they came to us not by chance, but from the love of our heavenly Father, who keeps his ear open to our prayers. Hence arise comfort, joy, and filial love; Ps. cxvi. 1, "I love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplication." Meanwhile, it is certain that God bestows on us many blessings for which prayers have not been offered, which we did not even feel that we needed, and by his grace anticipates our application.

Having now refuted the sophistical objections of

the flesh, we shall proceed to lay down the true arguments which convince us of the advantage and necessity of prayer. They are chiefly two, of which one respects *God*, and the other respects *ourselves*. With regard to God, prayer is a most important part of that worship by which he commands us to do him honour. Hence, the whole of worship is described to be, *calling on the name of the Lord*. An instance of this, if I mistake not, we have in the first age of the world; Gen. iv. 26, אִזְ הוֹחַל קִרָּא בְשֵׁם יְהוָה “Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.” These words are susceptible of a great variety of significations, which, in order to bring out the full meaning, may without impropriety be joined. קִרָּא בְשֵׁם sometimes signifies to *pronounce a name*, — and acknowledge it by open proclamation. In that sense, God said to Moses, Ex. xxxiii. 19, וְקִרָּאתִי בְשֵׁם יְהוָה לְפָנֶיךָ “I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee.” Which God actually did, as the narrative informs us. Ex. xxxiv. 5. “The Lord descended in a cloud, and stood with him there, וְקִרָּא בְשֵׁם יְהוָה, “and pronounced the name of the Lord.” In what manner this was done we are told, v. 6, וְקִרָּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן And he proclaimed, “the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious.” Again, this phrase signifies to *call on the name of the Lord by prayer*, as in Gen. xiii. 4, where it is related of Abram, that he came “unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first וְקִרָּא שֵׁם יְהוָה אַבְרָם, and Abram called there on the name of the Lord.” Lastly, it signifies to *call one’s self by the name of a person*. Isa. xlv. 4, וְהָיָה יְהוָה לִיהוָה אֲנִי —

בשם יקרא בזה יקרא, “ One shall say, I am the Lord’s, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob.” Let us join all these, and we shall have the complete sense. At that time, the name of Jehovah began to be honoured by a public profession, and the true worshippers of God distinguished themselves, in this manner, from idolaters and carnal men. Again, they honoured that name by calling upon it in public assemblies, and, on this account, received their denomination from Jehovah, being called the sons of God in opposition to the ungodly Cainites, and their followers, who are called *men*; Gen. vi. 2. But in later times the whole worship of God was included in this calling on the name of the Lord; Joel ii. 32. “ And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.” Hence, a temple dedicated to the worship of God is called a *house of prayer* כי ביתי בית תפלה יקרא לכל העמים “ For my house shall be called a house of prayer to all people.” Isa. lvi. 7, compared with Luke xix. 46. In like manner, the ancient Christians designated their sacred buildings *προσκυταίαι*, *oratories*, *houses of prayer*.

As the pious observation of the duty of prayer is the most important of religious acts, so to omit it entirely is to banish all fear of God. Such a charge, though unfounded, Eliphaz brought against Job. (xv. 4.) *Thou castest off fear*, וחרגע שיחה לפני אל *and thou breakest off*, or puttest away, *fear before God*. Heathens are charged with ungodliness on this ground, that they did not call upon God. Jer. x. 25. “ Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name.”

It is evident from the nature of the subject, that holy prayers render the highest possible honour to God. They contain an acknowledgment and declaration, *1st*, Of the Supreme MAJESTY of God, to which every knee in heaven and in earth ought to bow. He declares by an oath that he reserves this glory to himself as his peculiar right, Isa. xlv. 23. What a lovely sight, and how worthy of God, when ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels, unite “with every creature which is in heaven and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea,” and with one voice sing, “Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever,” Rev. v. 11—13. *2d*, Of the ALL-SUFFICIENCY of God, who has in himself all that is necessary for his own happiness, and for that of all his creatures. Prayer necessarily implies that confession which the Psalmist has beautifully expressed, “Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations. The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down. The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest their hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing,” Ps. cxlv. 13—16; and again, in Ps. civ. 27—31. *3d*, Of the OMNISCIENCE and perfect wisdom of God, by which he examines the wants of all his creatures, knows all the prayers of all suppliants, whether they are clothed in speech, or simply conceived in the mind, and has at his command all possible methods of assisting his people, in whatever difficulties they may be

placed, Ps. cxxxix. 1—4, 17, 18. *4th*, Of the ALMIGHTY POWER of God. Whatever we ask from God we acknowledge that he is able to accomplish, and so we ascribe to him this glory, that He “is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,” Eph. iii. 20. *5th*, Of the inexhaustible GOODNESS of God. To this, as a perpetual fountain, all men, at all times and places, have liberty to approach, that “with joy they may draw water out of the wells of salvation,” Isa. xii. 3. *Lastly*, In prayer we acknowledge that God is *all*, and we are *nothing*; that from him and in him is all that we are or have; and that in all things we are dependent on his will. All these views of prayer have a reference to God.

If, again, we look at ourselves, a wide view of the necessity and advantage of prayer is instantly opened. In ourselves we are in want of all things, so that, unless supported by divine aid, we cannot subsist for a moment. We can do nothing that is not permitted to us by Him, whose “is the earth, and the fulness thereof,” Ps. xxiv. 1, and who “giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.” For the most part, he does not choose to bestow blessings except in answer to prayer. “Ye have not,” says James, “because ye ask not,” Ja. iv. 2. And truly we receive them easily enough, if we obtain them by groanings, and wishes, and prayers; for what is this but to open our mouths that we may be filled?

But *on whom lies the duty of prayer?* We may confidently reply, *on all men without exception*. It is a part of the worship of God inculcated even by natural re-

ligion, and pronounced by the consciences of the heathens themselves to be just and necessary. Timæus in Plato, speaks excellently: Ἄλλὰ τοῦτο δὴγε πάντες ὅσοι και κατα βραχὺ σωφροσύνης μετέχουσιν, ἐπὶ πάσῃ ὕμῃ και σμικροῦ, και μεγάλου πράγματος Θεὸν αἰε ποῦ καλοῦσι, “All who have the slightest claim to the reputation of wisdom, at the commencement of every undertaking, whether great or small, in every case will call upon God.” From Plato’s writings it is evident that Maximus Tyrius spake justly when he said, Ἦν ὁ βίος Σωκράτους μεστὸς εὐχῆς, “The life of Socrates was full of prayer.” Plato enjoins it as a universal duty on all men, Ἀπὸ Θεῶν χρῆ πάντα ἀρχόμενον αἰε λέγειν τε και νοεῖν, “In all that we do or say we ought constantly to begin with God.” Xenophon is of opinion that it ought to be observed publicly in the State. Having given some instructions as to arranging and establishing a commonwealth, he advises that they should begin by propitiating the favour of the gods; and assigns the reason, “for those transactions which are carried on in concert with the Deity will evidently succeed better and more advantageously to the State.” Akin to this are the words of Pliny: “Well and wisely did our ancestors enjoin that every thing said or done should be commenced with prayer: for nothing would be begun by men in a right manner, or with proper foresight, without the assistance, advice, and favour of the immortal gods.”

Still, although the duty of prayer is incumbent on all men without exception, none can discharge it aright but a believing and regenerate person, by the guidance and instruction of the Holy Spirit, who alone

forms in their minds the prayers which God accepts. At the same time, the inability of unrenewed men to pray aright does not remove the obligation to prayer, which flows from man's natural inferiority to God. Nor yet must it be imagined that they are thus laid under a necessity to commit sin in their prayers. The same law which obliges them to pray obliges them to pray well. If they cannot do so, the fault is their own. And it is certainly much better that unrenewed men should pray in some manner, with a natural conviction of their wants, and an acknowledgment of the Majesty and goodness of God, than that they should not pray at all. The mere fact of their praying, so far as that is concerned, is not displeasing to God, though the sin which cleaves to it is justly condemned. Instances of this appear in Ahab,¹ and in the Ninevites.² To do a good thing in a defective manner is a smaller evil than to omit it altogether.

Thus it is the duty of parents to instruct and habituate their children, from their earliest childhood, to prayer, and not to wait till they can discover in them the marks of regeneration. For who knows at what time, and by what means, the Spirit will first exert his saving influence? One thing is certain, while believers alone can pray aright, their faith was bestowed on them for the express purpose that they may *continue in prayer*.

¹ 1 Kings xxi. 27, 29.

² Jonah iii. 8—10.

DISSERTATION III.

ON THE PREPARATION OF THE MIND FOR RIGHT PRAYER.

HITHERTO we have spoken of prayer, and of our obligation to it. We come now to inquire in what manner it ought to be performed, so as to be pleasing and acceptable to God. The manner in which a person prays is of no small consequence. There are some whom James thus reproveth, *Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss.*¹ There are some whose prayers are declared to be *an abomination* to God.² Our Lord Jesus, therefore, while he enjoins his disciples to pray, prescribes the manner of performing that duty aright, "ΟΥΤΩΣ ΟΥΝ ΠΡΟΣΕΒΧΕΘΕ ΪΜΕΙΣ, *After this manner, therefore, pray ye.*³

An act confined and regulated by I know not what rules and forms is, indeed, a widely different thing from a holy and devout prayer. In the familiar intercourse of friends, nothing is more agreeable than the unaffected freedom of sincerity and uprightness. The farther it is removed from the studied ornaments of style, it becomes the more delightful. In the same manner, as prayer is a conversation between the soul and God, that prayer ought to be considered as the best which is the simplest, and which expresses most

¹ James iv. 3.

² Prov. xv. 8.

³ Mat. vi. 9.

briefly the pious desires produced by the Holy Spirit. Its principal object ought to be, that the mind of the suppliant may be laid open to God in all its recesses, so that God may not only hear the prayers as they are expressed in language, but may see them as they are formed in the heart.

There are many things, however, to which the worshipper ought to attend, in order to avoid in prayer whatever would be unsuitable to himself and to God. These will chiefly be included under the four following heads. I. That **THE MIND OF THE SUPPLIANT** may be rightly prepared. II. That the **ATTITUDES AND GESTURES OF THE BODY** may be suitable to this most sacred action. III. That **STATED TIMES OF PRAYER** be observed. IV. That we ask from God **THOSE THINGS** only which it is worthy of him to give, or of us to receive.

A holy and devout preparation of mind includes some things *before* prayer, some *in* prayer, and some *after* prayer. *Before prayer*, the mind ought to be properly prepared, אַם אַתָּה הַכִּינֹת לִבְךָ, “If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hand toward him; if iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles. For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot, yea, thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear.”¹ Happy is that man who, when he is going to pray, is at liberty to say with David, נִבְּחֵן לִבִּי אֱלֹהִים נִבְּחֵן לִבִּי, “My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed.”² To this proposition belong.—I. The exclusion of all un-

¹ Job xi. 13—15.

² Ps. lvii. 7.

seasonable thoughts and affections from the heart. The crowd and bustle of the world must be shut out from our mind, as well as from our chamber.¹ II. A holy humility of mind, arising from the view of our vileness, poverty, unworthiness, and exposure to condemnation, and of the majesty, holiness, and justice of God.² III. The withdrawing of our thoughts from every other subject, earnest application to the matters in hand, and fixed attention to these objects, together with the excitement of the affections, and of all the faculties of our soul to a work of such magnitude, which truly demands the whole soul.³ IV. The imploring of the Spirit of prayer, by whom our naturally sluggish mind may be quickened, and all things suggested which it is proper for us to say to God, and in the manner which God will most highly approve. For unless God shall give the prayer, it will not be rightly performed.⁴

These remarks must not be understood as implying that, unless the acts now specified be conducted in a formal and regular order, no prayer is rightly and lawfully conceived. It is enough if the mind be kept in a state of habitual preparation. There is more of pomp and ostentation than of true piety and solid usefulness in what is related of the Hasideans, that, while they were preparing their minds for prayer, they spent a whole hour in meditation. If I am not mistaken in the opinion I have formed of the weakness of our minds, a preparation so laborious as this would not

¹ Isa. xxvi. 20; Matt. vi. 6. ² Eccl. v. 1. ³ Ps. ciii. 1.

⁴ Luke xi. 1; Rom. viii. 16.

prepare but exhaust the mind. It is hardly possible for any person to be otherwise than fatigued who applies his mind, with such intensity, to a single internal object. And, after all, if we choose to speak the truth, what sort of prayer is that which follows so laborious a preparation; and in what way is the preparation to be distinguished from prayer? Our transactions with God are not to be regulated in the same manner as with men. We must not first meditate, then contrive a method, next apply artificial ornaments, and, last of all, repeat the composition. Meditation itself, ardent desires, and the groanings earnestly put forth from the bottom of the heart, overthrowing all beauty of arrangement, and springing not from set study but from the occasion, are commonly prayers of extraordinary richness and energy. All we have to do is to maintain, in our stated prayers, that preparation of mind, in which there shall be no idle display of art or constraint, but everything shall flow, if I may so express it, naturally. When I say *naturally*, I must be understood as referring to that *nature* which comes from the regenerating and sanctifying Spirit.

In prayer itself we must observe.—I. That the prayer proceed from faith.¹ This implies (1), some hope, at least, that our persons have been accepted by God. (2.) A conviction that the thing asked is good. (3.) A belief, resting on the promise of God, that it will be obtained, but accompanied by submission to the Divine wisdom and goodness, which per-

¹ James i. 6, 7.

haps has looked out something better for us. II. That it be performed with *attention*—with attention to *God*, to the *things* asked, and to *ourselves*. *Lauspergius*, in his *Manual of a Christian Soldier*, has elegantly said, “Keep your eye on God alone, as if there were not another being in the universe besides God and yourself.” Equally beautiful is the following statement, “If, while you are praying, you allow your mind to wander, you will resemble one who holds the bow, and yet cannot direct the arrow against his adversary.” Here, if anywhere, does the old saying apply, *Hoc age, do this*, attend to the business in hand. III. That it be performed with *fervour*. Let the fire burn this incense, that “the Lord may smell a sweet savour.” “Let my prayers come up before thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.”¹ But let it be a sacred flame, kindled by the holy Spirit, at the farthest possible remove from the fire of lust and of depraved affections.² Such is that earnestness in prayer, which is mentioned with commendation in various passages of holy writ, Ἐκτενέστερον προσήυχετο, “he prayed more earnestly.”³ Προσευχὴ δὲ ἦν ἐκτενής γενομένη ὑπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας πρὸς τὸν Θεόν. EARNEST prayer was made by the church unto God.” IV. That it be performed *without ceasing*.⁴ The mind must be kept in a state of prayer, and, very frequently, as occasion offers, during the intervals of other employments, and even in the midst of these employments, it must send

¹ Ps. cxli. 2.² Ja. iv. 2, 3.³ Luke xxii. 44.⁴ 1 Thes. v. 17.

forth warm breathings towards God. Stated prayers, too, on matters of very high importance, ought to be frequently repeated, renewing unceasingly the struggle, until at length you come off a conqueror." I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."¹ This is πάντοτε προσεύχεσθαι και μη ἑκκακεῖν, "always to pray, and not to faint."²

After prayer the following things must be done. I. We must look for the blessing sought, and the answer of God, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace unto his people and to his saints."³ "Therefore I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me."⁴ When the servant of Benhadad, king of Syria, who but a little before had been very proud, now entreated, with humble prayers, that Ahab, king of Israel, would grant his deliverance, and had received a favourable answer, "the men did diligently observe whether anything would come from him, and did hastily catch it."⁵ The same thing, but with a proper regard to the relative condition of the parties, must be done towards God by those who engage in prayer. "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me." II. We must look for the blessing in the diligent use of lawful means. One thing have I DESIRED of the Lord, that will I SEEK AFTER.⁶ If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver,

¹ Gen. xxxii. 26.² Luke xviii. 1.³ Ps. lxxxv. 8.⁴ Mic. vii. 7.⁵ 1 Kings xx. 33.⁶ Ps. xxvii. 4.

and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.”¹ III. We must leave to God the appointment of the time for bestowing the blessing, satisfied, at all times, with *ἔνκαιρον βοήθειαν*, “help in time of need.”² “It is not for us to know the times, or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power.”³ There is some *acceptable time*, when God in the multitude of his mercies hears.⁴ But “our times are wholly in his hand.”⁵ It is, therefore, our duty to acquiesce, by faith and hope, in that promise of God, “Thus saith the Lord, in an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee.”⁶ IV. We must endeavour to ascertain whether we rise from prayer better and holier men. He who has conversed familiarly with God must carry away some of the brightness of the divine holiness. He has sanctified himself that he might approach to the Holy One of Israel. He has conversed, for a while, with the Holy One. Above all things else, he has prayed, as he ought to do, for his own sanctification. After such prayers, is it not fitting that he should apply his mind with greater promptitude and eagerness to his progressive holiness?

We have now finished what we intended to say about the preparation of the mind for prayer. We have handled the subject with the greater brevity on this account, that few or no passages of Scripture occurred which required copious illustration. The whole sub-

¹ Prov. ii. 3—5. ² Heb. iv. 16. ³ Acts i. 7. ⁴ Ps. lxix. 13. ^b Ps. xxxi. 15. ⁶ Isa. xlix. 8.

ject, indeed, is better adapted to sincere practice than to lengthened argumentation.

DISSERTATION IV.

ON GESTURES IN PRAYER.

OUR body ought to be employed for the honour of God in prayer, and therefore, we now proceed to treat of THE GESTURES OF THE SUPPLIANTS. These are of far less importance to the value of prayer than a holy preparation of mind, but they will furnish matter for more copious discussion, because under this head we shall throw together a multitude of facts drawn from the usages of antiquity. The order we shall observe is,—First, to relate *historically* what gestures were observed by the ancients in prayer, and next, to teach *theologically* what is proper to be done by us in this matter. The gestures of persons engaged in prayer refer either to the *attitude of the whole body*, or to *some particular part* of the body. Those which respect the whole body are, I. KNEELING. II. BOWING. III. FALLING TO THE GROUND. IV. STANDING. V. SITTING.

KNEELING was recommended by God, “Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our maker.”¹ It was used by the saints, not

¹ Ps. xciv. 6.

only under the Old Testament,¹ but also under the New.² In the temple of Jerusalem, the Israelites were accustomed to stand during the religious services, but when they engaged in prayer they always kneeled. This custom is referred to in an account given us of the remarkable peculiarities of the first temple, in the fifth chapter of *Pirke Aboth*, עומדים צפופים ומשהחיים, רווחים, That is, those who, from the immense numbers assembled at the religious festivals, had scarcely room to stand, found abundance of room for kneeling. This practice was afterwards observed universally by the Christian church. Eusebius, in his Ecclesiastical History, (Book v. Chap. 5), relates, that Christian soldiers, serving under Marcus Aurelius, obtained rain by their prayers, and adds that they did this, γονυθέντες ἐπὶ τῆν γῆν, κατὰ τὸ ὑπαεῖδον ἡμῶν τῶν προσεσυχῶν ἔθους, “kneeling on the ground according to the custom usually observed by us in prayer.” Tertullian, writing to Scapula, says, “When did it not happen that even droughts were removed by kneeling and fasting?” That this attitude was frequently employed even in public prayers, is proved by a long enumeration of constitutions and examples taken from the ancient church, the middle ages, and modern times, by the venerable Voetius.³ Even at the period of the reformation, in the earliest assemblies which the Dutch had “in the field, and in the woods,” they prayed kneeling. In the church of Dort, A. D. 1619, during the National Synod, this custom was

¹ 1 Kings viii. 34. 2 Ch. vi. 13. Dan. vi. 10. Ez. ix. 5.

² Acts vii. 60; and xx. 36; and xxi. 5. Eph. iii. 14.

Disp. Tom. v. p. 536.

constantly observed.¹ It is manifest, therefore, that those who recommended that kneeling should be observed as the most becoming attitude even in public prayers, where it could conveniently be done, were not chargeable with innovation.

Kneeling does certainly express humility and subjection. When we bend our body, we reduce it as far as possible to a smaller form, and by this attitude make an acknowledgment of our meanness. Its significancy is such, that it is attributed to those who have no limbs or sinews, and who are therefore incapable of kneeling. Theophylact, in explaining 1 Cor. xiii., and remarking on Phil. ii. 10, "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow," justly observes, "Οὐκ οστᾶ καὶ νεῦρα ἔχουσιν οἱ ἐπουράνιοι, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐπιτεταμένην ὑποταγὴν ἐδήλωσε. Heavenly beings have not bones and sinews, but he used the terms to express the greatest submission." The author of Questions to the Orthodox, quoted by Justin Martyr, observes, Γονυκλισία σύμβολον ἐστὶ τῆς ἐν ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις πτώσεως ἡμῶν. "Kneeling is a figure of our falling into sins." Basil, (on the Holy Spirit), adds that the rising from our knees is a figure of our rising from our sins. Καθ' ἑκαστὴν γονυκλισίαν καὶ διανάστασιν ἐργῶν δείκνυμεν, ὅτι δια τῆς ἀμαρτίας εἰς γῆν κατεβρόύημεν, καὶ διὰ τῆς φιλανθρωπίας τοῦ κτίσαντος, εἰς οὐρανὸν ἀνεκλήθημεν. "By each act of kneeling and rising we practically declare that by sin we were thrown down to earth, and by the love of the Creator towards men, we were recalled to heaven."

¹ Disp. Tom. v. p. 560.

These observations, we think, are more ingenious than solid, though it must be owned that such thoughts, whether naturally suggested, or forcibly introduced, are pious thoughts, and appropriate to the exercise of prayer. Such minute subtleties, however, were frequently indulged by the ancients. From that quarter was derived the notion, that on the Lord's day, and during the whole interval between Easter and Pentecost, it was improper to kneel in prayer, or to fast. Tertullian on the Soldier's Crown, Chap. iii., says, "On the Lord's day we hold it to be unlawful to fast, or to pray in a kneeling posture. We claim the same exemption from Easter to Pentecost." As this point was not observed with sufficient care by some persons, the Fathers of the council of Nice judged it to be so important, that they expressly enjoined all persons to stand on these occasions. *Ἐπειδὴ τίνες εἰσιν ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ γόνυ κλίνοντες, καὶ ἐν ταῖς τῆς πεντεκοστῆς ἡμέραις, ὑπερ τοῦ πάντα ἐν πάσῃ παροικίᾳ ὁμοίως φυλάττεσθαι, ἐστῶτας ἔδοξε τῇ ἁγίᾳ Συνόδῳ τὰς ἐυχὰς ἀποδιδόναι τῷ Θεῷ.* "As there are some persons who kneel on the Lord's day and on the days of Pentecost, the Holy council, with a view to the uniformity of all the observances in every district, has thought proper to enjoin that, at those times, the worshippers shall stand while offering their prayers to God." The same thing is constantly inculcated by the Fathers, and repeated by the other councils. The reason assigned is, that this custom is a figure of the resurrection, by which, through the grace of Christ, we have been delivered from sins, and from that death which he has destroyed.

But however ancient these views may be, no reverence for antiquity can or ought to prevent us from freely pronouncing them to be superstitious, and at variance with the simplicity of Apostolical Christianity. Certainly, the Apostle Paul, together with all who had accompanied him from Tyre to the ship, “kneeled down on the shore and prayed.”¹ That this took place during those days which were not far from Pentecost, may be gathered from Acts xx. 16, where we are told, that “he hasted, if it were possible for him to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.”

Closely allied to kneeling is the BOWING OF THE BODY towards the Holy place, which was used by the Israelites in their worship. “I will bow myself with reverence towards thy holy temple.”² And again, “Bow yourselves towards his footstool.”³ What is God’s footstool? God himself declares that it is the *earth*.⁴ “This might be supposed to mean,” says Cocceius, “worship God with the lowliest adoration.” But I think it means more. The Rabbins understood it to refer to בית המקדש, *the house of the sanctuary*, and they are supported by the ninth verse, “Worship at his holy hill.” In the same sense, a similar phrase occurs, Isa. lx. 13. “The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary, and I will make the place of my feet glorious,” where the place of the sanctuary, and the place of God’s feet appear to mean the same thing.

¹ Acts xxi. 5. ² Ps. v. 7. ³ Ps. xcix. 5. ⁴ Isa. lxvi. 1.

But even this, I think, does not bring out the full import of the phrase. In the house of the sanctuary, *το κειμήλιον*, *the part of the furniture* which was most sacred, was the *Ark of the covenant*. That appears to be designated by the same term. For David says, “As for me, I had it in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of our God;”¹ where “the footstool of our God” is distinguished from “the house of rest,” that is, from the temple. Again, “son of man, the place of my throne, and the places of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name shall the house of Israel no more defile.”² One probable reason why the ark receives this appellation, is its relation to heaven, where God sitteth on the throne of his majesty amidst the highest manifestations of his glory, so that every thing on earth, and particularly every thing in which God exhibited himself on earth, stands in place of his footstool.³ Another reason is, that God was supposed to dwell where the wings of the Cherubim were extended, and met each other, his feet being placed on the covering of the ark as his footstool. Towards this they are commanded to direct their worship, not that the footstool was the ultimate object of their adoration, but merely the place towards which the worshipper, even when at a distance, was commanded to look. This was Solomon’s design. “That thine eyes may be open toward this house, day and night, even toward the place of which thou hast said, my name shall be there; that thou

¹ 1 Chron. xxviii. 2.² Ezek. xliii. 7.³ Isa. lxvi. 1.

mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place. And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place.”¹ The same thing is repeatedly mentioned in the following verses, and required from the Israelites when banished from their country by the violence of their enemies.² It was carefully observed by Daniel, who, when he was about to pray, “ went into his house, and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God.”³ To sum up all that we have said on this point, to bow down towards God’s footstool, is to bow down in the lowest manner towards the earth, to bow down in body and in mind towards the holy place, and towards what was kept in the holy place, the ark of the Covenant.

There is, unquestionably, some meaning in all this. What may that meaning be? Bowing is an expression of humility. The person who bows down seems to throw himself at the feet of the other party, and to offer himself to be his footstool. “ I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee ; which have said to thy soul, bow down, that we may go over ; and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over.”⁴ The Eastern princes had women whom they called *ladders*, (*κλίμακες*), on whose backs they stood when

¹ 1 Kings viii. 29, 30. ² V. 33, 34. ³ Dan. vi. 10. ⁴ Isa. li. 23.

they were mounting on horseback. But what was the meaning of bowing towards God's sanctuary and footstool? The sanctuary was a type of heaven. Heaven itself could not be directly approached at that time, ἐπι τῆς πρώτης σκηνῆς ἐχούσας στάσιν, "while the first tabernacle was yet standing."¹ By bending towards the sanctuary, they declared that they expected from heaven assistance and an answer to their prayers. The Israelites, praying towards the sanctuary, prayed that God would "hear in heaven his dwelling place, and hearing would forgive."²

But there was still another meaning. Both the temple, and the Ark of the Covenant, are figures of Christ, "in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;"³ of whom it was said, "he shall be שַׁמֶּטֶת for a sanctuary;" and "whom God hath set forth ἱλαστήριον, a propitiation, through faith, in his blood."⁴ Such is the import of that lofty passage, "Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy," which we thus explain. Ye worshippers, look to God alone, and approach him with all sacred reverence. That you may worship aright, look only to Christ, in whom God dwells, and in whom he is to be found. Through him raise your minds to God that dwelleth in the heavens, who, being the Holy One, admits not sinners to friendly intercourse with himself, except through the interposition of that great Mediator.

Equal humiliation, but with the addition of great sorrow, is expressed by PROSTRATION, or falling on

¹ Heb. ix. 8. ² 1 Kings viii. 30. ³ Col. ii. 9. ⁴ Rom. iii. 25.

the ground, which the Hebrews call *נפילת אפים*. We have an instance in our Lord himself, "Ἐπεσεν ἐπὶ τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ προσευχόμενος," "he fell on his face, praying;"¹ and in 1 Cor. xiv. 25, *καὶ οὕτω πεσὼν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον, προσκυνήσει τῷ Θεῷ*, "and so falling down on his face he will worship God." Of the Christian soldiers, Marcus Aurelius, as quoted by Justin, says, *ῥίψαντες ἑαυτοὺς ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν*, "having thrown themselves down upon the earth." Speaking of Theodosius, Theodoret, book v. chap. xviii., where he relates the deep repentance of the emperor, at the sight of which Ambrose freed him from the bond of excommunication, says, and thus at length the emperor ventured to enter into the temple of God, *οὐκ ἐστῶς τὸν δεσπότην ἰκέτευεν οὐδὲ τα γόνατα κλίνας, ἀλλὰ προηήσας ἐπὶ τοῦ δαπέδου κείμενος, τὴν Δαυϊδικὴν ἀφῆκε φωνήν, ἐκολληθή τῷ ἐδάφει ἡ ψυχὴ μου*. "Not standing, nor on his bended knees, did he present his supplication to the Lord, but lying flat on the ground, he poured out the language of David, my soul cleaveth to the earth." What was done by the emperor from a conviction of aggravated crimes is recommended to some humble suppliants by Cæsarius Arelatensis. "Unquestionably, he does not believe his sin to be great who does not seek the cure of his soul by falling prostrate, or bowing down to the ground. Let no one, therefore, unless infirmity forbids, be reluctant to fall down flat upon the earth, to express his humility."

But **STANDING**, too, was used in prayer, even by

¹ Mat. xxvi. 39.

the ancients. In this sense, the Jews interpret Gen. xviii. 22, "Abraham stood before the Lord;" and, again, Gen. xix. 27, "Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord." On this passage the authors of the Talmud say, אין עמידה אלא תפילה *There is no standing without prayer.* Their meaning is, that nowhere in scripture is mention made of standing, except where prayer is expressed or implied. In the same sense *David Kimchi* interprets the words of Elijah, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand:"¹ that is, says he, שאני רגיל לעמוד לפניו בתפילה "before whom I am wont to stand in prayer." On another passage Maimonides remarks, אין מתפלל אלא מצומד "No one prays except standing;" which, if I am not mistaken, must be understood as meaning that, *at least*, the worshipper should be expected to stand, and that he should not be held at liberty to employ any attitude which is *less* appropriate than standing for expressing the sentiment of reverence.

The Jews had anciently אנשי מעמדות *stationary men*, divided into twenty-four classes, who were the deputies of all Israel, and represented the nation daily in prayers and sacrifices, during the performance of which they *stood*. Those for whom sacrifices were offered were supposed to lie under obligation to be present at the offering of their own sacrifices. But it was quite impossible that the whole people should be present on these occasions. Hence it became customary to select some persons of con-

¹ 1 Kings xvii. 1.

sideration, who should personate the people, and be present at the public services. These were under the command of the officers of the temple, the chief of whom called out the priests, levites, and stationary men, by this address, *לויים לדוכן וישראל למעמד* “Stand up, ye Priests, ye Levites to the reading desk, and Israelites for standing.”¹ They had a book, accordingly, which was entitled *סדר מעמדות* “the order of standings,” that is, of the readings and prayers of the Liturgy.² Of such importance were these *standing* services reckoned, that it was said in the book Musar, “Without the standings the world would not stand.” In the New Testament, also, mention is sometimes made of standing. Of hypocrites, it is said, “They love *ἑστῶτες προσεύχεσθαι* to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets.”³ On this passage Lightfoot well deserves to be consulted. Mark xi. 25; *Ὅταν στήκητε προσευχόμενοι*. “When ye stand praying.” Luke xviii. 13; *Μακρόθεν ἑστῶς*, “standing afar off.”

This practice was transferred from the synagogue to the Christian church. Justin, in his Apology to Antoninus Pius, when describing the public services of the Lord's day, has this among other observations. *Ἐπειτα ἀνιστάμεθα κοινῇ πάντες, και ἑυχὰς πέμπομεν*, “Next, we all rise together, and utter our prayers.” In the liturgy ascribed (but on insufficient grounds) to Mark, the deacon sometimes calls out, “Stand up to prayer;” and again, “Stand upright;” and

¹ Maimonides. ² Buxtorf Lex Talm. on the word *למעמד*.
Cunæus de Rep. Heb. Outram de Sacrificiis. ³ Mat. vi. 5.

“ You who are sitting stand up.” As to the practices among the Greek churches of the present day, Christophorus Angelus, chap. xxi., says, “ The Greeks constantly pray in the temple, standing upright.”¹ The services of the Armenians may be found explained by Tabernarius.² In the Latin church, the word *stationes*, stations, or standings, was in very frequent use. It was taken from the Roman soldiery, among whom there are well known to have been *stations* of soldiers, and *stationary* men, who, at certain places, were commanded to stand and keep watch. Thence it came to be applied to the sacred exercises of Christians. Tertullian (on Prayer) says, “ If station derives its name from military usage, we too are God’s soldiers.” Ambrose, mentioning the stations,³ says, “ our fastings are the camp, which protects us from the assaults of the devil. Lastly, they are called *stations*, because, standing and dwelling in them, we repel our treacherous foes.”

Now, standing expresses *reverence*, *obedience*, and *readiness* towards a superior. This may be gathered from the example of Joseph *standing* before King Pharaoh,⁴ and of Daniel and his companions, whom Nebuchadnezzar commanded to be instructed “ that they might stand before the king.”⁵ Hence the angels also are represented as servants *standing* before God as their King and Lord.⁶ On this ground Paul argues, “ To which of the angels said he at

¹ Προσιύχονται οἱ Ἕλληνες ἀεὶ ἐν τῷ ναῷ ὀρθῶς ἰστάμενοι.

² Tom. i. cap. iii.

³ Serm. 36.

⁴ Gen. xli. 46.

⁵ Dan. i. 5.

⁶ Dan. vii. 10. Zech. iii. 7.

any time, sit at my right hand?"¹ Maimonides says, "There is no service without standing;² for it was said, "that they might stand to minister."³

The ancient Christians, besides, observed that their *stations*, or religious services observed in a standing posture, were a figure of Christ's resurrection and of our own, were expressive of a mind raised to heavenly things, and of readiness to depart from this life; and, lastly, that the attitude was that of pleading a cause before a judge. Clement⁴ says, "On the Lord's day, we offer three prayers standing, in memory of him who rose on the third day." Chrysostom introduces the form of expression used by the deacon; "let us stand in a becoming manner," and thus applies it to a right disposition of mind. "During the divine service we are told to stand up in a becoming manner, that we may raise our low and grovelling thoughts,—may drive away the languor which we have contracted from the intercourse of life, and may raise our minds to a state of uprightness in the presence of God." Basil, or whoever is the author of the work on the Holy Spirit addressed to Amphilochius, says, "The church teaches her scholars that they must, on this day, perform their prayers in a standing posture, in order that, by maintaining a constant regard to that life which shall never end, we may not neglect to make preparation for our departure to that life." Joannes Climacus, whose writings are to be found in the

¹ Heb. i. 13. ² אין עבודה אלא מעומד.

³ Deut. xviii. 5. ⁴ Const. Apost. Lib. ii. cap. lxi.

Library of the Fathers, says, "Stand trembling during this prayer, in the same manner as if pleading your cause as a criminal before a judge, that, by your inward and outward worship, you may propitiate the favour of a just judge." But this is, perhaps, carrying subtlety to excess.

Again, those who prayed standing did not always stand with their face towards the same quarter of the heavens. The Jews turned towards the *west*, for the door of the temple was on the east side, and the Holy of Holies, to which they were commanded to look, lay on the west side of the temple. Accordingly, we are told, "They make the doors of the synagogue constantly towards the east, because we read concerning the temple, that its gate was towards the west, and it is written, "And they pitched their camp before the tabernacle towards the east, and again, before the tabernacle of the congregation towards the east."¹ The same custom was observed by the idolaters, in whose dreadful impieties some of the Jews mingled. "And he brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about five-and-twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces towards the east, and they worshipped the sun toward the east."²

It must be observed, however, that the Jews, when banished from their native land, and living in the western countries, build their synagogues so that the

¹ Rab. Ascher ad Megilla, cap. iii. p. 36. ² Ezek viii. 16.

gates may be on the west side,—the ark, in which is kept the book of the law, being in the quarter opposite to the gate, on the east, towards which, as they enter, they bow down and pray. The reason of the difference is this, because the Jews who live in the west have the land of Canaan, and consequently the place where the sanctuary was, towards the east. The instruction uniformly given by them is the following: When any one stands up to pray, let him turn his face towards the land of Israel, and direct his prayer toward Jerusalem, and the Sanctuary, and the Holy of Holies. Thus all their prayers were regulated by a regard to the Holy of Holies, so that in the land of Israel, if any one stood before the mercy-seat, he must turn his face towards the mercy-seat, and consequently toward the east. On this subject the eminent Campegius Vitringa treats with his usual ability.

The customs which we have now mentioned convey some instruction, which the moderns, from not understanding it, have improperly neglected. As the whole Ark was a type of Christ, so the כפרת, the mercy-seat, had a principal reference to Christ, and signified the propitiation which we have in Christ, through our intercessor with the Father.¹ In him God dwells as he formerly dwelt in the mercy-seat. There he is to be addressed. Thence he hears the prayers of the worshippers. At no time have adoration or prayer been presented in a proper manner, except with a view to the propitiation which the Messiah was to make, or has actually made.

¹ Rom. iii. 25. 1 John ii. 2.

In total ignorance of these and such like customs, many of the heathens, for widely different reasons, turned towards the East during their prayers, as Tertullian informs us.¹ *But most of you, from an affectation of adoring the heavenly bodies, move your lips towards the rising of the sun.* The same practice was very carefully observed by the ancient Christians, the custom, as some assert, having been handed down to them from the Apostles. This is a groundless statement, for in all their writings, not a syllable is to be found on that subject. But the superstition deserves the praise of ingenuity, and many stories have been invented for the purpose of confirming this custom. Pseudo-Athanasius,² humouring the various classes who had inquired into the reasons why Christians, when they pray, turn towards the east, thinks proper to give a variety of replies. To the Jews he bids them reply that it was because the Holy Spirit has commanded us by David, Psalm cxxxii. “Let us worship in the place where thy feet have stood, O Lord.” He means, because in the east Christ was born, spent his life, and was crucified. To the Gentiles he bids them say; “We worship with our face toward the east, not as if God were to be found only in the east, but because God is called the true light. On this account we look towards a created light, and worship not the light itself, but its Creator.” And he informs Christians that “the churches are built toward the east, in order that we may look to the Paradise from which we were banished, praying to the

¹ Apol. Cap. xvi.

² Qu. xxxvii. ad Antiochum.

Lord our God that he may restore us to our ancient country." Other reasons are added by different persons. Justin Martyr affirms that it is done on account of the excellence of the east above all the other parts of the creation. Clement of Alexandria declares that it was because the light and the dawn are from the east. Damascenus explains it to be because Christ is called the Light, the Son of Righteousness, and "the day-spring from on high." Others who are followed, with an excess of antiquarian predilection,¹ by the illustrious Selden,² say, that it is because our Saviour, when he was crucified, looked toward the west, or, which means the same thing, *from the east*, and might, therefore, be looked at by worshippers with their faces towards the east; and because, as the lightning moves from the east to the west, so on that day which we all expect will be the coming of the Son of Man.³ But these are trifling discussions, and Christianity does not consist in searching out such mysteries.

Whether or not SITTING is one of the gestures proper to be employed in prayer is a point disputed among learned men. We do certainly find it mentioned in Scripture as employed where meditation and prayer were joined. To this purpose it is customary to quote the example of Moses, for whom, while he was praying for the Israelites against the Amalekites, *they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon*;⁴ of David,⁵ of whom it is said,

¹ De diis Syris Synt. II. Cap. VIII.

² Nimis ἀρχαϊκῶς.

³ Mat. xxiv. 27.

⁴ Ex. xvii. 12.

⁵ 2 Sam. vii. 18.

“ then went king David in, and sat before the Lord;”¹ of Elijah,² who prayed *sitting under a juniper tree* ; of Nehemiah,³ who “ sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven ;” and lastly, of the whole multitude which Jesus “ commanded to sit down on the grass,” while “ he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.”⁴

But though men sometimes sat and prayed, it does not necessarily follow that they sat for the purpose of praying, or that they considered sitting to be as becoming an attitude in prayer as kneeling or standing. It may even be questioned whether, while they sat for a different purpose, they were animated by the ardour of prayer. And certainly, if we carefully weigh the instances now adduced, we shall find in each of them some peculiarity which deserves our notice. Moses, it is evident, sat on account of fatigue. Elijah had the same reason for sitting, being worn out with a tedious journey. There is reason to believe that his prayers arose from his weariness, and were occasional and ejaculatory, rather than stated prayers. Nehemiah sat on account of grief, for that is the usual manner of those whom grief has overcome. *He sitteth alone, and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him.*⁵ And there is rashness in asserting that during all the days in which they

¹ יושב לפני יהוה

² 1 Kings xix. 4.

³ i. 4.

⁴ Mat. xiv. 19.

⁵ Lam. iii. 28.

are said to have sat, and mourned, and fasted, they continued to sit, and did not rise to pray. The word *sit* does not express the attitude of prayer, but of mourning. We might refer to the case of Job's friends, who "sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him; for they saw that his grief was very great."¹ The multitude were commanded to sit down to eat, but it is not said that Christ sat while he prayed.

There is more difficulty in the case of David. But we must observe, 1. That the Hebrew word שׁב does not merely signify to *sit*, but to *remain*, to *continue*. The Greek translator renders it by καταγίνεσθαι, *to abide*. It might have the same meaning in David's case, and this might express not an indolent, sluggish, or unseemly attitude, but David's constancy in prayer. Can it be believed that David, who frequently exhorted the people to "bow down before God's footstool," exhibited in his own person not the best example, by sitting down before the ark? Josephus is of a different opinion. "Having heard these things from the prophet, David bowed himself joyfully towards the ark, and falling down on his face, worshipped God."² 2. If we must hold by the ordinary meaning of the word *sit*, it may be thought that, in sitting in the temple, David exercised a privilege which, the Jewish instructors tell us, was granted to the king alone. On this head it will be proper to consult Shickardus,³ who quotes Maimonides

¹ Job ii. 13.

² Jos. Ant. Lib. 7, Cap. 4.

³ De jure regio Hebræorum. Cap. 4. Th. xiii.

as expressing his opinion about the kings in the following terms: "When he enters the court of the Sanctuary, if he is of the seed of David, he sits. For there is no permission granted to sit in the courts of the Lord's house, except to the kings of the family of David, as we read,¹ then went king David in, and sat before the Lord." David therefore sat, not for the purpose of praying, but in order to comply with the royal usage during his presence at the religious services, in the course of which he was employed in praying. 3. What is there to interfere with the supposition that, though in the first instance he sat, yet when he was about to pray, he rose up or kneeled? Such was the case of Ezra,² who tells us, that on account of the transgression of the people of Israel, "he sat astonished until the evening sacrifice," but immediately adds, "And at the evening sacrifice, I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garments and my mantle, I fell upon my knees and spread out my hands unto the Lord my God."

In ordinary circumstances, sitting is considered by all nations to be an unbecoming attitude in prayer. The Hebrews think that it is not consistent with the reverence due to the deity. *Whoever, says Maimonides, performs a religious service in a sitting posture, is profane, and his service is a profanation.*³ Alexander, addressing Sisygambis, the mother of Darius, though then a captive, says, "As often as I come to you, until you signified your permission that I should

¹ 2 Sam. vii. 18.

² Ezra ix. 3—5.

³ כל העובד והוא ישב חלל ועבודתו פסולה.

sit down, I stood.”¹ “To sit down,” says Tertullian, “within the view, or in the immediate presence of a person whom you regard with the highest honour and reverence, would be a mark of disrespect : how much more in the sight of the living God ?”²

Having examined those gestures which relate to the attitude of *the whole body*, we now proceed to those which belong to *certain parts of the body*. The first which presents itself is the COVERING OR UNCOVERING OF THE HEAD. Among the Hebrews, the high priest, and the other priests were not the only persons who always had their heads covered, while performing the sacred rites. Those of the Israelites who were present stood with their heads covered. *He shall not*, says Maimonides, in his treatise on prayer, *he shall not stand during prayer with his head uncovered.*³ The same thing is laid down in the book *Musar*, which Drusius quotes on 1 Cor. xi. 4. “A man ought to cover his head when he prays, on account of God, before whom he prays, and stands with trembling and fear.” They held it to be an expression of *reverence*. To the same purpose is another Talmudic gloss quoted by Lightfoot on this passage of Paul’s writings. “He covers himself on account of his reverence for the divine Majesty.” Jacobus Altingius, in his discourse on the mitre of the high priest, asserts that this was done by Moses and Elijah, who, when they stood before God, and observed his presence, hid their face by drawing their garment over it, thinking themselves unworthy to ap-

¹ Qu. Cur. Lib. V.

² De Oratione.

³ לא יעמוד בתפלה בראש מגולה.

pear before him with their head uncovered.¹ They add, that it was a mark of modesty, and that, on this account, the scholars of the wise men sat covered during the solemn fasts, as sorrowful and excommunicated persons, *as the children of men reproved by God.*² In like manner, that person who was נזופ reprov'd by some great Rabbi, remained at home as one put to shame, and did not, in the presence of him who had put him to shame, stand with his head uncovered. And as the head covered was a mark of modesty, so the head uncovered was a mark of effrontery. For this reason, those whom Moses declares to have gone out *with a high hand*,³ are represented by the Chaldee paraphrast as having gone out *with uncovered head.*⁴ In the same manner, where mention is made of the soul which hath sinned *presumptuously*,⁵ or as the Hebrew phrase is, *with a high hand*, the Chaldee paraphrast again uses the expression *with uncovered head.*

The custom of covering the head during worship, as expressive of reverence, was not peculiar to the Hebrews. It was practised by most of the eastern nations.⁶ That it was observed by the Phrygians, an Asiatic nation, may be gathered from the circumstance that Helenus, a Trojan, enjoined it on Aeneas.⁷ The custom was brought by Aeneas into Italy.

¹ Ex. xxxiv. 8. 1 Kings xix. 13. ² כבני אדם נזופים
למקום. ³ ביד רמה ברש גליה. ⁵ Num xv. 30.

⁶ Curtius, Lib. IV.

⁷ Purpureo velare comas adopertus amictu.

Hunc socii morem sacrorum, hunc ipse teneto :

Hâc casti maneant in religione nepotes.

Next came the Romans, who, except in religious services, usually had the head uncovered, and hardly ever, unless in the case of disease, or mourning, or the severity of the weather, or perhaps through effeminacy, covered the head. In the services of religion, however, the various orders of priests wore a cap or bonnet, mitres and fillets, while the people, throwing over their heads a fold of their robes, stood with their heads covered. It was for this reason, Plutarch thought, that the priests of Jupiter received the name of *Flamines*, slightly altered from *Pileamines*, because they constantly wore the *pileus* or cap for covering their head. But this appears to be too far-fetched. A better etymology of *Flamen* is that it is put for *Filamen*, from *filum*, a thread, because a thread was attached to the priest's mitre, or because, during scorching heat, nothing more than a thread was usually employed in binding the head. This is very clearly employed by Servius, in explaining the VIII. book of the *Æneid*: "The priests (*flamines*), wore on their head a cap, in which was a short wand, with a little wool upon it. As they could not carry this in summer, they adopted, in place of it, a simple thread for binding their heads, for to have their heads altogether uncovered was unlawful. From the thread (*filum*), which they used they were called *flamines* or *filamines*. But, on the great festivals, it was necessary to lay aside the thread, and put on the cap." Such is the explanation given us by Servius. But the best etymology of all, if I mistake not, is that given by *Vossius*, who derives it from the covering of the head which

they wore, and which was called *flammeum*, from its *flame* or yellow colour. That colour was supposed to belong to the Thundering Jupiter, and was therefore appropriated to his priests. But this is a digression. I wanted to show that the Romans had their heads covered during the worship of their gods. It was on this account that L. Vitellius, on his return from Syria, resolving that, with fawning and affected adulation, he would give divine honours to Cæsar, *went to him with his head covered, and kneeled down before him.*¹ On this passage of Suetonius the reader may consult the observations of Torrentius, who will furnish him with others on the same subject.

The Grecian institutions were very different. Macrobius uses this language. "In those places divine worship is performed, according to the Greek custom, with uncovered head."² In this manner, Grotius informs us, the passage must be read, Chap. x. where worship is said to be rendered to Saturn *with uncovered head, according to the foreign*, that is, the Grecian *custom*. Plutarch, writing about these same Saturnalia, says that they were performed *with the head uncovered.*³ *Lucem facere*, Festus tells us, was the phrase usually employed in that sense.

Paul, when writing to the Corinthians who were Greeks, gives the preference to that custom.⁴ In doing so, he did not intend to lay down a universal law which should be everywhere observed. He

¹ Suet. Vitel. Cap. II.

² Satur. Lib. VIII.

³ ἀπαρακαλύπτω κεφαλῇ.

⁴ 1 Cor xi. 4.

merely accommodated himself to a custom of civil life observed, at that time, by those to whom he was writing. This is admirably, I think, explained by Altingius in a discourse already quoted. The Greeks, we have said, were wont to perform their sacred rites with uncovered heads, in the worship of their idols. Those who perpetrated dishonourable actions were in the habit of concealing their heads by throwing over them old tattered clothes. Those, again, who were engaged in any honourable occupation, were wont to keep their heads uncovered. Hence originated the proverbial expression, *γυμνῆ κεφαλῆ*, *with naked head*, applied to those who did anything openly and without shame. Now, as nothing is more noble than religion, they thought that its services should be observed with bare or uncovered head. At a subsequent period, however, when the Greeks, in considerable numbers, had abandoned idolatry, and gone over to the Christian faith, they appear to have departed from the practice of laying bare the head, either in imitation of the Jews, or from an aversion to the ancient custom. From this change in their outward services, some of their Greek neighbours might be apt to fancy that they treated the Deity with profane contempt, in consequence of their abstaining from every expression of reverence in their new religious observances. Paul, therefore, exhorts that, in praying or prophesying, they should attend to the proprieties of manner which were customary among the Gentiles, and that, after becoming Christians, they should not hold out

to strangers the appearance of being more ashamed of their new religion than they had been of their former idolatrous services. Such is the view given by Altingius.

To this observation may be added one made by *Ludovicus Capellus*. Both among the Greeks and Romans, says he, all respectable persons appeared in public without any covering on their heads, and were not accustomed to cover the head except when they were compelled by mourning, by disease, or by any necessary cause, or when broken down by effeminate softness. Paul, therefore, did not wish the Corinthians to attend religious services with the head covered, according to the custom of superstitious or idolatrous persons. Such a practice would argue a perverted, and certainly uncalled for ambition to follow the Jewish customs, or would betray *δεισιδαιμονίαν*, an unhappy and slavish dread of the Deity, and not that open freedom and boldness which Christians should cultivate and profess toward God. Or, in fine, he would give no countenance to an approximation, in Christian assemblies, to the effeminacy of some persons of that age, who gave out that they were unable to endure any severity of weather.

It must not be supposed that the same rule, which he had given to the Corinthians from a regard to their customs, would have been invariably given to Jews dwelling in their own country, or to Egyptians, or Arabians, who followed a different custom. The usages of civil life are endlessly varied by place and time. Consequently what, at one place and time,

is sufficiently becoming, would be, at another place and time, highly unbecoming. Yet the Apostolic rule has been in force, since that time, among almost all Christians. Is it because keeping the head uncovered is universally regarded by them as *a token* of reverence? I hardly think so. It has spread widely in the north, through the nations of France and Germany. But among the Jews, the Greeks, ancient Italy, and the whole of the east, the custom is wholly unknown. It appears, therefore, to belong to the *liberty of the New Testament*. *With uncovered head*, says Tertullian, *because we are not ashamed*.

From the head let us proceed to the HANDS. Three circumstances respecting them fall to be considered, the *washing*, the *spreading*, the *kissing*. *The washing of the hands* before prayer was greatly in use among Hebrew, Grecian, Roman and Christian nations. Aristæas, or whoever else is the author of the history of the LXX. Interpreters, mentions, among other things concerning them, that, after saluting the king, they went away to the accustomed places, “and, agreeably to the universal Jewish custom, having first washed their hands in the sea, they poured out prayers to God. When the king inquired why they washed their hands before praying, they replied, that every kind of work is done by the hands, and that their law enjoined them to do nothing carelessly, but every thing in a devout and holy manner.” Down to the present day, the Jews, before proceeding to prayers, practise daily the washing of hands, adding this short prayer, *Blessed art thou, O*

*Lord, our God, everlasting king, who has sanctified us by his precepts, and commanded us as to the washing of hands.*¹

The Christians, too, from Paul's injunction to "lift up holy hands," inferred the obligation to observe the outward washing of hands.² Chrysostom, in his XLIII. Homily on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, says, "Never pray with unwashed hands."³ For this purpose the outer courts of the churches had fountains, cisterns, wells, or even pitchers, that the faithful might not proceed to prayer with unwashed hands. The Greeks call them *λουτήρας*,

¹ ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו
במצותיו וצונו על נטילת ידים (נטילה literally signifies *lifting up*, but, by a transferred sense, was applied by the Rabbins to the washing of the hands.—T.) Homer, speaking of the Greeks, in the second book of the *Odysey*, says, "having washed their hands in the hoary deep, they prayed to Minerva."

Χεῖρας νιψάμενος πολιῆς ἄλος ἕυχσ᾽ Ἀθήνη.

Tibullus acquaints us with the practice of the Romans, Lib. 1. Ec. II.

"Casta placent superis, pura cum veste venite.
Et manibus puris sumite fontis aquam."

And Marius, according to Plutarch, prayed *after washing his hands*, *νιψάμενος τὰς χεῖρας*.

² 1 Tim. ii. 8. This interpretation probably took its rise among Jewish Christians, and might be suggested, partly by the word *holy* as synonymous with *clean*, but partly, also, by the double meaning of נטילה noticed above, to which the *ἱπαίρω* of the Apostle would be understood by them to correspond.—T.

³ "Οὐκ ἂν ἔλοιο χεῖρσιν ἀνίπτοις ἕξασθαι.

κρῆνας, πιπτῆρας, φρέατα. Chrysostom, in his LVII. Homily, Tom. V., uses these words, “It is enjoined, that in the halls of houses of prayer, there shall be fountains, that those who are going to pray to God may first wash their hands, and then spread them out in prayer.”¹ Paulinus Nolanus, writing to Aletius, Ep. xxxi. calls it a jug, (*cantharum*.) But all the ancient writers inculcate earnestly that the washing of the hands, however carefully performed, will be useless, unless it be accompanied by that purification of the mind from sin, which is denoted by this ablution. Where this is wanting, they pronounce the external rite of washing to be *laughing and trifling, the jests and sports of children*.² The reader may consult a lengthened dissertation on this subject by Suicerus in his *Observationes Sacrae*, cap. VI.

In almost all their prayers, *the spreading out and stretching the hands towards heaven* is mentioned. Aristotle, in his treatise *On the World*, says, *We all, when we pray, stretch out our hands towards heaven*.³ Among the ancient Hebrews it is well known to have been the custom.⁴ Among the Gentiles nothing was more common.⁵ Tertullian, speaking of Christians,

¹ Κρῆνας εἶναι ἐν ταῖς ἀνδραῖς τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν οἰκῶν νερόμισται, ἵνα οἱ μέλλοντες εὐχέσθαι τῷ Θεῷ, πρότερον ἀποπιψάμενοι τὰς χεῖρας, οὕτως αὐτὰς εἰς ἐυχὴν ἀνατίνωσι.

² γέλωτα, καὶ λῆρον, παίγνια καὶ παιδῶν ἀθύρματα.

³ πάντες οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἀνατείνωμεν χεῖρας εἰς οὐρανὸν ἐυχὰς ποιούμενοι.

⁴ Job. xi. 13. Lam. iii. 41.

⁵ ——— caelo palmas cum voce tetendit.—*Virg.*

Dicitur manus ad caelum tollens ita precatus.—*Liv. Lib. V.*

says, *with outstretched, because innocent hands*. Instances are, indeed, of so frequent occurrence, that to add more might appear to be unnecessary labour.

It is of more importance to inquire into the meaning of that attitude. And, first, it has been supposed to denote *sincerity*, for the attitude expresses laying open what was hid,—discovering what was concealed, revealing what was secret. Hence the Prophet commands us to “lift up our hearts with our hands unto God in the heavens.”¹ Again, it signifies *hope* withdrawn from every other object and turned to God. Children are wont to stretch out their hands to their parents, so as to give them an opportunity of taking hold of them. The same thing is done by persons drowning. The outstretched hand presents the image of a heart delighting to seize, and hold with the greatest eagerness, the hand of a father held out towards him. Such is the interpretation given by *Cocceius* of Job xi. 13. *If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him*. Again, it may denote that our faith is active, and that we are immediately to receive from the hand of God the blessing supplicated, or that we will struggle and take them by force. Lastly, it shows that the person who prays must *not be idle*, but, in the diligent use of lawful means, must wait for the divine blessing. Such is the meaning of the laconic admonition that *a hand prepared for labour must be employed in supplication to God*. Many passages to this purpose have been collected by Gathaker from Marcus Au-

¹ Lam. iii. 41.

toninus ; Lib. II. § xl. p. 347, from which these few may be selected :—“ We must call on God with outstretched hand.¹ You must first labour, and then call upon the gods.² No indolent man, though he have the names of the gods constantly in his mouth, will be able to earn his subsistence without toil.”³

There is some weight, too, in the observation of Chrysostom, who draws from it an argument to dissuade from all wickedness of conduct. “ What means the stretching out of the hands in prayer? The hands contribute to many wicked actions, such as acts of violence, murder, robbery, avarice, and unlawful gain. For this very reason we are commanded to lift them that the use we make of them in prayer may serve to banish malice and prevent crime. If you feel yourself disposed to injure the person or property of another, remember that those hands were employed, as your advocates and intercessors with God, in presenting that spiritual sacrifice. Beware of putting them to shame, and deprive them not of their liberty by a wicked action.”⁴

The kissing of the hands was also used in religious services. Job, speaking of the sun and moon, declares solemnly before God and men that he had never been guilty of such a crime. “ If I beheld

¹ Τὴν χεῖρα προσφέροντα τὸν Θεὸν καλεῖν.

² Ἄυτός τι νῦν δρῶν, εἶτα τοὺς Θεοὺς κάλει.

³ Ἄργος γὰρ οὐδεὶς. Θεοὺς ἔχων ἀνὰ στόμα εἶον δυναιτ' ἂν ξυλλίγειν ἀνευ πόνου.

⁴ Chrysostom on Ps. cxli.

the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness, and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand;" or, as the Hebrew phrase runs, MY HAND HATH KISSED MY MOUTH. He affirms that he was never led astray by the beauty of the heavenly luminaries to render to them, either in secret or in public, religious worship. The mode of expression is peculiar. It is not the hand which kisses the mouth, but the mouth which kisses the hand. But this difficulty is removed by a learned observation of *Cocceius*. The Hebrew word קָשַׁב, he tells us, does not literally signify to press with the mouth, but to touch any part of the body with any other part. Hence it comes to signify *to be armed*, 'Εἰ δὲ καὶ χεῖρᾶ μου ἐπιθείς ἐπὶ στόματι ἐφίλησα, is the version of the LXX. This is an attitude of a worshipper.¹ With these quotations it may be proper to compare a passage in Cicero's Orations against Verres. "There is a brazen statue of Hercules in that place. I do not remember to have ever seen anything more exquisitely beautiful. Its mouth and chin are a little worn, for, during their prayers and thanksgivings, they not only worship, but kiss the image." Such was the simple use of it in Divine worship. But there was another use of it which was more superstitious and farther fetched. Where distance or modesty prevented this mode of kissing, it was sometimes done by applying the hand to the mouth. In most cases they dreaded to touch the gods themselves, with their profane mouth, but

¹ 1 Kings xix. 18. Hos. xiii. 2.

stood at a distance, stretched out their hand, applied it reverently to their mouth, and kissed it. This was the most generally received practice, and was understood to express the solemnity of the worshippers. Hence was derived the Latin verb *adorare*, for they applied the hand *ad ora*. “In worship,” says Pliny, “we kiss the right hand.”

Something, too, must be said about the feet. Moses and Joshua were commanded to put off their shoes from their feet when they were about to make a nearer approach to the supreme Being.¹ But this appears to have been something out of the ordinary course, for neither of them would have done it without a special injunction. It is a Jewish tradition that the priests always had their feet uncovered during the sacred rites, so that their services were understood to be profaned, if anything were interposed between their feet and the floor of the temple. On this subject, the *Commentary* of a very learned writer, Antonius Binaeus,² well deserves to be consulted. Josephus relates that Berenice “stood barefoot,” during the services connected with her vow.³ Maimonides gives a caution, “Let no one come to the mountain of the house with his staff, or with shoes on his feet.”⁴ The advice of Pythagoras is also well known. “Put off your shoes ere you sacrifice or worship.”⁵ This, however, may not unwarrantably be

¹ Ex. iii. 5. Jos. v. 15.

² De Hebraeorum Calceis, Lib. II. Cap. III.

³ Wars of the Jews, Book II. chap. XV.

⁴ לא יכנס אדם להר הבית במקלו או במנעל שברגליו.

⁵ *Ανυπόδητος θύς, και προσχύνει.*

supposed to refer to national customs rather than to prescribed rites. Many nations observed the practice of pulling off their shoes before entering their places of worship. *Callimachus* and *Valerius Flaccus* inform us that it was frequently practised by the Greeks. Among the inhabitants of Crete, who worshipped with the most earnest veneration the goddess Diana, *the dwelling of the deity*, Solinus relates *could not be lawfully approached but with naked feet*. Among the Romans, the temple of Vesta was entered by the matrons with naked feet. The Mahometans, before entering their sacred edifices, devoutly put off their shoes.

The same custom was observed by Ethiopian or Abyssinian Christians. We are not at liberty, says Zaza Zubo,¹ *to enter a temple with naked feet*. He adds a superstitious and trifling reason. "For the churches of Ethiopia are not like that country in which the people of Israel, previous to their departure from Egypt, ate the paschal lamb, by divine command, with their shoes on their feet and their loins girt, on account of the pollution of the land. But they are like Mount Sinai, where the Lord spake to Moses, saying, Moses, Moses, take off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place where thou standest is holy ground. And this Mount Sinai is the parent of our churches, from which they derived their origin, as the Apostles from the prophets, and the New Testament from the Old." Into what fooleries will not mortals fall, when, swelled with the pride of their

¹ Apud Damianum à Goes.

own wisdom, they depart from the simplicity of the Divine appointment.

Let us attend to more solid matters. The pulling off the shoes was expressive of—I. Subjection and servitude. Slaves formerly were wont to go bare-foot.¹ In him who approaches to God, it is becoming to testify his subjection, and, in every way, to say to him, as David did,² “Surely, O Lord, I am thy servant, I am thy servant, the son of thine handmaid.” II. Grief and mourning. Accordingly, Ezekiel receives a command to lay aside mourning, and, at the same time, to put on his shoes.³ The Rabbins tell us, that on the Day of Expiation, it was forbidden *to put on a sandal*.⁴ In all deep mourning and solemn fasting this custom is observed by the Jews. And in religious services, what is more acceptable to God, or more adapted to the nature of Him who stoops to pardon, than the expression of sorrow for our sins? This was not neglected by the haughty Berenice, who, when going to deprecate the anger of Florus, “went barefoot before his tribunal.” III. Purity. The defilement contracted from a journey is laid aside along with our shoes. And, what man’s conscience does not tell him that a holy Being ought to be worshipped with a pure mind? There is some good reason for explaining, in reference to this, the injunction in Eccl. v. 2, KEEP THY FOOT *when thou goest to the house of God*, which is thus explained by the Chaldee paraphrast. “Thou son of man,

¹ Isa. xx. 2.

² Ps. cxvi. 16.

³ Ezek. xxiv. 17.

⁴ תנעול את הסנדל.

keep thy foot when thou art about to enter the house of the Lord's sanctuary to pray, that thou go not thither full of sins not washed away by repentance." The more subtle refinements of other authors we leave to themselves to explain.

Hitherto I have done little more than what belonged to the historian or the critic. I shall now attend to matters more peculiarly theological. It may be asked, is there any gesture, or what gesture is it, that is proper to be used in prayer by a Christian who enjoys the liberty of the New Testament? The answer to this question will demand attention to some points of difference, both in the prayers themselves and in bodily gestures.

Ejaculatory prayers, as they are called, or those brief aspirations of the soul towards God, which admit of being practised at all times and places, and during all kinds of employment, do not require any particular attitude. Take the instance of Nehemiah, who, while he was officiating as cup-bearer to the king, and conversing with him, "prayed to the God of heaven."¹ The same remark may be made as to *secret* prayers, however long, when they are performed by the mind alone, in company with others who may happen to be engaged in any kind of employment, as, for instance, in a journey by land or sea, that we may not wish to appear to be seen by men, which belongs to hypocrites.² *Chrysostom*, in his LXXIX. Homily, thus addresses the people of Antioch, "Although you do not bend the knee, or strike the breast,

¹ Neh. ii. 1—4.

² Mat. vi. 5.

or spread out the hands towards heaven, if you only maintain ardent devotion, you will discharge fully the duty of prayer. While you are attending the market-place, or walking, you may present long prayers. A man who is sitting in a workshop, and sewing skins together, may lift up his soul to God. When prevented by various engagements from attending public ordinances, he may present long and powerful prayers." The prayers of *sick* persons, though stately performed, are not limited to ordinary postures. Hezekiah, when confined to bed by sickness, turned his face toward the wall, and prayed devoutly to God.¹ Prayers offered *during the night*, arising out of holy meditation, may also be piously performed in a reclining posture.²

But *ordinary, stated* prayers, whether *private, social, or public*, require those postures which are fitted to excite and express humility, reverence, hope, ardour, and other affections of the mind. For, 1. Our body ought to bear testimony in prayer that it is God's property. 2. We have the example, as is evident from the passages already quoted, not only of the saints both of the Old and New Testaments, but of the Prince of all saints, our Lord Jesus Christ. 3. We are commanded to do so. The injunctions which relate to bowing, kneeling, and spreading the hands, do unquestionably refer mainly to the mind, but they proceed on the supposition of that bodily gesture, to which God requires a corresponding disposition. 4. On many accounts it is expedient. In

¹ Isa. xxxviii. 2.

² Ps. vi. 6.

respect of God, to whom we thus express adoration and obedience. In respect of others who are present, and who may be excited by our conduct to perform similar acts of devotion. Lastly, in respect of ourselves; for when gestures possess any meaning, they have a language of their own which reminds us that we are addressing God.

A very beautiful explanation of this matter is given by Augustine.¹ "Persons engaged in prayer employ the members of their body in a matter suitable to suppliants, when they bend the knee, or spread the hands, or prostrate themselves on the ground, or perform any visible action. Their will, and the intention of their heart, though invisible to men, are known to God, who needs not these outward expressions for laying open before him the human mind. But by these means the man excites himself to pray with greater humility and fervour. These movements of the body cannot be effected but by a preceding movement of the mind. Through some sort of mutual influence, the inward activity is again increased by the outward visible actions, so that the affection of the heart, from which those actions originated, derives from them an increase of its own strength."

The remark of Augustine, on the particular kinds of gesture proper to be observed in prayer, is worthy of observation. *The word of God has not expressly laid down the bodily attitude to be observed in prayer, provided the attention of the mind be kept up.*² Yet

¹ De cura pro mortuis gerendâ.

² Variar. Ju. ad Simplicium, Lib. II. Quæst. IV.

some attention is always due to personal decorum, and to the usages of the church to which we belong. There is no one gesture which will apply to all persons, times, and places. The practice of different periods and countries, which varies the outward expressions of respect, admits and even requires a variety of gesture. The ancient Hebrews prayed with their heads covered, and in so doing they acted properly, for among Eastern nations that was formerly, and still is, an outward expression of reverence. In the western and southern parts of Europe, we are now in the habit of uncovering the head in token of respect, and, therefore, we properly uncover the head in prayer. And even in the same country, there are differences as to what is required from different persons and at different times. Greater liberty is allowable in solitary prayers, in which the holy affections may be allowed their full scope, than in social, family, or public prayers, in which more attention is necessary to external propriety,¹ and to the edification of others. In such cases, the most appropriate of all attitudes are those which are mentioned with approbation in the sacred writings, such as kneeling, standing, spreading out the hands, and such like. The two extremes to be avoided are, careless profanity and anxious superstition.

¹ τὸ πρόσωπον.

DISSERTATION V.

ON STATED HOURS OF PRAYER.

The arrangement which we have proposed to follow requires us now to examine THE STATED TIMES OF PRAYER. Here again, observing the same method as before, we shall first state the usages of most nations, and next inquire what is the duty of a Christian.

The Hebrews, from the earliest ages, had three seasons of daily prayer. Sacred history informs us that Daniel “kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God as he did aforetime.”¹ So strictly was the custom observed by that eminently holy man, that, in defiance of King Darius’ decree, he chose rather to be thrown to the lions than to allow a single day to pass without paying this homage to the Supreme Being. What those three seasons were David explains. *Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice.*² On this subject no divine command had been expressly laid down, but the Jewish teachers of later times inform us that their ancestors received this custom from the ancient patriarchs. The morning prayer, which they call תפלה שחרית or תפלה אור, they ascribe to Abraham, the mid-day prayer תפלת מנחה to Isaac, and

¹ Dan. vi. 11.² Ps. lv. 18.

the evening prayer *הפלת ערבית* to Jacob. The reason of this observance is explained by Kimchi on Ps. lv. 18. "Man ought to praise God as often as the day changes, which happens three times a-day, at morning, noon, and evening. Ludovicus Capellus thinks that it had a reference to the number of sacrifices. These were every day offered twice. Hence there were every day two prayers, corresponding to the number of sacrifices which was offered each morning and evening. But as the joints of the animals continued to burn on the altar throughout the whole night, they added the evening or nightly prayer, which was particularly to be offered on a fast-day. This prayer, which they call *נעילה* *the shutting up*, was to be observed after sunset, because then the gates of heaven are *shut* upon the sun, who is hid from our view. On days of rejoicing or of fasting they added others, for which it is sufficient to refer to Capellus in his remarks on Acts iii. 1.

The proper time for prayer was defined by them in the following manner. The morning prayers were understood to extend from sunrise to the fourth hour of the day. "As to the morning prayer, the command is to begin to pray at sunrise, and its duration extends to the end of the fourth hour, for this is the third hour of the day."¹ But on the Sabbath and on religious festivals, a sacrifice was added to the ordinary morning sacrifice, in consequence of which

¹ תפלת השחר מצותה שיתחיל להתפלל עם הנצ
 החמה וזמנה עד סוף שעה רבעית שהיא שלישית
 היום Maimonides, Trac. Tephilla, Cap. iii. § 1.

other prayers were introduced at such seasons in place of the ordinary morning prayers. And as that sacrifice was called "the added sacrifice,"¹ so the prayer corresponding to that sacrifice was called "the prayer of additions."² Maimonides says that it lasted to the seventh hour, others say to the sixth. The assembly of the people was not dismissed for dinner till those prayers had been concluded. Josephus, in his life, says; *The assembly was dismissed exactly at the sixth hour, that being the hour at which it is lawful for us to dine on Sabbath days.*³ On any other day besides those on which the festivals were kept, they were at liberty to take a meal after the third hour of the day, though even on those occasions the more pious class did not taste food till the sixth hour. "He imposed on himself a fast," says Maimonides, "till the middle of the day."⁴

This custom throws light on the vindication which Peter offers for himself and his fellow-apostles from the unexpected and very foolish charge of drunkenness. *For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.*⁵ I am unwilling to quote here the observations made by various interpreters to show the force of this argument, but shall only mention the learned illustration of Petitus, drawn from the Jewish customs. The day on which Peter's words were spoken was Pentecost, a very

¹ קרבן מוסף

² תפלת המוספין

³ Τὴν σύνοδον διέλυσεν ἐπελθούσα ἕκτη ὥρα, καθ' ἣν τοῖς σάββασι ἀριτοποιεῖσθαι νόμιμον ἔστιν ἡμῖν.

⁴ קבל עליו תענית עד חצי יום

⁵ Acts ii. 15.

remarkable festival, on which, until the morning prayers had been offered, and likewise the additional prayers, which were not concluded till noon, it was not lawful, according to the custom of the country, to taste food. Now, it was then scarce the third hour of the day. What approach, then, to drunkenness could, with any probability, be laid to the charge of men accustomed to the religious observances of those remote times, at an hour when the slightest bodily refreshment was unlawful? But this is a remark in passing.¹

The prayers corresponding to the Minchah, or evening sacrifice, as also the Minchah itself, were at two separate times. There was *the Great Minchah*,² when the continual evening sacrifice was offered, between the sixth and seventh hour, as also at the time of the Passover, if that fell to be slain on the preparation day before the Sabbath. Next, there was *the little Minchah*,³ which lasted from between the ninth and tenth hours to sunset. Besides these they were at liberty to offer prayers at any hour of the day, though Maimonides was of opinion that immediately after noon was quite enough for such occasional prayers. Thus, *Peter went up upon the house-top to pray about the sixth hour.*⁴ But at other times they were at liberty to do as they pleased. *Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer being the ninth hour,*⁵ and at the same hour we find Cornelius praying.⁶

¹ ἐν παρόδῳ

⁴ Acts x. 9.

² מנחה גדולה

⁵ Acts iii. 1.

³ מנחה קטנה

⁶ Acts x. 3, 30.

What is called the *evening*¹ prayer lasted from the beginning of the night to the earliest dawn. What is called the *shutting up*² was to be performed about sunset. They do not reckon the evening, or, rather, nightly prayers, to be so forcibly enjoined as the morning prayers, or those which answered to the Minchah, though all the Israelites in every part of the world, are in the habit of observing the nightly prayers.

Almost all other nations, as well as the Hebrews, observed the custom of approaching God in morning or evening prayers. "At the rising and setting of the sun and moon," says Plato, "they heard and saw the adoration and worship of the Greeks and all the barbarous nations, who, in every condition prosperous or adverse, are accustomed to pray."³ *Apollonius Thyanaeus* advised that the dawn should be devoted to prayer, and urged that in this way the actions of the whole day would be sanctified. Such was his distribution of the day, as related by Philostratus. "He said that those who live agreeably to the dictates of philosophy, ought, at the commencement of the dawn, to commune with the gods, and, at a more advanced hour, to converse about the gods, and that the remainder of the day should be employed in human concerns."⁴

¹ ערבית

² נעילה

'Ανατίλλοντος τε ἡλίου καὶ σελήνης, καὶ πρὸς δυσμᾶς ἰόντων προσκλήσεις ἅμα καὶ προσκυνήσεις ἀκούοντες τε καὶ ὁρῶντες Ἑλλήνων τε καὶ Βαρβάρων πάντων ἐν συμφροαῖς παντοίαις ἐυχομένων καὶ ἐυπραγίαις. De Legibus, Lib. x.

⁴ "Εφασκε χάρ χεῖναι τοὺς οὕτω φιλοσοφοῦντας ἦους μὲν ἀρχομένης

The MAHOMETANS pray five times a day ; at dawn, at sunrise, at noon, between noon and evening, and at sunset. These prayers are expressly enjoined by the Mahometan religion. Two other seasons of prayer have been added. 1. In the evening, an hour and a half after sunset ; and 2. About midnight. These last are founded on tradition and custom, but, in imitation of Mahomet, are observed by the more devout.¹ The last prayer they make the longest of all ; because devotion, they tell us, ought to grow, and our latest actions to be better than the preceding.

These seasons are laid down by them as so expressly enjoined, that no one can without criminality neglect them. If a man were thrown into the sea, or if a female were struggling with the pains of childbirth, their strict laws respecting prayer would not be set aside by these emergencies. If a person on a journey is prevented from observing the public service, when he perceives that the stated hour of prayer has arrived, he will instantly stop, and wash himself with water, if he has the means of doing so, or if not, will sprinkle himself with dust or sand, and will not move from the spot till he has offered the customary prayer. The neglect of these observances is not allowed to pass unpunished. They have persons expressly appointed to inquire into such omissions, and who do

ξυνεῖναι Θεοῖς, περιούσης δὲ περὶ Θεῶν, (διαλέγεσθαι) τον δὲ μετα ταῦτα καιρὸν ἀνθρωπέων περὶ τὰς ξυνουσίας ποιῆσθαι.

¹ De Dieu on Acts iii. 1.

not fail to visit the delinquents with disgrace, and sometimes with fines.¹

The ANCIENT CHRISTIANS, imitating the Hebrews, had stated seasons of prayer, but “with the reservation,” as Tertullian says in his Treatise on Fasting, “that at all times, and in all places, prayer may lawfully be offered.” Clement of Alexandria describes his gnostic, by which he means a pious and spiritual Christian, in language which deserves to be written in gold. “His whole life is a holy festival. His sacrifices consist of prayers and praises, reading of the Scriptures before meals, and psalms and hymns after them. Before retiring to rest, and even during the night, prayers are again offered. By these means he unites himself to the divine choir, as a person set apart by habitual remembrance to the unceasing exercise of contemplation.”² In other passages, the same author recommends morning, evening, nightly, and daily prayers, as well as those before and after food, but without restricting them to particular hours.

Afterwards,³ however, he recommends the third, sixth, and ninth hours. “But if any choose to set apart stated hours for prayer, as for example, the third, and sixth, and ninth; the gnostic, on the other hand, prays through his whole life, earnestly desiring

¹ Hotting. Hist. Orient. Lib. II. Cap. v. § 3.

² Ἄπας ὁ βίος αὐτοῦ πανήγυρις ἁγία· αὐτίκα θυσαίαι μὲν αὐτῶν, ἰυχαι τε καὶ αἶνοι καὶ αἱ πρὸ τῆς ἐστίασεως ἐντεύξεις τῶν γραφῶν. ψαλμοὶ δὲ καὶ ὕμνοι παρα τὴν ἐστίασιν· πρὸ τε τῆς κοίτης, ἀλλὰ καὶ νύκτωρ ἰυχαι παλιν. Διὰ τούτων ἑαυτὸν ἐνοποιεῖ τῷ Θεῷ χωρῶν ἐκ τῆς συνεχοῦς μνήμης εἰς ἀείμνηστον Θεωρίαν συντεταγμένος.

³ P. 722.

that by prayer he may converse with God.”¹ Another Clement, author of the *Διατάξεις*, or apostolical constitutions,² enjoins Christians to pray three times a day, and lays down forms of prayer to be used in the *morning, evening, and at dinner*,³ or about noon. Eusebius gives it as an instance of the piety of Constantine, that “daily, AT STATED HOURS, he shut himself up in the most sacred recesses of his palace, in the absence of all witnesses, conversed alone with God, and falling on his knees, asked by prayer those things which he needed.”⁴ In this passage he speaks of stated prayers, but does not mention what they were.

Those writers who lay down hours of prayer, generally endeavour to find some mystery in the matter. Various accounts of it are given by the respective authors. Cyprian in his exposition of the Lord’s prayer, finds in the third, sixth, and ninth hours, “the mystery⁵ of the Trinity, which was made known from the earliest times. The first, second, and third hours exhibit the full number of the Trinity. The second triad, extending from the fourth to the sixth, points out another Trinity. And when the next, proceeding from the seventh to the ninth, is completed, the perfect Trinity is illustrated by the triple succession of three hours.” In these lofty speculations it is difficult to ascertain the

¹ Ἐι δε τινες καὶ ὥρας τακτὰς ἀπονέμουσιν ἐυχῆν, ὡς τρίτην φέρει καὶ ἕκτην καὶ ἕνατην, ἀλλ’ οὐν γε ὁ γνωστικὸς παρὰ ὄλον εὐχεται τον θεῖον, δι’ ἐυχῆς συνεῖναι σπύδων Θεῶν.

² Lib. VII. Cap. xlviiii.

³ Ἐπ’ ἀρίστον.

⁴ Le Vita Const. Lib. IV. Cap. x:ii.

⁵ Sacramentum.

excellent author's meaning. But he mentions another mystery as involved in the lawful and appointed hours of public services, assigning reasons which Jerome afterwards adopted in expounding the sixth chapter of Daniel. "There are three fixed times at which the knee should be bent in prayer. Ecclesiastical tradition lays them down to the third, sixth, and ninth hours. At the third hour the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles. At the sixth hour, Peter went up to the house top to pray. At the ninth hour, Peter and John went up to the temple." Other reasons are assigned by Augustin. "The strength of Christian faith is closely connected with the three seasons of evening, morning, and noon. In the evening, our Lord was crucified; in the morning he rose; at noon he ascended. The first reminds us of his sufferings and death; the second of his resurrection; and the third of the majesty and glory in which he sits at the right hand of his Father." Pinius gives us a comparison of the Jewish and Christian dispensations, but with what claim to learning or judgment, I shall not determine. "At three stated hours of the day the Jews prayed, at the third, the sixth, and the ninth hours. At the third, because then the law was given at Sinai, and at the same hour the church prays, because then the Holy Ghost was given at Pentecost. At the sixth, because then the brazen serpent was erected in the wilderness, and at the same hour the church prays, because then our Lord was crucified. At the ninth, because then the rock gave forth the waters at Kadesh, and at that hour, our Saviour's side on the cross gave out min-

gled blood and water." Whether or not the Jewish doctors approve of these reasons for their customs, I am not aware. One thing is evident. Superstitious persons will never want arguments, however trifling or foreign to the purpose, which will be sufficient to satisfy their own minds.

Others contend that prayers ought to be offered *six* times a day—about dawn, at the third hour, the sixth, the ninth, evening, and at cock-crowing, for each of which reasons are assigned.¹ *Chrysostom* lays down the same rule in his Homily on Psalm CXIX., where, however, he assigns other reasons for the arrangement. Some again recommend that, agreeably to the example of David, prayers should be offered *seven* times a day.

The modern GREEKS, on their festivals, on the Lord's day, and every Saturday, repair in the evening to the church. Very early on the following day, at two o'clock in the morning, even the women and children, leaving only a boy or girl to take charge of the house, are present at these services. There they remain till morning, praying and singing hymns. At sunrise, they return home, and abstain from every kind of food or drink till nine o'clock, when they again accompany the priest to the public services.²

The ROMANISTS of our own times maintain that all believers, of whatever sex or condition, are bound to offer the Angel's salutation in the worship of the blessed Virgin three times a day; morning, noon, and evening. By this threefold salutation, they tell

¹ Apost. Const. Lib. viii. Cap. xxxiv.

² Christoph. Aug. Cap. xiii. Fehlarii Annotationes.

us, they commemorate the three great mysteries of Christianity ; in the morning, Christ's resurrection ; at noon, his sufferings ; in the evening, his incarnation. Such are the sentiments of Bellarmine, Canisius, and others. But how far these practices are a departure from earlier and purer Christianity is demonstrated at great length by Daillé, in his treatise on the Object of Religious Worship.

The most remarkable of their stated times are the CANONICAL HOURS, or *Divine Service*. It is thus defined by Bellarmine. "There is a fixed order of praising and praying to God publicly, both with mind and voice, which has been appointed by the authority of the prelates of the church." They are called *Hours*, because at stated hours they are observed. They are called *Canonical*, either because they are Ecclesiastical, (for with them Canonical and Ecclesiastical are the same), or because they are the prayers of canonical persons attached to the choir. The matter of the public service is divided by Bellarmine into ten parts—psalms, songs, hymns, lessons, responses, choruses, litanies, chapters, collects, creed, and confession. What each of these means, and how they differ, would require tedious explanation, and is of little importance either to learning or piety.

The *persons* bound to the performance of this duty are not all Christians, but 1. *Beneficiaries*, who have a title to an ecclesiastical benefice, commencing with the day when they obtained possession. 2. Those who have entered into *holy orders*. 3. The *Professed Regulars*, whether men or women, attached to the choir, whose obligation to perform those services

dates from the hour when they made a solemn profession of their vows. But these are subject to many exceptions; for those on whom, in virtue of their office, the obligation lies, do not all observe these hours, but take care to have them performed by the other choristers in their turn. First of all, they affirm that those who derive no advantage from their benefice are not bound to perform them. Such is the judgment pronounced by the Jesuit *Sa*, who informs us that he spent forty years in expounding these elegant mysteries. He states it to be the opinion of some of their divines, that those who receive very small profit—not more, for example, than eight ducats—are not under obligation.

The following regulations relate to the *mode* of performing these services. 1. They must be performed not in the vernacular but the Latin tongue. 2. The words must not only be pronounced, but chaunted, and accompanied by vocal and instrumental music. But this belongs to the public choirs in the church, and does not extend to the saying of the *Hours* at home, by the beneficed clergy. 3. There are certain conditions, of which Bellarmine enumerates seven, the entireness of the prescribed service, the order, the kind of performance, the place, the time, attention, devotion.

The divisions consist of seven hours; the Morning, or Praises; one, three, six, and nine o'clock; the Evening, and the Midnight devotions,¹ all of which are supposed to contain some hidden meaning. At the turn of the night, or morning hour, our Saviour was born and arose. At one o'clock, he was led to

¹ Completorium.

Pilate. At three, in the language of the Jews, he was led to be crucified, was scourged, and crowned with thorns. At six, he was actually crucified. At nine, he died, and descended to Hell. In the evening, he was taken down from the cross. At the same hour he supped, washed his disciples' feet, and instituted the eucharist. At the hour of the *compline*,¹ or midnight devotions, he prayed in the garden.

But lest it should be supposed that the whole of these seven hours are employed in the service, an art has been discovered by which no contemptible abridgment of time is effected. It deserves to be known that, by due expedition, a Priest can, in a single hour, discharge the duties of all the *seven* hours. He may pronounce the morning prayers in the evening, and the evening ones in the morning, without the smallest blame. "Immediately after the midnight devotions," says Sa, whom we have already quoted, "the morning service of the following day may be performed, and in the morning, the whole services of the day." And might he not say the evening ones after midnight, and so get over the devotional services of the preceding day?

This notable arrangement of the Divine worship Bellarmine lays down as appointed *by the authority of the prelates*. But Joannes Cassianus says² that the ministration and authority, not of men but of angels, settled the order of the canonical hours. *Ado Trevirensis* asserts that *during the Diocletian perse-*

¹ Completorium.

²De Inst. Cœnob. Lib. II.

cution, at morning and evening, and again at three, six, and nine o'clock, there was heard around the remains of the saints heavenly psalmody. In the life of Mary Magdalene, we are informed that “the canonical hours are daily chaunted by the angels in Heaven.” The canonical hours are thus raised by them to a level with divine appointments, and the interruption of this service is pronounced to be a mortal sin. The mere external service of chaunting the canonical hours is rated by them so highly, that, *though it be performed without actual attention and the lifting up of the soul to God, it is a service most acceptable in his sight.*¹

Dismissing these fooleries of the Romanists, let us rather inquire into the duty itself, whether it be incumbent on a Christian to have stated seasons of prayer. This question, again, cannot be properly answered without attending to several distinctions of the prayers. 1. The public prayers must have certain days and hours known to all connected with that church, without which they could not assemble regularly. 2. As to private prayers, we ought, in a certain sense, to pray at all times without intermission.² This means that our minds ought to be so disposed as to be prepared to pray whenever a fit occasion presents itself. Frequent intercourse with God, and the almost uninterrupted exercise of holy meditation, will be the necessary consequence of that

¹ Those who wish to have more full information on these points may consult Casalius de Vet. Sac. Christ. Ritibus, Cap. xliv. Jo. Gerhard. Disput. Part I. Disp. viii. Thes. III. Rivetus. Cathol. Orthod. Quæst. xxxv. G. Voet. Disp. Select. Tom. III. p. 1056.

² Co). iv. 2. Thess. v. 7. Eph. vi. 13.

state of mind. In this sense, we lately quoted Maximus Tyrius speaking of Socrates, and Clement of Alexandria saying of a Christian man, that *his whole life is a continual prayer*. Nearly akin to this is the saying of Epictetus,¹ “ *In every affair, small or great, he had a reference to the divine Being.*”² It is a good and pious advice given by Jo. Lauspergius, in his Manual of a Christian Soldier; “ From every thing you see or hear learn to take occasion for prayer, and for lifting up the mind to God. For the most foolish action that can be done, or seen, or heard of, may afford to a mind properly disposed an opportunity of going to God, and conversing with him by prayer.”

III. Besides those prayers, to which our practical writers give the name of *Ejaculatory*, by which all our actions ought in some sort to be seasoned, there are longer, and—if we may so express it—more formal prayers, which cannot be limited to set times, because they are occasioned by the events which fall out in the course of our affairs. The teachers of our religion, and the very heathens, have enjoined that no transaction of any moment should be commenced without previously addressing the Almighty. The saying of Epictetus is well known, ON EVERY OCCASION WE OUGHT TO PRAY.³ The instance of Scipio, related by Livy,⁴ is truly admirable, and deserves to be often exhibited as a model to our statesmen. *He never, for a single day, proceeded to public*

¹ Apud Arrian. Lib. II. Cap. xix.

² Ἐπὶ τὸν Θεὸν ἀφορῶν ἐν παντὶ, καὶ μικρῶ καὶ μεγάλῳ.

³ Ἐπὶ πάντος πρὸ χειρὸς ἔκτερον.

⁴ Lib. xxvi.

or private business till he had entered the Capitol, and spent a considerable time there, generally alone, in deep thoughtfulness. But every Christian feels that an immediate necessity for prayer arises whenever he is assailed by temptations to sin, or finds himself sinfully affected by grief, or meets with a sudden calamity, or apprehends imminent danger, or has received a fresh instance of the divine goodness, or meets with any occurrences of that sort, an enumeration of which would be endless. Such prayers do not admit of being confined to any stated periods.

IV. Equally foolish and impious would it be to impose limits on the spirit of prayer. At whatever time he is pleased to visit the soul, and excite it to prayer, it becomes our duty to throw aside every hindrance, and to do that to which we feel ourselves impelled by the Spirit of God. When we are visited by a favourable gale of that heavenly wind, we ought instantly to spread the sails of our prayers, without restricting ourselves to any one method which, either through slothfulness, or laborious trifling,¹ might suffer the desired season to pass away unimproved. We have not in our own power those very delightful affections of the Divine Spirit, and, therefore, whenever they do occur, it is our duty to follow them out with the utmost earnestness.

V. In the ordinary and daily exercises of religion, whether private or secret, stated hours are, in many respects, advantageous. For, (1.) They assist in keeping up the regularity of the business of life, which is always of the greatest consequence. (2.)

¹ Importuna πολυπραγμοσύνη.

They guard us against indolence, lukewarmness, and sloth, by which the mind would otherwise be easily overpowered. "We are liable," says Calvin,¹ "through the greater part of the day to the distracting influence of a variety of business, from the hurry of which, without laying some sort of bridle on our minds, we cannot escape. It is, therefore, useful to have certain hours set apart for prayer, not that we should restrict ourselves to hours, but that we may be prevented from neglecting prayer, which ought to be viewed by us as of more importance than all the cares of life." (3.) Such has been the practice of the most excellent men in all ages, instances of which have been already quoted from sacred, ecclesiastical, and profane writings, to which many others might easily be added. Whoever wishes to see more examples may consult the *Politica Ecclesiastica*² of the venerable *Voetius*, where he will find enough to satisfy his thirst.

Yet the following cautions will deserve attention. (1.) We must not attribute any mysterious import to the arrangement of the hours, which, we grieve to see, was superstitiously done by the ancients, and to which the modern Romanists, in explaining their canonical hours, have added an endless variety of trifling. All that claims our attention is the convenience, order, and regular and successful discharge of the duties of religion. (2.) All men cannot and ought not to be limited to the same times. There is no precept in Scripture which fixes the number or

¹ Comment. Act. X.

² Tom. I. p. 161.

the hours of prayers. The examples which are there quoted with approbation are to be imitated in substance only, and not in every minute circumstance. Every hour is not equally suitable to every person. One rule will apply to persons who live in their own houses, who are their own masters for the greater part of the day, and can dispose of their time at their own pleasure. Another rule will apply to those who live at the pleasure of others, and whose services are limited to particular hours, such as labourers, servants, and the like. Justice requires that men so differently situated should not be subjected to the same regulations. Every person ought to select those hours which he finds to be most convenient for himself and his family. (3.) As the selection of hours is not a matter of divine obligation, but is left to individual prudence, the mind ought not to tie itself to them in such a manner as to imagine, either that the duty has been exceedingly well performed because the stated hours have been observed, or that a heinous fault has been committed when one has been interrupted at the usual time, and compelled to delay his prayers to a later hour. All hours of the day are alike to God. But (4.) The stated hours of prayer ought never, on slight grounds, to be set aside. If a hindrance occurs, we should feel uneasy, should take the earliest opportunity of preventing the recurrence of such hindrances, and make up for the omission at the next season of prayer. Those who are accustomed to eat or sleep at a stated hour feel appetite for food, or inclination to sleep, when that hour arrives, and if food or sleep is not then

obtained, they become uneasy. In the same manner those who enter cordially into the service of God, find the hours of prayer exceedingly delightful, and experience a degree of unpleasantness not easily expressed when other employments interfere with their favourite exercises.

It must not be imagined that, by fixing in this manner the hours of prayer, we set a limit to the Holy Spirit, as if he were laid under the necessity of attending to fixed hours. For (1.) We have already stated that, whenever any one feels himself impelled by the Holy Spirit to pray, he ought, without a moment's delay, to throw aside every incumbrance, and betake himself to prayer, without waiting for the arrival of the usual hour. (2.) The objections brought against stated hours of prayer would apply with equal force to stated seasons of the public reading of the Scriptures, of hearing the gospel, and of the celebration of the eucharist. For these, equally with the duty of prayer, need the presence of the Holy Spirit, and yet they cannot be observed in a convenient and orderly manner, except at stated times. (3.) Neither David, nor Daniel, nor the Apostles, all of whom observed stated seasons, did anything unworthy of the Spirit of prayer. (4.) It is a mistake to imagine that we ought not to pray except when we feel ourselves excited by the Holy Spirit to prayer. Our obligation to the duty does not depend on the influences of the Spirit, who, as the Lord of all, has his times of working in his own power, but depends exclusively on the Divine ap-

pointment, which is the rule of our actions. The influence of the Spirit in the exercises of religion must be looked for by faith.

DISSERTATION VI.

ON THE PETITIONS WHICH WE OUGHT TO PRESENT TO GOD, A SUMMARY OF WHICH IS CONTAINED IN THE LORD'S PRAYER.

WE come now to inquire WHAT ARE THOSE PETITIONS WHICH WE MAY LAWFULLY PRESENT TO GOD. And here the ignorance of all mortals becomes manifest. *For we know not what we should pray for as we ought.*¹ But here again we are struck with the astonishing kindness of the Supreme Being, which assists our ignorance, and graciously supplies us with copies or forms of prayer. In more than one way information respecting prayer is conveyed to us by God. He does it inwardly, by the Spirit; outwardly by the Son.

The Spirit helpeth our infirmities, and intercedes for us.¹ This subject has been already handled, but comes again under our notice here. (1.) He opens the eyes of our mind to see our wants and unworthiness, for we are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."² (2.) He enables us

¹ Rom. viii 26.

² Rev. iii. 17.

to perceive the excellence of spiritual benefits, "that we may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints."¹ (3.) He excites in us an ardent desire of those blessings, like that of "the hart"² panting after the water brooks." (4.) He bestows on us those affections which are suitable to the Divine Majesty, to our own vileness and unworthiness, and to the excellence of the blessings desired. And in this sense he is called the *Spirit of prayer*.³

But the Son of God has likewise taught us in what manner we ought to pray. He has done so on two occasions; first, of his own accord, when suggested by the wicked prayers of the Pharisees,⁴ and next, at the request of a disciple after he had risen from prayer.⁵ That disciple either was not present when Christ taught the multitude, or had forgotten what had been said by our Lord at that time, or wished to have some more extended form. Our Lord was pleased to repeat the same form, for one more complete or exact cannot be prescribed.

It will be of importance to examine, somewhat carefully, those Hebrew antiquities which tend to throw light on this form of prayer. As the Jews had every day stated hours of prayer, so they had prayers appointed to those hours; appointed, it is said, by Ezra, and the men of the Great Synagogue, and drawn up, in a fixed order, by Gamaliel, who lived in the time of Christ, and was the preceptor of the Apostle Paul. The enactment of these regula-

¹ Eph. i. 18.

² Ps. xlii. 1.

³ Zech. xii. 10.

⁴ Matt. vi. 9.

⁵ Luke xi. 1.

tions is mentioned in the Talmud : *Rabbin Gamaliel says, every man shall pray eighteen prayers every day.*

Those who had not sufficient readiness or power of memory to repeat conveniently those numerous prayers, were at liberty to use a compendious summary, in which the marrow of all those prayers might be said to be embodied. This summary they called מעין, *a fountain*, of which Rabbi Aquiba thus speaks :¹ *If this prayer be uttered orally,² let him pray the eighteen (prayers); and if not, (let him pray) the summary of the eighteen.*

It was then very customary for the Jewish doctors to draw up for themselves and their disciples forms and summaries of this sort, some of which have been copied into the Talmud. These were not intended to supersede the ordinary or stated national prayers, or to excite any prejudice against them, but to provide something which might be convenient for their own private use. John adopted this custom, which was very common in that age. He would fall into it the more readily in consequence of those remarkable peculiarities in his doctrines, which differed widely from the instructions of the Pharisees, and drew around him an immense crowd of hearers. Accordingly, he appears to have laid down for his followers certain forms of prayer, different from those which were commonly used by the Pharisees and in the synagogues³

¹ אַם שְׂגוּרָה תְּפִלְתּוֹ בְּפִי מִתְּפִלַּל יְהוָה וְאִם לֹא מֵעֵין יְהוָה

² With his mouth.

³ Luke xi. 1.

It was customary, too, to add to the stated prayers a short prayer by way of conclusion. *Rabbi Eliezer* was wont to conclude his prayers by saying, "May it be thy good pleasure, O Lord, that love and brotherly kindness may abide in our dwelling." And *Rabbi Jochanan*, "Be pleased, O Lord, to observe our reproach, and regard our miseries."¹ Accordingly, our Saviour, who, in every respect, accommodated himself to the customs and institutions of his age, so far as they were proper, did—both of his own accord, and at the request of his disciples—lay down to them this form, which might be used either as a summary or as a conclusion to long prayers. By us it ought certainly to be considered to be, as Cyril of Jerusalem styles it, *a divinely taught prayer*.²

These observations lead us towards the solution of the question, Is the Lord's prayer merely a COPY, or is it both a COPY and a FORM of prayer? Was it given us for the single purpose of informing us as to the kind and manner of our petitions? Is it proper for Christians to repeat those very words in prayer? I use the word PROPER, for hardly any person, I should suppose, will seriously contend that our Saviour expressly limited his disciples to the use of these words. I wish there were not some Christians to be found who, from strange superstition, would rather have Christ's words wholly suppressed than employ them in expressing their own prayers to God. We have, certainly, no intention of entering into controversy with those who employ it also as a form, provided they do so in an intelligent and devout manner.

¹ See Lightfoot on Mat. vi. 9.

² Θεοδιδάκτος ὕμνη.

The simple meaning of Christ's words seems to lead us to this conclusion. *After this manner, therefore, pray ye,*¹ and still more, *WHEN YE PRAY, SAY.*² His meaning, therefore, is, that we should take those words along with us.³ Undoubtedly, the disciple who made the request did not so much desire to be informed about the manner of praying. as to be furnished with a copy and form of prayer, similar to those which had been given by the Pharisees to their followers, and by John to his hearers. This desire our Lord Jesus cheerfully gratifies, not saying, "pray nearly in this manner," but, *when ye pray, say.* He does not say, ask that the name of God may be hallowed, that his kingdom may come, and so on,—as he would have done if he had meant it merely as a copy. But he says, *when ye pray say, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,* suggesting not the subjects only, or the dispositions, but the words in which our Heavenly Father chooses to be addressed. Can any one who takes an unprejudiced view of these things bring himself to believe that it was our Lord's intention, in using these words, that the most devout worshippers of our Heavenly Father should consider themselves to be prohibited, in all or in most cases, from using this prayer? When we hear Christ teaching, *when ye pray, say,* are we at liberty to paraphrase⁴ it thus: Express these things in whatever way you please in your own words, but I charge you to abstain from

¹ Mat. vi. 9. ² Luke xi. 1. ³ Hos. xiv. 2. ⁴ παραφράζειν.

using those precise words which I am now employing?

The next consideration is the practice of the Israelitish church, which, by the Divine command, addressed Jehovah in prescribed forms both of prayer and praise. Thus, a form of blessing for Aaron and his sons was divinely appointed by the hands of Moses. Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, *On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them.* There is also on record a prescribed form of confession and prayer, to be employed at the offering of the first fruits,¹ and of tithes. This precept, it deserves attention, is laid down in the singular number, that every one might be aware of his duty to use those very words, *Then shalt thou say before the Lord thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, &c.*² Joel, too, enjoined a form of supplication on the priests. *Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?* Next, as to the Psalms of David, such of them as belong to the class of psalms of supplication,³ what else are they than forms of prayer laid down for the ordinary benefit of the church? “Moreover, Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David, and of Asaph,

¹ Deut. xxvi. 5.² Deut. xxvi. 13—15.³ ἰουδαϊκῶν.

the seer.”¹ The use of settled forms of prayer, which was so becoming a practice in the ancient church, ought not to be reckoned unbecoming in a modern church, for whose use settled forms of prayers and thanksgivings have been handed down from the remotest times. The Psalms and the books of the Prophets contain many devotional compositions which were pronounced and sung by ancient believers in expectation of future benefits, and which are highly suitable to our own times.

The same practice prevailed in the ancient Christian Church, by which the repetition of the Lord's Prayer was held in the greatest veneration. “Why should we wonder?” says Tertullian, “God alone could instruct us in what manner it was his own will that we should pray. The service which derives its appointment from him, and which, even when uttered by divine lips, was animated by his spirit, ascends by its own right to heaven, commending to the Father those prayers which the Son has taught.”² Cyprian, in like manner, in an early part of his discourse on the Lord's Prayer, thus expresses himself:—“Christ, among his other precious instructions and divine precepts, by which he lays before his people the way of salvation, has himself given a form of prayer,—has himself taught and instructed us what ought to be our prayer. He who gave us life has, in the exercise of the same goodness which led him to bestow his other favours, taught us how to pray, in order that, when we address the Father in the

¹ 2 Chr. xxix. 39.

² De Oratione.

prayer which the Son has taught us, we may be the more favourably heard." And, a little after, he adds, "What prayer can be more spiritual than that which has been given to us by Christ, by whom, also, the Holy Spirit has been sent to us? What prayer can have greater power with the Father than that which came from the lips of the Son, who is the Truth? To pray in a manner different from that which he has taught us infers not merely ignorance but blame. Let us therefore pray, my beloved brethren, as our Divine Master has taught. To supplicate God in his own appointed manner, to pour into his ear the prayer of Christ, argues friendly and familiar intercourse. Let the Father acknowledge his own words when we pray. He says, *whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name he will give it you.* How much more powerfully do we demand what we ask in the name of Christ when his own prayer is employed to express our requests?"

While it was thus customary for the ancients to employ the Lord's prayer, their manner was, after it was finished, to add other prayers as circumstances required. Tertullian thus follows up the observations which we have already quoted. "Since our Lord, who foresaw the necessities of men, after prescribing the form of prayer, specially adds, *Ask, and it shall be given you,* and since there are petitions which every one has to offer arising out of his own circumstances, when the **LAWFUL AND ORDINARY PRAYER** (for so he designates the Lord's prayer) has been laid as the foundation, we are at liberty to

build upon it other petitions." Thus in Tertullian's time the practice in Africa was, that the Lord's prayer was first pronounced, and was followed by the other prayers. But at other times and places, the other prayers came first, and the Lord's prayer was added by way of conclusion. "Immediately after our prayers," says Gregory, "we repeat the Lord's prayer."¹

The ancients, however, had one peculiarity widely different from what is customary among us. They did not teach the Lord's prayer to catechumens. They did not even think it lawful for unbaptized persons to use that prayer. They did not permit the uninitiated to be present when that prayer was repeated in the public services. Their reasons for observing this custom were chiefly two. The first was, that as Baptism is the Sacrament of Regeneration, they did not think it right that God should be addressed under the name of Father by those who had not by baptism given evidence of their regeneration. We do not, says Theodoret, *teach this prayer to the uninitiated, but to the initiated. For none of the uninitiated, while he has not yet received the grace of adoption, ventures to say, Our Father which art in heaven. But he who has received the grace of baptism calls God Father, in consequence of being enrolled among the children of his grace.*² Another

¹ Lib. vii. Ep. lxiv.

² Ταύτην εἴην προσευχὴν ἐν τοῖς ἀμύτοις ἀλλὰ τοὺς μυσταγωγούμενους διδάσσομεν. Οὐδεὶς γὰρ τῶν ἀμυήτων λεγέειν τοῦ ματῆ Πατὸρ ἡμῶν ὃ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς· μή ὡς διεξάμενος τῆς εἰσοθείας τὸ χάρισμα Ὁ

reason was, the repetition of the Lord's prayer was thought by some to have been employed in the consecration of the Eucharist by the apostles. It was used at least by themselves in the Eucharist, and the fourth petition about our daily bread was interpreted by many as relating to the Eucharist.² As the uninitiated catechumens could not take part in that sacrament, it would have served no purpose for them to have repeated that prayer, which was connected in so many ways with the Eucharist. But these, like many other opinions of the ancients, are not free from superstition. Neither regeneration nor adoption depends on baptism; nor is it necessary that, every time we repeat the Lord's prayer, our thoughts should be directed to the Eucharist.

But superstition is, in my opinion, equally chargeable on those who avoid the repetition of the Lord's prayer as a dangerous rock, and who reckon it an evidence of their superior godliness, that they have ordered this form to be banished from Christian families, and from religious assemblies. And since our present object is to point out the extraordinary wisdom manifested by our Lord in forming this prayer, it will be proper to examine the principal argument of those who forbid pious persons to use it. They contend that—I. He who worships God in the spirit ought not to be confined to words, lest, amidst excessive attention to syllables, the warmer emotions

ὅτι τῆς του βαπτίσματος τριτυχηκῶς δωρεᾶς, πατέρα καλεῖ τον Θεὸν
ὡς εἰς τοὺς υἱοὺς τελέσας τῆς χάριτος.

¹ περὶ του ἄρθου του ἰπισιού.

of piety should be repressed. II. There is no small danger of idolatry being paid to words so frequently repeated, and so earnestly commended on the ground of their divine origin. III. So frequent a repetition of the same words is the *vain repetition*¹ condemned by Christ. IV. The diversity of the words employed in the inspired narratives of Matthew and Luke sufficiently shows, that it was not our Lord's intention to bind us to words. V. The Apostles, though they heard this prayer from our Lord's own mouth, never employed it. VI. This prayer does not, with sufficient particularity, express our wants, for the supply of which we have frequent occasion to address the Supreme Being. VII. It is not adapted to all times and circumstances: for how should a person in the jaws of death pray for his daily bread? VIII. It frequently amounts to imploring a curse instead of a blessing on those who use it; for if any person who is not conscious of an intention to forgive the offences of his enemies, shall say to God, Forgive my debts as I forgive my debtors, he asks not the forgiveness of his debts but his own condemnation.

On these arguments I shall first of all make some general observations, and shall afterwards give to each of them a particular reply. I request attention then to a point already proved, that, in the ancient Church of Israel, forms of blessing, confession, prayer, and thanksgiving were, beyond all controversy, prescribed by Divine authority. It was the

¹ Καττολογία.

will of God, I may likewise observe, that in the public services of religion the same prescribed words should be employed, at least in psalms and hymns, in which the poetry and music did not easily admit the substitution of other words and sentiments than those which had been put down. In some instances he chose to confine them to the very letters of the alphabet, with which the verses commence in regular order, this highly artificial arrangement being adopted for the purpose of impressing the words more strongly on the memory. If the singers, or any of the Israelites, had chosen purposely to transpose those verses, or to employ others in their room, they would undoubtedly have been chargeable with pouring contempt on the holy skill, which was communicated to inspired¹ men by the Spirit of God, and attempting in superstitious rashness to elude the Divine wisdom. Nor ought it to be forgotten that some sacred songs of this kind were to be used exclusively on the Sabbath-days, of which the title of the xcii. Psalm may be adduced in proof.

I now appeal to every unprejudiced person if the arguments brought against the use of the Lord's prayer be not equally strong against the forms prescribed by divine authority to the Israelites? Would it have been allowable at that time, in opposition to a divine appointment, to argue that the narrow limits of forms have a tendency to restrain those movements which proceed from the spirit of grace and prayer; that there is danger of acquiring an idola-

¹ Θεοπνεύστοις.

trous attachment to words repeated in this manner without variation; that the frequent utterance of them is chargeable, at least, with vain repetition; that they do not embrace those desires which a pious soul longs to pour out before God; that, in short, they are not adapted to all states and conditions; that all those forms, therefore, would be better laid aside, and that every saint, according to the measure of the spirit granted to him, ought to form for himself prayers, confessions, and thanksgivings, in which, with greater freedom and warmth, and without any injury to the Spirit's operations, he might express to the Supreme Being the thoughts of his heart? If the Israelites were not at liberty to reply to God in this manner, why are we now at liberty? If those arguments are weighty against the use of the Lord's prayer, how comes it that they are not weighty against ancient forms? Or if they be of no value against the latter, what can lead us to believe that they possess any value against the former? Does the mere difference of times and dispensations increase or diminish the value of arguments about spiritual devotion in prayer,—a subject which belongs to the rational worship of God, and is not affected by the diversity of times or dispensations?

It may likewise be observed that the use of the Psalms in singing the praises of God has received the highest commendation from the whole Christian Church. But there is no argument brought against the repetition of the Lord's prayer, which does not apply with equal force to the singing of sacred songs. If it be improper to adhere to the words of the prayer,

how comes it to be proper to keep close by the words of a psalm? Is the spirit less restrained by adapting itself to words arranged with the skill of the musician than by following a simpler style of prayer? How comes it that the words of a prayer distract, and the words of a psalm do not distract, the attention of the mind? Does less danger of idolatry arise from the elegant, affecting, and lofty composition of a psalm, which gives both to the ear and to the mind unspeakable delight, than from a prayer, the very style of which recommends itself by natural beauty and artless elegance? Where are sentiments and words more frequently repeated than in the Psalms? and yet to charge *them* with vain repetition would be horrid profaneness and actual blasphemy. Do we not sing many of the Psalms of David, which are much less suitable to our time and circumstances, than what we find in the Lord's prayer? In short, if the frequent singing of those psalms contribute, as it undoubtedly does contribute, to edify and excite our minds, how comes our edification to be prevented, and the excitement of our minds to be hindered by the repetition of the Lord's prayer, conducted in that attentive manner which alone we recommend?

We shall now offer a brief reply to each of the arguments in their order. 1. We are as little inclined as our opponents to confine the spirit of prayer, or those who pray in the spirit, to the use of any particular words. But because we are not bound to certain words, it does not follow that it is unlawful or unsuitable to employ them. If we are allowed to address God in our words, shall we not be allowed to

address Him in His own? Do we expect that our imperfect attempts at finding appropriate language will be more acceptable to him than his own words full of inexpressible wisdom? It is not even universally true that the attentive consideration of words interrupts devotional feeling? That might perhaps happen if one were to attend very closely to the words themselves, but not if, by the assistance of words remarkable for fulness of meaning, he were endeavouring to rise to the contemplation of those lofty and heavenly sentiments which these words are fitted to convey. An equal measure of devotional feeling is necessary in listening to the voice of God, when he is pleased to address us, as in our own addresses to the Supreme Being, and yet the very syllables—if I may be allowed the expression—of the inspired communication are not, on this account, to be less carefully weighed. We must *hearken diligently, with much heed*,¹ that the Divine wisdom appearing in them may excite in us a higher degree of holy astonishment.

II. To commit idolatry about the Lord's Prayer is to ascribe to it some Divine power or veneration which does not belong to it. This is done by those persons who imagine that the words themselves, because Christ is their author, possess such worth and efficacy with the Father, that the bare repetition of them, unaccompanied by the attentive exercise of the mind, is sufficient for obtaining blessings from heaven. The true way of avoiding this danger is not to neglect the use of this prayer, but to entertain a deep

¹ Isa. xxi. 7.

and serious conviction that an unmeaning muttering of any words whatever to the Supreme being is absolute ungodliness,—that there is no value in their sound,—that the matter conveyed by these expressive words ought to be carefully and devoutly considered,—that the mind ought to be prepared for being excited by means of the words to the desire of heavenly things, and, when excited, for expressing its desire to the Supreme being. If this be done, there remains not even the semblance of idolatry. The frequent repetition of the Lord's prayer, which raises our minds to our Heavenly Father, and teaches us to ascribe to Him alone *the kingdom, the power, and the glory* is really attended by no greater danger, in reference to that prayer, than the frequent repetition, strict enforcement, and careful examination of the words of the second commandment, by which all idolatry is forbidden.

III. What the *vain repetition*¹ condemned by Christ is, we have already explained.² But the daily, attentive, and devout repetition of this prayer, has nothing to do with that *vain repetition*, unless we shall dare to charge our Lord himself with having committed this fault, when he prayed most fervently, repeating three times the same words.

IV. Since our Lord, according to Luke's narrative, repeats the same form of prayer which had been formerly delivered, as Matthew informs us, at a different time and place, it ought, on this account, to stand higher in our esteem. From that circumstance

¹ Βαπτολογία.

² Dissertation I.

we are entitled to conclude that our Lord intended this prayer to be familiarly used by his disciples, since he laid down a second time the same prayer, instead of dictating additional prayers, and leaving it to his disciples to make their choice. Besides, there is so very small, or almost no difference, between the words as reported by Matthew and Luke, (if you except the clause given by Matthew and omitted by Luke) that our Lord appears to have discountenanced, rather than approved, by his example, the proposed substitution of other words. We have no wish, as we have repeatedly observed, to restrict the worshippers to syllables.

V. We do not read, it is true, that the Apostles used this form ; but we must not at once deny, nor are we always at liberty to doubt, events which are not expressly related to have happened. It is nowhere recorded that Elijah anointed Elisha to be a prophet, or Hazael to be king of Syria, as he had been commanded by God to do. From the want of this record, are we at liberty to conclude that the holy prophet neglected to obey the commandment of the Lord ? No account, so far as I remember, is given us in the sacred writings of a jubilee observed by the Jews, and yet that it was generally, if not always observed, is beyond a doubt. It is nowhere expressly said that the Apostles baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; but as they had been commanded to do this, we devoutly conclude, that as obedient servants of Christ, they did not neglect this observance. If, therefore, we have no express commendation of the Lord's

Prayer, warranting us to conclude that the Apostles used it, let us at least not venture to argue from the silence of Scripture, that they neglected to do what was recommended to them by our Lord. Let this point remain undecided, so as to lend no assistance to either party.

VI. We admit that all our wants are not particularly expressed in this prayer; but there are none which cannot be referred to some part of it, in which their general principles are contained. No one thinks of objecting to additional prayers in which our urgent necessities shall be spread out, if the case require it, into copious detail. Great caution will indeed be necessary, lest in descending to unnecessary minuteness, we ask what would prove hurtful rather than beneficial, lest instead of an egg we ask a scorpion. To make use of other prayers does not necessarily imply that this prayer is to be set aside. On the contrary, as it may and frequently does happen, that even in the longest prayers some things are omitted which yet are intimately connected with the glory and kingdom of God, is it not advisable to add to our supplications this prayer in which we are certain that nothing has been omitted?

VII. We do not think it absolutely necessary that this prayer should be used at all times, and on all occasions. To understand time and manner is one characteristic of a wise man. Yet I do not see that there are any seasons in which that prayer ought to be reckoned unsuitable. Even when prayers are offered by, or in behalf of a dying man, what absurdity is there in mentioning *daily bread*? Each worship-

per prays not for himself only, but for all with whom he is in any way connected. If this prayer is at any time not offered *by* many, it is at all times offered *for* many,—for Christians, whom every believer is bound to associate in his mind as needing or receiving the same blessings with himself. The word BREAD denotes all things which belong to the present life, including the mitigation of pain, and increased freedom of breathing. What should hinder a petition of that sort from being presented at that very moment?¹

¹ In replying to the seventh objection, our author has some appearance of becoming a special pleader. His reference to the fulness of meaning embodied in the Prayer, as well as to the numerous persons to whom it may be understood to have a reference, does certainly seem to be a little overstrained. If in a solitary passage he shall be supposed to have failed, the contrast will the more forcibly remind the reader of the delightful candour and singular ability with which the argument has been conducted. Yet on closer inspection it will be found, that even that portion of his reasonings which, at first sight, will strike certain classes of readers as sophistical and feeble, is not easily refuted.

It ought to be remembered, that were this passage removed or fully answered, the body of the argument would remain untouched. More is attempted to be proved than was essential to his purpose. Having admitted it to be “not absolutely necessary that this prayer should be used at all times, and on all occasions,” he might have held himself excused from vindicating its use at those times, and on those occasions, on which its propriety was liable to be disputed.—*Give us this day our daily bread*, when uttered by a dying man, does unquestionably *sound* like something inappropriate. But the ear is not in all cases a safe guide. Our Wesminster Divines define the petition to be “that of God’s free gift we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessing with them.”

VIII. He who does not cherish a disposition to forgive the offences of his fellowmen is no better prepared for offering any other prayer to God, than for offering this prayer. Whatever words he may

Does not this embrace, as stated above, “the mitigation of pain, and increased freedom of breathing?” A person little accustomed to make use of the Lord's Prayer is the most likely to observe the literal import of the word BREAD. One who has been long familiarized to the devout use of this prayer, will more naturally think of its wider and juster acceptance. At whatever period of this mortal life he shall present this petition as embracing that share of temporal benefits which his heavenly Father may be pleased to bestow, he can hardly be regarded as pursuing it to unwarrantable refinements, without questioning the interpretations given by our most approved expositors. If any one shall still hold, that on his death-bed, he could not consistently present the Fourth Petition, what has been said may lead him to judge more charitably of a fellow-Christian, by whom the appropriateness of the prayer is viewed in a different light.—I may take this opportunity of remarking, that our author has somewhat encumbered his argument respecting the use of the Lord's prayer, by overlooking (though but occasionally) the distinction between *defending* the practice of those Christians who make frequent use of the Lord's prayer, and *enforcing* their practice on others. He set out with proving the *lawfulness* of using this prayer, and proposed “to examine the principal arguments of those who forbid pious persons to use it.” Here he is completely successful, and triumphs over his opponents, not with the airs of a haughty disputant, which were foreign to his mild and Christian heart, but with the power of overwhelming argument. Never was the charge of superstition more successfully repelled, or more dexterously thrown back upon its authors.—An important lesson of Christian charity is thus taught. The degree of frequency with which the Lord's prayer shall be employed has been left to private judgment in the exercise of *that liberty with which Christ hath made*

happen to employ in asking the forgiveness of his sins, let him not expect to obtain it, if he indulge hatred and the desire of revenge, and refuse to be reconciled to his neighbour. Would he escape the righteous judgment of God? Let him not abstain from repeating the Lord's prayer, the mere omission of which would do him no good; but let him bring his mind to be able to say without hypocrisy, Forgive, as I forgive. This is the will of God by which we are constantly bound.¹ And thus I have sufficiently blunted the edge of those arguments which some persons have thought fit to employ against the use of the Lord's prayer.

While we consider it to be the privilege and duty of Christians to make use of the Lord's prayer, it must not be concluded that the mere repetition of it is enough, and that all other prayers are nearly useless.

us free. Individuals and communities are at liberty to pray to God in any way, not forbidden by his word, which they find to be most conducive to their edification and comfort. But they are not at liberty to pronounce that modes of worship, at variance with those which they have adopted, are unfitted to nourish lively devotion. Nothing is less safe than to take our experience as the sole standard for estimating the religious exercises of those whose habits and associations, from their earliest years, may have been widely different from our own. That an exceedingly frequent use of the Lord's prayer is consistent with high spirituality of mind, receives here a demonstration, to which a satisfactory answer will not easily be framed. The argument derives great additional weight from being employed by the venerable Witsius, on whose writings warm devotion and holiness, not less than uncommon abilities and learning, are strongly impressed.—T.

¹ Mat. vi. 14, 15.

About the end of the eleventh century arose the sect of the *Bogomiles*,¹ scattered far and wide throughout all the eastern churches, and descended from the ancient *Euchites* and *Massalians*.² A short, but correct, and exceedingly learned Dissertation on the history of that sect was written by a very celebrated and eminent divine, SAMUEL ANDREAE. Among the errors attributed to those mad heretics, the following is stated by *Harmenopolus*.³ *The term prayer*⁴ *is applied by them exclusively to the Lord's prayer, and other prayers they reject, calling them* IDLE TALKING.⁵

¹ “Whose founder, Basilus, a monk by profession, was burnt at *Constantinople*, under the reign of Alexius Comnenus, after all attempts to make him renounce his errors had been ineffectual. By the accounts we have of this unhappy man, it appears that his doctrine resembled, in a striking manner, the religious system of the ancient Gnostics and Manicheans. The name of this sect was taken from the *divine mercy*, which its members are said to have incessantly implored; for the word *bogomilus*, in the Mysian language, signifies calling out for mercy from above.”—*Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. Cont. XII.*

² “*Massalians* and *Euchites* are denominations that signify the same thing, and denote, the one in the Hebrew, and the other in the Greek language, *persons that pray*. A sect, under this denomination, arose during the reign of the Emperor Constantius, about the year 361, founded by certain monks of *Mesopotamia*, who dedicated themselves wholly to prayer, and held many of the doctrines attributed by Mosheim to the *Massalians* of the twelfth century.”—Note by Dr. Maclaine, translator of Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History.

³ De Sectis. Sect. xix.

⁴ Μόνην ὀνομάζουσιν προσευχὴν, τὸ Πατέρα ἡμῶν, τὰς δὲ ἄλλας ἀθετοῦσι, κατατολογία καλοῦντες.

⁵ *Vain repetition*, by which κατατολογία is rendered in Matt.

But these sentiments are opposed to the constant practice of our Lord and his Apostles, and of believers in all ages, who addressed God in prayers which were adapted to the subject, and to the occasion which gave rise to them. We do not even think that, viewed as a concluding clause, it ought necessarily to be added to all our prayers, or that they will be imperfect or unacceptable to God without this addition. Least of all do we approve of reducing the repetition of these words to a matter of calculation, agreeably to the practice of the Romish priests, by whom the most sacred of all prayers has been converted into a species of enchantment.

Lastly, I am of opinion that it is the duty of every Christian to cherish the spirit of prayer, and to learn to address God from the heart, in a manner suitable to the particular circumstances which arise. When the soul is affected by a sense of its misery, and of the Divine majesty and goodness, and warmed with the desire of invaluable blessings, it will not suffer itself to be bound by the trammels of any forms. It has not been the practice of Christians in their private or family prayers,—still less was it the practice of their predecessors in the church, in their public services, to bind themselves to any prescribed forms.

vi. 7, and which is supported by good authorities, is wholly inapplicable here. The obvious meaning is suggested by two synonymes, quoted by *Schleusner* from *Hesychius* as illustrative of its ancient and ordinary usage, ἀργολογία, ἀκαιρολογία, idle, unseasonable talking.—T.

Neither God, nor Christ, nor his Apostles, ever prescribed a stated liturgy; nor in the most ancient church, since the days of the Apostles, was there ever any liturgy in universal use. This is evident from what Justin says, in his Apology addressed to the Emperor Antoninus: *The pastor offers up prayers and thanksgivings to the best of his ability.*¹ A similar proof is found in Tertullian's Apology: *Christians pray with outspread, because clean, hands; with uncovered head, because we are not ashamed, and without the aid of a prompter, because we pray from the heart.*

When piety declined and sloth increased, when heresy and ignorance grew to a shameful height, the first steps began to be taken towards a fixed liturgy. The earliest traces of it, so far as we can perceive, appear in the council held at Laodicea, A.D. 364, the eighteenth canon of which contains a decree, *On² the necessity of employing the same liturgy of prayers on all occasions, both in the afternoon³ and evening prayers.* Shortly afterwards, private Christians were forbidden to use their own prayers till they had taken advice from the better informed. "If any one," says the Council held at Carthage, CCCXCVII., "shall draw up prayers for his own use,

¹ Ὁ προσεστὼς ἐυχὰς ὁμοίως καὶ εὐχαριστίας ὅση δυνατόν αὐτῷ ἀναπέμψει.

² Περὶ τοῦ τὴν αὐτὴν λειτουργίαν τῶν εὐχῶν πάντοτε, καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἑνάταις καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἑσπέραις, ὀφείλειν γινέσθαι.

³ ἑνάταις, at the ninth hour, or, according to our reckoning, at three in the afternoon.

let him not use them till he has conferred with his better instructed brethren." But they went still farther, and thought proper to prohibit the use of all prayers not authorized by the Synod, as appears from the following enactment of the Council of Mela, ccccxvi. Can. XII. "It is also enacted, that prayers or invocations, or impositions of hands, which have been approved by the Council, may be observed by all, and that no prayers, which have not been authorized by well-informed persons, or approved by the Synods, shall be used in the church, lest, through ignorance or carelessness, anything contrary to the faith should be received into such compositions." The stupidity of the ministers of that age and country, which occasioned the necessity of such enactments, must have been truly extraordinary. There will be little difficulty in dispensing with them where the character of the ministry receives proper attention. Regulations which convey to the unskilful worshippers a severe censure of their ignorance, and which, instead of guiding, could only fetter and retard the meditations of the better instructed, ought never to be authoritatively or permanently enjoined.

To return to the Lord's prayer. While the use of it is enjoined by our Lord's authority, the words, the phrases, and nearly all the petitions have been taken from forms of prayer employed by the ancient Hebrews,—just as, in his sermons, he makes frequent use of proverbs current in that age. These matters have been abundantly illustrated by learned men, whose observations it will not be deemed unseasonable to introduce here for the benefit of my younger

readers. As our Lord Jesus teaches his followers to address God under the appellation of their *Heavenly Father*, so the Jews frequently used the phrase—*Our Father who art in heaven*.¹ Maimonides, in his *Tephiloth*, has these words—*Our Father who art in heaven, deal with us as thou has promised by the Prophets*. And in the daily prayers of the Portuguese Jews these words occur—*Our Father who art in heaven, show kindness to us*.²

On *Hallowing the name* of God and the *coming of his kingdom*, the Jews have also their forms of expression. From the book entitled *Musar*, Drusius has given us the following extract. *Our Father, who alone art in heaven, let thy name be always established. Let thy kingdom reign over us for ever and ever. And let thy name be hallowed by our works*. A similar quotation is made by Capellus. *Let thy name, O Lord our God, be hallowed*:³ *and let the remembrance of thee, our King, be glorified, in heaven above and on earth beneath*. There is another prayer which begins thus: *Let us hallow thy name in this world as the name which they hallow in the highest heavens*.⁴ In the same prayer is also found the following petition.⁵ *Out of thy place, O our King, shine forth and reign over us, as we look*

1 אבינו שבשמים.

2 אבינו שבשמים עשה עמנו חסד.

3 שמך אלהינו יתקדש.

4 נקדש את שמך בעולם כשם שמקדישים אותו בשמי מרום.

5 ממקומך מלכינו תופיע ותמלוך עלינו כמחכים אנחנו לך מתי תמלוך בציון.

for thee. *When wilt thou reign in Zion?* And shortly after: *Let our eyes see thy kingdom.*¹ "Above all, let the name of our King, the King of kings, the holy and ever blessed, be magnified, and hallowed, and praised, and glorified, and exalted." It had even, as Lightfoot observes, become an axiom in the schools of the Jews, *That² prayer in which no mention is made of the kingdom of God is not a prayer.* Accordingly, the words used in offering the first-fruits, "I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them,"³ are thus expounded in the Talmud. "I have not transgressed, that is, in not giving thanks; and I have not forgotten, that is, I have not forgotten to make mention of thy name." But Rabbi Jochanan carries it farther: "I have not forgotten to make mention of thy name and kingdom."

Doing the will of God is also mentioned in the Jewish forms of prayer. In Bab. Berachah the question is put, "What is the shortest prayer?" Rabbi Eliezer replies. Do thy will in heaven,⁴ and grant quietness of spirit to those who fear thee on the earth. In the same passage we meet with something which answers to the fourth petition about *daily bread*. "The necessities of thy people Israel are many, and their knowledge of them is small; so that they know not how to make known their necessities. Be thou graciously pleased to give to each *what is*

¹ ועינינו תראנה מלכותך.

² כל ברכה שאין בה מלכות אינה ברכה.

³ Deut. xxvi. 13.

⁴ עשה רצונך בשמים.

sufficient for his support."¹ The *forgiveness of sins* is mentioned very frequently in all their prayers. Nor were they unacquainted with the sentiment, that he who asks forgiveness for himself is bound to ask it for those who have done him an injury. In their commentaries on the book *Aboth*, (fol. 24.) they tell us, "Our pious ancestors said, forgive and pardon all who injure us."

The Sixth Petition is expressed elsewhere almost in the very words. In the book *Musar* occurs a passage thus quoted by Drusius, "Lead us not into the power of sin, nor into the power of temptation, but deliver us from every evil occurrence." And in *Berachoth*, according to Lightfoot, "Rabbi Judah was wont to pray thus: be thou graciously pleased to deliver us from the impudent and from impudence, from the evil man and the evil occurrence, from the evil affection, from the evil companion, from the evil neighbour, from Satan the destroyer, &c." In their Liturgies they have this prayer: "Lead me not into sin, nor into transgression, nor into temptation, nor into scorning, and remove from me every evil thought:" where יצר הרע answers to the Greek phrase τὸ πόνηρον, *what is evil*. In another place we read: "Let not Satan, or the evil thought, reign over us."²

In fine, they were not without a Doxology exceedingly similar to that with which our Lord was pleased to conclude his prayer. In the treatise *Joma*,

¹ כדי פרנסתו.

² ואל ישלוט בנו שטן ויצר הרע.

after quoting various prayers which the High Priest offered on the day of expiation, the writer informs us that the people answered, "Blessed be the name of the glory of his kingdom for ever and ever."¹ In the Liturgies it is thus expressed: "For thine is the kingdom, and thou shalt reign in glory for ever and ever."²

On the expression of desire AMEN Lightfoot observes, that the word Amen was never employed as a response in their public prayers, and was rarely added to their private prayers. There is a tradition as to the temple service. "They did not answer Amen in the house of the sanctuary."³ But in the synagogue the people did reply amen to the prayers offered by the minister,⁴ and likewise at home to the blessings or prayers of the head of the family. But they rarely, if ever, added it to their private prayers. They considered this particle to possess great efficacy, provided it were uttered with corresponding faith and devotion. It is written,⁵ The Lord preserveth the faithful.⁶ But who are the אמונים, *the faithful*? Those who say Amen with a true faith.⁷ In the book *Musar* it is added—"Whoever says Amen with all his might, to him the gates of paradise shall be opened, as it is written,⁸ *the righteous nation*⁹

¹ ברור שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד.

² כי המלכות שלך היא ולעולמים עד תמלוך בכבוד.

³ לא היו עונים אמן בבית המקדש.

⁴ 1 Cor. xiv. 16.

⁵ Ps. xxxi. 23.

⁶ אמונים נוצר יהוה.

⁷ שאומרים אמן בתמונה.

⁸ Isa. xxvi. 2.

⁹ שומר אמונים.

which keepeth the truth shall enter in, that is, those who say amen with the utmost exertion of their strength."¹

It is in the highest degree improbable that so great a coincidence of expressions and of petitions as is observed to exist between the Lord's prayer and those commonly employed by the Jews—should have been the result of accident. We are, therefore, shut up to this alternative. Either the modern Hebrew teachers have taken these things from the gospel, and applied them to the service of the synagogue; or Christ borrowed them from the public formularies, and from the customs of the Jews, and recommended them to his disciples, as good and holy. Either of these views reflects honour on Christ and on this prayer. If the Jews—sworn enemies of our Lord—converted those parts of the gospel to their own use, they must have been struck with the beauty, wisdom, and holiness of those expressions; otherwise, the hatred they bore to the name of Jesus would have deterred them from resolving that his words should be in daily use among their followers. But I have difficulty in persuading myself that such was the fact. It appears far more probable that, so far as consisted with the wisdom and holiness of his character, our Lord accommodated himself to the genius of the people, and applied to his own purposes whatever he found among them that was excellent, as the golden remains of the ancient faith and hope. In this manner he avoided the appearance of unne-

¹ Buxtorf. Lex. Talmud.

cessary and affected novelty, and paved the way for the more ready and cordial reception of what he enjoined, when it appeared to be a collection of the most precious jewels contained in the storehouse of the Jewish Church. I am not unacquainted with the very lengthened dissertations on the other side of the question, written by no less a person than the celebrated Doctor John Owen.¹ But with the utmost deference to so distinguished a Divine, his reasonings are so far from altering my opinion, that I draw from them a striking lesson, how apt even the loftiest intellects are to adopt partial views, and how strong a leaning to the excess of contradiction² may be discovered in the best regulated minds.

These observations do not in any way affect the excellence of the Lord's Prayer, which ought not to be estimated by its novelty, but by the excellence of the matter, the richness of the petitions, the clearness of the method, and the sententious brevity of the expressions. And certainly these valuable properties do, one and all, belong in so high a degree to this prayer that nothing which equals or resembles it can be pointed out.

It may be conveniently arranged under three divisions. I. *The address of our Heavenly Father.* II. *The explanation of the petitions.* III. *The concluding doxology.* The address,³ besides embracing in a few words matters of the highest intrinsic value, brings before the suppliant considerations regarding

¹ Theologoumena, Lib. v. Digr. i.

² *ἰς ἀμετρίαν ἢ ἀνβολικῆς.*

³ Or Preface.

the Divine being which are fitted to inspire reverence, faith, hope, and heavenly desires. No subject connected with prayer deserves earlier or more careful study than these religious affections. The petitions, six in number, include every thing relating to the glory of God and our own salvation, to which pious and holy desires can be directed. By this beautiful arrangement, that object which, viewed as the highest end, deserves the most earnest enquiry, the hallowing of the name of God, comes first in order. Next follow the means appointed for attaining this highest end. These consist of petitions for spiritual and temporal benefits, and of the deprecation of evils both past and future. The doxology informs us that, as all good things come to us from God, so to Him the glory of them ought to be ascribed. So that in this short prayer we have an *abridgment*, as Tertullian says, *of the whole gospel*, and, I will add, *of the whole law*. This will be made apparent by a minute examination of the clauses in their order.

DISSERTATION VII.

ON THE ADDRESS TO OUR HEAVENLY FATHER.

ΠΑΤΕΡ ΗΜΩΝ Ο ΕΝ ΤΟΙΣ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΙΣ.

WE shall now direct our meditations to the Lord's Prayer itself, weighing every word it contains with all possible care and diligence. The first thing that meets us is the preface, which describes that Being to whom holy prayer must be addressed. He is called OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN. There is not a single word here that is not peculiarly emphatic. Nothing, indeed, was more common in the prayers of the Hebrews than to call God *Our Father which art in heaven*;¹ but the full meaning of this address applied to the Divine Being was apprehended by few. Let us, whose privilege it is to live in happier times, attempt an explanation.

When the Son enjoins us to call God FATHER, he means expressly the first person of the Godhead, who is the Father of Christ, and in Christ and on Christ's account is our Father. It is indeed a doctrine firmly maintained by all orthodox divines, that the Father cannot be invoked in a proper manner without, at the same time, invoking the Son and Holy Spirit, because they are one in nature

¹ אבינו שבשמים.

and in honour, as we have formerly and strongly asserted.¹ Nor can it, I think, be denied that, laying out of view the distinction of persons, and looking only at what is common to all the three persons in the Godhead, God may be denominated our Father. Yet I cheerfully concur with those judicious interpreters who maintain that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is particularly addressed.

For I. In the economy of grace the Father is represented to us under that character in which we ought to address him in our prayers, as sustaining the power² and majesty of the Godhead, and as originating and bestowing all saving benefits; the Son, as opening up our way to the Father, and providing for us opportunities of approach by his merits and intercession; and the Spirit, as forming within us our prayers and groans. And this is the reason why most frequently, and indeed almost always, in Scripture, we find worship addressed to the Father; rarely to the Son; very rarely to the Holy Spirit. II. The phrase *Our Father*, in almost every page of the New Testament where it occurs, denotes Him who is *Christ's Heavenly Father*,³ and *our Heavenly Father*.⁴ He is our Father in a different sense from that in which he is Christ's; his by nature, and ours by grace. Hence our Lord expressly said, *I ascend unto my Father, and your Father*.⁵ On this passage Epiphanius remarks, *My Father by nature in respect of Godhead; yours by grace, on my account, in respect*

¹ διὰ τὸ ὁμοούσιον καὶ ὁμότιμον.

² ἰξοχὴν.

³ Mat. xviii. 35.

⁴ Mat. v. 48.

⁵ John xx. 17.

of adoption.¹ Hence the *Father of all* is distinguished from Christ as *Lord*. There is *one Lord, one God and Father of all*.² “But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ.”³ “One is your Master, even Christ. One is your Father, which is in heaven.”⁴ There is no passage, so far as I remember, in the New Testament, which expressly names the Three persons together, or the Son or Spirit separately, as our Father.

¶II. In the prayers of the Apostles, the Father is almost always distinguished from the Son, and, where the subject requires it, from the Holy Spirit. Paul frequently employs in his Epistles this solemn prayer, “Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.” In the Epistle to the Ephesians⁵ he uses these words, “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” When the Holy Spirit makes believers cry “Abba, Father,⁶ he is distinguished from the Father to whom he makes them address that cry. In short, all the passages which I have now quoted lead to the conclusion that, in the prayers of the Apostles, when God is addressed under the appellation of our Father, we are always to understand the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. IV. But why should we employ so much labour in conducting the argument, when our Lord Jesus Christ is his own interpreter? “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the

¹ Πατέρα μου μὲν κατὰ φύσιν ἐν τῇ Θεότητι, καὶ πατέρα ὑμῶν κατὰ χάριν δι’ ἐμὲ ἐν ὑιοθεσίᾳ. ² Eph. iv. 5, 6. ³ 1 Cor. viii. 6. ⁴ Mat. xxiii. 8, 9. ⁵ Eph. iii. 14. ⁶ Rom. viii. 15.

Father in my name, he will give it you.”¹ As this name was so frequently employed by Christ, it cannot be imagined that the disciples would understand by it any other than the Father of the Messiah. “Thy Father, which seeth in secret.”² “Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him.”³ “Your heavenly Father will also forgive you.”⁴

With this interpretation agrees the Palatine Catechism. For in expounding the second petition it uses these words: “Rule us by thy Word and Spirit; and in expounding the sixth petition, “Do thou support and strengthen us by the power of thy Spirit.” Our Father to whom we pray is plainly distinguished here from his Spirit, and is therefore viewed *personally*.⁵ The reader may consult an accurate and copious dissertation on this subject by *Gomarus*.

The only design in making these observations has been to investigate, with all attainable *accuracy*,⁶ the phraseology of Scripture. We have no wish, certainly, that pious worshippers, when pronouncing the name of our Heavenly Father, should be prohibited from thinking of him, together with the Son and Spirit, as the object of the same adoration. For, as Tertullian has well observed,⁷ “In the Father the Son is invoked, for I, says he, and my Father are one.”

But it will perhaps be considered to be a more useful and profitable inquiry, Why is the Father of Jesus

¹ John xv. 16. and xvi. 23.

² Mat. vi. 6.

³ v. 8.

⁴ v. 14.

⁵ ὑποστατικῶ

⁶ ἀκρίβεια.

⁷ De Orat. Domin.

Christ called *Our Father*? The relation which, in common with all other men, we bear to the Divine Being, furnishes certainly one reason for the use of this phrase, "He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things."¹ Hence the poet Aratus, speaking of the human race, says, "for we are also his offspring."² Malachi argues thus—"Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?"³ While we owe much to our earthly Father, or, as Paul calls them, *fathers of our flesh*, we owe every thing to the *Father of Spirits*.⁴ He alone "formeth⁵ the spirit of man within him," and is therefore called *The God of the spirits of all flesh*.⁶ It is God whom the Psalmist, with equal truth and piety, thus addresses,—“I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.⁷ Marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written.”⁸ “Hast thou not,” says Job in a similar strain, “poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese? Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and fenced me with bones and sinews.”⁹ But the continuance of our life, and every thing that has contributed to render it happy must, equally with the commencement of our being, be

¹ Acts xvii. 25.² Acts xvii. 28.³ Mal. ii. 10.⁴ Heb. xii. 9.⁵ Zech. xii. 1.⁶ Num. xvi. 22.⁷ כי נוראות נפלאתי.⁸ Ps. cxxxix. 14—16.⁹ Job. x. 10, 11.

traced to the hand of our Creator. This subject is beautifully pursued by Job in the 12th verse. "Thou has granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit." It is the duty of every one gratefully and humbly to acknowledge that his life is continually in the hand of God, and in pious meditations to say, "Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night?" Basil¹ has with considerable success illustrated the phrase, "Not in an overstrained or metaphorical, but in the strict, primary, and true sense, God is called our Father, since by means of our earthly parents He brought us out of nothing into existence, and by His great kindness permits us to dwell with him."² Another writer³ employs still stronger language, "God who brought us out of nothing into being, is more strictly our Father than our parents who owed to Him their relation to us as well as to their own existence."⁴ And hence some allege that God is called *Father*, as the *Preserver of all things*;⁵ which, however, is more properly an allusion than an etymological remark.

But this, though of great weight, is neither the only, nor the principal reason why we call God our

¹ Κατὰ Εὐνομίον.

² Πατὴρ ἡμῶν ὁ Θεὸς οὐ καταχρηστικῶς, οὐδ' ἐκ μεταφορᾶς, ἀλλὰ κυρίως, καὶ πρώτως, καὶ ἀληθινῶς ὀνομάζεται, διὰ τῶν σωματικῶν γονέων εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ μὴ εἶναι πράγων, καὶ ταῖς κηδεμονίαις προσηκουόμενος.

³ Damascenus, De Orthodoxa fide, Lib. I. Cap. VIII.

⁴ Κυριότερον ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν ἐστὶ Πατὴρ, ὁ ἐκ μὴ ὄντων εἰς τὸ εἶναι πράγων, ἢ οἱ γεννήσαντες, οἱ ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ εἶναι καὶ τὸ γεννᾶν ἐίληφότες.

⁵ Πατὴρ ὡσανεὶ ὁ πάντων τηρητὴς.

Father. Another and more important reason applies exclusively to the elect and believers, who have been *regenerated* by the Spirit of God, and graciously *adopted* by him as his children. Believers are declared to have been “born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”¹ They are not reckoned the children of God in the same manner as certain persons were the children of the patriarchs, according to the flesh. Some were *of blood*, by the ordinary way of generation. Some were *of the will of the flesh*, from an excessive desire of having children, in consequence of which carnal views were improperly indulged, and means forbidden by the divine law were employed; of which the birth of Ishmael may be quoted as an instance. Finally, some were *from the will of a man*, who—for reasons entirely his own, and far from being satisfactory—chose one of his children in preference to the rest, in order to assign him the principal part of the inheritance; such as the will of Isaac was in reference to Esau. But they are the sons of God, because they are truly “born of God.”

Here it is proper to add, that they who are the sons of God by grace have some resemblance to him who is the Son of God by nature; always keeping in view the boundless *excellence*² of our Lord, and the slender *shadow*³ of it which exists in us. Why is God called the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? Because *he begat him*.⁴ In what does that generation consist? It consists in this, that “as the Father

¹ John i. 12.² ὑπεροχὴν.³ ἀποσκίασμα.⁴ Ps. ii. 7.

hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." Why is God called also *Our Father*? The same answer must be given,—because he begat us both as men and as believers. "Of his own will begat he us¹ with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures."² In what consists that new truth? He hath made us *partakers of the Divine nature*,³—bestowing upon us, by his grace, according to our limited capacity, what he communicated to the Son his equal, in a manner incomprehensible by us, but worthy of a Divine person to give, and worthy of a Divine person to receive. We are at least transformed after his likeness, and partake in no inconsiderable degree the brightness of his most excellent glory.

A third reason why God is called Our Father is, that he has graciously *adopted* us as his children; and having thus admitted us into his family, has, out of his loving-kindness, granted all the privileges of his children, and the right to enjoy their inheritance. This is the adoption so frequently mentioned.⁴ It gives "*the power to become the sons of God*,⁵—the power to act as becomes the children of God, to enjoy all the privileges belonging to that condition, to hope for the inheritance bequeathed to them, the state of complete sonship which will be attended by *the redemption of our body*.⁶ In short, the sons of God receive by adoption a right to the heavenly in-

¹ Βουλῆθεὶς ἀπεκύησεν ἡμᾶς.

² Ja. i. 18. 1 John v. 4.

³ 2 Pet. i. 4.

⁴ Rom. viii. 23. Eph. i. 5. Gal. iv. 5.

⁵ John i. 12.

⁶ Rom. viii. 23.

heritance, and to that exalted dignity which they shall enjoy both in soul and in body, as children of the family, in the palace of their heavenly Father, in a manner which cannot be taken away, diminished, or interrupted by any created being. *If children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.*¹

Thus far, the reasons for calling God our Father are applicable to every believer in every age ; for all have been regenerated by God, and adopted into the privileges of his children. It was even said to the Israelites, “ ye are the children of the Lord your God.”² What is thus said concerning the whole people, in reference to the outward covenant, may be truly said concerning the elect, in reference to their adoption to the heavenly inheritance. They, on the other hand, in the exercise of faith, said to God, “ Doubtless thou art our Father—thou, Lord, art our Father.”³ And again, “ But⁴ now, O Lord, thou art our Father.” Elihu, who did not belong to the communion of the people of Israel, calls God his Father. *My Father, let Job be tried unto the end.*⁵ These words, it may be alleged, convey nothing

¹ Rom. viii. 17.

² Deut. xiv. 1.

³ Isa. lxiii. 16.

⁴ Isa. lxiv. 8.

⁵ Job xxxiv. 36.

אָבִי יִבְחֵן עַד־נֵצַח

The English translation runs thus. *MY DESIRE is, that Job may be tried unto the end.* The marginal reading (which is pronounced by Dr. Adam Clarke to be in eight instances out of ten the preferable reading) is, *MY FATHER, let Job be tried.* The text renders אָבִי not *My Father*, which at the first glance

would occur to any reader, but *My desire*, for which it will be hard to find good authorities. If the word be supposed to be

more than the Gentiles might be supposed to mean, when they called Jupiter their Father. But such an interpretation is utterly irreconcilable with the faith and piety of Elihu, and the intimate fellowship with God which he enjoyed. A very celebrated interpreter has, with great acuteness, pointed out the three following things, as implied in the manner in which Elihu addresses God. I. The paternal solicitude of the Divine Being in this trial. II. The

אֲבָהָה *desire* with the affix, the substitution of the (τ)¹ for the (..) ² will need to be explained. Buxtorf puts it down as an interjection, “ expressive of wish and desire,” but gives also the other two meanings, *My wish* and *My Father*, leaving us to infer that his own mind was undecided. *Ah mon Pere, que Job soit éprouvé jusqu’a la fin*, is the rendering in the French Protestant Bible, with which other modern versions are found to agree. In almost any other inspired book, so wide a difference of translations would have attracted general notice, and exercised the ingenuity of learned critics. There would have been an attempt to settle, with some approach to certainty, the true meaning of the passage. But Job appears to be a book on which the wildest experiments of conjectural emendation are freely permitted. The voluminous expositions which it has received, though admitted to be the result of prodigious research, seem to be regarded as bearing nearly the same relation to critical writings on other parts of Scripture, which the boundless regions of Romance bear to the limited domain of History. A new translation of it, accompanied by notes and preliminary dissertations, after the manner of Dr. Campbell, is a *desideratum*. When shall the learning, sagacity, caution, judgment, and taste, of that extraordinary man be again found so admirably united, and dedicated to the interpretation of the sacred volume?—TR.

¹ Kametz.

² Tzere.

brotherly affection of the supplicant. III. The object intended to be accomplished by the trial,—filial reverence and confidence. All this implies such thoughts concerning God as our Lord intended that his disciples should cherish, when he enjoined them to employ the words which we are now expounding. And certainly, in every age, believers have been children of God, and consequently *heirs of all*,¹—heirs of the grace of God in the present, and of glory in the future life.² Nor is there any room to doubt, that with such faith and hope as we have now described, they addressed God as their Father. “Will not thou from this time cry unto me, my Father, thou art the guide of my youth.”

But a still higher dignity and boldness³ has been granted to the children of the New Testament. A very exalted rank was unquestionably enjoyed by believers under the Old Testament dispensation, as compared with the condition of the Gentiles, or even of those who lived in the merely outward fellowship of the covenant, and were destitute of true piety and saving grace. For all such persons continue to be the children of wrath, and heirs of the treasures of the Divine indignation. But all their high advantages lose not a little of their lustre when compared with the privileges reserved by our heavenly Father for the happier times of the New Testament. In ancient times, believers “differed nothing from servants, though they were lords of all, but were under tutors and governors until the time appointed of

¹ Gal. iv 1.² Ps. xvii. 15.³ *παρρησία*.

the Father. But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law,"¹ by delivering them from various inconveniencies, and particularly from that observance of the laws commonly called CEREMONIAL, which marked a state of infancy. It is added, "that we might receive the adoption of sons,"—not that adoption merely which separates us from the children of the Devil and of wrath, but that which we enjoy in preference to those children who differ nothing from servants. We are allowed, therefore, to call God our Father with such liberty, such boldness, and such pleasing consciousness of enjoying the Divine favour, as could not have been possessed in the same manner or degree by the children of God in ancient times.

Besides, the appellation FATHER was considered to be more suitable to the commencement of a prayer, and to the familiarity which the gracious declarations of the New Testament are fitted to produce,—than LORD, or any other expression of reverence by which God is elsewhere addressed. Theodoret, in his observations on the first chapter of the Song of Solomon, has these words: *O Lord and Father, for thou choosest to be called Father rather than Lord.*² The reason is, that this manner of address is fitted to excite very powerfully, the reverence, faith, hope, love, boldness,³ and other emotions, which it is of

¹ Gal. iv. 1—5.

² Ω δίσποτα καὶ πατερ· τοῦτο γὰρ μᾶλλον ἢ ἐκείνο Θέλεις ἀκούειν.

³ παρρησίαν.

the highest importance for the suppliant to cherish. It is a remarkable instance of the kindness of God towards us, that the spirit which we receive teaches us to cry, *Abba, Father*.

Among the ancient customs reported to us by the Hebrew instructors, we are informed, that bondmen and bondwomen were not permitted to use the term Father when addressing their masters.¹ But a free-man, either in addressing him on ordinary occasions, or in speaking of him to others, was at full liberty to call him Father, as expressive of his desire to obtain adoption into the family. By accepting the title of Father, and acknowledging him as a Son, the master was understood ultimately to recognize the full claims. But male or female slaves were not permitted to do so, lest the family, whose father was thus claimed, should be supposed to have contracted the degrading blemish of servitude. These observations may be very easily applied to our present purpose. We are all by nature the slaves of sin and of Satan. Believers in ancient times, though delivered from that bondage, were yet slaves under the law. Now that the Divine Redeemer has actually come, we, who receive him by a true faith, are instantly emancipated from all kinds of bondage, and authorized to call God our Father. This claim he is not unwilling to hear, for it is dictated to us by his Spirit. And thus the address, made by us through the Spirit, and admitted on the part of God, goes to confirm our right to the inheritance.

¹ Selden, *De Success. in Bona Defunct. Cap. IV.*

Another circumstance worthy of our notice is, that Christ has commanded us to say, OUR FATHER. This is expressive both of *Faith* and of *Charity*. Of *Faith*, so far as we apply to ourselves what is contained in this appellation. We declare that the regeneration, the adoption, and the unspeakable love which God exercises towards his elect, are our own. We profess also that, in return for the amazing goodness of God, we are actuated by such reverence, such love towards him who first loved us, such faith and hope, such subjection and obedience, as the children of our heavenly Father ought to cherish. It is the prerogative of Faith, raising its head on high above all the billows of temptation, triumphantly to exclaim—*Doubtless thou art our Father.*¹

But it expresses likewise *Charity* towards our neighbour, whom we include in our prayer as a partaker, either actually or prospectively, of the same grace and adoption with ourselves. This is one of the laws acknowledged by the ancient Church of Israel. A canon is in existence to that effect. “Every one who prays shall always pray for himself along with the Church.” The meaning of this is not simply that a reference to the church must be introduced into the public prayers in the synagogue. It means that, wheresoever the person praying happens to be situated, even though he may happen to be alone, he must always pray in the plural number. The canon is thus explained by one of their own

¹ Isa. lxiii. 16.

glosses. "Let¹ no one pray the short prayer (that is, a prayer different from the ordinary prayers) in the singular, but in the plural number."²

But here another question arises. To speak falsely to God must be heinously wicked, and no prayers which do not proceed from faith can find acceptance with God. Does the right to use this prayer, and to call God his Father, belong exclusively to him who is truly a child of God by regeneration and adoption, and who has been convinced of his sonship by the peculiar influences of the Holy Spirit. I answer—I. Proper and acceptable prayer can be offered only by a believer and a saint. Every prayer which deserves the name must proceed from the spirit of prayer. But the spirit of prayer is the spirit of regeneration and adoption. Consequently, no man can pray aright who is not a son of God. *Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father.*³

II. A person who has been actually regenerated and adopted into the family of God, may be, for the time, ignorant of the fact. If he does not distinctly perceive in himself, or has not duly examined the marks of grace, he may call in question his adoption. Nay more, if he be assaulted by powerful temptations, or if he have fallen into aggravated sin, or into a dull and languid condition, he may lean to the contrary belief, and conclude that he is not a child of God. Most certainly, no man in that condition can, with the full assurance of faith, call God his

אל יתפלל חף בלשון יחיד אלא בלשון רבים¹.

² Lightfoot.

³ Gal. iv. 6.

Father. And yet we must not enjoin him to abstain from praying, or to address God by any other name than Father. All believers unquestionably should strive to obtain, in a high degree, the assurance of faith. But when the struggling faith is really, or even eminently, defective, their exercises are not treated with scorn by the hearer of prayer. Let them call God Father with respect to the great benefits which he has bestowed on us, which they must know and cannot deny. Let them call him Father, in order to express that holy reverence, which hardly any strength of sinful principle can ever banish from the mind of a believer, so as not immediately to return, accompanied by submission to the Divine authority. Let them call him Father from the desire of obtaining His fatherly kindness, which must be more delightful to them than all things else. Finally, let them call him Father, if not from the believing assurance that he has been their Father, yet, from the prayer, and the hope, that he will be pleased to become their Father, and to make them sons worthy of holding a place in such a family. The act of addressing God as a Father, will have the effect of producing in their minds shame on account of past sins, desire of his favour, hope of pardon, and a resolution to maintain stricter godliness. And thus, the employment of this manner of address will singularly contribute to the invigoration of that faith from which, in the first instance, it may not appear to have proceeded.

III. Those who belong to the external communion of the church, but have not been born again by the

Holy Spirit, cannot call God their Father in the same sense as believers. Yet prayer, and other religious duties, are enjoined on these persons. To lay down for them a different manner of prayer, in which the Divine Being should be viewed as a Creator and Lord, would serve no good purpose. So long as they do not approach God with filial love, all their addresses will be vain. Let them be taught that no one can pray aright who is not a child of God, and that, therefore, they ought earnestly to implore from the Divine Being that high privilege. Let them be further taught that God is truly their Father, and may justly be so designated, in respect of creation, preservation, and a multitude of blessings which he has liberally bestowed upon us; but that nothing short of his being their father by regeneration and adoption, will promote their real happiness. Let them, therefore, call God Father, as far as they are able to do so, still aspiring to that grace by which they may be enabled, in the strongest sense of the expressions, to claim him as their own. Beyond this point the question may be safely dismissed, as it can only perplex the exercise of prayer by curious distinctions and excessive refinements, on which the Divine Being will not bestow his approbation.

We come now to the declaration that our Father is IN THE HEAVENS, the plural phrase¹ answering to the Hebrew שמים, (Shamaim). That God has fixed his throne in the heavens, or, as Hesiod poetically expresses it, *inhabits the loftiest*

¹ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.

abodes,¹ has been acknowledged by the religious systems of almost all nations. A remarkable passage to this effect is adduced from the fragments of Orpheus by Clement of Alexandria.² As the Gentiles assigned to Deity a residence in heaven, so they instructed the suppliant to rise to heaven on the wings of meditation. A fine passage from Euripides is likewise quoted by Clement, in which he speaks of “fitting on his golden wings, by the aid of which he will ascend to heaven, and converse with Jove.”³ Although these expressions, employed by the Gentiles, may appear to be lofty, they were unacquainted with that throne on which God sitteth, of which they were wont to give confused and inconsistent descriptions, as placed in the starry heavens, or in a particular star, or in some sort of elevated region among the stars or beyond them, which their imagination had formed.

We who are Christians must strive to attain much higher views. Stretching beyond all the visible heavens, we must contemplate by faith a far loftier

¹ ὑπέρτατα δώματα νάειν.

² Αὐτὸς δ' ἂν μίγαν ἄυθις ἐπ' οὐρανὸν ἐστήρικται,
Χρυσίῳ ἐνὶ θρόνῳ, γαίῃ δ' ὑπὸ ποσσὶ βέβηκεν.
Κεῖρα δὲ δεξιτερὴν περὶ θέρμασιν ὠκεανοῖο
Ἐκτίτακεν, ὄρεων δὲ τρέμει βᾶσις ἔνδοθι θυμοῦ
'Οὐδὲ φέρειν δύναται κρᾶτερον μένος· ἔστι δὲ πάντῃ
'Αὐτὸς ἐπουράνιος, καὶ ἐπὶ χθονὶ πάντα τελευτᾷ.
'Αρχὴν αὐτὸς ἔχων, καὶ μέσσατον, ἠδὲ τελευτὴν
'Ἄλλως οὐ θεμιτὸν σε λέγειν· τρομέω δὲ τε γυῖα
Ἐνοῶ ἐξ ὑπάτου κραίνει.

³ Χρῦσεσι δὴ μοι πτέρυγες περὶ νῶτον κ. τ. λ.

region, where our Father and king, in a manner worthy of himself, sustains his adorable majesty. Thence he displays himself to this lower world as an object of veneration or terror, while “dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto,”¹ he covereth himself with light as with a garment; stretcheth out the heavens like a curtain; layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters; maketh the clouds his chariot, walketh on the wings of the wind.”² Hence the alternate returns of day and night, with the vicissitudes of cold and heat, and of the seasons of the year, are regulated by him in a singularly wise and beautiful order, “He maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south.”³ “Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth out of his mouth. He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth. After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of his excellency; and he will not stay them when his voice is heard.”⁴ “The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn. The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire.”⁵ Who that duly ponders these inspired declarations is not disposed to exclaim, “The Lord reigneth: let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad there-

¹ 1 Tim. vi. 16.

² Ps. civ. 2, 3.

³ Job ix. 9.

⁴ Job xxxvii. 2—4.

⁵ Ps. xxix. 4—7.

of. Clouds and darkness are round about him ; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. A fire goeth before him and burneth up his enemies round about. His lightnings enlightened the world ; the earth saw and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.”¹ Such are the glory and the greatness of that heavenly king whom we who are Christians address as our Father.

*Lo, these are parts of his ways : but how little a portion is heard of him ?*² The discoveries made to us in the lower regions of this world, are not to be compared with what Scripture reveals to us of the glory of God in the highest heavens. Sitting there on the throne of his glory, surrounded by tens of thousands of angels, who are always ready to obey his call, he shines with that brightness before which the moon and stars, and even the sun himself, grows pale,—on which even the Seraphim dare not and cannot directly gaze, while they spend a blessed eternity in celebrating his praises.³ There he has prepared for his elect, when the toils of this life shall have closed, and their irksome journey through the deserts of this world shall be completed, a place of most delightful and blessed rest, compared with the surpassing excellence of which the scenes described by Cicero, in Scipio’s dream, with great magnificence of language, are indeed but frivolous and empty dreams. There he has laid up for his own people the full and

¹ Ps. xcvi. 1—6.

² Job xxvi. 14.

³ Isa. vi.

perfect enjoyment of blessings placed beyond the possibility of change, or removal, or termination,—invisible, indeed, to mortal eye, but, on that account, the more highly to be valued,—which *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man.*¹ There the knowledge, love, and enjoyment of himself, in which the perfection of happiness consists, will be bestowed on all the inhabitants of heaven, in a measure absolutely unbounded, and in comparison of which all that is bestowed out of the exhaustless treasures of his riches on the heirs of salvation in the present life, though in itself highly valuable, must be pronounced to be a poor and slender foretaste. How highly proper and suitable must these and similar meditations be for him who is about to approach God in holy prayer.

In all ages, when believers were called to prepare their minds for addressing God in prayer, it was their unquestionable duty to raise their thoughts to heaven, and to revolve those solemn views which we have now considered. But there was a time when he dwelt in the earthly sanctuary, and when it was his pleasure that his people should address him in that place and receive from it an answer to their prayers. “In thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.”² To that quarter they were commanded to look.³ There they prayed to God as dwelling “between the cherubims.”⁴ From that place they expected that God would address them, and grant

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 9.
Dan. vi. 10.

² Ps. v. 7.
⁴ Ps. lxxx. 2.

³ 1 Kings viii. 29, 44 ;

his assistance and all the blessings of salvation. *At the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord ; where I will meet you to speak there unto thee. And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle, or Israel, (which is the supplement given in the margin) shall be sanctified by my glory.*¹ The greater part of interpreters, taking these words by far too literally, have failed to hit the most important meaning. That earthly sanctuary, as we have already hinted, was a type of heaven, towards which it was their duty to direct their mind, while their eyes were fixed upon the temple. At the dedication, Solomon prayed, *Hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant and of thy people Israel when they shall pray toward this place ; and HEAR THOU IN HEAVEN, THY DWELLING PLACE ; and, when thou hearest, forgive.*² At all times it was their duty to say, *Let us lift up our heart with our hands UNTO GOD IN THE HEAVENS.*³ *Look down FROM HEAVEN, and behold FROM THE HABITATION OF THY HOLINESS AND OF THY GLORY.*⁴

But as there were few by whom those matters were properly understood, and as the disposition of most people in the time of our Lord, was to *betake themselves to the mountain*, that is, to the material temple situated on the mountain, (for so Habakkuk ii. 4, is explained by an eminent commentator), our Lord, with great propriety, intructed his followers to go directly to heaven. This was the more necessary as the

¹ Ex. xxix. 42, 43. ² 1 Kings viii 30. ³ Lam. iii. 41.

⁴ Isa. l.iii 15.

days were at hand when all the religious services of the earthly sanctuary, together with the sanctuary itself, should come to an end. It is appropriate to the character of the New Jerusalem, in which John saw no temple; "for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it,"¹ agreeably to the prophecy,² that the Lord of Hosts would be to them for a sanctuary."³ And here again the superiority of the New Testament economy to that of the Old is very remarkable.

This manner of addressing the Divine Being suggests many practical instructions. The most important of them refer not merely to prayer, but to the whole conduct of the Christian life. We are reminded that our whole conversation, as well as our prayers, ought to be worthy of that heavenly Father, whose children we profess ourselves to be. Above all, it ought to be deeply impressed upon our minds, that the great and unparalleled love of God to miserable sinners appears—in not only permitting them to draw near to him in prayer, but in authorizing them to address him by the endearing appellation of Father. What an invaluable privilege are we, who are "worms and no men,"⁴ the children of the earth, "the children of wrath,"⁵ permitted to enjoy! The angels in heaven regard Almighty God with such deep reverence that they bow their heads and worship. Yet this great and dreadful Being we style not simply our Creator, or Lord, or Governor, but

¹ Rev. xxi. 22.

² Isa. viii. 14.

³ וְהָיָה לְמִקְדָּשׁ

⁴ Ps. xxii 6.

⁵ Eph. ii. 3.

our Father, and thus, with his full approbation, claim the dignity and privileges of his children. This love of our God to man,¹ is very finely illustrated by Chrysostom.² “How wonderful is the love of God to man! How vast the honour conferred! What prayer can sufficiently express the gratitude we owe to Him who has crowned us with such mercies? Consider, my beloved, the worthlessness of your nature and mine. Trace our origin—earth, dust, clay, mud, ashes. Dust we are, and unto dust we shall return.³ Next, contemplate the inestimable riches of the divine goodness toward us, that you are commanded to call God Father,—that one who is earthly is commanded to claim a HEAVENLY,—a mortal to claim an IMMORTAL,—a corruptible to claim an INCORRUPTIBLE,—a child of Time to claim an ETERNAL Father,—that you who, but two or three days ago, were nothing more than clay, are commanded to claim as Father, him who is from everlasting to everlasting God.”

Again, when we call God Father, the designation implies, that we should never approach to him but *with reverence*. It belongs not to the written law, but has been taught us by nature herself, that a son ought to fear and honour his father.⁴ How much more if he, who is our *Father*, is also our *King*? Although the sentiments expressed, and the looks assumed, by Absalom, when he appeared before David as his father and king, were chargeable with hypocrisy,

¹ Φιλανθρωπία. ² Ὡς πόση τῆς φιλανθρωπίας ἡ ὑπεροβὴ;
 κ. τ. λ. Hom. XXX. Tom. V. ³ Gen. iii. 19. ⁴ Mal. i. 6.

yet he gives us a beautiful illustration of the kind of respect which a truly good man would sincerely render. *He came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king.*¹ How great, then, is that reverence with which we should approach in prayer to our Father and King, and, what is more, to our heavenly Father and King? “Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few.”²

But the appellation *Father*, produces likewise a *boldness*³ of faith not inconsistent with the reverence of which we have now spoken. For what may we not expect from a Father,—from a heavenly Father? If he is a Father, nothing that would be of advantage to his children will be refused by his fatherly kindness. “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.”⁴ There is something in the goodness of God which goes far beyond a *father's* or even a *mother's* affection.⁵ “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the child of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.”⁶ Every human emotion is confined with narrow bounds. The love of God towards his children is infinite and everlasting. “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love.”⁷ Human affection, when compared

¹ 2 Sam. xiv. 33.

² Eccl. v. 1.

³ παρρησία.

⁴ Ps. ciii 13.

⁵ στοργή.

⁶ Isa. xlix. 15.

⁷ Jer. xxxi. 3.

with the riches of the divine kindness, is miserably poor. All that it can bestow on its most beloved objects is so insignificant, that those who might have been deemed superlatively good, are by comparison pronounced to be evil. Christ himself has taught us thus to reason, “If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”¹ He is our *heavenly Father*. This contributes, in the highest degree, to strengthen our faith and hope. He who dwelleth in the heavens, perceives at one glance all our troubles and all our desires.² His kindness to his own is heavenly. “For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.”³ His Almighty arm, which is ever ready to be stretched forth in behalf of his own people, no created power is able to resist. “Our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.”⁴ Last of all, he graciously assures us,—“My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”⁵

Besides, the appellation *Father* teaches us to approach to God with *love*,—with love both to *God* and to *our neighbour*. What can more powerfully excite our love to God, than the contemplation of that great regard for us which the single word

¹ Luke xi. 13.² Ps. xxxiii. 13.³ Ps. ciii. 11.⁴ Ps. cxv. 3.⁵ Isa. lv. 8 9.

Father expresses, and of those great and amiable perfections with which the epithet *Heavenly* is associated in our minds? And how can our love to our neighbours be otherwise than inflamed, when we call him OUR Father, and profess to share with them in the same brotherhood? Such meditations are fitted to banish envy, to quicken our desire of obtaining blessings for our brethren, and to produce joy at the benefits which they receive, as received by them in answer to our prayers in their behalf. This address to our heavenly Father, when sincerely and devoutly made, affords exercise to the highest and purest love, and fulfils the whole law of God.

Lastly, when we call him our Father who is IN HEAVEN, our thoughts in prayer should be carefully purified from all base admixture of an earthly nature. Nothing which is not elevated, spiritual, heavenly, and worthy of his inconceivable majesty, should be permitted to enter into our conceptions of God. Nothing which is not proper for our Heavenly Father to give, and for us, the children of such a Father, to receive, ought ever to form the subject of our prayers. These views are illustrated by Chrysostom in his XIX. Homily on the Gospel by Matthew. “*When he says, WHICH ART IN HEAVEN, he does not speak of God as dwelling only there, but leads the suppliant away from earth, and attaches him strongly to lofty regions and heavenly contemplations.*”¹

¹ Ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς ὅταν εἴπῃ, οὐκ ἐκεῖ τὸν Θεὸν συγκλείων τοῦτο φησιν, ἀλλὰ τῆς γῆς ἀπάγων τὸν προσευχόμενον, καὶ τοῖς ὑψηλοῖς προσηλῶν χωρίοις, καὶ ταῖς ἄνω διατριβαῖς.

But God "desireth truth in the inward parts."¹ Our first care ought to be that the course of our life may correspond to the profession of our prayers. Let us beware lest actions contrary to our words should give the lie to our mouth when addressing the Supreme Being. Nothing, certainly, could be more base or shameful. *Gregory Nyssen* has very beautifully followed out these views in his Second Discourse on the Lord's Prayer. *When our Lord instructs us to call God our Father in prayer, he intends nothing more, in my opinion, than to inculcate on us a high and exalted course of life. THE TRUTH does not enjoin us to utter falsehood,—to call ourselves what we are not, or to assume a name which does not belong to us. But when we call the incorruptible, and just, and good Being our Father, he bids us prove the relationship by our manner of life. You see, then, what preparation, what sort of life, what kind and degree of earnestness are required that, raising our consciences to the standard of this boldness, we may venture to call God our Father.*²

Do you, my reader, in sincerity and truth claim

¹ Ps. li. 6.

² "Όταν τόνουν Πατέρα τόν Θεόν λέγειν ἡμᾶς ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ διδάσκη ὁ κύριος, οὐδέν ἕτερον μοι δοκεῖ ποιεῖν, ἢ τόν ὑψηλόν τε καί ἐπρημένον νομοθετεῖν βίον ὅν γάρ δὴ ψεύδεσθαι διδάσκει ἡμᾶς ἡ ἀλήθεια, ὥστε λέγειν ὁ μὴ ἐσμὲν, καὶ ὀνομάζειν ὁ μὴ πεφύκαμεν. Ἄλλὰ Πατέρα λέγοντες ἑαυτῶν τόν ἄβραρτον τε καὶ δικαίον καὶ ἀγαθόν, ἐπαληθεύειν τῷ βίῳ τὴν ἀγχιστείαν. Ὁρᾶς ὅσης ἡμῖν παρασκευῆς ἐστὶ χρεία; οἰου βίου; πόσης καὶ ποταπῆς ἐστὶ τῆς σπουδῆς; ὥστε ποτὲ πρὸς τοῦτο τὸ μέτρον τῆς παρρησίας ὑψωθῆσης ἡμῖν τῆς συνειδήσεως, τολμῆσαι ἐπιπεῖν τῷ Θεῷ ὅτι Πατήρ.

God as your FATHER? Fail not to pay him homage by the whole course of your life. Lend a willing ear to all his commandments. Imitate his holiness, and copy his perfections. Do you say OUR FATHER, and thus associate others with you in your prayers? Love them as your brethren; promote their benefit, and labour to the utmost of your power that they may become partakers with you of the same inheritance. Do you believe that your Father is IN HEAVEN? Despise these insignificant and transitory objects, and aspire to those which are truly good,—which are heavenly, glorious, eternal.¹ Prepare yourself for the enjoyment of the closest fellowship with God.

The highest and most perfect happiness attainable by man belongs to him who, trampling under foot all that is evil, soars on high and reaches the very sanctuary of God. Then does he exultingly ascend by noble meditations beyond the starry heavens, while the ornamented pavements of the rich, and all the gold and silver which the world contains, are beheld with scorn. Then does he look down with contempt on the magnificent porticoes and the ivory which glitters on the fretted roof, the woods ready to be cut down, the streams conducted into the mansion, and every thing which avarice and ambition delights to admire. If from that elevated region you look down on this world—at best but small,—a great part of its surface covered with the ocean,—while a large portion of the remainder is a barren desert, scorched by a vertical sun, or bound by perpetual

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 18. Col. iii. 1, 2.

frost,—you will be disposed to say, Is this the spot which has been parcelled out by fire and sword among so many nations? After raising your mind to objects truly great, the sight of an army marching with uplifted banners,—the movements of the cavalry (as if something great were actually going forward), at one time scouring the distant posts, and presently spread out along the lines,—will appear to you nothing more than the bustling activity of so many ants, toiling within a narrow circle, which will remind you of the poet's language,

The black troop moves along the plains.¹

There are vast regions above, in which the soul is permitted to expatiate, but not until it has shaken off the body, washed away all pollution, and proved itself to be free, disencumbered, and satisfied with a moderate portion of earthly good. When it has reached this point, it acquires nourishment and growth, throws off its fetters, and rises to its original rank. This, too, is an evidence of its divinity, that it finds pleasure in things divine, and feels them to be its own proper concerns. If I were not admitted to these enjoyments, I should hardly say that I had been born. For what reason would I have to glory in being numbered with the living? Is it that I would eat and drink? Is it that I would pamper and nurse this frail and sickly body, which, without constant supplies, would cease to exist? Away with

¹ *It nigrum campis agmen.*

such worthless advantages! Life does not repay the sweat and labour which it costs. O how despicable a thing is man, if he rises not above what is human!¹

Such, or but slightly altered, are the sentiments uttered by the Roman sage, drawn from the contemplation of the visible heavens, so far as a philosopher who devotes himself to the physical sciences is permitted to view them. But we are Christians, and aspire to nobler wisdom. What lofty emotions ought not to be raised in us by the consideration that we have a Father, who dwells far above all these heavens, in himself and in his own unapproachable light,—an eldest brother, who has gone before us to prepare a habitation,—and *an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.*² These, these, Christians, deserve your solicitude, your regard, your earnest activity. All things else are toys, trifles, shadows, mere nothings, loss and dung.³ I conclude, in the words of Chrysostom, contained in his XIV. Homily on the Epistle to the Ephesians: *From the moment that you said, OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN, the expression elevated you, gave wings to your thoughts, showed you that you have a Father in heaven. Do nothing, say nothing, that belongs to the earth. Has he raised you to that exalted rank? Has he admitted you to that society? Why do you degrade yourself?*⁴

¹ Seneca Qu. Nat. Lib. I.

² 1 Peter i. 3.

³ Phil. iii. 8.

⁴ Ἐυθίως εἶπες, Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, καὶ

DISSERTATION VIII.

ON HALLOWING THE NAME OF GOD.

ΑΓΙΑΣΘΗΤΩ ΤΟ ΟΝΟΜΑ ΣΟΥ.

IT is a very extraordinary and almost incredible familiarity of intercourse which a man is permitted to maintain with God in holy prayer. That a base wretch,—a sinner under sentence of condemnation, a worm that deserves to be trampled under foot,—should be admitted to intercourse with the Divine Being, whose majesty the brightest inhabitants of heaven approach with lively praise, and yet with the lowliest adoration, is certainly a high privilege. To be conducted to the throne of grace by the only begotten Son of God,—to have the words and the very groans supplied by the influence of the Spirit of prayer,—to be permitted to express, with the utmost boldness¹ and freedom, every desire and wish which is not inconsistent with the honour of God, or the true interests of the worshipper,—is a privilege higher still. But the most wonderful of all, and one which almost exceeds belief, is that a man should be

ἀνεστησε σε τὸ ῥῆμα, ἐπέτρωσε σου τὴν διάνοιαν, ἴδειξεν ὅτι πατέρα ἔχεις ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. Μηδὲν πράττει. μηδὲν λέγει του ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς Ἐὶς ἐκείνην σε τὴν τάξιν ἔστησε τῶν ἄνω ; Ἐκείνω σε ἐνέκρινε τῶ χροῶ ; τὸ καυτὸν κάτω καθέλκεις ;

¹ παρρησιάζεσθαι et summa cum libertate exponere.

allowed to plead, not only for himself and for his neighbour, but for God,—that the kingdom of God and the glory of God should be the subject of his prayer,—as if God were unwilling to be glorious, or to exercise dominion except in answer to the prayers of believers. The kingdom of God, and God the great king, form unquestionably the subject of the seventy-second Psalm. Among other lofty sentiments, we may mention a very remarkable one, contained in the 15th verse: *Prayer also shall be made FOR HIM, for the king, continually, and daily shall he be praised.* The honour of praying FOR GOD, which is thus granted to a human being, ought to be so highly prized by a believing soul that, loving God above all things, even above itself, it should overlook for a time its own concerns, until the matters which relate to the glory and kingdom of God have been carefully settled.

And yet the soul is at no time less forgetful of itself than when it is thus employed. Not to mention that our desires cannot be directed to a nobler object, our prayers for God are chiefly prayers for ourselves. It would throw great dishonour on the all-sufficiency of God to imagine, for a moment, that the perfection or blessedness of Him, who has all things in and from himself, can receive any addition from our prayers. Anything which lies in our power to accomplish, can only fulfil that eternal purpose by which God determined to manifest his glory, and to display his attributes and perfections in his wonderful works. When we sincerely declare that we take pleasure in those contemplations, we not only derive

from them the most pure and holy of all enjoyments, but find our glory in the glory of God, our happiness in the kingdom of God. A devout prayer that the glory of God may be promoted implies, at the same time, a request that he will be pleased to appear *wonderful and glorious*¹ in his communications to us, which is the summit of our happiness. And this is the reason why our Lord enjoined that the hallowing of the name of God should form the commencement of our prayers.

In explaining this petition, three things fall to be considered. I. What are we to understand by **THE NAME OF GOD**? II. What is the **HALLOWING of the name of God**? III. Why do we **ASK FROM GOD HIMSELF** the hallowing of his name?

THE NAME OF GOD denotes *God himself*, so far as he manifests himself and his perfections, by works and words, to rational creatures. Nothing occurs more frequently in the style of the ancient Hebrews than to call God *The name of the heavens*,² or simply *that name*.³ *That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD*.⁴ In the same sense it is said, *the Lord hear thee in the day of trouble and the name of the God of Jacob*, that is, the God of Jacob himself, *defend thee*.⁵ And again, *Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God*.⁶ The name of God is not some empty thing, which merely tingles in the ears, or holds out a picture to the eyes, or produces an illusion on the

¹ Ps. cxi. 3.² שם שמים.³ יהשם.⁴ Deut. xxviii. 58.⁵ Ps. xx. 1.⁶ Isa. l. 10.

mind. It is *Being Itself*.¹ The most sublime sentiment concerning God which can be uttered, or written, or conceived, falls infinitely below the sublimity of God's own existence. This is what Agur intended to convey. *What is his name? and what is his Son's name? if thou canst tell.*² Canst thou so understand or express the divine nature, that, after thy utmost efforts, thou mayest venture to say, This is God, and he is nothing more? No variety of spoken or written language, no conceptions, from whatever source they may have been obtained, can represent the thousandth part of that excellence which is found in God. *Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O Lord, and thy name is great in might.*³

The name of God, however, does not strictly denote God, as he exists in himself, but as he reveals and makes himself known to rational creatures. This is done both in the works of creation and common providence, and in the works of grace and of glory. But, most of all, he reveals himself in the word of his gracious covenant, in which he shows how God may be denominated the Saviour of sinful man, with the full display of all his perfections. Thus God, when he proclaims his name before Moses, dwells chiefly on his truth, grace, and justice.⁴ And our Lord Jesus Christ, after publishing his Gospel and finishing his work, declares, *I have manifested THY NAME unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world.*⁵ Having conveyed instruction, both by word and deed, he had

¹ תושיה.

² Pro. xxx. 4.

³ Jer. x. 6.

⁴ Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7.

⁵ John xvii. 6.

brought home to the consciences of the elect those just views of the divine character which lead to his praise and glory, and which contain solid reasons why men should call him their God. Beyond this the inquiry regarding the name of God need not be pursued to subtle distinctions. Let us only remember that God himself, so far as his attributes are made known to us, is denoted by the name of God.

God is HALLOWED when he is declared to be holy. Now, the holiness of God is the purest love of his attributes and perfections. Or, if the expression be preferred, it is that purity of the divine nature which renders every act of his understanding and will consistent with his perfections, and fitted to promote their manifestation. The complex whole, if we may so speak, of the perfections of God, of which holiness is the grace and ornament,—all the divine magnificence,¹—all the glory, the shining brightness, as it were, of all the perfections taken together,—all is included under the name of holiness. Accordingly, he is said to be glorious in holiness.² As the holiness of God is absolutely perfect, it is obvious that God cannot be hallowed³ by any addition to the holiness of his nature, but merely by the declaration of that holiness which belongs to him.

¹ Θεοεργεία.

² Ex. xv. 11, נֹאדָר בְּקֹדֶשׁ

³ Here it may be proper to remind the reader, that the words *Hallow* and *Sanctify*, both of which occasionally occur in the exposition of the first petition, are of similar import, and answer to the same term in the Latin original. In some cases I have preferred “Hallow,” because it was fitted to show the bearing of the remarks on the clause, as it stands in our English

That declaration is made both by *God* and by *creatures*; by *all* the creatures after their own manner, but chiefly by *rational* creatures. *God* sanctifies *Himself* by those works which contain plain, striking, and convincing proofs of his wisdom, goodness, justice, and other attributes. Thus, *God* is sometimes said to have sanctified and glorified himself, when he inflicted signal punishment on transgressors. “I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.”¹ “This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified:”² that is, I will show the glory of my holiness in the just punishment of those who do not carefully observe the ordinances of my worship. This interpretation is suggested by the Spirit of *God* himself, in the words

Bible, HALLOWED BE THY NAME. In other cases, I judged it more proper to employ the word “Sanctify,” either because, in the connection in which it stood, it was more agreeable to modern usage, or because it had been employed by our translators in the parallel passages adduced in illustration. Had it been practicable to adhere wholly to either of those terms, a certain amount of ambiguity from which our author is wholly free might have been avoided. With this explanation the criticisms found below on the words *Holy*, *Sanctify*, *Hallow*, and the like, will, I trust, appear, even to the English reader, to be strictly in point, and beautifully illustrative of the general argument.—T.

¹ Ex. xiv. 17, 18.

² Lev. x. 3.

of Ezekiel—"Thus saith the Lord God, behold, I am against thee, O Zidon; and I will be glorified in the midst of thee: and they shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall have executed judgments in her, and shall be sanctified in her."¹ Similar instances are to be found in the writings of the same prophet.²

In none of his works has God more eminently sanctified his name than in claiming his elect, whom he has purchased by the blood of Christ, to be his peculiar people. That work contains an incomparably bright exhibition of all the Divine perfections. There his love toward the human race,³ his wisdom, kindness, power, truth, justice, and particularly the attribute of which we are now speaking, Holiness,—shine with surpassing brightness. His holiness appears in making provision for restoring to sinful man that image of himself which had been shamefully effaced. His holiness appears in refusing to do this until he had expressed his abhorrence of sin, not only by the plainest language, but by deeds, by *exemplary punishment*.⁴ His holiness appears in requiring that, in order to the sanctification of his elect, the punishment should be endured by His own most holy Son, who freely offered himself for that purpose, and in so impressive a manner, that the display of the strictest justice and purest holiness filled heaven and earth with amazement. His holiness appears in raising his Son, after the completion

¹ Ezek. xxviii. 22. ² Chap. xxxvi. 23; xxxviii. 16, 23.

³ φιλανθρωπία, sive pietas erga genus humanum.

⁴ מוסר.

of his sufferings, from the dead, and *crowning him with glory and honour*,¹ by which it was made evident that the holy sacrifice of his Son was pleasing in his sight. In fine, his holiness appears in transforming those who had been redeemed by the blood of his Son to his glorious image, *that he might be the first-born among many brethren*.²

These and similar views, there is reason to believe, were present to the mind of Christ when, immediately before proceeding to give full satisfaction to Divine justice, he broke out into these words:³ *Now is my soul troubled* by the contemplation of those dreadful sufferings which await me. *And what shall I say?* I should wish my feelings to be universally known, but it is difficult to find words to express them. *Father—save me from this hour.* If it be possible, let my sorrow pass away from me. *But for this cause came I unto this hour.* I know that these sufferings must be steadfastly endured. My office as Mediator was undertaken on the express condition of paying that price, to satisfy thy justice, and redeem my elect. And I retract not the condition. Therefore, *Father glorify thy name*.⁴ Display thy holiness and justice in the sufferings which I now cheerfully present myself to endure. But display those attributes likewise in setting me free, and in justifying my people, when satisfaction shall have been offered. *Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, by many*

¹ Ps. viii. 5. Heb. ii. 7.

² Rom. viii. 29.

³ John xii. 27.

⁴ Ver. 28.

evidences of my perfections in the government of the universe, and, latest of all, by giving thee to the world, by the preaching of the gospel, and by the performance of those astonishing works by which the truth of the gospel has been confirmed. *And will glorify it again*, by accepting thy satisfaction, and by bestowing on thee and on thy people its righteous fruits. The amount of the whole is, that, in the work of our redemption, the name of God is hallowed or sanctified in a remarkable manner. In this manner God sanctifies himself.

The name of God is hallowed by *all the creatures* after their own manner, so far as the glory of the Divine perfections shining in them are capable of being seen by angels and men. David presented the following requests: "Bless the Lord, all his works, in all places of his dominion."¹ "Let all thy works praise thee, O Lord."² "Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him all, ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heaven of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created."³ And the request was not in vain. For, truly, "the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handy-work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge."⁴ They declare his glory, when their wonderful order and beautiful exactness invite the contemplation of men and angels, and lead them to celebrate the praises of God.

¹ Ps. ciii. 22.² Ps. cxlv. 10.³ Ps. cxlviii. 3—5.⁴ Ps. xix. 1, 2.

Strictly speaking, however, the name of God is hallowed by *rational creatures* only ; I. When they apply their mind to know and acknowledge the Divine perfections. “ Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.”¹ Here is found the perfection of human wisdom, and if man can have any ground of boasting, it is also found here. “ Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth : for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.”² II. When they celebrate those perfections : which is done by angels, “ Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength ;”³ and by all the blessed inhabitants of heaven,⁴ whose example ought to be followed by saints who continue to dwell upon the earth.⁵ III. When their whole life is so regulated that their actions, as well as their words, tend to glorify God.⁶ This was viewed by the Jewish teachers as an essential branch of hallowing the name of God. Such is the import of a quotation given by *Drusius* from the book *Musar*. *Since all our works ought to be assimilated to the works of the blessed God, whatever we do that is good and right contributes obviously to sanctify his great name..... The amount of what we have said is this : since we are capable of resembling him in our works, on*

¹ Ps. cvii. 43.² Jer. ix. 24.³ Ps. ciii. 20.⁴ Rev. iv. 10, 11.⁵ Ps. cxxxv. 1, 2, 3, 19, 20, 21.⁶ 1 Pet. ii. 9, 12. Mat. v. 16. 1 Cor. x. 31.

them depends the sanctification or profanation of his Name.

When we PRAY TO GOD that his name may be hallowed, we declare, I. Our true and sincere desire to seek his glory above all things. “The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.”¹ “Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee : let such as love thy salvation say continually, The Lord be magnified.”² II. That the glorifying of his name must proceed from God himself, who alone is competent to display his own perfections. He is “Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.”³ “Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens ; let thy glory be above all the earth.”⁴ “Unto thy name give glory for thy mercy and for thy truth’s sake.”⁵ III. We pray that he would make us fit for the hallowing his name. (1.) By “enlightening the eyes of our understanding,” that we may be enabled to see his perfections in a clear light.⁶ (2.) By moving our hearts, so that we may be at liberty to say with David, “My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed ; I will sing and give praise.” (3.) By exciting our tongue to praise him. “O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.”⁷ (4.) By regulating our whole life, through the influences of his Spirit, so as to promote the glory of his name, that in all he may appear “wonderful and glorious.”⁸

¹ Isa. xxvi. 8.

² Ps. xl. 17.

³ Rev. i. 8, 11.

⁴ Ps. lvii. 5.

⁵ Ps. cxv. 1.

⁶ Eph. i. 17.

⁷ Ps. li. 15.

⁸ Ps. cxi. 3.

The place which this petition occupies—as *First in order*—implies a declaration, that no other object is more earnestly or cordially desired by us than the *Hallowing of the Name of God*. This is the ultimate end to which every thing else ought to be referred. For this we should regard the supports of life and life itself as truly valuable. For this, the means of our salvation, nay, salvation itself, should appear to us worthy to be desired. We are not at liberty to rest satisfied with any good thing which we possess, so far as it is ours, or contributes to our advantage or enjoyment. Our very happiness must not be sought merely for the delight which the possession of it will afford us. A higher object is, that God's own property, which we truly are, may be beautified and enriched,—that the blessings from on high, which complete our happiness, may prepare us more fully for celebrating the excellencies of the Divine nature,—and that God himself may behold with delight the riches of his grace. Our highest happiness is to be entirely devoted to the Divine glory. Our highest rejoicing is to *rejoice in hope of the glory of God*.¹

If we wish to have it believed that we are sincere in such declarations, our first care ought to be, that our words may be proved by our actions. Can they be supposed to be sincere in seeking the glory of God, who are the slaves of personal distinction? whose faculties and possessions, whose wildest schemes and pursuits, are compelled to minister to one single object—their own ambition? who take such pleasure

¹ Rom. v. 2.

in their wealth, their honours, their ingenuity or skill, their eloquence, their learning, their celebrated exploits,—who are so highly elated by those attainments, or, it may be, by the mere imagination of them which their own foolish minds have indulged,—that they make an idol of themselves, and demand the notice and applause of the crowd?¹ who regard the gifts of the Divine bounty as the rewards of their own fancied excellence, and who are proud of possessing, or of imagining that they possess, some rare and superior endowments?² who employ the very worship of God, not as the means of “giving unto the Lord the glory due unto his name,”³ but chiefly, as an opportunity of making themselves appear to be holy and devout, and who not only cherish lofty notions of that holiness, but boast of it in the presence of others, and in their addresses to God himself?⁴ who, like brute beasts, “regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands,”⁵ or at least consider it so slightly, that, like most philosophers, they confine their attention to second causes, and, naturally or wilfully blind, overlook the astonishing displays of the perfections of God which are contained in his works? who, “while they make their boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonour God, and cause his name to be blasphemed?”⁶ who conduct themselves in such a manner, that, whatever may be their pretences,

¹ Isa. x. 13. Dan. iv. 30.

² 1 Cor. iv. 7.

³ Ps. xxix. 2.

⁴ Isa. lxvi. 3. Luke xviii. 11, 12

⁵ Isa. v. 12.

⁶ Rom. ii. 23, 24.

they assuredly mock God every time they utter the words, *Hallowed be thy Name*? But their mockery is vain. In opposition to their strongest wishes,—in their own persons, if they shall proceed in their wicked career,—the name of God will be hallowed by an exhibition of his justice, and by awful severity of punishment.

Again, when we claim God as our Father, and sincerely desire that his name may be hallowed, we must use our utmost exertions to promote the glory of God. The powers of understanding which he has given us must be employed in contemplating, knowing, and meditating on his perfections, which he has graciously made known to us in the works of nature and grace, and in the word of his supernatural revelation. The smallest object that can present itself to the eye or to the mind, will supply the richest materials for this purpose. It is only necessary for us to learn to perceive in visible objects *the invisible things of God*,¹ and to employ the creatures as ladders for ascending to the Most High God. We must lay it down as a principle, that all the excellence, light, and beauty, which is found in the creatures, exists in the highest perfection in the Creator. We must accustom ourselves to view earthly objects, whether existing in nature or in the arrangements of society, as representations of spiritual and heavenly objects, and *of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God*.² Our Lord Jesus was eminently skilled in this art. The most trival object he met with,—a

¹ Rom. i. 20.

² Acts i. 3.

vessel for drawing water,¹ or a grain of mustard-seed,² supplied him with an illustration of the kingdom of heaven. He advised his disciples to learn this art, and to apply to grosser objects the chemical skill, which will extract a spirit out of them by the *alembic* of devout meditation.³ Above all, we must frequently meditate on those works of God which are only taught in the school of Grace, and by which he has manifested his glory in *obtaining eternal redemption for us*.⁴ The highest powers of the understanding cannot be directed to a nobler object, or employed in a nobler manner, than in the contemplation of THE TRUTH ITSELF, and of all the sublime and saving truths concerning himself which THAT TRUTH has been pleased to reveal. In this manner, the name of God is hallowed by our understanding.

But we must not stop here. The knowledge of the Divine perfections must produce in us love, reverence, wonder, and adoration. Let us frequently, out of the full treasure of our heart, exclaim: "O Lord, how manifold are thy wonders! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches."⁵ "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and stars, which thou hast ordained: what is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?"⁶ "I will

¹ John iv. 11—14.

² Mat. xiii. 31.

³ Mat. xxiv. 32.

⁴ Heb. ix. 12.

⁵ Ps. civ. 24.

⁶ Ps. viii. 1, 3, 4.

hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more. My mouth shall show forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day: for I know not the number thereof. I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only. I will also praise thee with the psaltery, even thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel. My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul which thou hast redeemed. My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long.”¹ Such views of the character of Jehovah cannot be better or more affectingly expressed than in the words dictated by the Holy Spirit. It becomes our duty, therefore, to read, meditate, and ponder these words, that, experiencing those devout affections which the holy prophets expressed, we may be enabled to make them our own.

I cannot refrain, however, from quoting some observations of EPICURETUS,² a Gentile philosopher, but in whose writings something greatly superior to what might have been expected from a philosopher and a Gentile may be discovered. “If we were in good

¹ Ps. lxxi. 14, 15, 16, 22, 23, 24.

² Apud Arrianum, Diss. L. I. C. XVI. “Verba prolixiuscula sunt; ideoque Latine solummodo adscribam ex versione Hieronymi Wolfii.” Not having at hand the original Greek of *Epictetus*, whose plain and direct, though unadorned style, I should otherwise have endeavoured faithfully to represent, I must satisfy myself with translating from the Latin version of *Jerome Wolff*, of which *Witsius* has availed himself.—TR.

health, what else would we have to do in public or private but to adore, and praise, and bless the Deity? While we were digging, or ploughing, or partaking food, it would be proper for us to sing a hymn to God. He is the great God who gave us instruments for cultivating the earth. He is the great God who gave us hands, who gave us the capacity of receiving and digesting our food, who caused us to grow without perceiving it, and to breathe while we were asleep. These would deserve separate ascriptions of praise, and a hymn of far loftier strain would be due for that faculty of reason by which these matters are understood. *What else can a lame old man like myself do but praise God? Were I a nightingale, I would perform the part of a nightingale. Were I a swan, I would perform the part of a swan. But since I possess reason, my duty is to praise God. This is my business. This I follow. I will not desert my post while it continues to be mine.* “I exhort you,” he adds, “to sing the same hymn.” O how ought we to be ashamed of our indolence and inactivity when we read such a holy discourse, such a pious instruction from the pen of a Gentile! Did a philosopher speak and act in this manner? What may be expected from us who are Christians?

As we ought to praise God in his works, we ought to have the same purpose in our own actions. We must do everything with a view to the divine glory. “In all thy ways acknowledge him.”¹ It is a re-

¹ Pro. iii. 6.

markable sentiment which occurs in *Pirke Aboth*, *Let all thy works be directed to the name of the heavens*,¹ that is, to God. With this agrees the injunction of the Apostle Paul, *Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men*.² In the ordinary duties of civil society, a Christian performs the *same actions* as other men, but not in the *same manner*. They perform them in a *civil*, he in a *spiritual* manner; they *to men and* to themselves, he, *to God*. Not in *pretence*,³ but *from the soul*,⁴ *heartily*. Not in *some things* which appear to have a more direct reference to God, but in *all things, whatsoever ye do*. Not in a wavering or undecided manner,—attending to the Divine law when it is found convenient, and, at other times, consulting the views of men, but *as to the Lord, and not unto men*. Such is likewise the import of another injunction of the same Apostle respecting daily food. *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*.⁵ This does not mean that, in every action of our lives, we must have an immediate and direct intention to glorify God. That is impossible in the nature of things. But the children of God ought to hold it as a firm and unalterable principle, applicable to all occasions, that they are dedicated to God; that in all their thoughts, words, and actions, there must be some manifestation of the perfections and glory of God; that they must obey his precepts in all things, and do every thing from a desire to

¹ כל מעשיך יהיו לשם שמים.

³ προφάσει.

⁴ ἐκ ψυχῆς.

² Col. iii. 23.

⁵ 1 Cor. x. 31.

please him. The reader will find my views on this subject stated very fully in *the Economy of the Covenants*.¹

The propriety and beauty of this principle would seem to have been perceived, in some measure, by *Epictetus*,² who bids us *look to God in every thing small or great*.³ From the writings of *Epictetus*, it appears to have been adopted by the EMPEROR *MARCUS ANTONINUS*, whose golden admonition to himself is to the following effect,⁴ “As surgeons always have their instruments at hand, ready for instant application, so do you keep constantly in view those principles, by the aid of which you will perceive your duties to God and to man. *Do*⁵ *every thing even the smallest in such a manner as to remember the close connection of both with each other.* FOR YOU WILL NOT TRANSACT WELL ANY THING HUMAN WITHOUT A MUTUAL REFERENCE TO WHAT IS DIVINE, NOR, ON THE OTHER HAND, (anything divine without a reference to what is human). These quotations must not be interpreted as implying an admission on our part, that the great duties of religion, connected with hallowing the name of God, may be equally well learned from the instructions of philoso-

¹ Book III. Ch. XIX. Sect. XCVII.

² Arrian. Diss. L. II. C. XIX.

³ εἰς τὸν Θεὸν ἀφορῶντας ἐν παντὶ μικρῶ καὶ μεγάλῳ.

⁴ L. III. § XIII.

⁵ Καὶ πᾶν, καὶ τὸ μικρότατον ὅπως ποιεῖν, ὡς τῆς ἀμφοτέρων πρὸς ἀλλήλα συνδέσεως μεμνημένον· ὅτε γὰρ ἀνθρώπινον τί ἄνευ τῆς ἐπὶ τὰ Θεῖα συναφορᾶς εὖ πράξεις, ὅτε ἔμπαλιν.

phers, as from the records of inspiration. Whatever is stated by philosophers falls infinitely below the sublimity of the inspired volume, and may, perhaps, have been derived from that source. You will scarce find in their writings anything approaching to the admirable passages which we have now quoted till a period subsequent to the publication of the Gospel. But to receive from heathens instructions and examples of so excellent a description, is fitted to excite a holy jealousy.

Whatever superiority the Gospel possesses above all the instructions conveyed by philosophers, by legislators, by interpreters of the sacred mysteries of heathenism,—it is proper that Christians should exhibit, by a superior course of life, in which the image of their heavenly Father, the power of the merits of Christ, and the efficacy of the regenerating and sanctifying Spirit, shall brightly shine. It contributes, in the highest possible manner, to hallowing the name of God, that they who profess it shall be “blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom they shine as lights in the world.”¹ Their uprightness and godliness must leave all the showy virtue of the Gentiles, and all the scrupulous accuracy of Scribes and Pharisees, at an immense distance behind them. These, in short, are “the fruits of righteousness,” with which we must be “filled,” and “which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.”² “Herein,” says our Lord, “is my

¹ Philip. ii. 15.

² Philip. i. 11.

Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit ; so shall ye be my disciples.”¹ Nay more, we shall thus be “ the glory” of God, and “ of Christ.”²

Besides, this glory of God should be so dear to us that nothing could grieve us more than contempt of the Divine Being. “ As with a sword in my bones,” said David, “ mine enemies reproach me ; while they say daily unto me, where is thy God ?”³ We should be prepared to sacrifice to God any glory which we might call our own, and for His sake to be covered with shame. In this respect we have the example of God’s own Son, “ I have glorified thee on the earth ; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”⁴ Now, in what manner, or by what work, had Christ glorified the Father ? The Apostle Paul informs us, “ Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith ; who, for the joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame.”⁵ All the adopted sons of God ought to follow this example of the blessed Jesus, reckoning it an honour that “ they are counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.”⁶ Let them magnanimously walk forward in the royal path of holiness, “ by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report ;”⁷ having no *ambition*⁸ but “ to be accepted of God ;”⁹ indifferent about all things else, though they should be “ buffet-

¹ John xv. 8.

² 2 Cor. viii. 23.

³ Ps. xlii. 10.

⁴ John xvii. 4.

⁵ Heb. xii. 2.

⁶ Acts v. 41.

⁷ 2 Cor. vi. 8.

⁸ φιλοτιμίαν.

⁹ 2 Cor, v. 9.

ed, reviled, defamed, made as the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things.”¹

The saint who is under the influence of those devout affections, may happen to see some of his brethren enjoying a larger share of the gifts of Providence, occupying a more honourable place in the house of God, or labouring with greater zeal for the advancement of the Divine glory. In such a case he will not be moved with envy. It will give him pleasure that the name of God is hallowed, either by himself or by others. Conscious that he cannot adequately or properly give glory to God, he will rejoice that others are ready “to supply his lack of service,”² and to contribute far beyond his own ability to the accomplishment of this great work. Whatever can celebrate, in any way, the praises of God, will receive his warm invitation and concurrence. “Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles and the inhabitants thereof. Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing; let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare his praise in the islands.”³

The duty of hallowing the name of God, in the manner now explained, may be enforced by a variety of motives. No work in which we could engage

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 11—13. ² Phil. ii. 30. ³ Isa. xlii. 10—12.

would be more excellent, delightful, advantageous, or desirable. It is the work of the blessed in heaven, who delightfully spend in it an endless eternity, and who find in its constant and uninterrupted exercise the most perfect tranquillity and rest. To dedicate all that we are, and all that we can perform, to the advancement of the glory of God—is our own glory. To whom shall we give them if they are withheld from God? To what shall they be devoted but to the noblest of all possible objects?

Why has the Christian been made what he is? That God may be glorified in him. For this purpose he was *created*, and endowed with a capacity of knowing the things of God, that he may say, “Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night; who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven?”¹ For this purpose he was *elected* by God through Jesus Christ, “according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us acceptable in the beloved.”² For this purpose he was *redeemed* by the blood of Christ, that he might be “among the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb, and might sing a new song before the throne with those who have the Father’s name written in their foreheads, a song which no man can learn but the hundred and forty and four thousand that were redeemed from the earth.”³ For this purpose he was *called* by the

¹ Job xxv. 10, 11.

² Eph. i. 5, 6.

³ Rev. xiv. 1, 3, 4.

gospel, and *regenerated* and *sanctified* by the Spirit, “that he should show forth the praises of him who hath called him out of darkness into his marvellous light.”¹ “This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.”² For this purpose, finally, he will at length be *glorified*, that, with the four living creatures,³ and the four and twenty elders, and ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of holy angels, he may say—“Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”⁴ Amen.

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 9.

² Isa. xliii. 21.

³ *The four beasts.* Every reader of taste must regret this translation. In spite of long custom, which has greatly abated the harshness of the sound, the word awakens a most improper association. By this means the judgment is misled, and finds difficulty in connecting the strange expression with the allegorical meaning of the passage. It would be out of place to introduce here an inquiry into the symbols of the Apocalypse.—TR.

⁴ Rev. v. 11—14.

DISSERTATION IX.

ON THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

ΕΛΘΕΤΩ Η ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ ΣΟΥ.

THE wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ shines conspicuously in all his discourses and actions. A striking instance appears in the summary or abridgement of all that he *did and taught*,¹ which is contained in this form of prayer. In many points of view it is entitled to our highest admiration. I shall only advert, at present, to the manner in which, in the very few words of the opening address, he has laid the foundation for all the petitions which are afterwards introduced in the most beautiful order. He has taught us to commence the prayer by saying, *Our Father which art in heaven*. If these words be properly understood, we shall find little difficulty in deducing from them, by plain and necessary consequence, the remaining parts of the prayer. If we acknowledge God as our heavenly Father, what can be more natural, than that the glory due to his great name shall be the object of our strongest desires? This is the prayer of his only-begotten and eternal Son. *Father, glorify thy name.*² Those who are the sons of God by grace ought to present the same prayer. *Let such as love thy salvation say continu-*

¹ Acts i. 1.

² John xii. 28.

*ally, The LORD be magnified.*¹ Again, if our Father dwells and reigns in heaven, it is our duty to acknowledge him as our King, nor can we be truly said to hallow his name if we deny his royal Majesty. From such considerations arises a zealous attachment to his kingdom, which, viewed as the kingdom of our Father, cannot but be supposed to affect our own interests and prospects. Again, if God is our King, nothing can be more necessary than to yield constant submission to his most high and holy will, and to pray that his will may be done in earth as it is in heaven. The remaining petitions would lead us in some measure away from our present subject, and their intimate connection with what we have now stated will be pointed out in the proper place.

We are now to explain the petition, *Thy kingdom come*; in which there are three things to be observed. I. What is the KINGDOM OF GOD? II. What is the COMING of that KINGDOM? III. What is implied in our PRAYING, *Thy kingdom come*?

Beyond all question, GOD is the GREAT KING over men, and over all who are honoured with the appellation of *Gods*. *For thou, LORD, art high above all the earth; thou art exalted far above all gods.*² The kingdom of God must be viewed by us in a twofold aspect, as UNIVERSAL and as SPECIAL. I use the phrase, UNIVERSAL KINGDOM, to express his boundless greatness, majesty, authority, and power over all. “The Lord hath prepared his throne in

¹ Ps. xl. 16

² Ps. xcvi. 9.

the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.”¹ This is the kingdom to which the sun with all the stars, the sea with her waves, the winds with all their tempestuous fury, the seasons of the year with their various changes, the alternate returns of day and night, all the empires of the world, though engaged in acts of mutual hostility—are subject. The angels in heaven render to it willing obedience. The most rebellious of the devils, and the proudest tyrants, though contrary to their strongest wishes, own and execute its commands. A secret conviction of its existence is unwillingly felt by *Atheists* themselves (as they are called), the teachers of that wisdom which is madness. In this kingdom God has heaven for his throne, the earth for his footstool, heavenly angels for his attendants, the clouds for his chariot, the winds for his horses, wicked men for his enemies, lightnings and thunders for his instruments of war, hell for a prison, and devils for the black executioners of his vengeance. A remarkable acknowledgment of this kingdom was made by king Nebuchadnezzar: “I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?”² A similar acknowledgment is made by all the godly.³

¹ Ps. ciii. 19.

² Dan. iv. 34, 35.

³ Ps. cxlv. 10—14.

Besides this *universal* kingdom, or, as it may be called, the kingdom of *nature*, God has constituted a SPECIAL kingdom over his people, expressly elected for this purpose. This, again, is either the kingdom of GRACE in this world, or of GLORY in the world *to come*. The kingdom of grace may be likewise subdivided into the two ECONOMIES of the OLD and NEW TESTAMENTS.

Under the *Old Testament* God was certainly the king of the people of Israel. With a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm,"¹ and by almost incredible miracles, he "brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."² "On this ground he claimed them to be his own, and bound them to himself by a solemn covenant. From the top of Mount Sinai, while the people were assembled around its base, while the lightnings flashed, the thunders pealed, the winds roared, the mountains smoked, and the earth shook, he proclaimed to them his most sacred laws. When they wandered in the deserts of Arabia, he commanded preparations for his service to be made with the most exquisite splendour of royal magnificence. By a *pattern*³ exhibited from heaven, a tabernacle was erected,—beautified by goodly cedar, enriched with shining gold, adorned by furniture of the most costly material, prepared by hands of cunning workmen," and laid out in a variety of apartments. To the outer court all the people, provided they were clean from ceremonial uncleanness, had full access for presenting their homage and pray-

¹ Ezek. xx. 33.

² Ex. xx. 2.

³ Ex. xxv. 40.

ers to the king. The inner court was appropriated to the priests, the king's most honoured and familiar servants. But in the innermost court, separated by a curtain of most curious workmanship, and denominated the holy of holies, stood the throne of the divine glory, which all men were forbidden, on pain of death, to approach, with the exception of the high priest, who entered it only once every year. There, seated on the mercy-seat which stood above "an ark of shittim wood overlaid with pure gold,"¹—between cherubims of gold which "stretched forth their wings on high,"² with their faces toward the mercy-seat, and "covering the mercy-seat with their wings," an impressive symbol of the presence of his Majesty—God dwelt. Thence he gave forth his oracles, answered prayers, and shutting himself up, as it were, in that place of concealment, excited the awe and reverence of his people. "The Lord reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved."³ Time would fail us to tell the rest, how God sustained in all respects the dignity of a monarch, how he regulated the affairs of peace and war, conducted his people into the land promised to their fathers, arranged the whole commonwealth, gave them magistrates and judges furnished with his own instructions, and in short appointed everything in such a manner as to depend entirely on his own will and pleasure. Thus the form of political government established among the children of Israel was every way entitled to the name of a *theocracy*. This

¹ Ex. xxv. 10, 11.

² Ex. xxv. 20.

³ Ps. xcix. 1.

was acknowledged by Gideon, in a pious and becoming manner, when the people proposed to invest him with hereditary power. "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you."¹

In directing your attention to the kingdom of God over Israel, I do not wish you to view it only so far as it was *civil*, and resembled, in no small degree, the outward form of the governments of this world. Under this veil matters of greater moment lie concealed. All these things prefigured the kingdom of God in the days of the Messiah, and the condition of a better church. The tendency of these solemn preparations was to impress on the people of Israel the belief that their highest happiness would be obtained by rendering a sincere and conscientious obedience to the *spiritual* kingdom of God. They were intended to inform them that they must be separated from other men by the unchangeable decree of election, brought out of the slavery of sin and Satan, into the true liberty of the children of God, and united to him by a gracious covenant; that they must have the law written, "not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart;"² that the rites and ceremonies must lead them to the offices and blessings of the Messiah; that they must obtain access, not to a tabernacle or temple made with hands, or to any typical presence of the divine being, but to God himself, who promised that "he would be to them for a sanctuary;"³ that they must not only dwell in Jehovah's land, but

¹ Jud. viii. 23.

² 2 Cor. iii. 3.

³ Isa. viii. 14.

possess it as a pledge of heaven, of the inheritance which that type was intended to prefigure. In short, the kingdom of God over Israel was not merely *civil*, so far as they had a commonwealth in the land of Canaan; but was likewise *ceremonial*, figuratively representing higher and better things, so far as they constituted the church of the Old Testament.

But we must not stop even here. God had likewise a *spiritual* kingdom over them, so far as the dispensation of that period allowed. We must not imagine that the Jewish ceremonies were solely intended to prefigure those blessings which other believers were to enjoy at a distant period. They were the sacraments and signs of those blessings which all the pious Israelites at that time enjoyed. The people of God were actually delivered from the kingdom of Satan, and “from this present evil world,”¹ and made partakers of those privileges in which an Apostle informs us that the kingdom of God consists,—*of righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*² They had *righteousness*, both as justified and as sanctified persons.³ They had *peace*, being reconciled to God by the blood of the Messiah, which was to be shed “when the fulness of the time was come.”⁴ They had also the consciousness of that peace, the delightful composure of mind arising from that source, and *joy in the Holy Ghost*. For all these blessings, David prays in the full belief that they will be granted.⁵ At other times he praises God in

¹ Gal. i. 4.

² Rom. xiv. 17.

³ Ps. xxxii. 1, 2.

⁴ Gal. iv. 4.

⁵ Ps. li. 9, 10, 13, 14.

lofty terms for having bestowed them. The conclusion from the whole is, that God had a *threefold kingdom* in ancient Israel,—*political, ceremonial, spiritual*.

The last of the three is acknowledged by the modern Jewish teachers, who, borrowing the phraseology of the ancient Hebrews, denominate the inward fear and love of God “the *entire workings of the heavens*.”¹ They frequently tell us that, in repeating the *Phylacteries*,² it is proper first to pronounce

מלכות שמים שלמה¹.

² Phylacteries are once mentioned in the New Testament. *They make broad their phylacteries*.³ They have been defined, or rather described, by Dr. Campbell, to be “scrisps of parchments containing sentences of the law.” *Φυλακτήρια* from *φυλάσσω*, may mean either that they were intended as aids for *keeping* the divine law, or that they were used as amulets or charms to *protect* them against the agency of evil spirits.

תפלין *prayers*, the Chaldee term employed by the Rabbins intimates the chief purpose to which they were supposed to be applied. The Pharisees are charged with the offence of carrying the national custom to the highest pitch of ostentation, *making broad their phylacteries*,—wearing them of a conspicuous size and form, so as to attract general observation, and increase their reputation for godliness. To this day, it continues to be observed by the Jews, who possess one striking feature of the sect of the Pharisees, “being exceedingly zealous of the traditions of the Fathers.”⁴—A few expressions, taken from the writings of Moses, and strangely perverted from their original design, are adduced in support of this superstition. *Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine HAND, and they shall be as FRONTLETS between thine EYES*.⁵ No man of sense, reading

3 Mat. xxiii. 5.

4 Gal. i. 14.

5 Deut. vi. 8.

these words, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord,"¹ before pronouncing that other passage, "And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments, which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart, and with all your soul."² The reason assigned by them for following this order is, that *a man ought to undertake first the kingdom of the Heavens, and next the yoke of the commandment.* Accordingly, the repetition of the former passage is constantly designated by them the undertaking of the *kingdom of the heavens.*³ A bridegroom, on the evening of his marriage, was generally understood to be exempted from repeating the Phylacteries. But Rabbi Gamaliel, they assure us, refused to avail himself of that exemption, assigning the reason *that he would not, even for a brief*

these words, could doubt that they were employed as a figure, a beautiful and expressive figure, for illustrating the precept. But in all ages the spiritual meaning of scripture has been carefully evaded. Toilsome ceremonies, which serve to prevent the voice of conscience from being heard, and to banish the remembrance of God's righteous law, are cheerfully performed. This is not peculiar to what is emphatically called *Antichrist.* Some of the more glaring fooleries, which arose in a barbarous age, may yield to increasing knowledge, or to the faithful declaration of the gospel of Christ. But their place will speedily be supplied by other practices, somewhat less revolting to reason, but equally remote from vital godliness. The close resemblance which the conduct of many zealous Protestants bears to ancient Judaism and modern Popery would deserve serious enquiry.—Tr.

¹ Deut. vi. 4. ² Deut. xi. 13. ³ קבלת מלכות שמים.

space, separate himself from the kingdom of the heavens. In the book *Zohar*, the question is put, "What is the yoke of the kingdom of the heavens?" To which the reply is given, "To serve God in fear, in the fear of which it is written,¹ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."²

Yet various passages of Scripture do certainly speak as if the *kingdom* of God, or, which is the same thing, the *kingdom of the heavens*, were not to be expected till after the Messiah had appeared. Hence John and our Lord himself said, "The kingdom of Heaven is at hand."³ Christ "was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come."⁴ Joseph of Arimathea "waited for the kingdom of God."⁵ It is not improbable that the phraseology, taken in this sense, was borrowed from the Prophet Daniel, who, after describing the four great monarchies of the then known world, calls our attention to the kingdom of God in Christ, to which all the Godly looked forward with eager desire. "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man, came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."⁶

In the Gospel, accordingly, the kingdom of God

¹ Ps cxi. 10. ² Lightfoot on Mat. iii. 2. ³ Mat. iii. 2; iv. 17.

⁴ Luke xvii. 20. ⁵ Luke xxiii. 52. ⁶ Dan. vii. 13, 14.

is scarcely ever used in any other sense than as denoting *that state of dignity and freedom which belongs to the church of the New Testament under the reign of the Messiah*. That kingdom of God is distinguished, not only from the *universal* kingdom, or kingdom of *nature*, which is always the same; but from the *special* kingdom of God, as it existed under the Old Testament. At that time it was a *civil* kingdom, accommodated to the character of a single nation,—a *ceremonial* kingdom, abounding in figurative representations,—and a *spiritual* kingdom, though “in bondage under the elements of the world.”¹ But now it has nothing human,—no rulers or elders who might seem to share with the heavenly king in the government of the church,—nothing worldly,—no *wordly sanctuary*.² It is in every respect the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of the heavens.

It is the kingdom of *Christ*, but for weighty reasons was ascribed by Christ to the *Father*. For (1.) At the time when Christ enjoined this prayer on his disciples, he appeared in the form of a servant, who came not to seek, or to appear to seek, *his own glory, but his glory that sent him*.³ (2.) The Father reigns in Christ. The Father anointed him to be King, and gave in subjection to him the people whom he redeemed and whom he purchased to be the Father’s property. They have the “Father’s name written on their foreheads.”⁴ Both are mentioned together in these words. *Now is come salvation and strength, and THE KINGDOM OF OUR GOD, AND THE*

¹ Gal. iv. 3. ² ἅγιον κοσμηθὲν. ³ John vii. 18. ⁴ Rev. xiv. 1.

POWER OF HIS CHRIST.¹ Lastly “cometh the end, when he shall have delivered” all his economical or mediatorial kingdom “to the Father, that God may be all in all.”² With perfect propriety, therefore, Christ, to whom this kingdom truly belongs, chose to speak of it as the kingdom of the Father.

This condition of the church of the New Testament may be viewed in a twofold aspect, in its outward and inward form. Its *outward form* consists in the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, to which may be added ecclesiastical discipline, which a great divine has justly denominated to be *the throne of Christ reigning in the church*. In this sense, when the Jews, to whom the gospel had been preached and confirmed by many miracles, “demanded of him when the kingdom of God should come, he answered, *The kingdom of God is AMONG YOU*.³ They saw God, the King, present among them, in the person of his Son, and heard the word of the kingdom publicly preached, though neither the one nor the other was understood by them, or received by faith. They expected a kingdom of God of such a description that the Messiah should come in the name of the Lord, to free them from the yoke of the Gentiles, and to bestow upon them every kind of riches and grandeur. Christ affirms that the kingdom of God will not come with such worldly pomp and mag-

¹ Rev. xii. 10.

² 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28.

³ Luke xvii. 21. This is the marginal and the preferable reading. In this sense our author must have understood the words, since he quotes them to illustrate the **OUTWARD** form of the kingdom of God.—Tr.

nificence,—with such splendour, wealth, and triumph, anticipated by the Pharisees,—as are fitted to attract observation. He declares it to consist in the publication of the gospel, attended by the influences of the Holy Spirit, by means of which, though not understood by themselves, “the kingdom of God was *among them.*” Compare Mat. xii. 28, “If I cast out devils by the spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.” In the thirteenth chapter of the same book, the preaching of the gospel, with its various consequences and fruits, is frequently called *The Kingdom of Heaven*, which is there illustrated by various similitudes. In this point of view, all who, by outward profession, whether sincere or hypocritical, receive the glad tidings of freedom, belong to the kingdom of God. Compare also Mat. viii. 12, THE CHILDREN OF THE KINGDOM *shall be cast out into outer darkness.* That is, those who, by outward profession only, were in covenant with God. Such are said *to lie* to Christ, or to yield to him feigned obedience.¹

¹ Ps. xviii. 44. The English reader may not instantly perceive that this is a quotation, or that the idea of LYING is directly suggested by the words of the Psalmist. To the author its application appeared so obvious that he does not support it

by argument. בְּנֵי נֹכַר יִכְהַשׁוּ-לִי. “The strangers shall submit themselves unto me,” or, as the margin more literally and more happily renders it, “The sons of the stranger shall *lie* (Heb.) or shall yield feigned obedience.” *Les étrangers m'ont mentis.* (Fr.) “Ital. *have feigned.* Heb. *have lied unto me* : viz., not out of any sincere good will, nor loyally : but forcibly and dissemblingly have yielded them-

The *Inward Form* of this kingdom consists in the following things. In elect believers the power of sin and of the devil is broken by regeneration and sanctification. The law of God is inscribed in their hearts. They yield ready and cheerful obedience to God both in soul and body. Instead of those strong and sinful passions which formerly agitated their minds, there springs up a delightful composure, *peace and joy in the Holy Ghost*.¹ Believers, thus claimed as God's property, are kept² by his power in faith, and holiness. Under the banners of Christ, their general,³ they fight bravely against Satan, and will not lay down their arms till the battle has been fought, and a complete victory obtained. Where these things are found the kingdom of God truly exists in the souls of men.

selves unto me, and have acknowledged me. *Deut. xxxiii. 29. Psal. lxvi. 3, and lxxxii. 15.*" It is with sincere pleasure that this expository remark is quoted from the venerable *Diodati*, whose annotations, brief, but pointed and judicious,—abounding often in useful criticism, more frequently in happy illustration, always in practical and devotional matter,—deserve to be consulted both by the scholar and by the general reader. That the very name of so accomplished a theologian should be comparatively so little known among our countrymen is a fact not easily explained. Curiosity might have been awakened by the continental fame, to speak moderately, of his Italian version of the Scriptures, which, like that of Luther in Germany, and our own authorized version, ranks with the classical productions of his country. The only plausible defence, which amounts to nothing more than a palliation, may be drawn from the singularly unpretending form in which his instructions are conveyed.—TR.

¹ Rom. xiv. 17. ² 1. Pet. i. 15. ³ Heb. ii. 10.

What we have hitherto said belongs to the *Kingdom of Grace*, which will be completed in the KINGDOM OF GLORY. By this expression is understood that most blessed condition of the Church in heaven, when,—after all their enemies have been subdued, all the remains and consequences of sin have been removed,—all the elect of all ages from the beginning to the end of the world have been collected into one,—all things shall be subject to God, and shall produce the most perfect enjoyment of everlasting happiness. A sublime view of this subject has been given by the Apostle Paul under the guidance of inspiration.¹

The preceding observations must have sufficiently showed that the kingdom of God, which is now under consideration, is neither the universal kingdom of God, nor that kingdom which he had in a peculiar manner over ancient Israel, but the kingdom of God as it was to be manifested under the economy of the New Testament. We come now to inquire what we are to understand by the COMING of that kingdom, which, if I am not mistaken, may be viewed in a twofold aspect. I. As respects the *Universal Church*. II. As respects *Individual Believers*.

With respect to the *Universal Church*, the kingdom of God came gradually. The following STEPS will deserve our attention. (1.) When the doctrine of the gospel was publicly preached by our Lord and his Apostles, confirmed by miracles, accomplished by the death of Christ, vindicated by his resurrection from the dead and ascension to heaven, sealed by the

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 24-28.

pouring out of the Holy Spirit, and made efficacious by the influences of the same Spirit for the conviction and saving conversion of many. Then "the Lord sent forth the rod of" Messiah's "strength out of Zion, that he might rule in the midst of his enemies,"¹ by whom he had lately been crucified. Then was fulfilled, or, at least, then began to be fulfilled the Lord's prediction, "Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."² From the events which then happened, it became the privilege and the duty of "all the house of Israel to know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom they crucified both Lord and Christ; and that the kingdom of God had thus been manifested in the midst of them."³ (2.) The kingdom of God advanced another step when the gospel was preached to the Gentiles, and when they received it by faith. This had been the subject of prophecy. "It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth."⁴ And again, "Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all his people. Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts."⁵ And was it not a most remarkable sign of the kingdom of God that the

¹ Ps. cx. 2. ² Mat. xvi. 28. ³ Acts ii 36.

⁴ Isa. xlix. 6. ⁵ Ps. xcvi. 3, 7, 8.

Heathens, who had been at the greatest possible distance from the communion and worship of God, who had been sunk in idolatry and in the lowest depths of vice,—were converted to serve the God of Israel, and to take his most holy law for the guidance of their worship? This distinguishing mark of the kingdom of God was described by the ancient prophets in the sweet strains of poetry.¹ Other parts of the Old Testament, besides those quoted below, speak the same language. The Apostles, by preaching the gospel, accomplished all this to the conviction and astonishment of many.

(3.) The kingdom of God came when the rebellious Jews, the inveterate enemies of that kingdom, who “neither went in themselves, nor suffered those that were entering to go in,”² were signally punished; when their polity and carnal worship, together with Jerusalem and the Temple, were overthrown; when the people of God obtained that full exemption from all the bondage of ceremonies which, though bestowed on them as an undoubted right, was not fully enjoyed while the temple so much venerated “was yet standing.” From that time the Jews “saw the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”³ The Lord is said to “come in the clouds” when he comes for the execution of any divine judgments. “Behold the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt.”⁴ By the destruction of their city and temple

¹ Ps. ii. 8 ; lxxxiii. 8. Zech. ix. 10 ² Mat. xxiii. 13.

³ Mat. xxvi. 64.

⁴ Isa. xix. 2.

the Jews came to learn that in the Messiah God reigns gloriously. Then was fulfilled that saying of our Lord, "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them bring hither, and slay them before me."¹ In the Jewish schools a perverse notion respecting the kingdom of God had long prevailed. They imagined that the Messiah would cut off all nations that would not conform to the Jewish law,—that he would deliver them from the yoke of the Gentiles, form among them a worldly kingdom, and bestow upon them the highest prosperity and enjoyment. But the event proved far otherwise. The disobedient Jews, with all their outward worship, were rejected by the righteous judgment of God; while the Gentiles were placed in their stead, and permitted to serve God without the yoke of the Mosaic ritual, in the liberty of the kingdom of heaven.

(4.) Another step in the progress of the kingdom of God must be assigned to those times when the Church was delivered from the persecutions of the Gentiles, appeared openly in public, and began to conduct the government of the world. From that period the Christian religion was not only favoured, but embraced, openly professed, defended, and adorned with the highest splendour, by emperors and princes. This was done under Constantine the Great, with the earnest assistance of his mother, the Empress Helena. "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which

¹ Luke xix. 27.

deceiveth the whole world ; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ : for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."¹ Then the *saints* began to *judge the world* ;² that is, Christian men, who till now had been dragged before the tribunals, most unjustly condemned, most cruelly punished,—presided in the courts of law, and held the offices of magistracy in the Roman Commonwealth.³

¹ Rev. xii. 9, 10.

² 1 Cor. vi. 2.

³ This short paragraph rests its defence on two passages of Scripture, of which the one is quoted at large, and the other is accompanied by a plausible illustration. How far either of them will support the author's statement may be fairly questioned. The boldest assertions, indeed, which he could have made would hardly have excited surprise in any one at all conversant with the subject, and with the light in which it has been commonly represented. Our leading ecclesiastical historians lay it down as indisputable, that the exertions of Constantine the Great in behalf of the Christian religion rank among the prosperous events of the Church. Yet some of those very historians have made such large and candid admissions as must lead their readers to inquire how far the prosperity which has been ascribed to that age of the Church was particularly desirable.

Did those events promote or retard the progress of real godliness ? This is the true state of the question. How many thousands of heathens might instantly assume the Christian name, while their hearts remained unchanged, is wholly immaterial. The accession of such vast numbers might gratify a statesman as advancing his worldly policy. To one whose

(5.) Again, the kingdom of God came, when the church was freed from human institutions, from the superstition, idolatry, and tyranny of the Roman Babylon; when the power of that second beast was greatly diminished, the nakedness of Antichrist and of Antichristianism exposed, the everlasting gospel again proclaimed, and the doors thrown open to all who were desirous to escape from that Babylon.

heart burned with the love of the Redeemer, the spectacle of widely spread hypocrisy, pervading the services of religion and the employments of civil life, must have been truly distressing.

Turning from this sight, we again look around this Christianized Roman empire, and ask, where are the people of God? Are they more numerous than before, or do they “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ?” History gives a distinct but painful answer. A decay of religion,—visible, rapid, and ultimately leading to the worst evils of Popery,—dates from the hour when Constantine threw a deceitful splendour around the Church of Christ. Irreligion, the seeds of which had been sown during the third century, now ripened into all the fruits of unrighteousness. While the domains of Christendom extended greatly beyond the continent of Europe, the appellation of a *little flock*, as applied to the disciples of Christ, became increasingly appropriate.

Gladly would we have joined the pious author, if the facts of history had borne us out, in hailing the labours of Constantine, and of his mother, the Empress Helena, as aiding the progress of the Redeemer’s cause. But when we survey their rash interference with matters that were too high for them,—with the spiritual character of Messiah’s kingdom, we arrive at an opposite conclusion. The results of that interference, discernible throughout the period of the dark ages, and extending to our own times, cannot be sufficiently deplored.—**Tr.**

Within the recollection of our fathers¹ this was accomplished by that glorious Reformation in the light of which, by the kindness of God, we now walk. To those times the following passage may be appropriately applied: “I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city.”²

(6.) The kingdom of God, we have reason to expect, will yet come in a more remarkable manner, when Babylon shall fall to rise no more, when the kingdom of Antichrist shall be destroyed, and when the events described with copious and splendid imagery in the eighteenth chapter of the book of Revelation shall receive their accomplishment. That this destruction of Babylon will not take place on the last and great day is evident from many considerations. In the 4th verse, those who belong to the

¹ This work was published in 1689, when the author was in his 54th year.” His “fathers,—the men of the age preceding that in which he lived,—might remember the closing struggles of the Reformation. But perhaps the word is employed in a wider acceptation, agreeably to the allusion of the Psalmist, *which we have heard and known, and OUR FATHERS have told us*; Ps. lxxviii. 3.—TR.

² Rev. xiv. 6—8.

people of God are commanded to “come out of her, that they be not partakers of her sins, and that they receive not of her plagues.” In the 9th and 10th verses, it is said that the “kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment.” In the 11th verse, we are told that “the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more.” In the 17th and 18th verses it is added, “And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning.” In whatever way these things are explained, they are of such a nature that they cannot take place on the last day, and much less at a still later period.

The kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Antichrist are so entirely opposed to each other that the destruction of the latter is the increase of the former. Immediately after the fall of Babylon, John heard “a great voice of much people in heaven,” which is a representation of the church, “saying, Alleluia, salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God.”¹ And again, “I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”² Immediately afterwards, John saw

¹ Rev. xix. 1.

² Verse 6.

Christ sitting “on a white horse, and on his head were many crowns; and he had on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”¹ Next, he saw “the Devil and Satan bound a thousand years, and cast into a pit which was shut up and sealed, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled, when the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands, should live and reign with Christ.”² During what thousand years Satan has been bound I do not find in the history of the church. It does not appear that at any time the Devil has been so long bound. First, he led the nations astray by the heathen idolatry;—next, by an idolatry closely resembling it, the Antichristian (for in both the dragon exerted his power³),—and lastly, by the dreams of Mahomet, by which he captivated all the East, and the whole of India, with the exception of that part of it which is still heathen. I cannot take the liberty of interpreting that reign of a thousand years, as referring to the everlasting reign of Christ in heaven, for it is expressly said, that “when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations.” Hence it follows that we ought to believe, and hope,

¹ Rev. xix. 11, 12, 16.

² Rev. xx. 1—4.

³ Compare Rev. xii 3—5, and xiii. 4.

and pray for that period when the event will prove to be the best interpreter of an obscure prophecy.

That destruction of the Antichristian kingdom will be accompanied by a glorious and national conversion of the Israelites to the Lord Christ, which will be to the whole church as "life from the dead."¹ Roused by their example, the most distant nations—not excepting those which were formerly most hostile to the people of God,—will approach the threshold of the renewed church, and "all nations shall flow into it."² "In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land; whom the Lord of Hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance."³ Under the name and emblem of the *Assyrians*, one of the nations included in this enumeration, a special prophecy respecting the conversion of the **TURKS** is not improbably intended. Whatever may be in this, the light of the everlasting gospel and of saving wisdom, scattering its rays in every direction, will shine with extraordinary brightness, and triumph over the darkness of error and ignorance which has overspread the world.⁴ To this will be added a brightness of holiness worthy of its divine author, and spiritual joy arising from a delightful sense and experience of the goodness of God. When "the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob,"⁵ (which, the

¹ Rom. xi. 15.

² Isa. ii. 2.

³ Isa. xix. 24, 25.

⁴ Isa. xi. 9, and xxx. 26.

⁵ Isa. lix. 20.

Apostle Paul informs us, means that “all Israel shall be saved,”¹) then shall it be said to Jerusalem, “Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.”² Then shall the nations, united by the bonds of faith and love, adore and worship the one God in Christ, according to the institutions of his word. “And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: In that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one. And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left, of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.”³ The feast of tabernacles was the most joyful of the festivals among the Israelites, and was the latest in the sacred year. It afforded, therefore, the most appropriate illustration of those joyful times, preceding the consummation of all things, which will yield to the people of God the highest delight.

One of the divine appointments connected with that festival is particularly worthy of notice. The number of burnt-offerings was every day diminished. On the first day thirteen bullocks were offered⁴: on the second, twelve;⁵ on the third, eleven;⁶ and so on

¹ Rom. xi. 26. ² Isa. lx. 1—3. ³ Zech. xiv. 9, 16.
⁴ Ex. xxix. 13. ⁵ Ver. 17. ⁶ Ver. 20.

till they stopped at seven¹ bullocks. This may intimate that during that great peace and abundant prosperity of the Church, knowledge, faith, love, and zeal for the divine worship, will be gradually diminished. The whole tenor of inspired prophecy seems to lead us to believe that the happiest of all the conditions of the Church will not continue till the end of the world, but that ungodliness will by degrees resume its former vigour, and that, for the chastisement of the Church, she will be called to engage in renewed warfare with those formidable enemies who are described by the prophets under the names of *Gog* and *Magog*.² When those enemies are overcome, the Lord will come to judgment,—will sanctify and glorify his Church, and bestow upon her eternal blessedness in heaven, while “the Devil shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”³ This is the latest and most glorious COMING of the kingdom of God, the last, the unchanging object of all our prayers.

The coming of the kingdom of God has thus been considered with respect to the *Universal Church*. We are now to view it with respect to *elect individuals*. To them likewise the kingdom of God COMES by various steps. (I.) When God, by his wonderful providence, bestows on any person the means of grace, without which an adult is scarcely, if ever, brought out of the bondage of sin or Satan into a state

¹ Ex. xxix. 32.

² Rev. xx. 8.

³ Rev. xx. 10.

of grace. The gospel, as we have repeatedly stated, is the *word of the kingdom*. (2.) When a person is regenerated by the Spirit of God through the gospel. Then are the gates of the heart thrown open that “the king of glory may come in.”¹ Then is Satan, with the old man, driven from his throne, and nailed to the cross of Christ. Then is the law of liberty and of the kingdom proclaimed in the soul of the spirit of grace, and written on the heart, while all the faculties, both of soul and body, yield cheerful obedience to God. Then, in a word, “he is delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God’s own Son,”² which takes place from that very day when “he heard and received the grace of God in truth.”³ (3.) When a remarkable increase of grace,—of knowledge, comfort, and holiness is apparent; particularly when it has been preceded by a languid, melancholy, sinful, and distressed condition of mind. (4.) When the soul is freed from its connection with the body, in which it had maintained its warfare with the body of sin,—is received into heaven, and admitted to a nearer enjoyment of God, and to as large a share of happiness as the soul can enjoy in a state of separation from the body.⁴ (5.) When, at the glorious resurrection, the soul shall be united to the body, and the whole man shall be glorified, and admitted to the most perfect enjoyment of God.⁵ Such are the steps by which the kingdom of God comes.

¹ Ps. xxiv. 7.

² Col. i. 13.

³ Ver. 6.

⁴ Phil. i. 23. Rev. xiv. 13.

⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 52-54.

At the time when the Lord Jesus instructed his disciples to pray, *THY KINGDOM COME*, all these manifestations of his kingdom were still future, and the greater part of them, concealed among the secret purposes of God, were properly understood by a very small number. Godly persons, therefore, of those times, when they offered this petition, must have satisfied themselves with the best conceptions which it was possible for them to form respecting the kingdom of God. All things beyond this they would leave to God, as belonging to a new dispensation, in the course of which they would be more clearly revealed, more copiously explained, more fully and abundantly accomplished. It has been our privilege to see not the commencement only, but the wonderful progress and amazing increase of that kingdom. Every time, therefore, that we present this prayer, it is our duty to offer thanksgivings to God for what has been hitherto accomplished towards the advancement of this kingdom, to express our high satisfaction and living joy, and to praise and bless the Author of this glorious work. We ought next to pray that he would be pleased to bring the work to a conclusion, by sanctifying ourselves, by completing the whole church, and by fulfilling all the prophecies,—entertaining the assured hope that he who has fulfilled a part will fulfil the remainder in due time. All these matters have been explained to us with greater distinctness than to the ancient believers. If on our part we express them more fully and clearly, it will be the fruit of spiritual wisdom, and will be acceptable in the sight of God. We have no right, certain-

ly, to dictate to the Divine Being what is proper for him to do. This would be altogether inconsistent with the modesty which becomes us, and with the reverence we owe to the divine majesty. But let us freely own that we have not altogether neglected to meditate upon his word, or to “consider the operation of his hands,” and that we are not more ready to praise him for the *past*, than to anticipate with confident hope the *future* communications of his goodness.

We come now to consider those reflections which ought to be produced in our minds by an attentive consideration of this petition. And first of all, if it is our duty to pray that the kingdom of God may come, the prayer implies a confession that we are by nature out of the kingdom of God, and destitute of its privileges, “without Christ, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.”¹ By sin man withdrew himself from the government of God. From a desire to become his own master, he sold himself to Satan for the fruit of the unhappy tree, and became the degraded slave of the Devil, and of his own depraved lusts. All this no doubt is highly wicked. It was not in the power of man to withdraw himself from God, his rightful owner and Lord. The Devil had no right to entice or seduce those who were God’s property, or to alienate them from their creator and king. But as the just punishment of his sin, it pleased God to subject man to sin and to the Devil,

¹ Eph. ii. 12.

to be miserably distressed and tormented by both, agreeably to that just sentence, "of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage."¹ If we look only at the heinous wickedness of their tempter the Devil, those who are tempted by him are "the captives of the mighty, and the prey of the terrible;" but if we look at the justice of God, punishing man for his own transgression, and delivering him to the Devil to be tormented,—they are in this respect "lawful captives."²

"Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep"³ for the condition of those who are the subjects of such an unjust and cruel lord! But he is not their lord. He is the jailor, the executioner, of the fierce wrath of God. He keeps them employed in the wretched occupations of a most degraded and laborious slavery. He is their rigid taskmaster, who drives them, bound in the chains of everlasting darkness, to the commission of perpetual crimes. He allows them no rest but to amuse themselves with empty dreams, while he watches them with malignant vigilance, holds them more firmly in his snares, and more securely conveys them to hell. There will he employ his highest, his unceasing exertions in tormenting them with "the worm that dieth not, and the fire that never shall be quenched."⁴ This condition is not confined to those whose crimes have rendered them odious and detestable. It is the condition of us all, so long as

¹ 2 Pet. ii. 19.

² Isa. xlix. 24, 25.

³ Jer. ix. 1.

⁴ Mark ix. 43, 44.

we remain in that state which we derive from our connection with Adam. There are only two great empires in the world. The one is the empire of God ; the other is that of the Devil, who is the god of this world. Whoever does not belong to the kingdom of God, in which nothing but happiness is to be found, must belong to the kingdom of the Devil, which contains only unmixed misery. O that this truth could be impressed on the blind, deaf, mad, and thoughtless mortals, who take a foolish pleasure in their own chains, and go down bound into perdition ; “ 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.”¹

Again, if it be our duty to pray that the kingdom of God may come to us and to others, the prayer implies a confession that we cannot of ourselves break the chains of the most cruel slavery, or rise to the liberty of the kingdom of God. They are wretched mortals kept bound in the chains of tyranny by the god of this world. He hath blinded their eyes that they may not see true liberty or the path that leads to it.² He keeps so strict a guard over their will and affections, that they do not even apply their mind, or devote any serious thought, to throwing off the yoke of the most debasing slavery. He deprives them so completely of all wisdom, that, like madmen, they regard their fetters as tokens of freedom

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.

² 2 Cor. iv. 4.

and instruments of pleasure. Thus "the strong man armed keepeth his palace, and his goods are in peace: till a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, and take from him all his armour wherein he trusted and divide the spoils."¹ But that "stronger man" is "the king of glory, the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle."² What then remains for us but to make an humble confession of our weakness, to flee to the citadel of his salvation, to supplicate with earnest prayers the greatest of all kings, that he, who alone can, will make us free from the chains of sin and Satan and admit us to his own kingdom? He alone it is who, contrary to every appearance of possibility, can make for his people a way to escape. "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? But thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children."³

These are no doubt amazing views. But they are true. This kingdom of God is founded on impossibilities. It is more contradictory in its origin than the first kingdom of nature. The one arose from what was not in being, the other from what could not be. What is not may spring into existence at the call of God. But to bring to life what is unrighteous, condemned, and involved in eternal death,

¹ Luke xi. 21, 22.

² Ps. xxiv. 8.

³ Isa. xlix. 24, 25.

is opposed to the nature and attributes of God. There is no life without righteousness. But where unrighteousness is there righteousness is not, and its place is supplied by condemnation and death. He whom God justly condemns to death cannot justly be made to live. In him, therefore, God cannot reign. There is the law which, while it condemns the sinner, cannot condemn the sin which accuses him. There is the flesh, or the nature deprived of the guidance of the Spirit, which cannot be subject to the law. There is "the friendship of" the flesh, "which is enmity against God."¹ He knows God to be his enemy, and cannot know him as an object of love to the sinner, or if in any instance he suppose him to be kind and merciful to the sinner, he "thinks that he is altogether such an one as himself."² He must therefore hate God. Thus, ere the new kingdom of God can spring up, impossibilities must be effected. The law, which could not condemn the accusing sin, must condemn it. The flesh must "savour the things that be of God."³ The unrighteous man must be pronounced righteous by the Righteous One, who cannot lie, "cannot deny himself,"⁴ cannot be like the sinner. None belongs to the kingdom of God, none knows and perceives its true nature, who is not convinced that it arises out of impossibilities. And none sees this impossibility of salvation, who does not see the kingdom of God, and feel that it is springing up in his own breast.

¹ Ja. iv. 4.

² Ps. l. 21.

³ Mat. xvi. 23.

⁴ 2 Tim. ii. 13.

The two things are known together. What is impossible for every creature, what God alone can do, God alone does.¹

When, therefore, we pray, *thy kingdom come*, we acknowledge—(1.) Our inability to reach the kingdom of God. (2.) The utter impossibility, so far as regards creatures, that sinful man should be a partaker of the kingdom of God. (3.) Our hope in the all-sufficiency of God, who can and will accomplish what would have been impossible to us and to all the creatures in the universe. A devout meditation on these truths has a powerful effect in promoting Christian godliness.

Besides, from this petition itself, and from the order in which it is placed, we may conclude that, next to the hallowing of the divine name, nothing is more worthy of our desire than the coming of the kingdom of God. In this kingdom all our happiness is placed. For (1.) It is a kingdom of *perfect righteousness*. Our king is holiness, justice, goodness. “In mercy shall the throne be established; and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness.”² “Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne; mercy and truth shall go before his face.”³ “The sceptre of his kingdom is a right sceptre.”⁴ The law of the kingdom is “the law of liberty.”⁵ For true liberty consists in doing what

¹ Cocceius in Panegyri. de Regno Dei.

² Isa. xvi. 5.

³ Ps. lxxxix. 14.

⁴ Ps. xlv. 6.

⁵ Ja. i. 25.

you choose, it being always understood that no one can deliberately choose what does not bring solid pleasure to the mind, that nothing is pleasant but what forms a good conscience, that nothing can produce a good conscience but a firm and well grounded belief that our actions are agreeable to the will of God. Hence it follows that, in proportion as any man is devoted to the service of God, he enjoys the higher degree of liberty. (2.) It is a kingdom of *boundless wealth*. The magnificent accounts which the sacred history gives us of the riches of the kingdom of Solomon, who “made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars to be as the sycamore trees that are in the vale for abundance,”¹—cannot for a moment be compared to the riches of this kingdom. The description of the royal city, contained in the xxi. chapter of the book of Revelations, is worthy of our attention. There you will see streets, walls, gates,—all shining with gold, and precious stones, and pearls. Such things certainly do not belong to the wealth of this kingdom, much less do they represent it in an adequate manner. Whatever value they may elsewhere appear to possess, here they are too mean, trifling, and worthless to be held in any estimation. But the value of spiritual and heavenly things can hardly be exhibited to us but by a comparison with those things which, how wisely I say not, we are accustomed to estimate above all things else. The riches of this kingdom consist of—the word of God laid up in the holy treasury of the mind,² the spirit-

¹ 1 Kings x. 27.

² Ps. cxix. 72.

ual wisdom drawn out of it,¹ and the abundance of Divine grace, the smallest drop of which is more precious than all the gold in the universe.

The prophet Jeremiah illustrates this subject with beautiful imagery, "They shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their souls shall be as a watered garden, and they shall not sorrow any more at all. And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord."² On Zion, we all know, the temple was built. The temple itself was *higher* than the other parts of Zion. In the temple the holy place was higher than the courts. But the Holy of Holies was the highest of all. The ordinary Israelites were allowed to go no farther than the courts. None but the priests could enter into the holy place, and the high priest alone could set his foot within the Holy of Holies. Those gifts which were brought to Zion, and were not consumed on the altar, belonged to the priests, and as they had been consecrated to God, they are called the *good things of the Lord*. But here it is predicted that, in that spiritual kingdom of God, all the true Israelites, that is, the sincere subjects, will enjoy the distinguished privileges of the priests,—will be permitted to ascend, not only to Zion, but to the *Height of Zion*, to its loftiest height,—will there enjoy richly those good things

¹ Job xxviii. 15. Prov. iii. 14, 15.

² Ja. xxxi. 12, 14.

which God, out of his inexhaustible goodness, bestows on his intimate friends,—that he will not even withhold from them the *fatness*, which he had formerly reserved to be burnt on his own altar. Who does not exclaim at these things, “ Oh, how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that trust in thee before the sons of men !”¹ “ They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house ; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.”² Such statements might appear ridiculous to the men of this world, who judge only from what meets their eye and strikes their senses. We who are better instructed “ look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen ; for the things which are seen are temporal ; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”³ We do not deny that the kingdom of God contains the poor, but “ hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him ?”⁴ Those riches of the spiritual kingdom, which the poorest enjoy, we prefer immeasurably to the wealth of Cræsus⁵ or of Crassus,⁶ and to all the luxurious delicacies of the

¹ Ps. xxxi. 20.

² Ps. xxxvi. 8.

³ 2 Cor. iv. 18.

⁴ Ja. ii. 5.

⁵ Cræsus, king of Lydia, was considered, in his own time, to be the richest of mankind. *The riches of Cræsus* became a proverbial expression among the ancients, from whom it has been adopted by modern writers.—TR.

⁶ M. Licinius Crassus, a Roman, is usually surnamed **THE RICH**. Some idea of the extent of his wealth may be formed from his favourite saying, that “ No man deserved to be called

Persians.¹ Let the world look on and smile. “The rich man shall fade away in his ways.”²

(3.) It is a kingdom of *Uninterrupted tranquillity*. True, this kingdom does not want enemies. Satan, the leader of the infernal host,—“the whole world which lieth in wickedness,”³—Antichrist, with his attendant, hired and auxiliary troops—attack and harass it without intermission. But the King himself

rich whose annual income did not enable him to maintain an army.”—Tr.

¹ “*Omnibusque Persarum gasis.*” The Romans indulged, to an almost incredible extent, in the luxuries of the table. No expense was spared in bringing from the greatest distance what could gratify the palate. Persia *may* be introduced in this place as one of the countries laid under contribution for this purpose. But the principal allusion is unquestionably made to the effeminacy of the Persians,—exemplified by their refinements in cookery—which rendered them an easy prey to their Grecian invaders. This stain on their military reputation conveys a moral lesson. Historians employ considerable powers of description, and not a little sarcasm, in contrasting the hardy and frugal habits, not less than the valour and discipline of the Greeks—with the feebleness, luxury, and idle splendour of the East. Christians ought to learn from it a far higher lesson. The Apostle Paul exhorts Timothy to “endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”⁴ In another epistle he deplores, with bitter tears, the low gratifications of appetite as directly opposed to the Cross of Christ, and to a heavenly life. “For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ. Whose end is destruction, WHOSE GOD IS THEIR BELLY, who glory in their shame, who mind earthly things.”⁵

² Ja. i. 11.

³ 1 John v. 19.

⁴ 2 Tim. ii. 3.

⁵ Phil. iii. 18, 19.

keeps perpetual watch, and does not permit one of his subjects to perish. If he lead them to battle, “earnestly to contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints,”¹ his design is, that after having come off conquerors, they may share in the triumph, “receive a crown of glory,”² and “sit with him on his throne.”³ Even when they appear to be vanquished, they actually “overcome,” if in no other way, at least in this, “by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony,” for “they love not their lives unto the death.”⁴ But the war will not last for ever. This prophecy is and will be accomplished, “Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.”⁵

4. It is a kingdom of *incomparable dignity*. Here we find what belongs to no other kingdom. All the subjects are not only free, but are called to the dignity of priests, nay, of princes and of kings. They are a “royal priesthood.”⁶ Jesus Christ, “the prince of the kings of the earth, hath made them kings and priests unto God and his Father.”⁷ They are kings who, endowed with a *free spirit*,⁸ an *excellent spirit*,⁹—moved by the generous incentives of a holy

¹ Jude iii.

² 1 Pet. v. 4.

³ Rev. iii. 21.

⁴ Rev. xii. 11.

⁵ Isa. lx. 18.

⁶ 1 Pet. ii. 9.

⁷ Rev. i. 5.

⁸ Ps. li. 12 רוח נדיבה. The author appears to have interpreted these words, as others have done, a *princely spirit*. נדיב (Nadib) is the ordinary word for a *prince*.—TR.

⁹ רוח יתירא Dan. v. 12, and vi. 4.

ambition,¹ strive with heroic daring to realize the sayings of Solomon, “that the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.”² By the riches of hidden wisdom, by the beauty of spiritual grace, by the superiority of Christian excellencies, they labour to rise as far above other men, as kings are above their subjects. They govern their sins and lusts, to which the lords of the earth, the most formidable tyrants, render abject submission. They nobly despise, reject, and trample under foot the whole world, with its established customs and depraved morals, resolving that they “will not be brought under the power of any.” In short, they are conquerors, and “more than conquerors”³ of Satan, and look for the reward promised by Christ, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am sat down with my Father in his throne.”⁴ Since, therefore, the privileges of this kingdom and the happiness of its subjects are so far superior to all others,—that happiness, next to the glory of God, ought to be most earnestly solicited by us from God our King.

If these truths be seriously considered, something *must be done* by ourselves. We must abjure all obedience to the devil, to the world, and to sin. We must oppose the most beloved lusts from the bondage of which we have been made free. We must open the gates of our heart, that “the King of glory may come in.”⁵ We must fulfil his commands with the

¹ φιλοτιμίας. ² Psa. xii. 26. ³ Rom. viii. 37.

⁴ Rev. iii. 21. ⁵ Ps. xxiv. 7.

utmost cheerfulness. We must put away every thing that is displeasing to our Most Holy King. We must labour zealously to advance his kingdom in ourselves, and in others, in those especially who have been entrusted to our care. If we have any abilities, or eloquence, or reputation, let all be devoted to the service of our king. Let us conduct ourselves, in our various conditions, as faithful and active servants,—prepared, where the glory of the king and of his kingdom is concerned, to lay down life itself,—convinced that those men lead the happiest lives who, after doing all that is in their power for enlarging the kingdom of God, suffer for the sake of that kingdom a glorious death.

DISSERTATION IX.

ON DOING THE WILL OF GOD.

ΓΕΝΝΗΘΗΤΩ ΤΟ ΘΕΛΗΜΑ ΣΟΥ, ΩΣ ΕΝ
ΟΥΡΑΝΩ ΚΑΙ ΕΠΙ ΤΗΣ ΓΗΣ.

IMMEDIATELY after that part of the prayer which relates to the kingdom of God and the coming of that kingdom, there follows, in beautiful order, an expression of our desires, that the will of that great king may be done. Nothing is more clearly due to the majesty of our king, than an acknowledgment that

“ His kingdom ruleth over all,”¹ and that the opposition of the will of his subjects to his will is in all cases unlawful. It belongs to a king to say, “ My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.”² It belongs to subjects to comply with his will in all things, and with that aged priest to reply, “ It is the Lord ; let him do what seemeth him good.”³ And as our king “ hath prepared his throne in the heavens,”⁴ his subjects on the earth are obviously bound to look to his subjects in heaven, copying, as far as possible, their example. Such is the import of our Lord’s words when he enjoins us to pray that the will of God may be done in earth as it is done in heaven. The petition contains a declaration of our acquiescence in the will of God, and of our desire that it may be entirely fulfilled. There are two things which require a separate consideration. I. *The statement of the petition.* II. *The enlargement of it.*

The *statement* of the petition is contained in these words, **THY WILL BE DONE.** It proceeds, with the greatest propriety, on the principle that God is the supreme **LORD** of all, and has a right to dispose of all things according to his pleasure. For in his hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.”⁵ “ He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand or say unto him, what dost thou?”⁶ It proceeds also on this

¹ Ps. ciii. 19.² Isa. xlvi. 10.³ 1 Sam. iii. 18.⁴ Ps. ciii. 19.⁵ Job xii. 10.⁶ Dan. iv. 35.

principle, that God is the supreme LAWGIVER, from whom his rational creatures receive an authoritative law. “There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy.”¹ “The Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king.”² The *will* of God must therefore be viewed in a twofold aspect; *First*, as it denotes the DECREE or *purpose of God*, by which he determined, in his own mind, from all eternity, what would take place, in time, for his own glory. Such is the will spoken of in the following passages. “Our God is in the heavens. he hath done WHATSOEVER HE HATH PLEASD.”³ “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, ACCORDING TO THE GOOD PLEASURE OF HIS WILL.”⁴ *Secondly*, as it denotes the COMMANDMENT of God, by which he binds his rational creatures to obedience. This will points out what ought to be done, but does not determine what shall actually take place. “This is the WILL of God,” says Paul, “even your sanctification.”⁵ The one will is the cause of all that is done; the other is the rule of what ought to be done. Both belong to God as most absolute king and Lord, and are founded on his boundless power, and on his other perfections and excellencies.

In both senses of the word, we pray, “Thy will BE DONE,” but not in the same manner. When we present the petition in reference to the will of the *decree*, we declare,—(1.) Our acquiescence and de-

¹ Ja. iv. 12.² Isa. xxxiii. 22.³ Psa. cxv. 3.⁴ Eph. i. 5.⁵ 1 Thes. iv. 3.

light in all that God has appointed. “Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.”¹ “O my Father,” said our blessed Lord, “if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.”² “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will but thine be done.”³ Tertullian has explained it not amiss: *By this expression we give ourselves an admonition to SUFFERANCE.*⁴ (2.) Readiness to promote by our prayers the accomplishment of the Divine purpose.⁵ (3) Cheerfulness of mind in offering ourselves to God, if he shall be pleased to employ our services in fulfilling his good pleasure. “Here am I; send me.”⁶ (4.) If any opposition be made by the flesh, we pray that the all-powerful grace of God may subdue it to obedience, so that we may wish nothing to be done, by ourselves or by others, which is not agreeable to the will of God. We have a remarkable instance of this in the pious inhabitants of Cesarea, and other friends of the Apostle Paul. When they had heard that imprisonment awaited him at Jerusalem, they used their utmost exertions to dissuade him from setting out, and entreated with all possible earnestness that he would not go up to Jerusalem. But when Paul refused to yield, declaring that he was “ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus,—when

¹ Luke i. 38.² Mat. xxvi. 42.³ Luke xxii. 42.⁴ Ad sufferentiam.⁵ Dan. ix. 2, 3. Ezek. xxxvi. 36, 37.⁶ Isa. vi. 8.

he would not be persuaded, THEY CEASED, SAYING, THE WILL OF THE LORD BE DONE.¹

When we present the petition in reference to the will of the Divine *commandment*,—(1.) We declare that we acknowledge it as wise, righteous, just, and holy; that we “delight in the law of God after the inward man;”² so that, with our great pattern, we say, “I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.”³ (2.) We acknowledge that we have not strength to overcome the hindrances of the flesh and all the power of the enemy, which both within us and without us opposes the Divine will. Of ourselves we cannot presume to execute so arduous a task. Therefore, (3.) While we declare our own insufficiency, we humbly implore the aid of our heavenly Father, “without whom we can do nothing,”⁴ but “through whom strengthening us, we can do all things.”⁵

What we have already said relates to the *simple statement of the petition*. The *enlargement* of it is contained in the words—IN EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN. Heaven is either the region of the *stars*, or of *blessed spirits*. We may take it in both ways. In the starry region, every thing that exists follows with undeviating constancy the laws which God has laid down. “He appointed the moon for seasons; the sun knoweth his going down.”⁶ He knoweth also his rising and at the appointed time “he cometh forth as a

¹ Acts **xxi.** 12—14.

² Rom. **vii.** 22.

³ Ps. **xl.** 8.

⁴ John **xv.** 5.

⁵ Phil. **ii.** 13; **iv.** 13.

⁶ Ps. **civ.** 19.

bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.”¹ By that exact and uninterrupted obedience maintained throughout so many ages, “the sun, and moon, and all the stars of light, praise the Lord; fire and hail; snow and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling his word.”² And Lucan tells us, that the mind of a wise man “resembles the heavenly luminaries, which revolve unshaken in their course.”³

But we must rather direct our thoughts to the highest heaven, where the blessed angels, and “the spirits of just men made perfect,”⁴ spend a happy and holy eternity. “Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his that do his pleasure.”⁵ (1.) They *all, and in all things* do the will of God. (2.) They do it in the proper manner, *wisely, readily, constantly*. This is beautifully represented by the figure of the “Four living creatures.”⁶ Their *readiness* is expressed by the “four wings,”⁷ and by their “running and returning as the appearance of a flash of lightning.”⁸ Their *wisdom* is expressed by “having the hands of a man under their wings,”⁹ and by being “full of eyes before and behind.”¹⁰ Their constancy is expressed, for “their

¹ Ps. xix. 5.

² Ps. cxlvi. 3, 8.

³ Sicut coelestia semper

Inconcussa suo volvuntur sidera motu.

⁴ Heb. xii. 23.

⁵ Ps. ciii. 20, 21.

⁶ Ezek. i. Rev. iv.

⁷ Ezek. i. 6.

⁸ Ver. 14.

⁹ Ezek. i. 8.

¹⁰ Rev. iv. 6.

feet were straight feet,"¹ "and they went every one straight forward: whither the Spirit was to go they went: and they turned not as they went."² (3.) They do it *perfectly*, without any mixture of sin. Whatever is in heaven, has either always been free from sin, or has now laid it aside. All things there are perfect.

When we pray that the will of God may be done *in earth, as it is in heaven*, the resemblance must be traced, (1.) In the obedience itself,—that as every thing in heaven is in perfect agreement with the will of God, so all on earth who have been made like ourselves for the same end may join with us in obeying the will of God. (2.) In the *manner*,—with equal readiness, wisdom, and constancy. (3.) In *degree*,—in the utmost perfection that can be attained. We propose as our model the blessed in heaven, or as the Talmudists are fond of calling them, God's highest family, who obey without murmuring the *decreeing* will of God, glorifying him in all his judgments;³ and who cheerfully obey his *preceptive* will in all things, even in those which would appear to us exceedingly strange.⁴ By the frequent exercise of meditation we must place this model before our eyes as long as we are in the world, so that we may neither complain of its perpetual obligation, nor hold ourselves excused for our present imperfection.

The petition implies the three following requests, (1.) That at a future period there may be a univer-

¹ Ezek. i. 7.

² Ezek. i. 12.

³ Rev. xvi. 5, 7.

⁴ Ezek. ix. 7.

sal obedience and subjection of all nations to the will of God “in earth, as it is in heaven.” Religious men, dissatisfied with themselves, and conscious of their imperfections, would wish that all mortals should unite their exertions, as the inhabitants of heaven agree, in fulfilling the divine commandments. (2.) That we may experience the delight, satisfaction, and joy which becomes the children of God in his most holy, wise, and righteous will, free from the restraints of law, which do not exist in heaven, where “love is the fulfilling of the law.”¹ We testify that we are dissatisfied with every thing found in us which is not agreeable to the will of God,—that we breathe after perfection, and that we will not cease to offer this prayer till we have obtained *in heaven* what we desire *in earth*.

This observation naturally leads us to consider in what manner a question of no small difficulty may be resolved. Is it lawful for us, while we are on the earth, to pray for the same degree of perfection which exists in heaven? This question must, I think, be answered in some such manner as the following:—Two things come to be separately considered. One is, *The economy of the Divine will decreeing*. The other is, *The precept of the Divine will commanding*. With regard to the *former*, it is not the will of God that, while we sojourn on the earth, he shall bestow upon us the perfection of the heavenly inhabitants. And while we pray that in all things his will may be done, we solemnly declare that we are satisfied with that

¹ Rom. xiii. 10.

dispensation of the Divine Being, as wise, and just, and good, and as leading eventually to our advantage. With regard to the *latter*, or preceptive will of God, we are bound, (1.) To love and desire heavenly perfection. (2.) To employ our utmost endeavour to obtain it. (3.) To express that desire and endeavour in our prayers to God, entreating that, while we are on the earth, he may conduct us as nearly as possible to perfection, till we obtain it in the fullest manner in heaven.¹

This part of the Lord's prayer leads to many practical conclusions. And, first, we learn that we ought, above all things, to *renounce our own will*. A prayer that the will of God may be done, plainly implies that the subordination of *our* will is just and proper. The will of God justly claims a supremacy over the will of every other being in the universe. But our will is *enmity against God*,² rising up in murmuring against the decree, and in sinful desire against the commands, of the Almighty. Nothing is more closely allied to us than the will of our flesh, and nothing is more criminal. It is the fountain of all our uneasiness and distress,—the “foe that is of our own household,”³ the constant disturber of our peace and *cheerfulness*.⁴ Till we have subdued that monster, nothing has been accomplished. That idol to which the inhabitants of all countries pay religious adoration must be thrown down from his altar. In this manner we must prepare our minds for saying to God, I have no will, O Lord; thy will is mine.

¹ Phil. iii. 12—14. ² Rom. viii. 7. ³ Mat. x. 36. ⁴ ἐνοχμίας.

This is the only road to true happiness. As it is impossible that every event can happen as we would have wished it, the mind must contend with its lot till it is brought into harmony with Divine Providence. Nothing could be more unjust, or indeed impracticable, than the demand that the Supreme Judge of all should yield to feeble man, that the will of man should be held superior to the will of God. There is therefore but one way in which peace of mind can be obtained and preserved. Man must, without hesitation, submit all his wishes to God, or rather, he must form no wish but this one, that the will of God may be done. If God were to grant to man the liberty of asking whatever he pleases, it would be his duty to express a sincere wish that God would do what he knows best to be done,—giving back and resigning to God the determination of all his wishes. When we have brought our minds into this state, we shall always have our own will, and ere long, we shall arrive at that *cheerfulness*¹ of mind which is the perfection of human happiness, and immensely preferable to the enjoyment of all worldly prosperity.

It would be truly disgraceful if Christians could be made to blush for their inferiority to heathen philosophers, from whom we have quoted in another work² some beautiful sentiments to this purpose. To these may now be added the saying of *Timærides*, which is given by *Jamblichus*, in his *Life of Pythagoras*. His friend, at parting with him, had prayed

¹ *ἰσχυμία*. ² *Dissertations on the Creed*, Diss. XIII. § 21.

that he might obtain all good things. *May you have from the gods whatever you wish!*¹ Timaeides replied, *By no means. I would rather wish to have whatever the gods shall give me.*² How wise and holy a saying, if he had only said GOD, instead of the gods. With this agree the words of Epictetus,³ *Do not seek to have every thing happening as you would wish, but rather choose to have every thing happening as it is, and you will succeed.*⁴ Epictetus dwells largely on this subject,⁵ where he first blames those who make themselves miserable by a wicked direction of their appetites. *How comes it that what you wish does not take place, and that what you do not wish takes place? That is the highest proof that you are unsuccessful and miserable. I wish a thing, and it does not take place. What can be more distressing?*⁶ He then points out the source of that error. Men do not sufficiently consider that the fulfilment of our wishes must not be expected from without: that events must not be so altered and modified as to agree with our will, but that our will must be brought into agreement with the actual events. Last of all, he suggests the best

¹ Ὅσα βούλει παρὰ τῶν Θεῶν γένοιτο σοί.

² Ἐυρήμει, ἀλλὰ βουλόμην μᾶλλον ὅσα μοὶ παρὰ τῶν Θεῶν γίνονται.

³ Apud Stobaeum, Tom. I. Lib. 2. Tit. vii.

⁴ Μὴ ζήτηι το γιγνόμενα γίγνεσθαι ὡς θέλεις· ἀλλὰ θέλει ὡς τὰ γιγνόμενα γίνονται, καὶ εὐροήσεις.

⁵ Apud Arrianum, Lib. II. Diss. XVII.

⁶ Διατὶ θέλοντος σοῦ τὸ ὄν γίνεται, καὶ μὴ θέλοντος, γίνεται; ἀποδείξεις γὰρ αὐτῆ μεγίστη δυσροίας καὶ κακοδαιμονίας. Θέλω τὸ, καὶ ὄν γίνεται, καὶ τὸ ἐστὶν ἀβλιώτερον ἐμοῦ;

advice, an advice more precious than gold. IN SHORT, WISH NOTHING BUT WHAT GOD WISHES. *Who shall hinder, who shall constrain you? None, any more than he could hinder or restrain Jupiter. When you have him for your leader, when your desires and wishes go along with his, why do you dread disappointment?*¹ He proceeds. "If your aversion to poverty, and your love of riches be gratified, you will be disappointed, and will fall into the very evils which you dreaded. If you obtain health for instance, you will be unhappy, or if you obtain magistracy, honours, friends, children, or in short, any of those things which are not in our own power. BUT GIVE THEM TO JUPITER, (we would say to JEHOVAH.) *Give them up to him.* Let him govern. Let him take them under his direction. And how will it then be possible that you shall want success?" All who have not learned these truths, or who do not actually strive to attain this excellence, are pronounced by him to be altogether unacquainted with the subject.

But leaving Epictetus, let us return to the school of Jesus, where we are taught by this petition that, denying our own will, we are bound to acquiesce entirely in the decreeing will of God, both in prosperity and in adversity. Illustrious examples of this are to be found in the sacred writings; in Aaron,² in Eli,³ in

¹ ΚΑΙ ΑΠΛΩΣ ΜΗΔΕΝ ΑΛΛΟ ΘΕΛΕ Η Α Ο ΘΕΟΣ ΘΕΛΕΙ. Καὶ τίς σέ κολύσει; τίς ἀναγκάσει; ὀυ μᾶλλον ἢ τὸν Δία. "Ὅταν τοιοῦτον ἔχῃς ἡγεμόνα, καὶ τοιοῦτω συνθέλῃς καὶ συνορέῃ, τί φοβῆ ἔτι μὴ ἀποτύχῃς.

² Lev. x. 3.

³ 1 Sam. iii. 18.

David,¹ in Hezekiah.² “It becomes all to discover the same temper. To contend with the providence of God is equally vain and criminal. It is *vain*, for he leads the willing, and drags the refractory. It is *criminal*, for it is better thou shouldst be involved in total ruin, than that even the least part of his most holy will should fail to be accomplished.” The reader may consult a more extended illustration of this subject in one of the Dissertations on the Creed, which has been already quoted.³

But we are taught a third lesson, that both our prayers and our actions must be in obedience to the commanding will of God. (1.) We must carefully inquire and “prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God,”⁴ asking, “Lord,

¹ 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26.

² Isa. xxxix. 8.

³ Diss. XIII. § 20.—The three sentences towards the close of this paragraph, which I have marked as a quotation, are borrowed by the author from his XII. Dissertation on the Creed. In one respect I have followed his example, by borrowing—not indeed from myself—but from my respected father, Dr. Fraser, on whose spirited and faithful version of the passage I could offer no improvement. Dr. Isaac Watts apologizes for introducing into one of his poems a stanza from another author. “I chose rather,” he says, “to borrow and acknowledge the debt, than to labour hard for worse lines, that I might have the poor pleasure of calling them my own.” Had I followed an opposite course, I should certainly have provoked a disadvantageous comparison. Nor could the opportunity be easily resisted of fortifying myself by such an authority against those servile maxims of Translation, which at one time held undisputed sway, and from whose degrading yoke Dryden and other great names have not wholly emancipated English literature.—TR.

⁴ Rom. xii. 2.

what will thou have me to do?"¹ and saying to him, "Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness." We must attend to it, not in a general, but in a particular manner, in the very smallest matters, in conversation, in food, in clothing; not venturing to do any thing whatever which we are not convinced is pleasing in the sight of God. This is the great blessing for which Paul prayed in behalf of the Colossians, "We do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding."² (2.) When that will is known, we must conform to it in all things. For thus the Apostle proceeds, "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."³ We must not presume so far as to form our own judgment of the wisdom, justice, and usefulness of the commandments of God. Though the flesh may feel them to be unpleasant, or though unsound reason may pronounce them to be harsh, we must yield to them a ready, constant, and cheerful obedience. (3.) We must do so chiefly for this reason, that it is the will of God. "Have not I commanded thee?"⁴ When this is plain, there remains no room for inquiry or hesitation. God commands: let man obey.

Another lesson taught us is, that we must not attend only to the *duties* themselves, but also to the

¹ Acts ix 6.

² Col. i. 9.

³ Col. i. 10.

⁴ Jos. i. 9.

manner of them, as it is in heaven. We must propose to ourselves the most perfect example. Such is the high superiority of Christian excellence that those who study it are under no necessity of placing before their eyes a Socrates or a Zeno, a Cato or a Lælius, whom Seneca recommends to them for such a purpose. They have far more perfect examples, examples not in earth only, but also in heaven. In *earth* they have the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, all the saints, who enjoyed the peculiar influences of the Spirit of God,—who were honoured with the intimacy, approbation and applause of God himself,—and whose lives are described in volumes that will never die, written not with art and embellishment, but with what is better than every kind of art, with native simplicity. But Christians have other examples *in heaven*. The most illustrious example that was ever beheld in any part of this lower world—Jesus alone excepted,—was tainted by vices, was deformed by blemishes. A Christian must therefore look higher, and endeavour to find not merely an example but a pattern. On the wings of faith he must fly to heaven, and there behold, with the piercing eyes of his mind, the companies of holiest angels, and of “the spirits of just men made perfect,”¹ who, clothed in dazzling light, burning with the purest love, obey with extraordinary readiness, cheerfulness and constancy, all the commands of God. By frequent meditation their conduct must become our model. Every instance in which we are unlike them ought to ex-

¹ Heb. xii. 23.

cite our serious displeasure. Advancing eagerly to higher attainments, we must approach to them as nearly as the weakness of this mortal state will allow, till the perfection of virtue and holiness to which we aspired is at length enjoyed by us in heaven. There an infinite good, to which every desire of the heart shall be directed, will fill the soul with everlasting love and enjoyment in the perfect vision of God.

The last lesson taught us by this prayer arises out of the acknowledgment it makes of our weakness. We must implore the Divine assistance for the discharge of all these duties. Our will, deceived by false appearances, is so strongly attached to an imaginary good,—so thoroughly blinded by a ruinous love of itself,—so firmly bound by the iron chains of prejudices,—so obstinate and rebellious against God,—that, unless the Almighty power of God shall change our hearts, we can neither break our chains, nor bow to the Divine authority. He who made our will, and who, when it had basely abused its freedom, “gave it up,” by a just judgment, “unto vile affections,”¹ is alone able to restore the freedom of the will, and to make it his own willing subject. Christian piety bids us glorify God, by the persuasion that there is not one of his creatures whom he does not hold in his own hand, or whom he cannot direct and “turn whithersoever he will.”² Our consciousness of freedom is so complete, that to call it in question would be to dethrone reason itself. And, yet such is the wisdom and power of our God that,

¹ Rom. i. 26.

² Pro. xxi. 1.

without any violation of that freedom, he can control the will according to his pleasure. He has his own secret entrances to the will, and acts upon it with a power which cannot be resisted, but with a power which makes it willing, and which, therefore, instead of injuring, declares, confirms, and maintains the freedom of the will. The will of God could not be done in all things, unless the fulfilment of his pleasure on our minds were within the reach of his power. Let us devoutly believe and acknowledge these truths concerning God our Father. Resting on this foundation, let us offer our frequent and earnest prayers, that he may free our will from the bondage of depraved lusts,—may deliver our mind from unsound prejudices, and enlighten it by his Holy Spirit,—may enable us to perceive the folly and perverseness of our will and the supreme wisdom and justice of the will of God,—may fill us with such reverence for his Majesty as shall prevent us from opposing his decrees and disobeying his laws,—and may dispose us, by “his free Spirit,”¹ to yield a ready and cheerful obedience to all his commandments. O LORD GOD, OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, PERFORM IN US WHAT YOU COMMANDEST, THEN COMMAND WHAT THOU WILT, AND THOU SHALT NOT COMMAND IN VAIN. AMEN.

¹ Ps. li. 12.

DISSERTATION XI.

ON DAILY BREAD.

ΤΟΝ ΑΡΤΟΝ ΗΜΩΝ ΤΟΝ ΕΠΙΟΥΣΙΟΝ
ΔΟΣ ΗΜΙΝ ΣΗΜΕΡΟΝ.

WE now come to that petition of the Lord's Prayer which has received from ancients and moderns in every age some variety of interpretations. Some were of opinion that *daily bread* is the *Sacramental bread of the Eucharist*, of which the ancients made almost daily use; others, that it is the *spiritual and heavenly bread*, the Lord Jesus Christ with his grace, by which the soul is sustained and nourished to life everlasting; others, that it is the *natural bread*, by which our body is supported in this animal life; and others, that it means *all these together*. This great variety of expositions has been principally occasioned by the Greek word ἐπιούσιος.¹ That word occurs nowhere else in Scripture, and the most learned men have been unable to discover it in any profane writings. As it is not known to what Hebrew word employed by our Lord it corresponds, it is not surprising that different persons should have assigned to it different acceptations.

It were deeply to be lamented if a diversity of

¹ Rendered in our English Bible, DAILY.

sentiment on a difficult subject should alienate the minds of Christians from one another, and if this point could not be settled without some bitterness of disputation. O, how would all that improper feeling soften down into mildness and gentleness itself, did we but reflect that the inquiry relates to prayer, in which we have to do, not with man, but with God,—to that prayer, which, breathing throughout the love of God and of our brother, ought to inspire every worshipper with the same spirit!

I cannot allow myself to think of giving the smallest uneasiness to those Christians, whose thoughts, while they are uttering the fourth petition, are directed to our Lord Jesus Christ and his grace,—who, with earnest groans for themselves and for their brethren, entreat that their heavenly Father will graciously continue to feed them with his word and spirit, for the nourishment and growth of the true life, till they obtain “the fulness of joy at the right hand of God.”¹ Would to God that our minds were always animated by the desire of heavenly and spiritual things, in such a manner, that, when an occasion presented itself, or was purposely sought, they would burst into the flames of burning prayers! Would to God, that, at the mention of earthly and bodily concerns, we learned to rise, and to employ them as ladders for reaching higher objects,—or to lay them aside, and shut them out altogether from our minds, and dwell exclusively on the better bless-

¹ Ps. xvi. 11.

ings, so that, in comparison of our regard to heavenly things, every desire of a worldly nature should fade away ! Nothing, certainly, would be more unbecoming in a Divine, than to employ any sort of arguments for the purpose of interrupting religious meditation and inquiry, and to lead away the minds of men from solid and eternal to frail and perishing objects.

But that is not the subject now before us. The inquiry relates solely to the meaning of the words which our Saviour dictated to his disciples. In order to explain them, it is of little importance to consider what may be the meaning of other words employed in another place to enforce the duty of seeking the things which belong to the kingdom of God,—or what constitutes the highest exercise of Christian generosity. The great question is, what is the native meaning of the words themselves viewed in their whole connection ? it being always taken for granted that they contain nothing which is unworthy of Christ to teach, or of Christians to learn.

My view of the matter is this. It is the will of God that man should consist of a soul and a body united. For both parts he has laid down his laws, that in both the image of his holiness might be seen. To both he has promised rewards, that in both his truth and goodness might shine. On both he bestows the acts of his bounty, that both might form a mirror of his providence. Nay, Christ himself obeyed and suffered, both in soul and in body, that he might not only bless our soul, but might make our body

“like unto his own glorious body.”¹ Since, therefore, both parts of us are so much the objects of the Divine care, we are bound by the Divine example to take care of both.

But our soul is by far the noblest part of us, and the blessings which it is capable of enjoying are solid and eternal ; while the enjoyments of the body, besides being greatly inferior, are frail and perishing. Much greater solicitude, therefore, from the very nature of the case, is due to the soul than to the body. We may go farther and assert, that the body ought scarcely, if ever, to be the object of our care, except for the express purpose of bestowing its own peculiar kind of preparation for aiding the soul in its great work—of hallowing the name of God—by advancing his kingdom, and doing his will. Hence, it follows that the duty of man is properly performed in all its parts, and that his highest happiness is attained, when he glorifies God both in soul and in body. But it equally follows that it is a part of our duty to take care that the body shall not be deprived of its vigour, which is necessary for the service of the soul and of God. But it would be deprived of its vigour if it did not receive a sufficiency of food, and of other means necessary for the support and nourishment of animal life. These statements, I think, are beyond all controversy, and deserve to regulate the meditations and conduct of Christian men.

Now, the Lord's Prayer is justly believed by us

¹ 1 Phil. iii. 21.

to be the most perfect of all prayers. But the most perfect prayer must include all the blessings necessary to the happiness of the whole man; and that again requires that the body shall receive those supplies without which what deserves the name of life¹ cannot be maintained. It seems proper, therefore, that the most perfect prayer shall not altogether leave out those blessings which relate to animal life. But as the mind of man has a natural leaning to excess in this direction, it is equally to be expected that the wisdom of Christ shall convey such a petition in the fewest possible words, so as to prevent the mind from dwelling longer than is necessary on the subject,—shall express it in a manner fitted to encourage moderation,—and shall place it in that order which may show that the enjoyments of the body are of the lowest rank, and are not entitled to be the subject of prayer with any other view than to prepare man for higher enjoyments.

All these views I think I see exemplified with the highest intelligence in the Fourth Petition, which runs thus, GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD. In explaining these words, we shall abstain from replying to those whose views are different from our own, and shall employ ourselves entirely in supporting what we consider most agreeable to the truth. We may mention, at the outset, that we are satisfied with the explanation commonly received in our churches, and laid down in the Palatine Catechism, that the

¹ Sine quibus vita est nulla, aut certe non vitalis est. “Vita vitalis *Enn. ap. Cic. i. e. tolerabilis. Sic Græci βίος βίωτος.*” Ainsw.

petition refers to *natural bread*. We have been led to adopt this opinion by a careful examination OF EACH OF THE WORDS, and of the ORDER in which this petition is placed.

Every one of the words has its own weight, and deserves the closest attention. The subject is OUR—DAILY—BREAD. The prayer for this bread is that our Heavenly Father will GIVE—US—THIS DAY. The word BREAD, we all know, is not employed in scripture to denote, exclusively, that kind of food which is formed out of the fruits of the earth. *All food*, even the fruit of trees and the produce of the milk of goats, comes under the name of bread. “Let us destroy the tree with its BREAD.”¹ “And thou shalt have goats’ milk enough for thy BREAD, for the BREAD of thy house.”² It may be regarded, then, as a settled point, that *bread* signifies all food, either meat or drink.³ But there is nothing to hinder us from extending the meaning of the word *bread* a little farther, so as to include *clothing, habitation*, and all the conveniences of the body and of animal life. Jacob, it is true, distinguishes “bread” from “raiment.”⁴ But when God makes

¹ Jer. xi. 19. נשחיתה עץ לחמו “Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof.” (Eng. ver.) Heb. *the stalk with his bread*. (Marg.)

² Prov. xxvii. 27. ורי חלב עזים ללחמך ללחם ביתך “And thou shalt have goats’ milk enough for thy FOOD, for the FOOD of thy household.” (Eng. ver.)

³ Gen. iii. 19; xxviii 20; Prov. xxx. 8. In all these passages the word used for *food* is לחם, *bread*.—TR.

⁴ Gen. xxviii. 20.

known to Adam the threatening, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,"¹ he informs him that he will be compelled to suffer great uneasiness in procuring what is necessary for the support of his life. And when Agur prays that he may eat the *bread of his allowance*,² he means, if I am not mistaken, all that was necessary for supporting the rank in which he had been placed. In the writings of the Roman lawyers, clothing (*amictus*) is included in the term food (*victus*).³ Both in scripture and in ordinary life, bread denotes all *those things the withholding of which gives pain to human nature*. "When he says bread," says Gregory Nyssen, "he includes all that is necessary for the body."⁴ And hitherto we have met with nothing that would lead us to dissent from that observation, unless it may happen to be contained in the epithet *ἐπιουσίος*, which we shall now proceed to examine.

I shall not now enter into a critical examination of the very numerous expositions of that word which have been given by learned men. An exposition

¹ Gen. iii. 19.

² Pro. xxx. 8. פֶּן־אֶחָד־יִשְׁכַּח־לֶחֶם "food convenient for me." (Eng. ver.) Heb. *of my allowance*, (Marg.) which exactly corresponds to the author's phrase, *Pane demensi sui*.—Tr.

³ De Verb. Signet. L. xliii. "Verbo victus continentur quæ esui, potui, cultuique corporis, quæque ad vivendum homini necessaria sunt. Vestem quoque victus habere vicem Labeo ait." Addit Gaius: "et cætera quibus tuendi, curandive corporis nostri gratia utimur, ea appellatione significantur."

⁴ Ἄρτον ἑσπών, πᾶσαν τὴν σωματικὴν περιλαμβάνει χρεΐαν. Orat. IV. on the Lord's Prayer.

more copious and learned than any that had previously appeared, has been given by a very celebrated and learned man, JOHN MARCK, formerly my much esteemed colleague in the University of Friesland. It forms a part of his *Juvenile Dissertations*, as he is pleased to style them, but which contain much profound wisdom. The simplest and most probable of the various etymologies, I have always thought, is that which supposes ἐπιούσιος to be compounded of ἐπι and ουσία, as περιούσιος is compounded of περι and ουσία. The analogy of composition of such words presents no difficulty; for it does not require that the *i* in the word ἐπι shall be dropped before a vowel. This is proved by the words ἐπιεικής, ἐπιόγδοος, ἐπιόρκος, ἐπιόπτωμα, ἐπιούριος, and many of the same form. This derivation being granted, which has nothing unusual or anomalous, considerable progress has been made in the investigation of the subject. For as τὸ περιούσιον signifies *what is more than enough*, and beyond what the preservation of existence requires, so τὸ ἐπιούσιον signifies *what is enough*. Such is the meaning assigned to it by the ancient Greek writers, who were deeply skilled in their own language. "Ἄρτον ἐπιούσιον, "that is," says Chrysostom, "what passes to the substance of the body, and is able to support it."¹ "We have been commanded," says Gregory Nyssen, "to seek what is sufficient for the support of the bodily existence."² Basil of Cesaraea,³ explains it to be

¹ Ἄρτον ἐπιούσιον, τουτέστιν ἐπὶ τὴν οὐσίαν τοῦ σώματος διαβαίνοντα, καὶ συγκρατῆται ταύτην δυνάμενον. Hom. xxx Tom. V.

² Ζητεῖν προσετάχθημεν τὸ πρὸς τὴν συντήρησιν ἕξαρκούν τῆς σωματικῆς οὐσίας.

³ Regul. Brevior. Interrog CCLII.

“ what is useful to our existence for daily life.”¹ More extracts to the same purpose may be found in *Suiceri Thesaurus*. The inquiry into the meaning of this word conducts us to the same conclusion as before, that this petition embraces “ those things which are necessary to life,”² as Cyril of Alexandria explains it; or as Theodoret says, “ what is necessary in the present life,”³ or as one greater than them all, the Apostle James, expresses it, *daily food*.⁴

We call it OUR bread. It is ours when we have a right to it, both in the court of heaven and in the court of earth.⁵ In the court of heaven, before the tribunal of God, we have a right to the things of this world, when we have been united by faith to Christ, who has been “ appointed heir of all things.”⁶ To Adam, immediately after his creation, God had given dominion over all things which were fitted to be of use to him. That right of dominion he lost by his sin, being rejected and disinherited by the righteous judgment of God. No child of Adam, in his natural state, continues to possess any spiritual right, such as the children of God might claim, to the very smallest of God’s creatures. All men, while in a state of sin, are the unjust possessors, usurpers, robbers of God’s benefits. But Christ has recovered for his people what had been lost by the sin of Adam. God who had “ made him for a little time⁷ lower than the

¹ Τὸν πρὸς τὴν ἐφ’ ἡμέρον ζωὴν τῆ οὐσίας ἡμῶν χρῆσιμιεύοντα.

² Τὰ εἰς ζωὴν ἐπιτηδεῖα. ³ Τὴν κατὰ τὸν παρόντα βίον χρῆσιμ.

⁴ Τὴν ἐφ’ ἡμέρον τροφήν, Ja. ii. 15.

⁵ In foro, ut aiunt, tam *Polii* quam *Soli*. ⁶ Heb. i. 2.

⁷ *Paullisper*. the Hebrew word בְּיָמַי may either signify “ in a small degree,” or, “ for a short time.” *Βραχύ τι*, by

angels," afterwards "crowned him with glory and honour; made him to have dominion over the works of his hands; put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field: the fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas."¹ This Christ communicates to those, and those only, who are united to him by faith. "All are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."² Hence it follows, that in the court of heaven, believers are the only lawful possessors of all things, because they can enjoy them as their own, by the merits and the will of their first-born brother. Without going in the slightest degree beyond the bounds of propriety, they may view this sun, this moon, these stars, as so many torches lighted up on their account, to contribute to the performance of those good works which are worthy of human nature. They are even entitled to believe that on their account this world remains in its present condition, and that to them the wicked owe the forbearance which is now exercised. They may even glory in the Lord that all the creatures are their own,³ that

which the Apostle Paul, (Heb. ii. 9), following the Septuagint version, has rendered it, is capable of the same double interpretation, but more naturally suggests the idea of *time*, than of *space* or *degree*.—TR.

¹ Ps. viii. 5—8.

² 1 Cor. iii. 22.

³ His are the mountains, and the valleys his,
And the resplendent rivers, his to enjoy
With a propriety that none can feel,
But who, with filial confidence inspired,
Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
And smiling say—*My Father made them all.*

“all things,” and the whole government of God concerning them “will work together for their good.”¹

But an additional right is required in the court of men. The former right is universal, and does not interfere with private rights. While believers are assured that all things are theirs, individual possessions continue to be the property of individual persons. God, who is the supreme dispenser of his own benefits, has determined that each person shall claim as his own what he has acquired by a just title. By what various methods property may be lawfully obtained,—whether by inheritance, by gift, by purchase, by reward, or by any other method, it is the province of lawyers to determine. The meaning of the phrase, *our bread*, in the sacred writings, is explained by Paul when he “exhorts” the Thessalonians, “that with quietness they work and eat their own bread.”²

When we pray for OUR bread. (1.) It must be supposed, that a just right has been acquired by labour and diligence, accompanied by the Divine blessing. In this way it is distinguished from the bread of others, which many eat from base slothfulness, or filthy lucre, or covetousness and dishonesty. (2.) We next pray that we may not suffer that poverty and want, which would reduce us to the necessity of being supported by the liberality of others. What is bestowed on the poor by the liberality of the rich is, no doubt, their own by a just title, and may be

¹ Rom. viii. 28.

² “ἵνα μετὰ ἡσυχίας ἐργαζόμενοι τὸν ἑαυτῶν ἄρτον ἐσθίωσιν.

enjoyed by them, both before God and before men, with a good conscience. But the bread gained by our own industry is commonly considered to be our own, while that which is given to the poor as charity is considered to be the bread of others. It is the duty of every one, unquestionably, to rest satisfied with the lot which Providence has assigned to him. But as the Lord Jesus himself hath said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive,"¹ it is not inconsistent with the duty of a Christian to pray that he may not suffer that poverty which would compel him to live on the bounty of others. Such is the import of Agur's very judicious prayer, "Give me not poverty, feed me with the food of my allowance."² (3.) As the word *our* is plural, it denotes a fellowship of love, by which every believer prays not only for himself, but for all the members of his family, for other believers who are his brethren, and for all men without exception, that they may enjoy the necessaries of life,—but still with the view that he may be enabled to assist the necessities of others by charitable donations.

In this manner we are gradually led to the consideration of those things for which we are commanded to pray with respect to this bread. We pray, first, that God may GIVE it to us. God gives bread in two ways. I. With regard to possession.³ II. With regard to use.⁴ He gives it in the former method, (1.) When he blesses the labours of the

¹ Acts xx. 35.

² *Cibo demensi mei.* Pro. xxx. 8.

³ Κατὰ κτῆσιν.

⁴ Κατὰ χρῆσιν.

husbandman, and grants fruitful corn fields and a bountiful harvest. “He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of his works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth.”¹ (2.) When the produce which the earth, through the divine blessing, has yielded, is bestowed on individuals, and is possessed by them in their barns, in their houses, and at their tables. Those blessings are actually bestowed by God on individuals when they enjoy them, not as the bread of slothfulness, or of covetousness, or of deceit, or of robbery,—but when his providence enables them to obtain them by a just title. Those who possess them in any other way cannot be said to have them as a gift from God, but as the fruits of wicked robbery. “The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.”² (3.) When he bestows all those things on believers, not from the ordinary love which he bears to mankind,³ but from the Fatherly love with which he regards them in Christ. When the smallest crumb of bread, or a drop of cold water, is bestowed by the love of God the Father, and of Christ, it becomes inconceivably preferable to all the delicacies of the rich. When those things are enjoyed as the earnest of better and heavenly blessings, “a little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.”⁴

¹ Ps. civ. 13, 14.

² Ps. cxlv. 15, 16.

³ φιλανθρωπία.

⁴ Ps. xxxvii. 16.

But, II. God gives them with regard to use.¹ It is not enough that you possess those benefits, if you have not the power and ability to use them for your convenience. In this point of view, we ought to consider that God gives us our bread. (1.) When he bestows upon us good bodily health, so that we have a moderate and rational enjoyment of his benefits. The soul of a sick man “abhorreth all manner of meat.”² “His life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat.”³ So that, even while they possess them, they appear not to possess them. (2.) When he endows us with that generosity of soul, which enables us, according to the respective stations which Providence has assigned to us in this world, to take a free and cheerful use of the good things of this life. This is beautifully expressed by the inspired preacher, “Behold, that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for it is his portion. Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; **THIS IS THE GIFT OF GOD.**”⁴ (3.) When he blesses his own benefits, so that they yield the comfort which they are appointed to yield. Without that blessing they would, in some way or other, be unprofitably wasted, or, if they remained, the bread we eat would not nourish us, what we drink would

¹ Κατὰ χρεῖσιν.

² Job xxxiii. 20.

² Ps. cvii. 18.

⁴ Eccl. v. 18, 19.

not quench our thirst, and the clothes we wear would not give us warmth. "Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts, consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little: ye eat, but ye have not enough: ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink: ye clothe you, but there is none warm: and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes."¹ This blessing of God is the *staff of bread*, which gives to bread its power to nourish our bodies. When that is taken away, which God threatens that he will sometimes do, the greatest abundance will avail us nothing. "When I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied." This staff of bread derives all its power from the word of God,—from that powerful command by which God determines that this bread, at this time, shall nourish this man. For as all things have been appointed by God, as they all exist by the power of his Almighty command,—so the operation of all things takes place by the energy of that command, "That he might make thee know," said Moses, "that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."² It follows, from these statements, that this petition is as necessary for the richest as for the poorest of mankind. For what would the highest degree of the good things of this life avail us, if the blessing of God were wanting, which alone can make

¹ Hag. i. 5, 6.

² Deut. viii. 3.

them promote the comfort of soul or body, and yield to us the joy which is worthy of the children of God?

There is emphasis, too, in the prayer that the bread may be given to us **THIS DAY**. This expression conveys many important lessons. (1.) It is a confession of our poverty, which requires every day fresh materials for our support, and bids us depend continually on God, who supplies us with food from day to day. "These all wait upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them, they gather; thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled; thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to the dust."¹ (2.) It reminds us to abstain from anxious and unbelieving care, which looks forward, with excessive solicitude, to—"to-morrow," and to days which, perhaps, we shall never see.² I employ the expression, "anxious and unbelieving care," for a prudent care, joined to trust in the Divine goodness, is not merely allowed but approved.³ Nay, Paul declares that it is the duty of parents to lay up treasures for their children.⁴ (3.) It reminds us not to indulge an excessive desire of the good things of this life, and exhorts us to be content with what is necessary for the passing day.⁵ The meaning of our Lord's words has, in

¹ Ps. civ. 27—29.

² Mat. vi. 34.

³ Pro. vi. 6—8; xxxi. 21.

⁴ 2 Cor. xii. 14.

⁵ *Σήμερον*, (*this day*), appears to be here employed for what would have been the full Hebrew idiom, *σήμερον σήμερον*, that is,

my opinion, been best illustrated by the eminent *Grotius*, "When the master of a family is a good, and wise, and rich man, the members of the household will not ask permission to store up in their cellars provisions for a number of years, but will be satisfied with the daily allowance. In like manner, it is the will of Christ that our prayers shall be free from unbelief and from covetousness. The meaning of these words, therefore, is: Give us, O God, the food that is necessary for the remainder of life. If it please thee not to give us yearly, give us monthly, give us at least daily supplies. Every thing beyond this will be superfluous."

Finally, every one prays for bread, not for himself only, but for others. It is the part of a niggardly, avaricious, and envious man to say, *Give me*. Jesus has taught us to say, Give us. In this way we know that whatever blessings are granted by God in answer to those prayers, are granted on the condition that they be shared along with others. The Hebrew masters are wont to distinguish the *just*¹ man from the *beneficent*² and *pious* man, in the following manner. The *just* man says to his neighbour, "*All mine is mine, and all yours is yours*. The *pious* and *benefi-*

as Luke interprets it, τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν, *day by day*, (Luke xi. 3). The Hebrews say, דבר יום ביומו, *the allowance of the day in its day*, (Dan. i. 5), which the LXX. rendered τὸ τῆς ἡμέρας καθ' ἡμέραν. Junius translates it, demensum diei cujusque in diem quemque, *the allowance of every day for every day*.

¹ צדיק.

² חסיד.

cent man, again, says, *All yours is yours alone, but all mine is also yours.*¹ It is the will of the Lord Jesus that his disciples should be of that description of *Hasideans*² who spend for the advantage of others whatever they have received from God. And as they do not choose to eat the bread of others except when necessity compels them, so they do not choose to eat their bread alone, to the exclusion of the poor. A solemn declaration to that effect is made by the patriarch Job, in very beautiful language, “If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; for from my youth he was brought up with me as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother’s womb.”³

Having thus explained the words of the petition, we are now to consider the ORDER in which our Lord commanded that it should be placed. In the

¹ The distinction will probably remind the reader of one made by the Apostle Paul, the force of which must be in some degree estimated from the Hebrew words which he is likely to have had in his eye. Rom. v. 7, “Scarcely for a righteous man (צַדִּיק), will one die: yet, peradventure, for a good man (יִדְּוֹסִי), one would even dare to die.—TR.

² The ancient sect of the Jews, known by the name of *Hasideans*, or *Assideans*. (Ἀσιδᾶις, as they are called in 1 Mac. vii. 13), is not mentioned by any of the inspired writers. The Hebrew name is מְרַחֵם, *merciful*, derived from רַחֵם, mercy.—TR.

³ Job xxxi. 16—18.

order in which we find it placed, it comes after those petitions which have a more direct reference to God, and comes before those petitions which relate to the removal of the distresses of our soul. That circumstance has given rise to some doubts as to the true interpretation, all the commentators taking for granted the beauty of the arrangement, while they are at variance with each other as to the manner in which it is to be demonstrated. Our Lord chose, as some imagine, to begin with the concerns of the body, in order that our minds might gradually rise to higher objects and to nobler acts of faith. This view is admirably explained by Calvin. "Pardon of sin," says he, "is as far superior to food, as the soul is more valuable than the body. But our Saviour began with bread and the supports of our earthly life, that from such simple matters he might lead us to higher objects. We do not pray that daily bread may be given to us before we are reconciled to God, as if the perishing food of the body were of more importance than the eternal salvation of the soul. The design is, that our minds may rise, as it were by ladders, from earth to heaven. For when God condescends to nourish our bodies, it is beyond a doubt that he will be far more careful about our spiritual life. His kind indulgence, therefore, tends to elevate our faith." The acuteness and piety of these observations are readily admitted. I am not so certain if they are consistent with the order of the whole prayer. Our Lord does not lead us gradually from inferior to higher subjects. He commences with the highest of all, and then descends to what is lower.

He first of all lays down the ultimate object of our prayers, and next introduces the means by which that object is gained. If he had taught us to ascend by ladders, he would have begun at the lowest step, till in regular order we had arrived at the highest. But that plan, we perceive, is entirely reversed.

Some commentators employ still more refined arguments. The whole doctrine of the gospel, they tell us, leads to this conclusion, that heavenly, spiritual, and eternal blessings, ought to be supplicated with far more earnest prayers than the perishing objects which relate to this animal life. Yet such is the weakness of men, of those especially who were the earliest disciples of Christ, that they are wont to think of the soul more readily than of the body. Jesus, therefore, out of his inconceivable goodness and wisdom, condescends so far to human weakness, as to permit bodily and earthly benefits to be first mentioned in prayer, that the mind, freed from that kind of anxiety, may engage with greater ease and cheerfulness in spiritual inquiries. Such a method, certainly, instead of healing, would have nourished and strengthened the disease. Is this the way in which the mind is drawn aside from excessive solicitude about the bodily welfare? Is it first of all permitted to remove all grounds of fear about the body, that it may afterwards attend more carefully to other matters? Is it not the duty of a Christian to pursue higher objects with such earnestness that all things else shall be regarded as mere additions? This is unquestionably taught us by our Lord. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and

all these things shall be added unto you.”¹ But if he had thought that we ought to follow the way now recommended, would he not have placed the petition about daily bread before all the others, that after satisfying this natural and animal desire, our mind might be more freely and cheerfully employed about the things of God ?

What then ? Nothing in my opinion is more simple. We perceive that our Lord has so arranged this whole prayer as to divide the petitions of it into two parts. I. The desire of benefits. II. The deprecation of evils. The benefits again are divided into two classes. Some are divine, heavenly, and spritual ; others are earthly, bodily, animal. The former, being by far the most excellent, claimed to be placed in the first rank,—which our Lord did, by assigning to them the first three petitions. But as the latter are of far inferior value, they were properly thrown down to the lowest rank, which is the exact place they occupy among the petitions for blessings. Next follows the deprecation of evils—the removal of the guilt lying upon us from the sins we have committed, and deliverance from the tyranny of sin and Satan. For what would our life avail us if we had always to contend with those evils ? And what pleasure could we derive from the greatest abundance of the good things of this life, if our unpardoned guilt left us exposed to the wrath of God and to the cruel rage of the Devil ? “ How beautifully has the Divine wisdom arranged the order of this

¹ Mat. vi. 33.

prayer," says Tertullian justly, "for after heavenly matters,—the name of God, the kingdom of God, the will of God,—he has placed a petition about our earthly necessities." But deliverance from the evils we have mentioned is truly a great blessing, and more desirable than this animal life. The supports of this animal life are, therefore, not without reason placed in the middle of the prayer, that we may begin with eternal blessings and end with the deprecation of eternal evils. The observation of *Crocus*¹ is very appropriate: "It was the pleasure of our Lord to place this bread in the middle of the prayer, that we may both begin and end with spiritual matters,—knowing as we do, that we ought to pray for earthly blessings, solely for the purpose of being better prepared to pursue our journey to the kingdom of heaven."

We have thus succeeded, we think, in explaining our Lord's design. In doing so, we have said nothing that is not strictly agreeable to the native signification of the words, to the whole discourse, and to the connection of the prayer with what goes before and what follows. The view we have given will be found also to illustrate the exalted wisdom of the Redeemer, and to inculcate the exercise of those virtues which ought to adorn the Christian in the present life. This will appear more fully, when we have explained, in somewhat greater detail, the number and excellence of the moral précepts contained in these words; for we have still to consider the 'practical view of this petition.

¹ *Antiweigelij, Part II. Cap. v. Q. 1.*

And, *first*, we are taught that it tends to promote the glory of God when a Christian asks from him, as his Heavenly Father, what is connected with the support of this life. The most eminent men, who were favoured with the greatest familiarity and intimacy, and with the largest promises of the Supreme Being, have in all ages offered such prayers. The examples of the wise Agur,¹ and of Israel, our Father,² are well known. There are likewise commandments of God to this purpose, enjoining the exercise of prayer and fasting for removing the distresses and obtaining the benefits of this life.³ And Solomon, at the dedication of the temple,⁴ instructs us that prayers of that sort ought to be frequently presented.

Nor let it be objected that all this belongs to the Old Testament, where the largest promises of earthly blessings were made to the people, but is at variance with the economy of the New Testament, all the promises of which are spiritual and heavenly. Paul viewed the matter very differently. He did not hesitate to pray in behalf of the Corinthians for earthly blessings, which would heighten the enjoyment of their own lives, and furnish the means of fresh liberality to the poor. "Now he that ministereth seed to the sower, both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness."⁵ There are many things in this passage that claim our attention. (1.) The Apostle prays in express terms that bread may be given to

¹ Prov. xxx. 8. ² Gen. xxviii. 20. ³ Joel ii. 12-17.

⁴ 1 Kings viii. 33-37. ⁵ 2 Cor. ix. 10.

them for food. (2.) That their seed might be multiplied. (3.) That this might be done as the reward of their piety and charity. (4.) That they might be enriched, and might have the means of providing for the necessities of others. (5.) That such wealth might promote the divine glory, being "abundant by many thanksgivings unto God."

We cannot refrain from quoting here the exhortation which Paul addresses so earnestly to all Christians, to pray "for all men, for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."¹ What is said here about a "quiet and peaceable life" relates to the life which is led under a human government; what is added about "godliness and honesty," relates to the life which is led in the kingdom of Christ. An eminent commentator has judiciously observed that two things are here put together, one of which is desired by all men, and the other by the children of God only. All men desire "a quiet and peaceable life,"—a life free from disturbance, from fear and dread, from poverty and a want of those benefits which men confer on each other in the exercise of the various arts and operations of life, together with the interchange of honour and respect, of friendship and confidence. This is the advantage, for the attainment and protection of which society is formed, governments are constituted, and customs and tributes levied. Christians, therefore, in their character of citizens, are bound to

¹ 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.

seek this blessing along with other citizens, and to seek it from God. But they keep in view a far more excellent end of human society,—that under the protection of a just and pious magistracy, they may be permitted to spend their life in all piety and holiness, free from any molestation that might be offered to the children of God on account of their religion. This prayer is peculiar to Christians.

Nor is it true that, while the Old Testament had two kinds of promises, temporal and eternal, the New Testament has none but what are eternal and spiritual. Our Lord teaches an opposite doctrine : “ All these things shall be added unto you.”¹ What are *all these things*? They are those things of which he had just now spoken, “ what we shall eat,” and “ what we shall drink,” and “ wherewithal we shall be clothed,”² of which “ our Heavenly Father knoweth that we have need,”³ and which we are taught to expect with holy confidence from his goodness. And on what does this confidence or hope rest with certainty but on the promise of our Father? Or what else than a promise is contained in our Saviour’s words?

Another passage to the same purpose is contained in the Apostle Paul’s writings : “ Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” I do not deny that the good things of the present life *include* those spiritual blessings which the kindness of God bestows upon us while we sojourn in this world. But I do deny that they *exclude* those which relate to

¹ Mat. vi. 33.

² Ver. 31.

³ Ver. 32.

animal life. For, (1.) When Paul refers to the promises made to godliness, he means those which had already found a place in the inspired writings, which, beyond all controversy, included the blessings of the present life. But he declares that those promises belong to us. (2.) Is it not certain that the blessings of this mortal life are promised in the Fifth Commandment? That promise he employs as an argument with Christians. "Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise, that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth."¹ Why does he quote the promise in this manner? Plainly to inform us that it was made for us, and that the children of Christians, who are obedient to their parents in the Lord,² "may expect a long and happy life in this world. To expound those words, in reference to the *Jews*, in their native and literal sense, and to convert them into a mere allegory when they are applied to *Christians*, is a method of interpretation to which we can by no means assent. (3.) We ought to observe that Paul had immediately before spoken of "meats which God had created to be received with thanksgiving."³ From those meats certain superstitious and false teachers had taught them to abstain by that *bodily exercise*⁴ which, he tells us, profiteth little." Paul, on the contrary, teaches that sincere "godliness is profitable unto all things," and that, among other things, it enables a man to enjoy all the good things which

¹ Eph. vi. 2, 3.² Eph. vi. 1.³ 1 Tim. iv. 3.⁴ σωματικῆ γυμνασίᾳ. 1 Tim. iv. 8.

God hath created with joy and thanksgiving. (4.) In what manner would godliness have the promises of this life, if it wanted the promises of those things without which it is impossible to live? The present life is this animal life, "the life which we live in the flesh,"¹ to employ a favourite expression of the Apostle Paul. That life must, therefore, be understood to be promised with all its necessary supports. (5.) In short, what room have we to doubt the promises of this animal life, when we have our Lord's express words in the Gospel? "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"² There is here a promise,—a promise of the clothing with which the body is covered,—a promise confirmed by the argument from a less to a greater,—a promise to be embraced by faith, for the want of this faith in the disciples is strongly censured.

The true difference, therefore, between the Old and New Testaments, so far as respects the promises of temporal and spiritual blessings, may be briefly stated. In the Old Testament, spiritual and eternal blessings are promised more sparingly, more obscurely, and almost always under the metaphorical representation of temporal blessings; while the temporal blessings themselves are promised as the figures, symbols, and pledges of heavenly blessings. In the New Testament, spiritual and heavenly blessings are promised very frequently, very clearly, in plain and di-

¹ Gal. ii. 20. Phil. i. 22.

² Mat. vi. 30.

rect terms, and in greater abundance; while bodily and temporal blessings are promised as additions or aids to those which are spiritual and heavenly, without any idea of their being employed as a type or pledge.

But in what manner does prayer for those blessings by which this animal life is to be supported, conduce to the glory of our Heavenly Father? (1.) We declare that our life is in the hand of God, who alone gave it to us,—who alone preserves it by his power and goodness, and administers those aids without which, according to the order which he has himself appointed, life cannot be preserved. The Psalmist enters very fully into this subject, and immediately adds, “The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever: the Lord shall rejoice in his works.”¹ (2.) We extol that providence of God, by which, at stated seasons of the year, he blesses the productions of the earth. “Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it. Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly—thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof. Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness. They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness; and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.”² (3.) We acknowledge that

¹ Psalm civ. 31.

² Psalm lxxv. 9—13.

all our labour, application, and industry are of no avail, except so far as he is pleased to favour our exertions.¹ And thus we are taught that in all our actions we depend wholly on his kindness. This is unquestionably a great part of piety and of true religion.² (4) We acknowledge that our health, which enables us to enjoy the gifts of God, and that every lawful pleasure which we partake in this life, is bestowed wholly by the divine kindness. We rise in this manner to God himself, who delighteth us with his benefits.³ All this is a declaration of the divine goodness which, when it proceeds from a pious mind, cannot fail to be pleasing and acceptable in his sight.

The SECOND lesson taught us in this petition is to be *moderate* and to be *content with little*. Every view which we can take of the petition,—of its number, its order, or the words in which it is expressed—conducts us to the same conclusion. In this small abridgment of prayer, there is but one petition for earthly blessings, and expressed in the fewest words; while the desires of divine and heavenly blessings are divided into many heads, and contained in five petitions. The inference is, that the former are scarcely entitled to the sixth part of the solicitude that is due to the latter. Besides, in the order of benefits to be desired, this petition occupies the last and the lowest place,—which teaches us that we ought to “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,”⁴ and that all other things deserve only a passing and inferior con-

¹ Psalm cxxvii. 1, 2. ² Psalm cxxiii. 1, 2. ³ Eccl. ii. 24.

⁴ Mat. vi. 33.

sideration. The very words of the prayer are so framed as to breathe nothing but moderation. We ask *bread*, not dainties; bread *enough*,¹ not *more than enough*;² bread for each day.

These statements were admirably illustrated by the ancient fathers, and inculcated on their hearers with great energy of language. Chrysostom, when expounding the cxxviii. Psalm, observes, “ You are, therefore, commanded to offer this prayer, in which you present one petition only for earthly blessings, and nothing more.”³ He pursues this subject more fully in his LIV. *Homily on Genesis*: “ For this reason he has prescribed to us, in the very words of the prayer, limits and rules so far as it is our duty to pray for the things of this life, by commanding us to employ these words, WHICH CONTAIN ALL PHILOSOPHY, *Give us this day our daily bread*, which means, *the allowance of the day.*”⁴ Gregory Nyssen enters into the subject with great copiousness and learning: “ We are commanded to seek what is necessary for the preservation of the bodily existence, by saying to God, *Give bread*, not luxury, nor wealth, nor beautiful purple robes, nor ornaments of gold,—nor anything else by which the soul might be drawn away

¹ ἐπιούσιον.

² περιούσιον.

³ Διὰ τιαυτήν ἐκελεύσθης εὐχισθαι ἐυχῆν, ἐν ἧ μόνον ἐν αἰτημα αἰσθητον αἰτεῖς, καὶ πλέον οὐδέν.

⁴ Διὰ γὰρ τούτο καὶ ἐν ταῖς τῆς εὐχῆς ῥήματιν ὄρους ἡμῖν καὶ κανόνας τιθεῖς. μέχρι τίνος δεῖ τῆν περὶ τῶν βιοτικῶν αἰτησιν ποιῆσθαι, τὰ ῥήματα ἐκείνα λίγειν ἡμᾶς ἐκελεύσει, τὰ πασῆς φιλοσοφίας γέμοντα. τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον, ἀντὶ τοῦ, τὴν τῆς ἡμέρας τροφήν.

from its divine and worthier care, but—*bread*.”¹ Shortly afterwards he presses the matter earnestly, and introduces Christ addressing mortals in the following manner: “Cease, O men, to waste your desires on trifles. Cease to multiply the occasions of uneasiness against yourselves. It is but little that you owe to nature. You owe nourishment to your poor body,² a moderate affair and easily procured, if you look only to what is necessary.”³ I omit other passages to the same purpose. Whoever wishes to see them may consult *Suicerus*.

He who has learned moderation has made great progress towards actual composure of mind. “Godliness, with contentment, is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.”⁴ Let all Christians re-

¹ Ζητεῖν προσετάχθημεν τὸ πρὸς τὴν συντήρησιν ἕξαρκοῦν τῆς σωματικῆς οὐσίας, τὸν ἄρτον δὸς, τῷ Θεῷ λέγοντες, οὐ τρυφὴν, οὐδὲ πλοῦτον, οὐκ ἐνανθεῖς ἀλουργίδας, οὐ τὸν ἐκ χρυσοῦ κόσμον, — οὐδὲ τί τοιοῦτον οὐδὲν, δι’ ὧν ἀφέληται ἡ ψυχὴ τῆς θεΐας τε καὶ προτιμότερας φροντίδος, ἀλλὰ τὸν ἄρτον.

² τῷ σαρκίῳ σοῦ. Σαρκίον, literally signifies, “a small piece of flesh,” and is manifestly employed as a contemptuous term. —TR.

³ Παύσασθε οἱ ἄνθρωποι περὶ τὰ μάταια ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις διαχειόμενοι. Παύσασθε τὰς τῶν πόνων ἀφορμὰς καθ’ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν πλεονάζοντες· μικρὸν ἐστὶ σοὶ τὸ τῆς φύσεως ὀφείλημα· τροφὴν χρεωστέεις τῷ σαρκίῳ σοῦ, τραγῦμα μέτριον τε καὶ ἐυπόριστον, εἰ πρὸς τὴν χρεῖαν ἐλέπεις.

⁴ 1 Tim. vi. 6—8.

member the exhortation which Paul addressed to the Hebrews, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."¹ Moderation is of great advantage both to the poor and the rich. Till the poor learn to view the luxuries of the rich without even a wish to obtain them, they cannot live a good or a happy life. If they are satisfied with those things which nature requires for their support, and which hardly any one does not receive from the Providence of God, they may reckon themselves as rich as kings. Their food and sleep will be as sweet, and rather sweeter, than the luxurious indulgences of those whose appetite needs to be provoked by condiments brought from a foreign land, and who are not satisfied with a couch of the softest down. The shortest road to riches is by contempt of riches. Nothing is more true than the paradox of the Stoics, *To be content with what we have is the greatest and surest riches*. This subject has led philosophers into many curious and subtle inquiries. Let us practically excel them, and make the experiment. With magnanimity rather than with pomp of language, let us say with the Apostle Paul, "As having nothing, and yet possessing all things."² But the rich also will have their happiness increased by moderation. All their abundance will be of no use to them till they have acquired self-command in the management of their affairs. What sort of enjoyment can that man have, who eats nothing pleasantly

¹ Heb. xiii. 5.

² 2 Cor. vi. 10.

that does not gratify his palate,—who frets, and rages, and storms when a man-servant, or a housemaid, has failed to perform a trifling part of duty? That great master of pleasure, Epicurus, had fixed days on which he took no more food than was barely sufficient to satisfy his hunger. His object was to see whether he wanted anything of full and perfect pleasure, and if so, what was its amount, and whether much labour would be properly bestowed on its acquisition. He even boasts of the extremely small sum which he expended on a meal. Such a mode of living, besides satisfying hunger, was evidently fitted to yield pleasure,—not the light and fleeting pleasure which needs to be afterwards renewed, but of a solid and enduring character. Water and coarse flour, or a crust of barley bread, may not be in themselves pleasant things, but to be able to find enjoyment in them is the very highest pleasure.¹

We come now to the THIRD lesson taught us in this petition. When we pray that *our* bread may be given us, we are taught (1.) industry. We call it *our* bread, which means that it is to be procured by our own labour. None but a madman will expect that the ravens will bring him bread and flesh, though this once happened to Elijah, as we are informed by sacred history. Every man must labour in his calling to earn his own bread. In the state of innocence, God had given to man a garden filled with every thing delicious, which he was appointed “to dress and to keep.”² Even at that period when nature pro-

¹ Senec. Epist. XVIII.

² Gen. ii. 15.

duced every thing spontaneously, man was not permitted to eat his bread in total idleness. After the fall, a sentence was pronounced on the human race, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread;"¹ and this is the "sore travail which God hath given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith."² The Son of God himself, our great preserver,³ before entering on the public discharge of his prophetic office, appears to have supported himself, and the family to which he belonged, by labouring as a mechanic; for his countrymen were wont to say of him, not only, "Is not this the carpenter's son?"⁴ but, "Is not this THE CARPENTER?"⁵ The liberty of the Gospel does not exempt us from the obligation to toil. It frees believers, indeed, from that kind of distress which is the result of unpardoned guilt, and from the bondage of the things of this world, and restrains us from pursuing them with excessive ardour,—but does not remove the necessity of diligence in our calling. Paul, though an Apostle, and most diligent in the discharge of that office, refused to "eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that he might not be chargeable to any."⁶ He did so with the express design of holding out an example to other Christians. "Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an example unto you to follow us."⁷ It is one of the commands which he addressed to the churches: "For even when we

¹ Gen. iii. 19.² Eccl. i. 13.³ Sospitator noster.⁴ Mat. xiii. 55.⁵ Mark vi. 3.⁶ 2 Thes. iii. 8.⁷ Ver. 9.

were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busy bodies. Now, them that are such, we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work and eat their own bread."¹ Let no man practice hypocrisy by adducing Christian liberty or the pursuit of better things as the pretext for his indolence. It is unworthy of a pious man to abstain from every public exertion for himself and his family, and then to "eat the bread of idleness."²

But we are taught (2.) *justice*. That bread is not our own which we seize by violent, secret, or dishonest means, out of the hands of those to whom it had been given, or appeared to be destined by the providence of God. We are not sincere in praying that God may give it to us, if, instead of waiting till God gives it, we take it violently into our own hands, in defiance of the laws of justice and charity. It would be a mockery and open contempt of the Supreme Being, if any person who heaped up wealth by dishonest means should dare to represent it as having been bestowed by the goodness of God. Such was the guilt of those who slew at their pleasure the flock of God, and "held themselves not guilty," and when they sold them, said, "Blessed be the Lord, for I am rich."³ Of a similar character was the wickedness of the Ephraimitish merchant, who, though "the balances of deceit were in his hand," though "he loved

¹ 2 Thess. iii. 10—12.

² Pro. xxxi. 27.

³ Zech. xi. 5.

to oppress," yet took pleasure in his ill-gotten wealth, and boasted, "yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance: in all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin."¹ But let no man hope that he shall continue to enjoy in safety his unjust gains. Zechariah saw "a flying roll; the length thereof was twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits," of which it was said, "this is the curse that goeth forth." He saw it enter into the house of the thief, (and every man who makes unjust gains is, in the judgment of God, a thief), and remain in the midst of his house, and consume it with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof."² The words of Zophar the Naamathite³ on this subject are beautiful and energetic, but the passage is too long for quotation. Let the disciples of Christ beware of taking out of the hands of their brethren, by any kind of dishonest transaction, that bread which they supplicate as the gift of God.

But this prayer teaches us (3.) the duty of depending on the favour of God. As the phrase, **OUR BREAD**, implies a promise of the industry necessary to obtain it in a lawful manner, so the prayer that God may **GIVE** it to us, contains an acknowledgment that our industry will be of no avail without the divine blessing. It deserves notice that the same chapter of the Book of Proverbs which contains those words, "the hand of the diligent maketh rich,"⁴ contains also these words, "the blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he

¹ Hosea xii. 7, 8. ² Zech. v. 2—4. ³ Job. xx. 15—29.

⁴ Prov. x. 4.

addeth no sorrow with it.”¹ Before engaging in any work which may belong to our respective callings, let us earnestly implore the blessing of God upon our labours. This is particularly necessary every morning, when we are about to undertake our daily and ordinary duties. Moses² has furnished us with words singularly appropriate to such occasions: “Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.” “The work of our hands,” which is mentioned more than once, implies a promise of industry; but a consciousness of dependance on the divine kindness, and a desire to obtain it, are as plainly expressed by the prayer, that “the beauty of the Lord our God may be upon us, and that he may establish the work of our hands.”

FOURTHLY, this prayer has a powerful tendency to inspire us with gratitude. For if we ask from God the supports of this life, it is proper that, when we have received them, we should render thanks. Now, this gratitude includes many things. (1.) We must not claim any thing for our own industry and skill, attributing to God an agency but equal or inferior to ours, or (which amounts to nearly the same thing), overlooking him altogether. The pride of the human heart has a strong tendency in that direction. We have a striking instance of this in Nebuchadnezzar, who, while he walked in his proud palace,

¹ Pro. x. 22.

² Ps. xc. 17. This Psalm is entitled “A prayer of Moses the man of God.”

which commanded a view of the beautiful city of Babylon, "spake and said, is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?"¹ Compare this with the words which the prophet Isaiah puts into the mouth of the king of Assyria. For he saith, "by the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I am prudent."² This is to "sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag."³ Against such a course the people of God were loudly warned. "Lest thou say in thine heart, my power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth."⁴ God threatens that, if the Israelites shall disobey in this respect, he will punish their ingratitude by withdrawing from them the blessings of his providence. "For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal. Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness."⁵

Such base ingratitude God did not allow to pass unpunished, even in the Gentiles. The words of Ezekiel are remarkable: "Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, MY RIVER IS MINE OWN, AND I HAVE MADE IT FOR MYSELF."⁶ These last words may be understood lite-

¹ Dan. iv. 30.² Isa. x. 13.³ Hab. i. 16.⁴ Deut. viii. 17.⁵ Hosea ii. 8, 9.⁶ Ezek. xxix. 3.

rally. For Egypt was exceedingly proud of the Nile, and owed its fertility to that river, the waters of which had been distributed, by the command of its kings, into various canals. "On thy account," says *Tibullus*, addressing the Nile, "thy country asks no showers, nor does the parched herbage implore from Jupiter a supply of rain."¹ The reason was, that Egypt received no rain from the clouds, but was nourished by copious dews, and by the overflowings of the Nile.² The king of Egypt boasted that that river "was his own, which he had made for himself," meaning that he had distributed and adapted it to

¹ Te propter nullos tellus tua postulat imbres,
Arida nec pluvio supplicat herba Jovi.

² Moses, who was a native of Egypt, and enjoyed the best opportunities of studying the resources of that country, delights to contrast it with the rich and beautiful fields of Palestine. It is a favourite subject,³ and repeatedly finds a place in the simple and natural, but rapid and eloquent narratives with which the book of Deuteronomy abounds. On no feature—not even on the extraordinary fertility—of the land of promise, does he appear to dwell with such exquisite satisfaction, or with such exuberance of poetic imagery, as on the plentiful rains with which that land was favoured. "For the land which thou goest in to possess is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and WATEREDST IT WITH THY FOOT; as a garden of herbs; but the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, AND DRINKETH WATER OF THE RAIN OF HEAVEN; a land which the Lord thy God careth for; the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." (Deut. xi. 10—12.)—
TR.

³ Deut. viii. 7—9.

the purposes of his own convenience and renown. A *river* is frequently employed in prophetic language to express a *people*.¹ As by Euphrates are understood the inhabitants of Babylon,² so by the Nile are understood the Egyptians, who inhabited the banks of that river. Pharaoh considered the Egyptian people to be his own inheritance and lot, which could not be taken from him; and, overlooking the Supreme Being, boasted that he owed to himself his wealth, and kingdom, and power. In this lay the pride of Pharaoh, and the indignity offered to God, which excited the divine indignation. “Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, behold, I will bring a sword upon thee, and cut off man and beast out of thee. And the land of Egypt shall be desolate and waste; and they shall know that I am the LORD: because he hath said, THE RIVER IS MINE, AND I HAVE MADE IT.”³ The history corresponds to the prophecy. The king of Egypt who lived in the time of Ezekiel, was Pharaoh-hophra;⁴ for Jeremiah and Ezekiel, it is well known, were contemporary prophets. The LXX call him Ὀυαφρης. He appears to be the same person whom Herodotus calls *Apries*,⁵ and of whom, among other things, he tells us, “Apries is said to have entertained the belief that neither God nor man could take from him his kingdom: he had, in his own opinion, established it so securely.”⁶ And yet, He-

¹ Rev. xiv. 7, and xvii. 15.

² Isa. viii. 7.

³ Ezek. xxix. 8, 9.

⁴ Jer. xliv. 30.

⁵ Ἀπρίης.

⁶ Ἀπρίεω δὲ λέγεται εἶναι ἥδε ἡ διάνοια, μηδ' ἂν Θεὸν μὴν μηδένα δύνασθαι παῦσαι τῆς βασιλείης· οὕτω ἀσφαλῆως ἐωῦτῶ ἰδρῦσθαι ἰδόκειε.

Herodotus proceeds, " he fled from the field of battle, and was carried as a prisoner to the city Sais, to the house which had formerly been the palace of Amasis, and was afterwards strangled by the Egyptians." Herodotus and the prophets, certainly, do not agree on all points. What he says as to the pride of Apries, and what he states generally about his miserable end, form a beautiful commentary on the words of the prophet Ezekiel. But Herodotus affirms that the Egyptians revolted from Apries and made Amasis king; while Scripture relates that the king of Egypt, who bore that name, was delivered into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar.¹ But this is a remark in passing. All I meant to contend for was, that God cannot suffer that forgetfulness of himself, by which poor miserable men ascribe to their own industry or power the acts of the Divine kindness. And, if he punished it so severely in heathens, what may not Christians expect, if they are guilty of the same impiety?

(2.) Gratitude requires that what we disclaim for ourselves we ascribe to the Supreme Being. " When thou hast eaten, and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee. Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God."² " But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God; for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth."³

(3.) The acknowledgment of the Divine goodness does not consist wholly of the sentiment of gratitude, nor is it discharged by words alone, but includes

¹ Ezek. xxx. 25.

² Deut. viii. 10, 11.

³ Ver. 18.

also our duty to use the good things which God hath given us according to his will, and for the advancement of his glory. We ought to *use*, I say, the good things of God. For moderation or piety,—which many persons employ as a cloak to their own avarice or hypocritical superstition,—does not consist in doing violence to our natural inclinations, or in taking, with a niggardly hand, either for ourselves or others, the abundance of the Divine goodness. This is one of the vanities springing from human folly, which the inspired preacher justly reproveth, “There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men: a man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease.”¹ With extraordinary madness the man who acts in this manner makes himself poor in the midst of riches.² The Christian who has a proper knowledge of his religion and of true godliness, possesses and enjoys what God has given him as the means of doing good.³ This, certainly, is one of the maxims of the wise: “Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works.

¹ Eccl. vi. 1, 2.

² Obliviscitur usus, rationes accipit, forum conterit, kalendarium versat, fit ex domino procurator. Sen. Epist. XIV.

³ *Non huic sepositas infelix strangulat arca
Divitias.*

*Quid ergo? — expositi census et docta fruendi
Temperies.*

Let thy garments be always white ; and let thy head lack no ointment.”¹ They do an injury to Christian godliness who represent it as morose, or as inconsistent with the cheerful use of the bounties of Providence. Very different was the instruction given by Moses to the Israelites respecting tithes, which they were to bring to “ the place which the Lord should choose to place his name there,” but which, “ if the way were too long” for them, they were allowed “ to turn into money.” “ And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after ; for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth ; and thou shalt eat there before the Lord thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household.”² Nor can it be believed that, under the mild administration of the New Testament, the adult sons of God are treated with greater severity than infants formerly were under the rigid code of the Old Testament.

It must always be observed, however, that we ought to use the good things of God in no other manner than according to his will. And this is the will of God, that we should avoid all effeminacy and discontentment with our present enjoyments, “ every where, and in all things, being instructed both to be full and to be hungry ;”³ to “ make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof ;”⁴ to “ take heed to ourselves, lest at any time our hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this

¹ Eccl. ix. 7, 8.

² Deut. xiv. 26.

³ Phil. iv. 12.

⁴ Rom. xiii. 14.

life ;"¹ not to " be brought under the power"² of any worldly or animal enjoyment ; that, when " the Lord God of hosts calls to weeping and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth,"³ we may not consult our own pleasures or convenience ; in short, that we should be willing to part with every thing in this world for the service and worship of God, " taking joyfully the spoiling of our goods, knowing in ourselves that we have in heaven a better and an enduring substance."⁴

But we must likewise do every thing with a view to his glory. " Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."⁵ At the very time when we use these good things, let us remember our Benefactor. Not fixing our whole attention on creatures, let us rise in our meditations to the Creator, reflecting that we are supported by his power, refreshed by his goodness, " satiated with his fatness,"⁶ and that the pleasure or abundance of what we eat or drink is the gift of his hand. While we partake our food with satisfaction, let us not seek to find in it that kind of sensual enjoyment which carnal men have in common with the brutes, but to be better fitted, both in body and in mind, for the service of God. From the agreeable occurrences of the present life, let us endeavour to rise to those pleasures of a spiritual and heavenly life, which earthly minds neither relish nor understand. Let us choose life for the sole purpose of devoting it to God, and

¹ Luke xxi. 34.² 1 Cor. vi. 12.³ Isa. xxii. 12.⁴ Heb. x. 34.⁵ 1 Cor. x. 31.⁶ Jer. xxxi. 14.

that we may be found in the number of the sons of men, who hallow the name of our heavenly Father,—who are the subjects of his kingdom, and study to promote it,—and who do his will in earth after the pattern of the angels in heaven. O how spiritual is this petition for the bread of the body, provided we understand it aright, and pray with the Spirit?

DISSERTATION XII.

ON THE FORGIVENESS OF OUR DEBTS.

ΚΑΙ ΑΦΕΣ ΗΜΙΝ ΤΑ ΟΦΕΙΛΗΜΑΤΑ ΗΜΩΝ,
ΩΣ ΚΑΙ ΗΜΕΙΣ ΑΦΙΕΜΕΝ ΤΟΙΣ
ΟΦΕΙΛΕΤΑΙΣ ΗΜΩΝ.

THE full and perfect happiness of a sinful man consists of two parts: first, the bestowment of all good, and next, the removal of all evil. Since the assemblage of all good things, according to *Boethius*, constitutes happiness, that man cannot be reckoned happy who wants any good thing, the desire of which gives him uneasiness. And as a very small evil may be sufficient to blunt the sense and relish of many exquisite enjoyments, the perfection of happiness requires that no consciousness of any thing evil should remain. Such perfect happiness, it must be confessed, was never enjoyed by any mortal in this life. But we must never fail to maintain this great superiority of the Christian religion above all other religions,—that it conducts its sincere professors by regular steps

to the very summit of happiness. Even while they sojourn in the earth, Jehovah holds fellowship with them through his gracious covenant, so that they are at liberty to say, "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul."¹ Now, God is all. Whatever good is found elsewhere, whatever good the mind is able to conceive, exists in the highest perfection in God, who is therefore their *exceeding great reward*.² In God is found protection from every evil. He declares that he is their *shield*, which receives and wards off every attack. But though all these things, in the most perfect manner, belong to the enjoyment of God, yet the enjoyment of God in this life is not perfect. There remains always some good for which we should pray, and some evil which we should ask to be removed,—till, advanced to the perfect enjoyment of God, we shall be most abundantly satisfied with all good, without the consciousness or dread of any evil. To such exalted happiness Jesus leads his disciples by this prayer. He bids them pray for those blessings, the first fruits of which are sufficient to produce that happiness which is attainable in this life, and the full enjoyment of which contains the satisfaction of every desire. He who, by the perfect knowledge and perfect love of God, hallows his name,—who is enriched with all the wealth of the kingdom of God,—who, joined to the inhabitants of heaven, obeys like them all the will of God,—can hardly be said to want any good thing. Next, our Lord teaches us to pray for the removal of all that is evil. But every thing

¹ Lam. iii. 24.

² Gen. xv. 2.

evil is summed up in sin, which may be viewed, either as guilt which binds us to condemnation, or as tyrannical dominion which holds us as slaves. Against both we are commanded to pray earnestly. The one cannot be separated from the other, and either would be sufficient to exclude us from all participation of the Divine favour. And, first, a prayer for deliverance from the guilt of our sins is presented in these words: FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS.

There are two things here to be explained. I. THE STATEMENT OF THE PETITION. II. THE ENLARGEMENT OF IT. As to the statement of the petition, we must inquire—(1.) Why is sin called a *debt*? (2.) Why do we here speak of *debts* in the plural number? (3.) What is meant by the *forgiveness of debts*?

Debt, in this place, means *sin*, as it is explained by the evangelist Luke, “And forgive us our sins.”¹ In the same sense our Lord uses it elsewhere. “Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and slew them, think ye that they were DEBTORS² (that is criminals) above all men that dwelt at Jerusalem?”³ Man’s first debt is obedience to God. When that debt has not been paid, it is followed by another debt of sin, by which the sinner owes a debt to Divine justice. The subject deserves to be somewhat more fully illustrated.

God is the first, highest, absolute Lord of all his creatures. Every thing, therefore, besides God must

¹ Luke xi. 4.

² ὀφειλίται

³ Luke xiii. 4.

be subject to him in every way in which subjection is possible. Besides, God is the highest reason, and purest holiness, and is consequently a pattern to all rational creatures. In the exercise of that highest power, he has given to man a law, which describes and portrays his holiness so far as it can be imitated by man. By that law he demands and requires something from man,—all that is good and right. “And what doth the Lord require of thee¹ but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”² That his love might appear to men more venerable and more lovely, he has confirmed it by promises of the greatest benefits, to be bestowed on all who adore his majesty and love his holiness, and by threatenings of the most dreadful curse to be inflicted through eternity on all that hate him and despise his commandments. Hence it follows that man owes to God obedience, or, which means the same thing, the exercise of all piety and virtue, by the acknowledgment of his highest power, and purest holiness, in order to obtain his favour and avoid his wrath. “Therefore, brethren, WE ARE DEBTORS,³ not to the flesh, to live after the flesh;”⁴ but (which is the necessary supplement) to the Spirit, that we may live after the Spirit. “We have done that which was our duty⁵ to do.”⁶ This is the natural debt of man, and necessarily arises out of that relation which subsists between God, as the highest Lord

¹ ומה יהוה דרש ממך.

² Mic. vi. 8.

³ ὀφείλεται ἑαυτῶν.

⁴ Rom. viii. 12.

⁵ Ὅ ὀφείλομεν ποιῆσαι, πεποιήκαμεν.

⁶ Luke xvii. 10.

and highest and purest reason,—and man as a rational creature of God.

If man does not pay that debt, he falls into another debt, that of sin. It is called a *debt*, because by sinning he makes himself guilty of violating the Divine Majesty and Holiness,—acting in such a manner towards God as if there were not a God to whom he owed subjection, or as if he were himself God, and the supreme dispenser of his actions,—or, which is worst of all, as if God were like the sinner; as if he delighted in iniquity and would not punish any transgression. “Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.”¹ This is to thrust God from his throne, on which the sinner has the effrontery to place himself: or, which is horrible to be thought and dreadful to be expressed, it is to put Satan in the place of God, that the sinner’s unlikeness to God may not appear. By acting in this manner, does he not contract a debt which no power of man will be able to discharge through all eternity? “Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the most High God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten 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?”² Does not the sinner deserve to be cut off from all happiness, if he has any; and cut off from the present favour of God, and from the hope of future glory, so that neither

¹ Psalm l. 21.

² Mic. vi. 6, 7.

could be obtained at any price. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."¹ "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"² Does it not make him a debtor to the retributive justice of God, to satisfy it, if possible, by everlasting torments of soul and body? "And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due to him."³

Had we contracted but one debt of this kind, would not the thought of it have been enough to fill our mind with indescribable horror? But we are chargeable with *debts*,—debts of every description,—Original, imputed, inherent;—actual,—debts of omission and commission, of ignorance, infirmity, and deliberate wickedness, without limits and without number. "Who can understand his errors?"⁴

If those debts could be denied, or in any way set aside, sinful man would not want either the insolence of falsehood, or the dexterity of fraud, to escape in any manner the hand of his creditor. But we all carry the hand-writing in our breast. Our "sin is written with a pen of iron and with the point of a diamond; it is graven upon the table of our heart."⁵ With indelible characters it is written in the book of the Divine omniscience,—“the book of remembrance,”⁶ mentioned by the prophet Malachi,—from which God will “set them in order before the eyes”⁷ of sinners, so that there will be no room for denial or evasion. “If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong;

¹ Rom. iii. 23.² Mat. xvi. 26.³ Mat. xviii. 34.⁴ Psalm xix. 13.⁵ Jer. xvii. 1.⁶ Mal. iii. 16.⁷ Psalm l. 21.

and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead? If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.”¹ And again, “If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.”² The amount of all these statements is this: Nothing which man does, contributes to deny, excuse, palliate, or wash away his sins. On the contrary, he increases the amount of his guilt, brings down upon himself a heavier sentence, and appears convicted and *self-condemned*.³

It would give some confidence to a debtor, if he could find among his friends and neighbours one who would be willing and able, out of the abundance of his riches, to discharge the debt. But that the sinner may not entertain the smallest expectation from such a quarter, we are taught to acknowledge that the debt is common to us all, for we say, *our debts*. There is not one among mortals who does not owe his soul. “As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one. They are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”⁴ Since, therefore, all are oppressed by the load, no one is able to discharge his own debt, much less that of others. “None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him. For the redemption of the soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.”⁵

All these considerations oblige us to throw ourselves at the feet of our Creditor, to implore his favour,

¹ Job. ix. 19, 20.

² Job. ix. 30, 31.

³ *ἑαυτοκατάκριτος*.

⁴ Rom. iii. 10, 12.

⁵ Psalm xlix. 8, 9.

crying out with the voice and with the heart, FORGIVE. On the forgiveness of sins we have already somewhat fully stated our views,¹ which it is unnecessary to repeat here. But it is proper to inquire in what sense we ask in this prayer the forgiveness of our debts.

We pray (1.) That God, out of his undeserved goodness, would pardon our sins, by not demanding from us the punishment which we deserved, or chastening us with such severity as we are unable to endure. "O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure."² (2.) That, on account of the satisfaction and merits of his Son, God would be gracious to us, and regard us with complacency and kindness, notwithstanding all our transgressions, and particularly that transgression which in our prayers we confess with grief and repentance. "Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified. Hear me speedily, O Lord: my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me."³ (3.) That he would be pleased to assure us of his grace by the secret testimony of his Spirit; and that the sentence pronounced in the court of Heaven, and ratified by his seal, may be delightfully communicated to our minds by his Holy Spirit. Such, there is reason to believe, was the prayer of David. "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Make me to hear joy and gladness."⁴ He

¹ Dissertations on the Creed, xxv. ² Psalm vi. 1.

³ Psalm cxliiii. 2, 7.

⁴ Psalm li. 1, 8.

had already heard, from the mouth of Nathan, the gracious design of God. “The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.”¹ But, not satisfied with this, he desires to be assured by the internal language of the Holy Spirit, which he considers to be the true cause, and, if not the only, at least the highest and most immediate cause of returning gladness after long continued grief. The word of a mere man,—though he be a faithful servant of God, nay more, a prophet,—can hardly remove the suspicions which the mind is apt to entertain on a subject of so much moment. When the voice of God himself, speaking to them of his grace, is heard, full and lasting peace is obtained. “Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.”²

But as this intimation of the Holy Spirit is not conveyed by words alone, we pray, (4.), That God would bestow upon us those blessings which usually accompany the pardon of sins, particularly, that he would restore us to the enjoyment of intimate and delightful fellowship with himself. The history of Absalom may furnish an illustration by analogy. David had actually forgiven him the murder of his brother Amnon, and had sent him an assurance to that effect, accompanied by a command to return from Geshur to Jerusalem. But he did not instantly admit him to the palace, to the royal presence, or to his affectionate embrace. “Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king’s face. So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not

¹ 2 Sam. xii. 13.

² Psalm xxxv. 3.

the king's face." But when he had earnestly remonstrated, "Wherefore am I come from Geshur? now, therefore, let me see the king's face, Joab came to the king and told him;¹ and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king; and the king kissed Absalom."² In nearly the same manner did God act towards David. Though God did not intend to punish his crimes,—though, as we have already said, he had intimated this by Nathan,—yet David did not, as formerly, enjoy friendly and familiar intercourse with God, or experience the highest delights of the Divine favour. Tormented by mental anguish, he prays, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation. Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice."³

Such is the frequent experience of believers. When they have once received our Lord Jesus by a true and living faith, they are reconciled to God and justified, by which it becomes absolutely certain that the wrath of God shall never fall upon them to condemnation. Yet it is possible, and frequently happens, that the same believers, who have been brought out of a state of nature into a state of grace, fall into some heinous crime, or even into a languishing and sluggish condition of the soul. In such cases, with a view to demonstrate the holiness of God, and the hatred which he bears to sin, God usually hides his face, expresses his heaviest displeasure, employs the rod of fatherly correction, and, even in answer to prayer,

¹ 2 Sam. xiv. 24, 28.

² Verses 32, 33.

³ Psalm li. 8, 12.

does not immediately restore to the sweet enjoyment of his former kindness. To a mind conscientiously impressed with a view of its sins, cherishing a sincere love of God, and preferring his favour above all things, this cannot fail to be in the highest degree distressing. Hence the tears, and sobbing, and sickness, and lamentation, and deep groans, till their Heavenly Father is graciously pleased to listen to their entreaties, and to restore the full and delightful enjoyment of his friendship. All that I have said may be properly viewed as comprehended in this petition.

But our Lord Jesus Christ was pleased to enlarge this petition by adding a remarkable argument, AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS. In order to understand this, we must inquire, I. Who are those *debtors*? II. In what consists *the forgiveness of our debtors*? III. What *relation* does our forgiveness of our debtors bear to the forgiveness which we ask from God?

Those are not *our debtors* who, according to a regular and civil contract, owe us money or some kind of services. This would imply that a Christian cannot properly and lawfully be held bound to fulfil such engagements. A Christian always continues to be a member of the commonwealth, and the sacred profession of religion does not interfere with those privileges which the laws of nature, or of nations, or of the state, bestow on men and citizens. Debtors would be guilty of hypocrisy, if they employed Christianity as a cloak for their injustice and fraud. "Render therefore to all their dues. Owe no man

any thing but to love one another.”¹ Onesimus, before he became a Christian, had run away from his master and carried off some property. Yet Paul himself, in pleading with Philemon in behalf of his slave, asks the pardon of his fault and his restoration to favour, but at the same time promises payment. “If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account. I, Paul, have written it with mine own hand. I will repay it.”² There is a religion in the world, which, with a view to its own propagation, and the destruction of what it is pleased to call heresy, thinks it right and proper to discharge its Catholic adherents from any obligations under which they may have come to heretics. While it thus openly violates the laws of nature and of nations, though it claims an exclusive right to the Christian name, it is, in this respect, the reverse of Christian. Yet justice and mercy, which our common humanity recommends, and Christianity enforces, require from creditors not to be unduly rigorous towards debtors. The prevailing consideration with them ought to be, not the maintenance of abstract rights, but the exercise of love, which is “the fulfilling of the law,”³—and a badge of Christianity.⁴

Our debtors are those persons who, by unjust designs, or words, or actions, have done us an injury. All sins, indeed, are committed against God, as the supreme Lord and lawgiver. But some are also committed against men, as the objects to which the sins immediately relate. To this class belong all attacks,

¹ Rom. xiii. 7, 8.

² Phil. 18, 19.

³ Rom. xiii. 10.

⁴ John xiii 34, 35.

by craft or violence, on the life, chastity, wealth, and reputation of others. He who commits such a crime makes himself a debtor to another, to repair the injury done. And such are the debtors here mentioned.

When our Lord requires us to *forgive* our debtors, he does not intend that it would be in all cases unlawful to demand the reparation of an injury, provided it were done in a regular manner, unaccompanied by bitterness, revenge, or a breach of charity. But he commands us to lay aside all hatred, enmity, and malice; not to wish or do any thing amiss to those who may have used us improperly; not to rejoice in the afflictions which befall them; but, on the contrary, to wish them well, and, when occasion offers, to do them good,—desiring earnestly that God may pardon the transgression of his law incurred by the injury they have done us. In a word, this forgiveness implies that we lay aside all malice, and perform the duties of brotherly love towards offenders. “Put on, therefore,” says the Apostle Paul, “as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.”¹

But what *relation* has this forgiveness of ours to that forgiveness which we ask from God? Our Lord did not certainly intend to teach us that they resemble each other very greatly, or almost in any

¹ Col. iii. 12, 13.

manner ; for the difference between them is immense. (1.) God forgives us as Lord, lawgiver, and judge, in the exercise of his supreme power ; while we forgive as equals, and as persons who are often chargeable with equal, or at least similar offences. (2.) As God cannot lay aside the character of a most righteous judge, he forgives sins solely with a view to the satisfaction of Christ, “ whom he hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.”¹ We, again, are here viewed as private members of society, and as brethren. In this capacity, though we owe to each other the reparation of any injury that has been done, yet we are bound to forgive without any satisfaction, and the more freely and readily we yield our own rights, the more becoming will be our conduct. (3.) When God forgives, he frees the sinner from everlasting punishment, and blesses him with his favour, which is the fountain of life and of all happiness. But when we forgive, we merely cease to indulge towards the offender our feeble, and perhaps impotent wrath, and bestow upon him our best wishes, which are always poor, and can scarcely yield him any perceptible advantage. And certainly our own condition would be miserable, if God’s forgiveness of sins were not infinitely more advantageous to us than ours can possibly be to our neighbour.

Neither was it our Lord’s intention to hold out our forgiveness as the meritorious cause of the Divine

¹ Rom. iii. 25, 26.

forgiveness. In one who is engaged in prayer,—more particularly in one who is praying for the pardon of his sin, nothing can be more unsuitable than a haughty presumption on his merits. How daring would be the pride of a sinner under sentence of condemnation, who should accompany an acknowledgment of the blackest crimes, for which no palliation could be offered, by a proud boasting of his merits; and who should presume to bring forward that miserable forgiveness—which he owes as a duty of love to his neighbour, and in which, perhaps, he frequently fails—as a reason why he considers himself entitled to the Divine forgiveness! Far from the humility of the Christian heart be such unbecoming pride; but most of all in prayer, and in that part of prayer in which grace and pardon are sought!

Still our Lord suffers us to adduce this plea, founded on our forgiveness. (1.) As a sort of argument with God, in which some degree of freedom is used, but attended by awe and reverence. Our argument with God is of the kind which proceeds from the less to the greater, and may be expressed in the following manner: “O Lord, we, whose kindness is always narrow and scanty, are influenced by such affections towards our neighbour as to forgive him cordially his offences against us. With how much greater boldness may we ask such a favour from thee, whose vast kindness knows neither bounds nor limits!” This argument is of a similar character to one of which Christ himself hath set us an example.

“ If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”¹ (2.) As a mark of the Divine favour about us and in us. It is an evidence that God has not altogether “ given us up unto vile affections,”² nor “ taken his Holy Spirit from us ;”³ since there are found in us those bowels of compassion which can only proceed from the Spirit of grace and love. On this ground we rest a well-founded hope that he will bestow upon us additional favours, for the gifts of God are usually crowned by fresh gifts. (3.) As something which necessarily precedes the conviction that our sins are forgiven, and the want of which would kindle the wrath of our heavenly Father against us. For it is impossible to be perfectly assured that our “ iniquity is pardoned,”⁴ and to derive from it consolation and joy, unless we discharge this duty of brotherly love towards our neighbours. We shall incur the displeasure of God, not only for our other transgressions, but likewise for our hardness of heart, in retaining an implacable enmity towards our brethren. “ And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any : that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.”⁵

Let this, therefore, be deeply impressed upon our

¹ Luke xi. 13.

² Rom. i. 26.

³ Ps. li. 11.

⁴ Isa. xl. 2.

⁵ Mark xi. 25, 26.

minds, THAT SINFUL MAN OUGHT TO ASK FROM GOD, WITH THE GREATEST EARNESTNESS, THE PARDON OF HIS SINS. That part of the Lord's prayer which we have now examined leads us to this conclusion, and there are not wanting weighty reasons to enforce it. No evil is more dreadful than unpardoned guilt. "If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?"¹ (1.) It is impossible to say how far the burden of unpardoned sin weighs down the soul, and oppresses the conscience. "For mine iniquities have gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me."² There is no inward calmness, no peace, till the mind, freed from the guilt of its iniquities, has nothing to fear from itself, from the Devil, or from God. The sinner looks upon himself as a dreadful, shapeless, huge monster,³ the sight of which fills him with perpetual dread. Wherever he dwells, he carries about and within him, at all times, an executioner. He is tormented by awful terrors. A deadly arrow sticks in his side, and behind the horseman, and behind the foot-passenger, sits black care.⁴ Or if some sort of poultice gives temporary relief from pain, it is followed by the slow progress of a cancer, which will afterwards show more alarming symptoms. The fire is not extinguished but is concealed under the ashes. A sinner will never be cordially reconciled to himself till he is reconciled to God his

¹ Ps cxxx. 3.

² Ps. xxxviii. 4.

³ *Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens.*

⁴ *Post equitem peditemque sedet atra cura.*

judge,¹ and he is not reconciled to God but by the forgiveness of his offences.

(2.) Till we have obtained it, we must want the favour of the Divine goodness, which is more delightful than life itself. “Thy loving kindness is better than life.”² It will not be in our power to draw near familiarly to God as our Father,—to perceive in his countenance the expression of fatherly regard,—to receive from his mouth the precious word of consolation,—to feel in our minds the sweet influence of love,—or to enjoy his embraces, for the sake of which it would be no hard matter to part with life itself. We must not think of heaven and salvation. That gate is shut. While our sins remain, there can be no hope of returning to Paradise, from which we were driven out. If, in such a condition, we happen to enjoy the good things of the present life, those good things are not ours. They do not proceed from that favour of God, which alone could render them truly good. And what advantage will they yield to those who, in a short time, will miserably perish? A magnificent, perhaps, and costly equipage, but the last they shall ever enjoy, and preparatory to their condemnation to everlasting death. (3.) We must not only lose the favour of God, but experience the inexpressible bitterness of his wrath and indignation. Sin is a fatal plague: it infects whatever it touches: the body, the soul, and ultimately all the faculties are tainted by its dreadful poison. Every thing connected with the sinner is cursed, “It shall come to

¹ 1 John iii. 20.

² Ps. lxiii. 3.

pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. Cursed shall thou be in the city, and cursed shall thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Cursed shall thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shall thou be when thou goest out."¹

(4.) But "all these" things, though grievous to relate, and hard to endure, are but "the beginning of sorrows."² Far heavier punishment of their iniquities will be inflicted on the sinners after this life, throughout an endless eternity. O were I permitted to lead by the hand, or rather by the ear, those irreligious persons who live in hardened neglect of their danger, and conduct them to the iron gates of hell,—presently to behold the excruciating torments of the damned,—to hear the wailings and lamentations with which they unavailingly lament the irrecoverable loss of time sinfully wasted, of labour sinfully bestowed, of Divine grace sinfully neglected,—to perceive, as it were, in their own presence, the dreadful but uninterrupted strokes of the sharpest chastisements, with which not flesh only, but the bones, the marrow, the whole frame is scourged by the righteous severity of God! The contemplation of such anguish might, perhaps, strike their minds with horror, impress them with a

¹ Deut. xxviii. 15—19.

² Mat. xxiv. 8.

conviction of their guilt, and throw them at the feet of the supreme judge, that with all prayers, and groans, and tears, while the door of his mercy is not shut, they might implore forgiveness. These are not the silly bugbears and idle phantasies of credulous minds, but the oracles of undoubted truth. O how wretched, how impossible to be sufficiently lamented and deplored is the condition of those who, burdened with the guilt of their sins, have not obtained forgiveness!

“Blessed,” on the other hand, are they “whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.”¹ For (1.) They are then delivered from the wrath and curse of God, and from every thing truly evil. “THERE IS NO CONDEMNATION to them which are in Christ Jesus.”² They have no reason to dread the accusations of conscience, the reproaches of Satan, the rigour of the Judge, the vengeance of Deity, the mention of hell. What accusation can conscience bring, if the Lord of the conscience is reconciled? With what reproaches can Satan charge them, if “God justifieth?”³ What room is there to dread the severity of the Judge, or the wrath of Deity, if he has once declared that he is fully satisfied? Why should the mention of hell alarm, if that is removed against which hell is threatened by him who alone “hath the keys, both of hell⁴ and of heaven?”⁵ If fatherly chastisements still await them, yet He from whose hand they come is a kind father, not a severe judge; and it would well become them to bow and kiss that

¹ Ps. xxxii. 1.

² Rom. viii. 1.

³ Rom. viii. 33.

⁴ Rev. i. 18.

⁵ Mat. xvi. 19.

fatherly rod. "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness."¹ If they must contend with the various afflictions of the present life, yet these will be unmingled with the curse, the bitterness of which alone produces misery. They will be "good,"² and will "work together for good."³ The very name of death ought not to alarm those to whom God is reconciled; for, when it has lost its sting, death is no longer the penalty of sin; but the close of sinning, the condemnation of sin, and the entrance into life. He who has actually obtained forgiveness of sins is entitled to raise a song of triumph, with the Apostle Paul, over death and hell. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord."⁴

(3.) The pardon of sin does not only free the sinner from the wrath of God, but restores him to the Divine favour and friendship. As it originated in a love of benevolence, and in the gracious purposes of God; so it places the sinner in such a condition that God regards him with a love of complacency, and bestows upon him the enjoyment of his grace in the most delightful manner. He is then enabled to behold the face of God as an indulgent Father, to hear

¹ Mic. vii. 9. ² Lam. iii. 26, 27. ³ Rom. viii. 28.

⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 55—57.

his gracious voice, and in the sweetest intimacy of Divine fellowship to declare, "Thy love is better than wine."¹ "For I will not," saith God, "contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made. I have seen his ways, and will heal him. I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners."² (3.) Since all these consequences flow from the full satisfaction of Christ, by which positive happiness, as well as freedom from punishment, has been obtained for believers; it follows that the pardon of sin is accompanied by the acknowledgment of a title to everlasting life. He who prays, *Forgive us our debts*, prays for nothing less than the most perfect happiness. Blessed, every way blessed, are those who are at liberty to glory in the Lord that their iniquities are pardoned. And who can doubt that such an attainment ought to be the object of our most earnest prayers; more especially when it is considered that the attainment is not so easy as many persons rashly allow themselves to believe. What labour, and sweat,³ and anguish, and suffering; what a dreadful and accursed death did it cost our Lord Jesus Christ, before he obtained for his elect the forgiveness of sins? But before the forgiveness which has been obtained can be applied to them, many of these distresses must be endured by themselves. Many prayers, and griefs, and tears,—many struggles with the Devil and with God,—many painful conflicts with sinful passions must take place,

¹ Cant. i. 2.² Isa. lvii. 16, 18.³ Luke xxii. 44.

ere they become assured of their reconciliation with God. The groans of David,¹ the bitter tears of Peter,² the streams that flowed from the eyes of that distinguished and blessed sinner who washed with them our Lord's feet,³ all speak the same language.

I must now address warm exhortations to several classes of persons. And, I. To you who indulge so freely in sinful pleasure; who, with an easy, cheerful, and smiling countenance, add immeasurably every day to the amount of your debts; whose sins, instead of being a burden, or a dread, are a delight; who "drink iniquity like water."⁴ Believe me, or rather believe God,—this mad pleasure in sinning will end either in this life, or in the next,—it may be in both,—in the bitterest sorrow. You will one day "say of laughter, it is mad; and of mirth, what doeth it?" What is now swallowed with such avidity is certain poison, which will consume your bowels with excruciating pain. Your "vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: your grapes are grapes of gall, your clusters are bitter: your wine is as the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps."⁵ "At the last, it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."⁶

But, II. Awake from your sleep, ye who, though burdened with such a load of debt, yet pass through life without anxiety; or who, if any anxiety unwillingly overtakes you, endeavour by every possible method to shake it off, resolving that you will not disturb the festivity of a single day, the cheerfulness of

¹ Ps. li. and xxxii.

² Mat. xxvi. 75.

³ Luke vii. 38.

⁴ Job xv. 16.

⁵ Deut. xxxii. 32, 33.

⁶ Pro. xxiii. 32.

a meal, or the repose of a night. What sort of deadly sluggishness must belong to a mind which so shamefully neglects its own concerns? Must all that we have said about the baseness of sin, and the obligation of debt by which the sinner is bound, pass for trifles and for delirious dreams? "Let no man deceive you with vain words:" you unquestionably owe your soul; "for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."¹ "Tribulation and anguish" shall be "upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God."² Do you hope to discharge your own debts? You never can. The strictest of all creditors keeps accounts which even your own conscience must own to be rigidly exact. Do you presume to attempt flight, to escape from the hands of your creditor? But where, or how? "If you ascend up into heaven, he is there: if you make your bed in hell, behold, he is there. If you take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall his hand lead you, and his right hand shall hold you."³ Where will you find an asylum safe against the omnipresent Jehovah? "The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee."⁴ "Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down. And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they hide from my sight in the bottom of

¹ Eph. v. 6.² Rom. ii. 9, 11.³ Ps. cxxxix. 8 10.⁴ Obad. 3.

the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them.”¹ Do you flatter yourselves with the hope that these accounts will never be exacted? God hath sworn by a solemn oath that they will certainly be exacted. “For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. SO THEN EVERY ONE OF US SHALL GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF TO GOD.”² Or do you imagine that you will easily find some means of defending, palliating, or excusing your admitted transgressions? Oh vain thoughts of the self-deceiver! You have not even a “fig leaf”³ to cover your nakedness. “Now ye have no cloak for your sins.”⁴ “That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”⁵ And now, by what reason, or by what appearance of reason, can a state of carelessness so madly foolish be defended? You have still, perhaps, one remaining consolation, in the thought that from a Being infinitely good there will be no great difficulty in obtaining pardon, provided that on your dying bed you address God in the words of the publican, “God be merciful to me a sinner.”⁶ But who are you that dare to promise more to yourselves from the goodness of God than did David, or Hezekiah, or Peter, or Paul, and others who, you cannot but know, were the intimate *Friends of God*,⁷ and who yet panting and toiling ascended through the valley of tears to the hill of calm consolation? Let none, none imagine that he will succeed on easier terms.

¹ Amos ix. 2, 5. ² Rom. xiv. 11, 12. ³ Gen. iii. 7.

⁴ John xv. 22. ⁵ Rom. iii. 19. ⁶ Luke xviii. 13.

⁷ Isa. xli. 8. Ja. ii. 23.

III. But I must also address you who rashly claim the forgiveness of your sins as obtained and certain, though you have not bewailed your sins in a proper manner, though you continue to live in them, and though you do not exercise justice, kindness, and love towards your neighbours. What madness is this that, on a matter of such moment, you will amuse yourselves with "old wives fables"¹ and foolish dreams? Our sins—so you say, so you profess to believe,—have been pardoned by God. And trusting to that presumption, you harden your mind against every kind of warning or suspicion. But when were they pardoned? And how? On what day was the sentence of absolution pronounced? Who announced, who conveyed to your mind an intimation of the fact? Where is a copy of this deed to be found? By whom was it written or subscribed? These, you reply, are mere riddles, puzzling questions, which no man understands, and to which no man can be expected to reply.—And is it so? Are you ignorant of them? Do you not understand them? Have you not learned them? And yet you boast so confidently that the sentence of absolution has been pronounced. You unquestionably know this, that you are guilty of aggravated crimes; that you deserve eternal condemnation; that you have to do with an omniscient and just judge. You are ignorant of the time and manner in which your pardon was obtained. You have no proper argument to offer for convincing yourselves

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 7.

or others. And yet you choose to be as much at ease, as if you had contracted no debts, or at least as if you had your discharge at home. Tell me honestly, have you acted thus about your pecuniary debts; where, if any thing had been neglected, it might be remedied by a fitter time or more favourable opportunity? And if in pecuniary affairs you dare not act thus, will you not hesitate to do so in this great matter, in which the possibility of mistake occurs but once, and on which the everlasting salvation or perdition of your souls depends? Rouse yourselves from this lethargy. Bestow your utmost attention, lest you share the fate of some criminal, who, imprudently trusting to certain spurious letters of pardon which some impostor had put into his hands, is hurried, at a time when he least expected it, to ignominious execution.

And you, my brethren, whom I love, and after whom "I long greatly in the bowels of Jesus Christ,"¹ act, I beseech you, with greater wisdom and prudence. Have compassion on yourselves, and build no hopes of so important a kind on any but a solid foundation. Every one of you is compelled along with me to acknowledge that he has contracted immense and vast debts, which he cannot refuse, and which he cannot discharge. What remains but that you turn to God, fall upon your face, and with sighs, and tears, and sobs, and groans, again and again pour out this petition. Forgive, O Lord,—Forgive, O Heavenly

¹ Phil. i. 8.

Father.¹ At morning, noon, and even,—by day and night let this be your cry. Break in at times on your worldly occupations. Choose a solitary spot to transact this matter with God. Even in the midst of business, let prayers and groans, unheard by any ear save the ear of God himself, ascend to his throne. Give no peace or rest to your mind till you have obtained it, and till the conviction that you have obtained it is supported by unanswerable arguments.

In order to obtain it, attend to the following instructions. (1.) Make an unreserved confession of all your sins to God. Nothing is unknown to him, and all dissimulation is regarded by him as the mark of a mind that is not upright. “I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.”² He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy.³ (2.) Submit humbly to the rod of his fatherly chas-

¹ [What better can we do than to the place
Repairing where he judged us, prostrate fall
Before him reverent; and pardon beg; with tears
Watering the ground, and with our sighs the air
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeigned, and humiliation meek?
Undoubtedly he will relent, and turn
From his displeasure; in whose look serene,
When angry most he seemed and most severe,
What else but favour, grace, and mercy shone?

Milton's Paradise Lost, Book X.]

² Ps. xxxii. 5.

³ Pro. xxviii. 13. Luke xv. 18, 19.

1 John i. 9.

tisement, only praying that he may “not rebuke you in his anger, or chasten you in his hot displeasure.”¹ Let this be your prayer, “O Lord, if thy wisdom, and holiness, and goodness command me to taste the bitterness of my sins; if I must want for a time the greatly desired light of thy countenance, for the sake of which I would cheerfully part with every thing that is most delightful in this world; if I must experience the bitterness of thy indignation, which is more distressing to me than death itself, and which, alas! I own that I have deserved; yet, O Lord, I do not withdraw, and have no right to withdraw myself from thy authority. Here I am, ready to endure without a murmur whatever it shall be thy good pleasure to lay upon me. Only lay not on me thy wrath and curse; chasten me in moderation, for my correction, not for destruction; and when I shall have been chastened, receive me at length into thy friendship, lay aside the rod, let the light of thy countenance cheer me; “make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.”² What is there that will not be obtained by such humble prayers from the boundless goodness of our heavenly Father? (3.) Add to this the sincere profession of a *forgiving*³ spirit, of a mind quick and ready to forgive,—not merely once and again, but frequently, as often as occasion offers,—even if it be necessary, “not seven times only, but seventy times seven” times in a single day;⁴ not on slight occasions, but on the most important; and without respect

¹ Ps. vi. 1.

² Ps. li. 8.

³ Animi συγγνωμικῶν.

⁴ Luke xvii. 4. Mat. xviii. 21.

of persons, even towards those whom you have laid under many obligations to gratitude. With what face shall we who owe to God so many talents ask pardon from our creditor, if we hesitate to forgive a single pound, or even a penny, to our brethren? Let us see that we do not bring a curse upon ourselves, and not a blessing."¹ The majesty of God will not endure to be mocked.² (4.) Declare your serious resolution to avoid sin with all care and diligence. As Elihu says, "That which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more."³ And as the whole church says, "So will not we go back from thee: quicken us and we will call upon thy name."⁴ For it is certain that God has annexed the promise of pardon to the condition⁵ of sincere repentance.

¹ Gen. xxvii. 12.

² Mat. vi. 14, 15; xviii. 35.

³ Job. xxxiv. 32.

⁴ Ps. lxxx. 18.

⁵ A writer so deeply imbued as Witsius was with the spirit of the gospel, cannot for a moment be supposed to employ the word *condition* as denoting *human merit*. He evidently attaches to it a meaning closely resembling that of our Westminster Divines, who tell us: "The grace of God is manifested in the second covenant, in that he freely provideth and offereth to sinners a mediator, and life and salvation by him, and REQUIRING FAITH AS THE CONDITION to interest them in him." (Lar. Cat. Q. XXXII.) In both cases, the word *condition* means simply *an indispensable requisite*. Though freely employed by many sound divines, the word has come to be classed with the *voces signatae*, which more correct writers are expected to avoid. Few will dispute the principle, that a term which is apt to be interpreted in an unsound sense ought to be abandoned, wherever another term not liable to the same objection can be conveniently found. But those who have most warmly proscribed this and similar phrases have not al-

“ Wash you, make you clean : put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes : cease to do evil : learn to do well : seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow : though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”¹ “ Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts : and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”²

If we pray in this manner, and with this spirit, we are encouraged to expect that the affections of our Heavenly Father will be moved toward us. “ Therefore,” says he of Ephraim, “ my bowels are troubled for him ; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.”³ In the very midst of our prayer, he will

ways been careful to provide proper substitutes. Actuated by a laudable zeal to guard against every appearance of setting aside or modifying the doctrines of “ free grace,” they have sometimes neglected to urge the absolute necessity of faith and repentance in order to salvation. “ Although repentance be not to be rested in as any satisfaction for sin, or any cause of the pardon thereof, which is the act of God’s free grace in Christ : YET IS IT OF SUCH NECESSITY TO ALL SINNERS, THAT NONE MAY EXPECT PARDON WITHOUT IT.” (Conf. of Faith, c. xv. § 3.) “ Except ye repent,” said our Saviour, “ ye shall all likewise perish,” (Luke xiii. 3, 5.) The Apostles proceed in a similar strain. “ Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” (Acts iii. 19.)—TR.

¹ Isa. i. 16—18.

² Isa. lv. 7.

³ Jer. xxxi. 20.

sweetly interrupt us, saying, Rise up, my Son, wipe away thy tears, cease from thy groans, thy debts are forgiven thee, my "anger is turned away,"¹ my friendship is renewed. There is my right hand, the pledge of my favour. Take hold of it with faith and love. Come nearer that I may embrace thee.² But beware of new offences. I do not promise thee an eternity of uninterrupted love.³ O words sweeter than honey, dearer than gold, more precious than rubies! Grant, O Lord Jesus Christ, our Advocate⁴ and intercessor,⁵ that we may hear these words from thy mouth, and from the mouth of our Father, by thy Spirit. Amen.

¹ Isa. xii. 1.

² Gen. xxvii. 26.

³ This expression, which ought, perhaps, to have been better guarded, must be interpreted agreeably to the context. Those believers, to whom the joy of God's salvation has been restored, are liable to be again deprived of that enjoyment by falling into those sins which are visited by his fatherly displeasure. But the act of justification can never be suspended or reversed. "There is NOW NO CONDEMNATION to them which are in Christ Jesus." "God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified: and although they can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may, by their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure, and not have the light of his countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance."—(Conf. c. xi. § 5).

⁴ 1 John ii. 1.

⁵ Rom. viii. 34.

DISSERTATION XIII.

ON LEADING INTO TEMPTATION.

ΚΑΙ ΜΗ ΕΙΣΕΝΕΓΚΗΣ ΗΜΑΣ ΕΙΣ ΠΕΙΡΑΣΜΟΝ,
ΑΛΛΑ ΡΥΣΑΙ ΗΜΑΣ ΑΠΟ ΤΟΥ ΠΟΝΗΡΟΥ.

WHOEVER has God for his friend will find Satan to be his enemy. He receives the name of SATAN,¹ first, because he is the adversary of God himself; and next, because he is the adversary of those whom God honours with his friendship, who love God, who rank on the side of God, who bear his image, and reflect, in no inconsiderable degree, the brightness of the Divine glory. That wicked enemy is so inveterately opposed to the Divine majesty that he would gladly, if it were possible, overturn the throne of God. As he utterly despairs of accomplishing that object, he throws out all his venom against the elect, employs every expedient, and exhausts all his devices to enslave those whom the power of God has torn from his grasp. “The great red dragon,” when he was cast out from heaven, found a mad solace of his misery in drawing with his tail as large a proportion as he could of the stars of heaven, in removing them from their ethereal abode, and sinking them in the

¹ שָׂטָן, an adversary.

bottomless pit.¹ He assaulted the first Adam in Paradise, and “beguiled him through his subtlety.”² He made an attempt on the second Adam in the wilderness, but his efforts were foiled. Disappointed in that expectation, he bends all his attack on those whom Christ has claimed to be his own. When he sees them extricated from his toils, loosed from his shackles and bolts, restored to liberty, and proceeding straight towards the glory of the heavenly kingdom,—he is roused to rage and fury, and, “like a roaring lion,” pursues and besets them from every quarter, “seeking whom he may devour.”³

But this hatred must be mutual; as was ordained by God in Paradise, when “the Lord God said unto the serpent, I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”⁴ Those who are desirous to practise true holiness pursue the Devil and all his works with a deadly hatred. There is nothing which they are more desirous to avoid than to do, or say, or wish, or think anything which he does not dislike. That mutual hatred is the source of the petition which we are now to explain.

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

Having already confessed our sins, we have prayed that God would forgive them, and restore to us his friendship. But the hope of obtaining pardon, or the belief that it has been obtained, ought to produce, in

¹ Rev. xii. 3, 4.

² 2 Cor. xi. 3.

³ 1 Pet. v. 8.

⁴ Gen. iii. 15.

devout minds, a state of feeling exceedingly remote from security as to the past, or preparation for future transgressions. The brighter the discovery of the truth that "the Lord is good and ready to forgive,"¹ the deeper should be our reverence for the Divine majesty. "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared."² A sense of obligation to goodness so great and so undeserved ought to warm our hearts with the love of Him who is infinitely good and holy, and thus to become a powerful restraint from sin. It ought to warn us not to incur the charge of abusing the Divine goodness, not to renew the necessity of those prayers and groans and painful exercises which we have already experienced, not to lose his sweet and beloved fellowship, and not to shut up from ourselves the path to its recovery. One thing is certain, no man can enjoy the delightful sense of his justification, who does not earnestly seek his sanctification. Now, an important part of sanctification is the hatred and avoidance of sin. The sworn enemy of our souls labours incessantly that, as soon as we have been freed from the old debts, we may immediately contract new. But the very fact that the exertions of our enemy are thus unremitting ought to redouble our watchfulness, that his object may be defeated, and that we may prove our fidelity to our gracious master. And such is the reason of the admirable order by which our Lord has connected this petition with the preceding one.

There are two things chiefly which come here to

¹ Ps. lxxxvi. 5.

² Ps. cxxx. 4.

be considered. I. What we pray, *that it may not happen*. II. What we pray, *that it may happen*. We pray that God, our Father who is in heaven, MAY NOT LEAD US INTO TEMPTATION. We pray THAT HE MAY DELIVER US FROM EVIL. As to the first of these, again, we are to inquire, (1.) *What is temptation?* (2.) *In what way can God be said to lead us into temptation?* (3.) *In what sense do we pray that this may not befall us?*

Temptation here signifies any thing said or done, or, in short, any occasion whatever by which we are moved, or in any way excited, to what is evil. For by these means a man is tempted, proved, tried, whether he will choose to remain steadily on the side of God and of virtue, or allow himself to be drawn away from them. “Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and TO PROVE THEE,¹ to know what was in thine heart, whether thou would keep his commandments or no.” A man meets with this kind of temptation in more ways than one. It arises sometimes from *internal* and sometimes from *external causes*, and not unfrequently both are united and com-

¹ Deut. viii. 2. לְנִסְתָּךְ to tempt thee. It is the same

word which is used in Genesis xxii. 1. וְהֵאֱלֹהִים נִסָּה

אֶת-אַבְרָהָם and God did tempt Abraham. Our author is

known to have greatly excelled as a Hebrew scholar, and many of his quotations seem to indicate that it was his ordinary habit to read the Old Testament in the original Hebrew, instead of the vernacular translation.—TR.

bined. An internal temptation springs from that wickedness and corruption of our nature which every one of us, alas! has too frequently experienced; which the Old Testament calls *the evil imagination*,¹ and which is described in the pages of the New Testament as “the sin that dwelleth in us,² the flesh,³ or lust,⁴ and the law of sin which is in our members.”⁵ By its disorderly motions it sometimes impels us strongly towards what is evil, “wars against the law of our minds,”⁶ and, unless it were wisely and powerfully resisted, it would lead us captives to “the law of sin,” it would lead us astray, and would end in death. “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.”⁷ Wisely has the Apostle James warned us of these consequences. “Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”⁸

No temptation, certainly, is more dangerous than what springs from this internal source. It scarcely, if ever, fails to produce some bad consequence. For though it does not always lead to action, or break out into the full commission of crime, yet it renders a good work less perfect than it ought to be, and hinders that proper cheerfulness with which the mind desires to follow the practice of virtue. “The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that

¹ יצר הרע.² Rom. vii. 17.³ Rom. vii. 18.⁴ Rom. vii. 7, 8.⁵ Rom. vii. 23.⁶ Rom. vii. 23.⁷ Rom. viii. 13.⁸ Jas. i. 14, 15.

ye cannot do the things that ye would.”¹ In that conflict, sometimes the one party prevails, and sometimes the other ; and by their mutual resistance both are weakened in all their actions. Nay, as concupiscence is an act of our soul, no excitement to evil can arise from that cause without polluting the soul itself.

True, indeed, the Apostle appears to distinguish between himself and the sin that dwelleth in him. “ Now, if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.”² But this mode of expression, though highly proper and worthy of an Apostle, is rhetorical, and must not be explained according to the strict meaning of the words, but according to the intentions of the writer. If we look at the subject itself, “ the sin which dwelleth in us” is the sin of the person in whom it dwells. When sin does what is evil, we in whom sin dwells do that evil. We ourselves have to confess, bewail, and deplore that sin, and to ask forgiveness of it from God. If Paul, when led by his sinful desire to do what was evil, had imprudently taken occasion from this to plead in his own defence, it would have been contrary to the views which he illustrates. The Apostle’s meaning was this. By the grace of God he had become a different person from what he formerly was. He was not only a different person, but the servant of a different master.³ He was no longer a sinner, who, with pleasure and with the full inclination of his mind, did what is evil : but a saint who “ delights in the law of God,” and ab-

¹ Gal. v. 17.

² Rom. vii. 20.

³ Neque alium solum, sed alius.

hors sin. He was no longer “the servant of sin,” from which he had been released, but the servant of Christ. So far as he was a saint and Christ’s servant, in which relation¹ he chose to be chiefly considered, he did no sin ; but only so far as, contrary to his wishes, there existed in him some remains of sin, which he refused to acknowledge as his own, and still less as a part of himself. The conclusion is, that every temptation which proceeds from an internal source is to be deplored, except so far as it serves to illustrate the power of the Spirit, which represses and overcomes the power of sin.

Among the external sources of temptation, the first place is due to *Satan* or the *Devil*, who is, by way of eminence,² called *the tempter*.³ Having assumed the form of a serpent,⁴ he infected the first-made⁵ man in paradise with the poison of enticing language. He laid his snares for the innocence of Job, that eminently holy man, of whom God himself said, “that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil.”⁶ He attacked David, that invincible king, who had gained celebrity by his victory over the huge giant, and over so many fierce nations, and more than once overthrew him.⁷ Not only did he stir up the perfidious Judas to a heinous crime, and make him the betrayer of the best and kindest of masters ; but he attacked Peter, who, till then, had been a powerful adversary, — strove hard “to sift him as wheat,”⁸ and after large,

¹ A quâ σχίσει. ² κατ’ ἰζοχὴν. ³ ὁ πειράζων, Mat. iv. 3.

⁴ Gen. iii. 1. ⁵ πρωτόπλαστον. ⁶ Job. i. 8.

⁷ 1 Chron. xxi. 1. ⁸ Luke xxii. 31.

express, and confident promises, drove him to deny three times his beloved Lord. He manifests the same disposition towards all who are the servants of God and of Christ, attacking them at one time with the cunning of the serpent, at another with the fierceness of the lion, "seeking whom he may" ruin and "devour."¹ In whatever direction we move, we have the strongest reason to suspect that, under the herbs and flowers, this deceitful and cruel serpent lies concealed.

That tempter has his stratagems, which, without suffering great injury, it is hardly possible for us to detect. The Apostle Paul calls them "the devices,"² "the wiles,"³ and Christ calls them "the depths of Satan."⁴ It is astonishing with what power and efficacy he everywhere acts on the minds of wretched mortals. (1.) He enters into a man, so as to seem a domesticated enemy.⁵ (2.) He throws evil thoughts into the heart,⁶ and "fills the heart"⁷ to do evil. (3.) He "blinds their minds."⁸ (4.) And with all subtlety.⁹ (5.) And with the greatest success.¹⁰ (6.) So that he frequently "prevails,"¹¹ and takes some of them "captive at his will."¹² All this is plainly taught us in scripture.

But the manner in which those things are accomplished by the tempter is not equally clear. He labours, as far as possible, to conceal himself. In this lies a great part of his cunning, that his snares may take effect without being perceived. We are almost

¹ 1 Pet. v. 8.² τὰ νοήματα.³ τὰς μεθοδίας.⁴ τὰ βάθη τοῦ Σατανᾶ. ⁵ Luke xxii. 3. ⁶ John. xiii. 27.⁷ John xiii. 2. ⁸ Acts v. 3. ⁹ 2 Cor. iv. 4. ¹⁰ 2 Cor. xi. 3.¹¹ Eph. ii. 2.¹² 1 Kings xxii. 2.¹³ 2 Tim. ii. 26.

entirely unacquainted with the nature and progress of those operations by which mind acts upon mind. Yet with the assistance of Scripture, accompanied by reason and experience, we may safely, we think, advance the following statements as to the manner in which Satan frequently acts on our minds. I. He sometimes presents to the external senses those objects which, he knows, are fitted to affect them powerfully; as he presented to Eve the beauty of the forbidden tree,¹ to Achan the Babylonish garment,² to David naked Bathsheba.³ II. He knows how to move and influence the mind by producing certain effects on the brain, which, by natural laws, are fitted to excite certain thoughts in the mind, whether sleeping or awake. III. By the motion of the blood, and by the alteration of the prevailing humours in the human body, he can excite the various affections of love, anger, melancholy, and the like. Thus he affected powerfully in Saul the black bile, which produced constitutional melancholy and dread; and afterwards the yellow bile, which produced indignation and rage against David. IV. It is true that he cannot, by physical energy, affect the understanding, or mould the judgment, or bend the will. That power over our minds belongs to God alone.⁴ But as spirit is exceedingly subtle, it appears to be capable of maintaining, and sometimes actually to maintain, some intercourse with our minds, which leaves upon them a deep and powerful impression,—in the same manner almost as angels

¹ Gen. iii. 6.² Jos. vii. 21.³ 2 Sam. xi. 2.⁴ Pro. xxi. 1.

communicate their thoughts to each other. This may be gathered from the passages already quoted, which cannot, without a forced interpretation, be understood to refer to the operation on the body alone, and, by means of it, upon the mind. An additional proof may be brought from suggestions of abstract thoughts thrown into the mind about God and divine things, which appear to be purely mental, and as far as possible removed from matter. But we must beware of indulging excessive curiosity in such matters. Let this one thing be deeply impressed upon our heart, that we have to do with an enemy of extraordinary skill and power, who knows better perhaps than ourselves the concealed approaches to our minds.

Next to the Devil as a tempter, it will be proper to consider *the world*, whose "Prince" and "God" that wicked spirit is. "The prince of this world cometh."¹ "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not."² By *the world* are sometimes meant, I. *Wicked men*, who "lie in wickedness,"³ who pursue good men and goodness with a deadly⁴ hatred,⁵ who endeavour to involve them in sinful associations,⁶ and, to employ a phrase used by our Lord, supply to them the place of Satan.⁷ II. But by the world are also meant *those wicked customs* which prevail among men, and are opposed to the rectitude of the divine commandments. Paul calls it "the course of this world,"⁸ and exhorts Christians, "Be not conformed to this

¹ JOHN xiv. 30.

² 2 Cor. iv. 4

³ 1 John v. 19.

⁴ Odio Vatiniano.

⁵ John xv. 18.

⁶ Pro. i. 11—14.

⁷ Mat. xvi. 23.

⁸ τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου.

world;"¹ and John guards the disciples against that temptation which "the world," in this sense of the expression, commonly presents to believers. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."² III. Lastly, The World likewise denotes *the creatures of God, so far as, enslaved by sin,* and "made subject to vanity" on account of it, they allure incautious minds by their amiable qualities, and become the objects of that inordinate affection which leads to spiritual adultery. Thus, the brightness of the sun, and the beauty of the moon and other heavenly bodies, so captivated not a few individuals merely, but whole nations, that they worshipped them as supreme divinities, or at least associated them with the supreme Divinity. Hence Job defends the purity of his religious worship by this argument among others, that he had not beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness," so that his "heart had been secretly enticed, or his mouth had kissed his hand."³ And in this respect The World may be classed among our tempters.

Whether, in the sense which is here given to the expression, God can be said to tempt us, deserves inquiry. The Apostle James affirms that this is impossible. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I

¹ Καὶ μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ. ² 1 John ii. 15, 16.

³ Job. xxxi. 26, 27.

am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."¹ All who have a proper knowledge of the infinitely pure holiness of God must be fully convinced that he is not the author of sin, that he never excites or persuades to what is sinful. "Far be it from God that he should do wickedness; and from the Almighty that he should commit iniquity."² To maintain that God is the author of evil is not less injurious to him than to affirm that there is no God. There is a discourse by *Basil the Great*, which bears this inscription, "That God is not the author of evil."³ In that discourse the observations which I have now made are beautifully followed out, and I shall gratify my readers by inserting a portion of his argument. "That man is ascertained to be a fool in mind and understanding who says that there is no God. He is next to him, and not a whit behind him in respect of folly, who says that God is the author of evil. I consider both to be equally criminal, for both equally deny Him who is good; the one asserting in an unqualified manner that he does not exist, and the other affirming that he is not good. For if he is the author of evil, he is consequently not good, and if he is not good, he is not God; so that there is on both sides a denial of God."⁴

¹ Ja. i. 13.

² Job. xxxv. 10.

³ "Ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν αἴτιος τῶν κακῶν ὁ Θεός.

⁴ "Ἀφρων ὡς ἀληθῶς ἐστηριγμένος νοῦ καὶ φρονήσεως, ὁ λέγων ὅτι οὐκ ἔστι Θεός. Παραπλήσιος δὲ τούτῳ, καὶ οὐδὲν κατὰ τὴν ἀφροσύνην ἀπολειπόμενος, ὁ λέγων κακῶν αἴτιον εἶναι τὸν Θεόν. Ὁμότιμοι γὰρ αὐτῶν εἶναι τίθεμαι τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, διότι ἐκάτεροι ὁμοίως ἀρνοῦνται τὸν ἀγαθόν, ὁ μὲν οὐκ εἶναι τὸ παράπαν λέγων, ὁ δὲ οὐκ ἀγαθὸν αὐτὸν

We must therefore take the most scrupulous care, not only in our reasonings, which are sometimes apt to become too curious and rash,—but in the whole course of our meditations, and throughout our whole life, that we never, in any manner, impute the blame of our sins to Divine Providence. This would be the height of impiety. Nor ought such an acknowledgment to be extorted from us by the attacks of adversaries who cavil at sound doctrine, but by a love and reverence for the divine holiness. We ought to give the most earnest attention that our conversations and thoughts may be of such a character as to reflect no dishonour on that most holy and most divine truth. With respect to God, we ought always to believe and assert to his glory, that “He is the Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.”¹ With respect to ourselves, for the suppression of foolish pride, we ought firmly to believe that the whole blame of sinful actions lies with us; that God may be always justified, and that man, convicted by conscience of his sins, may be condemned by his own sentence.

And yet our Lord Jesus does express himself on this subject as if our Heavenly Father may sometimes lead his people into temptation. Some people, indeed, have thought proper, in repeating as well as in explaining the Lord’s Prayer, to soften the harshness

εἶναι διοριζόμενος. Ἐι γὰρ κακῶν αἰτίας, οὐκ ἀγαθὸς δηλονότι· εἰ δὲ οὐκ ἀγαθὸς, οὐτε Θεὸς ὥστε ἀμφωτέρωθεν εἶσιν ἄρνησις τοῦ Θεοῦ.

¹ Deut. xxxii. 4.

of this expression. *Cyprian* reads it, *Suffer us not TO BE LED INTO TEMPTATION*, and so it is found, as *Augustine*¹ assures us, in many Latin copies. But it is not consistent with modesty to take so much upon us as to venture to correct wisdom itself. We must not change the words of Christ, for which no mortal can substitute any that are more appropriate. But we ought to examine their true sense. Our Lord used language which his disciples had been accustomed to hear. It is a prayer which frequently occurs in the Hebrew writings, *Lead us not, or cause us not to come, into the hand of temptation.*² That phrase expresses very emphatically the powerful, but just, holy, and pure providence of God regarding tempters, temptation, and the consequence of temptation.

This is manifested in the following ways. I. He gives the tempter a permission—not a moral but an actual permission—to employ his arts. All the creatures, not excepting even the devils themselves, are so completely in the hand of God, that they cannot move a hair's breadth without his will. It is therefore impossible that any schemes, to which he does not consent, can be attempted against the elect of God. Thus, he permitted Satan to “persuade Ahab and prevail,” by becoming “a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.”³ He permitted him to tempt David, so that the same action is attributed to God

¹ De bono perseverantiæ, C. vi.

² אֵל תְּבִיאֵנוּ לַיַּד נִסְיוֹן.

³ 1 Kings xxii. 22.

and to Satan, but in a different sense. "Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel."¹ "And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah."² It is attributed to Satan, as the enemy who labours of his own accord to accomplish the destruction of men; to God, as the wise and holy Governor of all that happens in the universe. In nearly the same manner, the false prophets were permitted to tempt the Jewish people, which Jeremiah does not hesitate, though in a sound sense, to attribute to Jehovah. "Ah! Lord God, surely thou hast greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, ye shall have peace."³ He refers to the addresses of the prophets, who promised safety and prosperity to the people, and especially to Jerusalem, which shortly afterwards was reduced to the extremity of desolation. He ascribes it to God, who had permitted the prophets thus to lie, and even to use his name, and had not in every instance visited them with immediate punishment. He regards God as a just judge, who gave up "a rebellious people, lying children, children that would not hear the law of the Lord; which said to the seers, see not: and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceit;"⁴ and who permitted them to take pleasure in the smooth language of their deceivers. But some will prefer,

¹ 1 Chron. xxi. 1.² 2 Sam. xxiv. 1.³ אֲכֵן הִשָּׂא הַשָּׂאָת לְעַם הַזֶּה. Jer. iv. 10.⁴ Isa. xxx. 9, 10.

it may be, to interpret this language interrogatively as the expression of astonishment, "Hast thou, O Lord God, greatly deceived this people?" As if he had said, "How does this agree with the promises of God? Is it possible that God can impose on any person?" Whatever may be the true interpretation of Jeremiah's words, we must hold it as certain that no temptation befalls any one but agreeably to the permission and government of God. And this is the smallest part of what our Lord intended to convey by this phrase in the Lord's prayer, "Lead us not, that is," says Theophlact,¹ "suffer us not to fall into temptation."²

II. With respect to temptation many things are ascribed to the providence of God. It sometimes happens that the person who is to be tempted is brought into that situation, and placed in those circumstances, in which the tempter has an opportunity of exercising all his wiles. "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit," that is, the Spirit of God, "to be tempted of the Devil."³ III. There are some cases in which, in the exercise of that sovereign freedom which he displays in the dispensation of his grace, either for the punishment of past sins or for the manifestation of human infirmity, he withholds from the person tempted that powerful assistance which was necessary for repelling the attack. We have a remarkable example of this in the history of Hezekiah. "Howbeit, in the

¹ On the xi. chapter of Luke.

² Μὴ ἰσοπεύχης ἡμᾶς, τουτέστι, μὴ συγχωρήσης ἡμᾶς ἰμπεσιον εἰς πειρασμὸν.

³ Mat. iv. 1.

business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land, "GOD LEFT HIM, TO TRY HIM, THAT HE MIGHT KNOW ALL THAT WAS IN HIS HEART."¹

When, therefore, we pray that our heavenly Father may not lead us into temptation. I. We express the hatred which we bear to sin, and our anxious desire and careful watchfulness, that we may not fall into its snares. "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked."² II. We acknowledge our weakness, which will be easily overcome by so powerful a host of enemies. In this sense, every one of us has occasion to say, "I am ready to halt."³ III. We pray, (1.) That he may not permit us to meet with those temptations which we are unable to overcome, that he may "not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but may with the temptation make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it."⁴ (2.) That in any temptations whatever he may not forsake us, or leave us to ourselves or to our enemies, or deprive us of that assistance without which we can do nothing, as once happened to Hezekiah. "O forsake me not utterly."⁵ (3.) That, on the contrary, he may be present with us by the efficacious assistance of his Spirit, by whose power we may successfully repel every attack. "O keep

¹ 2 Chr. xxxii. 31.

² Ps. xcvi. 10.

³ Ps. xxxviii. 18.

⁴ 1 Cor. x. 13.

⁵ Ps. cxix. 8.

my soul, and deliver me : let me not be ashamed ; for I put my trust in thee. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me ; for I wait on thee.”¹

The meaning, therefore, is not that God may not permit us to fall into temptations,² which is the common lot of all Christians, and particularly of those who have made the greatest proficiency in the school of Christ,³ but that he may not allow us to sink under the load. For “to come into temptation,”⁴ to “enter into temptation,”⁵ signifies to be so involved in allurements and dangers that escape is impossible.⁶ The Hebrews express it more fully, “to come into the hand of temptation,” that is, into its power and dominion.⁷ In short, to be led into temptation is “to be vanquished by temptation, and to come under its power.”⁸ Not only does God, in many instances, leave wicked men to their own vicious inclinations, “giving them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts ;”⁹ but he abandons, as it were, for a time, those also who place an excessive

¹ Ps. xxv. 20, 21. ² πειρασμοῖς περιπίπτειν. ³ Ja. i. 2, 3.

⁴ **הָבִינֵנוּ בְּיָדָאֵלֹהִים**

⁵ εἰσερχεσθαι εἰς πειρασμόν.

⁶ Mat. xxvi. 41. Mark xiv. 38. Luke xxii. 40.

⁷ The reader may consult the learned Annotations of Grotius.

⁸ κυριευθῆναι ὑπὸ τοῦ πειρασμοῦ, καὶ εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν ἥτταν αὐτοῦ. Theoph. Hom. 27. [Εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν ἥτταν is an idiomatic phrase not easily translated, but its meaning is precise and clear. It conveys more strongly than κυριευθῆναι the idea of a decided victory.—TR.]

⁹ Rom. i. 24.

confidence in their own strength. Against such an evil we are commanded to guard by acknowledgment of our weakness and by incessant prayer.

We have thus attended to the negative part of the petition,—to those things respecting which we pray that they *may not* happen to us. We pray, on the other hand, *that God may deliver us from evil*. Here we must inquire, first, what is meant by *evil*, and next, in what *deliverance from evil* consists. *Evil* may be explained in two ways, either as meaning *that which is evil* or *him who is evil*. If we take it in the former sense, *evil* will be of the same import as *sin*. *Chrysostom* has properly observed,¹ that *πονηρὸν* (*evil*) is derived ἀπὸ τοῦ πονοῦ, from *labour*, because sin brings to man nothing but labour and uneasiness, while true “quietness” of mind is found only in the exercise of virtue. “The work of righteousness, shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever.”² And in this sense the word *πονηρὸν*, connected, too, with the article, is used, “the whole world lieth in wickedness.”³ If we interpret it in this way, we shall conclude that we are commanded to pray, not for exemption from all annoyances, but for a mind fortified against temptations to sin. “I pray not,” said our Lord,⁴ “that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them FROM THE EVIL.”⁵ “And the Lord shall deliver me,” says Paul,

¹ Hom. VII. On the Acts of the Apostles.

² Isa. xxii. 17.

³ ὁ κόσμος ὅλος ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κίτται.

⁴ John xvii. 15.

⁵ ἀλλ' ἵνα τηρήσης αὐτοὺς ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ.

“from EVERY EVIL WORK.”¹ There is a close resemblance between these expressions and a form of prayer in use among the ancient Hebrews. “And bring us not into the hands of sin, nor into the hands of transgression.”²

But the greater part of commentators, both ancient and modern, understand by *evil*, in this place, *the evil one*,³ the Devil. In this sense the word occurs in the following passages. “When any one heareth the word, and understandeth it not, then cometh THE WICKED ONE,⁴ and catcheth away that which was sown in the heart.” “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of THE WICKED,” that is, *of the wicked one*.⁵ Chrysostom⁶ interprets it in this manner: “He calls the Devil, in this place, THE EVIL ONE. He is, by way of eminence, so called, on account of his superlative wickedness, and because, though he has received no injury from us, he carries on against us an implacable war.”⁷ And certainly this appellation of THE EVIL ONE is properly applied to that wicked spirit, because he does nothing but what is evil,—because all the evil that exists in the universe originated

¹ Καὶ ῥύσεται με ὁ Κύριος ἀπὸ πάντες ἔργου πονηροῦ.

² וְאֵל תְּבִיאֵנוּ לְיַדֵּי עֲבִירָה וְלֹא לְיַדֵּי חַטָּא

³ τὸν πονηρον. ⁴ ἔρχεται ὁ πονηρὸς, Mat. xiii. 19.

⁵ ἐν ᾧ δυνήσεσθε πάντα τὰ βέλη τοῦ πονηροῦ τὰ πεπυρωμένα εὐεῖσαι.

⁶ Hom. XIX. on Mat. vi.

⁷ Πονηρὸν ἐνταῦθα τὸν διάβολον καλεῖ. Κατ' ἔξοχὴν δὲ οὗτος ἐκείνος καλιῖται διὰ τὴν ὑπερβολὴν τῆς κακίας, καὶ ἐπιιδὸν μηδὲν παρ' ἡμῶν ἀδικηθεῖς ἄσπονδον πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἔχει τὸν πόλεμον.

with him,—because in doing evil and in persuading others to do evil, he finds his only delight, the wicked and malignant solace of his desperate misery. These names applied to him ought to excite our hatred and dread.

To be delivered from evil does not mean to be so preserved by divine power that we may not afterwards fall into any sin, or that we may never be exposed to the assaults of the Devil. Our condition in this world does not allow this. But it denotes that gracious government of Divine Providence, by which the more powerful and formidable attacks of the Devil are prevented, or the necessary supplies of strength administered to us, that we may not yield or be overcome. Devout men hate the Devil and all his works so thoroughly, that they desire to have nothing to do with him. But, if that cannot be obtained, if they must sometimes encounter that fierce and dangerous enemy, they pray that God may grant them spiritual courage, prudence, and perseverance, that they may break his power, elude his cunning, and repel every attack. They pray also that, by means of these very contests, the invincible strength of divine grace towards them may be made to appear, and that the firmness of Christian virtues may be manifested and increased, till at length that enemy is completely vanquished, trampled under their feet, and “cast into the lake of fire and brimstone,”¹ from which he will never come forth to enter again into battle.

What we have now said may be briefly summed up in the following manner. A Christian ought to

¹ Rev. xx. 10.

pray daily to his Heavenly Father that he may not be led into temptation, but that, when temptation does occur, he may courageously resist evil. The necessity of this petition may be proved by various arguments. I. The road in which we have to travel is narrow, and we are not permitted to depart from it to the right hand or to the left. "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life."¹ "Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil."² And that road is beset on every hand by numerous foes,³ who, at almost every step, have spread and concealed their snares.⁴ On this side, Satan presses us hard with all his infernal forces, and on that the world surrounds us with its toils. Within, the flesh pursues us, and you can scarce plant your foot on a spot that is not entangled with nets. Our enemies have learned to weave those nets out of nearly every kind of materials; not only from those things which in their very nature are evil, but also from what are indifferent and lawful, and even from such as are positively good, which are easily, but dangerously, abused. Almost every thing that happens in the world, after sin has begun to exert its power, possesses some charm by which you are fascinated before you are aware. In short, wherever you go, either a snake lurks in the grass, or you walk over fires concealed from your view by the ashes which cover them. II. Those enemies are stern and fierce,⁵ cunning and wicked.⁶ They labour to take from us

¹ Mat. vii. 14. ² Pro. iv. 27. ³ Ps. iii. 2.

⁴ Ps. x. 8. ⁵ Eph. vi. 12. ⁶ Jer. xvii. 9; Eph. vi. 11.

all our wealth, “the robe of righteousness,”¹ the ornament of the divine image, the union of faith, the inheritance of salvation,—in short, the very life of the soul. “There is no discharge in this war:”² we must either conquer or die. III. And yet we, whose enemies are so numerous and powerful, are unable to make effectual resistance, and ought to adopt the language of king Jehoshaphat, “O our God, we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.”³ IV. We carry about and within us something which maintains a secret conspiracy with our outward foes. We have “the sin that doth easily beset us,”⁴ a strong propensity to do what is evil,⁵ “a law of sin” which dwells “in our members,”⁶ the fuel of all evil, which needs but a spark to be thrown in to make it burst into a flame.⁷ If all these things be attentively put together, who does not see that we are laid under the strongest necessity to cry out continually, *Lord, lead us not into temptation?*

This prayer, however, ought to be so conducted as to neglect nothing that has been entrusted to ourselves. We ought to pray to God with such consciousness of our infirmity and weakness, we ought to implore his aid with such earnestness, as if the result of this contest depended on him alone, and as if nothing could be contributed by ourselves. We ought, at the same time, to do every thing with such care and watchful-

¹ Isa. lxi. 10.² Eccl. viii. 8.³ 2 Chr. xx. 12.⁴ ὑπερίστατος ἁμαρτία, Heb. xii. 1.⁵ Gen. vi. 5; viii. 21.⁶ Rom. vii. 23.⁷ Ja. iii. 5.

ness as if without it God were unwilling to bestow his aid, or to grant a successful close of the battle. While he has undertaken to protect those who are his own, prayer is necessary to obtain the fulfilment of his promises. But he bestows also on his people the disposition to protect themselves. "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and THAT WICKED ONE¹ toucheth him not." We must join in practice what our Lord has joined in his exhortation, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."²

That watchfulness embraces many points. I. We must avoid, as far as lies in our power, every occasion of sin. Our own experience, or that of others, or general reasonings on the subject, may convince us that there are some things by which the mind is easily led away, or its firmness in some degree shaken. He who does not carefully guard against such things, such places, and such acquaintances or friendships as are found to possess this evil tendency—tempts God and leads himself into temptation. That man acts with imprudence, overweening confidence, and rashness, who, either trusting to his own strength, or hoping to obtain, in an extraordinary measure, the aid of Divine grace, does not hesitate to place himself in those situations in which others stronger than he, or perhaps in which himself has formerly fallen.

A remarkable instance, to this purpose, is that of *Alipius*, quoted by Augustine.³ He had a strong hatred and detestation of the entertainments furnished

¹ διὸ ποιηρὸς ἑυχῆ ἀπαιτεῖται αὐτοῦ, 1 Johu v. 18.

² Mat. xxvi. 41.

³ Conf. B. vi. C. vii.

by gladiators. But it happened that some of his friends and schoolfellows, whom he accidentally met on the road as they were returning from dinner, carried him in a friendly but violent manner, and in opposition to his strongest refusal and resistance, to the amphitheatre, on one of the days set apart to those cruel and bloody sports. He told them: "If you drag my body to that place, and fix me there, will you be able to direct my mind or my eyes to those shows? Though I am there, I shall be absent, and so I shall get the better of you and them." Having heard him use this language, they persisted as strongly as ever in carrying him off, wishing, perhaps, to try if he were able to make good his resolution. When they had arrived and placed themselves on the best seats they could procure, the whole multitude enjoyed, with the keenest relish, the barbarous entertainment. But he resolutely closed his eyes, and laid his mind under the strictest injunction not to enter into those scenes of wickedness. O had he but also stopped his ears! A tremendous shout, raised by the whole multitude, in consequence of one of the combatants having fallen, struck him forcibly. His curiosity was roused. Prepared, as he imagined, to despise and overcome whatever was presented to his sight, he opened his eyes. Instantly, his *soul* was more seriously wounded than the *body* of the man whom he was desirous to see. He fell more lamentably than the man whose fall had drawn forth the shout. When the sound entered into his ears, the opening of his eyes, to discover how the man was struck and thrown down, proceeded from a mind not brave, but foolishly adventurous, and which,

indeed, discovered its weakness by placing that reliance on itself which was due only to God. When he saw the blood, he instantly imbibed the fierceness of the scene. Instead of turning away his eyes, he fixed them earnestly; drew unconsciously large draughts of rage; was delighted with the wickedness of the contest, and intoxicated with the cruel enjoyment. He was not the same person as when he came, but one of the crowd which he had joined, the real companion of those who had brought him. What more shall I say? He gazed, he shouted, he became furious, he carried away with him the madness which excited him to return, not only in company with those by whom he had been formerly carried off, but with still greater eagerness, and dragging others along with him. Let us learn, from the example of *Alipius*, to act with greater caution, and prudently to avoid every temptation to sin.

But the watchfulness which we are exhorted to maintain, implies, II. That we must be sober, examining with care and dread every individual object, lest there may be found snares where we might scarcely suspect them to exist. Those enemies who fawn upon us most are commonly the most dangerous. No time serves their purpose better than when the mind is overcome by sloth. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."¹ III. Our mind must be armed with this determination, that, whatever happens, we shall "cleave unto the

¹ 1 Peter v. 8.

Lord,"¹ and resist the devil. It will be necessary for us every morning to renew this resolution, and whenever we are about to be employed in the business of this life, to bind ourselves by humble and holy engagements to God, that in all things we will attend to his revealed will; "for that which is comely, and that we may attend upon the Lord without distraction."²

IV. If at any time the immediate line of duty leads us to encounter temptation, we must fight bravely and with determined resistance, convinced that we ought never to despise an enemy, or to despair of victory. "Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you,"³ "whom resist stedfast in the faith."⁴

If we pray in this manner, and if we add to prayer the watchfulness which has been now described, this part of the Lord's prayer supplies us with many grounds of consolation. It may well inspire us with great boldness to consider that no temptation can befall us, but under the eye, direction, and restraint of our heavenly Father; for that is implied in the petition. If, again, the temptations by which we are assaulted are under the eye of our Father, we ought to labour with all courage and perseverance to "present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,"⁵ to please whom is our highest glory, to displease whom is our greatest disgrace. If all things are subject to his direction and restraint, we ought to believe that "God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able,"⁶ that he will not permit the

¹ Acts xi. 23.

² 1 Cor. vii. 35.

³ Ja. iv. 7.

⁴ 1 Pet. v. 9.

⁵ Rom. xii. 1.

⁶ 1 Cor. x. 13.

utmost fury of the enemy to be exerted against us, but will impose upon it certain bounds and limits; that he will not withhold his grace if we ask it; that he will not refuse his assistance if he see it to be necessary, agreeably to his promise, "I will keep thee from the hour of temptation;"² and finally, that he will govern all things in such a manner that the temptation itself shall ultimately contribute to our advantage and honour. Thus we are "conformed to the image of the Son of God,"³ who, like ourselves, "hath suffered, being tempted."⁴ Thus we gain a triumph over our proudest foe, who will at length yield the victory to weak and feeble men. Thus we manifest the constancy of our faith and piety, "that the trial of our faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ."⁵ And, to crown the whole, when the struggle of virtue shall be successfully terminated, we shall be admitted to sing this glorious triumphant song:⁶ **I HAVE FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT, I HAVE FINISHED MY COURSE, I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH: HENCEFORTH THERE IS LAID UP FOR ME A CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHICH THE LORD, THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE, SHALL GIVE ME AT THAT DAY: AND NOT TO ME ONLY, BUT UNTO ALL THEM ALSO THAT LOVE HIS APPEARING.**⁷

¹ Job i. 12; ii. 26.² Rev. iii. 10.³ Rom viii. 29.⁴ Heb. ii. 18.⁵ 1 Pet. i. 7.⁶ ἐπινίκιον.⁷ 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

DISSERTATION XIV.

ON THE CONCLUSION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.

ΟΤΙ ΣΟΥ ΕΣΤΙΝ Η ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ, ΚΑΙ Η ΔΥΝΑΜΙΣ,
ΚΑΙ Η ΔΟΞΑ ΕΙΣ ΤΟΥΣ ΑΙΩΝΑΣ. ΑΜΗΝ.

WE have still a few things to say on the Conclusion¹ of this prayer, on which we shall bestow a short Dissertation. The Conclusion consists of two parts. I. A DOXOLOGY. II. The particle, AMEN. As to the Doxology we shall, I. Defend its genuineness. II. Give a short explanation of its terms. III. Point out its connection with what goes before.

Some interpreters maintain that this doxology was not given by Christ, that it is no part of the Lord's Prayer, but has been added to the text by a bold, perhaps, but unskilful and rash hand. The writers who hold this opinion are not confined to the priesthood. *Grotius* contends that it began to be used as a customary addition of the Greek churches, rather than as a part of the prayer, for it is not found in any of the Latin copies. *Erasmus* proceeds somewhat farther, and censures "the rashness of those who do not hesitate to append their own trifles to a divine prayer. For I am fully entitled," he adds, "to give the name of Trifles to every thing relating to inspired doc-

¹ De Epilogo.

trine which proceeds from men ; particularly if what is added by men be attributed to Christ as its author."

The arguments adduced by those writers are chiefly the following: I. This doxology is wanting in some very ancient Greek copies, (as Beza has observed), and in the very ancient gospel of the Nazarites, and in nearly all the Latin copies. II. It is not found in the xi. chapter of Luke's gospel, where the Lord's prayer is repeated. III. It is not acknowledged by *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, *Augustine*, and others, even where they professedly quote and explain the Lord's Prayer. But as the ancient Greek churches were in the habit of concluding almost all their public prayers in this manner, it is probable that the whole of the concluding clause had in that manner crept into the text.

But these arguments do not appear to me to be of so much weight as to entitle us to rob the Greek gospel of Matthew of this magnificent conclusion of the Lord's Prayer. In defence of it, we are able to adduce more numerous and more weighty arguments.

I. It is manifestly found in the most ancient and most approved Greek copies. This is not denied by those who choose to hold the opposite view. With the exception of a single Parisian manuscript, all the others contain this clause. *Robert Stephens* assures us that he had found it in a manuscript of great antiquity. *Erasmus* and *Bellarmino* acknowledge that it is found in all the Greek manuscripts. And if a very few copies want it, they are hardly sufficient to call it in question. How can it then be proved that those

copies have been vitiated, and that this clause has been thrust in by some unknown hands? In so important a matter something more is necessary than the bold and peremptory assertion frequently brought forward, *It is conjectured by certain critics*. I grant that it was the custom of the Greek churches to add this conclusion to all their public prayers. But which is the more probable supposition, that the Greeks learned it from the gospel, or that it was borrowed from them and found its way into the gospel? The former appears to me much more credible than the latter. Nor is there any force in the objection that it is not found in the gospel by Luke. No argument against any narrative can be founded on the silence of a single Evangelist. What is wholly or partly omitted by one must be supplied from the writings of another. Instances of this are so frequent, that every person who possesses a moderate acquaintance with the gospels must know them.

II. It exists in the *Syriac* version, which is itself very ancient, and which was made from very ancient Greek manuscripts; and in the *Arabic*, not merely the one edited by *Erpenius*, but another manuscript of good authority in King's College, Oxford. *Grotius*, who acknowledged this, inferred, that "not only the Arabic, but the Syriac version, was made after that the liturgy of the churches had received a regular form." As if we were bound to take for granted what I consider to be destitute of all probability, that those versions were accommodated to the church liturgy, and that their authors dared to make an addition to the text, in order that it might agree with

the received liturgy. In the Latin copies, certainly, this clause is not found. But whether is it more proper that the Latin copies, being more modern, should be corrected by the Greek, which are more ancient; or that, on the authority of the Latin, the Greek copies shall suffer an erasure? *Helvicus*, quoted by *Glassius*,¹ reasons justly.—“Which edition, pray, was the earlier, and which the later? Which was the mother, and which the daughter? Which was the fountain, and which the stream? Is the mother descended from the daughter, or the daughter from the mother? Does the stream flow from the fountain, or the fountain from the stream?”

III. Though it is not expounded by *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, and *Augustine*, because they did not find it in their Latin editions, yet it was expounded by *Chrysostom*, *Euthymius*, and *Theophylact*, who in this respect deserve not to be contrasted with the Latin writers, but preferred to them, for they drew from the fountains, while the others drew from the streams. *Erasmus*, I am aware, treats this argument very lightly. “*Chrysostom*,” he says, “expounded it, because he heard it constantly used by the Greek church, in the same manner as if a person illustrating the Psalms were to expound that solemn conclusion, *Glory to the Father and to the Son*. And we need not wonder that *Chrysostom* should have thought proper to do so, since in his Homilies he explains a hymn, which some monks were in the habit of using for imploring the blessing of God on their entertain-

¹ Sacred Philology, B. i. Tr. ii. p. 150.

ments." But that observation has no weight, and could arise from nothing but prejudice. For any person who inspects Chrysostom's writings must plainly see, that he explains this doxology, not as an ecclesiastical ode, but as a passage of Scripture, and a part of the Lord's Prayer.

Chrysostom's words deserve to be quoted here, not only because they prove the point in dispute, but because they contain an excellent illustration of the passage. "After having roused us to the struggle by the consideration of the enemy, and entirely removed every apology for slothfulness, he again confirms and strengthens our mind by reminding us of the King, whom we faithfully serve, and by showing that he is more powerful than all. THINE, he says, IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY. If the kingdom is his, we have nothing to fear, there being none that can oppose it, or wrest from him the government. When he says, *Thine is the kingdom*, he shows that our antagonist is also subject to him, although, so far as God permits, he makes opposition. For he is one of the number of God's servants, though he belongs to the guilty and wicked; and he will not venture, in a single instance, to attack a fellow-servant, till he has received power to do so from the Lord of all."¹ Does he, who explains the words in this manner, view them as any thing else than as a part of a discourse and prayer from our Lord himself? But to proceed.

IV. In other parts of Scripture similar doxologies

¹ Hom. xx. on vi. chap. of Matthew.

are to be found. One very closely analogous occurs in a prayer of David, "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine: thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head over all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all."¹ As David used these words by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we need not wonder that David's Son and Lord, who in all things sought, and commanded his followers to seek, the glory of his heavenly Father, should enjoin his disciples to employ similar language; and that the commencing and the concluding sentiment of the prayer should be alike. Besides, the disciples of Christ, in whom the Spirit of their Master dwelt, have introduced some parts, at least, of the same doxology, into their inspired writings. Paul did so very frequently. "Now, unto the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen."² And again, "To whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen."³ Jude has very closely imitated the same doxology in the last verse of his Epistle. "To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen."⁴ When, therefore, we find doxologies of a similar description, both in

¹ 1 Chr. xxix. 11, 12. ² 1 Tim. i. 17. ³ 1 Tim. vi. 16.

⁴ Jude 25.

those parts of Scripture from which our Lord chose to take those which he employed, and in those writers who borrowed theirs from our Lord; what reason can be assigned for calling in question the uniform testimony of the Greek copies, instead of acknowledging that those words, which we cannot but admit to be highly worthy of our Lord, were actually his?

V. It has been already shown, that in composing this prayer, our Lord brought together, with admirable skill, the best parts of the Hebrew forms of prayer which were used in his time. But it has been at the same time shown, that the Israelitish church was accustomed to conclude the public prayers with this exclamation,¹ “Blessed be the name of the glory of his kingdom for ever and ever.”² The antiquity of this form is carried by the Jews as high as the days of the Patriarchs. Which supposition must we now consider to be the more probable? That our Lord introduced into his prayer this clause, like almost all the rest, from the ancient formularies of the Hebrew nation? Or that some unknown Greek copyists, borrowing from their modern ritual, appended it to the sacred text; and with such an extraordinary concurrence of all concerned, that hardly any Greek copies are found which do not contain the clause? What I have now said may suffice for a vindication of the passage.

¹ ἐπιφώνημα.

² בָּרוּךְ שֵׁם-כְבוֹד-מְלֻכּוֹתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

We come now to explain the terms. THINE, we say, IS THE KINGDOM; the kingdom of that universal power, which thou swayest over all men and all things; from which it follows, that there is nothing which can promote the injury, nothing which must not contribute to the advantage, of those whom thou regardest with kindness. Thine, too, is the kingdom of grace, over a people "chosen out of the world,"¹ redeemed by the blood of Christ, sanctified by the Spirit; in whom thou choosest to reign by a manifestation of thy goodness, wisdom, holiness, and all-sufficient grace. Thine is the kingdom of glory, in which thou hast already commenced a happy reign over so many "spirits of just men made perfect,"² which thou continuest rapidly and constantly to advance throughout the universal church, and of which, when completed, thou shalt be the everlasting King. Formerly we prayed that thy kingdom may come, and properly, for in many ways it is yet to be revealed and enlarged. Now we acknowledge that the kingdom is thine, and in so doing we also act properly, for rightfully and truly thou possessest, and wilt possess throughout eternity, all royal dignity and power. "The Lord reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is established, that it cannot be moved. Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting."³

We add, THINE IS THE POWER. By that power thou art able to subdue, conquer, and make obedient

¹ John xv. 19.

² Heb. xii. 23.

³ Ps. xciii. 1. 2.

to thy will all the enemies of thy kingdom; to preserve thine own peculiar people; to render subservient to their advantage every thing in heaven, in earth, in sea, in hell itself; to answer our prayers, and fulfil our just and holy desires. "Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand. For thou art the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted."¹

Next, we subjoin, **THINE IS THE GLORY.** Thou alone possessest those excellencies and perfections which no mind can conceive, no tongue can express, no pen can describe. Thou makest them manifest to the consciences of all by thy Word. By thy Works also, especially by the noblest of all thy works, the salvation of lost men, thou givest so bright an exhibition of them, that every thing respecting them which we are capable of knowing ought to raise our minds to holy astonishment. Thou art He, who "dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto,"² who coverest thyself with light as with a garment,"³ who scatterest on every hand the rays of unequalled and inconceivable brightness, whom even the inhabitants of heaven cannot steadfastly behold. Thou art worthy to be acknowledged, worshipped, and adored by all classes, from the highest to the lowest, **FOR EVER AND EVER**; while they shall spend that endless eternity not so much in enjoying their blessedness, as in celebrating thy praises and admiring thy glory. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power."⁴ Who is like thee, O Lord, among the gods?

¹ Ps. lxxxix. 13, 17. ² 1 Tim. vi. 16. ³ Ps. civ. 2.

⁴ Rev. iv. 11.

who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?¹ For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him. O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord² like unto thee, or to thy faithfulness round about thee?³ So will we sing praise unto thy name for ever, that we may daily perform our vows.”⁴ To meditate frequently on these sentiments, to sing them to our God, and by such exercises of meditation and praise to prepare our minds for perfect and everlasting songs, is in the highest degree worthy of a Christian.

Let us next inquire in what manner the conclusion is connected with what goes before. It may be view-

¹ Ex. xv. 11.

² “ Quis est par tibi, יהוה סוּיִן præditus decentia?”
 יהוה סוּיִן כְּמוֹתָיִךְ. “Who is like unto thee, O powerful JAH, or JEHOVAH?” Our authorized translation, though supported by the Italian, *O Signore Iddio degli eserciti, chi e potente signore, come sei tu?* departs from the obvious construction. The French is exceedingly close. *O Eternel, Dieu des armées! Qui est semblable a toi, O Dieu Tout-Puisant! Tu es environné de ta fidélité.* It is the more remarkable that our translators should have missed the true rendering, as the Septuagint has brought it out much more certainly than its usual success. *Κύριε ὁ Θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων, τίς ὁμοίος σοὶ; δυνατὸς εἶ Κύριε. καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια σου κύκλω σοῦ.* It is not improbable that the LXX had suggested to Bishop Horsley his magnificent version.

“Jehovah, God of Hosts, who is like thee?

Mighty Jehovah! and thy faithfulness encircles thee.”

TR.

³ Ps. lxxxix. 6—8.

⁴ Ps. lxi. 8.

ed as connected either with the sixth petition which immediately precedes it, or with the whole prayer. Its connection with the preceding petition is this—**THINE IS THE KINGDOM.** Satan, the World, and the Flesh, attack that kingdom as often as they attack us. They wish not that thou shouldst reign over us, which yet you willest: they wish that we should wickedly withdraw ourselves from thy kingdom, which thou willest not. Arise, then, O God, arise, O our King. “Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him.”¹ **THINE IS THE POWER.** Thou art “stronger” than that “strong man”² to whose attacks our weakness would soon yield. “Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old.”³ “Wound the head of thine enemies, the hairy scalp of such as go on still in their trespasses. Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.”⁴ **THINE IS THE GLORY.** By nothing is that glory more obscured than by the sins of thy people; by nothing is it more brightly illustrated than by their deliverance, and by treading that wicked and proud One under their feet. “O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself. Lift up thyself, thou Judge of the earth; render a reward to the proud.”⁵

But we have the same grounds for our faith in all the petitions which we present to God. He is a **KING.** He is therefore Rich, Faithful, Generous, so that we may expect from him all that is excellent.

¹ Ps. lxxviii. 1.² Luke xi. 21, 22.³ Isa. li. 9.⁴ Ps. lxxviii. 21, 23.⁵ Ps. xciv. 1, 2.

“Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob.”¹ He is POWERFUL, and “is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.”² To him IS THE GLORY, and hence he will be “glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe in that day.”³ And as “the kingdom, and the power, and the glory” are his FOR EVER AND EVER, we are entitled to expect the enjoyment of that everlasting kingdom and everlasting glory. “Thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end. The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.”⁴

This Doxology instructs us what ought to be the end of all our petitions,—not our own advantage, but the manifestation of the Kingdom, Power, and Glory of God. We must begin with the glory of God. We must end with the glory of God. The love of the Divine glory ought to be the first principle from which our desires and prayers flow. Whatever we desire ought to be desired by us as the means of attaining that highest end. The purpose of the soul to promote the glory of God is the most important part of prayer, and gives it all its value. After the consummation of all things, we shall be so completely satisfied in heaven with the abundance of good things, that nothing farther will remain to be desired. This single prayer will still continue to be offered. “Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that

¹ Ps. xliv. 4.

² Eph. iii. 20.

³ 2 Th. i. 10.

⁴ Ps. cii. 27, 28.

sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”¹

AMEN is a Hebrew particle, expressive both of strong assertion and of ardent desire. “The prophet Jeremiah said, AMEN, the Lord do so.”² By this word we express our sincere acknowledgments of the kingdom, power, and glory of God; our earnest desire to obtain from God such valuable blessings; and our faith resting on the promises of God, “the confidence that we have in him that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.”³ Luther, with his wonted liveliness of manner, wrote to *Melancthon* in the following terms:—“I pray for you, I have prayed, and I will pray, and I have no doubt I shall be heard, for I feel the AMEN in my heart.

BLESSED BE THE LORD FOR EVERMORE.
AMEN AND AMEN.⁴

¹ Rev. v. 13.

² אָמֵן כֵּן יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה. Jer. xxviii. 6.

³ I John v. 14.

⁴ Ps. lxxxix. 52.

THE END.







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