

Puritan Prayer - "Man A Nothing"



O Lord,
I am a shell full of dust,
but animated with an invisible rational soul
and made anew by an unseen power of grace;
Yet I am no rare object of valuable price,
but one that has nothing and is nothing,
although chosen of thee from eternity,
given to Christ, and born again;
I am deeply convinced
of the evil and misery of a sinful state,
of the vanity of creatures,
but also of the sufficiency of Christ.
When thou wouldst guide me, I control myself,
When thou wouldst be sovereign, I rule myself.
When thou wouldst take care of me, I suffice myself.
When I should depend on thy providings, I supply myself,
When I should submit to thy providence, I follow my will,
When I should study, love, honour, trust thee, I serve myself;
I fault and correct thy laws to suit myself,
Instead of thee, I look to a man's approbation,
and am by nature an idolater.
Lord, it is my chief design to bring my heart back to thee.
Convince me that I cannot be my own god,
or make myself happy,
nor my own Christ to restore my joy,
nor my own Spirit to teach, guide, rule me.
Help me to see that grace does this by providential affliction,
for when my credit is good, thou dost cast me lower,
when riches are my idol, thou dost wing them away,
when pleasure is my all, thou dost turn it into bitterness.
Take away my roving eye, curious ear, greedy
appetite, lustful heart;
show me that none of these things
can heal a wounded conscience,
or support a tottering frame,
or uphold a departing spirit.
then take me to the cross
and leave me there.*

*Arthur Bennett, editor, "The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions" (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1975), p.91.
