

# **PRA YERS AND RELIGIOUS MEDITATIONS**

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Prayers and Religious Meditations by David Hartley

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**DAVID HARTLEY**

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AND

RELIGIOUS MEDITATIONS,

BY

DAVID HARTLEY, M. D.

*Second American Edition.*

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1836.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

THERE is so much of the true spirit of rational and fervent piety in the following prayers, and so little in them which is exclusively applicable to the peculiar circumstances of their author, that it was thought they would be useful and acceptable to those who seek to cultivate a similar temper. The character of Dr. Hartley needs no encomium; but were it necessary, the following prayers and religious meditations bear distinct and strong testimony to its moral and religious excellence.

One or two short passages only have been omitted, which relate too particularly to his own situation or opinions to be generally useful. No other alteration has been made.

*Cambridge, April 10, 1821.*

**PRAYERS**  
**AND**  
**RELIGIOUS MEDITATIONS.**

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**I.**

Composed in Spring, 1733. *Ætat.* 28.

**GRACIOUS GOD!** my life, the blessings of it, and the expectation of a better; whatever I am, have, or hope for, which is good, are thine: glory be to Thee. Make me sensible how contented and happy they ought to be, who have the high privilege of calling infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, their Father and Friend; and inspire me with a gratitude as great as my faculties can attain unto. My sins, and the evils I suffer, are my own. Thou, the Creator of all things, hast no share in them. They are the productions of my own perverseness and folly. Have mercy upon me, a miserable sinner: for the sake of thy Son **JESUS CHRIST**, pardon all my offences, and accept my frail endeavours; and, that they

may be hereafter more sincere and hearty, let me never forget, that thy unalterable nature, and consummate perfection, make it impossible that virtue and happiness, vice and misery, should ever be disjoined. Awaken my hopes and fears; inform my understanding; and so correct and improve my whole heart, that I may be truly penitent for what I have already done amiss; that I may be constantly watchful over all my thoughts, words, and actions, and never cease tending to entire, universal purity.

Almighty Parent and Governor of the world, Thou hast placed me in the various relations of this life, that I, as a part, may, in my proper station, contribute to the beauty, order, and good of the whole. Let me ever pursue this great end with unfeigned and unwearied zeal, courage, and constancy; let me earnestly seek all occasions of producing happiness, and avoid all of producing misery. Grant me unlimited charity; the strictest regard to truth, justice, and integrity; unaffected humility; an invincible meekness in every apprehension of insult or injury; perfect chastity in thought, word, and deed; and a temperance not to be



overcome by appetite, or surprised through folly or negligence. Make my heart whole before Thee in all these things, and also grant me prudence so to conduct my actions, that they may best answer their true purpose. In the pursuit of my own happiness here, let thy Holy Spirit direct, and govern me, that the appearance of good impose not upon me, nor my own foolish passions transport me beyond due bounds. To Thee I commit myself, mind, body, and estate; humbly praying for a virtuous industry in the care of all, and then not doubting that Thou wilt bless that industry, in such a manner as will be fittest for me.

O most wonderful and incomprehensible Being! Thou who art the hope, end, centre, and happiness of all things; let me desire nothing in comparison of Thee. Let me consider this world as the school of discipline for my affections, and the joys and sorrows of it as intended to prepare and qualify me for the enjoyment of Thee. How would this consideration give a relish to all my pleasures, and deprive my pains of all their sting and bitterness! But I am stupidly foolish, ignorant, and perverse. I have happiness before me,

and do not see it ; within my reach, and yet neglect to take it. O teach me to love, reverence, and fear Thee above all things ; to put my whole trust in Thee ; to resign myself implicitly to Thee ; to make it my chief delight to look up to Thee with all the devotion in my power ; and whatever I do, to do it as unto Thee. Let this consciousness, this experience of my blindness, and the deceitfulness of my heart, arm me against them, and since I cannot confide in myself, be Thou ever with me. I can do all things through CHRIST who strengtheneth me. What I here beg for myself, I likewise beg for all my friends ; for all my enemies ; for all my superiors ; for the Christian church ; and for the whole race of mankind ; and all in the name of JESUS CHRIST.

Our Father, who art in heaven, &c.

## II.

Composed in Summer, 1734. *Ætat.* 29.

O THOU, whose mercy is over all thy works, teach me that perfect love of Thee, which casteth out fear : let me be truly sensible of the heinousness of my transgressions, and yet still see that thy goodness infinitely exceeds my

guilt. Let no superstitions, fears, or doubts of the discoveries which Thou hast made of thyself, sully my devotions ; or lessen that implicit confidence in Thee, which is the comfort and support of my life. LORD, I believe ; help thou mine unbelief. Thou hast given me sufficient evidence, both in thy word and works, that no evil can approach me, except such as my own wilfulness brings upon me. O make me always to carry upon my mind the strongest conviction of this great truth, that so it may beget in me, on the one hand, a constant serenity and cheerfulness ; on the other, all possible humility, watchfulness, and earnest application to Thee, for the protection of thy Holy Spirit. I plainly see, that at the same time that I am foolishly scrupulous in trifles, I am very apt to neglect the weighty matters of thy law : O do thou deliver me from the spirit of fear ; and grant me that of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Grant me an upright intention in all that I do ; and true wisdom, which may enable me to see what is fittest to be done ; and then let me rest satisfied that Thou wilt accept of my sincere, though weak endeavour, through JESUS CHRIST.