

*Alexander Pope's  
Universal Prayer*



MYSTIC VERSE AND INSIGHTS SERIES  
A UNIVERSAL PRAYER

[This prayer was written in 1738 to correct the impression of fatalism which Warburton's ingenious exposition had failed to remove. Pope had really as little mind for dogma as most poets; but these verses represent what, in view of the instructions of Bolingbroke, corrected by Warburton, he now believed himself to believe.]

*Deo Opt. Max.*<sup>1</sup>

Father of all! in every age,  
In every clime adored,  
By saint, by savage, and by sage,  
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!

Thou Great First Cause, least understood:  
Who all my sense confined  
To know but this — that thou art good,  
And that myself am blind:

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 Heaven pursue.

What blessings thy free bounty gives,  
Let me not cast away;  
For God is paid when man receives,  
To 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:

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<sup>1</sup> [*Deo optimo maximo*, often abbreviated as D.O.M., is Latin for "To the greatest and best god," or "To God, most good, most great."]

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

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

Save me alike from foolish pride,  
Or impious discontent,  
At aught thy wisdom has denied,  
Or aught 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 though I am, not wholly so  
Since quickened by thy breath;  
Oh lead me wheresoe'er I go,  
Through this day's life or death.

This day, be bread and peace my lot:  
All else beneath the sun,  
Thou know'st if best bestowed 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!





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