

from whom they come. But that to every petition we make for things needful there should be some answerable sentence of thanks provided particularly to follow such requests obtained, either it is not a matter so requisite as they pretend ; or if it be, wherefore have they not then in such order framed their own Book of Common Prayer? Why hath our Lord and Saviour taught us a form of prayer containing so many petitions of those things which we want, and not delivered in like sort as many several forms of thanksgiving to serve when any thing we pray for is granted? What answer soever they can reasonably make unto these demands, the same shall discover unto them how causeless a censure it is that there are not in our book thanksgivings for all the benefits for which there are petitions<sup>1</sup>.

[2.] For concerning the blessings of God, whether they tend unto this life or the life to come, there is great cause why we should delight more in giving thanks, than in making requests for them ; inasmuch as the one hath pensiveness and fear, the other always joy annexed ; the one belongeth unto them that seek, the other unto them that have found happiness ; they that pray do but yet sow, they that give thanks declare they have reaped. Howbeit because there are so many graces whereof we stand in continual need, graces for which we may not cease daily and hourly to sue, graces which are in bestowing always, but never come to be fully had in this present life ; and therefore when all things here have an end, endless thanks must have their beginning in a state which bringeth the full and final satisfaction of all such perpetual desires : again, because our common necessities, and the lack which we all have as well of ghostly as of earthly favours is in each kind so easily known, but the gifts of God according to those degrees and times which he in his secret wisdom seeth meet, are so diversely bestowed, that it seldom appeareth what all receive, what all stand in need of, it seldom lieth hid : we are not to marvel though the Church do oftener concur in suits than in thanks unto God for particular benefits.

<sup>1</sup> T. C. lib. iii. p. 208. "The "default of the Book, for that there "are no forms of thanksgivings for "the release from those common "calamities from which we have

[3.] Nevertheless lest God should be any way unglorified, the greatest part of our daily service they know consisteth, according to the blessed Apostle's own precise rule<sup>1</sup>, in much variety of Psalms and Hymns, for no other purpose, but only that out of so plentiful a treasure there might be for every man's heart to choose out his own sacrifice, and to offer unto God by particular secret instinct what fitteth best the often occasions which any several either party or congregation may seem to have. They that would clean take from us therefore the daily use of the very best means we have to magnify and praise the name of Almighty God for his rich blessings, they that complain of our reading and singing so many psalms for so good an end, they I say that find fault with our store should of all men be least willing to reprove our scarcity of thanksgivings.

[4.] But because peradventure they see it is not either *generally* fit or possible that churches should frame thanksgivings answerable to each petition, they shorten somewhat the reins of their censure ; "there are no forms of thanksgiving<sup>2</sup>," they say, "for release of those *common calamities* "from which we have petitions to be delivered." "There "are prayers set forth to be said in the common calamities "and universal scourges of the realm, as plague, famine, &c. "and indeed so it ought to be by the word of God. But "as such prayers are needful, whereby we beg release from "our distresses, so there ought to be as necessary prayers of "thanksgiving, when we have received those things at the "Lord's hand which we asked in our prayers." As oft therefore as any public or universal scourge is removed, as oft as we are delivered from those either imminent or present calamities, against the storm and tempest whereof we all instantly craved favour from above, let it be a question what we should render unto God for his blessings universally, sensibly and extraordinarily bestowed. A prayer of three or four lines inserted into some part of our church liturgy? No, we are not persuaded that when God doth in trouble enjoin us the duty of invocation, and promise us the benefit of deliverance, and profess that the thing he expecteth

<sup>1</sup> Ephes. v. 19; Coloss. iii. 16.

<sup>2</sup> T. C. lib. i. p. 138.

after at our hands is to glorify him as our mighty and only Saviour, the Church can discharge in manner convenient a work of so great importance by fore-ordaining some short collect wherein briefly to mention thanks. Our custom therefore whensoever so great occasions are incident, is by public authority to appoint throughout all churches set and solemn forms as well of supplication as of thanksgiving, the preparations and intended complements whereof may stir up the minds of men in much more effectual sort, than if only there should be added to the Book of Prayer that which they require.

[5.] But we err in thinking that they require any such matter. For albeit their words to our understanding be very plain, that in our book "there are prayers set forth" to be said when "common calamities" are felt, as "plague, famine," and such like; again that "indeed so it ought to be by the word of God;" that likewise "there ought to be as necessary prayers of thanksgiving when we have received those things;" finally that the want of such forms of thanksgiving for the release from those common calamities from which we have petitions to be delivered, is the "default of the Book of Common Prayer:" yet all this they mean but only by way of "supposition, if express prayers" against so many earthly miseries were convenient, *that then* indeed as many express and particular thanksgivings should be likewise necessary. Seeing therefore we know that they hold the one superfluous, they would not have it so understood as though their minds were that any such addition to the book is needful, whatsoever they say for argument's sake concerning this pretended defect. The truth is, they wave in and out, no way sufficiently grounded, no way resolved what to think, speak, or write, more than only that because they have taken it upon them, they must (no remedy now) be opposite.

XLIV. The last supposed fault concerneth some few things, the very matter whereof is thought to be much amiss. In a song of praise to our Lord Jesus Christ we have these words, "When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers." Which maketh some show of giving countenance to their

In some things the Matter of our Prayer, as they affirm, unsound.

error, who think that the faithful which departed this life before the coming of Christ, were never till then made partakers of joy, but remained all in that place which they term the "Lake of the Fathers<sup>1</sup>."

In our liturgy request is made that we may be preserved "from sudden death." This seemeth frivolous, because the godly should be always prepared to die.

Request is made that God would give those things which we for our unworthiness dare not ask. "This," they say, "carrieth with it the note of popish servile fear, and savoureth not of that confidence and reverent familiarity that the children of God have through Christ with their heavenly Father."

Request is made that we may evermore be defended from all adversity. For this "there is no promise in Scripture," and therefore "it is no prayer of faith, or of the which we can assure ourselves that we shall obtain it."

Finally, request is made that God "would have mercy upon all men." This is impossible, because some are the vessels of wrath to whom God will never extend his mercy.

XLV. As Christ hath purchased that heavenly kingdom the last perfection whereof is *glory in the life to come*, grace in this life a preparation thereunto; so the same he hath "opened" to the world in such sort, that whereas none can possibly without him attain salvation, by him "all that believe" are saved. Now whatsoever he did or suffered, the end thereof was to open the doors of the kingdom of heaven which our iniquities had "shut up." But because by *ascend-*

When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst open the kingdom of heaven unto all believers.

<sup>1</sup> [2 Adm. 58. ed. 1617. "Things there are maintained by some of them which are not agreeable to the Scripture: namely, the false interpretation of this clause in our Creed, 'He descended into hell;' which is expressly set down contrary to the Scriptures in the Creed made in metre in these words:

"His spirit did after this descend  
"Into the lower parts,  
"To them that long in darkness were,  
"The true light of their hearts."

"If they can warrant this out of  
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"the Scriptures, then 'Limbus Patrum' and within a while Purgatory will be found out there." See in Nichols on the 3d Article, p. 47, an account taken from Bishop Montague's Apparatus, p. 49, &c. of a disputation on this doctrine at Cambridge, 1599, in which Bishop Overall dealt with the same reserve as Hooker here. Neither Cartwright nor the Admonitioners, nor the Book of Discipline, took this exception to the "Te Deum;" so far at least as the Editor has yet been able to ascertain.]

ing after that the sharpness of death was overcome, he took the very local possession of glory, and that to the use of all that are his, even as himself before had witnessed, "I go to prepare a place for you<sup>1</sup>;" and again, "Whom thou hast given me, O Father, I will that where I am they be also with me, that my glory which thou hast given me they may behold<sup>2</sup>:" it appeareth that when Christ did ascend he then most liberally opened the kingdom of heaven, to the end that with him and by him all believers might reign.

[2.] In what estate the Fathers rested which were dead before, it is not hereby either one way or other determined. All we can rightly gather is, that as touching their souls what degree of joy or happiness soever it pleased God to bestow upon them, his ascension which succeeded procured theirs, and theirs concerning the body must needs be not only of but after his. As therefore Helvidius<sup>3</sup> against whom St. Jerome writeth, abused greatly those words of Matthew concerning Joseph and the mother of our Saviour Christ<sup>4</sup>, "He knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born," thereby gathering against the honour of the blessed Virgin, that a thing denied with special circumstance doth import an opposite affirmation when once that circumstance is expired: after the selfsame manner it should be a weak collection, if whereas we say that when Christ had "overcome the sharpness of death, he then opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers;" a thing in such sort affirmed with circumstance were taken as insinuating an opposite denial before that circumstance be accomplished, and consequently that because when the sharpness of death was overcome he then opened heaven as well to believing Gentiles as Jews, heaven till then was no receptacle to the souls of either. Wherefore be the spirits of the just and righteous before Christ truly or falsely thought excluded out of heavenly joy; by that which we in the words alleged before do attribute to Christ's ascension, there is to no such opinion nor to the favourers<sup>5</sup> thereof any

<sup>1</sup> John xiv. 2.

<sup>2</sup> John xvii. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Hieron. contra Helvid. [in init. t. ii. 7.] August. Her. lxxxiv. [t. viii. 24. "Helvidiani exorti ab Helvidio, ita virginitati Mariæ

"contradicunt, ut eam post Christum alios quoque filios de viro suo Joseph peperisse contentant."

<sup>4</sup> [Matt. i. 25.]

<sup>5</sup> Lyra super Gen. xxix. [xxv.

countenance at all given. We cannot better interpret the meaning of these words than Pope Leo himself expoundeth them, whose speech concerning our Lord's ascension may serve instead of a marginal gloss: "Christ's exaltation is our promotion, and whither the glory of the head is already gone before, thither the hope of the body also is to follow. "For as this day we have not only the possession of paradise assured unto us, but in Christ we have entered the highest of the heavens<sup>1</sup>." His "opening the kingdom of heaven" and his entrance thereto was not only to his own use but for the benefit of "all believers."

XLVI. Our good or evil estate after death dependeth most upon the quality of our lives. Yet somewhat there is why a virtuous mind should rather wish to depart this world with a kind of treatable dissolution, than to be suddenly cut off in a moment; rather to be taken than snatched away from the face of the earth.

Touching prayer for deliverance from sudden death.

Death is that which all men suffer, but not all men with one mind, neither all men in one manner. For being of necessity a thing common, it is through the manifold persuasions, dispositions, and occasions of men, with equal desert both of praise and dispraise, shunned by some, by others desired. So that absolutely we cannot discommend, we cannot absolutely approve, either willingness to live or forwardness to die.

And concerning the ways of death, albeit the choice thereof be only in his hands who alone hath power over all flesh, and unto whose appointment we ought with patience meekly to submit ourselves (for to be agents voluntarily in our own destruction is against both God and nature); yet there is no doubt but in so great variety, our desires will and may law-

Add. ii. on the expression, 'Congregatus est ad populum suum.' "De nonnullis sanctis antiqui testamenti, cum de hac vita migraverant, Scriptura dicit ipsos congregari ad populum suum: . . . nunquam tamen de aliquo eorum dicitur quod 'obdormivit in Domino.'" marg. "Ante Christum nemo ascendit in cœlum," i. p. 303 A. ed. Douay, 1617. And on c. xlix. v. 4. "Patres . . . quantum-

"cunque justis, non admittebantur ad regnum, sed descendeabant ad Limbum." 467 C.] Tho. [Aquino.] p. iii. q. 52. [t. xii. 168.]

<sup>1</sup> Leo Ser. i. de Ascens. [c. 4. "Christi ascensio, nostra provectionis est, et quo processit gloria capitis, eo spes vocatur et corporis . . . Hodie enim non solum Paradisi possessores firmati sumus, sed etiam cœlorum in Christo superna penetramus."]

fully prefer one kind before another. Is there any man of worth and virtue, although not instructed in the school of Christ, or ever taught what the soundness of religion meaneth, that had not rather end the days of this transitory life as Cyrus in Xenophon, or in Plato Socrates are described, than to sink down with them of whom Elihu hath said, *Memento moriuntur*<sup>1</sup>, "there is scarce an instant between their "flourishing and their not being?" But let us which know what it is to die as Absalon or Ananias and Sapphira died, let us beg of God that when the hour of our rest is come, the patterns of our dissolution may be Jacob<sup>2</sup>, Moses<sup>3</sup>, Josua<sup>4</sup>, David<sup>5</sup>; who leisurably ending their lives in peace, prayed for the mercies of God to come upon their posterity; replenished the hearts of the nearest unto them with words of memorable consolation; strengthened men in the fear of God; gave them wholesome instructions of life, and confirmed them in true religion; in sum, taught the world no less virtuously how to die than they had done before how to live.

[2.] To such as judge things according to the sense of natural men and ascend no higher, suddenness because it shorteneth their grief should in reason be most acceptable. That which causeth bitterness in death is the languishing attendance and expectation thereof ere it come. And therefore tyrants use what art they can to increase the slowness of death. Quick riddance out of life is often both requested and bestowed as a benefit. Commonly therefore it is for virtuous considerations that wisdom so far prevailleth with men as to make them desirous of slow and deliberate death against the stream of their sensual inclination, content to endure the longer grief and bodily pain, that the soul may have time to call itself to a just account of all things past, by means whereof repentance is perfected, there is wherein to exercise patience, the joys of the kingdom of heaven have leisure to present themselves, the pleasures of sin and this world's vanities are censured with uncorrupt judgment, charity is free to make advised choice of the soil wherein her last seed may most fruitfully be bestowed, the mind is at liberty to have due

<sup>1</sup> Job xxxiv. 20.<sup>4</sup> Josh. xxiv.<sup>2</sup> Heb. xi. 21.<sup>3</sup> Deut. xxxiii.<sup>5</sup> 1 Kings ii.

regard of that disposition of worldly things which it can never afterwards alter, and because<sup>1</sup> the nearer we draw unto God, the more we are oftentimes enlightened with the shining beams of his glorious presence as being then even almost in sight, a leisable departure may in that case bring forth for the good of such as are present that which shall cause them for ever after from the bottom of their hearts to pray, "O let us die the death of the righteous, and let our last end be "like theirs<sup>2</sup>." All which benefits and opportunities are by sudden death prevented.

[3.] And besides forasmuch as death howsoever is a general effect of the wrath of God against sin, and the suddenness thereof a thing which happeneth but to few; the world in this respect feareth it the more as being subject to doubtful constructions, which as no man willingly would incur, so they whose happy estate after life is of all men's the most certain should especially wish that no such accident in their death may give uncharitable minds occasion of rash, sinister, and suspicious verdicts, whereunto they are over prone; so that whether evil men or good be respected, whether we regard ourselves or others, to be preserved from sudden death is a blessing of God. And our prayer against it importeth a twofold desire: first, that death when it cometh may give us some convenient respite; or secondly, if that be denied us of God, yet we may

<sup>1</sup> Cypr. de Mortal. [i. 162. (c. 15.) "mortis extinguant, an cervicem  
"Pavore mortalitatis et temporis  
"flectant superbi, an audaciam leni-  
"accenduntur tepidi, constringun-  
"ant improbi, an pereuntibus caris,  
"tur remissi, excitantur ignavi,  
"vel sic aliquid divites indigentibus  
"desertores compelluntur ut red-  
"largiantur, et donent sine hærede  
"eant, gentiles aguntur ut credant,  
"morituri. Ut nihil aliud morta-  
"vetus fidelium populus ad qui-  
"litas ista contulerit, hoc Christianis  
"etem vocatur, ad aciem recens et  
"et Dei servis plurimum præstitit,  
"copiosus exercitus robore fortiore  
"quod martyrium cœpimus libenter  
"colligitur, pugnaturus sine metu  
"appetere, dum mortem discimus  
"mortis cum prælium venerit, qui  
"non timere. Exercitia sunt nobis  
"ad militiam tempore mortalitatis  
"ista, non funera; dant animo for-  
"accedit. Quid deinde illud, fratres  
"titudinis gloriam, contemtu mortis  
"dilectissimi, quale est, quam per-  
"præparant ad coronam." . . . and  
"tinens, quam necessarium, quod  
"p. 163. (c. 19.) "Audivit frater noster  
"pestis ista et lues, quæ horribilis  
"et collega moriturus quod cæteris  
"et feralis videtur, explorat justiti-  
"diceret. Nam qui moriturus au-  
"am singulorum, et mentes humani  
"divit, ad hoc audivit ut diceret.  
"generis examinat . . . an feroces  
"Audivit non sibi ille, sed nobis.  
"violentiam suam comprimant, an  
"Nam quid sibi disceret jam reces-  
"rapaces avaritiæ furentis insatia-  
"surus? Didicit immo remanen-  
"bilem semper ardorem vel metu  
"tibus. . . ."] <sup>2</sup> Numb. xxxiii. 10.

have wisdom to provide always beforehand that those evils overtake us not which death unexpected doth use to bring upon careless men, and that although it be sudden in itself, nevertheless in regard of our prepared minds it may not be sudden.

Prayer that those things which we for our unworthiness dare not ask, God, for the worthiness of his Son, would vouchsafe to grant.

XLVII. But is it credible that the very acknowledgment of our own unworthiness to obtain, and in that respect our professed fearfulness to ask any thing otherwise than only for his sake to whom God can deny nothing, that this should be noted for a popish error, that this should be termed baseness, abjection of mind, or "servility," is it credible? That which we for our unworthiness are afraid to crave, our prayer is that God for the worthiness of his Son would notwithstanding vouchsafe to grant. May it please them to shew us which of these words it is that "carrieth the note of popish and "servile fear<sup>1</sup>?"

[2.] In reference to other creatures of this inferior world man's worth and excellency is admired. Compared with God, the truest inscription wherewith we can circle so base a coin is that of David, *Universa vanitas est omnis homo*<sup>2</sup>: "Who-

<sup>1</sup> T. C. lib. i. p. 136. [107.] "This request carrieth with it still the note of the popish servile fear, and savoureth not of that confidence and reverent familiarity that the children of God have through Christ with their heavenly Father." ["For as we dare not without our Saviour Christ ask so much as a crumb of bread, so there is nothing which in his name we dare not ask, being needful for us; and if it be not needful why should we ask it?" Comp. Whitg. Def. 493; T. C. iii. 202-4. There are two collects against which this charge is brought by Cartwright; the first that for the 12th Sunday after Trinity, which before the last review ended as follows: "giving unto us that, that our prayer dare not presume to ask: through Jesus Christ our Lord." "Ut dimittas quæ conscientia metuit, et adjicias quæ oratio non præsumit." Miss. Sar. fol. cvii. ap. Palmer, Orig. Liturg. i. 349. The other collect ("one of

"those which are to be said after the Offertory, as it is termed, is done." . . . T. C. ubi sup.) remains unaltered. Mr. Palmer (ii. 162.) was unable to trace it "in any very ancient formularies." N. ap. Sarav. Art. 4. "Quod Dominica xii<sup>ma</sup> post Trinit. in collecta dicitur, Deum ea nobis dare, quæ petere ab eo preces nostræ non ausint præsumere: interpretor ex eodem loco Deum vota nostra et prævenire et superare. Sed verbis illis si quis inhæreat, papisticam diffidentiam stabilire videantur, contra infinita Scripturæ loca." Resp. "Quis tu? quæ tua est auctoritas? quæ eruditio? ut sine ulla ex verbo Dei demonstratione audeas damnare tam sanctam, tam humilem, tam piam orationem? . . . Annon multa sunt in Dei arcanis, quæ fidelibus suis Deus dare decrevit, qui tamen illa petere non audent?" He instances in Solomon, Joseph, Mordecai.]

<sup>2</sup> Psalm xxxix. 5.

"soever hath the name of a mortal man, there is in him whatsoever the name of vanity doth comprehend." And therefore what we say of our own "unworthiness" there is no doubt but truth will ratify. Alleged in prayer it both becometh and behoveth saints. For as humility is in suitors a decent virtue, so the testification thereof by such effectual acknowledgments, not only argueth a sound apprehension of his supereminent glory and majesty before whom we stand<sup>1</sup>, but putteth also into his hands a kind of pledge or bond for security against our unthankfulness, the very natural root whereof is always either ignorance, dissimulation, or pride: ignorance, when we know not the author from whom our good cometh; dissimulation, when our hands are more open than our eyes upon that we receive; pride, when we think ourselves *worthy* of that which mere grace and undeserved mercy bestoweth. In prayer therefore to abate so vain imaginations with the *true conceit of unworthiness*, is rather to prevent than commit a fault.

[3.] It being no error thus to think, no fault thus to speak of ourselves when we pray, is it a fault that the consideration of our unworthiness maketh us *fearful* to open our mouths by way of suit? While Job had prosperity and lived in honour, men feared him for his authority's sake, and in token of their fear when they saw him they "hid themselves<sup>2</sup>." Between Elihu and the rest of Job's familiars the greatest disparity was but in years. And he, though riper than they in judgment, doing them reverence in regard of age, stood long "doubtful," and very loth to adventure upon speech in his elders' hearing<sup>3</sup>. If so small inequality between man and man make their modesty a commendable virtue, who respecting superiors *as superiors*, can neither speak nor stand before them without fear: that the publican approacheth not more boldly to God; that when Christ in mercy draweth near to Peter, he in humility and fear craveth distance; that being to stand, to speak, to sue in the presence of so great majesty, we are afraid, let no man blame us.

<sup>1</sup> Phil. de Sacrif. Abel. et Cain. [p. 138 C.] Μεμνημένος γὰρ τῆς ἰδίας παρὰ πάντα οὐδενείας μνησῆσθαι καὶ τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ παρὰ πάντα ὑπερβολῆς.

<sup>2</sup> Job xxix. 8. Amongst the parts of honour Aristotle reckoneth προσκυνήσεις and ἐκστάσεις. Rhet. lib. i. c. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Job xxxii. 6.