

Puritan Prayers

Confession and Petition

Holy Lord, I have sinned times without number, and been guilty of pride and unbelief, of failure to find Thy mind in Thy Word, of neglect to seek Thee in my daily life. My transgressions and short-comings present me with a list of accusations, but I bless Thee that they will not stand against me, for all have been laid on Christ. Go on to subdue my corruptions, and grant me grace to live above them. Let not the passions of the flesh nor lustings of the mind bring my spirit into subjection, but do Thou rule over me in liberty and power.

I thank Thee that many of my prayers have been refused. I have asked amiss and do not have, I have prayed from lusts and been rejected, I have longed for Egypt and been given a wilderness. Go on with Thy patient work, answering 'no' to my wrongful prayers, and fitting me to accept it. Purge me from every false desire, every base aspiration, everything contrary to Thy rule. I thank Thee for Thy wisdom and Thy love, for all the acts of discipline to which I am subject, for sometimes putting me into the furnace to refine my gold and remove my dross.

No trial is so hard to bear as a sense of sin. If Thou shouldst give me choice to live in pleasure and keep my sins, or to have them burnt away with trial, give me sanctified affliction. Deliver me from every evil habit, every accretion of former sins, everything that dims the brightness of Thy grace in me, everything that prevents me taking delight in Thee. Then I shall bless Thee, God of jeshurun, for helping me to be upright.

Consecration and Worship

My God, I feel it is heaven to please Thee, and to be what Thou wouldst have me be. O that I were holy as Thou art holy, pure as Christ is pure, perfect as Thy Spirit is perfect! These, I feel, are the best commands in Thy Book, and shall I break them? must I break them? am I under such a necessity as long as I live here?

Woe, woe is me that I am a sinner, that I grieve this blessed God, who is infinite in goodness and grace! O if He would punish me for my sins, it would not would my heart so deep to offend Him; But though I sin continually, He continually repeats His kindness to me.

At times I feel I could bear any suffering, but how can I dishonour this glorious God? What shall I do to glorify and worship this best of beings? O that I could consecrate my soul and body to His service, without restraint, for ever! O that I

could give myself up to Him, so as never more to attempt to be my own! or have any will or affections that are not perfectly conformed to His will and His love! But, alas, I cannot live and not sin.

O may angels glorify Him incessantly, and, if possible, prostrate themselves lower before the blessed King of heaven! I long to bear a part with them in ceaseless praise; but when I have done all I can to eternity I shall not be able to offer more than a small fraction of the homage that the glorious God deserves. Give me a heart full of divine, heavenly love.

Contentment

Heavenly Father, if I should suffer need, and go unclothed, and be in poverty, make my heart prize Thy love, know it, be constrained by it, though I be denied all blessings. It is Thy mercy to afflict and try me with wants, for by these trials I see my sins, and desire severance from them. Let me willingly accept misery, sorrows, temptations, if I can thereby feel sin as the greatest evil, and be delivered from it with gratitude to Thee, acknowledging this as the highest testimony of Thy love.

When thy Son, Jesus, came into my soul instead of sin He became more dear to me than sin had formerly been; His kindly rule replaced sin's tyranny. Teach me to believe that if ever I would have any sin subdued I must not only labour to overcome it, but must invite Christ to abide in the place of it, and He must become to me more than vile lust had been; that His sweetness, power, life may be there. Thus I must seek a grace from Him contrary to sin, but must not claim it apart from Himself.

When I am afraid of evils to come, comfort me by showing me that in myself I am a dying, condemned wretch, but in Christ I am reconciled and live; that in myself I find insufficiency and no rest, but in Christ there is satisfaction and peace; that in myself I am feeble and unable to do good, but in Christ I have ability to do all things. Though now I have His graces in part, I shall shortly have them perfectly in that state where Thou wilt show Thyself fully reconciled, and alone sufficient, efficient, loving me completely, with sin abolished. O Lord, hasten that day.

The Deeps

Lord Jesus, give me a deeper repentance, a horror of sin, a dread of its approach. Help me chastely to flee it and jealously to resolve that my heart shall be Thine alone.

Give me a deeper trust, that I may lose myself to find myself in Thee, the ground of my rest, the spring of my being. Give me a deeper knowledge of Thyself as saviour, master, lord, and king. Give me deeper power in private prayer, more sweetness in Thy Word, more steadfast grip on its truth. Give me deeper holiness in speech, thought, action, and let me not seek moral virtue apart from Thee.

Plough deep in me, great Lord, heavenly husbandman, that my being may be a tilled field, the roots of grace spreading far and wide, until Thou alone art seen in me, Thy beauty golden like summer harvest, Thy fruitfulness as autumn plenty.

I have no master but Thee, no law but Thy will, no delight but Thyself, no wealth but that Thou givest, no good but that Thou blessest, no peace but that Thou bestowest. I am nothing but that Thou makest me. I have nothing but that I receive from Thee. I can be nothing but that grace adorns me. Quarry me deep, dear Lord, and then fill me to overflowing with living water.

Devotion

God of my end, it is my greatest, noblest pleasure to be acquainted with Thee and with my rational, immortal soul; it is sweet and entertaining to look into my being when all my powers and passions are united and engaged in pursuit of Thee, when my soul longs and passionately breathes after conformity to Thee and the full enjoyment of Thee; no hours pass away with so much pleasure as those spent in communion with Thee and with my heart.

O how desirable, how profitable to the Christian life is a spirit of holy watchfulness and godly jealousy over myself when my soul is afraid of nothing except grieving and offending Thee, the blessed God, my Father and friend, whom I then love and long to please, rather than be happy in myself! Knowing, as I do, that this is the pious temper, worthy of the highest ambition, and closest pursuit of intelligent creatures and holy Christians, may my joy derive from glorifying and delighting Thee. I long to fill all my time for Thee, whether at home or in the way; to place all my concerns in Thy hands; to be entirely at Thy disposal, having no will or interest of my own. Help me to live to Thee for ever, to make Thee my last and only end, so that I may never more in one instance love my sinful self.

Divine Support

Thou art the blessed God, happy in Thyself, source of happiness in Thy creatures, my maker, benefactor, proprietor, upholder. Thou hast produced and sustained me,

supported and indulged me, saved and kept me; Thou art in every situation able to meet my needs and miseries.

May I live by Thee, live for Thee, never be satisfied with my Christian progress but as I resemble Christ; and may conformity to His principles, temper, and conduct grow hourly in my life. Let Thy unexampled love constrain me into holy obedience, and render my duty my delight. If others deem my faith folly, my meekness infirmity, my zeal madness, my hope delusion, my actions hypocrisy, may I rejoice to suffer for Thy name.

Keep me walking steadfastly towards the country of everlasting delights, that paradise-land which is my true inheritance. Support me by the strength of heaven that I may never turn back, or desire false pleasures that will disappear into nothing. As I pursue my heavenly journey by Thy grace let me be known as a man with no aim but that of a burning desire for Thee, and the good and salvation of my fellow men.

Evening Praise

Giver of all, another day is ended and I take my place beneath my great redeemer's cross, where healing streams continually descend, where balm is poured into every wound, where I wash anew in the all-cleansing blood, assured that Thou seest in me no spots of sin. Yet a little while and I shall go to Thy home and be no more seen; help me to gird up the loins of my mind, to quicken my step, to speed as if each moment were my last, that my life be joy, my death glory.

I thank Thee for the temporal blessings of this world—the refreshing air, the light of the sun, the food that renews strength, the raiment that clothes, the dwelling that shelters, the sleep that gives rest, the starry canopy of night, the summer breeze, the flowers' sweetness, the music of flowing streams, the happy endearments of family, kindred, friends. Things animate, things inanimate, minister to my comfort. My cup runs over. Suffer me not to be insensible to these daily mercies. Thy hand bestows blessings: Thy power averts evil. I bring my tribute of thanks for spiritual graces, the full warmth of faith, the cheering presence of Thy Spirit, the strength of Thy restraining will, Thy spiking of hell's artillery. Blessed be my sovereign Lord!

Evening Prayer

O lover of Thy people, Thou hast placed my whole being in the hands of Jesus, my redeemer, commander, husband, friend, and carest for me in Him. Keep me holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners; may I not know the voice of strangers,

but go to Him where He is, and follow where He leads. Thou hast bathed me once for all in the sin-removing fountain, cleanse me now from this day's defilement, from its faults, deficiencies of virtue, harmful extremes, that I may exhibit a perfect character in Jesus. O Master, who didst wash the disciples' feet, be very patient with me, be very condescending to my faults, go on with me till Thy great work in me is completed. I desire to conquer self in every respect, to overcome the body with its affections and lusts, to keep under my flesh, to guard my manhood from all grosser sins, to check the refined power of my natural mind, to live entirely to Thy glory, to be deaf to unmerited censure and the praise of men. Nothing can hurt my new-born inner man, it cannot be smitten or die; nothing can mar the dominion of Thy Spirit within me; it is enough to have Thy approbation and that of my conscience. Keep me humble, dependent, supremely joyful, as calm and quiet as a sucking child, yet earnest and active. I wish not so much to do as to be, and I long to be like Jesus; if Thou dost make me right I shall be right; Lord, I belong to Thee, make me worthy of Thyself.

Evening Renewal

My Father, if Thy mercy had bounds, where would be my refuge from just wrath? But thy love in Christ is without measure. Thus, I present myself to Thee with sins of commission and omission, against Thee, my Father, against Thee, adorable redeemer, against Thee and Thy strivings, O Holy Spirit, against the dictates of my conscience, against the precepts of Thy Word, against my neighbours and myself. Enter not into judgment with me, for I plead no righteousness of my own, and have no cloak for iniquity. Pardon my day dark with evil.

This night I renew my penitence. Every morning I vow to love Thee more fervently, to serve Thee more sincerely, to be more devoted in my life, to be wholly Thine; Yet I soon stumble, backslide, and have to confess my weakness, misery and sin. But I bless Thee that the finished work of Jesus needs no addition from my doings, that His oblation is sufficient satisfaction for my sins.

If future days be mine, help me to amend my life, to hate and abhor evil, to flee the sins I confess. Make me more resolute, more watchful, more prayerful. Let no evil fruit spring from evil seeds my hands have sown; Let no neighbour be hardened in vanity and folly by my want of circumspection. If this day I have been ashamed of Christ and His Word, or have shown unkindness, malice, envy, lack of love, unadvised speech, hasty temper, let it be no stumbling block to others, or dishonour to Thy name. O help me to set an upright example that will ever rebuke vice, allure to goodness, and evidence that lovely are the ways of Christ.

Reflection on Self: "O my soul, thou art a creature, formed and furnished by him, and lodged in a body which he provided, and which he supports; a body for which he intends only a transitory abode. That I live I owe to thine indulgence. Wound my heart O Lord, so that afterwards I can feel your healing touch. Break my heart into pieces, if you will but at length condescend to bind it up." (A paraphrase of Philip Doddridge's words.)

A Prayer for the Graces of Faith, Hope, Charity.

O Lord God of infinite mercy, of infinite excellency, who hast sent thy holy Son into the world to redeem us from an intolerable misery, and to teach us a holy religion, and to forgive us an infinite debt: give me thy Holy Spirit, that my understanding and all my faculties may be so resigned to the discipline and doctrine of my Lord, that I may be prepared in mind and will to die for the testimony of Jesus, and to suffer any affliction or calamity that shall offer to hinder my duty, or tempt me to shame or sin or apostasy; and let my faith be the parent of a good life, a strong shield to repel the fiery darts of the devil, and the author of a holy hope, of modest desires, of confidence in God, and of a never-failing charity to thee, my God, and to all the world; that I may never have my portion with the unbelievers or uncharitable and desperate persons; but may be supported by the strengths of faith in all temptations, and may be refreshed with the comforts of a holy hope in all my sorrows, and may bear the burden of the Lord, and the infirmities of my neighbour, by the support of charity; that the yoke of Jesus may become easy to me, and my love may do all the miracles of grace, till from grace it swell to glory, from earth to heaven, from duty to reward, from the imperfections of a beginning and still growing love, it may arrive to the consummation of an eternal and never-ceasing charity, through Jesus Christ the Son of thy love, the author of our hope, and the author and finisher of our faith: to whom with thee, O Lord God, Father of heaven and earth, and with thy Holy Spirit, be all glory and love and obedience and dominion, now and for ever. Amen.

A Prayer for a completed Work (or endeavor such as this website)

"O thou, the merciful Father of spirits, the attraction of love and ocean of delights, draw up these drossy hearts unto thyself, and keep them there till they are spiritualized and lines, to the practice of this delightful, heavenly work! O suffer not the soul of thy most unworthy servant to be a stranger to those joys which he describes to others; but keep me, while I remain on earth, in daily breathings after thee, and in a believing, affectionate walking with thee! And when thou comest, let me be found so doing; not serving my flesh, nor asleep, with my lamp unfurnished; but waiting and longing for my Lord's return! Let those who shall read these heavenly directions, not merely read the fruit of my studies, but the breathing of my active hope and love; that if my heart were open to their view, they might there read the same most deeply engraven with a beam from the face of the Son of God; and not find vanity, or lust, or pride within, when the words of life appear without; that so these lines may not witness against me; but proceeding from the heart of the writer, may be effectual, through thy grace, upon the heart of the reader, and so be the savor of life to both! Amen."