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The Works Of Alexander Pope Esq.

In Nine Volumes Complete. With His Last Corrections, Additions, And Improvements; As they were delivered to the Editor a little before his Death

Containing His Moral Essays

Pope, Alexander

London, 1751

[The Universal Prayer. Deo Opt. Max.]

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THE
UNIVERSAL
PRAYER.
DEO OPT. MAX.

UNIVERSAL TRAYGE

THE

DEO OPT. MAX.

UNIVERSAL

P R A Y E R.

DEO OPT. MAX.

T H E

Universal Prayer.

D E O O P T. M A X.

FA T H E R of All! in ev'ry Age,
 In ev'ry Clime ador'd,
 By Saint, by Savage, and by Sage,
 Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!

Thou Great First Cause, least understood:
 Who all my Sense confin'd
 To know but this, that Thou art Good,
 And that myself am blind;

C O M M E N T A R Y.

Universal Prayer.] Concerning this poem, it may be proper to observe, that some passages, in the preceding *Essay*, having been unjustly suspected of a tendency towards Fate and *Naturalism*, the author composed this Prayer as the sum of all, to shew that his system was founded in *free-will*, and terminated in piety: That the first cause was as well the Lord and Governor of the Universe as the Creator of it; and that, by submission to his will (the great principle inforced throughout the *Essay*) was not meant the suffering ourselves to be carried along with a blind determination; but a religious acquiescence, and confidence full

Yet gave me, in this dark Estate,
 To see the Good from Ill;
 And binding Nature fast in Fate,
 Left free the Human Will.

What Conscience dictates to be done,
 Or warns me not to do,
 This, teach me more than Hell to shun,
 That, more than Heav'n pursue.

What Blessings thy free Bounty gives,
 Let me not cast away;
 For God is pay'd when Man receives,
 T' enjoy is to obey.

Yet not to Earth's contracted Span
 Thy Goodness let me bound,
 Or think Thee Lord alone of Man,
 When thousand Worlds are round:

Let not this weak, unknowing hand
 Presume thy bolts to throw,
 And deal damnation round the land,
 On each I judge thy Foe.

COMMENTARY.

of *Hope* and Immortality. To give all this the greater weight and reality, the poet chose for his model the LORD'S PRAYER, which, of all others, best deserves the title prefixed to this Paraphrase.

If I am right, thy grace impart,
 Still in the right to stay;
 If I am wrong, oh teach my heart
 To find that better way.

Save me alike from foolish Pride,
 Or impious Discontent,
 At ought thy Wisdom has deny'd,
 Or ought thy Goodness lent.

Teach me to feel another's Woe,
 To hide the Fault I see;
 That Mercy I to others show,
 That Mercy show to me.

Mean tho' I am, not wholly so
 Since quick'ned by thy Breath;
 Oh lead me wheresoe'er I go,
 Thro' this day's Life or Death.

NOTES.

*If I am right, thy grace impart,—
 If I am wrong, O teach my heart]*

As the *imparting grace* on the christian system is a stronger exertion of the divine power, than the natural illumination of the heart, one would expect that the request should have been expressed reversely; more aid being required to re-

store men to the *right* than to keep them in it. But as it was the poet's purpose to insinuate that Revelation was the *right*, nothing could better express his purpose than the making the *right* secured by the guards of *grace*.

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This day, be Bread and Peace my Lot:
All else beneath the Sun,
Thou know'st if best bestow'd or not,
And let Thy Will be done.

To thee, whose Temple is all Space,
Whose Altar, Earth, Sea, Skies!
One Chorus let all Being raise!
All Nature's Incense rise!

