

WORDS OF THE WISE.

QUESNEL ON THE LORDS PRAYER.

After this manner therefore pray ye:

The prayer which Jesus Christ gives us here is the pattern of all Christian prayer, and an abridgement of the gospel. What satisfaction it is to learn, from God himself, with what words and in what manner he would have us pray to him, so as not to pray in vain ! A king, who himself draws up the petition which he allows to be presented to himself, has surely a very great desire to grant the request. The order of the petitions is the order of our desires and of our duties ; it is here we ought to be particularly mindful of them.

Our Father which art in heaven,

We must, in the first place, say this prayer with the heart of a heavenly child, disengaged from the earth by his new birth, animated with the Spirit of the divine adoption, and full of desire to be reunited to his Father and Author. The heart of a child of God is a brotherly heart, in respect of all other Christians ; it asks nothing but in the spirit of unity, fellowship, and Christian charity, desiring that for its brethren which it desires for itself.

Hallowed by the name.

We must say it, with the heart of a priest, all inflamed with zeal for God's glory, and for the sanctification of souls, and with the desire of that holiness, which should render him like to God as to his Father. In the sanctification of the elect and of the whole church, God is pleased to place his glory ; and, therefore, this glory and this sanctification we ought to desire and to pray for before all things.

The kingdom come.

We must say it with the heart of a faithful subject, zealous for the glory of his sovereign. When will it be, O my God, that death and sin, the devil and his ministers, the world and its offences, shall cease to reign upon earth ; and that thou, after having judged the quick and the dead, separated thy elect from the reprobate, and destroyed all the powers of earth and hell, wilt thyself reign alone everywhere, in all, and forever, and thy saints with thee, and with thy Son ?

Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

We must say it with the heart of a wife who studies the desires and inclinations of her husband, and seeks only to please him. God everywhere effects his will, even in those who oppose it the most ; but it is done, with and by love, in none but the saints in heaven and on earth. We acknowledge the necessity of a grace, which, by a free and predominant love, may subject our will to that of God, when we pray that "his will may be done in us as it is in heaven."

Give us this day our daily bread.

We must say it with the heart of a sheep, which requires food from its shepherd ; and of one really in want, who begs his bread. We ought to ask of God the bread of the body ; but much more the bread of the soul,—his grace, his word, the divine eucharist, the love of his law, and the accomplishment of his will. God will have us depend on him.

And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

We must say it with the heart of a penitent who begs mercy of his God, while he affords it to his neighbour in all respects. That man condemns himself to suffer the eternal vengeance of God, who makes use of this prayer with revenge