

Letanies for All Things and Persons

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Anglican · Post-Reformation · Exegesis

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INTRODUCTION

Composed during Taylor's enforced retirement in Wales after the Royalist defeat, when the deposed Anglican chaplain turned his energies to furnishing the dispossessed Church of England with prayers it could no longer say in public, these litanies offer petitions for every conceivable circumstance of a Christian life—childhood sins, the temptations of age, sickness, journeys, the dying. Taylor's prose here is the same instrument that produced *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying*, and the cadence belongs to the same school of devotional English that shaped Anglican piety from Andrewes through Keble. The repeated forms invite slow use rather than continuous reading: a manual to be prayed through in pieces, found wanting in oneself, and prayed through again.

O God the Father of Mercies, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon thy servants, and hear the prayers of us miserable sinners.

O blessed Jesus, the Fountain of Peace and Pardon, our Wisdome and our Righteousness, our Sanctification and Redemption, have mercy upon thy servants, refuse not to hear the prayers of us miserable, sorrowful, and returning sinners.

O holy and divinest Spirit of the Father, help our infirmities, for of our selves we know not what to ask, nor how to pray, but do thou assist and be present in the desires of us miserable sinners.

#I. For Pardon of Sins.

Remember not Lord the follies of our childehood, nor the lusts of our youth, the wildness of our head nor the wandrings of our heart, the infinite sins of our tongue, and the inexcusable errors of the dayes of vanity.

Lord have mercy upon us poor miserable sinners.

Remember not, O Lord, the growing iniquities of our elder age, the pride of our spirit, the abuse of our members, the greediness of our appetite, the inconstancy of our purposes, the peevishness and violence of all our passions and affections.

Lord have mercy, &c.

Remember not, O Lord, how we have been full of envy and malice, anger and revenge, fierce and earnest in the purchases and vanities of the world, and lazy and dull, slow and soon weary in the things of God and of Religion.

Lord have mercy, &c.

Remember not, O Lord, our uncharitable behaviour towards those with whom we have conversed, our jealousies and suspicions, our evil surmisings and evil reportings, the breach of our promises to men, and the breach of all our holy vows made to thee our God.

Lord have mercy, &c.

Remember not, O Lord, how often we have omitted the several parts and actions of our duty; for our sins of Omission are infinite, and we have not sought after the righteousness of God, but have rested in carelessness and forgetfulness, in a false Peace and a silent Conscience.

Lord have mercy, &c.

O most gracious Lord, enter not into judgement with thy servants, lest we be consumed in thy wrath, and just displeasure: from which

Good Lord deliver us, and preserve thy servants for ever.

#II. For deliverance from evils.

From gross ignorance and stupid negligence, from a wandering head, and a trifling spirit, from the violence and rule of passion, from a servile will, and a commanding lust, from all intemperance, inordination and irregularity whatsoever:

Good Lord deliver and preserve thy servants for ever.

From a covetous minde and greedy desires, from lustful thoughts, and a wanton eye, from rebellious members, and the pride and vanity of spirit; from false opinions and ignorant confidences:

Good Lord deliver, &c.

From improvidence and prodigality from envy and the spirit of slander, from idleness and sensuality, from presumption and despair, from sinful action; and all vicious habits:

Good Lord deliver, &c.

From fierceness of rage, and hastiness of spirit, from clamorous and reproachful language, from peevish anger, and inhumane malice, from the spirit of contention, and hasty and indiscreet zeal:

Good Lord deliver, &c.

From a schismatical and heretical spirit, from tyranny and tumults, from sedition and factions, from envying the grace of God in our Brother, from impenitence and hardness of heart, from obstinacy and apostasie, from delighting in sin, and hating God and good men:

Good Lord deliver, &c.

From fornication and adultery, from unnatural desires and unnatural hatreds, from gluttony & drunkenness, from loving and believing lies, and taking pleasure in the remembrances of evil things, from delecting in our Neighbours misery, and procuring it, from upbraiding others, and hating reproof of our selves:

Good Lord deliver, &c.

From impudence and shame, from contempt and scorn, from oppression and cruelty, from a pitiless and unrelenting spirit, from a churlish behaviour, and undecent usages of our selves or others:

Good Lord deliver, &c.

From famine and pestilence, from noisome and infectious diseases, from sharp and intolerable pains, from impatience and tediousness of spirit, from a state of temptation, and hardened spirits:

Good Lord deliver, &c.

From banishments and prison, from widowhood and want, from violence of pains and passions, from tempests and earthquakes, from the rage of fire and water, from Rebellion and Treason, from fretfulness and inordinate cares, from murmuring against God, and disobedience to the divine Commandment:

Good Lord deliver, &c.

From delaying our repentance, and persevering in sin, from false principles and prejudices, from unthankfulness and irreligion, from seducing others, and being abused our selves, from the malice and craftiness of the Devil, and the deceit and lyings of the World:

Good Lord deliver, &c.

From wounds and Murder, from precipices and falls, from fracture of bones, and dislocation of joints, from dismembering our bodies, and all infatuation of our souls, from folly and madness, from uncertainty of mind and state, and from a certainty of sinning:

Good Lord deliver, &c.

From thunder and lightning, from phantasms, spectres and illusions of the night, from sudden and great Changes, from the snares of wealth, and the contempt of beggary and extreme poverty, from being made an example and a warning to others by suffering sad judgements our selves:

Good Lord deliver, &c.

From condemning others, and justifying our selves, from mispending our time and abusing thy grace, from calling good evil, and evil good, from consenting to folly, and tempting others:

Good Lord deliver, &c.

From excess in speaking and peevish silence, from looser laughing and immoderate weeping, from giving evil example to others, or following any our selves, from giving or receiving scandal, from the horrible sentence of endless death and damnation:

Good Lord deliver, &c.

From cursing and swearing, from uncharitable chiding, and easiness to believe evil, from the evil spirit that walketh at noon, and the arrow that flieth in darkness, from the Angel of wrath, and perishing in popular diseases:

Good Lord deliver, &c.

From the want of a Spiritual Guide, from a famine of the Word and Sacraments, from hurtful persecution, and from taking part with persecutors:

Good Lord deliver, &c.

From drowning or being burnt alive, from sleepless nights, and contentious dayes, from a melancholy and a confused spirit, from violent fears and the loss of reason, from a vicious life, and a sudden and unprovided death:

Good Lord deliver, &c.

From relying upon vain fancies and false foundations, from an evil and an amazed Conscience, from sinning near the end of our life, and from despairing in the day of our death:

Good Lord deliver, &c.

From hypocrisie and wilfulness, from self-love and vain ambition, from curiosity and carelesness, from being tempted in the dayes of our weakness from the prevailing of the flesh, and grieving the Spirit, from all thy wrath, and from all our sins:

Good Lord deliver, &c.

#III. For Gifts and Graces.

Hear our Prayer, O Lord, and consider our desire, hearken unto us for thy truth and righteousness sake: O hide not thy face from us, neither cast away thy servants in displeasure.

Give unto us the spirit of Prayer, frequent and fervent, holy and persevering, an unreprouable Faith a just and a humble Hope, and a never-failing Charity.

Hear our prayers, O Lord, and consider our desire.

Give unto us true humility, a meek and a quiet spirit, a loving and a friendly, a holy and a useful conversation, bearing the burthens of our Neighbours, denying our selves, and studying to benefit others, and to please thee in all things.

Hear our prayers, &c.

Give us a prudent and a sober, a just and a sincere, a temperate and a religious spirit; a great contempt of the world, a love of holy things, and a longing after Heaven, and the instruments and paths that lead thither.

Hear our prayers, &c.

Grant us to be thankful to our Benefactors, righteous in performing promises, loving to our relatives, careful of our charges, to be gentle and easie to be intreated, slow to anger, and fully instructed and readily prepared for every good work.

Hear our prayers, &c.

Give us a peaceable spirit, and a peaceable free from debt, and deadly sin, grace to abstain from all appearances of evil, and to do nothing but what is of good report, to confess Christ and his holy Religion, by a holy and obedient life, and a minde ready to die for him when he shall call us, and assist us.

Hear our prayers, &c.

Give to thy servants a watchful and an observing spirit, diligent in doing our duty, inflexible to evil, obedient to thy word, inquisitive after thy will, pure and holy thoughts, strong and religious purposes, and thy grace to perform faithfully what we have promised in the day of our duty, or in the day of our calamity.

Hear our prayers, &c.

O teach us to despise all vanity, to fight the battles of the Lord manfully against the Flesh, the World, and the Devil, to spend our time religiously and usefully, to speak gracious words, to walk alwayes as in thy presence, to preserve our souls and bodies in holiness, fit for the habitation of the holy Spirit of God.

Hear our prayers, &c.

Give us a holy and a perfect repentance, a well instructed understanding, regular affections, a constant and a wise heart, a good name, a fear of thy Majesty, and a love of all thy glories above all the things in the world for ever.

Hear our prayers, &c.

Give us a healthful body and a clear understanding the love of our neighbors, and the peace of the Church, the publick use and comfort of thy holy Word and Sacraments, a great love to all Christians, and obedience to our Superiors, Ecclesiastical and Civil, all the dayes of our life.

Hear our prayers, &c.

Give us spiritual wisdom, that we may discern what is pleasing to thee, and follow what belongs unto our peace; and let the knowledge and love of God, and of Jesus Christ our Lord, be our guide and our portion all our dayes.

Hear our prayers, &c.

Give unto us holy dispositions, and an active industry in thy service, to redeem the time mispent in vanity; for thy pity sake take not vengeance of us for our sins, but sanctifie our souls and bodies in this life, and glorifie them hereafter.

Hear our prayers, &c.

Our Father, &c.

#IV. To be added to the former Letanies, according as our Devotions and time will suffer.#

For all states of men and women, especially in the Christian Church.

O Blessed God, in mercy remember thine inheritance, and forget not the congregation of the poor for ever; pity poor mankinde, whose portion is misery and folly, shame and death: But thou art our Redeemer, and the lifter up of our head, and under the shadow of thy wings shall be our help, untill this Tyranny be overpast.

Have mercy upon us, O God, and hide not thy self from our petition.

Preserve, O God, the Catholick Church in holiness and truth, in unity and peace, free from persecution, or glorious under it, that she may for ever advance the honour our of her Lord Jesus, for ever represent is Sacrifice, and glorifie his Person, and advance his Religion, and be accepted of thee in her blessed Lord, that being filled with his Spirit, she may partake of his Glory.

Have mercy upon us, &c.

Give the spirit of Government and holiness to all Christian Kings, Princes and Governours: grant that their people may obey them, and they may obey thee, and live in honesty and peace, justice and holy Religion, being Nursing Fathers to the Church Advocates for the oppressed, Patrons for the widows, and a Sanctuary for the miserable and the fatherless, that they may reign with thee for ever in the Kingdome of the Lord Jesus.

Have mercy upon us, &c.

Give to thy servants the Bishops, and all the Clergy, the spirit of holiness and courage, of patience and humility, of prudence and diligence, to preach and declare thy will by a holy life, and wise discourses, that they may minister to the good of souls, and finde a glorious reward in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Have mercy upon us, &c.

Give to our Relatives [our Wives and Children, our Friends and Benefactors, our Charges, our Family, &c.] pardon and support, comfort in all their sorrows, strength in all their temptations, the guard of Angels to preserve them from evil, and the conduct of thy holy Spirit, to lead them into all good; that they doing their duty, may feel thy mercies here, and partake of thy glories hereafter.

Have mercy upon us, &c.

Give to all Christian Kingdomes and Common-wealths peace and plenty, health and holy Religion: to all families of Religion and Nurseries of piety, zeal and holiness, prudence and unity, peace and contentedness: To all Schools of Learning, quietness and industry, freedome from wars and violence, factions and envy.

Have mercy upon us, &c.

Give to all married pairs, faith and love, charitable and wise compliances, sweetness of society, and innocence of conversation; To all Virgins and Widows, great love of Religion, a sober and a contented spirit, an unwearied attendance to devotion, and the offices of holiness; protection to the fatherless, comfort to the disconsolate, patience and submission, health and spiritual advantages to the sick; that they may feel thy comforts for the dayes wherein they have suffered adversity.

Have mercy upon us, &c.

Be thou a star and a guide to them that travel by land or sea, the confidence and comfort of them that are in storms and shipwracks, the strength of them that toil in the Mynes, and row in the Gallies, an instructor to the ignorant, to them that are condemn'd to die, be thou a guide unto death; give chearfulness to every sad heart, spiritual strength, and proportionable comfort to them that are afflicted by evil spirits: pity the lunaticks, give life and salvation to all to whom thou hast given no understanding; accept the stupid and the fools to mercy, give liberty to prisoners, redemption to captives maintenance to the poor, patronage and defence to the oppressed, and put a period to the iniquity, and to the miseries of all mankind.

Have mercy upon us, &c.

Give unto our enemies grace and pardon, charity to us, and love to thee; take away all anger from them, and all mistakes from us, all misinterpretations and jealousies; bring all sinners to repentance, and holiness, and to all thy Saints and Servants give an increasing love, and a persevering duty; bring all Turks, Jews and Infidels to the knowledge and confession of the Lord Jesus, and a participation of all the Promises of the Gospel, all the benefits of his Passion; to all Hereticks give humility and ingenuity, repentance of their errors, and grace and power to make amends to the Church and Truth, and a publick acknowledgement of a holy faith, to the glory of the Lord Jesus.

Have mercy upon us, &c.

Give to all Merchants faithfulness and truth; to the labouring husbandman health, and fair seasons of the year, and reward his toil with the dew of heaven, and the blessings of the earth; To all Artizans give diligence in their Callings, and a blessing on their labours and on their families; To old men piety and perfect repentance, a liberal heart, and an open hand, great religion, and desires after heaven; To young men give sobriety and chastity, health and usefulness, an early piety, and a persevering duty; To all families visited with the rod of God, give consolation, and a holy use of the affliction, and a speedy deliverance; To us all pardon and holiness, and life eternal, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communication of the Holy Spirit, be with us all for ever. Amen.

Source: The Golden Grove, Jeremy Taylor. London: Printed by J.F. for R. Royston at the Angel in Ivie-lane, 1655. Text sourced from Project Canterbury (anglicanhistory.org).

Transcribed from the 1655 first edition by Project Canterbury (Anglican History Project, anglicanhistory.org). Taylor composed The Golden Grove during his years of enforced exile in Wales under the Interregnum, when Anglican worship had been suppressed and he was living under the protection of Richard Vaughan, Earl of Carbery, at the estate from which the book takes its name. The text is in the public domain; Taylor died in 1667. No translator is involved; this is Taylor's own English.

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