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THE

WORKS

OF

REV. SAMUEL SHAW, M. A.

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN LONDON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

FIRST AMERICAN FROM THE ENGLISH EDITIONS,

CORRECTED AND IMPROVED.

VOL I.

BOSTON:
PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF GEORGE CLARK,
FOR REV. DANIEL OLIVER.

1821.

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DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS, to wit:

District Clerk's Office.

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the twenty-sixth day of July, A. D. 1820, in the forty-fifth of the independence of the United States of America, DANIEL OLIVER, of the said District, has deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words following, *to wit*: "The Works of Rev. Samuel Shaw, M. A. Minister of the Gospel in London. In two volumes. First American, from the English editions, corrected and improved. Vol. I."

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, "An Act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the Copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such Copies, during the times therein mentioned:" and also to an act entitled, "An Act supplementary to an act entitled, An Act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the Copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such Copies, during the times therein mentioned; and extending the benefits thereof to the Arts of Designing, Engraving and Etching Historical and other Prints"

JNO. W. DAVIS, *Clerk of the District of Massachusetts.*

OF THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

SAMUEL SHAW, M. A. was born of religious parents at Repton, in Derbyshire, in the year 1635, and educated in the free school there, at that time the best in those parts of England. He went from thence to the University at Cambridge, in England, at fourteen years of age, where he was chamber-fellow with Dr. Morton. Upon the completion of his studies he went to Tamworth, in Warwickshire, and was usher in the free school, and became master in 1656. When that reverend person, Mr. Blake, died, in 1657, Mr. SHAW pronounced an eloquent oration at his funeral, after Mr. Anthony Burgess had preached a sermon. They both were printed, and, such as have perused them must think a conjunction of three such men as the deceased, and the two speakers, a singular happiness to that neighbourhood. From Tamworth Mr. SHAW removed to Mosley, a small place in the borders of Worcestershire, being invited there by Col. Greavis, of that place, who had so great a respect for him that he showed him much kindness. At his coming thither, he was ordained by the Classical Presbytery at Wirksworth, in Derbyshire; and in 1658, by the assistance of Mr. Gervas Pigot, of Thrumpton, he obtained a presentation from the Protector to the Rectory of Long-Whatton, worth one hundred and fifty pounds per ann.

This was in the gift of the Crown. In June this year, 1658, he had full and peaceable possession of this place, and continued so to have till King Charles's return in 1660. Upon this event, fearing some disturbance might arise, he, in the month of September, that year, obtained, without much difficulty, a fresh presentation under the great seal of England, the former incumbent, Mr. Henry Robinson, being dead, and two more who enjoyed it after him. But though his title was thus corroborated, yet Sir John Pretyman made interest with the Lord Chancellor Hyde, and they found means to remove Mr. SHAW, in 1661, about a year before the act of uniformity passed; and introduced

one Mr. Butler, who had no manner of title to the place. He was a man of such mean qualifications, and so little respected in the parish, that some of them told Sir John, that they heard Mr. Butler had given him a pair of coach-mares to get for him the living; but they would give him two pair to get him out, and put Mr. SHAW in again. Mr. SHAW now quitted the church, because he could not satisfy himself to conform to the new terms. Though he was not properly turned out by the uniformity act, yet he was silenced by it, and never after had any public living. He was afterwards offered his living without any other condition than that of re-ordination. But he used to say that he would not lie to God and man, in declaring his Presbyterian ordination invalid.

Upon Mr. SHAW's leaving Whatton he removed to Cotes, a small Village near to Loughborough, in the same county. During his residence here his family was afflicted with the plague, receiving the infection from some relations, who came from London to avoid it, about harvest time in 1665. He then preached in his own house to his friends and family, and afterwards published that useful and excellent book called, "The welcome to the Plague," from *Amos*, iv. 12. *Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.* He buried two children, two friends, and one servant, of that dreadful distemper, but he and his wife, who both had it, escaped with their lives; not being ill both at once, they looked after, and attended one another, and the rest of the family, which was a great mercy; for none of the people in the neighbourhood durst come to his assistance. He was in a manner shut up for about three months together. Mr. SHAW was forced, not only to attend his sick; but to bury his dead himself in his own garden.*

* How sore an affliction Mr. SHAW must in these circumstances have undergone, cannot be easily conceived, but great, amazingly great it must have been. But hear how the good man speaks in his preface to his piece entitled, "The Welcome to the Plague," which was drawn up and published on the occasion. "Let me call on men and angels, says he, to help me in celebrating the infinite and almighty grace and goodness of the eternal and blessed God, who enabled me to *abide the day of his coming*, Mal. iii. 2. to stand when he appeared; and made me willing to suffer him to sit as a refiner of silver in my house; who carried me above all murmurings against, I had almost said, all remembrance of those instruments that conveyed the infection to me; who reconciled my heart to this disease, so that it seemed no more grievous or noisome than any other;

Towards the latter end of the year 1666, he removed to Ashby de la Zouch, in the same county; and was chosen to be sole school-master of the free school, in 1668. The revenue was then but small, and the school-buildings were quite out of repair, and the number of scholars few. But Mr. SHAW, by his diligence, and prudent managing the business, soon got the salary augmented, not only for himself, but for all succeeding school-masters; and by his interest

who subdued me, I had almost said, brought me in love with this passage of the divine will. I can remember, (alas! that I can say little more but that I do remember,) how my soul was overpowered, yea, and almost ravished with the goodness, holiness, and perfection of the will of God; and verily judged it my happiness and perfection, as well as my duty to comply cheerfully with it and be moulded into it; who gave me a most powerful and quick sense of the plague of a carnal heart, self-will, and inordinate creature-love, convincing me that those were infinitely worse than the plague in the flesh; who wonderfully preserved me from the assaults of the devil; never let him loose so much as to try his strength upon my integrity, to drive me to a despondency, or to any uncharitable conclusion concerning my state; who enabled me to converse with his love and mercy in the midst of his chastening; to see his shining and smiling face through this dark cloud; yea, kept up clear and steady persuasions in my soul that I was beloved of him, though afflicted by him; who knew my soul in adversity, visited me when I was sick, and in prison, refreshed, strengthened, and comforted my inner man in a marvelous manner and measure, and made me appear to myself never less shut up, than when shut up. O would to God I might be never worse than when I was shut up of the plague! The not removing that affliction-frame I shall count a greater blessing, and a more proper mercy, than the removing that afflicted state. Who cleared up my interest in his Son, strengthened my evidence of his love, and satisfied and assured my soul of its happy state more than at all times formerly. I had clearer and surer evidences of divine grace in that patient, self-denying, self-submitting frame of spirit, than in all the duties that ever I performed. The valley of tears brought me more sight of my God, and more insight into myself, than ever the valley of vision, all duties and ordinances had done. When the Sun of righteousness arose on my soul, and chased away all the mists and fogs of self-will, and creature-love, then also did all black and dismal fears, all gloomy doubting most sensibly flee before him. Who supplied my family from compassionate friends with all things needful for food, physic, &c. The Lord return it sevenfold into their bosom! Who maintained my health in the midst of sickness, in the midst of so great a death! I do not remember that either sorrow of mind, or sickness of body ever prevailed so much on me, during three months seclusion, as to hinder me of my ordinary study, repast, devotions, or my necessary attendance on my several

among gentlemen, he collected money for the building of a good school-house, and also for a gallery for the convenience of the scholars in the church. Such a benefactor was he to that town, and such the lasting monuments of his praise ! Then he had another difficulty, which was, how to procure a license, without subscription to such things as his conscience could not allow of. But this difficulty was soon removed, for by means of lord Conway, he obtained from Archbishop Sheldon a license to teach school any where in his whole province, and this without so much as once seeing or waiting on the archbishop. A license being also necessary from the bishop of the diocess, Mr. SHAW got a friend to make his application to Dr. Fuller, who was at that time bishop of Lincoln. This friend put into his Lordship's hands Mr. SHAW's late book occasioned by the plague in his family, in order to satisfy him of the author's real worth. The Bishop was so much pleased with the piety, peaceableness, humility, and learning discovered in the piece, that he gave Mr. SHAW a license on such a subscription as his own sense dictated and inserted ; and said that he was glad to have so worthy a man in his diocess on any terms ! He added, that he understood there was another book of his in print called Immanuel, which he desired to see.

infected rooms, and administering to the necessities of the sick. These ensuing discourses were then composed, which do at least argue that, through grace, his mind was not altogether discomposed, nor body neither. Who preserved me and gave me not up to death ; for I judge that I was personally visited with the plague, though not with the sickness. Who hath given me a sincere and settled resolution, and vehement desire to live entirely on, and to himself ; which I account to be the only life of a soul, and only worthy to be called a living. Grant me this prayer, O most blessed and gracious God, for the sake of my only and dear Redeemer !

“ Thou, O Lord God, who art witness to all my thoughts, and words, and works, knowest that in truth and soberness I publish these things to the world, not to advance the reputation of my own silly name, or to be admired of my fellow-creatures, but for the glory of thine holy name, to beget a good liking of so gracious a Creator in all thy poor creatures, who are prejudiced against thee, and thine holy service ; and to strengthen the hearts of thy servants to a most firm and lasting adherence to thee, even in the greatest extremities ; that thou mayest be admired in thy saints, and glorified for giving such power, and grace and comfort unto men.” And *O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men,* Ps. cvii. 8.

Mr. SHAW being thus settled in his school, his piety, learning and mild temper soon raised its reputation, and increased the number of scholars above any school in those parts; having often one hundred and sixty boys, or more, under his care; so that he always kept one, and for a great while two ushers to assist him. His own house, and others in the town, were continually full of boarders, from London and other distant parts of the kingdom. Several divines of the Church of England, namely, Mr. Sturges, of All-Saints, in Derby, Mr. Walter Horton, afterwards one of the Canons of Litchfield, and many gentlemen, physicians, lawyers, and others, owed their school-learning to his good instructions.

He endeavoured to make the youth who were under his care, in love with piety; to principle them in religion betimes, by his good advice, and to allure them to it by his pious example. Mr. SHAW was affable in his temper, and pleasures, and facetious in his conversation. His method of teaching was winning and easy. He had great skill in finding out the tempers and dispositions of his scholars, and adapting himself to them. He was of a peaceable disposition, very humble, and was frequently employed, and very successful in his endeavours to conciliate differences among mankind. His charity was universal. He thought others were better than himself. He relieved the indigent, freely taught poor children, where he discovered in them a disposition to learning, and afterwards procured for them assistance to perfect their studies at the University. He did indeed excellent service in the work of education: mild and gentle in his disposition, by kindness and love he gained the hearts of his scholars. His school is said to have been of great advantage to the trading part of the town. He was of a public and generous spirit, and was always ready to encourage any good and benevolent designs. He was given to hospitality, and happy when he could make his friends so. In principle, he was moderate; but in the practice of moral virtue, he was much engaged. Though he did not, in every thing, agree with the Vicar of the place, yet he kept up a constant correspondence with him. When the liberty of the Dissenters was settled by acts of Parliament, he licensed his school for a place of religious worship, but so contrived his meetings as not to interfere with the public assemblies, nor to diminish the congrega-

tion: for he preached at noon between the sermons at church, and constantly attended there both parts of the day with all his scholars, his family and all his hearers: so that the public assembly was hereby considerably augmented, and the weekly lecture was chiefly attended by him and his scholars. The first time he used his school-room he preached from *Acts*, xix. 9. "*Disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.*" But such was his prudence and conciliatory disposition, that he was on the most friendly terms with the Vicar of the place. He corresponded also with Dr. Barlow, the Bishop of Lincoln, to whom he presented his book of Meditations, which has been generally esteemed, and read with great profit. Upon which his Lordship, who was a great reader, and good judge of books, and as considerable a casuist as most in his age, wrote him the following letter. "My reverend brother, I have received your's, and this comes (with my love and respects) to bring my thanks, for the rational and pious book you so kindly sent me. Though my businesses be many, and my infirmities more, (being past 74,) yet I have read all your book, and some parts of it more than once, with great satisfaction and benefit. For in your meditations of the love of God and the world, (I am neither afraid nor unwilling to confess it, and make you my confessor,) you have instructed me in several things, which I knew not before, or at least, considered not so seriously, and so often as I might and ought. One great occasion, or cause, why we love our gracious God less, and the world more than we should, is want of knowledge, or consideration. God himself, *Isaiah* i. 2, 3. complains of this, and calls heaven and earth to witness the justice of his complaints. "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." It is strange, and yet most true, that the ox and ass, irrational and stupid creatures, should honour their masters who feed and take care of them, and yet men, rational creatures even Israel, God's only church and people, whom he had miraculously preserved and nourished, should neither honour nor consider. This consideration is *our duty*, and the want of it *our sin*, (a sin of omission,) and therefore it is no wonder if it be a moral cause or occasion of some consequent sin of commission; so that the best men, (by reason

of the old man, and the remains of corruption in them,) may, and many times do sin, and come short of fulfilling the law and doing their duty, when they want this consideration, or such a degree and measure of it as is required to the moral goodness of an action. Suppose a man tempted to commit adultery, murder, perjury, or any such sin; if such a man would seriously consider the nature of the sin he is going to commit, that it is a transgression of the law of his God; to whom he owes all he has, both for life and livelihood; that it pollutes his soul; that it dishonours his gracious God and heavenly Father; that it makes him obnoxious to eternal misery, both of body and soul; I say, he who considers this, as all should, would certainly be afraid to commit such impieties. Now of such considerations you have given us many in your book, and those grounded on the clear light of nature, or on evident reason, or revelation: and it is my prayer and hope, that many may read, and (to their great benefit) remember, and practise them. I am well pleased with your discourse against usury; which, as it is commonly, and without fear or remorse, confidently managed, I take to be one of the crying sins of our ungrateful nation. I remember that in 1645, in Oxford, two rich and understanding gentlemen came to the lord-primate of Ireland, Dr. Usher, desiring to know his opinion, whether usury was lawful. He knew, and they confessed, that they had money at use, and they gave their reasons which induced them to believe that their taking use was innocent and lawful. The good primate patiently heard them, and (without farther dispute; or answering their reasons, as they called them, which they had brought for the lawfulness of usury) said, "come, gentlemen, I believe you are willing in this case to take the safest way for your souls. They replied, yes, that was their desire. Well, said the primate, then your safest way will certainly be to take our blessed Saviour's advice (or command rather) and lend freely, expecting nothing, no use again." For if you lend freely you do an act of charity, and so are certainly secured from all fear of sin in that particular: but if you take use, it is an hundred to one but you sin, and become liable to that curse and punishment which fatally follows it. The gentlemen, like him in the Gospel, went away sorrowful, for they were rich and had great possessions, and to increase them continued their usury. So that

I think you may safely say, as you do, that usurers are lovers of the world.

“Give me leave faithfully, and as a friend, to add one thing more. In your second page, there is, I believe, a little mistake. For you seem to say, that James, who wrote the canonical epistle, was brother to John the apostle. Now it is certain, that among the apostles there were two of that name. 1. James the son of Zebedee, and brother of John. 2. James the son of Alpheus, *Mat. x: 2, 3.* who was called James the less, *Mark xv. 40.* whose mother was Mary, who was sister to the virgin Mary; and so our blessed Saviour and James the son of Alpheus were sisters, children, cousin-germans. Now that James the son of Zebedee, and brother of John, did not write that canonical epistle, will be certain, if we consider, 1st. that James, brother of John, was slain by Herod Agrippa, *Acts, xxii. 2.* which was Anno Christi 44 or 45. And 2dly, If it be considered, that the epistle of James was not written till the year of Christ 63. For so Baronius, Sympson, and the best chronologers assure us. They say that the epistle of James was not wrote till almost twenty years after James the brother of John was slain by Herod: and therefore it is certain he neither did nor could write it. I beg your pardon for this tedious, and I fear impertinent scribble. My love and due respects remembered. I shall pray for a blessing on you and your studies: and your prayers are heartily desired by and for your affectionate friend and brother,

THOMAS LINCOLN.

Buckden, March, 16, 1681.

For my reverend friend, Mr. SAMUEL SHAW, at his house in Ashby de lay Zouch.”

If such a correspondence as this had been carried on between the Bishops of the Church of England and Dissenters, it might have produced much better effects than the great distance which has been generally observed on both sides. So engaged was Mr. SHAW in doing good, that for the space of almost thirty years he was earnestly employed to make the world better, though with no great gains to himself. It was his chief aim to live usefully, and he thought that was considerable reward to itself. He was of middle stature, and his countenance not very penetrating; like another Melancthon, who could not fill a chair with a

big look, and portly presence; but his eye was brilliant and sparkling, and his conversation witty, savoury, affable and pertinent. He was ready at harmless repartees and innocent jests, with a mixture of poetry, history, and other polite learning calculated to promote cheerfulness in conversation, and was careful not to hurt the feelings of his company. But his greatest excellency was in religious discourse, in praying and preaching. One who knew him well writes as follows; "I have known him spend part of many days and nights too in religious exercise, when the times were so dangerous that it would hazard an imprisonment for a person not to be drunk, or be in a harlot's house or tavern, but to be worshipping God with five or six more like minded with himself. I have sometimes been in Mr. SHAW's company for a whole night together, when we have been obliged to steal to the place in the dark, stop out the light and stop in the voice, by cloathing, and fast closing the windows, till the first day-break down a chimney has given us notice to be gone. I bless God for such seasons. If some say it was needless to do so much, I reply, the care of souls and eternity, which only was minded there, requires more. I say, I bless God for the remembrance of them, and for Mr. SHAW at them, whose melting words in prayer I can never forget. He had a most excellent faculty in speaking to God with reverence, humility, and an holy awe of his presence, filling his mouth with arguments: by his strength he had power with God; he wept and made supplication: he found him in Bethel, (such were our assemblies,) and there our God spake with us. I have heard him for two or three hours together pour out prayer to God, without tautology or vain repetition, with that vigour and fervour, and those holy words that imported faith and humble boldness, as have dissolved the whole company into tears," &c. In short a mixture of so much learning and humility, wit and judgment, piety and pleasantness, is rarely found in any, as met in Mr. SHAW. He lived beloved, and died lamented, January 22, 1696, in the fifty-ninth year of his age.

His funeral sermon was preached by Mr. William Crosse, his brother-in-law; from Luke xxiii. 28.

What happy prophet shall his mantle find,
Heir to a double portion of his mind?

WATTS.

THE
VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN A
WILDERNESS ;
OR,
THE BUSINESS OF A CHRISTIAN ;
IN SEVERAL SERMONS,
FIRST PREACHED TO HIS OWN FAMILY,
AND NOW MADE PUBLIC.

All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies, *Ps. xxv. 10.*

Mala pœnalia non sunt vere mala, quia fluunt a summo bono, nimirum Deo ; ducunt ad summum bonum, nimirum fruitionem Dei ; et erant in summo bono, nimirum Christo.

BIEL.

The evils of punishment are not truly evils ; for they flow from the chiefest Good, even GOD ; they lead to the chiefest Good, the enjoyment of GOD ; and are found in the chiefest Good, even CHRIST JESUS.

PREFACE.

It is now more than seven months since it pleased the holy and wise God to visit my house with the plague, when some dear and Christian friends from London were with me, whereby he gently touched and gave warning to myself and whole family, consisting then of eight souls, but called away only three members of it, *viz.* two tender babes and one servant, besides my beloved sister, and a child of my precious friend, that man of God, Mr. G. C. since also translated, who were of those citizens that visited me. You will easily believe that I can have no pleasure to rake into the ashes of the dead, nor to revive the taste of that wormwood and gall, which was then given me to drink ; and yet I see no reason why I ought not to take pleasure in the pure and holy will of God, which always proceeds by the eternal rules of Almighty love and goodness, though the same be executed upon my dearest creature-comforts, and bear hardly or ever so much upon my sweetest earthly interest ; yea, and I see all reason in the world why I should give to God the glory of his attributes and works before all the world, and endeavour that some instruction may accompany that astonishment, which from me and my house hath gone out and spread itself far and near. I will not undertake to make any physical observations upon this unaccountable disease, nor to vindicate myself from that great guilt that is charged upon me, as if I were a sinner above all that dwell in this country, or from those many false and senseless aspersions that have been cast upon my behaviour during this visitation, much like that we read of, *Matt. xxviii. 13.* ; but do freely commit myself to him that judgeth righteously ; and pray with the Psalmist, *Ps. lxxix. 6.* *Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake : let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.* Neither do I purposely undertake in this preface to reconcile the providence of the most wise God to his promises, or the seeming difference between the words of his mouth and the language of his hands ; between which I have only suspected some kind of jar, but have experienced an excellent harmony : *in very faithfulness hast thou afflict-*

ed me. Whence arise all these uncharitable censures with which the afflicted soul is apt to charge both himself and his God too? Spring not they certainly from these two grand causes, *viz.* a misapprehension of the nature of God, and of the nature of good and evil? Let the studious and pious reader search and judge. If ever therefore you would be established in your minds in a day of affliction; 1. "Labour to be rightly informed concerning the nature of God." Away with those low and gross apprehensions of God, whereby your carnal fancies do ascribe unto God such a kind of indulgence towards his children as you bear towards yours, which indeed no way agrees to his nature. His good-will towards his children, is a solid, wise, and holy disposition, infinitely unlike to our human affections. *Soli Deo competit, amare et sapere.* [God only can at the same time exhibit both love and wisdom.] 2. "Labour to be rightly informed concerning the nature of good and evil." Judge not the goodness or badness of things by their agreeableness or disagreeableness to your fleshly palate, or carnal interest, but by the relation that they have to the supreme good. The greatest prosperity in the world is no further good, than as it tends to make us partakers of God; and the greatest affliction may thus be really good also. But my design is to justify and glorify infinite wisdom, righteousness, goodness, and holiness before all men. Oh blessed be God! who makes a seeming dungeon to be indeed a delightful place; who brings his poor people into a wilderness, purposely that he may there speak comfortably to them! Be of good cheer O my soul! he hath taken away nothing but what he gave; and, instead of it, hath given thee that which shall never be taken away, the first fruits of life, instead of those whom the first-born of death hath devoured. But why do I say devoured? doth not that truly live at this day, which was truly lovely in those darlings? Didst thou, O my fond heart! love beauty, sweetness, ingenuity in earthly bodies, and canst thou not love it still in the Fountain, and enjoy it in a more immediate and compendious way. Thy body indeed cannot taste sweetness in the abstract, nor see beauty except it be subjected in matter; but canst not thou, O my soul, taste the uncreated goodness and sweetness except it be embodied, and have some material thing to commend it to thy palate? Be ashamed that thou, being a spirit as to thy constitution, art no more

spiritual in thy affections and operations. Dost thou with sadness reflect upon those sweet smiles, and that broken rhetoric, with which those babes were wont to entertain thee? 1. Consider duly what of real contentment thou hast lost in losing those.—For, what were those things to thy real happiness? Thou hast lost nothing, but what it was no solid pleasure nor true felicity to enjoy; nothing but what the most sensual and brutish souls do enjoy as much as thou. 2. Be ashamed rather that thou didst enjoy them in such a gross and unspiritual manner. Art thou troubled because any earthly interest is violated? rather be ashamed that thou hadst and didst cherish any such interest.

But pardon me, courteous readers, this digressive soliloquy; and now suffer me patiently, whilst I speak something by way of admiration, something by way of observation, and something by way of exhortation.

1st, Let me call upon men and angels, to help me in celebrating the infinite and almighty grace and goodness of the eternal and blessed God,—who enabled me to *abide the day of his coming*, Mal. iii. 2.—to stand when he appeared; and made me willing to suffer him to sit as a refiner of silver in my house;—who carried me above all murmurings against, I had almost said, all remembrance of those instruments that conveyed the infection to me;—who reconciled my heart to this disease, so that it seemed no more grievous or noisome than any other;—who subdued me to, I had almost said, brought me in love with this expression of the divine will. I can remember (alas! that I can say little more than that I do remember) how my soul was overpowered, yea, and almost ravished with the goodness, holiness, and perfection of the will of God; and verily judged it my happiness and perfection, as well as my duty to comply cheerfully with it and be moulded into it;—who gave me a most powerful and quick sense of the plague of a carnal heart, self-will, and inordinate creature-love, convincing me that those were infinitely worse than the plague in the flesh;—who wonderfully preserved me from the assaults of the devil; never let him try his strength upon my integrity, to drive me to a despondency, or to any uncharitable conclusions concerning my state;—who enabled me to converse with his love and mercy in the midst of his chastening; to see his shining and smiling face through this dark cloud; yea, kept up clear and steady

persuasions in my soul that I was beloved of him, though afflicted by him;—who knew my soul in adversity, visited me when I was sick, and in prison, refreshed, strengthened, and comforted my inner man in a marvellous manner and measure, and made me appear to myself never less shut up, than when shut up. O would to God I might be never worse than when I was shut up with the plague! That he did not remove that frame so suitable for affliction, I shall account a greater blessing, and a more proper mercy, than his removing that afflicted state.—Who cleared up my interest in his Son, strengthened my evidences of his love, and satisfied and assured my soul of its happy state more than at all times before. I had clearer and surer evidences of divine grace in that patient, self-denying, submissive frame of spirit, than in all the duties that I ever performed. The valley of tears brought me more sight of my God, and more insight into myself, than ever the valley of visions, all duties and ordinances had done. When the sun of righteousness arose upon my soul, and chased away all the mists and darkness of self-will, and creature-love, then also did all black and dismal fears, all gloomy doubting most sensibly flee before him.—Who supplied my family from compassionate friends with all things needful for food, physic, &c. The Lord return it sevenfold into their bosoms!—Who maintained my health in the midst of sickness, in the midst of so great a death! I do not remember that either sorrow of mind, or sickness of body ever prevailed so much upon me, during three months seclusion, as to hinder me of my ordinary study, repast, devotions, or my necessary attendance upon my several infected rooms, and administering to the necessities of my sick. The ensuing Discourses were then composed; which do at least prove that, through grace, my mind was not altogether discomposed, nor body neither.—Who preserved me and gave me not up to death! for I judge that I was personally visited with the plague, though not with the sickness.—Who hath given me a sincere and settled resolution, and vehement desire to live entirely upon, and to himself; which I account to be the only life of a soul, and only worthy to be called living. Grant me this prayer, O most blessed and gracious God, for the sake of my only and dear Redeemer!

Thou, O Lord God, who art witness to all my thoughts, and words, and works, knowest that in truth and soberness

I publish these things to the world, not to advance the reputation of my own worthless name, or to be admired of my fellow creatures; but for the glory of thy holy name, to produce a love of so gracious a Creator in all thy poor creatures, who are prejudiced against thee, and thy holy service; and to strengthen the hearts of thy servants to a most firm and lasting adherence to thee, even in the greatest extremities; that thou mayest be admired in thy saints, and glorified for giving such power, and grace, and comfort unto men. And *O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works in and to the children of men,* Ps. cvii. 8.

2dly, Suffer me to make a short observation of some few memorable passages, out of many; possibly they may be for the future, though they should not be for your present advantage. The Lord direct you to make a right application of them, according to the emergencies of life!

1. I do thankfully record the gracious design of the holy, and wise God, in that he had secretly prepared my heart, though at the time I knew not particularly for what. I remember, that for some few weeks before, I had found a more than ordinary largeness and readiness of soul; particularly that I had been studying the excellent mystery, and extracting the strengthening marrow of that remarkable text, *1 John iv. 8; God is love*: from whence I had importunately pressed upon myself the reasonableness of complying sweetly, cheerfully, universally with the will of God, little dreaming then of the plague, which was almost an hundred miles off. Oh blessed and merciful God, who of old didst make Abraham, and even now makest his and thy children, to follow thee, though they know not well whither!

In the next place, I count it most worthy of my observation, (not unworthy of your consideration,) that it pleased God to seize upon my family in the beginning of harvest; a harvest which I had too earnestly expected, too carefully provided for, and promised myself too liberally from; of which folly and vanity of mind, this visitation, thus sent, did as clearly convince (methought) as if I had seen a handwriting upon the wall. I am ashamed, yet I will not hesitate to confess before all the world, (God grant it may be for the seasonable and effectual warning of many,) that my vain mind was very pleasantly, not to say eagerly, drawn

out towards secular and worldly, though necessary employments and concernments: and thus I was rebuked.

Upon examination I find, that verily I have been guilty concerning my children. I do not remember that ever any man reprov'd me for immoderately loving them, or could reprove me for any indulgence that could be by human eyes discern'd; but oh! I see and feel it as a sword at my heart, that I loved them not so purely, spiritually, and properly in God as I ought to have done. Philosophy will easily prove it to be a more tolerable vanity to dote upon a child, than upon a kingdom; but christian divinity doth abundantly demonstrate all creature fondness unreasonable and intolerable.

The next thing that I will record shall be, the difficult task that I found to maintain a right humble, and a right cheerful frame at the same time. Oh how oft and how long did I labour under this difficulty! That sense of sin which was call'd in to promote tenderness of heart, being over much indulg'd, was ready at length to destroy that largeness and cheerfulness of soul which it was so much my duty and interest to maintain: and, on the other hand, the sense of divine wisdom, grace, and love in Christ Jesus being call'd in to keep up the soul from sinking, was ready to bear it up so high, that it almost forgot that it was in the waters. Beware, Christians, and watch diligently, that godly sorrow do not settle into an ungodly despondency and inconsolable heaviness, the soul not being able to bear up under its own burden; and that a holy cheerfulness and serenity do not evaporate into an unholy trifling and forgetfulness of your infirmities, the soul not being able to manage its own metal and motions.

I know you would willingly understand something of the frame of my heart at that day, relative to my departure out of this world: you will best read my heart in the ensuing discourse upon 2 Cor. v. 6. which I think was deriv'd from that source. I shall therefore say no more about this matter; only acquaint you with one eminent experience relating hereunto. My mind, or fancy, or appetite, (I know not well what to call it,) was sometimes inditing in me some desires to live yet longer. I entered the lists with this temptation, and when I had fairly and calmly debated the ground and reason of such inclination, after many evasions and pretences, it came to this, I would fain persuade myself

I was not yet holy enough : to this I did immediately assent, knowing it to be a certain truth ; but that therefore I should desire to prolong my days upon earth, was a fallacious inference. Methought I pleased myself a while, whilst I could say, I desired to live only to become better : but after a time, I apprehended a fallacy in this pretence ; for the way to be perfected in holiness, is not by living, but indeed by dying. Christians, if indeed your souls be sincerely and powerfully affected towards perfect holiness, then sing not so much with David, *Spare me that I may recover, &c.* as with good old Simeon, who having seen God in the flesh, desired to go out of the flesh, that he might see him more fully and beautifully ;—*Now lettest thou thy servant depart, &c.* I cannot enlarge upon this observation ; I suppose I have hinted enough to shew that those pretences of many men, (*viz.* that they would fain live to be more fit to die,) to be, for the most part, but a kind of mockery and self-deceit.

Lastly, (That I be not over tedious,) I do solemnly and sincerely profess before God, angels, and men, that I was never so much as inclined to think hardly of God, or his good and holy ways, because of this dispensation ; but did then constantly and freely proclaim, to all that came to visit me, that sin, particularly self-will and sensual love, is the worst of plagues, and holiness the only happiness of man ; yea, afflicted holiness infinitely to be preferred before prosperous wickedness.

3dly, Suffer me, as a conclusion of this preface, and as a result from all that I have seen and suffered, to commend unto you, a few excellent and necessary duties. I have much difficulty to forbear being copious here ; but I have already transgressed ; therefore I will wave those common themes of remembering your Creator betimes ; of hearkening to the voice of his word, before his rod speak ; of living in continual preparation for death, of repenting and renewing repentance, &c. and only commend two or three things, which seem to me of most excellent and necessary importance ;

—*petimusque damusque vicissim.*

[—We ask and give by turns.]

1. “Love and enjoy all things in God.” Admire divine goodness in every created excellency, and taste a divine sweetness in every created comfort. O how is the noble

soul of man debased, pinched, confined, by low and sensual loves; whilst many men love the creature in opposition to the Creator, most men in competition with him, and almost all men in a way of separation from him! Oh base and degenerate affections! Let God be all things in your eye, so that you shall neither see, nor know, nor love, nor taste any thing but him in the world. Deliver yourselves (oh immortal souls, to whom I write) from all those low, and straightening, and starving creature-loves, and long and labour to be filled with pure, and holy, and spiritual delights, such as the angels of God have, such as the Son of God had, when he made it his meat and drink to do the will of his Father.—But this you will find more largely prosecuted and urged in the last of the following discourses: therefore,

2. “Live purely at the pleasure of God, and maintain an universal and hearty compliance with his holy and perfect will.” Believe it, you will never enjoy a firm and steady peace, till you have committed all your wills and ways to him, and wrapt up all your interests and ends in him; till your hearts be conformed to the honour of God, and your wills moulded into his will. It is a difference of wills and ends, and a distinction of interests, that begets all these ragings and stormings in the hearts of men against God: *mine* and *thine* do not only divide the world amongst men, but divide men against God, earth against heaven. Take this for a certain and undoubted precept, that “the grand interest of a soul is to comply with, and be one with God.” Communion of hearts, and wills, and interests, and ends, is that glorious fellowship, which a creature hath with its Creator; it is indeed the interest and honour, the duty and dignity, yea, the heaven and happiness of the reasonable creature. But something to this purpose you will find in the first discourse.

3. I beseech you, christians, be not contented to say, you have chosen God for your chief good, but, “pursue after him as such, without grudging, and without ceasing, longing to be as much one with him, in a participation of divine perfections, as our created natures are capable of.” Maintain a holy and secret striving of soul towards this blessed object continually, as a thing moves towards its centre, as a soul ought to endeavour to accomplish its own perfections: stand not waiting for a heaven to come, but labour to draw down all that peace, joy, love, purity, which make heaven,

into your own souls, by growing up into the life of God daily. Reckon that you are never in a right temper, except you be in David's temper, when he waited for God, *more than they that watch for the morning*, when his soul broke for the longing that it had unto him at all times. I say not, that you should prepare for death; that seems too low, both word and thing: look and live beyond death and the grave; be lifting up your heads to discover the dawns of the day of your redemption; be laying hold upon immortality, and eternal life. Something to this purpose you will find in the second discourse, whither I refer you.

And now accept, I pray you, these poor labours, which, for the glory of my God, I make public, that since, with Hezekiah, I may not go up to the house of the Lord, to declare the goodness of the Lord, yet I may leave some monument of it in writing, as he did, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness. I will add no more, but intreat all serious and devout readers to magnify the holy name of God on my behalf, adding thereunto their earnest prayers to God for me, *viz.* that the same fire that burnt up the standing corn of my creature-comforts, may also happily consume the stubble of my creature delights and loves; that my God would give me *a name better than of sons and of daughters*, the blessed fruits of his Spirit instead of the beloved fruits of the womb; that I may for ever live under the most powerful influences of this dispensation; and that the glory of the Lord may never depart out of the temple of my soul, as it departed out of the temple made with hands.

Now, to the God of all grace and peace be all-praise and glory! To him I commit you all, and rest

Your friend and servant

In Christ Jesus,

Feb. 27, 1665.

SAMUEL SHAW.

*Quod sani quæsumus, hoc invenimus ægri:
Quæ nequirit vallis visus, tulit hæc lachrymarum.*

[What we ask for in health, we obtain when sick: What the valley of vision could not do, this the vale of tears has effected.]

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY
5400 SOUTH DIVISION AVENUE
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60637

TO THE EDITOR OF THE JOURNAL OF POLYMER SCIENCE
PART A-1

Dear Sirs:

I am pleased to inform you that the manuscript of the paper entitled "The Effect of Temperature on the Kinetics of the Free Radical Polymerization of Styrene" has been accepted for publication in the Journal of Polymer Science, Part A-1.

The paper is scheduled to appear in the issue of the Journal dated [insert date].

Very truly yours,
[Name of the author]

A WELCOME TO THE PLAGUE.

PART I.

Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.

AMOS iv. 12.

BEGINNING at the 6th verse of this sermon of the prophet, the Lord reckons up the many fearful plagues wherewith, from time to time, he had assayed to reclaim this perverse people, the ten tribes of Israel; but concludes the relation with a doleful epiphonema, *Yet have ye not returned unto me.* It is not my business to enquire into the several plagues, the clear meaning of them, or the particular time when they took place or ended, nor into the impenitence and stubbornness of the people; though many useful things might be observed from hence. But in the conclusion, because none of these judgments had prevailed upon them, God resolves to trouble himself with them no longer, but to destroy them utterly. All that he had done to them in the land, had not prevailed; therefore now he will cast them, and carry them out of the land, by the overflowing scourge of an Assyrian captivity. This threatening he denounces in the second and third verses, *I will take you away with hooks, and your posterity with fish-hooks, &c.* And after he had

A Welcome to the Plague.

reckoned up the many calamities whereby he had sought to bring them to repentance, but they repented not, and so had demonstrated the equitableness of this final judgment, he re-assumes the same threatening, and persists in his former resolution, ver. 12. *Therefore thus will I do unto thee; and then adds, Because I will do this unto thee, therefore prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.*

Which words may either be understood ironically, by way of derision of all their vain confidences and refuges; and then the doctrine is, "That there is no standing before, nor striving against, nor flying from God, when he comes to execute vengeance;" which is an excellent truth, and of great use. Or else the words may be understood seriously, by way of exhortation. The doubt seems to arise from the ambiguous meaning of the word meet: which signifies both to meet in a hostile manner, to assault, invade, or grapple with, as a man meets his enemy; so it is used concerning David addressing himself to fight with Goliath, *1 Sam. xvii. 48. He ran to meet the Philistine;* and also to meet in a friendly amicable manner, by way of communication, colloquution, salutation, or converse; so it is used concerning Isaac going to meet Rebekah, *Gen. xxiv. 65,* and concerning God's meeting of Balaam, to speak with him, and impart his mind to him, *Numb. xxiii. 4.* If we take the word in the first sense, then it is spoken by way of irony or derision, and so the meaning of the words is contained in the proposition that I have laid down. If we take the word in the latter sense, then it is spoken seriously, by way of exhortation; and so the meaning of them may be thus expressed:—

“That it is the duty of God’s people to study a right behaviour towards him, and to converse with him aright in the way of his judgments, in the time of their afflictions.” And in this sense I shall take them, and prosecute them. Besides that general, unalterable godly frame and behaviour, which God’s people owe to him as a standing duty, and indispensable homage, there are some more especial behaviours and tempers which they owe to him in special cases and are duties *pro hic et nunc* [resulting from situation and circumstances,] as the season requireth; particularly, there are some special behaviours required of our hands in the time of our affliction; and these towards ourselves, as self-examination, self-judging, renewing of repentance, &c. Towards men, meekness, compassion, instructing, warning, comforting, &c. Towards God, as we shall presently point out. An afflicted condition doth call for some more especial tempers and behaviour towards ourselves and others: but these I am not to speak unto from this text. It is the soul’s meeting God, behaviour towards him, conversing with him, that my text leads me to treat of, and I shall not vary from it. In handling of which position, I shall take this method.

I. Premise some things needful to be known concerning the soul’s conversing with God; for I shall retain the word *conversing* throughout my discourse, as being a single, yet a large and significant word.

H. Shew what it is for a soul to converse with God; and how it comes to converse with him.

III. Prove the doctrine, that it is our duty to converse with God in the way of his judgments.

IV. Shew particularly, how we are to converse with God in the time of afflictions.

V. Apply it.

1. I shall premise some things needful to be known, that tend to clear up my way to the following discourse.

1. "It is the great duty of man to converse with God." I have read, that it was a common precept that the Jewish doctors were wont to give to the people, that they should single out some one commandment, and exercise themselves very diligently in the observation of it, that therein they might make God their friend, and make him some amends for the breach of many others. I fear it is a rule by which too many professors of Christianity live, who not having the genuine and generous spirit of true religion, do parcel out their obedience into some little portions of homage and devotion, and instead of consecrating their whole lives to God, do content themselves with some circumstantial and light obedience, and think themselves people of great attainments, if they do but severely tie up themselves to hearing the Gospel preached twice a day, and a few other acts of more solemn worship. Certainly this is a penurious and needy spirit, much unlike the generous, ample, and free-born spirit of true religion. The duty, the whole duty, the constant duty of man, is to converse with God, commended in Enoch by the name of *walking with God*, Gen. v. 22. where you may observe of him, that he did not only set out fairly

with God, and take a turn or two with him; but he walked with him three hundred years together. The same God calls for from Abraham, under the same name, *Gen. xvii. 1. Walk before me, and be thou perfect.* But it is not only the command of God that makes this a duty; if there had been no express commandment concerning it, yet would it be the duty of every man, necessarily flowing from his relation to God as a rational creature. As man is a creature, so he must needs live upon God; and as a rational creature, so he ought to live with him, and unto him. Therefore hath God given unto man a noble rational soul, not only that he might talk and work, manage the creatures, and converse with the world, but that he might converse with the God of the world, that infinite, blessed and glorious Being. This is the very end of man's creation, as man, as a rational creature; this was the end of his being created in the image of God; and when he was fallen from this image, this was the end of his redemption by Christ Jesus, that heaven and earth might be reconciled, and those that were far off might be brought nigh. Sin is a sinking of the soul down to self and the creature; and redemption from sin is nothing else but a recovery of the soul into a state of favour and fellowship with God; so that whatever is expressed by faith and repentance, is contained in this one word, converse with God. It is the great, the necessary, and, as I may say, the natural duty of the rational soul.

2. "It is the highest privilege of man." The prerogative of man above the beast is his rea-

son; and the glory of reason is, that it is capable of knowing, loving, enjoying, and conversing with the supreme and infinite Good. The privilege of reason is not, as too many think, that it is capable of understanding arts and sciences; that it is capable of searching into the nature and course of the heavenly bodies, diving into the secret depths of the earth and sea, and the creatures therein contained; but in conversing with the infinite and glorious God. How miserably do vulgar souls abuse this noble faculty, who exercise it only in discoursing, numbering, and ordering the poor concerns of the world and the body! Yea, certainly those wise men, those scribes, disputers of this world, as the apostle calls them, who exalt this faculty, and glory so much in it, and yet do not exercise it about that high and eternal being, do not converse with God in pure affections, and God-like dispositions and conversations, but expend those vast treasures of reason upon secrets in art, secrets in state, or some other created being, do enthrall their own souls, which they say are so free-born, and captivate and confine that noble principle, which they themselves do so much magnify; for sin is certainly the great and holy shame and reproach of an immortal soul. And indeed these men, though they put their souls to a more noble drudgery, are really no more happy than the vulgar sort, who spend the strength of their souls about eating and drinking, plowing and sowing, or keeping of cattle. What difference, I pray you, in point of true happiness, is there between

boys playing with pins and points, and old men clinging to their gold and lands? The noblest sciences, the greatest commands, the most enriching traffics, are as really toys in comparison of true happiness, as the poor dunghill-possession of vulgar men; and the wise, the rich, the learned, the honourable, that take up with an employment in this world, and with a happiness in themselves, or in any creature, do as much disgrace their own souls, and as truly live below their own faculties, as he doth, that knows no higher good than to toil all his days in a ditch. For indeed, as to all things but conversing with God, man seems to be but equal, perhaps inferior to the beasts that perish. Doth man eat, drink, sleep, work? so do they. Doth man find any sensual pleasure which the beasts do not enjoy as well as he? Nay, the gormandizing emperor envied the crane's long neck; and others have envied the more able and permanent lusts of the brute beasts, because themselves have been inferior to them therein, and have enjoyed less sensual pleasure than they. If any glory in their knowledge of natural and political things, I could produce instances of the strong memory, great sagacity, quick fancy, wonderful perceptions of many beasts, and their strange knowledge of many secrets, which they never learned by books, nor gathered gradually by observation; and as for man's communication of his notions by words and phrases, I doubt not to affirm that there is something similar to be found in beasts and birds; yea, that very beauty and flower of sound, even music, which some men magnify so much, is more

fairly and sweetly uttered by the silly bird that sits solitarily upon a bough, than by the choristers of the pope's cathedral. What solid prerogative worth naming remains to man above his fellow-creatures, but his conversing with God, which we call religion, and is indeed reason rectified, sanctified, exalted, and increased to its pure and primitive perfection! in so much that I have sometimes thought that I never heard a more reproachful word spoken concerning degenerate man, neither do I think that any thing can be spoken of him more shameful and dishonourable than what the apostle saith of the heathen, *Eph. ii. 12.—Without God in the world.* By conversing with God in the world, is man truly raised above the beasts, and the godly man above all other men; nay, hereby is the godly soul advanced to the dignity and glory of the holy angels, or at least to a parity of happiness; for it is this that is their perfection and glory, as we find it described in *Matt. xviii. 10.—They also behold the face of God.* And therefore our blessed Saviour doth affirm, that the saints in the resurrection, who shall be raised above all creature communion, to live upon God singly and entirely, shall be equal to the angels of God, *Luke, xx. 36.* In a word, this is the most real heaven, setting aside all circumstances of place, &c. the perfect and proper happiness of a soul, to see God, *Matt. v. 8.* to be like unto him, *1 John iii. 2.* to converse with the Father by the Son, as our Saviour hath told us, who best knew it, *John xvii. 3. This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* By this it is, that

God dwells in the soul, and the soul in God, as we shall see hereafter; and the kingdom of heaven doth really enter into every believer.

3. "The natural man is utterly unwilling and unable to converse with God." An earthly mountain may as soon rise up to heaven by its own power and good-will, as an earthly mind; and such are all natural and unregenerate minds. Sin, as I hinted before, is a falling from God, a sinking of the soul into self, whether sensual self or spiritual self, and a contracting of it into the creature; and the sinful soul is always, like a shadow, moving upon the surface of the earth, and higher it cannot get, *Rom. viii. 5.* Would you know what is the principle object of a natural man's admiration, inclination, and ambition? The Psalmist will tell you, it is some created good, *Psal. iv. 6. 7.* Would you know what is the disposition of the natural man towards the supreme uncreated Good? The apostle will tell you, it is ignorance and enmity, *1 Cor. ii. 14. Rom. viii. 7.* *The carnal mind is enmity against God.* This high duty of conversing with God in a right manner, is not pleasing to the temper of the wicked man: never any such man did perform it. It is a contradiction: a wicked man conversing with God is, as if one should say, an ungodly man that is godly. But that is not all: this duty is not only out of the hands of a wicked man, but out of his reach too, *Neither can he know him,* saith the apostle to the Corinthians; and again to the Romans,—*Neither can he be subject to him. Can two walk together except they be agreed?* saith the prophet: Can man walk with God, converse with God, ex-

cept he be reconciled to him? And what agreement but by a Mediator? What Mediator between God and man but Christ Jesus, who is a Mediator, as the logicians call a *medium participationis*, who is God-man? In a word, some converse with one thing in the world, and some with another, as I noted before; but all converse principally and mainly with the creature, that are not regenerated by grace, and reconciled by Christ.

4. "It is the duty of man, in all ages of life, at all times, and in all places and conditions, to converse with God." It is a necessary, natural, certain, constant duty, springing up out of the very nature and natural will of God, and out of the very nature and relation, and capacity of the reasonable soul, binding *semper ad semper*, [permanently,] as the school-men speak, and admitting of no dispensation or diminution. There is no time wherein it is not a duty, or wherein it is less a duty than at another time; however we are apt to give to ourselves many relaxations from it. The first fruits, nay, the very early buds of the tender soul, and of the springing faculties, are due to God, and ought to be dedicated to him, *Eccl. xii. 1. Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.* Manhood is not allowed to attend unto cares and exploits, nor old age to pains and griefs, so as to neglect converse with God; but whether young men build or plant, fight or study, work or marry, or manage the affairs of the house or of the field, all should be undertaken and carried on in a way of converse and fellowship with God; or whether old men sit and muse, and meditate, or lie under the pain and grievances of de-

crepit age, still it ought to be in the Lord. Neither doth this duty admit of interruption, any more than of cessation: there is no dispensation given us from this duty; as in no age, so in no hour of our life. As we cannot live a moment out of God, so neither ought we to live a moment without God in the world. We ought continually to endeavour to walk in subservience to, and converse with God; yea, and as far as may be, in a feeling converse with him too. Holy David witnesses of himself, that the fear of God was continually before his eyes, and that he did continually converse with God, for so those words may be understood, *Ps. lxxiii. 23. I am continually with thee.* The like is recorded of many other saints, both in the Old and New Testament; concerning whom one may well say, as the queen of Sheba concerning the servants of Solomon, and with much better reason, *1 Kings x. 8. Happy are these thy servants, O Lord, which stand continually before thee.* Neither is it the duty of some few men, who have the greatest knowledge, or the most leisure; for it springs out of the relation of a creature and out of the very nature of the rational soul; so that no soul of man is exempt from it, however many ignorant and profane persons live rather in a professed independence upon God. Neither is it a duty only, upon supposition of leisure and freedom from worldly business, as some other things are, but is equally incumbent upon prince and peasant, upon him that sits in his closet, and upon him that plows in the field; yea, they that go down into the sea in ships, ought to go up to heaven in their hearts, and not only to converse

with the clouds, which they often do, but above them too. A hand full of earth, and a heart full of heaven, may well stand together; for as this duty deprives us of no honest business, so neither should itself be excluded by any. And as this high and excellent duty belongs to all ages, and times, and persons, so it agrees to all conditions too. Poor men think that rich men may well do it, and rich men think that poor men had need to do it: *prosperity* thinks it hath better things to mind than a God: and *adversity* knows it hath worse things, but it must mind them: *plenty* is too full to entertain him; and *poverty* hath enough to do to bear up under its own burden: *learning* knows how, but will not; *ignorance* says it would, but knows not how. But, notwithstanding all this evasion, the obligation to this duty ceases not: none so high as to be above it, none so mean as to be below it; for rich and poor, high and low, learned and unlearned, prince and peasant, though they are divided amongst themselves by punctilios and lesser differences, yet they are united in one universal Being, meet in one and the same centre, agree in the common capacity of reasonable creatures. As religion hath an interest and a concernment in the whole of the conversation, according to that of the apostle, *Phil. iii. 20. Our conversation is in heaven*; so also hath it a room in the conversation of every man in every capacity; no relation, condition, action, change, is exempted from the powerful influence thereof. So the apostle describes himself, by his *living in all good conscience before God, Acts xxiii. 1.* and by his exercising himself in this thing, to

have always a conscience void of offence towards God, and towards men, Acts xiv. 16.

5. "It is more especially the duty of God's people to study to converse with him aright in the way of his judgments; which is the doctrine itself, which I must not proceed to confirm, till I have shewed, according to my promise,

II. "What it is for the soul to converse with God; and how it comes to converse with him."

Not to name those low and improper notions that men ordinarily have of this high and spiritual matter, conversing with God; to speak properly, it is "a complex act of the soul, whereby it entertains God in itself, and renders itself back again to him;" receives impressions from him, and then empties itself into him. You may conceive of it after the similitude of a plant, that is influenced by the benign beams of the sun, and in those beams spreads itself, and in the virtue and power of them grows up towards heaven: or after the similitude of a river, that is continually filled from the ocean, and is continually emptying itself into the same. This seems to be our Saviour's elegant allusion, *John iv. 14.* where he compares a divine and godly principle in the soul to *a well of water*, springing out from God, and continually boiling and bubbling up to towards him,—*springing up into everlasting life.* Or you may conceive of it after the similitude of a glass, which receives the image of him that looks into it, and reflects the self-same image that it receives: for indeed the brightness and beauty of holiness, wherewith a godly soul doth shine as a light in the world, is nothing but a reflection of

that light and brightness wherewith the Father of light shines into it.—And so the best of men have nothing of their own to glory in: for they behold God, but it is in his own light; they love him with a love which he hath shed abroad in their hearts; they are therefore like him, because hath stamped his own image upon them; and so they must needs acknowledge, concerning all their acts of love, communion, and delight, as David did in another case, *Of thine own we offer unto thee.* This is indeed the true and noble converse and communion with God, wherein the life of a godly man is infinitely advanced above the life of angels.—Their life is described in the holy scriptures, by a seeing of God, a beholding of him face to face; which we must not understand of a naked idle speculation, but of real assimilation, arising from the divine impressions made upon them; a beholding of him so as to be changed into his image: and such is a godly man's life, spiritual life, his life of converse with God, consisting in a participation of God and of his grace, and a holy reciprocation or reflection of affections to him; which are indeed two distinct acts, though originally springing from the same fountain: for the love wherewith the soul loves God, is itself an efflux from him; for by loving us, he inspires us; and by influences from God, we become God-like. But this converse with God is not only by the impressions of goodness from God, and the reflections of love and delight towards him, but is also seen in the various acts of the soul, according to the various impressions which God makes upon the soul, and suitable to the various occa-

sions of life: so we converse with God by acts, fear, reverence, joy, confidence, resignation, and the like.

Now, because we are in the body, and so cannot converse with God so purely, spiritually, and immediately, as the angels in heaven do, therefore it hath pleased God to appoint unto man ways and means of conversing with him, wherein he hath promised to communicate himself to the soul, and so to draw forth reciprocal acts of love, fear, reverence, confidence, resignation, dependence, and delight, out of the same soul towards himself. Now, these ways or means may be reduced to three heads, duties, ordinances, and providences; though indeed the two first may be contracted into one.

1st. I will speak of ordinances, such as the word and sacrament; for I shall name no more than these two. The preaching of the word is a way in which God doth usually meet the soul, to communicate life, *1 Pet. i. 23.*; light, *Psal. xix. 8.*; warmth, *Luke, xxiii. 32.*; growth, *1 Pet. ii. 2.*; and the soul doth answer these impressions, as in water face answereth to face, by the acts of faith, love, joy, meekness, and holy resolution. So also the administration of the sacraments is a way wherein God meets the soul, and communicates his love, sweetness, fulness, goodness, strength, and vigour to the soul; and it reflects upon him in the acts of holy complacency and delight, cheerfulness, thankfulness, and dependence.

2dly. Duties are also ways of converse with God such as, confession, petition, thanksgiving, conference, singing, meditation, observation. In

all which God impresses something of himself upon the soul, and draws answerable affections of the soul unto himself, as might appear in the particular explication of them; but that would be too much a digression. Only I will here note by the way, the mistake of many low spirited christians, who know no other converse with God, than the bare performance of these things: this they count the very top-stone of a christian's perfections, the very summit of the spiritual life. But, alas! this is a very gross mistake: there is, surely something more sweet, savoury, satisfactory in the spiritual life, than the dry duty; there is marrow in the bone, or else a holy soul would not covet it with so much fervour. Converse with God in duties is a spiritual, savoury, filling enjoyment, distinct from the duties themselves. This must needs be, except we will allow to wicked and hypocritical men the same dainties that the most sanctified souls feed upon, and say, that the children's bread is common to the dogs as well as unto them. The soul doth not converse with God in duties barely, when it prays or meditates; for even godly souls themselves do many times find little converse with God in these, *viz.* when he suspends the influences of his graces, or their hearts are clogged or cloyed with earthly objects, or other wise indisposed and shut up against him. It is not speaking to God that brings the soul really nigh unto him, nor bare thinking of God that advances the soul into the excellent state of feeling converse with him; even prayer itself may prove many times an empty sound, *vox et præterea nihil*; [sound, and nothing more;] and me-

dition, that most excellent and genuine offspring of the soul, may prove a poor, dry and tasteless speculation. It is not enough to set up the sails, but there must be also wind to fill them. But the soul doth then converse with God in duties, when the dark places thereof become filled with his divine light, and the empty places thereof filled with his divine love, and the low and languishing affections thereof are ravished and revived with the powerful insinuations of his almighty grace; when God draws, and the soul runs: he puts in his finger by the hole of the door, and the very bowels of the soul are moved for him, as it is described, *Song*, v. 4. Then doth the soul converse with God in meditation and prayer, when the Spirit of God moves upon the face of the waters, when he kisses it with the kisses of his mouth; and the shaking soul finds itself marvellously settled, the doubting soul established, the frozen heart thawed, the benumbed affections warmed, the scant and contracted capacity of it enlarged and wonderfully widened, and its slow and sluggish motions quickened into a lively and cheerful compliance with, and pursuit of the supreme and all-sufficient good; when the soul can use its feet to run after that glorious object which is presented to it; lift up its hands to lay hold upon the strength, the fulness, the faithfulness, the Christ of God, and bearing up itself upon the wings of faith and love, fly out to seek its rest and happiness, and no longer envy the birds of the altar, for itself enters into the holy of holies, and through the arms of its Mediator throws itself into the very heart of God. In a word, and that shall be the word of God,

then doth a soul converse with God in duties, when, with *open face beholding the glory of God*, it doth not only admire it, but itself is *changed into the same image, from glory to glory*, i. e. from grace to grace, 2 Cor. iii. ult.

3dly, Providences, these are another way wherein the soul converses with God. Now, by providences we mean in general, "the whole work of God in governing the world, and all things therein." And so indeed a religious, enlarged soul, a mind freed from particular vexing cares, low and selfish ends, converses with God in beholding and observing God's settled course of governing the world. The whole heavens, earth, and sea, and the admirable order kept up in them, do teach the knowlege of God, and draw up the contemplative soul into an observation and admiration of him in them; and the pious soul longs to find some impressions made upon itself by all these, and to be affected with God therein: it is not content with a bare speculation, but its meditation of God in these is sweet to it, as David's were, *Ps. civ. 34*. Particularly, God's providence towards mankind, as it doth most lively express his infinite love, justice, and wisdom, so we ought to converse with him therein; and in all the changes of any kind, that befall man in the world, that befall all the kingdoms of the world, the four great monarchies of it, and all other subordinate dominions; more especially in all the mutations that befall the church of God in the world, and all men of all sects and sorts therein, but most especially ourselves. Labour to converse with that infinite mind, wisdom, and under-

standing that ordains and orders all the changes that befall yourselves. Now, our conversing with God in the several changes that befall us in the world, is in general by endeavouring to serve the providence of God in every change. The providence of God serves itself even upon all creatures that do least understand it; but a godly man only knows how to serve the providence of God in the things that befall him: he hath no private selfish interest of his own, but counts it his interest cheerfully and faithfully to serve the will of God, to be what God would have him be, to be without that which God would have him to want, and to do what God would have him do. Every wicked soul in the world sets up some trade for himself, and drives on some particular self-interest distinct from God; but a godly soul counts it his greatest honour and happiness to be nothing in himself, or for himself, but is wholly at the disposal of his Creator; and, looking upon all his interests as being bound up in God, is solicitous for nothing else but to serve the will of God in his generation. So the life of holy David is described, *Acts* xiii. 36. *David in his generation having served the will of God*, i. e. the providence of God, say the Dutch annotators translating the words in this order. A good man eyeing nothing but the great and blessed God in the world, and knowing that he was not made for himself, but for a higher good, is only ambitious to be subservient to that infinite and sovereign Being; herein imitating his blessed Saviour, who lived not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him, *John* vi. 38. and again, to seek the glory

of him that sent him, *John* vii. 18. In a word, he looks upon himself, not as in himself, but in God, and labours to become wholly God's, and to live in the world only an instrument in the hands of him that worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will: that is, in general, for the conversing with God in all kind of changes.

Now, these changes are reduced to two heads—prosperity and adversity. In the first of these it is our duty to converse with God, and not with the creature comforts which we do enjoy from him, as one might shew at large. But I am to speak of the latter, and to shew how we ought to converse with God in that: This point I shall pursue in the subsequent discourse.

PART II.

Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.

AMOS iv. 12.

In the preceding Discourse, it was pointed out, that the doctrine contained in this text, is, "That it is the duty of God's people to study a right behaviour towards him, and to converse with him aright in the way of his judgments, in the time of their afflictions."—To elucidate this it was proposed,

I. To premise some things needful to be known concerning the soul's conversing with God.

II. Shew what it is for a soul to converse with God; and how it comes to converse with him.

III. Prove the doctrine, that it is our duty to converse with God in the way of his judgments.

IV. Shew particularly, how we are to converse with God in the time of afflictions.

V. Apply it.

III. The *third* thing promised, was, “to shew that it is the duty of God’s people to study to converse with him aright in the way of his judgments, in a time of affliction.”

And here, I hope, I need not be at pains to prove by scripture, that besides the general business of a christian’s life, some particular and more especial behaviours are required of him, in an afflicted state; all will readily grant it: besides, after I shall have declared what they are, I shall not need to prove that they are. Therefore, for the present, I shall content myself with giving three or four reasons of it. It is especially the duty of God’s people to study to converse with him aright in the time of afflictions.

First, Because “then it is hard to do it.”—We are then very apt to be taken off from it, therefore we should then especially labour to pursue it, and perform it. We are then in imminent danger of being taken off from it; and by the following means:

1. “Our senses do set us on work to converse with outward means;” and whilst we attend upon them too eagerly, we neglect and forget God. This might appear by an induction of particular affections; but that would be too long. I will only give an instance of one or two for explication.

—The sickness and pains of the body call out the mind to seek after and converse with physicians; bodily wants call us to seek after bodily supplies; and so all kind of distresses call out the soul to seek creature relief. Direct the sick and languishing patient to call upon, and hang upon divine help, to converse with God; alas! he hath enough to do to attend upon his pains and pangs. Tell him of ease of recovery, and he can hearken to you, for that he longs to hear. Call upon the poor emaciated beggar to seek relief from God, to converse with him; alas! he finds such a faintness in his limbs, such a gnawing of hunger, such a restless appetite within himself, that he can groan out nothing, but, Oh that one would give me bread to eat! In a word, the soul is more naturally addicted to mind its body to which it is joined, than the God that joined it to that body. Hence you may observe two things by the way, *viz.* 1. The reason why so few persons repent in time of sickness: the sense of sickness drowns the sense of sin. 2. The reason why so few poor people, who are always conflicting with the necessities of the body, do not at all mind the concerns of their souls: the exigencies and straits of the body cry louder in their hearts than all the words and works of God. So that, as health is the best time for repentance, it seemeth that the best way to teach the poor is to relieve them.

2. “The corruptions of the heart are then most apt to make war against heaven.” This is the opinion of him who knows the temper of man, *Job i. 11. Put forth thy hand against him, and he*

will curse thee to thy face. And I am persuaded that the devil acts much by this observation, which makes him endeavour all he can to make many good men poor, thinking thereby to make them less good, though the wise and merciful God graciously prevents him. For indeed the soul is naturally so tender of the body that it is unwilling that God himself should touch it: if he, do, it is ready to rage and rebel against him. *Converse with God!* saith the wicked king; *why, this evil is of the Lord, what should I wait for the Lord any longer?* 2 Kings vi. 33. There are many corruptions of the soul that are most ready to clamour against God in a time of affliction, as fear, anger, unbelief, yea, and sinful self-love, and creature-love: an affection that can never be taught to converse with God, yet will cry after him, when he takes away any darling from it; as Phaltiel cried on account of his wife; or it will rather cry against him; as Micah cried against the men of Dan, saying, *Ye have taken away my gods, and are gone away, and what have I more?* Judg. xviii. 24.

3 “Temptations do then come strongest from without.” Then it is the devil’s time to instigate the soul: ‘what, put up this reproach! what, will you sit down with this loss! up and revenge thyself.’ He that knows so well the temper of man’s heart that it is ready to curse God when he touches him, *Job* ii. 5. will not fail to touch the heart, and tempt it to curse him indeed, *Job* ii. 9. *Curse God and die.*

The 2d reason why we ought especially to study to converse with God in the time of affliction

tion, is, because "that is a time wherein we are most apt to think ourselves excused from this duty;" as if it were allowed us in our extremity to forget God, and mind ourselves only; and that not only in respect of these bodily straits and distresses which I named under the last head, but in respect of our own passions. When the afflicting hand of God is upon us, pressing and grieving us, and taking our beloved comforts from us, we are apt to indulge our own private and selfish passions, care, fear, sorrow, complaining, &c. yea to think we are in some sense allowed to indulge them. How willingly do we suffer ourselves to be drawn into a converse with ourselves; to be contracted, as it were, into ourselves, and suffer ourselves to be carried down the stream of our own passions, which at other times we should think it was our duty to resist! Even as the heart in natural things draws home to it, in a time of danger, the blood that was dispersed abroad in the body, as it were to defend itself; so the heart in moral things gathers home its power and affections, which were formerly bestowed here and there, to employ them all about itself in a time of sore affliction. And we are apt to think ourselves excusable too in so doing; so that if God himself should ask a distressed soul, as he did Jonah, Dost thou well to be careful, fearful, sorrowful, querulous, because of those afflictions, losses, distresses, that are upon thee? It would be almost ready to give him the same answer. "I do well to be sorrowful, yea, and to refuse to be comforted." There seem to be allowed us some natural affections in case of extreme affliction, but

how far they are lawful, I will not now dispute; but sure I am, that if such be allowed us they must not be wild and extravagant, wandering beyond the bounds of religion and conscience, as if God had laid the reins upon the neck of the soul, and giving it leave to indulge itself in what passions it would for a certain time, as the daughter of Jephthah was allowed to go whether she would, wailing upon the mountains for two months. We are never allowed any passions or affections, surely, that do not comply with the will of God, and consist with our submission thereunto: but whatever they are, I find, that under the pretence of those, some men are apt to be carried into strange, inordinate conduct, and commit many passionate outrages; and indeed the best of men are too prone to suspend and interrupt that lively and feeling-converse with God, which they ought to maintain even when they suffer most.

The third reason why we ought to seek converse with God in trouble, is, "Because that is a time when there is more especial use for, and need of such converse with God." And that, 1. To give rest to the soul. In prosperity men forget God, and yet can find some kind of rest in their pleasures, friends, or employments; some take comfort in their cups and companions, and indeed all are apt to fancy a contentment in creature-enjoyments. But in a time of great affliction all these are gone, or at least have no savour in them; and where shall the weary soul find rest then? Then there is no rest but in God alone; when all other props fail, then either seek help of God or fall, there is now nothing left to give any ease or contentment to the soul but God alone; and in him

there is ease to the tottering, contentment to the troubled christian. Therefore converse with God in the day of great affliction, which is the same counsel in effect that our Saviour gave, *Mat. xi. 28. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* 2. There is need of it to give relief to the body also.

And so conversing with God in a right manner is the best policy, the surest way to recovery and relief. See what a speedy cure there is in it, *Ps. xxxiv. 5. 6. They looked unto him, and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed: this poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles* In vain is it to converse with friends, physicians, counsellors; in vain is all creature-converse without this; no rest to the soul, no ease to the body in a time of affliction, without converse with God: so that a man in affliction, estranged from God, wandering from God, is altogether miserable. In a word, separate a soul from God and in prosperity his enjoyments are low, and in adversity the want of them is very bitter: so that there is good reason why a christian should study to converse with God in the way of his judgments.—But the great art is to know how. Therefore,

IV. In the *fourth* place, I shall shew particularly, “how we are to converse with God in afflictions.” Now, there are two ways of explaining this.

1. By shewing with what attributes of God we are to converse.

2. By what acts of the soul. But I shall bring both these into one.

1st. We ought to converse with the absolute and unlimited sovereignty of God, whereby he, as a free and supreme agent, doth what he will, and none can say unto him, *What doest thou?* Dan. iv. 35. This Job often eyes and owns, particularly in Chap. ix. 12. *He taketh away, who can hinder him? Who will say unto him, What doest thou?* This we must also eye often, and own heartily; this we may well argue from God's creating us; he that made us thus without any constraint, can he not, may he not make us otherwise, and alter us without restraint? So Job argues, Chap. i. 21. We may also argue it from the subordinate sovereignty and inferior supremacy of men; even a monarch among men doth whatsoever he pleases, and who may say unto him, *What doest thou?* Eccl. viii. 3. 4. Yea, a very centurion hath a kind of sovereignty in his sphere, over as many as are under him; he saith unto one man, *Go, and he goeth; and to another, Do this, and he doth it,* Mat. viii. 9. And shall we not then acknowledge a sovereign power, and independent absolute authority in the great and blessed God over the whole creation, the workmanship of his own hands? So the good centurion argues, and infers, in the place last quoted. Nay, as the apostle saith in one place, *We have fathers of our flesh,* who use us at their pleasure, and we do not gainsay their authority; we do not say to our father, *What begettest thou?* nor to our mother, *What hast thou brought forth?* Isa. xiv. 10. Nay, if these similitudes will not teach you, I will say to you, as God to the prophet, *Arise, go down to the potter's house* there I will cause you to learn this lesson;

he maketh or marreth his vessels of clay as oft as he pleaseth; and are not ye in the hand of the Lord, as the clay is in the hand of the potter? *Jer.* xviii. 6. I speak the more to this, in as much as I find, that however men give God good words, and confess his dominion over them and theirs, yet when he touches them in any of their darling comforts, they are ready to clamour against him in their hearts, as if he did them some wrong; if not to curse him to his face. Certainly there is some atheistical opinion of propriety, that in some degree or other is apt to steal into the most devout minds: and sure I am, we do not barely offend, but we do ourselves much hurt; we wound our own peace, we shake the settledness of our own hearts, we put ourselves into briers; in a word, we both lessen our comforts and multiply our griefs, and aggravate our sorrows, by calling things our own; if we had not taken them to be our own, it would not have troubled us to part with them.

Be sure therefore to eye and own the absolute and unlimited sovereignty of God. But that is not all; it is not enough to believe it, we must converse with it otherwise than by thinking of it, or assenting to it. Then do we converse with the sovereignty of God.

“When the powerful sense of it doth silence quarrelling, yea, murmurings, yea, even disputing in the soul.” We may indeed modestly contend with men concerning their dealings with us; the potsherd may strive with the potsherd of the earth, but it must not say to the potter, Why hast thou made me thus? A peaceful and quiet frame of heart is a real conversing with the sovereignty of

God : so did Aaron when he held his peace, *Lev. x. 3.* and Job, when he attributed nothing unseemly to God, chap. i. &c.

We converse with the sovereignty of God, "When the sense of it doth suppress self-will." This is an unruly passion in the soul, a giant-like spirit, warring against heaven, and breeding hatred continually. This is that which maintains *à meum* and *tuum*, [a mine and a thine] even with God himself; that sets up interests, (as the Jews set up princes, *Hos. viii. 4.*) but not by God, yea, indeed, in opposition to him. This is the seditious party in the soul that is always crying out, We will not have this man to rule over us; and when that darling interest, which this proud rival hath set up is touched of God, and smitten and blasted from heaven, it is ready to fret and storm, yea, and to think it hath reason to be angry. If this son of the bond-woman were cast out, Abraham's family would be all united, all in order, and at rest. If this undisciplined and perverse spirit were quite banished, oh, what a calm day would it be in the soul! What fair and sweet correspondence would there be between God and his creature! For certainly this is the Jonah that raises the storm and makes the great deeps of the soul restless, and perpetually roll and toss, yea, and cast out mire and dirt continually. But, alas, I suspect this spirit is not quite driven out, no not in the most spiritual man: the best of men are ready to nourish and foster some darling, some private interest or other of their own, distinct from God and the grand interest of their souls, which God himself must not touch; some gourd or other that the cold wind must not blow

upon. He is a blessed man indeed, who lives and moves in God alone, and is so overpowered with the sense of the infinite goodness and holiness of God, and the absolute perfection of his divine will, as to reckon it his greatest perfection to be nothing in himself, and have nothing of his own distinct from God; but who only studies to be great in favour with God, to be filled with God, to live to him and for him, to enjoy all things as in and under him; who counts it his only interest to quit all self-interest, and private ends, and to be freely at the disposal of the highest Mind, conformable to the highest Good, cheerfully compliant with the uncreated Will. Potiphar had so committed all to Joseph, on account of his great faithfulness, that, *he knew not ought he had, save the bread that he did eat*, Gen. xxxix. 6. But this similitude is too low: a godly soul should commit all its interests, its life and livelihood, and all to God, in view of his sovereignty, and not know ought that he hath, no not his own life, but despise it in comparison of uncreated life, as Job speaks, chap. ix. 21. Methinks the sovereignty of God speaks such language to the soul, and in it, as Eli to Samuel, *My son, hide nothing from me, keep nothing back of all that thou hast*: and the pious soul should not, with foolish Rachel, conceal any selfish interest, so as not to be willing to part with it, when its sovereign Lord and Father comes to search the tent, but (with allusion to *Amos*, vi. 10.) when God comes to root out all self-interests, and shall ask, *Is there any such yet with thee?* should be able to answer boldly, No, there is none. Blessed is the man that is in such a case;

blessed is the man whose only interest it is to serve the will of the Lord! Well, improve the infinite sovereignty of God to this end, and impress it upon and in your own hearts, that all self-will may yield to it: and let the main interest of your souls be so planted and established in your souls that no other interest may be able to grow by it: disarm your own self-will with such severe reproofs as this, *Either deny thyself, O my soul, or deny thyself to be a creature: either be wholly at God's command, or call him not thy sovereign.*

We converse with the sovereignty of God "When the sense of it doth beget reverence in the soul towards God." We ought not only to be subject to the rod of God, but even to reverence him when he correcteth with it; and so not only to accept of the rod, but to kiss it too. And surely if the fathers of our flesh correct us, and we give them reverence, *Heb. xii. 9.* much more ought we to reverence the sovereign Father both of flesh and spirit. This is a devout act of the soul, whereby it looks up and adores the infinite and sovereign Majesty, and thinks equitable and honourable thoughts of him, even when he is in the way of his judgments. And these are the proper acts of a soul conversing with God's sovereignty in the time of afflictions. When we are silent before him, subject unto him, and reverence him, then we do really and truly converse with him as our almighty and absolute Sovereign. But God's authority and prerogative, though it may silence, will scarce satisfy; to such a corrupt and

rebellious pass are our natures grown. Therefore,

2dly, Converse with the perfect and infinite righteousness of God in the time of afflictions; that divine perfection whereby he renders to every man what is just and due, and no more. This we are to eye and own, and sincerely to acknowledge, even in the time of our greatest extremity, after the example of Daniel, chap. ix. 14. *The Lord our God is righteous in all his works; and of the godly Levites, Neh. ix. 33. Thou art just in all that is brought upon us, thou hast done right. Argue with Abraham, Gen. xviii. 25. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Can Righteousness itself err in judgment? shall the timber say unto the rule, Why hast thou measured me thus? or to the line, Thou art crooked? Are not my ways equal? saith the Lord, Ezek. xviii. 25. Are not the Lord's ways equal? let your souls say so too. Be ye firmly persuaded of the infinite and incorruptible righteousness and equity of God. But that is not all; we do not then converse with the righteousness of God, when we do believe it, or acknowledge it: a very Pharaoh may be brought to make such a confession, Exod. ix. 27. *The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.* But then do we converse with the righteousness of God, in general, when the sense of it doth give a rational satisfaction to the soul. And indeed, though the sovereignty of God is enough to silence, yet his righteousness had need to be called in to administer satisfaction: the former is sufficient to stop the mouth, but there is need of the latter to settle*

the heart. And indeed, methinks it is a heart-settling consideration: for how can the interest of the creature be better secured than in the hands of a righteous God! Where can we venture all we have, better than on such a certain and steady bottom? How can we better trust ourselves than on such firm and even ground? We will trust ourselves far with an upright and righteous man: and if we hear of the miscarriage of any interest of ours at any time, it doth mightily calm and satisfy our hearts, if we are assured that it was in the hands of a just and upright person: much more rational and steady satisfaction may the infinite righteousness of God administer, even in the time of the greatest affliction, if it be duly wrought into the heart. But more particularly,

1. "The powerful sense of the righteousness of God should make us tender and serious." It becomes us seriously to ponder, duly to weigh, and in good earnest to lay to heart, all that is done to us by a righteous God. We slightly pass by, and disesteem the words or actions of vain man; but it is not for nothing that the righteous God afflicts any man, in any measure, at any time. The voice of God, though it be not always articulate, yet is always significant. Will a lion roar for nothing? Surely every action of the righteous God hath a meaning in it. A hair falls not from our head, nor a sparrow to the ground, without him; much less, surely, do greater changes befall us without him. And in all things he is infinitely righteous. Oh, how doth this call to tenderness and seriousness! How ought all the powers of

the soul to be awakened to attention, when the righteous God utters his dreadful voice; and the whole frame of the heart and life to be composed under his heavy hand! Now, if ever, one would "say of laughter, It is mad;" one would reckon trifling to be a kind of profaneness, and judge that foolish jestings do almost border upon blasphemy, formerly not convenient, now not lawful; for indeed a vain, light, trifling spirit, in the day of affliction, is in a sense, a blaspheming of the righteousness of God. As a consequent of this,

2. "It should put us upon self-examination." Nature itself had taught the heathenish mariners to enquire where the fault was, in a storm, *Jonah*, i. 7.; much more may the knowledge of God's infinite righteousness teach us. So may the holy word too, that word in *Lam.* iii. 40, *Let us search and try our ways, &c.* and many others. Now do the faculties of the godly soul, being awakened, begin to cast lots upon themselves, to find out the guilty party: and certainly God hath a great hand in ordering these lots; he doth ordinarily shew unto man his sin, even by the verdict of his own heart. Conscience, I mean, is God's vicegerent in the soul: and though it is true, that this judge is oft times corrupted and bribed, or at least overruled in prosperity, yet God instructs it to speak out, and speak the truth in the time of affliction. I believe they struck at the root of the evil, who cried out one to another, *Verily we are guilty concerning our brother*, *Gen.* xlii. 21. Another cries, *Verily I am guilty concerning my master, concerning my people, guilty concerning my wife, concerning my children, concerning my estate, my*

time, my talents; and it may be all true. I believe that heathen was in the right, who looked upon his hands and feet, and cried out, *As I have done, so God hath requited me*, Judg. i. 7.: and the Babylonish monarch sounded upon a right string, after he was come to his right mind, *Dan. iv. ult.—Those that walk in pride, he is able to abase.* God hath not given to our faculties any infallibility indeed, but he enables them to make good surmises; and, I am verily persuaded, doth many times lay the hand upon the diseased part, and order this secret lottery from heaven; and consequently that faculty, or that frame, or that action, which stands convicted in the court of conscience, is seldom held guiltless in the court of heaven.

3. “It should produce in us humiliation and reformation; a heart broken, and a conversation healed of its breaches.” By humiliation, I mean a heart broken purely, properly and spiritually for sin. I do not mean by it, a heart broken for losses and afflictions, and bowing down itself heavily under the burden of its distresses; no: nor a heart broken for sin, as viewing it only in the calamitous effects and bitter fruits of it; which, I doubt not, is the humiliation of most. Many may say concerning their humiliation, (to use the prophet’s words in a different sense, *Zech. xiii. 6.,*) *These are the wounds with which I was wounded in the house of my friends,* by the loss of my friends, the loss of my health, the loss of my goods; these tears that you see, these groans that you hear, are nothing but the scars which the sore hath left behind it, and the wales which the rod hath made. Our very sorrow for sin, in a time of af-

fiction, admits of a mixture of carnal self and passion, and so of sin too. But I mean a pure, spiritual, proper sorrow and hatred of sin; which I know may be broached by sharp afflictions, and have vent given it by piercing the vessel; but that is not the proper cause and ground of it. Moses, in his joy, had an eye to the *recompence of reward*, Heb. xi. 26.; and so a christian, in his sorrow, may have respect to the recompence of his sin, I mean his afflictions; but it is not primarily and principally caused by these; for though these dreadful showers from heaven should cease, yet the stream of his eyes, or at least the fountain of his heart, would not cease sending forth bitter waters; though the righteousness of God do serve to give vent to godly sorrow, yet it is the goodness and holiness of God that causes it. Do we sorrow for sin because it deprived us of our comforts, stripped us of our ornaments? Then, surely, we think there is something in the world worse than sin, for which we should bewail it, and hate it, and so, consequently, that there is something better than God, for which we would love him. Alas! how apt are we to run into practical blasphemy before we are aware! In a word, to decide this controversy, our afflictions, losses, distresses in the world, may possibly be as a bucket to draw up this water of godly sorrow, but they must not be the cistern to receive and hold it. Serious and spiritual humiliation is a real conversing with the righteousness of God: to meet God, is indeed to fall down before him; and to converse with him, is to be submissive under his dealings: the truth of which temper is best evidenced by that

excellent commentator, the life of a christian: this doth best declare the nature, and interpret the meaning of heart-humiliation. He that breaks off his sins doth best make it appear that his heart is broken for them. If you would know whether there has been rain in the night, look upon the ground, and that will discover. Oh, my friends! if the dust be laid, if all earthly joys, contentments, pleasures, concernments, be laid, you may conclude your sorrow was a shower sent into your souls from heaven.

If you see a boy both sobbing and minding his book, you may conclude he hath some right sense of his master's severity. Conversion to God is the most proper and real conversing with him in the way of his judgments: so he himself interprets in that complaint made, *Is. ix. 13.* *The people turneth not to him that smiteth them, &c.* That which happened to Moses, when he had been in the mount with God, (*Exod. xxxiv. 29.*) should also be the condition of every good Israelite, when he hath been with God in the valley, the vale of tears, an afflicted state; his face should shine, his conversation should witness that he had been with God; the smell of this fire should pass upon his garments, upon his whole outward man; the spirit of mourning should be demonstrated by the spirit of burning. If God from heaven consume the standing corn of our worldly comforts, we must answer him from within, and consume the stubble of our worldly lusts and corruptions. Let me change our Saviour's words therefore a little, (*Matt. vi. 18.*) and exhort you earnestly; thou, Christian, when thou fastest, when

thou humblest thy soul for sin, *wash thy face* also, cleanse thy outward conversation from all sinful pollution, that thou mayest appear to be humbled indeed: and this shall be accounted as a true and real conversing with the righteousness of God in the time of affliction.

3dly, Converse with the faithfulness of God. This attribute of God hath respect unto his promises, and therefore it may be, you will think strange that I should speak of this in a discourse of afflictions, as not having place there at all. Every one will readily acknowledge, that God's sovereignty and righteousness do clearly appear in his judgments; but how his faithfulness can be exercised therein, they see not. What! faithful in punishing, in visiting, in afflicting, distressing his creature; how can that be? Many will be ready to think rather that God is not faithful at such a time, when he withholds what he had promised to continue; when he plagues David every morning, when he had promised him that the plague should not come nigh his dwelling; when he brings Abijah to the grave, to whom he had promised that his days should be long upon the land; and Job to the dust, to whom all the promises were made, both of the life that now is, and of that which is to come; Is this faithfulness? doth God fulfil his promises by frustrating them? Notwithstanding all this, it seems that the faithfulness of God hath place in the afflictions of his people; for so hath David expressly, (*Ps. cxix. 75.*) *I know that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me*; if indeed faithfulness be taken properly in that place. Neither indeed need it seem so

strange as some men make it; for God hath promised his covenant-people to visit their iniquity with a rod, (*Ps. lxxxix. 32.*) *the rod of a man*, a fatherly chastisement, as it is explained, *2 Sam. vii. 14.* where this seems to be made a breach of the covenant, and is understood by many as a promise. But if that be not a plain promise, I am sure there is one in *Ps. lxxxiv. 11.* *No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.* And if no good thing, then no correction neither; for that is often good and profitable for the people of God in this world, for many excellent ends; which, considering the nature of man, cannot well be accomplished without it, as might appear in many particulars; but it is not needful to enumerate them. God will take more care of his own people than of the rest of the world, and will rather correct them than not restore them. It is their main happiness that he cares for, and he will in kindness take out of the way whatever hinders it, and give whatever may promote it. God's thoughts are not as our thoughts; he judges otherwise of health, riches, liberty, friends, &c. than we do. We are apt to measure God by ourselves, and our own affections; which is the ground of our mistake in this business; we mind the things that please our flesh, our senses, our appetite, our fancy; but God minds the things that concern our souls, and their true happiness. The saints are much more beloved of God, and much dearer to him, than they are to themselves; and therefore he will not give them what is sweet, but what is suitable; he will give them what makes for their real and eternal hap-

piness, whether they would have it or not. He loves them with a strong and powerful love, and will not deny them any thing that is truly good for them, though they cry out under it; nor allow them any thing that is really hurtful, though they cry after it. So will a wise father upon earth do by his children, to the best of his skill and power; much more will God then, *qui plusquam patrum amorem gerit in suos*, [who exhibits more than a father's love towards his own,] whose compassions are infinitely greater and stronger than those of a father. Now then, labour to converse with the faithfulness of God in the time of afflictions, by studying the covenant, and the promises of it, and your present condition, and comparing them together, and observing how consonant and agreeable they are, each interpreting the other; as also, by persuading your hearts of the consistency of afflictions with divine love and favour, and by studying to reconcile the hand and heart of God together. But especially converse with it practically, by a holy establishment and settlement of heart under all afflictions; for, afflictions in themselves are apt to beget a fearfulness, despondency, or at least fluctuation in the soul, the lively sense of God's faithfulness in afflicting them will settle and sustain it. It is a firm and consistent thing, upon which the trembling soul may settle safely, and centre itself boldly.

4thly. Converse with the holiness and unspotted purity of God. He is angry, and sins not; he corrects for sin without sinning; *Fury is not in me, saith the Lord*, Is. xxvii. 4. There is no passionate, malicious temper, in the pure and holy God;

no revengeful appetite to feed upon the blood of his creature: he is of purer eyes than to behold the least iniquity, and of a purer nature than any way to miscarry in any of his dealings or dispensations. Converse then with this infinite holiness of God: keep up pure, equitable, honourable thoughts of him in your hearts; take heed of fancying to yourself a God guilty of passion or partiality, or one carried away with such weak and mixed affections as we ourselves are. But, more practically, converse with God's holiness in the time of afflictions, by laying even little sins greatly to heart! Little sins, compared with infinite holiness and purity, ought to be matter of great and serious sorrow to a sensible soul. Again, take heed of the least miscarriages under affliction, of departing from God in the least. This I know is the great duty and care of every tender-hearted christian at all times; but, I conceive, we ought more especially to press it upon our hearts in the time of affliction, because we are then most apt to indulge some kind of human passions, which we call natural affections, as if we had a license to care, and fear, and grieve, and complain, not only in an extraordinary, but even in an irregular manner. Oh! let the sense of God's infinite purity, and perfect holiness, check and awe those very natural affections, be they what they will, if they offer to exceed their bounds, and overflow their banks. But this I touched upon before under another head, amongst the reasons of the doctrine; therefore,

5thly, Converse with the almighty power of God.—That God is infinite and almighty in pow-

er, I need not undertake to demonstrate: no man hath read a leaf in Scripture, nor indeed turned over one leaf in the book of creation, who hath not learned this. I need not, surely, turn you to any particular mighty work of God. They that give, as an instance, his letting loose the power of the elements, in the case of the universal deluge; or his binding up of their influences, as in the case of the three captive Jews, and of Daniel and Jonah, when he kept the fire from burning, and forbade the lions to eat the one, and the fish to digest the other, whom he had swallowed, inadequately conceive of Almighty power, and do but faintly describe it. The creation of the least thing out of nothing is an higher proof of divine power, than the government of the greatest that is already created. Consider God duly in the notion of a Creator, yea, the Creator of your own souls and bodies, and you have enough to fill you with everlasting admiration, as David was filled, *Ps. cxxxix. 14. I am fearfully and wonderfully made.* But it is not enough to eye, or acknowledge, or admire; we must yet do more, if we would rightly converse with the omnipotence of God, *viz.* by acts of reverence and dependence.

We must “reverence that almighty and glorious God in our hearts,”—who can bring *quid libet ex quodlibet*, any thing out of any thing, yea, out of nothing, yea, any thing to nothing in a moment. Reverence that power of God, that can pour contempt upon princes; that can bring Job, the greatest of all the men of the east, to lie in the ashes, and make his bed in the dunghill; that can send home Naomi empty, who went out full and

flourishing. Hath he done so by you, debased you when you were high, cast you down from the clouds, and rolled you in the dust, emptied you when you were full, withered you when you were fresh and flourishing? Let not God lose the glory of his almighty power; reverence that glorious hand of God.

“Rest upon the same almighty God,” who can also bring up the same Job from the dunghill, and set him with princes; and satisfy afflicted Naomi with a distinguished offspring, bringing into her bosom one of the ancestors of the Messiah according to the flesh. The same power that caused your sun to go down at mid-day, when you least expected, it can also cause it to rise at midnight, when you least hope for it.—Dwell not upon human probabilities or improbabilities; but lift up thyself, believing soul, and be assured, that God can do what he will, and he will do what is good for them that love him, according to the dictates of unsearchable wisdom and goodness. Thou that art prostrated in the dust, arise, and betake thyself to those almighty arms that brought thee thither, and that are able to advance thee; as I have seen a child thrown off by his father, and thrown down to the ground in a seeming displeasure, yet clinging to the same hand, and will not let it go, till at length he rises up again by it: a fit emblem of a child of God, whom his heavenly Father seems as if he had cast off. The wounding hand of God is apt to amaze indeed, and to beget consternation and astonishment; but remember, the same hand that wounds can also heal; he that breaks us, can also

heal all our breaches; let this beget confidence and dependence. God never wounds so deeply that he cannot easily bind up the wound again; never throws his people so low that they should be out of his reach. Take heed therefore of unseemly despondencies; cast not away your confidence, which shall have a recompense, if ye maintain it; a recompense, I say; for that God who can bring back the setting sun, and exalt it in its beauty and brightness, and doth so every morning; who can clothe the forlorn and naked trees with leaves and fruits; who can recover the verdure of the withering grass, and doth so every year; he can also cause light to arise to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, *Is. ix. 2.*

He who could give unto Amaziah much more than that with which he parted at his command, (*2 Chron. xxv. 9.*;) who could turn again the captivity of Job, and give him double for what he had taken from him, (*chap. ult. 10.*;) he can surely make his people *glad accordingly to the days wherein he hath afflicted them, and the years wherein they have seen evil*, *Ps. xc. 15.*; he can recompense and restore to his penitent people the fruits which the locusts and the caterpillars have consumed; (according to his promise, *Joel ii. 25.*;) he can recompense to his people the comforts of health and liberty, which sickness hath consumed; the comforts of friends and relations, which the grave hath devoured. He who made the springs dry, *Jer. li. 26.* can as easily make *the parched ground to become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water*, *Isa. xxxv. 7.* as you find both elegantly

joined together, *Ps. cvii. 33—35. He turneth water-springs into dry grounds, &c.* Say not therefore with the captive Jews, *Ezek. xxxvii. 11. Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost, &c. for God can cause even those dry bones to live.* Say not with that low-spirited courtier, *2 Kings vii. 19. If the Lord should make windows in heaven, then might such plenty be in Samaria; for he did accomplish it, and yet not rain it from heaven neither: but say rather with Job, chap. xiii. 15. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him; and with the three worthies, Dan. iii. 17. Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us out of thine hand, O king; so he is able to deliver us out of thine hand, O enemy, O prison, O sickness, yea, out of thine hand, O grave.* If we despond and be dejected both in mind and body at the same time, then is our condition indeed sad and shameful; nay, we do more reproach God by such a temper in our affliction, than he reproacheth us in afflicting us. Make it appear, christians, that though God hath cast you down, yet you do believe that he hath not cast you off; and that you, although you be sorely shaken by him, yet are not shaken off from him. Thus you shall glorify the almighty power of God in the day of your visitation.

PART II.*Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.***AMOS iv. 12.**

IN the preceding Discourses it was stated, that the doctrine contained in the text, is, "That it is the duty of God's people to study a right behaviour towards him, and to converse with him aright in the way of his judgments, in the time of their afflictions." To illustrate this position, the subject was divided into five heads:—

I. Premised some things needful to be known concerning the soul's conversing with God:—

1. That it is the great duty of man.
2. It is the highest privilege of man.
3. The natural man is utterly unable and unwilling to converse with God.
4. It is the duty of man in all ages of life, at all times, in all places and conditions, to converse with God.
5. It is more especially his duty, to converse with God aright, in the way of his judgments.

II. Under the second head, it was proposed to shew what it is for the soul to converse with God; and how it comes to converse with him.

1. By ordinances—as the word and sacraments.
2. By duties—as confession, petition, meditation, &c.
3. By Providences—as, his government of the world, dealings with mankind, &c.

III. Under the third head, it was inculcated,

that it is the duty of God's people to study to converse with him aright in the way of his judgments, in time of affliction.

1. Because it is then hard to do it.
2. Because it is a time in which we are most apt to think ourselves excused from the duty.
3. Because it is then especially necessary for our comfort.

IV. Under the fourth head, it was proposed to explain particularly, how we are to converse with God, in afflictions—by shewing with what attributes of God we are to converse; and by what acts of the soul.

- 1st. With the absolute sovereignty of God.
- 2d. With the infinite righteousness of God.
- 3d. With the faithfulness of God.
- 4th. With the holiness and unspotted purity of God.
- 5th. With the almighty power of God.

Having recapitulated the substance of the preceding Discourses, we shall now proceed to the remaining articles under this fourth head:—

6thly. Converse with the infinite and unsearchable wisdom of God; especially with the wisdom of God in reference to his judgments, and our afflictions: For He knows what, and what manner, and what measure of correction we stand in need of: and when and how best to deliver us; and How to make the best use of all for our good.

“He knows what, and what manner, and what measure of correction we stand in need of.” He is that wise physician, who knows what humour is most predominant in the souls of his servants, and what is the most proper medicine to purge

it out; where the most corrupt blood is settled, and from what vein to let it out. He perfectly knows the various tempers and distempers of his servants, and can apply a remedy suitable to them all. And as to the measure and degree, he is also infinitely wise and exact: he weighs out the afflictions of his people to a grain for quantity, and measures them to a day and hour for duration. He did not miss of his time, no not one day in four hundred and thirty years, *Exod. xii. 41.*: so many years of bondage were determined upon the people; and after these years were expired, the very next day the hosts of the Lord went up out of Egypt. And as for measure, he observes a certain proportion, as you may see in that full text, *Is. xxviii. 27, 28.* The husbandman uses different ways of purging and cleansing different sorts of grain, beating the fitches with a staff, and cummin with a rod, because they are a weaker sort of grain, and will not endure hard usage; but bruising the bread-corn, because threshing will not suffice, and he is unwilling to break it all in pieces with turning his cart wheels upon it. An elegant similitude, whereby God intimateth his different ways of correcting his people, and observing a suitableness to their strength and temper, when less would do, and more would overdo: he must correct so far as to bruise, but will be sure not to break and spoil. He that saith to the proud waves of the swelling sea, *Hitherto shall ye come, and no further,* (*Job xxxviii. 11.*) hath the same command over those metaphorical waves, those floods of affliction, which he lets loose upon his people, and they cannot go an inch fur-

ther than he hath appointed: he saith, Hitherto shall this sickness, this mortality, this persecution go, and no further; and even these storms, and this sea obey him. Now, we converse with him in this instance of divine wisdom, not only when we observe it, and acknowledge it, but,

“When it begets in us a friendly and charitable temper towards second causes:” when we are at peace with the whole creation, even with enemies themselves, and in perfect charity with those very plagues and sicknesses that do arrest us, rather admiring and delighting in their subserviency to God, than at all maligning their severe influences upon us. A good man is so much in love with the pure and holy, and perfect will of God, that he desires also to fall in love with, at least he is at peace with every thing that executes it, that serves the will of his heavenly Father: he sees no reason to fall out with, and fret against any man, or any thing that is a means to afflict him, but views them all as instruments in the hand of God, readily serving his will, and doing his pleasure, and under this motion is charitably affected towards them all. Observe a little and admire, how David was reconciled to the rod, because it was in the hand of his Father, and seems to kiss it for the relation that it had to the divine will, *2 Sam. xvi. 11., Let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him.* This gracious soul is so wonderfully in love with the will of God, that he could almost find in his heart to be reconciled to sin itself, if it do accomplish it; and to be friends with the wrath of man, if it work the righteousness of God. And if David can be so charitably affected to-

wards a cursing Shimei, viewing him as an instrument in the hand of God, methinks we may be almost in love with any thing under that notion, and much rather say concerning a poor harmless sickness, Let it alone, let it put us to pain, for God hath sent it. To this sense may a devout soul apply the words of our Saviour concerning the woman in *Matt. xxvi. 10.* *Why trouble ye the woman? she hath wrought a good work upon me:* Why do ye interrupt and disturb this disease? why do you fret against this persecutor? why do you repine at this prison? it executes the will of my God upon me. What though these men pour out their venom in such abundance? what though this disease spend its influences upon my body so plentifully; there is no waste in all this; there is need of just so much; God doth not lavish out his arrows in vain, nor shoot at random, as Jonathan did, who deceived his lad, making him believe he shot at a mark, when he shot at none. A soul overpowered with the sense of God's infinite wisdom in appointing, measuring, timing all afflictions, will easily be reconciled to a poor harmless creature, which is set on and taken off at his pleasure.

We also converse with this instance of divine wisdom, "when it begets in us a holy acquiescence and resting in God," which is opposed to a larger and disorderly hastening towards deliverance. Then do we indeed own and honour the skill of our surgeon, when we do quietly suffer the corrosive plasters to be applied, and do not offer to tear them off, notwithstanding the smart they occasion. And surely he who believes the

infinite wisdom of God, who knows what, and what manner and measure of correction we stand in need of, will not make haste to be delivered from under his hand, but will compose himself quietly, as young Samuel laid himself down, and when he was called, answered cheerfully, *Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.*

A soul sensible of God's infinite wisdom in this particular, argues thus, Who am I, poor worm, shallow creature, that I should contend with infinite wisdom about the time or manner of my being in the world? Why did not I also undertake to appoint him the time and place of my being born? Shall I say it is too much, when infinite wisdom thinks it is not enough? Cease, wrangling soul, and be at rest, for the Lord deals wisely with thee. Such a soul, so conversing with the all-wise God, dares freely refer all to him, venture all with him; if he smite on one cheek, he turns to him the other; if he take away his coat, he offers him his cloak also; if he takes away his liberty, he trusts him with his life too; if he smite him in some of his comforts, he turns to him the rest also: for he knows that infinite wisdom cannot err in judgment, nor miscarry in his dispensations.

“God knoweth when and how best to deliver us.” This necessarily follows upon the former. To him all times, and all things, past, present, and to come, are equally present; in one single act of understanding he doth wonderfully comprehend both causes and events, sickness and cures, afflictions and deliverances. Let the atheistical world cry, These are they that are forsaken,

whom no man careth for, there is no hope for them in their God; as their manner is to blaspheme; still the promise stands unrepealed in both Testaments, *I will never leave you, nor forsake you*; though the case be ever so extreme and desperate, still the apostle's words hold good, *2 Pet. ii. 9. The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations.* If all passages be blocked up, he will rather make a way through the sea than his people shall not escape, *Exod. xiv.* And this way and time of God's delivering is the most excellent, suitable, and certain, as might abundantly appear in many particulars: but that would be a digression. In general, be assured that God's way is the best way of deliverance, and his time is also the best time. He that sits as a refiner of silver, knows how and when to take out the metal, that it be purified, and not hurt. Here I might enter into a large discourse, and shew you how the judgment of man is ordinarily deceived, and his expectations disappointed, which he had built upon human probabilities; when in the mean time the purpose of God takes place in a far better and more seasonable deliverance of his servants. But it may suffice to have hinted it only.

Our duty is to converse with this instance of divine wisdom by the exercises of patience and hope. If God seems to tarry long, yet wait patiently for his appearance; for he will appear in the most acceptable time, and "in the end we shall consider it," and acknowledge it. Take heed of limiting the Holy One of Israel, as that murmuring generation did, *Ps. lxxviii. 41.* Take heed of fixing your deliverance to such or such a

train and series of causes which you have laid in your own heads, and of engaging God to act by your method; if God be a wise agent, it is fit he should be a free agent too. Bear up, christian soul, faint not when thou art rebuked of him; *Cast thy burden upon the Lord*, and he will, in due time, find out a way, either of lessening it, or removing it. *You have heard of the patience of Job, and you have seen the end of the Lord*, James v. 11. be you patient, and you shall see it too; a better end than ever you could have accomplished by your own art and industry. In the mean time, cherish in your hearts a lively hope of a happy issue; for your lives and comforts are all hid in him, in whom also are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. As the consideration of infinite wisdom, in knowing how and when best to deliver us, may settle our hearts and prevent their rising up, as a foam upon the waters, through impatience; so it may bear up our hearts, and prevent their sinking within us, as a stone in the waters, through desperation.

“God knoweth how to make the best use of all for our good.” I say, of all, both of the affliction, the manner and measure of it, of his delay, and of the season in which he chooses to redeem us. He can make Paul’s imprisonment turn to his advantage, *Phil. i. 19*. Job’s captivity to redound to his far greater state, chap. xlii.: Joseph’s banishment to make him great; and Manasseh’s to make him good. This is a large theme, and therefore I dare not enter into it particularly; take all in one word from the apostle, *Rom. viii. 28*. *All things do work together for good to them that*

love God. Whatever the premises be, the only wise God knows how to draw a happy conclusion from them. Get a firm belief of this radicated in your hearts; and converse with the wisdom of God, in this instance of it, by the great grace of resignation. The sovereignty of God may well cause in us a resignation of our interests, and comforts, and concerns to him; but this infinite wisdom of God ought, in reason, to work us into a resignation even of our very wills unto him. Oh! this debasing of self-will, this self-resignation is a noble and ingenuous act of a pious soul, (for so I dare call him in whom it is found,) whereby it honours God greatly in all that comes upon it! A godly soul, considering itself ignorant of many things, burdened with many corruptions, and clogged with an animal body, senses, appetite, fancy, which are always calling for things inconvenient, if not unlawful, doth conclude it would not be good for it to find, or care, or choose for itself; and duly eyeing that infinite mind and understanding, which, in a wonderful, unaccountable manner, orders all things, and all events, to a good and certain issue, is so overcome by, and indeed enamoured with the sense of it, that he renounces his own wisdom, and silences his own clamorous will, and complies readily with the all-wise God. This is truly to converse with the wisdom of God, when we do out of choice refer ourselves to it, and recline upon it. Every bare acknowledgment of divine wisdom is not a proper conversing with it; but when the same is wrought into the soul, and the lively sense of it doth so overpower the heart, that the will is prepared to

close readily with such methods as God shall please to use to accomplish his own ends, then do we properly and feelingly converse with God, under the notion of the all-wise God. But of self-resignation I have spoken under the first head, and much of that which is spoken there may be applied here. Therefore,

7thly. Converse with the unbounded goodness, love, and mercy of God. God is infinitely and unchangeably loving and merciful to his people: *he is good*, saith the psalmist, and *he is love*, saith the apostle, 1 *John* iv. 8. Those dreadful and terrifying apprehensions which men have of the blessed and good God, as if he were some austere and surly majesty, given to passion and revenge, are apt to destroy that cheerful and ingenuous converse with him, which the creature should maintain with its Creator at all times. But then we are most prone to entertain those apprehensions, and to harbour such unbecoming notions of him, when he appears in the way of his judgments, when we take a view of him in the ruins of our comforts, the blood of our friends, the spoil of our goods, and in the distresses of our lives. We are apt to frame notions of God according to what we find in our own disposition, to fancy a God like unto ourselves; and therefore we cannot eye an afflicting God, but we presently conclude he is an angry God; as though the eternal and pure Being were subject to passions and changes as we are. These apprehensions being once imbibed by the soul, it becomes unhinged presently, and almost afraid to behold the face of Love itself; but flies and hides itself,

as Adam in the garden: or if the soul do converse with God at all, it is a city that is besieged, converses with the enemy without, *viz.* sending out to seek peace, and to obtain a cessation of arms. And so a soul may bestow much upon God, surrender up the castle, give him all that he hath almost, not for any love that he bears to him, but as Joash gave Hazael a present of gold and precious things, to hire him to depart from him, *2 Kings* xii. 18. Oh! then they will up and do any thing, yea, circumcise their lives, as Zipporah circumcised her son, *Exod.* iv. 25. to escape the hands of an angry God. Every one will converse with God as an enemy does in time of extremity, will hang out a flag for peace, send presents, pay homage, send ambassadors to entreat his face; but few know how to converse with the goodness and mercy of God, with him as their dear and holy friend in a time of affliction, freely and cheerfully. Now, there seems to be a double account to be given of men's not conversing with the goodness and mercy of God in the time of afflictions.

1. "Many cannot believe the mercy and kindness of God, when he is in the way of his judgments." If it be so, why am I thus? cries the poor soul, struggling under its burden, and travelling in pangs to be delivered of its griefs. Thus unbelievably argues Gideon, who was otherwise famous for faith, in the time of his bitter bondage under the Midianites, *Judg.* vi. 13. When an angel from heaven was sent to assure him of the goodwill of God towards him, he could not entertain the news, nor believe the report, because of the anguish of his soul; but cries out, *Oh, my lord,*

if the Lord be with us, why is all this evil befallen us? No, the Lord hath forsaken us, for he hath delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. The sad soul is ready to cry concerning Christ's gracious presence, as the two sisters concerning his personal presence, *John xi. 21—32. Lord if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died: Lord, if thou hadst been here, if thou hadst loved me, if thou hadst any delight in me, my brother had not died, my husband, and wife, my children had not died; I had not been thus plagued, afflicted, wounded, tormented, as I am. Hence we have those many complaints of the afflicted soul throughout the psalms, Hath the Lord forgotten to be gracious? is his mercy clean gone? hath he shut up his tender mercies in anger?* and many such like. The smart of our senses is apt to pervert the judgment of our minds; and the sense of bodily evils is ready to destroy all sense of the infinite and unchangeable goodness and love of God. Now, this great evil seems to arise from these two causes, *viz.* our measuring of God, and his divine disposals, by ourselves and human passions and affections, as I hinted before; and our measuring the love of God too much by the proportion that he gives us of worldly prosperity. Wo to him in a day of distress, who was wont to judge of divine love by the things that are before him, as Solomon calls the things of this world, *Eccl. ix. 1.* This, I say, is the temper, the infirmity of many in the time of afflictions, though indeed there be no reason for it: for why should we conclude harshly concerning Job in his affliction, any more than we would conclude charitably con-

cerning Ahab on the throne? Besides, the scripture teaches expressly, that the love of God is consistent with correction, *Ps. lxxxix. 33. I will visit his iniquity, but my loving kindness will I not take from him.* Nay, it seems as if it could not well be without it, *Heb. xii. 6. Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*

2. Others do indeed believe the goodness and mercy of God to them in a time of affliction; “but either they cannot, or dare not, or will not converse with it, nor take comfort in it.” They remember God with the psalmist, *Ps. lxxvii. 3. i. e.* the goodness, bounty, mercy of God, saith Molle-
rus, and yet at the same time are troubled; their hearts are unquiet, fluctuating, tumultuous within them: the soul is so impressed with the sense of sin, which it hath contracted from the consideration of its sufferings, that it dares not presume to meddle with mercy; but though this mercy of God be its own, yet it is ready to think that it is a duty to forsake its own mercies, as though it heard God chiding it in the words of Jehu to Joram’s messenger, *2 Kings, ix. 18. What hast thou to do with peace? what hast thou to do with mercy? turn ye behind me.* An afflicted soul hath much difficulty to believe it to be a duty to converse with the goodness and love of God in a time of affliction. It easily agrees to converse with the justice, holiness, and power of God indeed; but thinks it very improper and unseasonable, if not unsafe, to converse with his mercy. It is ready to cry, with Solomon, presently, *In the day of prosperity rejoice, but in the day of adversity con-*

sider ; or with the apostle, *If any be afflicted, let him pray ; if he be merry, let him sing psalms.* Conversing with the goodness of God seems not to be a duty at this season. I confess this is a high and hard duty. Every babe in religion will cry in his affliction, *Thou art just and righteous, O Lord ; but Thou art good and merciful ; blessed be the name of the Lord,* is the voice of a Job only, chap. i. 21. But it is a duty, though a hard one, and affords much pleasure and contentment to them that are exercised therein. That the kindness and benignity of God doth not fail, that his love is not broken off from his people, nor suspended even when he afflicts them most, is most certain : for though he works changes, in and upon us, yet he himself is eternally and unchangeably the same, *Jer. i. 17.* and though some of his dealings towards his people seem to be rough and severe, yet, if we judge rightly of them, they are all mercy and truth towards them that keep his covenant, *Ps. xxv. 10.* And that the people of God ought to converse with this divine love and mercy, even in their greatest afflictions, is as clear. To this purpose I might alledge the forecited example of holy Job, and might enforce this doctrine from the apostle's words, *Philip. iv. 4.* and *James i. 2.* *Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations ;* and from many good reasons too, if it were needful. I know indeed that it is a hard thing to keep up a right frame towards, and converse rightly with the righteousness and goodness of God at the same time : the one frame is ready to exclude the other. Sorrow is apt to contract the heart, and destroy the enlarged and cheerful

temper of it; and joy dilates and enlarges it, and is ready to make it forget its grief. But though it be hard, yet it is possible: these two may well exist together in the same soul, according to *Ps. ii.*

II.—*Rejoice with trembling.*

But how must we converse with the love and mercy of God in the time of afflictions? I have partly anticipated myself in this already, but I shall speak a little more distinctly of it. We do not then converse with the goodness and mercy of God, when we barely think of it, or acknowledge it; but,

1. “When we believe and apply it, and take to ourselves the comforts of it;” when we look through the clouds that are round about and quite cover us, and by the eye of faith behold the Fountain and Father of light; when we can look beyond the frowns that are in his face, and the rod that is in his hand, and see the good-will that dwells in the heart of God towards us: more especially,

2. When we do not only see and believe it, but also “draw virtue and influences down from it into our souls, to establish, settle, and satisfy them.” Not so much when we see it, as when we taste it; when we feel the Son of righteousness warm us, though it does not dazzle us, and though we cannot perceive it to shine upon us, yet we find it to shine in us. We do then converse with the love and mercy of God in an afflicted state, when the same doth bear us up, not only from utter sinking, but even from inordinate sorrowing; when we draw a virtue from it into our souls to sustain them, yea, and to cherish them.

too. Thus Job comforts himself in his living Redeemer, chap. xix. 25. and the psalmist in the mercy of God, even when he was ready to slip, *Ps. xciv. 18. 19.* In the multitude of my thoughts *within me, thy comforts delight my soul.* In a word, we converse with divine goodness, when we are really warmed with it: and with almighty love, when we rejoice in it, and can with holy boldness, and humble confidence, throw ourselves into the very bosom of it: when we receive impressions of it from the Spirit of God, and are thereby moulded into a temper suitable to it, and becoming it; for then indeed do we most happily converse with the love and goodness of God, when we for our part do live upon it; when we, being assured of an interest in a loving and good God, do surrender ourselves also unto him, in the most beautiful and becoming affections of love, joy, confidence, and holy delight. This is an excellent frame; and sure I am it is much for our interest thus to converse with God in the time of our afflictions. It is a high way of glorifying God, and bringing much credit to religion; and indeed he who keeps up this frame, can be afflicted but in part: he escapes the greater half of the evil: for though it be ever so stormy a time without him, a storm upon his house, upon his goods, upon his relations, yea, upon his own body, yet it is a calm day within; in the soul there is peace and tranquillity.

Lastly, and indeed everlastingly too, we are to converse with the infinite self-sufficient fulness of God, in a day of the greatest extremity; that is, as if I should say, not with any one single attribute,

but with the very God head of God, the immense perfection of God, the fulness of the Deity. Oh! how seasonably doth this blessed object present itself to the soul in a time of afflictions, losses, mortalities, persecutions, when we are most emptied of creature-enjoyments, and the emptiness of them doth most appear! for upon these two doth our conversing with God much depend. I need not tell you how apt we are to live without God, when we have our fill of creature-delights: whilst we can entertain our hearts with a created sweetness, we foolishly forget and neglect the supreme Good. And so fond and unreasonable is this affection, that no warnings, no precepts will prove effectual; God is forced to break that off from us, from which we would not be broken. Sure I am, the blessed and bountiful God envies not his servants any of their creature-comforts or delights; but he loves them, as I said before, with a strong and powerful love, and will not suffer them to live so much to their own loss as they do, when they spend noble affections upon transitory things, in the everlasting enjoyment of which they could never be happy. Now, afflictions are a negative, if we speak properly, even as sin is: and whenever we are afflicted in any kind, we are emptied of some created good; as poverty is nothing but the absence of riches; sickness the want of ease, of order, of health in the constitution; restraint is the loss of liberty, &c. So then it appears, that in a time of affliction God is emptying us of creature-enjoyments; for indeed affliction itself is little or nothing else but such an emptying or deprivation: and that then the emp-

tinness of the creature doth most appear, I suppose all will grant. The sick person looks upon his decayed strength, and withering members, and is feelingly convinced of the truth of the scripture, — *All flesh is grass*. Another casts about his eyes with Samson, and sees heaps upon heaps, and cries out like one that feels the weight of his own words, *Childhood and youth are vanity*: or, Alas! how soon is the desire of one's eyes taken away with a stroke! Another sees his goods carried away before his face, and his house on fire before his eyes, and then cries out, that he hath a real proof of the vanity of those things, which Solomon had long ago observed, *Prov. xxiii. 5. Riches make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle towards heaven*. Whilst we see the creatures stand, we will not believe but they are stable; whilst we see them fair and flourishing, we cannot rightly lay to heart the withering nature of them; but when we see them cut down, we then conclude they were but flowers; when we see them flitting, we conclude they are shadows; when God pours them out upon the ground, we are then convinced that they were unstable as water. To shew us what the best of our creature-enjoyments are, God is forced to take them quite away, that they may be no more.

Now, then, in such a case, at such a time, converse with the infinite self-sufficient fulness of God. Oh! now it is seasonable, now it is your duty, nay, now it will be your greatest policy. If that channel, that creature-channel be stopped, in which your affections were wont to run too freely, turn the stream of them into their proper channel

in which they may run freely, and neither ever meet with obstruction, nor ever overflow. Let your soul grow up into acquaintance and union with God by disappointments and failures in the creatures. More particularly, converse with the self-sufficient fulness of God,

1. By the act of creature-denial. Regarding an infinite, absolute, uncreated, fulness in a right manner, takes off the soul from all created objects, earthly things; even as beholding the sun in its glory dazzles the eye to all things below. God becomes so great to the eye of the soul, that it cannot see the poor motes of worldly comforts. Give a soul a feeling taste of the infinite sweetness and fulness of the Fountain, and its thirst after the polluted streams of the world is presently abated, if not perfectly quenched, according to that of our Saviour, *John iv. 14. Whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst, i. e. not after any other thing.* Like unto which is that gospel-promise, *Is. xlix. 10. They shall not thirst,* who do enjoy these springs of water. When this fountain is opened to the eye of the soul, and the soul begins to taste of it, it longs to drink deeper of that indeed; but as for all other waters, waters of the cistern, the soul looks upon them as nothing, or at least as being bitter, comparatively waters of Marah. We do then truly converse with the infinite self-sufficient fulness of God, when we look upon all created good with a noble disdain, and are content to part with it; or if we do still enjoy it, are resolved to enjoy it only in God, and so look upon it, and love it, only as a beam from the Father of lights, as a drop of the

infinite Fountain of all perfections. Tell me, is it not a poor and low thing that many professors do, who acknowledge and magnify the uncreated goodness, the fullness of God, and yet at the same time do covet and court the creature with all eagerness, and their worldliness is apparently too great for their religion? Methinks I hear God speaking to such seeming friends as Delilah to Samson, *Judg. xvi. 15. How canst thou say, I love thee, when thy heart is not with me?* For these men's hearts, methinks our Saviour's doctrine should strike cold, *Mat. vi. 21. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also:* and those words of his beloved apostle, *1 John. ii. 15. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* Let a man pretend and profess what he will, and in words magnify the fulness and sufficiency of God as much as he will, if in the mean time his soul be bound up in the creature, such a man's religion is vain; nay, indeed, his profession of God becomes a real reproaching of him, and a blasphemy against reason itself. Let your low esteem of all created good in comparison of supreme Good, your readiness to quit your title to every creature-comfort, and in the mean time your care to live above it, witness the true and honourable esteem, the true and feeling sense that you have in your hearts of the infinite and self-sufficient fulness of God: for however men may cheat themselves, God is not truly magnified in the soul till all other things become as nothing; neither doth the soul rightly converse with his infinite fulness, so long as any thing stands in opposition to it, or competition with it.

2. Converse with the self-sufficient fulness of God by the grace of faith; I mean by that act of it, whereby we do interest ourselves, and, as it were, wrap up our own souls in this fulness, and make it our own. And herein there is no danger of an humble soul's being too bold or venturous; for the proclamation is full, and the invitation free, *Is. iv. 1. John vii. 37. Rev. xxii. 17. Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* What Seneca says of the soul, in regard to the divine origin of it, may surely be better said of a godly soul, in respect to its divine nature and qualities. *Illum divino delectant, nec ut alienis interest, sed ut suis;* "It doth not converse with things divine, as with another's, but as its own." Indeed we cannot truly and comfortably converse with the infinite perfection and fulness of God, if we have no title to it; and we then converse with our own God, not another's, when the soul is able to say, All the fulness of power, wisdom, goodness, is wholly mine in my Head Christ Jesus, for in him all this fulness dwells, *Col. ii. 9.* and he dwelleth in me; in him are hid all these treasures, *Col. ii. 3.* and "my life also is hid with Christ in God," as theirs was in *Col. iii. 3.* You see then that a soul cannot converse with the infinite fulness and self-sufficiency of God but by Christ; for it is in and by him that we receive of divine fulness, *John, i. 16.*—Hence was that expression of the devout father, *Tolle meum, tolle deum;*—[Take away God, and you take my all,] to which I may add, *Tolle Jesum, et Tollis meum*—[Take away Jesus, and you take my all.] The fulness of a fountain is nothing to me, except it be mine. There is bread

enough in my father's house, says the poor prodigal, but still I perish with hunger; so are there living waters in this uncreated life, this infinite spring of all perfection; yet many souls are choaked with thirst, because the fountain is not theirs. It is a fountain sealed, as Solomon speaks in another case. *The well is deep, and they have nothing to draw with,* as the woman said concerning another well, *John iv.* Therefore be sure you get an interest in the fulness and sufficiency of God, or, as Solomon speaks in another case, *Prov. v. 15. Drink waters out of thine own well.*

3. converse with the self-sufficient fulness of God, by delighting yourselves in it. Drink of this fountain, yea, drink abundantly, ye beloved of God, *Cant. v. 1.* yea, lie down by it, *Ps. xxiii. 2.* yea, bathe yourselves wholly in it: *Enter into the joy of your Lord;* lie down in his bosom, spread yourselves in his love and fulness. The beloved disciple leaning upon the breast of his Lord at supper, was but a dark shadow, a faint resemblance of a beloved soul, which, by the lovely acts of joy, confidence, and delight, lays down in the bosom of Jesus, and doth feed upon him, and his all-sufficiency. Then do we converse indeed feelingly and comfortably with the infinite fulness, when the soul is swallowed up in it, doth rest in it, is filled with it, and centred upon it. Oh the noble and free-born spirit of true religion, that, disdaining the pursuit of low and created things, is carried out with delight to feed, and dwell and live upon uncreated fulness! Then is a soul raised to its just altitude, to the very height of its be-

ing, when it can spend all its powers upon the supreme and self-sufficient good, spreading and stretching itself upon God with full contentment, and wrapping up itself entirely in him. This is the way to live above losses; and he that so lives, though he may often be a loser, yet shall never be at a loss. He who feeds upon created goodness or sweetness, may soon exhaust all; the stock will be spent, and which is worse, the soul will be dried up that hath nothing else to nourish it. But he who lives upon uncreated fulness, is never at a loss, though he lose ever so much of the creature; for who will value the loss of a cup of water, who hath a well of living water at his door, from whence he obtained that and can have more as good, though not the same.—Nay, to speak properly, this is the only way to lose nothing; for how can he be properly said to lose any thing who possesses all things? And I am sure that he who is filled with the fulness of God, doth possess all things. Be sure, therefore, that in the want, in the loss of all things, you live upon the Fountain-fulness; delight yourself in the Lord, after the example of the prophet *Habakkuk*, iii. 17, 18.

I have gone through the doctrinal part of my discourse upon these words, which was the thing I mainly intended. Many inferences might be drawn from it; but I shall content myself to forbid, and so, as it were, to remove out of the way some things that hinder this great duty, and then conclude with one word of exhortation.

1. "Converse not with creature-comforts," the poor, low, and scant enjoyments of this world, for so I may well call them. Though they be ever

so high in the opinion of them who have them, and ever so large as to the proportion that any one hath of them, they are low in comparison of that high and supreme Good for which the soul was made, and scant as to any real happiness or satisfaction that they can possibly give; for indeed those sinful and sensual souls that take up their rest and happiness most in them, are not properly satisfied, but surfeited; not filled, but for the present glutted with them. There are many unlawful and hurtful ways of the soul's conversing with created comforts: But converse not with them, fondly delighting in them, and doating upon them; especially take heed of this when God is shaking his rod over any of them. Doth God arise and begin to plead with you in Judgment, laying his hand upon any of these, and threatening to take them from you? Oh then, quit your hold; touch them not. What an unseemly and indeed monstrous sight it is to see a creature striving against his Creator, and maintaining his supposed right against heaven itself; Is it proper for a heaven-born soul to stand gazing and doating upon, or passionately weeping over created friends, the loss of liberty, corporeal health, houses made with hands, things below God, and even below itself too? Pore not too much upon them; value them only in God, and resign them freely to him. If you can say, you have any thing of your own, make much of it, and spare not; but give unto God the things that are God's; and when you have done so, I think you need not doat upon what is left. We ought indeed at all times to enjoy all our creature-com-

forts with hearts loosed from them; but if formerly our hearts have been too much joined to them, it is now time to loosen them.

2. "Converse not with creature-causes in a time of affliction." This a strange kind of atheistical temper, into which we are very prone to fall. I speak properly when I say, fall; for it is indeed a falling from God in our hearts, in whose infinite essence all creature causes are enclosed, and in whose hand the several successes and events of them all do lie. Let a senseless beast, kick at the thorn that pricks him; but let rational souls fix upon the highest and supreme Agent, who, in an infinite, powerful, and skilful manner, uses what creature he will, for what end he will, and sends it on an errand which itself knows not. Why do we seek after the poor perishing pleasures of the present world? Shall the noble faculties of an immortal soul spend themselves upon such a search? or is it just to pursue them thus? Is it proper to quarrel with the sword, because it suffered itself to be drawn; or beat the air, because it is infected?—This were indeed to go out with the king of Israel, with much warlike preparation, after a worthless insect. *1 Sam. 26.*

20. I deny not but that wise men may look into second causes, and make many profitable observations from them, both for present and future, and all men may and ought to learn many wholesome lessons even from the instrument that afflicts them. But sure I am, a godly man will not dwell upon these; he will not fix here, but readily resolve all into a higher cause, and so converse with that: much less will he blame or murmur at the harm-

less arrow, that flew no further than it was sent, and pierced no deeper than it was bidden. Yea, though the second cause were a sinful cause, a rational agent, and so consequently actuated by malicious and evil principles, yet a godly soul knows how to distinguish between him and his action: he hates him as a sinner, but bears well enough with him as God's instrument; and though he condemns his action as it varies from God's commands, yet he approves of it as being ordered by God's hand and counsel. David hated cursing as much as any man; yet did he eye the hand of God in every thing, and comply with it too; there was a time when he said concerning Shimei, *So let him curse.*

3. "Converse not with creature-cures, creature relief." These may indeed be looked after, and safely made use of when they are found: nay, I will add further, that they are to be sought diligently, and used carefully. Those who know the infinite sovereignty, power, and wisdom of God, will not restrict him to means, much less to those or these particular means: but, on the other hand, they that understand God's usual and ordinary way of acting, governing, and upholding the world, will not restrict him from means; no, nor expect that he should appear for their relief immediately and miraculously: though if any one have a miraculous faith, truly grounded upon some special and particular promise, I will not contend with him; only I would desire to see his miraculous faith justified by some miraculous works, which I conceive do always attend it. But the converse with creature-cures, which I oppose, is the immoderate seeking of them, or

the inordinate using of them. To use means in themselves unlawful, can never become lawful; but I speak not of these. For although some have reached that height of atheism and abjuration of God, as to employ satan himself for a counsellor in a time of straits, as Saul did; and contract with the prince of death for the preservation of life in time of sickness, as Ahaziah did; and I doubt not but very many do become acquainted with that evil spirit, and receive assistance from him before they be well aware, by seeking unscriptural, unwarrantable cures; yet the greatest danger is not in these; *in licitis perimus omnes*; "the greatest danger is of miscarrying about things in themselves lawful," and that is chiefly by those two ways which I just named. Take heed, therefore, of immoderate seeking after created helps; be not anxious, perplexed, tormented in mind by a passionate desire of any of these. Oh what a raging and unquenchable thirst have many men after earthly cures! They will move heaven and earth, and almost hell too, (with her in the poet), but they will find out relief. Give me a physician, or I die, says one; give me trading, good markets, a plentiful crop, or I am undone, says another. What, man! does thy life depend upon the physician, or is it incorporated into a potion? is thy main happiness in the abundance of these things here below? or wilt thou say to the wind, Blow here in this quarter, and nowhere else? or restrict the supreme and free Agent to a form and method of operation that you shall dictate? Let not such a profane disposition be found amongst us. Again, if

you have found out hopeful means of cure, take heed of using them in an inordinate manner, laying stress upon them, looking earnestly on them, as though they, by their own power and proper virtue, could make the lame to walk, or the sick to recover. Eye not, much less depend upon the virtue of any created means, as distinct from God; but acknowledge the power, and virtue, and goodness of God in that creature; and so consequently use it in subordination and subserviency to the supreme Cause, who can at pleasure pervert or suspend the influence and virtue of every such means.

4. "Converse not with creature-losses in a time of affliction." The sinful soul that hath wandered away from God, and centred upon the creature, is always intemperate and restless: if it be disappointed in its converse with human-cures, and sees that, in spite of these, his comforts are cut off, health, liberty, friends, are perished; then he seeks converse with his losses, and spends the powers of his soul in discontents, and many dismal passions. "Oh then! alas! I am undone! *What shall I do, for the hundred talents? I am the only man that hath seen affliction: no sorrow like unto my sorrow: I shall go softly all my days, for the joy of my heart is perished, the delight of mine eyes is cut off.*" Thus Rachel weeps for her children, and will not be comforted; Rizpah attends the dead bodies of her sons, and will not be parted from them, 2 *Sam.* xxi. 10. It is a strange thing that a soul should live upon its losses; and yet how many do so? Their very soul cleaves to the dust, where their earthly

comforts are interred; and their souls are so much bound up in the creature, that they would live and die together with them. If God smites the gourd, and makes it wither, Jonah droops, and would die too, *Jonah* iv. 8, 9. If Joseph be missing, Jacob will not be comforted; no, he will go down into the grave unto his son mourning, *Gen.* xxxvii. 35. Who would have thought of such conduct from such wise men, as a prophet and a patriarch! Oh the strange and unbounded power which this unseemly creature-love hath obtained over the best of men! which makes me call him a happy man, almost more than a man, a compeer of angels, who hath learned to converse with God alone. Well, converse not with creature-losses; let not your soul take up its lodging by the relics of your created comforts, with Rizpah; dwell not upon the lowest round of the ladder, but climb up by it to reach the meaning of God, and to some higher good, and more excellent attainment. They live to their loss who live upon their losses, who dwell upon the dark side of the dispensation; for every dark providence hath one bright side, wherein a godly soul may take comfort, if he be not wanting to himself.

5. "Converse not with flesh and blood." By flesh and blood, I suppose, the apostle means men, *Gal.* i. 16. And indeed, if we confer with men only for counsel, and repair to men only for comfort in a time of affliction, we fail of our object. But by flesh and blood, the scripture elsewhere often means man in his animal state, as he is in his corruptible, mortal body, as *1 Cor.* xv. 50, and many other places. And in this sense I speak,

when I say, converse not with flesh and blood. Judge not according to your senses; let not your own sensual appetite determine what is good or evil, sweet or bitter: consult with rectified reason, and not with brutish appetite; confer with faith, and not with fancy. Rectified reason will judge that to be really good which our sensual appetite disrelishes; an enlightened mind will judge that favourable to the interest of the soul, and its eternal happy state, which sense judges hurtful to the interest of the body and its animal state. It is not possible that there should be any order, nor consequently any peace or rest in that soul, where the inferior faculties domineer over the superior; and sensitive powers bear sway over the intellectual; and where raging appetite and extravagant fancy must ascend the throne to determine causes, and right reason must stoop and bow before it.

Be admonished to shun converse with all these, if you would converse rightly, purely, properly, comfortably with God, which is the highest office and attainment of created nature. Consider what I have said concerning this excellent and high employment, and awaken your souls, and all the powers of them, to meet the Lord God, and converse with him aright in the way of his judgments. Converse with God, with God in Christ, with God in his promises, with God in his attributes; and labour to do it, not speculatively, but really, practically, according as I have directed in the foregoing discourse. Religion is not an empty, airy, notional thing; it is not a matter of opinion, or of mere show, but it hath a real exis-

tence in the soul, and doth as really distinguish, though not specifically, one man from another, as reason distinguishes all men from beasts. Converse with God is described in scripture by living and walking with him, and the like. Let me inculcate this thing therefore again, and press it upon you, and I shall then close. As the way of glorifying God in the world is not by a mere thinking of him, or entertaining some notion of his glory in our minds, but consists in a real participation of his image, in a God-like disposition, and holy conversation, according to that expression of our Saviour, *John xv. 8. Herein is my Father glorified, &c.* so the way of conversing with God in his several attributes is not a thinking often with ourselves, and telling one another that God is just, wise, and merciful, &c. though this be good: but it is an imbibing of the virtue and value of these divine perfections, a working of them into the soul: and is on the other hand, the soul's rendering of itself up to God in those acts of grace which accord with such attributes, as in water, face answereth face. I do not call the bare performance of duties a conversing with God: prayer and meditation, &c. are excellent means, in and by which our soul converses with God; but communion with God is properly something more spiritual, real, powerful, and divine, as I have just described. As for example, the soul receives the impressions of divine sovereignty into it, and gives up itself unto God in the grace of self-denial, and humble subjection: the soul receives the communications of divine fulness and perfection, and entertains the same with delight and complacen-

cy; and, as it were, becomes filled with them; even as the communications of the virtues of the sun are answered with life, and warmth, and growth in the plants of the earth. So a soul's conversing with the attributes of God is not an empty notion about them, or a dry discourse concerning them; but a reception of impressions from them, and a reciprocation of them: the effluxes of these from God are such as do beget reflections in man towards God. This is to know Christ, to grow up unto him in all things, according to that in *1 John iii. 6.* *Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.*

A FAREWELL TO LIFE.

2 COR. v. 6.

Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.

THE holy apostle in the first verse of this chapter, lays down the doctrine of eternal glory, which will follow this transitory state of believers; and then shews in the following verses how he himself longed within himself, and groaned after that happy state; and then proceeds to give a double ground of his confident expectation. The one is in verse 5. where the apostle is confident concerning the putting off of this mortal body, because God had wrought and formed him for this state of glory, and already given him an earnest of it, even his Holy Spirit; the other ground of the confidence and settledness of his mind, as to his desires of a change, is taken from his present state in the body, which was but poor and uncomfortable, in comparison of that glorious state held forth in the words of the text. *Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.* Concerning the apostle's resolution, with

a quiet and sober mind, to suffer any kind of persecution or affliction whatever; but *we are always confident, i. e.* we do confidently expect, or at least we are always well satisfied, contented, well resolved in our minds, concerning our departure out of this life: the apostle was speaking, not of the afflictions, or persecutions in the former verses, but of death, which he calls a dissolving of the earthly house of this tabernacle, verse, 1. and a being clothed upon with our house which is from heaven, *ver.* 2. 4. Yea, and thus the apostle explains himself, *ver.* 8. where he tells, what he means by this his confidence, *we are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body,* where the latter words are explanatory to the former: *q. d.* It is better to be with the Lord than in this mortal body; but we cannot be with the Lord whilst we are in this body, it keeps us from him; therefore we have the confidence to part with it. It is the reason of the apostle's confidence and willingness to part with the body that I am to speak of; and the reason is, because this body keeps him from his Lord.—*Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.* The words are a metaphor, and are to be translated thus, *We dwelling in the body, do dwell away from the Lord;* which our translation renders with propriety, yet taking little notice of the metaphor, *whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord;* though indeed, if they had left out that word *at home,* it would have been as well, and so have neglected the metaphor altogether, as we may show hereafter. The words give a lesson of the apostle's willingness to be dissolved,

and contain a kind of an accusation against the body, and so seem to lay a blame upon it, and upon this animal life, which must be remembered. Now, for the former phrase of being *at home in the body*, it is easily understood, and I think generally agreed upon, to be no more than carrying about with us this corruptible flesh, and living this natural animal life: it only describes man in his compounded animal state, and doth not at all allude to his sinful, unregenerate, or carnal state: but the latter phrase, *absent from the Lord*, is capable of a double sense, both good and true; and, I think both well adapted to the context and drift of the apostle. I shall speak on both, but insist most upon the latter.

“Whilst we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord,” *i. e.* from the bodily presence of the Lord in heaven, absent from Christ Jesus and his glory; and so the words are the same in sense with 1 Cor. xv. 50. *Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; for by flesh and blood there, must needs be meant man in his animal corruptible state. And so the apostle accuses this kind of life in the body, and as it were blames it for standing between him and his glorified Lord, and so, consequently, between him and the glory of his Lord, and this sense doth well agree with what went before, and with what follows. The apostle hath a great mind to depart, for whilst he is in the body, he is absent from his perfect happiness; for this is the consummation of a christian's happiness, to be with the Lord, to be admitted to a beholding of his infinite glory, as appears by our Saviour's earnest prayer for this,*

John xvii. 24. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory. Besides, if we shall see him as he is, we must needs also be made like unto him, 1 *John iii. 2.* else how can we be fit to live forever in his presence? Now are we kept from this seeing and beholding of the Lord in glory by this animal life; it stands between us and the crown, between us and our Master's joy, between us and the perfect enjoyment of God. To be with the Lord is a state of perfect freedom from sin. No unclean thing shall or can enter into heaven, *Rev. xxi. 27.* A perfect freedom from all manner of afflictions, *Rev. xxi. 4. There shall be no more sorrow, nor crying, nor pain, and all tears shall be wiped away from their eyes.* A state of freedom from all temptations to sin; for a tempting devil and all tempting lusts, shall be cast out forever: a state of perfect peace, without the least disturbance from within or without; of perfect joy, that shall never have end or abatement; and of perfect holiness, when the whole soul shall be enlarged, and raised to know, and love, and enjoy the blessed God, as much as created nature is capable. This is the happy state of seeing God, of being with the Lord; and it is our corruptible body, this animal life, that interposes between us and it; so that the apostle is confident, and rather willing to depart and be with the Lord, than stay here and be without him.

2. "Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord," without any reference to the world to come; and so it may be fitly translated, *distant from the Lord, estranged from*

God. This agrees well with the context, and scope of the apostle also. And thus the words are also a good ground of the apostle's resolution and willingness to die: *q. d.* I am willing to be absent from this body; for whilst I am in it, I find myself to be at a great distance from God. And indeed the word signifies properly to be at a distance, or to be estranged: so I find it interpreted by a learned critic, without any mystery, (as he speaks,) of the distance that even believers themselves stand at from God in this life. And in this sense I shall choose to prosecute the words. In which sense the apostle blames this body and animal life, because it keeps us at a distance from God; it is a clog, a snare, a fetter, a pinion to the soul. And so the words do agree in sense with those of our Saviour, *Mat.* xxvi. 41. *The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak:* where by the flesh must needs be understood the body, if we consider the context, *viz.* the occasion upon which the words were spoken, the sleepiness of the apostles; or if we consider the propriety of speech, according to the style of the New Testament. True indeed, the corruption of nature is sometimes called *flesh*; but according to that way of speaking, our Saviour would rather have said, that the spirit was willing, but the flesh was strong; as he saith elsewhere, that the strong man armed kept the house.

I shall attempt to explain this doctrine, "That even the godly themselves, whilst they are in this body, are at a distance from the Lord." It must be granted, that the godly soul is nigh unto God, even whilst it sojourns in this mortal body, and

tottering flesh. All souls are involved in the apostacy of Adam, and are fallen from God, have alike wandered from their God, and are sunk into self and the creature: God opened a way for their return by the blood of Jesus; for we owe it unto Christ's death, not only that God is reconciled to us, pardoning our sins, but that any of our natures become reconciled to God, by accepting him as our God, and loving him as the chief Good. Now, there is a double attraction to God by Christ. The first is more general, external, and, as I may say, rational; thus the partition-wall being broken down, the Gentiles that were converted from their idolatry to a profession of God and Christ, and admitted to a communion with the visible church, are, upon that account, said to be brethren to the rest of God's children, *1 Cor. v. 11.* and are said to be within the church, *verse 12,* though at the same time they were fornicators, covetous, drunkards; and are said to be made nigh unto God, *Eph. ii. 13.* A professing of God is called being nigh to him; and even external performance is said to be drawing nigh to him; and so Nadab and Abihu, even in the offering of strange fire, are said to have drawn nigh to God, *Lev. x. 3.* And though this is a privilege, yet it is not that honourable privilege of the truly godly souls, who are by Christ Jesus raised up to God in their hearts, and reconciled to him in their natures, and united to him in their affections, and are so made nigh unto him in a more especial and spiritual manner. Thus all sinful and wicked souls, notwithstanding all their profession and performances, are far from God, estranged from the life of

God. Enmity and dissimilitude are the most real distance from God, and truly God-like souls only are nigh unto him; they dwell in him, and he dwelleth in them, as in his most proper temple. As to any kind of actual approach, no man can draw nigh to God; nor by any local accession; for so all men are alike nigh to him; for he is every where, and the worst as well as the best of men do live and move in him. But they only are really nigh unto God who do enjoy him; and they only enjoy him, whose natures are conformable to him in a way of love, goodness, and God-like perfections. We do not enjoy God by any palpable and external conjunction with him, but enjoy him and are nigh unto him, by an internal union; "when a divine Spirit informeth and actuateth our souls, and produceth a divine life in them, and through them." And so a godly soul only is really and happily nigh unto God. Thus the apostle Paul, I believe, was as nigh unto God as any man in the world; who did not only live and move in God, as all men do, (though few understand it,) but God did even live, and, as it were, breathe in him; the very life that he lived, was *by faith in the Son of God*, Gal. ii. 20. for though he walked in the flesh, yet he did not walk after the flesh, 2 Cor. x. 3. And yet this gracious soul, even as all other believers, was at a distance from God; and that not so much by reason of his being a creature, for of that he doth not speak, (so the very angels of God are at an infinite distance from God,) but by reason of this mortal body, and animal life, which hindered him from being so nigh to God as his soul was capable

to be: *Whilst we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord; i. e. at a great distance from God.*

1st. We are distant from God, "as to the knowledge which we shall have of him." Philosophical divines speak of a three-fold knowledge, 1. An essential knowledge of God. This is that unspeakable light, whereby the divine Nature comprehends its own essence, wherein God seeth himself. 2. By science. Of this, man is capable in the present life. But this kind of knowledge of God, by way of science, is but a low and dry thing, common to good and bad, to men and devils; and is indeed the perfection of the learned more than of the godly: "and this kind of knowledge of God, the glorified soul will reckon but a fable, or a parable, when it shall be once swallowed up in God, feasting upon Truth itself, and seeing God in the pure rays of his own divinity." 3. Or by intuition. To this man cannot attain in this life, in its perfection, because it arises from a blissful union with God himself, which in this animal state is imperfect. This, in the Platonic phrase, is a contact with God; and, in scripture language, a beholding of God face to face, of which we are not capable in this animal state. So may the answer of God to Moses be understood, when he besought God to shew him his glory, *Exod. xxxiii. 18. i. e. to imprint a distinct idea of his divine essence upon his mind, ver. 20. No man can see me and live; i. e. no man in this corruptible state and animal life is capable of seeing me as I am, to apprehend my divine essence, to see my face.* The vision of God is

not in this life, but in the other; so that a man must die before he can thus know God. This is the exposition of Jewish doctors, and our learned countrymen do approve it also. This blessed knowledge of God we are at a distance from whilst we are in this body; so the apostle declares plainly, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. *Now we see darkly, as through a glass*; but the time will come when we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known. Now, our body principally hinders the operation of our minds, when they do exercise themselves about the nature of God, whilst it presents its fancies and gross imaginations to the soul; so it becomes, as it were, a veil upon the face of the soul, draws a cloud, and casts a mist over its eyes, that it cannot discern distinctly, nor judge properly and spiritually.—And, with allusion to this, that passage of the apostle is proper and significant, *We see as through a glass, "which glass is indeed continually sullied and darkened whilst we look into it, by the breathing of our animal fancies and imaginations upon it."* Not only those fogs of pride and self-love, and other sinful corruptions, that do arise out of the soul itself, hinder our right perceptions of God; (as the earth sends vapours out of itself, which arise and interpose between itself and the sun;) but even the animal fancy throws its phantasms and imaginations as a mist before the eye of the soul, which, through divine grace hath been somewhat enlightened, and cleared from its imbred sinful humours. Though corruption in the mind be as a rheum in its eye, so that it cannot well see, yet that doth not hinder but that the fancy, by pre-

sending its unholy imaginations, doth also cast a mist before it, that it cannot see well, nor judge rightly; and so it is either held in gross ignorance, or relapses into error. But in the regeneration, this sense either shall not be, or shall be pure and spiritual.

2dly. Whilst we are in the body, we are distant from God, "as to that service which we ought to perform to him in the world." And herein it were endless to run through all those outward duties which we owe unto God in the body, and to shew how the body becomes a hinderance either to them, or in them. Though the soul be made willing and forward, by a divine principle implanted in it, yet the body remains a body, a weak and sluggish instrument; and so it will continue to be whilst it is animal; it will go down into the dust a weak body, *1 Cor. xv. 43.* What man ever had a more willing and cheerful heart than Moses, the friend of God? yet his hands were heavy, and ready to hang down, *Exod. xvii. 12.* Shall I adduce as an instance the excellent duty of preaching and hearing, wherein the spirits of the most spiritual preacher are soon exhausted; the tongue of the learned is ready to cleave to the roof of his mouth; the head is seized with dizziness, the heart with panting, the organs of speech with weariness, and the knees with trembling? and the ears of the most devout hearers with heaviness, the eyes with sleepiness, and the whole body in a short time with weakness! Shall I adduce as an instance the noble duty of prayer, wherein the pious soul goes out to God, but can scarce get its body to accom-

pany it; and there the fancy distracts, the senses divert, and indeed all the members are ready to play the truant, if not the traitor too; especially the brain, where the soul sits enthroned, is suddenly environed with a rude multitude of sluggish vapours arising from the stomach, and being no longer able to defend itself against them, falls down dead in the midst of them; in-somuch that the poor soul is ready to wish sometimes with the sorrowful prophet,—*Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place, that I might leave my members, and go from them, for they are all an assembly of treacherous servants*; or wish that it were like its Saviour, who could leave his disciples asleep, and go and pray apart, and come again unto them! Shall I adduce as an instance that high duty of sustaining martyrdom, bearing persecutions for God? Come on, my body, cries the holy soul, come on to the stake; come my head, lay down thyself upon this block; come my body, compose thyself in this dark dungeon; come my feet, fit yourselves into these stocks; come my hands, draw on these fetters, these iron bracelets; come, drink the cup that my Father gives thee. But oh! how it follows to the stake! what shaking, shivering, trembling, and reluctancy, may you see in the whole structure of it! the head hangs down, the eyes run over, the lips quiver, the shoulders pull back, the hands tremble, the knees knock together, and the whole fabric is ready to tumble down for fear of falling. Either to this, (as some interpret) or to that duty of prayer, (as others,) doth that expression of our Saviour refer, *Mark xiv. 38.* *The spirit indeed*

is willing, but the flesh is weak. It seems the spirit of the weakest christian is strong, though the body (as we have seen) of the strongest saint is weak; though indeed it is not properly the weakness that is in the body, of which I am to speak, but the influence that the body hath upon the soul to weaken that; for whilst the soul sympathizes with the body, attends to it, spares it, pities it, itself becomes almost ill-affected to the service of God. I am not so much blaming the body, because it had need, by reason of its slothfulness, to be drawn on to duty; but because, by its influences it draws the soul also from them; for so we find it by woful experience, that if the body do sleep, the soul cannot wake; it cannot hear without the ear, nor see without the eyes; so that the body's weariness at length ends in the soul's unwillingness; and the weakness of the one grows to be the sin of the other.

3dly. Whilst we are in the body we are at a distance from God, "as to communion with him;" we are estranged from fellowship with him: and this is indeed to be absent from the Lord. Oh! how many weary and uncomfortable days do poor saints live, at a great distance from their God, their life, their happiness, whilst they are in their worldly pilgrimage, in their cage of flesh! Oh! how many days do they forget God, and are apt to think that God hath forgotten them too! how do they live sometimes, as it were, without God in the world, their souls being surfeited with worldly pleasures, benumbed with fears, frozen with self-love, choaked with cares, stifled with grief, and seem to have no more feeling of God,

their life, than a body in the dust hath of the soul its life ! Oh ! under what a heavy yoke doth the poor soul draw when it plows and harrows to the flesh, and cannot lift up its head to heaven ? Oh ! how is our intercourse with God obstructed ; our beholding of him obscured ; our entertaining of him prevented ; our enjoyment of him disturbed and violated ; our love to him deadened, and his love to us damped ; ours rendered infirm, and his rendered insensible ; and all by this debasing mortal flesh ! Alas ! what uncertainties and vicissitudes, what changings and tossings, turnings and windings, are our poor pilgrim souls here exercised with ! What breakings and piercings, reconciliations and fallings out, closing and partings, rising and falling, what elevation and depression, what forwards and backwards, doth the poor distressed soul experience in this animal state ! The flourishing soul withers, the lofty soul languishes, the vigorous soul faints, the nimble soul flags, the devout soul swoons, the lively soul sickens, and is ready to give up the ghost ; and she that was recently resting and glorifying in the arms of her Lord, now lies embracing a dunghill, and hath almost forgotten that ever she was happy ; her peace is violated, her rest is disturbed, her converse with heaven interrupted, her incomes from God are few and insensible, her out-goings to him are few and faint, and the rivers of her divine pleasures are almost dried up ; and all this whilst she is in this body ; and indeed a great part of it, by reason of this body in which she is ; the animal body keeps us distant from the Lord, that we cannot converse with him, mind him, enjoy him, live

upon him and unto him. The body being fitted only for this animal state, is ever drawing down the soul, when it would raise up itself in contemplation of, and communion with the blessed God. And so,

1. The necessities of the body hinder the soul's communion with the Lord. Not that the necessities of the body are simply in themselves to be blamed, but the caring for these doth so exercise the soul in this state, that it cannot attend upon God without distraction. Oh! how much doth the necessary caring for meat and drink, food and physic, yea, the ordering of temporal affairs, estrange from communion and converse with God! so that the soul, like poor Martha, is cumbered with many cares, and busied with much serving in this house, and cannot attend so devoutly and entirely as it ought upon the Lord. If the body be racked with pain, the soul cannot be at rest, but must needs look out for relief; if the body be pinched with hunger and thirst, the soul can take no rest till it have found a supply for it; if the one be sick, the other is sad; if the one be hungry or thirsty, the other seems to languish; like Hippocrates' twins, that laughed and cried, lived and died together.

It is a wonderful mystery, and a rare secret, how the soul comes to sympathize with the body, and to have not only a knowledge, but, as it were, a feeling of its necessities; how these come to be conveyed to the soul, and how it comes to be thus affected with them. But we find it to be so; and indeed, to speak truth, it seems necessary for the maintenance of this animal state that it should be so, that the soul should be, as it

were, hungry, weary, sick, and sleepy too together with the body. "For if our soul should not know what it is to be hungry, thirsty, cold, or sick, or weary, but by a bare ratiocination, or a dry syllogistical inference, without any more especial feeling of these necessities, it would soon suffer the body to languish and decay, and commit it wholly to all changes and casualties; neither would our body be any more to us than the body of a plant or of a star, which we do many times view with as much clearness, and contemplate with as much contentment, as we do our own." But in the mean time the soul is diverted from its main employment, and turned aside from its communion with God; not so much by providing somewhat for our bodies to eat, and drink, and put on, which is lawful and needful, as our Saviour implies, *Matt. vi. 32.* as by sinking itself into the body, being passionately and inordinately affected with its wants, and so being sinfully thoughtful, as our Saviour intimates in the same chapter, verse 31.

2. The passions of the body hinder the soul's communion with the Lord. So powerful is the interest and influence that this body hath in and over the soul, that it fills it with desires, pleasures, griefs, joys, fears, angers, and sundry passions. The body calls the soul to attend upon its several passions, which I dare not say are sinful in themselves, as they first affect our souls, any more than it is our sin that we are men; our blessed Saviour seems not to have been free from them, as grief, *Isa. liii. 3.* fear, *Heb. v. 7.* who yet was free from all sin, *1 Pet. ii. 22.* Nay, it seems ne-

cessary, as I said before, considering the nature of this animal life, that the soul should have the corporal passions and impressions feelingly and powerfully conveyed to it, without which it could not express a due benevolence to the body that belongs to it: and indeed, were it not so, we could not properly be said, in the apostle's phrase here, to be at home in the body; the soul would rather dwell *in domo aliena quam sua*, [in another's house rather than its own.] But the soul being called to attend upon these passions, is easily ensnared by them, but it slips insensibly into a sinful inordinancy. As for example, "The animal spirits, nimbly playing in the brain, and swiftly flying from thence through the nerves up and down the whole body, do raise the fancy with mirth and cheerfulness, which we must not presently mistake for the power of grace, nor condemn for the working of corruption: so also when the gall empties its bitter juice into the liver, and that mingles itself with the blood there, it begets fiery spirits, which presently fly up into the brain, and cause impressions of anger." Now, though I dare not say that the soul's first perceiving and entertaining of these passions is sinful, yet it is sadly evident that our souls being once moved by these undisciplined animal spirits, are very apt to sit upon and cherish those passions of grief, fear, mirth, anger, and, as it were, to work them into itself, in an inordinate manner, and contrary to the dictates of reason; and so the will presently makes those sinful, which before were but merely human; or, as one calls them, the mere blossomings and shootings forth of ani-

mal life within us. We see then, in these particulars, that not only the depraved dispositions of the soul do keep us at a distance from God, but even this body also is a great hinderance to that knowledge of God which we shall attain to; that service of God which we might perform; and that sweet communion with him which we shall enjoy. It is a clog to the soul that would run; a mist to the soul that would see clearly; a manacle to the soul that would work; a snare to the soul that would be free; a fetter to chain it to earthly material things; and, as it were, a pinion to the wings of contemplation. More particularly, it is a hinderance to it, as to these three things which I have named: as to the soul's knowledge of God, the body is an occasion of ignorance and error; as to its serving God, an occasion of distraction and weariness, lightness and trifling; and, as to its communion with God, an occasion of earthliness and sensuality.

Now, this distance at which the body keeps the soul from God, might more particularly appear in another way of explication, by observing the especial grievances, that arise to the soul from those three great animal faculties, (if I may so speak,) the senses, the appetites, the fancy.

1. The senses; I mean the external senses of the body, seeing, hearing, &c. These convey passions to the soul, upon which it insists and lingers with a sinful fondness and eagerness. Set open the eye, and it will strive to convey some image to the soul of the earthly objects, that shall expel the ideas of God from it. Set open the ear, and it will fill the soul with such a noise of earthly tumult, that the secret whispers of the

Divine Spirit cannot be heard.—The like I may say of the rest. Oh! how easily do these discompose the fixed soul, distract the devout soul, cast a mist before the contemplative soul, and bear down the raised soul from communion with heaven, to converse with earthly objects! *Ut vidi, ut perii!* [what have I seen! what have I lost!] is the complaint of many a christian, as well as it was of the heathen. The souls of most men are quite subservient to their senses, and are nothing but, as it were, slaves to them all their lives; and so the servants are on horseback, and princes go on foot.—Though the eye will never be satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing; yet these importunate suitors must be gratified; the eye must see what it will see, and the ear must hear what it will hear: nothing must be withheld from them, that these petulant senses do cry after.—These men's souls are indeed incarnate, wholly devoted to the service of their eyes, ears, and mouths. But not only these, but even godly souls are often charmed and ensnared by their senses; even they converse not only in the body, but too much with it also, and it becomes as a Delilah to lull them asleep, and blind them too. Job found his senses so treacherous, that he was fain to make a covenant with them, *Job xxxi. 1.* and well would it be if he could even by that means escape. The words are a metaphor; for indeed the mischief is, that these senses are not capable of any discipline, one cannot bring them into any covenant-terms; so that whilst we have senses, they will be treacherous; whilst we have eyes they will be wandering after forbidden objects.

2. The appetite, the sensitive appetite; which is a faculty of the sensitive soul, whereby this animal man is stirred up to desire and lust after the things which his senses have dictated to him. This bodily lust following upon the heels of the former, becomes a greater snare to the soul: this restless suitor comes to the soul begging for every trifle that the eye hath seen, or the ear heard, or the mouth hath tasted; and by its continual coming, and importunate crying, wearies her into compliance: as the fond child comes crying to the mother for every toy and trifle that it hath seen in the shops, and she, though she cannot in judgment approve of the request, yet either in fond indulgence, or for peace sake, will condescend to purchase it. This is the daughter of the horse-leach, that cries continually, Give, give. Why, what would it have? even any thing that it hath seen, or heard, or touched, or tasted, any thing that it sees a fellow-creature to be possessed of: and so indeed the appetite doth not only ensnare the soul into drunkenness and gluttony, but voluptuousness, lasciviousness, and all manner of sensuality. The evil of the sensual appetite appears in wantonness and lasciviousness, (whether real, verbal, or mental,) in immoderate and inordinate trading, ingrossing, sporting, building, attiring, sleeping, visiting, as well as in eating and drinking. I will determine nothing concerning the first motions of the appetite, whereby it solicits the will to fulfil it; only this, that if it solicit to any thing simply and morally evil, it is sinful in that first act, and that at all times it ought carefully to be watched, lest it seduce to intemperance in things

lawful. But concerning the gratifying of the appetite, (seeing there must be in us a sensitive appetite,) whilst we are in this animal state, the endeavour as far as may be, should be not to gratify the appetite, as a sensitive appetite, but under this notion, because the thing that it desires is for our real good, and tends to the enjoyment of the supreme Good: to eat and drink, not because we are hungry or thirsty, because the appetite desires it, but with reference to the main end, with respect to the highest good, that the body may be enabled, strengthened, and quickened, to wait upon the soul cheerfully, in the actions of a holy life. But to this, man, in his animal state, cannot perfectly attain; which shews that the appetite doth keep us at a distance from God.

3. The fancy; this also keeps man at a distance from God, and hinders us in the knowledge and service of God, and interrupts the soul's communion with God. This is a busy and petulant faculty, or inward sense, and the soul doth readily feel the passions of it, so that it doth frequently hinder its mental operations, and becomes a great snare. An operative fancy, how much soever it is magnified by the wisdom of this world, is a mighty snare to the soul, except it co-operate with right reason, and a sanctified heart. I am persuaded, there is no greater burden in the world to a serious soul, especially in warm and dry constitutions, where it is commonly most pregnant, and most impatient of discipline; and, I confess, I have often wondered that the soul is so speedily affected with the phantasms and imaginations of it; and that it so unwillingly relinquishes them.

This indeed, if it be so far refined, as to present sober and solid imaginations to the mind, and to act in subserviency to sanctified reason, is an excellent handmaid to the soul in many of her functions; but otherwise is a snare, (as we have observed already) if we study the secrets of our own souls, and the mighty mysteries that are within us. And this doth not only ordinarily disturb, distract, and hinder in ordinary duties, but even when the soul is at the highest pitch of communion and contemplation, it essays to pull it down to attend to its vain phantasms, and indeed gives it many a grievous fall. I hesitate not to affirm, that this is the most pernicious enemy of the three that I named, to the soul's happiness, as might appear in many respects; I will only name one. It hath an advantage against us, which neither of the other two hath: it infests us and annoys us sleeping as well as waking. In sleep the senses are locked up, and the appetite is, for the most part, silent from its begging; but the fancy is as busy and tumultuous as ever, forming and gathering imaginations, and those are commonly wild and senseless, if not worse. The mind, through kindness and benevolence to the body, suspends its own actions, whilst the body takes its rest in the night, and then the rude fancy takes its opportunity to wander at liberty, as being without its keeper, and acts to the disturbance of the body: but that is not the worst; for it becomes so tumultuous and impetuous sometimes, that it awakens the mind to attend upon its imaginations; and to this the soul doth condescend, in an inordinate manner, and sets the stamp of sinfulness

upon them, to its own wounding. And now I cannot but observe how sleep also keeps us at a distance from God in this animal state. How is our communion with God interrupted by this! for herein we cease not only from the actions of an animal life, but commonly from the actions of a spiritual life too. What a great breach, what a sad interruption is there made in our converse with God by this means! A poor happiness it is that we have in this world, yet even that is cut off, and during a fourth part of our time, seems, as it were, not to be; for indeed a happiness that is not felt, deserves not the name of happiness. Some learned and active men have been ashamed that they have slept away so much of their time, when all was too little for their studies and exploits. Ah, poor christian! who, as it were, sleeps away so much of his God; being as much estranged from him in the night, as though he had never conversed with him in the day, and in the morning when he awakes, cannot always find his God with him, which is enough to make a poor saint wish, either that he might have no need of sleep, or that with the loving spouse, *Song, v. 2.* though he sleep, his heart might wake perpetually.

A FAREWELL TO LIFE.

2 COR. V. 6.

Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.

IN the preceding Discourse, we have seen in what sense this mortal body keeps believers absent from the Lord, and in what respects it keeps them at a distance from God, even in this life, from the *knowledge of God*, the *service of God*, and *communion with him*. This subject having been pursued, in a distinct consideration of various particulars, I proceed to remark,

1. We may see that it is for good reasons that the blessed apostle is confident and willing to depart; nay, he groans within himself, desiring that *mortality might be swallowed up of life*, as he speaks, *vers. 4*. I hope you see that the reason is good, and the ground of his confidence is sufficient. What! (will the men of the world say,) will you persuade us out of our life? should any thing in the world make a man weary of his life? *præstat miserum esse quam non esse*. [It is better to be miserable, than not be at all.] The apostle was surely beside himself, or he would never have been weary of his own life; or else he was in a passion, and knew not what he said; or else his life was bit-

ter to him by reason of the poor, afflicted, persecuted condition that he lived in, and so he was become desperate, and cared not what became of him. No none of these; the apostle was in his right mind, and sober too. It was not a passion, or a fit of melancholy, but his judgment and choice upon good deliberation; and therefore you find him in the same mind elsewhere, *Phil. i. 23. I desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.* Besides, he gives a reason for what he desires; but we know that passion is unruly and unreasonable. Neither was the apostle beside himself, for he gives a good, solid, and wise reason—*Whilst we are at home in the body, &c.* he will part with his life rather than not be perfectly happy. For, whereas worldlings put such a high price upon life, and think that nothing should persuade men out of their lives; (it is true indeed, if we speak properly, that life is the perfection of the creature; the happiness of every thing is its life; *A living dog is better than a dead lion*, Eccl. ix. 4.) but I may say to these, even as our Saviour said to the woman in *John iv. 18.* concerning her husband, the life that we live here is not our life. The union of the sensitive soul with the body is indeed, truly and properly the life of a beast, and is its greatest happiness, for it is capable of no higher perfection: but the union of the rational soul with God is the noblest perfection of man, and his highest life: so that the life of a believing soul is not destroyed at death, but perfected. Neither was the apostle weary of his life because of the adversities of it. The apostle had more forti-

tude than any Stoic; he durst live, though he rather desired to die. All the conflicts he endured with the world never extorted such a sigh from him, as the conflict that he had with his own corruptions did, *Rom. vii. 24. O wretched man, &c.* All the persecutions in the world never made him groan so much as the burden of his flesh and his great distance from the Lord did. A godly soul can converse with persecuting men, and a tempting devil, can handle briars and thorns, can grapple with any kind of oppressions and adversities in the flesh, without despondency, so long as it finds itself in the bosom of God, and in the arms of omnipotence; but when it begins to consider where it is, how far it is from its God, its life, and the happy state for which God hath prepared it, then it cannot but groan within itself, and be ready, with Peter, to cast itself out of the ship to go to its God, to land itself in eternity. Neither indeed, to speak truly, is it only the sense of sin against God which excites the godly soul to sorrow: for though it must be confessed that this is a heavy burden upon the soul, yet the apostle makes no complaint of this here, but only of his distance from God, that necessary distance from God, at which the body kept him.

2. See here the excellent spirit of true religion. Godly souls do groan after a disembodied state, not only because of their sins in the body, but even because of the necessary distance at which the body keeps them from God. We may suppose a godly soul sometimes to have no manner of affliction in the world to grieve him, no sin unpardoned, unrepented of to trouble him;

yet for all this he is not at perfect rest; he is burdened, and groans within himself, because he is at such a distance from that absolute Good, whom he longs to know more familiarly, and enjoy more fully than he doth yet, or than is allowed to mortal men: and though nothing else trouble him, yet the consideration of this distance makes him cry out, *Oh! When shall I come and appear before God!*—be wholly swallowed up in him, see him as he is, and converse with him face to face. Bare innocency, or freedom from sin, cannot satisfy that noble and large spirit that is in a truly God-like soul; but that spirit of true goodness, being nothing else but an efflux from God himself, carries the soul out after a more intimate union with that Being from whence it came: God dwelling in the soul, doth, by a secret mighty power, draw the soul more and more to himself. In a word, a godly soul that is really touched with the sense of divine sweetness and fulness, and impressed with divine goodness and holiness, as the wax is with the stamp of the seal, could not be contented to dwell for ever in this kind of animal body, nor take up an eternal rest in this imperfect, mixed state, though it could converse with the world without a sinful sully of itself, but must endeavour still to obtain a closer conjunction with God; and, leaving the pursuit of all other objects, must pant and breathe not only after God alone, but after more and more of him; and not only when it is under the sense of sin, but most of all when it is under the most powerful influences of divine grace and love, cry out with Paul, *Oh, who will deliver me out of this body!*

3. Suffer me from hence to expostulate a little, to expostulate with christian souls about their becoming temper. Doth this animal life and mortal body keep us at such a distance from our God, our happiness? Why are we then so fond of this earthly and mixed state? Why do we so pamper this body? Why so anxiously studious to support it, so dreadfully afraid of the ruin of it? If we take the apostle's words in the first sense that I named, then I may ask with him in the first verse, *Know we not, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens?* Or, as in ver. 8. Why are we not willing rather to be *absent from the body*, and to be *present with the Lord*? If we take them in the latter sense, as this animal body is an hindrance to the souls knowledge of, and communion with God, then I ask concerning this, as the apostle doth concerning rich men, *James ii. 6.* Why do ye pamper, prize, honour, doat upon this body? Doth not this body oppress you, distract you, burden you, clog you, hinder you? Doth not this body interpose between the Sun of righteousness, between the Father of lights, and your souls, that should shine with a light and glory borrowed from him; even as the dark body of the earth interposes between the sun and moon to eclipse its light? Why are we not rather weary that we are in the body? Surely there are some objections, some impediments to the soul's longing after its happy state, which I shall presently mention; but I suspect also, that there is something that chains the soul to this an-

imal life, some cords in this earthly tabernacle that bind the soul to it; but I cannot well imagine what they are. Say not, there is something of God to be enjoyed in this life, which makes it pleasant; for although this be true, yet I am sure God gives not himself to a soul to clog it, or satiate it. Did Moses send for some clusters of the land of Canaan into the wilderness, think ye, that the people might see and taste the fruits, and sit still, and be satisfied, and say, Oh, it is enough, we see that there are pleasant things in that land, but we will never go to it? Or did he not rather do it, that they might make the more haste to possess it? Will any man say, Away, I will have no more land, no more money, for I have some already? Can a godly soul say, God hath given me foretaste of happiness, I desire no more? No, no; but the report that a christian hears of a rest remaining, a happy life remaining for it, and the chariots of divine graces that he sees God hath sent to his soul to convey it thither, make him cry out, not with Jacob, *Gen. xiv. 28. It is enough, Joseph my son is yet alive, &c.* but, Oh! this is not enough: this report is not enough: it is not enough that I taste some of the good things of the land; it is not enough that I see these carriages sent for me; it is not enough that my soul hath an happy and honourable life prepared for it; I see it indeed before I die, but I will also die that I may see it better, and enjoy it more. But I suspect there is some earthly tie, even upon the heavenly soul, that chains it to this animal body; but sure I am, that whatsoever it is, it is but a weak one. Is there

any worldly accomodation, any created joy that should in reason step between a soul and its God? Is this life sweet, because there are creature-comforts to be enjoyed? and will it not be a better life, when creature-comforts shall not be needed? And are the pleasures of this body, the comforts of this life, the flattering smiles, the fawning embraces of the creature, such a mighty contentment to a soul, to a soul acquainted with the highest Good? Hast thou, O my soul, any such full and satisfying entertainment in thy pilgrimage, as to make thee unwilling to go home? Wilt thou hide thyself with Saul among the stuff, among the lumber of the world, when thou art sought for to be crowned? Are the empty sounds of popular applause, the breaking bubbles of secular greatness, the shallow streams of sensual pleasures, the smiling dalliance, and lispng eloquence of wives and children, the flying shadows of creature-refreshments, the momentary flourishes of worldly beauty and excellence, are these meet for a soul? Are these the proper object, or the main happiness of such a divine thing, as an immortal soul? Why are we not rather weary of this body, that makes us so weary of heavenly employment? Why do we not rather long to part with that life that parts us from our life? and instead of the young apostle, *It is good to be here*, cry out with the sweet singer, *Oh that one would give me the wings of a dove, that I might fly away and be at rest.*

I will now attempt to dissuade from two evils concerning your body; *viz.* fear and fondness.

1. Take heed of fearing for the body. I speak

not so much of those first impressions which our fancies and animal spirits do make upon our minds, (though it were to be wished that the mind did not so much as once perceive or entertain these;) but of those acts of the will, whereby it doth receive, allow, and cherish these impressions, until the cockatrice egg be hatched into a viper. I speak not against care and circumspection; nor against that kind of suspicion whereby wise and prudent persons are jealous of circumstances and events, and so do watch to prevent, remove, or manage bodily evils, which is called *fear*; though even in these there may be an extreme, a *fear where no fear is*; Ps. liii. 5. which is there ascribed to the wicked, and elsewhere threatened as a judgment, *Lev. xxvi. 36. The sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them*; Deut. xxviii. 65. *The Lord shall give thee a trembling heart, &c. Prov. xxii. 3. A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself*; but there are also many fools who hide themselves though they see no evil. But I need not speak of these; there is a vast difference between care and fear. By fear, I mean that trembling, fluctuating, tormenting passion, that doth not suffer the heart to be at rest; but doth, as it were, unhinge it, and loosen the joints of the soul, whether it breaks into expression or not; it clouds the understanding, unsettles the will, disorders the affections, confounds the memory, and is like an earthquake in the soul, taking it off from its own basis, destroying the consistency of it, and hurling all the faculties into confusion; this, whether it break out into any unbecoming acts or not, which commonly it doth, is itself an unlovely temper for a

wise man, much more for a godly. I might speak as a philosopher, and shew how unbecoming a man, and how destructive to him this passion is; so much, that whilst it doth predominate, it almost robs him of that which is his greatest glory, even reason itself. But, to say no worse of it, it is very opposite, if not contrary, to that noble grace of faith, whereby the steady soul rests and lodges in the arms of God, as in its centre. But, to speak to the thing in hand, what an unlovely passion is this? We would have the world to believe that we have laid up our happiness in God, and that we are troubled because we are so far from him; and yet we are afraid lest that should be taken out of the way that keeps us at a distance from him: we flatter ourselves that we are in haste for heaven, and yet we are greatly afraid lest our obstacles should be taken out of the way. How can these things be reconciled? Are we persuaded, that if this earthly house of our tabernacle were taken down, we have a building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens? If not, why do we call ourselves christians? But, I think, I may take it for granted, we are all persuaded of this; and if so, why are we afraid that it should be taken down? I am unwilling to speak what I think; yet certainly the entire and ardent love which we either do bear, or ought to bear, to the blessed God, and our union and communion with him, should cast out this fear. This is consonant to scripture, 1 *John* iv. 18. I will not attempt to decide how far sinful fear for the body may carry a godly soul; the further the worse, I am sure; but if any one will be so indulgent to his own pas-

sions, and so much an enemy to his own peace, as to encourage himself to fear, (which is a strange thing,) from the example of Abraham denying his wife, or Peter denying his Lord, let him compare the issue, and then see whether he dare go and do likewise: but if that will not hinder you ponder upon these two considerations.

(1.) I pray you seriously consider the matter with yourselves, how far fear of sickness and death may consist with that ardent thirst after union and perfect communion with the blessed God; with which we ought to be possessed.

(2.) Consider seriously how far it can consist with the sincerity of a christian. God hath not left us in the dark as to this matter. I will point you to a text or two, which, methinks, should strike cold all slavish, trembling professors, *Prov. xxviii. 1. Job xv. 20, 21. The wicked travaileth with pain all his days, a dreadful sound in his ears.* They are the words of Eliphaz indeed, but they do agree with the words of God himself, *Is. xxxiii. 14. The sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites.* When I read over these texts, I cannot but pray, and cry, O my soul, come not thou into the number of the wicked, and be not united unto the assembly of hypocrites!

2. Take heed of fondness of the body; of priding, and pampering it.

(1.) Take heed you pride not yourselves in any excellencies of the body. Doth this mortal body keep us at a distance from our God? do we well then to love that which keeps us from that which is most lovely? Why do we stand fondly

gazing upon that which keeps us from the blessed sight of God? If you ask me, Did ever any man hate his own flesh? I will ask you again, Did ever any wise man love his flesh above him that made it? Did ever any godly soul love his body in opposition to his God? Oh, but it is a comely body! And what is a beautiful body but a fair prison? A silver cord, or a clog of gold, do as really hinder the flight of a bird, and take away her liberty, as a stone bound to her wings. Nay, those very excellencies which you so much admire, are so much the greater hinderances. If we had learned the excellent lesson of enjoying all things only in God, then the several beauties and attractions of the body would be a help to our devotion; they would carry us up to an admiration and contemplation of that glorious and most excellent Being, from whom they were communicated: so we might, in some sense, look into a glass, and behold the beauty of God. But, alas! these commonly prove the greater snares; many would have been more beautiful within, had they been less beautiful without; more chaste, if less comely; many had been more peaceable, and more at peace too, if they had been less able to quarrel and fight.

It was said of Galba, who was an ingenious man, but deformed, that his soul had an ill habitation; sure I am, it might better have been so said of beautiful Absalom, or Jezebel, whose bodies became a snare to their souls. On the other hand, they that want beauty in their bodies, will perhaps labour to produce an excellency in their minds far beyond it; as the philosopher advised to

look often into a glass, *ut si deformis sis, corrigas formositatem morum, &c.* (that is, if you are deformed in body, you may obviate it, by decency of manners, &c.)

(2.) Take heed of pampering the body, of treating it too gently or delicately. Deny it nothing that may fit it for the service of God and your own souls; and allow it no more than that. Thy pampering is, 1. Unseemly: What! make a darling of that which keeps us from our Lord; conduct gently, and delicately, and tenderly towards that which whilst we carry about with us we cannot be happy! 2. Injurious: If you bring up this servant delicately from a child, you shall have him become your son at length, yea, your master. If you do, by your bodies, as the fond king did by his son Adonijah, *1 Kings i. 6.* never displease it, never reprove it, never deny it, it will do with you in time as he did, raise seditions in your soul. Go on, and please, and pamper your bodies, and it will come to this at length, that you must deny them nothing; you must give whatsoever an insatiable appetite will crave, go whither your senses will carry you, and speak whatsoever wanton fancy will suggest. Doth not the body itself set us at a sufficient distance from God, but we must estrange ourselves more from him, by pleasing it, and spend the time that should be for God, in decking, trimming, and adorning it! When you indulge this, you feed a bird that will pick out your eyes; you nourish a traitor when you gratify this Adonijah. In a word, is it not enough that we do all carry fire in our bosoms, but we must also blow it up

into a flame? *Nay, my brethren, do not so foolishly.*

And now, I would exhort you,

1st. "To watch against the body." You have heard how the senses, appetite, and fancy, become a snare to the soul's living unto, and conversing with God. Now then; if you seriously design to commune with heaven; if you place your happiness in the knowledge and enjoyment of that supreme and eternal Good, it becomes you to watch against all things that may distract or divert you from it, or make you fall short of the glory of God. Men that live upon earthly designs, whose sole ambition it is to be great in the world, do not only use the most effectual means, and take the most direct courses to accomplish those designs, and attain those ends, but do continually suspect, and diligently watch against all the moths that would corrupt, the rust that would consume, the thieves that would plunder their treasures; and, in a word, against all possible hinderances, frauds, and disappointments: so should we suspect and watch against all enemies and traitors to our souls, if we live here upon eternal designs, if it is our ambition to be great in God alone. And the more imminent the danger is, the more should we watch. Have you not found by experience, which of these three have been most prejudicial to your communion with God? If not, you have not been so studious to know the state, or to pursue the happiness of your own souls as you might; if so, then watch against that most of all, which you have found to be most injurious. For it ordinarily comes to pass, either by the difference of constitutions, or

difference of temptations, or different ways of living, or some other thing, that God's children are more ensnared by one of those than another. Well, be sure to watch and pray, and strive more especially against the more dangerous enemies of your souls.

2dly. "To live above the body;" above bodily enjoyments, ornaments, and excellencies. Though these bodily enjoyments be ever so sweet, these bodily ornaments ever so glorious, yet is not your happiness in these. Certainly they live to their loss, who pride themselves upon the excellencies of their own souls, whether natural or acquired; they deprive themselves of the infinite glory, fulness, and sufficiency that is in the blessed God, who take up their happiness in these: much more do they pinch and impoverish their own souls who live upon bodily ornaments or excellencies, in which many inferior creatures do excel them; the rose in beauty, the sun in brightness, the lion in strength, the stag in swiftness, &c. If a woman were as lovely as the morning, *fair as the moon, clear as the sun*; if a man were full of personal grace and majesty, *terrible as an army with banners*; yet their happiness would not be found in these accomplishments. Nay, which is worse, these ornaments stand between us and our happiness. When you begin therefore at any time fondly to admire any of these bodily excellencies, then think with yourselves, Oh, but all these do not make my soul happy! Nay, this beautiful outside must decay, and be deformed; these fair and flourishing members must wither in the dust; this active, strong and graceful body, must be buried

in disgrace and weakness, before I can attain to an entire and perfect happiness. This consideration will induce us to live above the body.

3dly. "Be content to be disembodied for a time." Is it true, that we can no otherwise be happy, no otherwise be present with God, know him familiarly, enjoy him perfectly and entirely? Cannot we get to him, except we go through the dust? Be it so then; be content to be disembodied for a time. *Occidat, modo imperet,* [Let him slay, only let him rule,] could the heathen say concerning her son; much rather may a christian say concerning his Father, Let him slay me, if my soul may but reign with him; which is by his reigning in it; Let him kill, if he will but replenish me; let him draw me through the dust of the earth, if he will but draw me out of this dust of the world, if he will but draw me nigh unto himself, and bring me into a full and inseparable conjunction with my Lord! Methinks I need not use many arguments to persuade a soul that is feelingly overpowered, mastered, ravished with the infinite beauty, goodness, glory, and fulness of his God, to be willing to quit a dusty tabernacle for a time, wherein it is almost swallowed up, to depart, and to be entirely swallowed up, in him. Nay, suppose a christian in the lowest form, who hath but chosen God for his highest good and only happiness, as every sincere christian hath, surely, he should have learned this lesson, to comply with that infinitely perfect will, that governs both him and the whole world. A godly soul will subdue his self-will, and a sincere saint will certainly possess the habit of self-resignation. Therefore I will

add no more concerning this, but proceed to say, *Athly*, "Long after a disembodied state." Desire to depart, and to be with the Lord; groan within yourselves to have mortality swallowed up of life, in which temper you find the holy apostle. To be content to die, is a good temper! a temper scarcely to be found, I think, in any wicked man; not from a right principle, I am sure; but, methinks, it is no very great thing, in comparison of what we should labour to attain to. Pursue the thought, what a strange, uncouth phrase it is to say, Such a man is content to be happy! Men are not said to be content to be rich, but covetous; not willing to be honoured, but ambitious; and why should ye only be content to be with God? I am persuaded there is no shew nor semblance of satisfactory bliss and happiness for a soul, a noble immortal nature, but only in the supreme, essential, perfect, absolute Good, the blessed and eternal God: and should not this noble active being be urged on with vehement longings after its proper and full happiness, as well as this earthly sluggish body, which it carried, with restless desire after health, safety, and liberty? Why should a soul only be content to be happy, when all other things in the world do so ardently court, and vehemently pursue their respective ends and several perfections? Certainly, if the blessed and glorious God should display himself in all his beauty, and open all his infinite treasures of goodness, and sweetness, and fulness, within the view of a soul, it could not but be ravished with the object, earnestly press into his presence, and, with a holy impatience, throw itself into his

arms; there would be no need of setting bounds to the mount, to keep it from breaking through unto the Lord. What is said of the queen of the South, when she had heard the wisdom, and seen the glory of Solomon, 2 *Chron.* ix. 4. would be more true of a christian; there would be no more spirit left in him. Some have therefore observed the wisdom of God, in engaging the soul in so near an union with the body, that it might care for it, and not quit it: yea, the heathen observed the wisdom of God, in concealing the happy state of a separated soul, that so men might be content to live out their time, *Victurosque Dii celant, ut vivere durent, felix esse mori*, [The gods conceal from the living that it would be a happiness to die, that they may be willing still to live.] But, alas! we see but as through a glass, darkly, and our affections towards God are proportionable to our apprehensions of him; these are dark, and therefore those are dull. And oh! would to God they were but indeed proportionable! for then we should love him only, if not earnestly; and desire him entirely, if not sufficiently. Consider what I have hinted concerning the happiness of the soul in the enjoyment of God, and what I have more fully demonstrated concerning the body's hindering it, and keeping it at a distance, and then argue, is happiness the main end of every being? Must not this soul, then, being of a noble and immortal nature, look out for some high and noble happiness suitable to its excellent self? can that be any where found but in the enjoyment of the highest and uncreated Good? and can this never be attained whilst we are in this

animal state? Oh! why then do we not look out after so much enjoyment of this blessed God as we are now capable of, and long after a departure hence, that we may enjoy him freely and fully, and be eternally happy in him? Oh! be not only content, but even eager.

But what! shall the soul break the cage, that she may take her flight? God forbid! how can he pretend to be a lover of God, who is not formed into his will, subject to his devotion, content to abide in the station that he hath allotted him? But if we may not break it to escape, yet, methinks, it may be safe enough, with submission, to wish it were broken; if we may not with Saul, dissolve ourselves, yet, with Paul, we may desire to be dissolved. The perfection that most christians attain, is but to desire to live, and be contented to die. Oh! consider what I have said in this matter, and invert the order of those words in your hearts, Be contented to live; desire to die.

But what! would you have us pray for death? Answer: I speak not of praying formally either for one or other. What the apostle says of the greatest of sins, 1 *John* v. 16. I am ready to say of this state of freedom from all sin, *I do not say that ye should pray for it.* You will tell me, that David and Hezekiah prayed for life; and I can tell you that Elijah prayed for death, 1 *Kings* xix. 4. he was indeed a man, subject to passions, *James* v. 17. but I believe was enslaved to none of them. But I will not intangle myself in any controversy: Methinks the sad consideration laid before your eyes, Whilst we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord, should wring out

an *O wretched man that I am, &c.* or an, *I desire to be dissolved*; or if not words, yet at least a groan after immortality, with our apostle here,—*We groan within ourselves that mortality may be swallowed up of life.*

But can a soul possibly long for the destruction of the body? Philosophy indeed tells us that it cannot. Be it so; yet I am sure divinity teaches, that a soul may long after the redemption of the body, the redemption of it from this kind of animal, corruptible, ensnaring condition in which it now is, *Rom. viii. 23.*—*We groan within ourselves, waiting for the redemption of our body.* If we cannot wish to be unclothed, yet we may long to be clothed upon, (*vers. 4.* of this chapter,) at least, methinks, the heathen should not outdo us, who could say, *Mori nolo, sed me mortuum esse nihil curo*, [I am unwilling to die, but I do not regard being dead.]

But, will all cry, Oh! if we were sure of an interest in Christ, of pardon of sin, of truth, of grace, of eternal life, then we could freely leave all.

Ans. 1. That is you would live to be more holy before you die; you are not yet holy enough, no, nor ever will be till you die. If you long after holiness, long to be with God, for that is a state of perfect holiness. To desire to live, upon pretence of being more holy, is a mere fallacy, a contradiction. But, it may be, this is not the meaning of the objection: therefore,

2. Though we do not possess what we wish, yet that is not an excuse for not doing what we should do. It is our duty to rejoice in the Lord, *Phil. iv. 4.* but our not having the assurance of

God's favour doth not exempt us from the duty ; though if we have assurance, we might indeed rejoice the more. But, to destroy this plea at once,

3. Our earnest longings after a full and perfect enjoyment of God, and our breathings after an immortal state, do not depend upon our assurance, but, indeed, assurance rather depends upon that. I suspect we are commonly mistaken in the nature of assurance ; and, it may be, we are in a wrong manner curious about the signs of Christ's appearing in our souls, for certainly a well-grounded assurance of the love of God doth most discover and unfold itself in the growth of true godliness in the soul. Now, the love of God, and an earnest desire to be like unto him, and to be with him, is the better half of all religion, *Matt. xxii. 37, 38.* so that it rather seems, that assurance springs up from this frame of soul, than that this arises out of assurance. If assurance be the thing that you desire, get your souls joined to God in an union of affections, will, and ends, and then labour and long to be closer to him, more like him, perfectly holy and happy in him, and be assured that Christ is in you of a truth ; for these mighty works which he hath wrought, these divine breathings, these holy pantings after him, do bear witness of him.

4. Whether ever you obtain that certain knowledge, that powerful sense of your state, which you call assurance, yet know that it is your duty to long after immortality. We are wont to call assurance the privilege of some few ; but the Scripture makes this temper, of which I am speak-

ing, the duty of all believers; which I do the rather name, because I find that few professors are of this temper, and indeed but few that are willing to believe that they ought to be. Our Saviour calls all believers to as much, in effect, as I do. *Luke xxi. 28. Look up, and lift up your heads, for the day of your redemption draweth nigh:* whereby is not meant a bare posture and speculation, but joy, and longing are required by that phrase, say the Dutch annotators. See also *Rev. xxii. 17.* Consider further, (what, methinks, should strike terror to the hearts of cold-hearted professors,) that this very temper is made one of the greatest characteristics of true and sincere saints: I do not know of any one oftener named! See *Rom. viii. 23. We groan within ourselves, waiting for the redemption of our body.*—*2 Tim. iv. 8. The Lord shall give the crown to them that love his appearing.*—*Tit. ii. 13. We should live godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*—*2 Pet. iii. 11, 12. What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God?*—*Jude verse. 21. Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.* Do all these plain and pathetic scriptures stand for cyphers in your estimation? Doubtless they should not. But not to insist upon the proof of it as a duty, it matters not whether there be an express command for it or not: this, of which I am speaking, is not so much the duty of godly persons, as the very na-

ture, *genius* and *spirit* indeed of godliness itself. A godly soul, that is truly touched with divine Goodness, influenced by it, and impressed with it, as the needle is with the loadstone, must needs strive powerfully, within itself, to be in conjunction with it: a holy soul, that, after all its wearisome defeats, and shameful disappointments in search of worldly good, finds itself perfectly matched with this infinite, full, and perfect object, must certainly and necessarily be carried, without any other motive, with fervent longings after union to it, and communion with it. The spouse might say concerning Christ, as he concerning her, *Song. vi. 12. Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib:* and every godly soul may, in some degree, say with that spouse, *Cant. v. 4. 5. My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him: I rose up, &c.* Tell me, friends, how can divine grace, that well of living water in the soul, fail of springing up into eternal life? *John iv. 14.* I doubt not to affirm, that what is of God in the soul must needs carry the soul after God; as it belongs to heaven, so it will be pressing towards heaven. That which is of a divine origin, must needs have a divine tendency; that which is of divine extraction, will have in it a divine attraction, and pursue a divine perfection, *Col. iii. 1.* That divine life and spirit that runs through godly souls, doth awaken and exalt, in some measure, all their powers into an active and cheerful sympathy with that absolute Good that renders them completely blessed. Holiness, and purity of heart will be attracting God more and more

to itself; and the more pure our souls are, and the more separate from earthly things, the more earnestly will they endeavour to attain the nearest possible union with God: and so, by consequence, they must, in some sense, desire the removal of that animal life, and dark body that stands in their way; for they know that that which now letteth, will let, (such is the unchangeable nature of it,) till it be laid in the dust, till it be taken out of the way. The thirsty king cried for water of the well of Bethlehem, and his champions broke through the host of the Philistines and brought it, 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 15. and will ye not allow the thirsty soul, if not to break through to bring it, yet at least to break out into an *Oh that one would give me to drink* of the living water of the fountain of grace, and peace, and love? Will ye allow hunger to break down stone walls: and will ye neither allow the hungry soul to break down these mud walls, nor to wish within itself that they were broken down? In a word, then, give me leave earnestly to press you to seek the perfect fruition of, and eternal converse with God; and, to change the apostle's word, *Heb.* xii. 1. Seeing we are compassed about with so great a divine light, and glory, and brightness, let us be willing and desirous to lay aside this weight of flesh, and this body, that so easily resists us, with sins and snares, and run with eagerness to the object that is set before us. Amen, Amen.

THE ANGELICAL LIFE.

MATT. xxii. 30.

—*Are as the Angels of God in Heaven.*

THE doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the great things of the Christian Religion were accounted strange things by all the world, when they were first published and preached; and were by none less entertained, or rather, more opposed, than by the wisest of men living in that age, viz. Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees; (who were the *disputers of this world*, as the apostle's phrase is, 1 Cor. i. 20.) a thing worthy of observation, not only to us in our day, but even to our blessed Lord himself in the days of his flesh; who attributes the cause of it to Heaven, and adores the infinite wisdom of God in it, *Matt. xi. 25.* Amongst other formal disputations that the Sadducees held with our Saviour, that in this chapter, is very remarkable; where they dispute against the resurrection of the dead, by an argument *ab absurdo*, [By an argument that reduces an assertion to absurdity.] ver. 25. grounded upon an instance of a woman that had been married to seven husbands successively. Now, say they, if there be a resurrection, whose wife shall she be then? Our Saviour answers by destroying the

ground of their argument, and shewing that they disputed upon a false supposition; for, saith he, *In the resurrection there shall be no marrying; but men shall be as the angels of God.* In which words the following doctrine is plainly laid down;

“That the glorified saints shall be as the angels of God in heaven. The other evangelists assert the same truth, see *Mark* xii. 25. *Luke* xx. 36. In the explication of which point I will shew, I. Negatively, wherein the saints shall not be like the angels. II. Affirmatively, wherein they shall be like unto them, or, as St. Luke expresses it, equal to them.

I. Negatively. 1. “The glorified saints shall not be like the angels in essence.” The angelical essence, and the rational soul are, and shall be different. Souls shall remain, shall keep their own essence: the essence shall not be changed; souls shall not be changed into angelical essences.

2. “They shall not be wholly spirits without bodies,” as the angels. The spirits of just men now made perfect, are more like to the angels in this sense than they shall be after the resurrection; for now they are spirits without bodies, but the saints shall have bodies, (not such as now, so corruptible, so frail, not in any thing defective, not needing ordinary supplies; but incorruptible, glorious bodies, in some sense, spiritual bodies; which are described by three characters, *1 Cor.* xv. 42, 43. incorruptible, (somewhat more than immortal,) glorious, powerful.—Neither doth their having bodies in the least abate their perfection or glory, nor render them inferior to the angels; for even the glorious Redeemer of the world who

is superior to the angels, hath a body; and he shall change the vile bodies of the saints, and make them like unto his glorious body, *Phil. iii.*

3. "Neither have we any ground to believe that the saints shall be altogether equal to the angels in dignity and glory:" but rather, as man was at first made a little lower than the angels, so he shall never come to be exalted altogether so high as they; for it seems, that the natural capacity of an angel is greater than that of a man, and so shall continue to be, for they are a distinct kind of creatures.—As a beast cannot become so wise and intelligent as a man, for then he would cease to be a beast; so neither can a man become so large and capable as an angel, for then he would cease to be a man.

II. Affirmatively. The glorified saints shall be like the angels of God in heaven, 1st, In their qualities; that is,

1. "In being pure and holy." Whether they shall be equal to them in positive holiness or not, I know not; whether they shall understand, and know, and love God, in all degrees, as much as the angels; it seems rather that they shall not, because, as I said before, their capacity shall not be so large. But if in this they be not altogether equal to the angels, yet it implies no imperfection; for they shall be positively holy, as far as their nature is capable, and so shall be perfect in their kind, *Heb. xii. 23. The spirits of just men made perfect*: they shall in this be like unto the angels, if not equal to them, yea, like unto God himself in it; *Be ye holy, as I am holy, 1 Pet. i. 16. Matt. v. 48.* But as to negative holiness,

the saints shall be even equal to the angels of God in heaven, *i. e.* they shall have no more sin, no more corruption than they have; they shall be as perfectly freed from all iniquities, imperfections, and infirmities, as the angels. What can be cleaner, than that which hath no uncleanness at all in it? But, so clean shall all the saints be, *Rev. xxi. 27. No unclean thing shall enter into heaven.* They shall be without any kind of spot or blemish, *Eph. v. 27.* which is a perfect negative holiness; more cannot be said of the angels in this respect. As branches of this :

2. "As the holy angels do reverence the divine Majesty, *Is. vi. 2, 3. They cover their faces with their wings, crying, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; so shall the glorified saints also reverence him.*" You may see what sweet harmony they make, consenting together to give the glory of all to God, *Rev. vii. 9—11, 12.* The saints stood and cried, *Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb;* the angels stood round about, saying, *Amen, Amen.*

3. "In their readiness to do the will of God, and execute his commands;" therefore the angels are described as having wings, *Is. vi. 2. With twain they did fly.* How God shall please to employ angels or saints in the world to come, is not for us to inquire; but they shall be alike ready to do his will, and serve his pleasure, whatever it shall be. Even whilst the saints are imperfect on earth, they can cry, *Here am I, send me, Is. vi. 8.* how much more ready shall they be then, when all their fetters are knocked off!

4. They shall be as the angels, "in their cheerful and unwearied execution of the will of God." So the angels are, and so shall the saints be. The spirit shall be then more willing, and the flesh shall be no more weak, as it is now; for when it is raised again, it shall be in power, 1 Cor. xv. 43. More things of this nature might be added, but I pass lightly over them; because, although they be true, yet they are not principally aimed at in this text: therefore I come to the second thing, wherein the glorified saints shall be like unto the angels; and this is,

In their way of living. They shall be like the angels, *i. e.* saith one truly, living like the angels. How is that? our Saviour tells us, neither marrying, nor being given in marriage; it is added presently in *Luke xx. 36. For neither can they die any more.* If there be no dying, there will be no need of propagation; if no need of propagation, then why should they marry? The angels are single, and know no other conjunction but with God in a spiritual manner; neither shall the saints. But what great benefit is it to be like the angels in this respect? What perfection is it? Many saints, yea, and sinners too upon earth, are in that respect like the angels; even the devils are thus. Therefore, you must know that our Saviour under this phrase of not marrying, &c. doth comprehend by a synecdoche, (*i. e.* by taking a part for the whole; as is customary in the Scripture,) all manner of creature-converse, all kind of living upon, and delighting in the creature, *I have not given upon usury, saith the prophet, yet the people curse me, Jer. xv. 10. i. e.* I have had no dealing in the

world, no negotiation. By one kind he understands the whole, *Ezek. xxv. 41.* where, by eating their fruits, and drinking their milk, is understood the possessing of all that was theirs; and in many other places the Spirit of God uses this figurative way of speaking.

The angels of God neither marry, nor are given in marriage, *i. e.* they live not upon any created comfort, but live entirely upon God, converse with him, are everlastingly beholding his glory, and delighting themselves in him.—Thus shall the glorified saints live for ever; their bodies shall not need nor use created supplies, food, physic, raiment, &c. of which things, in this animal state they stand in need, *Matt. vi. 32.* But that is not all, for their souls shall not any longer desire, nor be importunate for any created thing; but as the angels, shall be possessed of God, filled with the fulness of God; all their powers and faculties shall be perfectly refined and spiritualized, abstracted from all created things, eternally rejoicing and delighting themselves in the contemplation and participation of the supreme and infinite Good: for during this earthly and imperfect state, not only the bodies of good men feed upon, and are sustained by the creatures, in common with other men; but even their souls do taste too much of worldly contentments, and drink too deeply of earthly pleasures and creature-comforts: even the most refined souls upon earth, though they do not properly feed upon any thing below God, yet do oft dip the end of their rod in this honey that lies upon the earth, (with Jonathan,) do cast an unchaste eye upon their

earthly enjoyments, and delight in them in a way too gross and unspiritual, having abstracted them from God, and loving them with a distinct love. But in the resurrection it shall not be so; for the holy souls shall be perfectly conformed to the holy God, shall feed upon him singly, live upon him entirely, be absolved in him wholly, and be satisfied with him solely and everlastingly, and so shall they be equal to the angels. The creature does not fill any truly sanctified soul upon earth, yet it hath some place there; but then it shall be perfectly cast out, and the soul shall be filled with all the fulness of God. The creature now hath much place in some godly souls, and something in all of them; but then it shall be nothing at all to them, or in them, but God shall be all in all; all things in all of them; as the way of the saints living, and their glorified state is described, 1 Cor. xv. 28. *That God may be all in all. They shall inherit all things;* but how is that? see the explication of it in the following words, *He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God,* Rev. xxi. 7. God will be their God; God shall be unto them instead of all things. In that state there shall be no need of sun or moon, Rev. xxi. 23. by which excellent and useful objects the whole creation seems to be intended; for they that shall live above the sun and moon, shall certainly live above all things that are below these: but how? Why, it follows, *The glory of God shall enlighten them, and the Lamb shall be their light:* so Rev. xxii. 5. *And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun: for the Lord giveth them light. All*

happiness is derived to them from God, and therefore there shall be no night, no want of any creature-comfort to them; neither shall they desire any thing more of created objects, whether small or great, whether candle or sun. For explication of this their blessed life, let me allude to that expression of our Saviour, *Luke xii. 24. The fowls of heaven neither sow nor reap, yet God feedeth them;* so the saints in heaven neither want nor desire any created good, for they feed upon God the supreme and infinite Good: and again, *ver. 27. The lilies neither toil nor spin, and yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.* These blessed souls have no respect at all to things terrestrial and created, yet these terrestrial things are so filled and adorned with the glory of the infinite Majesty, that Solomon in all his glory was unattractive, and had no glory in comparison with them. In a word, the state of the glorified saints and angels is depicted by our Saviour in the same manner, by one and the same description, and that is, the seeing of God; the life of angels is called a continual beholding of the face of God, *Matt. xviii. 10.* and the state of the saints' glory and happiness is also a seeing of God, *Matt. v. 8. Heb. xii. 14. Rev. xxii. 4. They shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads.* Now, this phrase, the seeing of God, app eth both to the saints and angels; it doth place their happiness in God alone, excluding the creature; and it doth import the fulness and clearness, and certainty of their bliss.

Thus I have shewed, in what sense, though I am not able to shew in what degree, the glorified

saints shall be like the angels of God in heaven: their way of living, viz. upon the blessed God alone, shall be the same with that of the holy angels.

APPLICATION.

From the discovery of the future state and blessedness of the saints, I am filled with indignation, that many conduct as they do.

I would therefore bring a reproof against the unworthy conceptions that many christians have of heaven. Christians do I call them! nay, herein they are rather like Mahometans, who place heaven in the full and lasting enjoyment of all creature-comforts, nay, indeed of sinful and abominable pleasures, as one may read in their Alcoran. It may be, that few christians are altogether so sensual; but, sure I am, the far greater part of christians, so called, are very gross and carnal, at least, very low in their conceptions of the state of future happiness. Heaven is a word as little understood as holiness; and that, I am sure, is the greatest mystery in the world. It would be tedious to recount the particular various apprehensions of men in this matter, and indeed impossible to know them. The common sort of people understand by heaven either nothing but a glorious name; or at best but a freedom from bodily torment: as nothing of hell affects them but that dreadful word *fire*, so noth-

ing of heaven but the comfortable word *rest* or *safety*. Others, it may be, think there is something positive in heaven, and they dream of an honourable, easy, pleasant life, free from such kind of toils, labours, pains, persecutions, reproaches, penuries, which men are subject to in this life; this is a true notion, but much below the nature of that happy state. Others are yet more highly affected with the words *glory* and *glorious*, and seem to be much ravished with them, but are like men in a maze or astonishment, who admire something that they understand not, and are altogether confounded in their own apprehensions of it! as if a man should be mightily pleased with such a fine name as Arabia the Happy, and by a blind fervour of mind should desire to go and visit it. Others rise yet higher in their apprehensions of heaven, and look upon it as a holy state; but that holiness is negative, *viz.* a perfect freedom from sin, and all temptations to it; and indeed this is a precious consideration, and one wherein many a weary soul finds much rest: but yet this amounts not to the life of angels; it is a lower consideration of heaven than what our Saviour here presents us with. The state of the glorified saints shall not only be a state of freedom from temporal pains, or eternal pains, or a freedom from spiritual pains and imperfections, but a state of perfect, positive holiness, pure light, ardent love, spiritual liberty, holy delights; when all created good shall perfectly vanish, all created love shall be swallowed up; the soul shall become of a most God-like disposition, shining forth in the glory that he shall put upon it, glorying in

nothing but the blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in his divine image and perfections, and absorbed entirely in his infinite fulness to all eternity: which hath made me oft-times disrelish and indeed disdain the poor, low descriptions of the kingdom of heaven, which I have found in books and sermons, as being too tasteless and gross. For they describe heaven principally as a place, and give it such circumstances of beauty, firmness, security, light, and splendor, pleasant society, good neighbourhood, as they think will most commend an earthly habitation. True indeed, the Holy Ghost in scripture is pleased to condescend so far to our weak capacities, as to describe that glorious state to us by such things as we do best understand, and are apt to be most pleased with, and which do most gratify our senses in this world; as a kingdom, paradise, a glorious city, a crown, an inheritance, &c. but yet it is not the will of God that his enlightened people should rest in such low notions of eternal life; for in other places God speaks of the state of glory according to the nature and excellency of it, and not according to the weakness of our understanding, and describes it at another rate, calling it the life of angels, as here; the beholding of God, *Matt. v. 8.* a coming unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, *Eph. iv. 13.* God's being all things in us, *1 Cor. xv. 21.* it is called a knowing of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, *John xvii. 3.* In a word, which is as high as can be spoken, higher indeed than can be perfectly understood, it is called a being like unto God, *1. John iii. 21.* *We*

shall be like unto him. But this use is not so much for reproof, as it is for information.

2. Here is matter of reproof, yea, and of just indignation, against the gross, low, sensual, earthly life of professors, who yet hope to be the children of the resurrection, and to be as the angels of God in heaven. What! hope to be like them then, and yet altogether unlike them now! I speak not in a passion, but out of a just indignation that I have conceived against myself, and against the generality even of saints themselves. I am not going to speak of covetousness commonly so called; there is a sin much like to it, which is not indeed a single sin, but an evil and unseemly temper, which is, earthly mindedness, or minding of earthly things; or, because I would not be misunderstood; a living upon the creature, or a loving of the creature with a distinct love. Oh! the insensible secrecy, and insuperable power of this creature-love! I cannot sufficiently exclaim against it. Why do we spend noble affections upon such low and empty nothings? Are we called with such a high calling, think you, that our conversation should be so low? Is the fulness of the fountain your's, and do ye yet delight to sit down and bathe yourselves in the shallow streams? Is your life hid with Christ in God? Why then do you converse as if your life were bound up in the creature? Have you laid up your treasure in the blessed God? Why are your hearts then so far from it? Is your happiness in heaven? why then is not your conversation there too? Do ye count it your bliss to see God? What then mean those fond and wanton

glances that ye cast upon created comforts, and that unchaste love which you bestow on things below? I mean not only the *bleatings of the sheep and the lowings of the oxen*; I speak not of the grosser sort of earthly-mindedness, sensuality, or covetousness, but of that more refined and hidden creature-love, a loving of friends, relations, health, liberty, life, and that not in God; but with a love distinct from that love wherewith we love God. To love all these in God, and for his sake, and as flowing from him, and partaking of him, and with the same love wherewith we love God himself, is allowed us; but to love them with a particular love, as things distinct from God, to delight in them merely as creatures and to follow them as if some good, or happiness, or pleasure, were to be found in them, distinct from what is in God, is a branch of spiritual adultery, I had almost said idolatry. To taste a sweetness in the creature, and to see a beauty and goodness in it, is our duty; but then it must be the sweetness of God, in it, and the goodness of God, which we ought alone to taste and see in it. As we say, *Uxor splendet radiis mariti*, "the wife shines with the rays of her husband;" so more truly every creature shines, but by a borrowed light, and commends unto us the goodness, and sweetness, and fulness of the blessed Creator. You have heard that the glorified souls shall live upon God alone, entirely, wholly, eternally; and should not the less glorious souls, I mean gracious souls, do so too, in some degree? Yea, even we who are upon earth, and do yet use created things, should behold all the scattered beams of goodness, sweet-

ness, perfection, that are in these creatures, all united and gathered up in God, and so feeding upon them only in God, and upon God in all of them. It is the character of wicked and ungodly men, that they set up and drive a trade for themselves; live in a way distinct from God, as though they had no dependance upon him; they love the world with a predominant love; they enjoy creature-comforts in a gross, unspiritual manner; they dwell upon the dark side of their mercies; they treasure up riches, not only in their chests, but in their hearts: they feed upon the creatures, not only with their bodies, but their very souls do feed upon them; and thus, in a word, they *live without God in the world*.—All this is not wonderful; for that which is of the earth must needs be earthly, *John iii. 31.* but is it not a monstrous thing that a heavenly soul should feed upon earthly trash? I speak without any hyperbole; the famous king of Babylon, forsaking the society of men, and herding with the beasts of the earth, and eating grass with the oxen, was not so absurd a thing, nor half so monstrous or unseemly, as the children of the most high God forsaking the true bread of souls, and feeding upon the low fare of carnal men, even created sweetness, worldly goods; nay, a glorious star falling from its own sphere, and choking itself in the dust, would not be such an eminent piece of baseness; for what is said of the true God in one sense, *John iii. 31.* is true of the truly godly in this sense, *what cometh from heaven is above all, i. e.* above all things that are below God himself.

3. Shall this life of angels be also the life of saints? This may then serve as a powerful con-

sideration to mortify in us the love of this animal life, to make us weary of this low kind of living, and quicken us to long after so blessed a change. Well might the apostle say, that to die was gain, *Phil. i. 21.* for is it not gain, to exchange an animal for an angelical life? a life which is, in some sense, common to the very beasts with us, for that which in some sense may be called the life of God? For, as the blessed and holy God lives upon his own infinite and self-sufficient fulness, without being beholden to any thing without himself, so shall the saints live upon him, and upon the self-same infinite fulness, and shall not need any creature-contributions. The apostle indeed saith, that *the last enemy to be destroyed is death, 1 Cor. xv. 26.* which is true of enemies without us; and it is true with respect to Christ, who shall make a general resurrection from the dead; for that is the proper meaning of it; but it is true also, that the last enemy to be overcome within us, is the love of life; therefore it is said, that a man will part with any thing to keep his life, *Job ii. 4.* and we do generally excuse the matter, and cry, Oh! life is sweet, life is precious. It must be confessed, and it may be granted; I believe that there is an inclination of the soul to the body, arising from that dear and inconceivable union that God himself hath made, which is purely natural, some say altogether necessary for the maintaining of man in this complex state, and not in itself sinful: possibly there may not be found a man upon earth so holy and mortified, in whom this is not found; certainly it is the last hinderance to be removed out of the way of our perfect happiness. Although this is

in itself natural, yea necessary, and without blame, yet in the inordinateness of it, ordinarily, if not constantly it becomes sinful. I esteem him the most perfect man in the world, who loves not his own life with an inordinate sinful love; who loves it only in God, and not with a love distinct from God. There are two ways whereby this natural and lawful love of life becomes sinful, *viz.* immoderateness and inordinateness: immoderateness is when men love their lives at that rate, that they are filled with unreasonable and distracting fears, cares, and thoughts about them; when the whole business of life is almost nothing else but a studiousness to preserve the being of life. Inordinateness is, when men, though they do not love their lives at that excessive rate, yet do love life as a creature-good, not in God, nor in order to him, but love it for itself, as something out of God. Every carnal man in the world is guilty of the latter, and I suspect but few saints are altogether free from the guilt of it. Now that this immoderate love of life ought to be subdued in christians, all men will grant: if any will not grant it, we can easily prove it from the command of God, *Matt. vi. 25. Take no thought for your life.* 1. *John ii. 15. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.* Which phrases in the most favourable interpretation that can be given of them, do in the judgment of all, forbid immoderation, nay, a mere philosopher would enforce this from moral considerations. But as this inordinate love of life is a more secret abiding evil, a more refined corruption, so it is harder to be discovered, and men are loth to be convinced of the evil of it. Now,

this particular distinct loving of life, not as in God, but in itself, as a created good, is clearly condemned in that first and great commandment, *Matt. xxii. 37. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. q. d.* God the supreme, infinite, perfect, original, essential, self-sufficient Good, is to be loved in the highest, and purest, and strongest manner, that the heart of man is capable of loving; and all other things only in him, and under him, and as being of him, and for his sake. Let it be allowed that life is good; yet it must be added, that it is but a created good; let it be allowed that life is comfortable: yet it must be acknowledged that man's chief comfort and happiness doth not consist in this animal life. So then, life itself is to be loved in God, who is the fountain and spring of life, it is to be loved in the quality of a created good, and not otherwise.

Now, created good is to be loved only in the Creator, as coming from him, as partaking of him, as leading to him. In other words: The soul of man is allowed to love its body, to which the great God hath united it; and to love union with this body, which union we call *life*; but this body being a creature, and a creature much inferior to the soul, and much more ignoble than that, cannot in reason be judged to be the fit and adequate object of its strongest and best affections: such an object should be something more excellent than itself; and that cannot be any thing in this world; (or this world hath nothing so noble, so excellent in it as the soul of man;) it must indeed be the Creator himself. Well, seeing

God is the supreme, self-sufficient, perfect Good, he is to be loved with all the strength and powers of the soul, singly and entirely: and the will of God being God himself, is not only to be submitted to, or rested in, but to be chosen and loved above all created things, yea, even above life itself, the best of creatures. So then, if it be the will of God to call for our lives, we ought readily to give them up; because we ought to love the will of God more than our lives. I pray you entertain that notion, viz. that the will of God being pure, holy, and perfect, should not only be submitted to, or rested in, but even loved and chosen above all things. Now, the will of God is not that only whereby he teaches men, and prescribes laws to them, but that whereby he rules and governs the world, and disposes of men in any condition of life, or takes away their lives from them. The, eternal Fountain of goodness can send forth nothing but what is perfectly good; and that which is perfectly good ought to be loved with an universal, pure, and, as far as possible, perfect love. This you will say, perhaps, is a high and hard saying; but let it not seem impossible for a man to love his own life only in God, and in subordination to him; for this God requires, and he requires not things impossible, Luke xiv. 26. *If any man come after me, and hate not his own life, he cannot be my disciple; i. e. not simply hate it, but in comparison of me and my will.* It is not then impossible, nay, you see it is a necessary duty, without which we cannot be Christ's disciples. The saints of old found it possible. Holy Paul gives this answer readily;

Acts xxi. 13. *I am ready to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus; and Acts xx. 24. I count not my life dear unto me, so that I might finish my course with joy.* It is witnessed of the whole army of the saints, in *Rev. xii. 11.* that *They loved not their lives unto the death, i. e.* they did not value them in respect of God and his truth.—Neither let any one flatter himself, and say, Yea, if I were called to die for God, I would rather do it than deny him; for the will of God is as much to be noticed in his sending for us by a natural death, as by martyrdom; and not giving up our lives to him at any time, is as truly to deny him and his will, as not to give them up at the stake when we are called to it. Besides, how shall we imagine that he, that is unwilling to die in his bed should be willing to die at a stake? Now, this duty of being mortified to the love of this animal life, being so difficult, yet so necessary, and so noble, how doth it become every saint to study to attain to this perfection? To do which, let us press upon ourselves this consideration, this doctrine, that the glorified saints shall live as angels of God in heaven. We know that if this body were broken down, this low life cut off, we should live like angels, not being beholden any more to poor creatures for help or comfort, but should be filled with the fulness of God, filled with his image and glory, and live upon him entirely for evermore. Yea, I may add, that this very living above our own lives, and merely at the will of God, is a participation of the angelical life even in this world; therefore labour to be mortified to that love of this life which is here upon

earth, yea, to be weary of it, yea, almost ashamed of it.

4. Shall we thus live the lives of the angels, subsisting in God, feasting upon him, filled with him to all eternity? This may moderate our sorrow for the loss of any created good, houses, lands, husband, wife, children, &c.: yet a little while and we shall not miss them, shall not need them, shall not desire them any more. The blessed angels live a glorious life, and they have none of these things, but are perfectly satisfied in the enjoyment of God alone: they have no wives nor children, yet they want none; and, yet a little while, and we shall have none, neither shall we want them, having all things in the God of all things: they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are in conjunction with the Father, with love, and goodness, and truth itself; and so they have no want of any thing. If you have no candles left in the house, yet it is towards day-break, and the sun will rise upon you, and you shall need none, and yet have light enough too. In a word, learn to live above them whilst you have them, and you will be the better able to live without them when they are removed.

5. I come now to the fifth and last use that I shall make of this doctrine; and, O that you and I may make this happy use of it! Shall the saints be as the angels of God in their way of living upon God, and enjoying all happiness in him alone for ever? Shall this certainly be our life in heaven? O, then, labour to begin this life upon earth. If you cannot perfectly transcribe, yet, at least, imitate that angelical kind of life. Though you are

here imprisoned in a body of earth, and oft cumbered and clogged with bodily infirmities, called to attend upon bodily necessities; yet, as far as this animal state will permit, live upon God. Do not excuse nor vindicate that low kind of earthly life, do not justify your living below and aside from God, but stir up yourselves to behold where your happiness lies, and live not willingly below it. Certainly a godly soul hath more than bare hope in this world: God the blessed, infinite, and communicative Good, hath not locked himself so far out of sight, but that he gives his people a comforting vision of him even whilst they are in their pilgrimage; and what Solomon saith of the life of the godly, he means of their present life, *Prov. xv. 24.* *The way of life is above to the wise:* their living not only shall be, but is now above; it is a high way of living. They are certainly a puny sort of mechanical christians, that think and talk only of a heaven to come, and dream of an happiness without them, and distinct from them. The truly godly and God-like soul cannot so content himself, but being spirited and principled from above, is attracted towards the infinite and almighty Good, as a thing is attracted towards its centre; and hastens into his embraces, as the iron hastens to the loadstone, and seeks to be in conjunction with it. If therefore ye be from heaven, live above all, above all earthly things. *If ye be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, Col. iii. 1.* If ye be born of God, living upon God, and not on the dainties of a stranger, deny self, live above self, *i. e.* live not to your lusts, live not to the service of your senses, to the

lust of the flesh, to the lust of the eye, to the pride of life; let not your souls be servants to your sins, nor to your senses; that would be for servants to ride on horseback, and princes to walk on foot, *Eccl. x. 7.* Live above self, *i. e.* let your souls quit all their own interest in themselves, and entirely resign themselves to God, as to all points of duty and service. But that is not all; neither is it that which I press upon you from the word of the text; but live above the creature, and whatsoever is in it, *viz.* delighting in God, conversing and communing with him alone as the chief Good; desire not any creature any further than as it may help you forward to the Creator; neither delight in it any further than as it either represents some of the divine perfections, witnesses something of divine love, or leads to some divine participation or communion. Seeing we shall hereafter live upon God, and delight in him alone, without any created good, let us now live upon, feed upon, love God alone in every created good.

Now to give you a more distinct knowledge of this high and noble life, I will, in the next discourse, explain it in some particulars, negatively and affirmatively.

THE ANGELICAL LIFE.

MATT. xxii. 30.

—*Are as the Angels of God in Heaven.*

HAVING explained, in the preceding discourse, in what *sense*, though not in what *degree*, the glorified saints shall be *like the angels of God in Heaven*, viz. that they shall live upon the blessed God alone; and having applied the subject in a distinct enumeration of particulars, I had exhorted to a *resolute commencement of this happy life on earth*. Agreeably, then, to the engagement, with which the preceding discourse concluded, I will now explain this high and noble life, in some special views of it.

1. Negatively: 1st. "Live not upon self." I speak not of living unto self, but live not upon self, self-excellencies, self-sufficiencies, any created accomplishments; such was the life of the Stoics, those great philosophers, who placed happiness in the enjoyment of themselves. To enjoy one's self, indeed, is a high duty, a noble privilege, a duty of the gospel, *Luke xxi. 19. Possess ye your souls*. But how must we enjoy ourselves? Why, only in God. It is not he that enjoys himself, who, in sullen melancholy, retires to a solitary and monastical life, as many of the rigid

sort of papists do : Nor he who, in a proud mood, disdains the perfections of God shining forth in other men ; and hiding himself from them through envy, contents himself to sit and admire his own personal accomplishments, as many humourists do. Nor he, who, finding nothing without him, nor knowing any thing above him to give his soul its full rest, settles upon a foundation of his own, and admires a self-sufficiency in the temper of his own spirit, a little subdued by philosophical precepts, as the Stoics did, and our Quakers do. But it is he who enjoys himself in God, who doth not view himself in the narrow point of his own being ; but, taking a view of himself in the unbounded essence of God, loves, and enjoys, and values himself, and all his personal excellencies as he is in God, and as he partakes of his perfections. To live in a way of self-converse is below the end of man's creation, who was made for a higher good ; and hereby a man shall never obtain true happiness, for it is peculiar to God alone to be happy in himself. " In a word, a soul that confines itself to itself, and lives, and moves, and rejoices only within the narrow cell of its own particular being, deprives itself of that almighty and original Goodness, and Glory that fills the world, and shines through the whole creation."

2dly. " Live not upon any creature without yourselves." Self indeed is a creature ; but yet, for clearness in proceeding, we shall distinguish them. Now, this is the life of the greatest sort of men, they live apart from God, and move only within the sphere of the creature. You will easily understand that I speak not of the body's liv-

ing upon the creature, for so God hath appointed that it shall live; and yet as to this too, I say with our Saviour, *Man liveth not by bread alone, &c.* but I speak of the soul of man living upon the creature as its highest good, and feeding upon it as its best fare; they rise up early, and sit up late, and God is not in all their thoughts: they are filled with domestic and foreign comforts, but behold not the Father of lights from whom all these descend: they live upon the good things of the world, yet live without God in the world. Now, by these men,

1. I do not mean those Heathens that in the most idolatrous manner do, in the literal sense, set up the creatures for gods.

2. Nor those christians that in a most gross manner do make idols of the creatures, and place their happiness in them.

3. Nor those earthly professors only, who follow the world too eagerly, and have such a deep and rooted respect for it, that they can be ordinarily content to suffer creature employments to banish God and duties out of their hearts and houses, whose worldliness is apparently too hard for their religion. Who then? Shall we come any nearer? Yes.

4. Those are guilty of creature-converse who do not enjoy all creatures in God; who love any thing in any creature with a distinct love, who do not love it only in God; who love silver, gold, houses, lands, trading, friends, with a particular contracted love. Oh, take heed of this creature-love, of valuing any created thing any otherwise

than as being from God, partaking of him, and leading to him.

3dly. "Live not upon ordinances." These are God's institutions, love them, cleave unto them, attend upon them, let no temptation cause you to leave them; but live not upon them, place not religion, place not your hope, your happiness in them, but love them only in God; attend upon them, yet not so much upon them, as upon God in them; lie by the pool, but wait for the angel; love not, no not a divine ordinance for its own sake. Why, who doth so? Alas! who almost doth not?

1. Thus did they in *Ezek.* xxxiii. 32. who delighted in the prophet's eloquence, and in the rhetoric of his sermons, as much as in a well-tuned voice and harmonious music: and so do thousands now, who read the Bible for the sake of the style or story, and love to sit under learned and elegant discourses, more for accomplishment than for conversion: and there are swarms of priests, who preach themselves more than Christ Jesus, even in his own ordinances; as a proud boy rides a horse into the market, to set forth himself more than his master's goods.

2. But there are many not so gross as these, who do yet use ordinances in a way very gross and unspiritual, placing their devotion in them, and sinking their religion into a settled course of hearing or praying; who will wait upon God, as they call it, at some set and solemn times, new moons, and sabbaths, it may be evening and morning; but religion must not be too busy with them, nor inter-meddle in their ordinary affairs, or world-

ly employments; it hath no place there; they do not esteem it a garment for a every day's wear.

3. And not only these, but even almost all men are too apt to rest in duties and ordinances, or, at least, to be well satisfied with the work done, whether they have conversed with God or not. Oh, if you love your souls, seek your happiness higher! Conversing with divine ordinances, I confess, is honourable and amiable, but it is too low a life for an immortal soul.

II. Affirmatively. Let nothing satisfy you but God himself; take up with no pleasure, no treasure, no portion, no paradise, nay, no heaven, no happiness, below the infinite, supreme, and self-sufficient Good. Let your eye be upon him, and his all-filling fulness; let your desire be unto him, and to the remembrance of his name; follow hard after to know the Lord, and to enjoy the Father through his Son Jesus Christ; let your fellowship be with the Father, and with the Son by the Spirit, 1 John i. 3. *O love the Lord all ye his saints, Ps. xxxi. 23. Yea, love him with all your soul, and with all your strength, Matt. xxii. 37. Yea, and keep yourselves always in the love of God; preserve and increase in the love of God; Keep yourselves in the love of God, Jud. ver. 21.* Oh sweet duty! Oh amiable, pleasant task! Oh! sweet and grateful command! Away, ye crowd of creatures, I must keep my heart for my God: away, ye gaudy suitors, away, ye glittering toys, there is no room for you; my whole soul, if its capacity were ten thousand times larger than it is, were too scant to entertain the supreme Good, to receive infinite goodness and fulness. Oh, charge

it upon yourselves with the greatest vehemence! Love the Lord, O my soul, keep thyself in the love of God; let the love of God constrain you, and keep yourselves under the most powerful constraints of it. In a word, live upon God as upon uncreated life itself; drink at the fountain; feed upon infinite fulness; depend upon almighty power; refer yourselves to unsearchable wisdom, and unbounded love; see nothing but God in the creature, taste nothing but God in the world, delight yourselves in him, long for communion with him, and communications from him, to receive of his fulness grace for grace. Then do we live most like angels, when we live most purely in God, and find all the powers of our souls spending themselves upon him; and ourselves, our life, and all the comforts of it, flowing from him, and again swallowed up in him. But because we are yet in the body, I shall explain it in these following particulars:—

1st. “Converse with God in all your own excellencies.” I bade you before not converse with these; now, I say, converse with God in these. Thus do the angels; they know nothing that they have of their own, they enjoy nothing distinct from God: they are excellent creatures, excellent in knowledge, power, holiness, &c. yet they enjoy all their excellencies in God, and ascribe them all to him, *Rev. vii. 12.* and so let us labour to do.

View yourselves not in your own particular beings, but in the essence of God; look upon yourselves as being and subsisting in the midst of an

infinite essence, in which the whole creation is, as it were, enveloped, and doth subsist.

And whatever excellency you find in your souls or bodies, look not upon it as your own; maintain not a *meum* and *tuum*, [a mine and a thine,] a distinction of interests between God and yourselves, but look upon all as God's, and enjoy it in him.

When you find yourselves tempted to cast a fond and unchaste look upon the beauty, strength, activity, or temper of your own bodies, upon the ingenuity, wisdom, constancy, courage, composedness of your own souls, take heed of settling into a selfish admiration of any of them, but enjoy them in God, and say, This, O my body, this, O my soul, is no other than the portraiture of the blessed God; these created excellencies are broken beams of the infinite, unspotted, uncreated perfections, *Jer. ix. 23, 24.* Having once attained to this, we shall no longer covet to be admired, desire to be commended, repine at being undervalued; I mean, not in a selfish manner, but rather break out in a spiritual passion with the psalmist, *O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!* *Ps. cvii. 8.*

Nay, let me add, when you find yourselves ready to put your own stamp upon God's best coin, to look upon supernatural gifts and graces with a sinful, selfish admiration, remember that you have them only in Christ Jesus, and enjoy them in him as your Head; labour to enjoy grace itself only in Christ, as the apostle, *Gal. ii. 20. I, yet not I, but Christ in me. 1 Cor. xv. 10.*

I labour, yet not I, but the grace of God. So ought we to glory: I believe, I love, I am patient, penitent, humble; yet not I, but the grace of God that is with me, Christ Jesus that dwelleth in me. And indeed a godly man, who thus lives at the very height of his own being, yea, and above it too, knows best how to reverence himself, yea, and to love himself too, and yet without any selfish love; for he loves himself in God, and his own endowments as divine ornaments.

2dly. "Converse with God, and live upon him in the excellencies of all other creatures, and in all your creature-enjoyments." We cannot live without creatures, as the angels do indeed, but let us be as much like them as we can, which is by living above creatures; place your happiness in God, and your hearts upon him; labour to find God all things to you, and in you, and to be filled with his fulness; labour to get your understandings filled with the knowledge of God, your wills filled with his divine will, your hearts filled with his infinite goodness and sweetness, your memories filled with the remembrance of his name, your whole souls filled with his holy and pure image, filled with the fruits of his Holy Spirit: nay, let these very bodies be filled not only with his providential favours, but more especially with his good-will in these favours. It is said indeed of the sensual epicures of the world, that their bellies are filled with God's hid treasures, *i. e.* with rare and precious delicacies: but how much better doth God fill his saints with his hid treasures, when he feedeth them with his divine favour, and kindly directeth them in all their ways?

This is meat indeed which the saints eat, of which other men, though they feed at the same table, know nothing. The glorified saints shall be satisfied wholly and perfectly with the divine image shining gloriously on them, and in them; to which purpose that expression of the psalmist may be accommodated, *Ps. xvii. ult. I shall be satisfied when I awake, &c.* Well, we cannot be so satisfied in this life: however though we cannot be so satisfied with it, yet let us not be satisfied without it, nor satisfied with any thing besides it. Resolve thus, holy soul, Well, if I must not be fully satisfied with the image of my heavenly Father till I awake, I will lie down, and sleep hungry as I now am; for I will not fill my mouth with chaff, nor my soul with the husks that the swine do eat. But, in the mean time, enjoy God as much as possible in his earthly favours.

Enjoy all things for God, and that in these two ways;

(1.) Use all for him. Let those riches, honours, interests, friends, which are clogs upon the wheels of others, be as wheels to you to carry you heaven-ward; let your souls be winged with those very enjoyments, wherewith the wings of others are pinioned; and let that which is fuel to their worldly lusts, be as fuel to feed and nourish your spiritual love. To use what we have for God is the only way of not abusing it; this is one way of enjoying all for God, to use all for him; and yet there is something higher in that phrase of enjoying all for God, than this, *viz.*

(2.) Value no creature-comfort any further than as it leads to God; and this in a double

sense too. 1. Value things to be good only by this, by their leading you unto God: *Perfectum in suo genere est mensura reliquorum.* [Perfect in its own kind must that be which is the measure of other things.] Now God being the supreme and infinite Good, any thing is so far good as it leads to the enjoyment of him. But the enjoyment of God is only in being like to him; holiness is his image; so then every thing is good that tends to sanctification, and to make men partakers of a divine nature. We are usually mistaken in the true notion of good, and evil, of mercies and judgments, judging according to the taste, as unwise patients do; but God's thoughts are not as our thoughts. Measure all things by the proportion they bear, and the tendency they have to the supreme Good: and call not any thing evil that brings nearer to him, nor any thing good that draws off from him. 2. When you have found a thing that is really good, tending and leading to the chief Good, and to the possession of him; labour to enjoy it, and rejoice in it only under this notion, as such; when you love it, let it be with a pure spiritual love; and so order your delight in it, that it may be said, you do rather rejoice in the design of it, than in the enjoyment of it.

Another way of living upon God in his favours is, to enjoy all things as coming from him. *Every good and perfect gift is from above, James i. 16.* Every beam of created light floweth out from the Father of light. When the blessed and glorious God framed this stately fabric of the visible world, because there was nothing better in the world than himself, he was pleased to copy out himself

in it, and to spread his own infinite perfections over it, and through it, *Rom. i. 20.* so that every particular good is a blossom of the first goodness; every created excellency is a faint sketch of God, and a broken beam of this infinite Sun of righteousness. Created life, beauty, wisdom, goodness, sweetness, are nothing but effluxes, or rather ebullitions from the self-sufficient Fountain, partial communications made of himself from uncreated Life, essential Wisdom, universal Goodness; and under this notion only we ought to enjoy them, and delight in them; and if we do so, we do not so much enjoy them, as God in them. Oh labour to do this! look upon the perfections which you find here below, not so much as the perfections of this or that particular being, but as so many drops from the Fountain of all perfections, in whom they all meet, and concentrate. It is well expressed by one, "In a particular being, love the universal Goodness;" let the whole world be as the garden of God to you, where every creature is a flower, from which you may collect something of the divine sweetness. Alas! at what a low and sensual rate do we live, when we rejoice in creatures, either as in themselves excellent, or as belonging to us; whereas, indeed, neither of these is true; for they are not excellent, but God is excellent in them; and how can we call any thing our own, when God made both us and all things for himself? Oh! how injurious is it to the blessed God, when we rob him of his own perfections that he hath imprinted upon the creature, by loving it, and delighting in it, not as in him, but

as something distinct from him! nay, we are then injurious to ourselves. Labour to enjoy and to converse with God in the creatures, *O how precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God!* cried David, when he had been meditating of the created excellencies, *Ps. cxxxix. 17.* Labour to abstract your minds from terrestrial things even in the enjoyment of them, and call upon yourselves to love, and live, and feed upon God in them; live not upon the dark side of your mercies, but upon the representations of God in them. Is there any thing good? oh, this is a state of infinite goodness! Is there any thing sweet? oh, how sweet is the God that made it so! Is there any thing lovely? it is a picture of him whose name is Love. Is any thing firm, stable, lasting? It is a shadow of that glorious Essence with whom is no shadow of change. Have you any thing strong? it arises out of that God with whom is everlasting strength. Doth any creature give rest, ease, refreshment? it springs out of the all-satisfying fulness of God. In a word, labour to rise by every created excellency, as by so many beams, to the Father of lights: Let all the world be to you as God's temple, and be ready to say of every place, as Jacob, *How dreadful is this place! surely this is none other but the house of God;* that God who pervades all created beings, and from himself derives the various prints of beauty and excellency throughout the world. But especially take heed of your own created comforts, that they do not insensibly lead away your hearts, and ensnare you into a sinful, particular, distinct love of them; which is

a sin easily committed, hardly discerned, and most hardly reformed. Few, if any, are wholly freed from these inordinate affections; and those few have come dearly by it; as one said in another case, With a great sum they have obtained this freedom: they have paid for it, not with the foreskins of the Philistines, but with the lives of what they so loved, there being no way to cure this evil distemper, but cutting off the member affected with it, the part that it fed upon. As a branch of this head, let me add, Labour to live upon God in the excellencies of other men: value them, and all their accomplishments, only in God, as he that did *diligere Deum habitantem in Augustino*, admire God, and enjoy them in God. Wherever you see wisdom, goodness, ingenuousness, holiness, justice, or any other accomplishment, say, here and there is God. And this is the honest way of making ourselves masters of whatever is another man's, and enjoying it, as truly as he himself doeth, yea, as truly as if it were our own; when we behold all these beams, as coming from the same Fountain of lights, and do love them all in him, with an universal love. This is the rare art of having nothing, yet possessing all things; of being rich, though one have nothing; and of being wise, though one know nothing.

Another way of living upon God in the creatures is, to taste and feed upon the love of God in them, not only his common bounty, but his special love in Christ. The good-will of God gives a sweet relish to every morsel, as I have already said. Even in the midst of all your delightful, pleasant,

sweet enjoyments, let your souls be more affected with this than with them; let this be as the manna lying upon the top of all your outward comforts, which your spirits may gather up and feed upon. But this I touched upon before, therefore I shall add no more concerning it. Thus I have shewn you how you may imitate the life of angels, in living upon God, even whilst you live in the body. To this I may add another particular or two.

3dly. "Converse with God, and live upon him in all his ordinances." Let communion with God be your object in every duty, and the very life, and soul, and sweetness of every ordinance. Never was a soul more thirsty after ordinances than David, as might appear abundantly; yet if you examine his expressions, you will find, that it was not so much after them, as after God in them; not after the dead letter, but after the living God, *Ps. xlii. 2. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God;* and *Ps. lxxxiv. 2. My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.* Let the word preached or read be as a voice from heaven talking with you: let your conference be a comment upon that word; let meditation be as a kind of bringing down God into your souls, and prayer as a raising up of your souls into God, nothing but faith and love put into praises. And so of all the rest.

4thly. "Converse with God in all his providences," prosperity, adversity, plenty, penury, health, sickness, peace, and perplexity. This is a large theme: but I have already alluded to prosperity, under the head of conversing with God in crea-

ture-enjoyments; as for adversity, I have said much in a long discourse to describe and commend the art of conversing with God in afflictions. Briefly at this time, converse not with losses, wants, afflictions, but with God in them; and that not only with the justice, righteousness, severity, and sovereignty of God in them, but with the goodness and mercy of God in them. They are dark providences, we need not dwell altogether on the dark side of them. If all the ways of the Lord towards his people be mercy and truth, *Ps.* xxv. 10. then his roughest and darkest ways are so too: if God be wholly love, 1 *John* iv. 8. then his very corrections proceed not from hatred: if it be his name to be good and to do good, *Ps.* cxix. 68. where have we learned then to call his afflicting providences evils, and to divide evil, which is but one, even as God is one, into *culpæ* and *pœnæ*, sin and affliction? Surely we speak as men: and if God call them so, he speaks after the manner of men, as he often doth. If the governing will of God be pure, perfect, and infinitely good and righteous, ought we not to converse with it in a free and cheerful manner, yea, and to love it too? In a word, ponder not upon creature-changes, nor the uncertain wheels of motion, that are turning up and down, we know not how, nor how oft; but fix yourselves upon that all seeing Eye, that unbounded Understanding, that unsearchable and infinite Goodness, that diffuses itself through the whole universe, and sits in all the wheels of motion, governing all the strange motions of the creatures in a wonderful and power-

ful manner, and carrying them all in their several orbs to one last and blessed end.

Thus imitate the angelical life, even whilst you are in the body: converse with God in self-excellencies, in the creature-excellencies, ordinances, providences; and yet labour to be more like him still, to abstract your mind from all these material and sensible things, and to converse with God without the help of any creature, I mean in the Spirit, and by a secret sense of his almighty goodness, and energy of grace, and the communications of a divine life in your souls. In a word, if you would taste of heaven whilst you are upon earth, labour above all things for a true conjunction of your hearts with God, in a secret feeling of his goodness, and a reciprocation of love to him; and to find the holy and blessed God exercising his grace and power upon all the faculties of your souls, and rendering them like unto himself, and all these powers of the soul mutually spending themselves upon him freely and entirely, as upon the highest Good, which is their proper and full object. Seeing the saints in glory shall be like unto the angels of God, in their way of living in and upon God alone, receive, I pray, this exhortation, which I have so largely prosecuted, and labour to begin that life, as far as you can, upon earth. Is there not reason for such an inference? Doth it not now flow naturally from the doctrine? If you think it do not, I will add two or three particulars to strengthen this inference, or at least to clear it.

1. It is highly reasonable that we now begin to be that, which we expect to be for ever, to learn

that way of living in which we hope to live to all eternity : so that I infer, upon as strong ground as the apostle, *1 John iii. 3. He that hath this hope purifieth himself, &c.*

2. If this be the life of angels, then it is the highest and noblest life, of which any created being is capable. As by the bread of angels, and the tongue of angels, the most excellent food, and the most excellent language is understood in scripture, so must we understand this life of angels. Now, it is very suitable to the reasonable soul, that immortal, noble being, to aim at the highest and noblest life : see *Matt. xvi. 26. What shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?*

3. This shall not only be our life in heaven, but itself is something of heaven, a beginning of heaven. This life is not a thing really distinct from life eternal, *John xvii. 3. This is life eternal, &c. 1 John v. 13. Ye have eternal life.* Therefore we read of eternal life abiding in men, and not abiding in them, *1 John iii. 15.* so also *John vi. 54. Whoso eateth my flesh hath eternal life.* A holy soul thus deified, thus living in and upon God, is as truly glorified upon earth, in some degree, as the world is enlightened by the morning-sun, which is as truly, though not so gloriously, as by the sun in its greatest height. Oh low and ignoble spirits, who can be satisfied with a happiness, which shall only be in the world to come ! Certainly it is true and proper to say, that a participation of God, is an anticipation of heaven ; and to be like unto him, is to be with him. You see what reason I have to make such an inference, and to form it unto such an earnest exhor-

tation; oh, therefore, I beseech you before God, and his holy angels, to endeavour to be like him, and to live like them!

Obj. Say you, How can men on earth live like angels? *Ans.* 1. But fall on, and imitate them, though it be—*haud passibus æquis*: [with faulting, unequal steps.] 2. We are bidden to live the life of God, *Matt. v. ult. Be perfect, &c.* so *1 Pet. i. 15. Be ye holy, &c.* If I speak high, how high speak these texts.

Obj. Say you, But how can this animal life permit this? *Ans.* 1. Thus men have lived in the body; thus lived Enoch, *Gen. v. 22.* thus lived Paul, *Phil. i. 21.* thus lived David, that man after God's own heart, (the greatest and most divine character that can be given of a mortal man,) *Ps. lxxiii. 25. There is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.* 2. Cannot we live in the body, except we live to the body? You see saints upon earth live above other men upon earth; and you with a little more pains may take the other flight, and may live above yourselves too, higher than you now do. I will only add a motive or two to this duty of living upon God.

1. "The last enemy to be overcome is creature-love." This is the last enemy that keeps the field, by which alone the greatest part of men do perish everlastingly: conquer this, and you win the day, and shall wear the crown; nay, the very conquest of it is a crown, as I said before.

2. "To live upon God in the creature, is to enjoy the creature in the best sense." You will lose nothing of the creature by this means, but shall enjoy it more fully than ever you did; for

the creature is ten thousand times sweeter in God than it is in itself. Yea, in a word, this is the way to enjoy all the world, and to enjoy the accomplishments of all men, and all things as much as if they were your own.

3. "It is the way never to lose any thing." He that lives upon God, spends upon a stock that cannot be wasted, drinks at a fountain that cannot be exhausted. So much as we enjoy of God in the creature, we do not lose with it; and that which we do not so enjoy, we deserve to lose. This, then, is the secure and honourable life, in comparison with which the life of a prince is but wallowing in the mire. "Lord, give us evermore this bread," and hearts to feed upon it. Amen.

16*

Dei & Animæ Consortium :

SIVE

PERIPHRAISIS IN POSTERIUS HEMISTICHIIUM,

1 John iv. 16.

— *in Deo manet, et Deus in eo.*

*Omnia mi Deus est ; idem Deus est meus omnis :
Ipse Deo totus ; totus et ipse Dei.*

Omnia mihi Deus est.

*In Deo cujusque boni creati
Singulæ vires penitissime insunt
In Deo solaminaque implicantur
Omnia vitæ.*

Omnis Deus est meus.

*Omne quod fecit mihi dat benignus ;
Omne quod præ se quia nil pependi,
Insuper menti dedit appetenti
Omne quod ipse est.*

Ipse in Deo totus.

*In Deo versor medio, que spiro,
In Deo grandescere concupisco,
Luceo totus radiis paterna
Luce receptis.*

Ipse totus Dei.

*Non mei, non alterius creati
Sum, (Deus) sed quantus ego, tuus sum :
Vita quos a te radios recepi,*

Oro, reflectat !

*Cuncta te subter (Deus alme) quæ sunt,
Judico mente inferiora nostra :
Absit ut rebus studeat caducis
Mens generosa !*

*Fac teipsum, mi Deus, ipsiorem
Huic meæ menti penitus seipsa,
Fac meipsum, mi Deus, uniozem,
Quam mihi tecum !*

GOD AND THE SOUL;

A PARAPHRASE UPON 1 JOHN V. 16.

dwelleth in God, and God in him.

MY God is all things unto me;
All God is also mine:
I am, O Lord, wholly in thee;
And also wholly thine.
God is all things unto me.

The powers of each created good
In God are all contain'd;
In him my comforts all do bud,
Flourish, and are maintain'd.
All God is mine.

He gave me all that he had made;
All which did not suffice
My larger soul; therefore I pray'd,
He gave himself likewise.
I am wholly in God.

I' th' midst of God I live and breathe,
In him alone I'm bright;
The rays with which I shine beneath
Are borrow'd from his light.
I am wholly God's.

O Lord, I'm not at all mine own,
Nor for another free;
Let life be a reflection
Of beams receiv'd from thee.

All things below thee, Lord, I judge
To be below my soul;
O let my nobler mind ev'n grudge,
Itself in dust to roll.

Be more myself, O God, to me
Than I myself have been;
Make me, O God, more one with thee
Than with myself! Amen.

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[The following text is extremely faint and illegible due to the quality of the scan. It appears to be a long list or index of entries.]

PREFACE

TO THE IMMANUEL.

Amongst the many spectacles that usually surprise and amuse inquisitive minds, there seems to be nothing in the world of a more sad and astonishing appearance, than the small progress and propagation of the Christian religion. This I call a sad appearance, because religion is a matter of the most weighty and necessary importance; without which it is not possible for an immortal soul to be perfected and made happy. I call it astonishing, because the Christian religion hath in itself such advantages of recommending itself to the minds of men, and contains in it such mighty engines to work them into an hearty compliance with it, and to captivate their reason unto itself, as no other religion in the world can with any face pretend to. I do earnestly, and as I think rationally and scripturally hope that this great truth, those sacred oracles, will yet more prevail, and that the Founder of this most excellent religion, who was lifted up upon the cross, and is now exalted to his throne, will yet draw more men unto himself: and this, perhaps, is all the millennium that we can warrantably expect. But, in the mean time, it is too evident, that the kingdom of satan doth more prevail in the world than the gospel of Christ, either in the letter or power of it. As to the former, if we will receive the probable conjecture of learned inquirers, we shall not find above one sixth part of the known world yet Christianized, or giving so much as an external worship to the crucified Jesus. As to the latter, I will not be so bold as to make any arithmetical conjectures, but judge it more necessary, and more becoming a charitable and Christian spirit, to sit down in secret, and weep over that sad but true account given in the gospel, *Few are chosen*, Matt. xx. 26. and again, *Few there be that find it*, Matt. vii. 14. being grieved, after the example of my compassionate Redeemer, *for the hardness of their hearts*, and praying with Joab, in another case, *The Lord make his people an hundred times so many more as they be!* 1 Chron. xxi. 3. It is foreign to my present purpose to inquire into the immediate causes of the non-propagation of the gospel in the former sense; only it is easy and obvious to conjec-

ture, that few will enter in by *the way of the tree of life*, when the same is guarded with a *flaming sword*! And it were reasonable to hope, that if the minds of Christians were more purged from a selfish bitterness, fierce animosity, and arbitrary sourness, and possessed with a more free, generous, benign, compassionate, condescending, candid, charitable, and Christian spirit, which would be indulgent toward such as are, for the present, under a less perfect dispensation, as our Saviour's was, Luke ix. 49, 50—54, 55. would not impose any thing harsh or unnecessary upon the sacred and inviolable consciences of men, but would allow that liberty to men, which is just and natural to them in matters of religion, and no way forfeited by them; then, I say, it might be reasonable to hope, that the inherent power and virtue of the gospel would prove victorious. Judaism, Mahometism, and Paganism, would melt away under its powerful influences, and satan himself would *fall as lightning* before it, as naturally as the eye-lids of the morning do chase away the blackness of the night, when once they are lifted up upon the earth. But my chief design is to examine the true and proper cause of the ill success of the gospel, in regard to its power and inefficacy upon the hearts and consciences of those that do profess it. But in finding out the cause of this, I shall not endeavour to be *wise above what is written*, leaving that daring course of searching the decrees of God, and prying into the hidden rolls of eternity, to them who can digest the uncomfortable notion of a self-willed, arbitrary, and imperious deity; which I suspect is the most common apprehension of God; men measuring him most grossly and unhappily by a standard of their own. And as I dare not soar so high, so neither will I adventure to stoop so low, as to examine into particulars; which are differently assigned, according to the different dispositions and interests of those who assign them: for each sect in the world is so exceedingly favourable to itself, as to be ready to say with David, *The earth, and all the inhabitants of it, are dissolved; I bear up the pillars of it*, Ps. lxxv. 3. and to think that the very interest of religion in the world is involved in their persuasions and opinions; and that the whole church is ruined, if but an hair fall from their heads, or their notions be in the least controverted or abridged. Such conduct is the more unpardonable, inasmuch as it destroys the design of

the gospel, by confining or limiting the Holy One of Israel, and making God as much confined to one people as when he dwelt no where upon earth but at the temple in Jerusalem.

Waving these extremes therefore, I conceive the cause in general of the so little prevalence of true religion in the hearts and lives of men, is the false notion that men have of it; placing it where indeed it is not, nor doth consist. That this must needs be a cause of the ill success of the gospel, wherever this false notion is found, I suppose every one will grant; and that it is almost every where to be found, will, I doubt not, too evidently appear by that description of the Christian religion, which the sacred Author of it, the Lord Jesus Christ, made to the poor Samaritan woman; which I have endeavoured briefly to explain, according to the tenor of the gospel, in this small treatise; which I commenced for private use, in a season when it most behoved me to understand the secrets of my own soul, and do the utmost service I was able, for the salvation of those that were under my roof; expecting daily to render up my own or their souls into the arms of our most merciful Redeemer, and to be swallowed up in that eternal life, towards which true religion daily tends; and into which it will at length infallibly conduct the Christian soul. This work thus undertaken, and in a great measure then carried on, I have since perfected, and do here present to the perusal of my dear countrymen; having published it for no private end; but, if possible, to serve the interest of God's glory in the world. And this I am persuaded will be done, if, by his blessing, I may be instrumental of undeceiving any soul mistaken in so high and important a matter as religion is; or any way to awaken and quicken any religious soul not sufficiently ravished with the unspeakable glory, nor cheerfully enough springing up into the full fruition of eternal life.

What certain and unfailing tendency true religion hath towards the eternal happiness and salvation of men's souls; will, I hope, evidently appear from the substance of this small treatise: but that is not all, (though indeed that would be enough to recommend it to any rational soul, that is in the least degree candid and ingenuous,) for it is also the wisest policy imaginable, and the most unerring expedient in the world, for uniting and establishing a divided

and tottering kingdom or commonwealth: to demonstrate which, was the design of this preface. It is well known, (O that it were but as well and effectually believed!) that *godliness is profitable to all things*, and that it hath the promise and blessings of the *life that now is, and of that which is to come*, 1 Tim. iv. 8. that the right seeking of the kingdom of God and his righteousness, hath no less than *all things* annexed to it, Matt. vi. 33. How immeasurable is the body and bulk of that blessedness, to which all the comforts of this life are only as an appendix compared to a volume! But men are apt to evade generals; therefore I will descend to instances, and shew in a few particulars, what a mighty influence religion, in the power of it, would certainly have on the political happiness and flourishing state of a nation. Wherein I doubt not but I shall make it appear, that not religion, as some slanderously report, but the want of it, is the immediate troubler of every nation, and individual society; yea, and of every soul too; according to that just saying of the holy apostle, *From whence come wars and fightings? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?* James iv. 1. Here let me desire one thing of the reader, and that is, constantly to bear in mind, that where he finds the word religion, I have principally a respect to the description given of it in the text; and that I mean thereby, “a divine principal implanted in the soul, springing up into everlasting life.”

And now I should briefly glance at those faults, both in governors towards their subjects, subjects towards their governors, and towards each other, which do destroy the peaceful state and the sound and happy constitution of a body politic; and indeed I fear it will cause me some inconvenience, if not confusion, to wave this method: But out of a sincere desire to avoid whatever may be interpreted as ill-will, curiosity, presumption, or any other bad disposition; and that it may appear to an ingenuous eye, that I am more desirous to bind up than to tear open sores, I will expressly shew how religion would heal the distempers of any nation, without taking any more than an implied notice of the distempers themselves.

First then, It is undoubtedly true that religion, deeply rooted in the nature of princes and governors, would most effectually qualify them for the most happy way of reign-

ing. Every body knows what an excellent euchrasy,* and lovely constitution the Jewish polity was in under the influences of holy David, wise Solomon, devout Hezekiah, zealous Josiah, and others of the same spirit; so that I need not spend myself in that inquiry, and so consequently not upon that argument. Now, there are many ways by which it is easy to conceive, that religion would rectify and temper the spirit of princes.

This principle will constitute the most noble, heroic, and royal soul, because it will not suffer men to find any unhalloved satisfaction in a divine authority, but will be springing up into a God-like nature, as their greatest and most perfect glory. It will certainly correct and limit the undue desire of unwieldy greatness and unbounded dominion, by teaching them that the most honourable victory is self-conquest; and that the propagation of the image and kingdom of God in their own souls, is infinitely preferable to the advancement or enlargement of any temporal jurisdiction.

The same holy principle being the genuine offspring of divine love and benignity, will also polish their rough and over severe natures, and instruct them in the most sweet and obliging methods of government, by assimilating them to the nature of God; who is infinitely abhorrent from all appearance of oppression, and hath most admirably provided that his servants should not be slaves, by making his service perfect freedom.

The pure and impartial nature of God cannot endure superstitious flatterers, or hypocritical professors; and the princes of the earth, that are regenerated into his image, will also estimate men according as God does; I mean according to the example of him who loves nothing but the communications of himself; and according to their participation of his image, which is the only amiable object in the world. What God rejected in sacrifices offered to him, religion will teach princes to dislike in the pretended devotions of their courtiers; I mean not only the leaven of superstitious pride and moroseness, but also the flattery of mercenary prostrations and fawning adulations.

* A Greek word, implying a good temperature and condition, or state of the body.

In a word, this religious principle, which makes God its pattern and end, springs from him, and is always returning to him, would powerfully heal the distemper of ruling by caprice, self-interest, and arbitrariness; and teach men to seek the good of the public in preference to self-gratifications. For God rules the world in this manner; who, however some men slander him, I dare say, hath made nothing the duty of his creature, but what is really for its good: neither doth he give his people laws for the purpose of shewing his sovereignty in making them, or his justice in punishing the breach of them; much less doth he give them any statutes, which he is as willing they should break as keep, provided he might but exact the penalty.

What I have briefly said concerning political governors, the judicious reader may review, and apply to the ecclesiastical. For I do verily believe that if the hearts of these men were in that right religious temper and holy order of which I have been speaking, it would plentifully contribute towards the happy and prosperous state of any kingdom. I will speak freely, let it light where it will, of that principle which terminates in popular applause, secular greatness, worldly pomp and splendor, flesh-pleasing, or any kind of self-exaltation, (which is manifold,) is really in contradistinction to that divine principle, that religious nature, which terminates in everlasting life. And certainly, notwithstanding all the recriminations and self-justifications which are, on all hands, used to evade the guilt, these governors must lay aside their sullen pride, as well as the people their proud sullenness, before the church of God be healed of its breaches; purged of Antichrist, or can probably arrive at any sound constitution or perfect stature.

But I suppose religion will not have its full and desirable effect upon a nation, by healing the sickly heads of it; except it be like the holy oil poured upon the head of the sacrificer, which ran down also upon the skirts of his garments, *Ps. cxxxiii. 2.* Therefore,

Secondly, It is indispensably requisite for the thorough healing and right constituting of any political body, that the subjects therein be thus divinely principled. This will not fail to dispose them rightly towards their governors, and towards one another.

1. Towards their governors. There are many evil and perverse dispositions in subjects towards their rulers;

all of which, religion is the most excellent expedient to rectify.

The first and radical distemper seems to be, a want of due reverence toward these vicegerents of God upon earth; which easily grows up into something positive, and becomes a secret wishing of evil to them. This fault, as light as some esteem it, was severely punished in Queen Michal, who despised her lord King David in her heart, and she, in barrenness, went down to her grave under great reproach, 2 Sam. vi. 16. Prov. xxx. 16. And if an ordinary hatred be so foully interpreted by the holy apostle, *Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer*, 1 John iii. 15. surely disloyal and malignant dispositions towards governors must needs have a fouler aspect; and we may say, by parity of reasoning, *Whosoever hateth his prince is a rebel and a regicide*. Now this distemper, so fundamental and epidemical, the spirit of true religion, and that only, will heal; for I know of nothing in the world that hath; nay, I know that nothing in the world hath that sovereignty and dominion over the dispositions and affections of the soul, that this principle thoroughly ingrafted in the soul, doth challenge to itself. This alone can frame the heart of man into that beautiful temper and complexion of love and loyalty, that he will not curse the king, no not in his conscience; no, not though he were well assured that there were no winged messenger to tell the matter, Eccl. x. 20.

Another distemper in subjects, in respect to their governors, is impatience of bearing the yoke; which is an evil so natural to the proud and imperious spirit of man, that I believe it were safe to affirm, that every irreligious subject could be well content to be a prince; however there may be many who, utterly despairing of such an event, may, with the fox in the fable, profess they do not wish it. From this principle of pride and impatience of subjection, I suspect it results that the rigid Chiliasts do so scornfully declaim against, and so loudly decry the human ordinances of the magistracy and the ministry: not that they do, by such conduct, verily seek the advancement of Christ's kingdom, (which indeed every disorderly, tumultuous, proud, impatient soul, doth in reality oppose, and endeavour to destroy,) but of themselves. To whom one might justly apply, with a little alteration, the censure which Pharaoh injuriously passes upon the children of Israel, *Ye are proud,*

therefore ye say, *Let us go, and do sacrifice to the Lord*, Exod. v. 17. This distemper the power of religion would excellently heal, by mortifying ambitious inclinations, and quieting the impatient turbulence of the fretful and envious soul, by fashioning the heart to a right humble frame and cheerful submission to every institution of God. You will see in this treatise that a truly religious soul, powerfully maintaining the Christian life, hath no wish nor leisure to attend to such poor attainments and sorry acquests, as domineering over other men; being feelingly acquainted with a life far more excellent than the most princely, and being overpowered with a supreme and sovereign good, which charms all its inordinate inclinations, and laying hold upon all its faculties, draws them forth by a pleasing violence, unto a most zealous pursuit of itself. A principle of humility makes men good subjects; and they that are indeed probationers for another world, may very well behave themselves with a noble disdain of all the glories and preferments of the present.

The last distemper that I shall name in subjects towards their governors, is discontent about imagined misgovernment and mal-administration; which commonly spring from an evil and sinister interpretation of the ruler's actions, and are attended with an evil and tumultuous zeal for relaxation. Now this distemper, as great as it is, and as destructive to the well-being of a body politic, true religion would heal, both root and branch. Were universal charity, that noble part and branch of the Christian religion, rightly seated in the soul, it would not suffer the son of the bond woman to inherit with it; it would cast out those wrathful jealousies, sour suspicions, harsh surmises, and imbittered thoughts which lodge in unhallowed minds, and would display itself in a most amicable sweetness and gentleness of disposition, of putting fair glosses upon doubtful actions; by friendly censures, or none at all; by kind extenuations of greater faults, and covering of lesser: for it is the proper characteristic of this divine principle, to be very unbelieving of evil, and easily entertaining of good reports, gladly interpreting all things to a good meaning that will possibly admit of such a construction; or if you will, in the apostle's phrase, *Charity is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil*, 1 Cor. xiii. 5.

And as charity doth eradicate this root of discontents, so will faith allay and destroy those discontents themselves, which regard mis-government and ill-administration. This noble principle administers ease and satisfaction to the soul, if she happen to be provoked: for it will not suffer her long to stand gazing upon second causes, but carries her up in a seasonable contemplation to the supreme Cause; without whom no disorder could ever befall the world; and there commands her to repose herself, in the bosom of infinite wisdom and grace, and wait for a comfortable issue. He may be perplexed indeed, that has reason sufficient to observe the many monstrous disorders which are in the world, and not faith sufficient to eye the inscrutable providence of a benign and all-wise God, who permitteth the same for the purpose of accomplishing the most beautiful end and blessed order imaginable. Though faith abhors the blasphemy of blaming God, yet it so fixes the soul upon him, and causes her so to eye his hand and end in all mal-administrations of men, that she hath no leisure to fall out with men, or quarrel with instruments.

These discontents, I said, were frequently attended with an evil and seditious zeal for relaxation, discovering itself in secret treacherous conspiracies, and many times in boisterous and daring attempts. These are at the first sight so directly contrary to the character given of religious men, namely, *the quiet of the land*, Ps. xxxv. 20. and the genius of religion, which is wholly made up of *love, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness of mind, forbearance, forgiveness, charity, thankfulness, wisdom*, Gal. v. 22, 23. Col. iii. 12—16. that it is easy to conceive that religion, in the power of it, would certainly heal this evil disease also. There are many pretenders to religion, who complain still concerning oppression and persecution; their cry is all for liberty and deliverance; but to make it the more passable and plausible, they style it the advancement of the kingdom of Christ. This pretence is so fair, yet so deceitful, that I deem it worth my time to speak a little more extensively in regard to it. And here I do heartily protest, that I account the advancement of the glory of God and the kingdom of Christ, to be the most desirable thing in the world; and that it is highly becoming the greatest minds upon earth to employ their utmost zeal and diligence to assist in its accomplishment: yea, so utterly

do I abhor irreligion and Atheism, that, as the apostle speaks (*Phil. i. 18.*) in somewhat a similar case, I do verily rejoice that Christ is professed, though it be but pretended; and that truth is owned, though it be not owned in truth. I will further add, that the oppressing and obstructing of the external progress and propagation of the gospel is hated of Christ, and to be lamented of all true Christians. Yea, I will further allow men a due sense of their personal oppressions and injuries, and a natural warrantable desire to be redeemed from them. And now having thus freely expressed myself, I entreat the Christian reader patiently, and without prejudice, to suffer me to speak more closely to this matter: yea, I do verily assure myself that I shall be accepted, or at least indulged by all free and ingenuous spirits, who are well acquainted with the genius of the Christian religion, and do prefer truth before interest.

And, first, for the complaint that is mostly concerning oppression and persecution: certainly religion, if it did really prevail in our hearts, would very much heal this distemper, if not by perfectly silencing these complaints, yet surely by putting them into another strain. Religion quite silences these complaints, when it engages the soul so entirely in serving the design of God in afflictions, and in a right improvement of them for religious purposes, that she wishes not to spend herself in fruitless murmurings and unchristian indignation. As fire seizeth upon every thing that is combustible, and makes fuel for itself, and as a predominant humour in the body converts into its own substance whatever is convertible, and makes it nourishment to itself; so doubtless this holy flame, this divine principle, if it were predominant in the soul, would nourish itself by all things that lie in its way, though they seem ever so heterogeneous and hard to be digested; and rather than want meat it would, with Samson, fetch it out of the very eater himself. But if religion should not utterly silence these complainings, by rendering the soul thus forgetful of the body, and regardless of its pain, in comparison of the happy advantage that may be made of it; yet, methinks, it should draw the main stream of these tears into another channel, and put these complaints into another strain. It is very natural to the religious soul to make God all things to itself; to lay to heart the interest of truth and holiness more than any particular interest of its own; and to be-

wail the dishonour done to God more than any personal inconvenience. Must not he be a good subject to his prince, who can more heartily mourn that God's laws are not kept, than that he himself is kept under; who can be more grieved that men are cruel, than that they kill him; who can be more troubled because there are oppressions in the world, than because he himself is oppressed? Such subjects religion alone can make.

As for the cry that is made for liberty and deliverance; I confess I do not easily apprehend what is more, or more naturally desirable than true liberty: yea, I believe there are many devout and religious souls that, from a right, noble, and generous principle, and out of a sincere respect to the Author and end of their creation, are almost immoderately desirous of it, do prefer it above all preferments, or any thing that may be properly called sensual, and would purchase it with any thing that they can possibly part with. But yet that I may moderate this thing a little, if not quite stifle it, I must freely profess that I do apprehend too much of sensuality generally in it; because this liberty is commonly abstracted from the proper end of it, and desired merely as a naturally convenient good, and not under a religious consideration. Self-love is the very heart and centre of the animal life; and doubtless this natural principle is as truly covetous of self-preservation, and freedom from all inconveniences, grievances, and confinements, as any religious principle can be. And therefore I may well allude to our Saviour's words, and say, *If you love and desire deliverance, only under the notion of a natural good, what do you more than others? Do not even the publicans the same?* Matt. v. 47. But were this divine principle rightly exercising its sovereignty in the soul, it would value all things, and all states and conditions, only as they have a tendency to the advancement and nourishment of itself. With what an indifferent, not to say disdainful eye, would the religious soul look upon the fairest self-accommodations in the world; and be ready to say within itself, *What is a mere deliverance from afflictions worth? Wherein is simple freedom from afflictions to be accounted of? Will this make me a happy man? Was not profane and impudent Ham delivered from the deluge of water, as well as his brethren? Were not the shameless daughters of Lot delivered from the deluge of fire, as well as their father? And*

yet we are so far from rising up and calling these people blessed, that the heart of every chaste and modest Christian is ready to rise against the very mention of their names, when he remembers how both the one and the other, though in a different sense, discovered their father's nakedness. If we did really value ourselves by our souls, and our souls themselves by what they possess of the image of God; if we did rightly prefer the advancement of the divine life before the gratification of the animal, it is easy to conceive how we should prefer patience before prosperity; faith in God before the favour of men; spiritual purity before temporal pleasures or preferments; humility before honour; the denial of ourselves before the approbation of others; the advancement of God's image before the advancement of our own names; an opportunity of exercising gracious dispositions before the exercising of any temporal power of secular authority; and, in a word, the displaying of the beauty, glory, and perfections of God, before health, wealth, liberty, livelihood, and life itself. We should certainly be more indifferent towards any condition, whether prosperous or adverse, and not be so fond of the one, nor weary of the other, if we did verily value them only by the tendency that they had to promote religion, and advance the life of Christ in our souls. This would certainly make men more sincerely studious to discover God's design in afflicting them, and less anxious to see the end of their afflictions.

And as for treacheries, plots, invasions, usurpations, rebellions, and that tumultuous zeal for relaxation, into which this impatience of oppression, and fondness of deliverance do so often grow up, I dare say there is nothing like religion, in the power of it, for effectually healing them. The true spirit of religion is not so weary of oppression, though it be by sinful men, as it is abhorrent from deliverance, if it be by sinful means. May I not be allowed to allude to the apostle and say, whereas there is amongst you this zeal, contention, and faction, *Are ye not carnal, and walk as men?* 1 Cor. iii. 3. Is not this the same which a mere natural man would do, strive and struggle, by right and by wrong, to redeem himself from whatsoever is grievous and galling to the interest of the flesh? Might it not be reasonably supposed, that if religion did but display itself aright in the powerful actings of faith, hope and humility, it

would quench this burning zeal, and calm these tempestuous motions of the soul, and make men rather content to be delivered up to the adversary, though the flesh should by him be destroyed, if the spirit might be saved, and the divine life advanced in the way of the Lord. O how dear and precious are the possession and practice of faith, patience, humility, and self-denial, to a godly soul, in comparison of all the joys and toys, treasures, pleasures, ease and honour of the world, the safety and liberty of the flesh! How much more then, when these must be accomplished by wicked means, and purchased at the price of God's displeasure? And because it is so often alleged, that the kingdom of Christ defends and patronizes these strange fervours and frenzies, let me here briefly record to all that shall read these lines, the way and method of Christ himself in propagating his own kingdom. It will not be denied, that Christ was infinitely studious to promote his own kingdom in the best and most proper sense: but I cannot find that he ever attempted it by force or fraud, by violent opposition or crafty insinuation. Nay, he reckoned that his kingdom was truly promoted when these tumultuous, impatient, imperious, proud lusts of men were mortified. Nothing could have been more easy with him, considering his miraculous power, infallible wisdom, and the mighty interest and party which he could by these have made for himself in the world, than to have raised his own kingdom upon the ruins of the Roman, and to have quite driven Cæsar from the world: but indeed nothing could be more impossible, considering the perfect innocency and infinite sacredness of his temper; nor any thing more contradictory, considering the proper notion of his kingdom; which he declares is not secular, and so not to be maintained by fighting: but if you would know in what sense he was a king, he himself seems to intimate it in his answer to Pilate, *Thou sayest that I am a king; to this end was I born, that I should bear witness unto the truth*, John xviii. 37. So then it seems wherever truth and holiness are predominant, there is Christ really enthroned, and actually triumphant. Where religion doth vitally form, animate, and actuate men's souls, it doth make them rightly to understand that the kingdom of Christ is not the thriving of parties, the strengthening of factions, the advancement of any particular interest, though it seem to be of ever so evangel-

ical a complexion ; no, nor yet the proselyting of the world to the profession of Christianity, or of the Christian world to the purer and more reformed profession of it, though these latter would be a great external honour to the person of Christ : but that it is most properly and happily propagated in the spirits of men ; and that wherever there are faith, patience, humility, self-denial, contempt of this world, and bright hopes of a better, pure obedience to God, and sincere benignity to men, there is the kingdom of God, there Christ reigns, and the gospel exists in the power and triumph of it. And may not these things be, even most conspicuously, in a persecuted condition of the church ? That certainly was an high instance of the mighty power of the divine life in our blessed Saviour, which the apostle Peter records of him, *who when he was reviled, reviled not again ; when he suffered, he threatened not ; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously,* 1 Pet. ii. 23. The same divine principle dwelling richly in our souls, would instruct us to the same behaviour, according to the precept given by the same apostle, *Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing ; but contrariwise blessing, &c.* 1 Pet. iii. 1. How vainly do men dream that they serve the interest and advance the kingdom of Christ by fierce and raging endeavours to cast off every yoke that galls them, and kicking against every thorn that pricks them. When indeed they are serving the interest of the flesh, and do, as under a cloak, gratify the mere animal life, and sacrifice to self-love, which is as covetous of freedom from all retrenchments and confinements as religion itself can be. It is said, indeed, that when the churches had rest they were *edified and multiplied,* Acts ix. 31. but when they suffer *according to the will of God,* they are then glorified : for *the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon them,* 1 Pet. iv. 14. as the apostle Paul professes of himself in that most noble and heroic passage to the Corinthians ; *Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me,* 2 Cor. xii. 9.

Secondly, Religion will not fail rightly to dispose the hearts of subjects towards one another ; and that, whether they be of the same way and judgment with themselves, or different. I dare not assert that it would make them all of the same way and mind ; neither do I believe it would : yet I am more confident it would do more towards this catholic union than all the laws and severities in the world

can do. Mutual forbearance and forgiveness, Christian kindness, and discreet condescension, are the most warrantable and most effectual method for introducing uniformity, and unanimity too, which is much better, into the church of Christ. But, however, religion would certainly give a right disposition, and teach men a right behaviour respecting each other, whether they agree in sentiments, or not.

This principle would teach men to love their friends and companions only *in the Lord*, as his members, not as their own partizans. Are not they strangely devoted to self-interest that will vindicate any thing in a partizan, which they will declaim against in one who dissents from them? And yet how is the sacred name of Christian friendship reproached every where, by reason of this partiality! How much better did true religion instruct the great apostle, *to know no man after the flesh*, 2 Cor. v. 16. no, not Christ himself.

The same principle would not fail to cure the distempers of men respecting those that are of different sentiments from themselves; whether of protestants towards protestants, or protestants and papists one towards another. It would heal the distempered affections and behaviour of protestants towards protestants. Were men thoroughly imbued with the spirit of love and wisdom, which are so vividly portrayed by the apostles Paul and James, that one might well be enamoured of the very description: how certainly would all oppressions, law-suits, and disputations about unprofitable and indeterminable points, either be suppressed or sanctified; either not exist, or not be vexatious? Not to speak of the oppressions by overreaching, stealing, lying, false witness-bearing, slanderous detractions, envious suggestions, and malignant disseminations of doubtful suspicions, by which commonly poor men oppress the rich; all which true religion abhors. There is a great oppression that is uncontroled in the world; which is, the cruel engrossing of property, and covetous trading of richer men. What these intend I will not say; but that they are really as great oppressions as those inhuman depopulations, and squeezing exactions, which are so much inveighed against, I doubt not. But be they what they will, or be they excused how they will, I am confident that this divine principle that powerfully springs up into everlasting life, would mightily relieve the world in this re-

spect; in that it would moderate men's desire of corruptible riches; forbid them to seek the things of this world any more or any otherwise than in consistency with, and in subserviency to their primary and most diligent seeking of the kingdom of God; it would make men seek the wealth of others even as their own, and make private advantage yield to the public good. I do verily believe, that if there were none but good men in England, there would be no poor men there. Civil laws may provide for the maintenance of the poor; but the law of divine love, a principle of religion, if it were universally obeyed, would make men so nobly regardless of earthly accommodations, that there would soon be room enough for all men to increase into a sufficient stature; and then, being thus grown, they would covet no more.

In law-suits, if there were any, men would seek the advancement of truth, and not of their own cause and interest distinct from it.

And O how excellently would it still the noise of axes and hammers about the temple of God! It would abstract men from vain speculations and much eagerness about unnecessary opinions, by employing them in more substantial and important pursuits. The very existence of religion in the soul would indeed decide numerous controversies, which the schools of philosophers have long laboured in vain to determine. For these scholastic wars, justly called Polemics, like those civil dissensions spoken of by the apostle James, chap. iv. 1. do, for the most part, proceed from men's lusts that war in their members; such as pride, curiosity, wantonness of wit, disobedience, and unsubduedness of understanding, and the like. I have observed with great grief, how the spirits of many men, and even sects of men, are occupied wholly in disputes about ceremonies; about church government; about what is orthodox and what is heterodox; about the true and the false church; and about this, their zeal, their conversation, and their very prayers, are principally employed. What the church is, they commonly decide by something external, and separate from the essence of a true church. Who can doubt but that religion, in the power of it, would find men something else to do? Yea, and if it could not perfectly determine these points, it would much heal our dissensions about them, and bring tears to quench the strange and unnatural heats which are

amongst us, and which cause such dreadful inflammations in our souls.

But it may seem that there is such a fatal enmity and irreconcilable contest betwixt Papists and Protestants, that nothing, not religion itself, can heal it. And truly if we suppose that it is religion that engages both parties in this enmity, I think it will prove incurable: but God forbid that this pure offspring of Heaven should be so blasphemed! It is not religion, but the want of it, that begets this implacable animosity, whatever is pretended. Cruel religion, bloody religion, selfish religion, envious and revengeful religion! Who can but cry out against the blasphemy of this contradiction at the very first hearing? Nay, I dare affirm it without hesitation, that the more religious any Protestant or Papist is, the more abhorrent he is from brutish savageness, wicked revenge and diabolical hatred. The church of Rome judges the reformed heretics are not fit to live; and why? Not because they do not live well, but because they cannot think and believe as they themselves do. And is this the genuine product of true religion? Certainly not. For a desire of ruling men's consciences, and of subjecting the faith of others to themselves, is certainly compatible to a mere natural man; nay, to the devil himself, who is as cruel and imperious as any other being. The reformed churches, on the other hand, are, I doubt not, generally more offended at the Papists for their persecutions of the Protestants, than for their real persecuting and crucifying Christ afresh by their sins; and so, consequently, do rather write and contend against them, than either pity or pray for them. I hope there are as many well-spirited Christians in England, at least proportionably, as in any church upon earth; and yet I fear there are far more that could wish the Papists out of this world, than that earnestly desire that they might be fitted for, and so counted worthy of a better. And doth this spring from a religious principle, think ye, or a selfish? Doth it not agree well to the animal life, and natural self, to be tender of its own interests and concernments, to wish well to its own safety, and to defend itself from violence? May I not allude to the Saviour's words and say, *If ye hate them that hate you, how can that be accounted religious? Do not even the publicans the same?* Matt. v. 46. I suspect we know not sufficiently what spirit we are of. The power

of religion, prevailing in the soul, would mould us into another kind of temper; it would teach us as well to love, and pity, and pray for Papists, as to hate Popery. I know the prophecy indeed, that the beast and the false prophet shall be cast alive into the lake burning with brimstone, and the remnant shall be slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, *Rev. xix. 20.* but since that sword is said to proceed *out of his mouth, Rev. xix. 21.* I would gladly interpret it of *the word of God, Eph. vi. 17.* which kills men unto salvation. However, let the interpretation of that text, and others of the like import, be what it will, I consider it very unsafe to turn all the prophecies and threatenings of God into prayers, lest haply we should be found to contribute to the damning of men's souls. Yea, when all is said concerning the reprobating decrees of God, and his essential inflexible punitive justice, and all those texts that seem to speak of God's revenging himself with delight, are interpreted with the utmost harshness of meaning that the cruel heart of man can invent; yet it remains a sealed, and to me a sweet truth, *I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God, Ezek. xviii. 32.* and again, *As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, Ezek. xxxiii, 11.*

Wherefore, waving all those dreadful representations (that do rather describe the bitter and revengeful temper of the man who makes them, than exhibit the pure and perfect nature of God, about whom they are made) let us attend to that beautiful character that is every where given of religion, (which is our highest concern,) in the person of Moses, of Paul, and of Christ Jesus himself, the author and exemplar of it. For he, by his incarnation, life, and death, abundantly demonstrated the infinite benignity and compassionate ardour of his soul towards us, when we were worse than Papists, being beyond the possibility of salvation without him; and *let that mind be in us, which was in him also, Phil. ii. 5.* Though it be not directly our Saviour's meaning in my text, yet I believe it may be inferred from it, that this pure and divine principle, religion, springs up into the everlasting life, not only of ourselves, but of others also. But, however religion is described, surely it is most unnatural to the soul that is regenerated into the true spirit of piety, pity, and universal charity, to be of a cruel, fierce, revengeful, condemn-

ing disposition. And therefore whatever are the raving and wrathful strains of some men's devotions, I beseech the reader to endeavour with me, that charity towards men's souls may go along in conjunction with zeal and piety towards God, when we present ourselves before the throne of his grace, and I am confident it will, if we pray sincerely after this manner, namely, "That God would cause the wickedness of the wicked to come to an end; that he would consume the Antichrist, but convert the Papist, and make the wonderers after the beast to become followers of the Lamb!" I suspect there are many that think they can never be too liberal in wishing ill to the Papists; nay, they deem it a strong argument of a good Protestant, I had almost said an evidence of grace, to rage and inveigh against them. Alas! how miserably do we manifest in so doing, that we are any thing rather than that to which we pretend by doing it. For are not we ourselves antichristian; in complaining of their cruelties, whilst our own souls, in the very act, are inflamed with revengeful and burning affections? If we do indeed abhor their cruelty, because it is contrary to the holy precepts of the gospel, and the true kingdom of Christ, we ought to be jealous at the same time lest any thing like it should be found in ourselves; otherwise, are we not carnal? For mere nature, as I have often said, will abhor any thing that is contrary to itself, and will not willingly suffer its dearest interests to be touched. The apostle tells us, that no man speaking by the *Spirit of Christ, calleth Christ accursed*, 1 Cor. xii. 3. but I suspect it is common to curse Antichrist by a spirit that is antichristian; I mean carnal, selfish, cruel, and uncharitable. For there is a spiritual Antichrist, or, if you will, in the apostle's phrase, a *spirit of Antichrist*, 1 John iv. 3. as well as a political Antichrist; and I doubt not but the former prevails most in the world, though it be the least discerned and execrated. Men do with Antichrist as they do with the devil; defy him in words, but entertain him in their hearts; run away from the appearance of him; and, in the mean time, can be well contented to be in reality all that which the devil and Antichrist is. All this is evidently for want of the true spirit of religion, which I recommend as a great healer, even of distempers.

Perhaps no Papist will be disposed to read this epistle written by a heretic; yet possibly some one or other may;

therefore I will adventure briefly to prescribe this same medicinal divinity to them also; though perhaps I might be excused upon other accounts; as all that which I have hitherto said to distempered Protestants is rightly enough, *Mutatis mutandis*, [the terms being changed which it was necessary to change,] applicable to them. Moreover, they value their church, and the truth and correctness of it, by its universality and prosperity; but the power of religion would make men value themselves and their adherents, only by the divine impressions of piety and purity, and account such only worthy of the glorious title of apostolic, and children of God, as are sincere followers of the apostles so far as they were followers of Christ, namely, in *true holiness and righteousness*. Are they industrious and zealous for proselyting the world, and spreading their cause far and near? And do not wicked men, yea, and the devil himself do the same? The fairest and most flourishing state of a church is nothing to God; and consequently nothing to a godly soul, in comparison with those excellent divine beauties with which religion adorneth the world. But as the greatest complaint, and the most dreadful charge which the Protestants bring against the Papists, is their barbarity and most unchristian cruelty, exercised against all whom they esteem heretics; and they, on the other hand, allege that the interest of religion, and the catholic faith doth require it, and that they do not so properly murder men, as sacrifice them to the honour of God: it will be proper to spend a little time, at least, to exculpate religion of this blame; that as wisdom is at all times justified of her children, so she may be sometimes justified by them, especially when the aspersions are so monstrously foul. And indeed she hath sufficiently instructed us how to justify her from all such imputations; having so fairly portrayed herself by the pen of the apostle James, both negatively and affirmatively. She is void of *strife, envyings, bitterness, and every evil work*; but she is *pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy*, James iii. 14—17. This is the proper description of heavenly wisdom, or pure religion: and O that all Christians would estimate themselves wise only according to their consonancy and conformity thereunto! Then I could easily believe, that none would be Papists in practice, whatever they might be in opinion.

What, Sirs, is the God of the Christian become like a devil, that he should delight in cruelty, and drink the blood of men? Is butchering rational creatures the reasonable service which he requires? *Rom. xii. 1.* Is the living sacrifice of your own bodies to be turned into the dead sacrifice of other men's? It was wont to be said, *What communion hath Christ with Belial?* *2 Cor. vi. 15.* And is the Prince of Peace now become a real Satan; the author of enmity, malignity, confusion, and every evil work? Did he shed his blood for his enemies, to teach us that good lesson of shedding the blood of our enemies? Did he come to seek and to save that which was lost, *Luke xix. 10.* to set us an example that we might seek to destroy; and that, only to repair our own losses? Be it so; that the Protestant churches have apostatised from you: this, I hope, is not a greater crime than the apostasy of mankind from God; which he expiated, not with the blood of the apostates, but with his own. Religion was formerly a principle springing up into eternal life. How is the world changed, that it should now be a principle springing up into massacres, and temporal death? Or is religion now become a principle springing up into secular power, worldly dominion, temporal greatness, and all manner of accommodations agreeable to the natural heart? This was formerly the description of sensuality and heathenism, for after all these things do the Gentiles seek, *Matt. vi. 32.* Are these so many mighty engines in the gospel to engage the hearts of men to believe, profess, and obey it, and must they all now give place to fire and sword? Are these the only gospel methods of winning men to the Catholic faith? What! are we wiser than Christ, or more zealous than he himself was? Did he forbid fire from heaven, *Luke ix. 55.* and will you bring it even from hell to consume Dissenters? Did he sheathe the sword that was drawn in his own defence, and set a dreadful seal upon it too, *All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword,* *Matt. xxvi. 52.* and will you adventure to draw it, in a way of revenge and persecution, and count it meritorious too, as if you should therefore never perish because you take it? Is it not written in your Bibles, as well as ours, that no murderers shall enter into the kingdom of God? *Gal. v. 21.* And do you think by murders to propagate this kingdom upon earth, and have a more abundant entrance into it yourselves hereafter? Can hell dwell with heaven? Shall

bloody cruelty ever lodge in the bosom, or lie down in the sacred arms of eternal love? Be not deceived, Sirs, with a false heaven; but take this for an indubitable and self-evident truth, No soul of man hath any more of heaven, nor ever shall have, than he hath of God, and of his pure, placable, patient, benign, and gracious nature. And this is that everlasting life into which a religious principle is always springing up; so that it hereby appears plainly, that religion, in the power of it, would heal these feverish distempers also, and so restore a most excellent constitution, both to persons and to the body politic.

It may possibly seem that I have laboured too much in these discoveries; and perhaps my pains may prove ungrateful to many: but if it please Almighty God that they should vindicate religion, or restore the sickly and lapsed ecclesiastical or political state; yea, or even prove medicinal and profitable to any single soul, I shall estimate it worth an age of pains. And if it should prove that by all this toil I have *caught nothing*, Luke v. 5. as the weary disciples complained of old; nevertheless being well assured that I have the word of God for my encouragement, I will *let down the net* once more, and so finish these epistolary exertions with an earnest hortatory address to all that shall peruse them.

Let nothing satisfy your souls, Christians, let nothing administer rest or ease to your hearts, that is common to the natural man, or compatible with the mere animal life. There are many high strains of zeal and seeming devotion, by which many men judge themselves to be something great, and concerning which they are ready to say, These things are the great power of God; which, if they be well examined, will be found to grow upon no better root than natural self, and to spring from no higher principle than this animal life. It is impossible for me to give an exact catalogue of all these; many of them I have occasionally recorded in the latter part of the ensuing treatise; to which yet many more might be added, if I had opportunity. But at present let me in general recommend to you this description of true religion, given by our Saviour, as the rule whereby I do earnestly entreat you faithfully to examine yourselves, your actions, affections, zeal, confidence, professions, performances. Let me speak freely: all pomp of worship, all speculative knowledge, how orthodox soever, is as dear to the animal life as to the divine:

and all external modes of devotion, submissive confessions, devout hymns, pathetic prayers, raptures of joy, much zeal to reform indecencies in worship or superstitions, a fierce raging against the political Antichrist, do as well agree to a natural man as to a spiritual; and may apparently be as fairly acted out, by a mere selfish carnal principle, as by that which is truly divine. When Diogenes trampled upon Plato's bed, saying, *calco Platonis fastum*, [I trample upon the pride of Plato,] it was answered him very sharply, *sed majore fastu*, [but with greater pride,] he was prouder in treading upon it, than Plato was in lying upon it. I doubt not but it may be applied too truly to a great deal of that cynical and scornful zeal, that is in the world at this day; men declaim against the pride and pomp, and grandeur of antichristian prelates, with a pride not in the least inferior to that of those whom they thus decry. However, it is plain, that those things which may be imitated by a sensual heart, and indeed performed by the mere magic of an exalted fancy, are not to be rested in by a sincere Christian. Read over therefore, I beseech you, the fruits of the Spirit, recorded by the apostle Paul and the apostle Peter, *Gal. v. 22.* &c. *2 Pet. i. 5, 6.* and estimate yourselves by them: these things are utterly incompatible with the mere animal man. All the natural men and devils in the world cannot be humble, meek, self-denying, patient, charitable, lovers of God more than of themselves, or of their enemies as themselves.

Would you judge correctly of the soundness of any opinion? then value it by the tendency that is in it to advance the life of God in the soul: particularly thus judge of the Millenarian opinion, which begins to be so much embraced in the world: concerning which, I will only say thus much at present, that, in the common notion of it, as it promises a state of much ease, liberty, power, prosperity, and freedom from persecutions and oppressions, it is as grateful to the fleshly palate, and will be as gladly embraced by the mere animal man, as by the greatest saint upon earth. And therefore, supposing it to be true, I cannot but wonder how it administers so much satisfaction, and affords such a sweet relish to minds divinely principled, as many seem to taste in it. By this same tendency, to advance the divine life in your souls, judge also of all your enjoyments, riches, honours, liberties, friends, health, children, &c. and value them, if it be possible, only under this consideration. But

to hasten to an end, I will endeavour to enforce this general exhortation by two or three weighty considerations. First, It is utterly impossible that any speculation, opinion, profession, enjoyment, ornament, performance, or any other thing, but the transformation of the mind into the very image and nature of God, should ever be able to perfect our souls; because most of these things are exterior, and all of them inferior to it. They cannot commend a man to God, who loves us, and whom we so far know and love, as we partake of his nature, and resemble him; this is the love of God, this is the worship of God, and this is really the soul's acquaintance with him, and nothing but this is. Secondly, The advancement of the divine life is that which God primarily designs in the world. I need produce but two proofs. 1. The sending of his own Son into the world for this very end and purpose, *that he might take away our sins*, as says the apostle John, 1 John iii. 5, 8. and, *that he might destroy the works of the devil*; and again, as says the apostle Paul, *That he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*, Tit. ii. 14. 2. It appears that this is the grand design of God in the world, since he doth not deliver his faithful servants out of their afflictions and tribulations: which he would not fail to do, did he not intend them a greater good thereby, and design to lead them on and raise them up to a higher life. Now what can more ennoble these souls of ours, than to conduct according to the same design as God himself does.

And now, reader, I commend thee to the blessing of God, in the perusal of this treatise, which I have composed, and publish, under a sense of that common obligation that lies upon every person to be active in his sphere for the interest of the name and honour of God, and to render his life as useful as possible; more particularly, under a sense of my own deficiency in several accomplishments, whereby others are better fitted to serve their generation: and especially, under a sense of the peculiar engagement that lieth upon me, to dedicate my life entirely to his service, from whom I have so lately, and that so signally, received the same afresh: in imitation of whom, I hope thou wilt be indulgent towards my infirmities: to whom I heartily commend thee, and to the precious influences of his eternal Spirit, and rest, *Thy servant, in his work, and for his sake,*

SAMUEL SHAW.

IMMANUEL:

OR,

A DISCOVERY OF TRUE RELIGION,

AS IT IMPORTS

A living Principle in the Minds of Men.

CHAP. I.

The occasion of the words of the text. The principal contents of it. The origin of true religion. All souls the offspring of God, and more especially a portrait of him; but godly souls yet more especially. God the author of religion from without, in several respects; God the author of it from within, enlightening the faculty. Religion something of God in the soul. A discovery of religious men by the affinity that they have to God. God alone to be acknowledged in all holy accomplishments. The original of sin from hence discovered.

JOHN IV. 14.

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.

THIS chapter contains an excellent, profitable, familiar discourse of the blessed Saviour of the world; into whose lips grace was poured, *Ps.*

xlv. 2. and he ceased not to communicate it to others. That which is said of the wise, *Prov. xv. 7.* is fully verified of Wisdom itself, his lips dispersed knowledge. A poor woman of Samaria comes to draw water, and our Saviour takes occasion from the water to instruct her in the great and excellent doctrines of the kingdom of heaven. O the admirable zeal for God, and compassion for souls, which dwell in that divine breast! and O the wonderful unsearchable counsels of an all-wise God! He ordains Saul's seeking of asses to be the means of his finding a kingdom upon earth; and this poor woman's seeking of water, to be an occasion of her finding the way to the kingdom of heaven. She comes to the well of Jacob, and, behold, she meets the God of Jacob there. The occasion, circumstances, and events of this discourse, would each afford many good and profitable observations: but I think none would afford more than this verse that I have selected; in which the mystery of gospel-grace is perspicuously unfolded, and true religion is excellently described. For I understand our Saviour, not as speaking of faith, or knowledge, or any other particular grace; but of grace in general, of the Holy Spirit of God; that is, the gifts and graces of it; and of true godliness; or, if you will, of the christian religion; for that word I shall choose to retain throughout my discourse, as being most intelligible and comprehensive.

In the words of the text we find true christianity unfolded in its origin, nature, properties, consequent, and end. The origin of it is found in those words, *I shall give him*; the nature of it is

described by a *well of water*; the properties of it, by the phrase of *springing up*; the consequent of it, that the man that is endowed with it *shall never thirst*; the end or perfection of it, is *everlasting life*. Each of these, shall be discussed, in the following order:

First, the original of it, contained in the words, *The water that I shall give him*. And the proposition here laid down, is this, 'That the true christian religion is of divine origin.' All souls are indeed the offspring of God. Those noble faculties, the understanding and a will free from constraint, do more resemble the nature of God, than all the world besides. There is more of the glory, beauty, and brightness of God in a soul, than there is in the sun itself. The apostle allows it as a proper speech spoken in common of all men, *for we are also his offspring*. Acts xvii. 28. God hath impressed more lively characters of himself, and his divine essence, upon a rational soul, than he hath upon the rest of the creation: so that the soul of man, even as to its constitution, doth declare and discover more of the nature of God, than all the other things that he hath made, whereof the Apostle speaks, *Rom. i. 20*. He that rightly converseth with his own soul, will get more acquaintance with God, than they that gaze continually upon the material heavens, or that traverse the dark and distant corners of the earth, or go down unto the sea in ships: the serious consideration of the little world within a man will teach more of God than the great world could do: So that I hesitate not to take the apostle's words concerning the word of God, and ap-

ply them to the nature of God, Rom. x. 6. *Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven, to bring a discovery of God from thence? or, who shall descend into the deep, to fetch it up from thence?* The nature and essence of God is nigh thee, even in thine own soul, excellently displayed in its constitution and frame, its power and faculties: God hath not made any creature so capable of receiving and reflecting his image and glory, as angels and men: which hath made me often say, "That the vilest soul of man is much more beautiful and honourable than the most excellent body, than even the body of the sun at noon-day," And this should render sin odious and loathsome; because it hath defiled the fairest piece of God's workmanship in the world, and hath blurred the clearest copy which he had drawn of himself in the whole creation.

But though all rational souls are the children of God, yet all of them do not imitate their Father; though their constitution expresses much of the essence of God, yet their disposition doth express the image of the devil. But godly souls, who are *followers of God*, are indeed his *dear children*, Eph. v. 1. Holy souls, who are endowed with a divine and God-like disposition, and do work the works of God, are most truly and properly his offspring, *Matt. v. 44, 45*. And in this respect, God's children are his *workmanship, created unto good works*, Eph. ii. 10. Religion is of divine origin: God is the author and father of it, both externally and internally.

1. God is the author of it externally. When man had fallen from God by sin, and so had lost

his way, and was become both unwilling and morally unable to return, God was pleased to set up that glorious light, his own Son, the Sun of Righteousness, in the world, that he might guide our feet into the way of peace. He is therefore called, *A light to lighten the Gentiles*, Luke ii. 32. and compared to a candle set upon a candlestick, *Mark. iv. 21.* God of his infinitely free grace, and over-flowing goodness, provided a Mediator, in and by whom these apostate souls might be reconciled, and re-united to himself; and *to as many as receive him, to them he giveth power to become the sons of God*, John i. 12.

Yet further, it pleased God in his infinite wisdom and mercy, to mark out the way of life and peace in the holy scriptures, and therein to disclose the secrets of salvation to succeeding generations. Herein he hath plainly laid down the terms of the covenant of peace, which was made in the Mediator, and hath given precepts and promises for the direction and encouragement of all who will enquire into the same. These are the sacred oracles, which give clear and certain answers to all that do consult them about their future state, *Rom. iii. 2.* Christ Jesus opened the way into the holiest of all; and the scriptures follow after and point it out unto us: he purchased life and immortality; and these bring it to light, *2 Tim. i. 10.*

And yet, that these might not be mistaken or perverted to men's destruction, which were ordained for their salvation, which sometimes doth come to pass, *2 Pet. iii. 16.* God hath been pleased to commit these records into the hands of his

church, and therein to his ministers, whom he hath appointed, called, qualified, instructed, for opening, explaining, interpreting, and applying them: so that they are called *scribes, instructed unto the kingdom of God, and stewards of the mysteries, stewards of the household of God, to give unto every one his portion.* These apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, God hath given *for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ,* Eph. iv. 11, 12.

These things hath God done for us, from without us; he hath set up a light, marked out our way, and appointed us guides. To which, I might add the many incitements and motives, which we call mercies or comforts of this life; and the many affrightments of judgments and afflictions which God hath added to the promises and threatenings of his word, to bring us into the way of life. But all these are too little, too inefficient of themselves to restore a wandering soul, or to produce a living principle of true religion in it. Therefore,

2. God is the author of religion from within. He doth not only reveal himself and his Son to the soul, but in it; he doth not only make discoveries to it, but lively impressions upon it; he doth not only appoint, and point out the way of life, but breathes into the soul the breath of life. He hath not only provided a Saviour, a Redeemer; but he also draws the soul unto him, *John vi. 44.* He hath not only appointed pastors and teachers, but he himself gives efficacy to their word, and clothes their doctrine with his own power, using their ministry as an instrument of

instruction; so that the children of God are said to be *all taught of God*, John vi. 45. Ministers can only discover, and, as it were, enlighten the object; but God enlightens the faculty; he gives the seeing eye, and does actually enable it to discern. Therefore the work of converting a soul is still ascribed to God in scripture; he begets us again, *1 Pet. i. 3.* he draws the soul, before it can run after him, *Cant. i. 4.* Christ apprehends the soul; lays powerful hold of it, *Phil. iii. 12.* God gives a heart of flesh, a new heart; he causes men to walk in his statutes, *Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.* He puts his law into their inward parts, and writes it in their hearts, *Jer. xxxi. 33.* To which I might add many more quotations of the same import.

But, methinks, we have not yet perfectly discovered that religion is the work of God in the minds of men. For it is God who enlighteneth the faculty as to the learning of all other things also; he teacheth the grammar and the rhetoric, as well as the divinity; he instructeth even the husbandman to discretion in his affairs of husbandry, and teaches him to plow, and sow, and thresh, &c. *Isa. xxviii. 26.* Not only the gift of divine knowledge, but indeed *every good gift cometh from the father of lights*, James i. 17. God doth from within give that capacity, illumination of the mind, whereby we comprehend the mysteries of nature, as well as of grace, *John i. 9.*

Therefore we may conceive that the origin of religion is more inward and spiritual still. It is not so much given of God, as itself is something of God in the soul; as the soul is not so

properly said to give life, as to be the life of man. As the conjunction of the soul with the body, constitutes the life of the body; so also the life of the soul consists in its connexion with God by a spiritual union of the will and affections. God doth not enlighten men's minds as the sun enlightens the world, by shining upon them, and round about them; but by shining into them; by enlightening the mind, as I said before; yea, which seems to be somewhat more, by shining in their hearts, as the apostle expresseth it, *2 Cor. iv. 6.* He sets up a candle, which is his own light within the soul; so that the soul sees God in his own light, and loves him with the love that he hath shed abroad in it; and religion is no other than a reflection of that divine image, life, and light, and love, which from God are stamped and imprinted upon the souls of true christians. God is said to enlighten the soul, but it is not as the sun enlightens; so he draws the soul too, but not from without only, as one man draweth another with a cord; as *Jupiter in Homer* draws men up to heaven by a chain; and *Mahomet* his disciples by a lock of hair; but he draws the soul, as the sun draws up earthly vapours by infusing its virtue and power into them; or, as the loadstone draws the iron, by the powerful attractions of his grace. God doth not so much communicate himself to the soul by way of discovery, as by way of impression, as I said before; and indeed not so much by impression neither, as by a mysterious and wonderful implantation. Religion is not so much something from God, as something of God in the minds of good men; for so the scripture allows

us to speak: it is therefore called his image, *Col. iii. 10.* and good men are said to *live according to God in the spirit.* *1 Pet. iv. 6.* but, as if that were not noble enough, it is not only called his image, but even a participation of his divine nature, *2 Pet. i. 4.* something of Christ in the soul, an infant-Christ as one calls it, alluding to the apostle, *Gal. iv. 19.* where the saving knowledge of Christ is called Christ himself,—*until Christ be formed in you.* True religion is, as it were, God dwelling in the soul, and Christ dwelling in the soul, as the apostles St. John and St. Paul do express it; yea, God himself is pleased thus to express his relation to the godly soul, *Isa. lvii. 15.* *I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a humble spirit;* and again, *2 Cor. vi. 16.* *As God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them.* Pure religion is a beam of the Father of lights, *lumin de lumine;* [a light from a light,] it is a drop of that eternal fountain of goodness and holiness; the breath of the power of God, a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty, the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness, more beautiful than the sun, and above all the orders of stars; being compared with the light, she is found before it, as the author of the book of *Wisdom* speaks, chap. vii. What is spoken of the eternal Son of God, *Heb. i. 3.* may, in a sense, be truly affirmed of religion in the heaven born soul, that it is “the effulgence or beaming forth of divine glory;” for there is more of the divine glory and beauty shining forth in one godly soul, than in all things in the world.

beside: the glorious light of the sun is but a dark shadow of the divine light, not to be compared with the beauty of holiness. An immortal soul doth more resemble the divine nature than any other created being doth; but religion in the soul is a thousand times more divine than the soul itself. The material world is indeed a faint representation of divine wisdom, power, and goodness; it is as it were the footsteps of God: the immaterial world of angels and spirits does represent him more clearly, and thus are the face of God: but holiness in the soul doth the most nearly resemble him of all created things; we may call it the beauty and glory of his face. Every creature partakers of God; he had no copy but himself and his own essence by which to frame the world; so that all these must necessarily bear some resemblance of their Maker. But no other creature is capable of receiving such communications from God as a rational immortal spirit is; and the highest that angel or spirit, or any created nature can be made capable of, is to be *holy as God is holy*. So then if the poet may call the soul, which St. Paul allows him to do, *Divinæ particula auræ*, [a particle of divine breath;] sure one may rather speak thus of religion, which is the highest perfection that the soul can attain to, either in the present or future world. One soul, the soul of any man, excels all the world beside in glory and dignity; but the lowest degree of true holiness, pure religion, conformity to the divine nature and will, is of more worth than a world of souls, and to be preferred before the essence of angels. I

have often admired three great mysteries and mercies, God revealed in the flesh, God revealed in the word, God revealed in the soul: this last is the mystery of godliness of which I am speaking, but which I cannot fathom: it is this that the apostle says transcends all that our eyes have seen, our ears heard, or our souls conceived, *1 Cor. ii. 9. Eye hath not seen, &c.* Christ Jesus formed in the soul of man, is as great a miracle, and a greater mercy, than Christ formed in the womb of a virgin. There was once much glorying concerning Christ in the *Israel*; but let us call to the powers of eternity, and the ages of the world to come, to help us to celebrate and magnify Christ in us *the hope of glory*; or, if you will, Christ in us *the first-fruits of glory*. What has been said may, *First*, Help us in our discovery of that precious pearl, Religion. There is nothing that men do generally seek more, or less find: no nation in the world but hath aimed at it in one way or another; but alas, how few have obtained it! At the present day, there are many claims to it, and all pretend they have a just title: the men of Judah cry, She is of kin to us; the men of *Israel* say, We have ten parts in this queen; we have more right in religion than ye; as they formerly contended about King David, *2 Sam. xix.* They say of Christ, in the same manner, though perhaps not in the same sense, as was foretold, Lo, here he is; and, lo, there he is; which hath made many say, he is not at all: or, to continue the same illusion, they live by the rule that there follows; they will not go forth to seek him any where. Mighty strivings, yea, and wars there have been,

about the *Prince of Peace*, whose he should be: and at this day no question more debated, nor less decided, than which is the most correct religious party in the land. Would to God that men would dispute this controversy with works and not with words; much less with blows! Religion is of an eminent pedigree, of a noble descent; you may find her name in the register of heaven; where God is, there is she. She carries her name in her forehead; her divine disposition, the divine works which she worketh, which no one else can work, do bear witness which is she. I am ready to say with the man that had been blind, *John ix. 3.* herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not who Religion is, and yet she is the mighty power of God, opening the eyes, changing the hearts, and, as it were, deifying the souls of men. Why do we not also go about enquiring which of those many stars in the firmament is the moon? If ye ask about the best religious party, I will point you to the blessed and eternal God, and say, As he is, so are they, in their capacity, each one resembling the children of a king; or I will point out the real Christian by the same token as Christ himself was designated to John the Baptist, *John i. 33.* *Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining, the same is he.* If ye enquire about the children of God, the apostle shall describe them for you, *Eph. v. 1.* the followers of God are his dear children.

Call that religion which is most nearly allied to the nature and life of God, under whatever disguises or reproaches it may go in the world.

Examine the world by no lower standard than that character that is given of David, 1 Sam. xiii. 14. and the man that doth appear to be after God's heart, namely, conformable to his image, compliant with his will, and studious of his glory, pitch upon; for that is the best man, under what name soever he goes; of what party or faction soever he is. And let no soul examine itself by any lower standard than this, "a participation of the divine nature; conformity to the divine image." Examine what alliance your soul hath to God; *whose is the image and superscription.* Religion is divine, proceeds from God, and may, by its affinity to heaven, be discerned from a child of hell and darkness. Therefore, Christians, if you will make a judgment of your state, apply your hearts and lives to the rule, the eternal goodness, the uncreated purity and holiness; and see whether you resemble that pattern; for conformity to the image and will of God, is Religion; and God will own that as his, when all counterfeits and shadows shall fly away, and disappear for ever. I fear it may be imputed as vanity and idle curiosity to many counterfeit, speculative Christians, that they are very inquisitive, prying into the hidden rolls of God's decree, the secrets of predestination, to find out the causes and method of their vocation and salvation; in the meantime they are not solicitous for, nor studious of the relation and resemblance that every religious soul bears unto God himself; of the heaven that is opened within the godly soul itself; and the whole plan and mystery of salvation transacted in the heart of a true Christian.

It is a vanity which I have observed in many pretenders to nobility and learning, that they seek to demonstrate the one by their coat of arms and the records of their family, and the other by a gown, or a title, or their names standing in the register of the university, rather than by the accomplishments and behaviour of gentlemen or scholars. A like vanity, I doubt not, may be observed in many pretenders to religion: some are searching God's decrees, to find their names written in the book of life; when they should be studying to find God's name written upon their hearts, *holiness to the Lord* engraven upon their souls: some are busy in examining themselves by notes and marks without them; when they should labour to find the marks and prints of God and his nature upon them: some have their religion in their books and authors, when it should be the law of God written in the tables of the heart; some glory in the greatness of their duties, and in the multitude of their pompous performances, and religious achievements, crying, with *Jehu*, *Come, see here my zeal for the Lord*; whereas, it were much more excellent, if one could see their likeness to the Lord, and the characters of divine beauty and holiness drawn upon their hearts and lives. But we, if we would judge rightly of our religious state, must view ourselves in God, who is the fountain of all goodness and holiness, and the rule of all perfection. Value yourselves by your souls, and not by your bodies, estates, friends, or any outward accomplishments, as most men do: but that is not enough; if men rest there, they make an idol of the fairest of God's crea-

tures, even of their own souls; therefore value your souls themselves by what they have of God in them.

To study the blessed and glorious God in his word, and to converse with him in his works, is indeed an excellent and honourable employment; but O, what a blessed study is it to view him in the communications of himself, and the impressions of his grace upon our own souls! All the thin and subtle speculations which the most exalted philosophers have of the essence and nature of God are a poor, low, and beggardly employment and attainment, in comparison of those blessed visions of God, which a godly soul hath in itself, when it finds itself partaker of a divine nature, and living a divine life. O labour to view God and his divine perfections in your own souls, in those copies and transcripts of them which his holy Spirit draws upon the hearts of all godly men. This is the most excellent discovery of God of which any soul is capable; it is better and more desirable than that glorious discovery that was made to Moses in the cleft of the rock, *Exod.* xxxiii. Nay, I should much rather see the real impression of a God-like nature upon my own soul; the crucifying of my own pride and self-will; the mortifying of the mere sensual life, and a divine life springing up in my soul instead of it; I would much rather see my soul glorified with the image and beauty of God put upon it, (which is indeed a pledge, yea, and a part of eternal glory,) than to have a vision from the Almighty, or hear a voice witnessing from heaven, and saying, *Thou art my beloved Son, in whom my soul is well pleas-*

ed. This of which I am speaking, is a true foundation of heaven itself in the soul, a real beginning of happiness; for happiness, heaven itself, is nothing but a perfect conformity, a cheerful and eternal compliance of all the powers of the soul with the will of God; so that as far as a godly soul is thus conformed to God, and filled with his fulness, so far is he glorified upon earth. *Sed heu quantum distamus ab illo!* [But, ah! how far are we from being like him!]

Secondly, Let wisdom then be justified of her children; let the children of God, those that are his genuine offspring, rise up and call him blessed, in imitation of their Lord and Saviour, that only Son of God, that *first-born amongst many brethren*, who rejoiced in spirit, and said, *I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast revealed these things*, Luke x. 21. or, according to the style of the apostle Peter, 1 *Pet.* i. 3. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again!* There is no greater contradiction, than that a man should pretend to religion, and yet ascribe it to himself; whereas pure religion is wholly of divine origin: besides, religion doth principally consist in the subduing of self-will, in conformity to, and compliance with the divine will in promoting God's glory in the world. Then, and not till then, may a soul be truly called religious, when God becomes its supreme object of desire, and the interest of God is so powerfully planted in it, that no other interest, no self-interest, no creature-love, no particular private end, can grow with it, any more than the magicians could stand

before Moses, when he came, in the power of God, to work wonders. So that what Solomon saith of self-seeking, Prov. xxv. 26. *For men to seek their own glory is not glory*, I may safely say, upon the principles I have laid down, selfish religion is not religion. How vainly and madly do men dream that their self-religion will carry them to heaven; when heaven itself is nothing but the perfection of self-denial, and God becoming all things to the saints, 1 Cor. xv. 28. Instead of advancing men towards heaven, there is nothing that doth more directly war against heaven, than that proud and petulant spirit of self-will that rules in the children of disobedience. So that when the Holy Ghost would describe David, one of the best of men, to the best advantage, he describes him as opposing self and self-will, 1 Sam. xiii. 14. *A man after God's own heart*; and, Acts xiii. 36. *He served the will of God in his generation*.

There were of old a great number of philosophical men, who being raised above contemplating their own souls, which is the logical life, unto a contemplation of a Deity, and being purified by a lower kind of virtue and moral goodness, from the pollutions that are in this world through lust, did yet ultimately settle into themselves, and their own self-love. They were full indeed, but it was not with *the fulness of God*, as the apostle speaks, but with a self-sufficiency; the leaven of self-love lying at the bottom did make them swell with pride and self-conceit. Now though these men were free from gross external enormities, yet they did not attain to a true

knowledge of God, nor to any true religion, because they set up themselves to be their own idols, and carried such an image of themselves continually before their eyes, that they had no clear and spiritual discernment of God. They did, as is related of one of the Persian Kings, enshrine themselves in a temple of their own. But why speak I of heathen philosophers? Is there not the same odious spirit of self-adoration to be found among many Christians, yea, and teachers of Christianity too? Witness that whole class of men, who, whilst they suspend the grace of God upon man's free-will, do utterly rob him of his glory. Some of these have impudently given a short, but unsavoury answer to the apostle's question, in 1 Cor. iv. 7. *Who maketh you to differ from another? Ego meipsum discerno*, "I make myself to differ!" These men, while they pretend to high attainments, do discover a low and most ignoble spirit. To fasten and feed upon any thing in the creature, is the part of a low and degenerate spirit; on the other hand, it is the greatest perfection of the creature, not to be its own, not to be any thing in itself; but to be wholly dependant on the blessed God, the father and fountain of light and grace. Holy Paul constantly exhibits a different spirit, as in 1 Cor. xv. 10. *I, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me*. I have mentioned before the fair and honourable character the Holy Ghost hath given of holy David, *a man after God's own heart*: now you may also find a description of these men in Scripture, not much differing from the other in phrase, but very much in sense; it is the same

that is given of the proud prince of Tyrus, Ezek. xxviii. 2. *They set their heart as the heart of God.* But we, if we do indeed partake of the divine nature, shall not dare to claim any part of the divine glory; if we conform to God's image, we shall not set up our own. This self-glorying, in the predominancy of it, is as utterly inconsistent with true religion, as fire is with water: for religion is nothing else but the image of God upon the soul, the reflection of a beauty and glory which God hath put upon it. Give all therefore unto God; for whatever is kept back, is sacrilegiously purloined from him. Let us glory in the fulness of God alone; and in our own penury and nothingness. The whole of religion is of God. Do we see and discern the great things of God? It is by that light that God hath set up in us; according to the apostle, 1 Cor. ii. 11. *The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.* That love whereby we love him, he first shed abroad in our hearts. If our souls be beautiful, it is with his brightness, the beauty and glory of essential holiness, according to the apostle, Heb. xiii. 10. *Partakers of his holiness.* If we be really and truly full, we receive it of his fulness, according to the apostle, Eph. iii. 19. *Filled with all the fulness of God.* In a word, if we have any God-like disposition, it is by his spreading of his image in us, and over us. By all which it appears to be a thing not only wicked and unwarrantable, but utterly impossible for a godly soul to exalt himself against God; or for grace to advance itself against divine glory: for, grace is nothing else but a communication of divine glory;

and God is then glorified, when the soul, by holy and gracious dispositions, becomes like unto him. How is it possible that grace should be a shadow to obscure divine glory, when itself is nothing else, as it comes from God, but a beam of glory? And as it is found in the creature, may properly be called a reflection of that glory. To conclude then, be ye persuaded, that a man hath so much of God as he hath of humility, and self-denial, and self-nothingness, and no more; he is so far of God, as he loves him, honours him, imitates him, and lives to him, and no farther.

Thirdly, By this discovery of the origin of religion, we come to understand the origin of sin and wickedness. And here, according to the method in which I spoke of the origin of religion, I might shew that the origin of sin from without is of the devil; who first ushered it into the world, and ceased not to tempt men to it continually; so also I might shew that men are his instruments; and that sin does, in a sense, spring from many external sources. But these things are more improperly said to be the causes of sin. The inward cause is the corrupt heart of man; that unclean spirit, that unholy nature, which is indeed the worst and most pernicious devil in the world to man. It is an old saying, *Homo homini dæmon*; "one man is a devil to another;" and though it be in some sense true, yet it is more proper to say, *Homo sibi dæmon*, "man is a devil to himself;" taking the spirit and principle of apostacy, that rebellious nature, for the devil, which indeed doth best deserve that name. But yet, if we enquire more strictly into the origin and

nature of this monster, we shall best know what to say of it, and how to describe it, by what we have heard of religion. Sin then, to speak properly, is nothing else but a degeneration from a holy state, an apostacy from a holy God. Religion is a participation of God; and sin is a departure from him. Therefore it is usually defined by negatives; departing from God; forsaking him; living in the world without him, &c. The soul's deflection from God, describes the general nature of sin; but then, as it sinks into itself, or settles upon the world, and fastens upon the creature, or any thing therein; so it becomes specific, and is called pride, covetousness, ambition, and by many other names. All souls are the offspring of God, were originally formed in his image and likeness; and when they express the purity and holiness of the divine nature, by being perfect, as God is perfect, then are they called the children of God: but those impure spirits that do depart from God, may be said to implant themselves into another stock by their own low and earthly lives, and are no more owned as the children of God, but *are of their father the devil*, John x. 44. By which you may understand the low and base origin of sin: nothing can be so vile as that which, to speak properly, is nothing else but an entire falling off from glory itself. By this you may also discover the miserable condition of unholy souls. We need not call for fire and brimstone to portray the wretched state of sinful souls. Sin itself is hell and death, and misery to the soul, being a departure from goodness and from holiness itself; I mean

from God, in conjunction with whom the happiness, and blessedness, and heaven of a soul do consist. Avoid it therefore, as you would avoid being miserable.

CHAP. II.

True religion described, as to the nature of it, by water; a metaphor usual in the Scriptures;

1. *By reason of the cleansing virtues of it. The defiling nature of sin, and the beauty of holiness manifested.* 2. *By reason of the quenching virtue of it. This briefly touched upon, and the more full discussion of it, referred to its proper place.* *The nature of religion described by a well of water: that it is a principle in the souls of men, proved by much Scripture. An examination of religion by this test; by which examination are excluded all things that are merely external; external reformations and performances. A godly man hath neither the whole of his business, nor his motives lying without him. In the same examination many things internal found not to be religion: it is no sudden passion of the mind; no, not though the same amount to an ecstasy; nor any thing begotten and maintained by fancy, and the mere power of imagination.*

I SHALL now attempt to explain the nature of true religion, which is here described by our blessed Lord, by a well of water. *First, By water. Secondly, By a well of water.* I shall speak

something of both these, but more briefly of the former.

1. Pure religion, or gospel grace, is described by water. This is a comparison very familiar in the holy Scriptures, both of the Old Testament and the New. By this similitude gospel grace was typified in the ceremonial law; wherein both persons and things, ceremonially unclean, were commanded to be washed in water, as is abundantly to be seen in that administration. Under this notion the same grace is prayed for by the Psalmist, when he had defiled himself in the bed of a stranger, Ps. li. 7. *Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.* He had drunk water out of a strange cistern, as his son Solomon describes that unclean act, *Prov. v. 15.* and now he prays for water from the fountain of grace, to cleanse him: he now cries for water from the fountain of grace, from the blessed Messiah, that sprung up into the world at Bethlehem; and that, with more earnestness than formerly, when he wished for the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate, *2 Sam. xxiii. 15.* In the same phrase the same grace is promised by the ministry of the prophets, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto us. Thus we read of the fair and flourishing state of the church, *Isa. lviii. 11. Thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not;* and of the fruitful state of the gospel proselytes, *Joel iii. 18. All the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim.* That these promises are un-

derstood of the grace of sanctification, the prophet Ezekiel sheweth plainly, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. *I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you;* for ordinary, elementary water cannot cleanse men from idols. The prophet Isaiah also puts it out of doubt; whose prophesy, together with the interpretation of it, we find both in one verse, Isa. xlv. 3. *I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring.* By the same ceremony the gospel dispensation represents the same mystery in the sacrament of baptism; and, by the same phrase our Saviour offers and promises the same grace, John vii. 37. *If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink:* and his apostles after him, who, in allusion to water, call this grace the *washing of regeneration*, Tit. iii. 5. To which I might add 1 Pet. iii. 21. and many other texts if it needed.

Now, as the grace of God is compared to fire, because of its refining nature, and because of its consuming the dross and refuse of lust in the soul; and to other things, for other reasons: so it is compared to water, especially for those two properties, namely, cleansing and quenching: for observe this by the way, that it is a very injurious thing to the Holy Ghost, to press the metaphors which he useth in Scripture, further than they do naturally and freely serve. Neither are we to adhere to the letter of the metaphor, but to attend unto the scope of it. If we tenaciously adhere to the phraseology, cavillers

will be ready to quarrel with absurdities; and so unawares run into strange blasphemies: they will immediately exclaim, How can fire wash? when they read in the prophet, *Isa. iv. 4. The Lord will wash away the filth of the daughter of Zion, by the spirit of burning.* But who art thou, O man! that wilt teach him to speak who formed the tongue? The Spirit of God intends the virtue and property of things, when he names them; and to that we must chiefly attend.

1. Therefore, by the phrase water, is the cleansing nature of religion commended to us: it is the purifying of the soul, which sin and wickedness hath polluted: sin is often described in Scripture by filthiness, loathsomeness, abomination, uncleanness, a spot, blemish, stain, pollution; which indeed is a most proper description of it. The spots of leprosy, and the scurf of the foulest scurvy, are beautiful in comparison with it; Job upon the dunghill, covered with scabs and boils, was not half so loathsome as comely Absalom in whose body *there was no blemish from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head*; but whose soul was stained with the bloody spots of malice and revenge, and festered with the loathsome sores and swellings of ambition. Lazarus, lying at the gates, full of running sores, was a far more lovely object to the pure eyes of God, than Jezebel, looking out at the window, adorned with spots and paints. If the best that a godly man hath of his own, even his righteousness, be as a filthy rag, *Isa. lxiv. 6.* whence shall we borrow a phrase bad enough to describe the worst of a wicked man, even his wickedness? I need say

no more of it, I can say no worse of it, than to tell you it is something contrary to God, who is the eternal Father of light, who is beauty, and brightness, and glory itself; or, in the apostle's phrase, *Rom. iii. 23. A falling short of the glory of God.* Which hath made me many times wonder, and almost cry out with the prophet, *Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this!* when I have seen poor, ignorant, wicked, and profane wretches, passing by a person or a family visited with some loathsome disease, with a mixture of fear and disdain, stopping their nostrils, and hastening away; when their own souls have been more vile than any reptile upon the earth, spotted with ignorance and atheism, and puffed up with pride and self-will, and contempt of God and his holy image. This might well be matter of wonder to any man, till he considers with himself, that one part of the uncleanness of those men, is that very blindness which keeps them from discerning it; I speak principally of the defilement of the soul; though indeed the same pollutes the whole conversation: every action springing from such an unclean heart, thereby becomes filthy; even as the hand of Moses, put into his bosom, became leprous, *Exod. iv. 6.* or rather, as one that is unclean by a dead body, defileth all that he toucheth, *Hag. ii. 13.*

Now, religion subdues this unclean spirit and conversation: so that, though the soul were formerly as filthy and odious as Augeas' stable,*

* Augeas had immense herds, and the stable in which they were kept had never been cleansed, so that the task seemed impossible. Hercules, undertaking it, changed the course of a river; and by that means immediately cleansed it.

when once those living waters flow into it, and through it, from the pure fountain of grace and holiness, the Spirit of our God; one may say of it as the apostle said of the Corinthians, 1 Cor. vi. 11. *Such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, &c.* The soul that before was white as leprosy, is now white as wool, *Isa. i. 18.* The soul that before was like Moses' hand, leprous as snow, is now like Davids' heart, white as snow; yea, and whiter too, *Ps. li. 7.* O what a beauty and glory is put upon the soul, that shines with the image and brightness of God upon it! Solomon, in all his glory, was not beautiful like such a soul: nay, I dare say, the splendour of the sun, in its greatest strength and altitude, is a faint glimmering, if compared with the day-star of religion, which even in this life, arises in the heart; or, in the prophets' stile, *the sun of righteousness, which ariseth with healing in his wings,* upon them that fear the name of God. To speak without a metaphor, the godly soul, having received into itself the pure emanations of divine light and love, breathes after nothing more than to see with nearer vision, and love more ardently: its inclinations are pure and holy; its emotions spiritual and powerful; its delights high and heavenly; it may be said to rest in its love; and yet it may be said, that love will not suffer it to rest, but is still urging it forward to a more intimate union with its beloved object. What is said of the ointment of Christ's name, *Cant. i. 3.* is true of the water of his Spirit, it is *poured forth, therefore do the virgins love him.* Religion begets a pure and holy love in the soul towards that blessed God that

begat it; it bathes itself in the Fountain that produced it; and basks perpetually in the warm beams that first originated it. Religion proceeds from God himself, and is ever returning towards God alone, passionately breathing with the holy Psalmist, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? in earth there is none that I desire beside thee!* The soul that formerly may be said to have lain among the pots, by reason of its filthiness, is now as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold: the soul that formerly may be said to have sat down by the flesh-pots of Egypt, because of its sensual and earthly loves, being redeemed by the almighty grace of God, is upon its way to the holy land, hastening to a country not earthly but heavenly, *Heb. xi. 16.* This pure principle being put into the soul, excites holy studies, indites holy meditations, directs it to high and noble ends, and makes all its embraces to be pure and holy, labouring to be like God himself, though before it was impure and idolatrous; free for sin and self and the world, to lodge and rest in. In a word, this offspring of heaven, this King's daughter, the godly soul, is *all glorious within; yea, and outwardly too, she is clothed with wrought gold, Ps. xlv. 13.* Her faith is more precious than gold, *1 Pet. i. 7.* and her conversation is curiously made up of an embroidery of good works, some of piety, some of charity, some of sobriety, but all of purity, and shineth with more noble and excellent splendour, than the high priest's garments and breast-plate adorned with such variety of precious stones. This precious ointment, this holy unction, as the apostle calls

it, 1 *John* ii. 20. diffuses itself like that of Aaron, and ten thousand times more fragrant, though that was so much commended in *Ps.* cxxxiii. running down from his head upon his beard, and from thence upon the skirts of his garment. *Not my feet only, but my hands and my head, Lord,* said Peter, *John* xiii. 9. not well knowing what he said; but the soul that is truly sensible of the excellent purity which is caused by divine purifyings, desires to have the whole man, the whole life also, made partaker of it, and cries Lord, not my head only, not my heart only, but my hands and my feet also; make me wholly pure, as God is pure. In a word then, true religion is the cleansing of the soul, and all the powers of it; so that, whereas murderers sometimes lodged in it; now righteousness. The den of thieves, thievish lusts and pleasures, and interests and pursuits, which formerly stole away the soul from God, its right owner, is now become a temple fit for the great King to dwell, and live, and reign in; and the whole conversation is turned from its accustomed vanity, worldliness, and iniquity, and is continually employed about things that are *true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report*, *Phil.* iv. 8.

2. By the phrase *water*, the quenching nature of religion is commended to us. God hath endued the immortal soul with a restless appetite, and raging thirst after some chief good; which the heart of every man is continually groping after, and aiming at, though indeed few find it, because they seek it where it is not to be found. If we speak properly, it is not gold or silver, or popular applause, at which the covetous or ambitious

mind doth ultimately aim; but some chief good, happiness, sufficiency, and satisfaction in these things; in which they are more guilty of contempt than atheism: for it is clear, that they do not deny a supreme good; for that at which men do chiefly and ultimately aim, is their god, be it what it will; but they do verily contemn the true God, when they place their happiness where it is not to be found, and attribute that fulness and sufficiency to something else besides the living God. Sin hath not destroyed the nature and capacity of the rational soul, but hath diverted the mind from its adequate object, and hath sunk it into the creature; where it wanders to and fro, like a banished man, from one den and cave to another, but is secure no where. A wicked man, who is alienated from God by sin, and departed from the fountain of his life, flies low in his affections, and flutters perpetually about the earth, and earthly objects, but can find no more rest for the foot of his soul, than Noah's dove could find for the sole of her foot. Now, religion is the hand that restores this wandering bird to her own ark from whence she was departed; it settles the soul upon its proper object, and quenches its burning thirst after happiness. And for this reason it is called water in scripture, as appears from *Isa. lviii. 11. The Lord shall satisfy thy soul in drought; and Isa. xlv. 3. I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; compared with John vii. 37. Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.* Religion is a taste of infinite goodness, which quenches the soul's thirst after

all created and finite good; even as that taste which honest Nathanael had of Christ's divinity, took him off from any expectation of the Messiah to come, and made him cry out presently, *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel*, John i. 49. And every religious soul hath such a taste of God, even in this life, which, though it do not perfectly fill him, yet doth perfectly assure him where all fulness dwells. But of this I shall discourse more largely, when I treat of the consequent of true religion.

I proceed, therefore, to the second phrase, whereby our Saviour describes the nature of true religion; it is a well, a fountain in the soul: *Shall be in him a well of water*. From which phrase, to wave particulars, I shall only observe, "That Religion is a principle in the souls of men."

The water that Christ infuses into the soul, is not like the water that he pours upon our streets, that washes them, and runs away; but it becomes a cleansing principle within the soul itself; every drop from God becomes a fountain in man; not as if man had a well in himself, or were the first spring of his own motions towards God: I find not any will in the natural man so divinely free. God hath indeed given this to his natural Son, his only begotten Son, to have *life in himself*, John v. 26, but not to any of his adopted ones. If you ask me concerning man in his natural capacity, I am so far from thinking that he hath a self-quickening power, a principle of life in himself, that I must assert the contrary with the apostle, that he is *dead in trespasses and sins*,

Eph. ii. 1 and so far from thinking that he hath in himself a well of water, I must call him, with the prophet, *Isa. xlv. 3. thirsty and dry ground.* In regard to the regenerate man, I will not enter into that deep controversy concerning the co-operation of man's will with the Spirit of God, and its subordination to that in all gracious acts; or how far this renewed will of man may be safely called the cause of them; only, I will affirm, that repenting and believing are properly man's acts, and yet they are performed by God's power. Christ must give this water, ere it can be a well of water in the soul; which is enough, I suppose to clear me from siding with either of those parties, either with those that ascribe to God that which he cannot do, or, with those that ascribe to free-will that which God alone can do. But I fear nothing from these controversies; for that way wherein I shall discourse of this matter, will not at all border upon them.

This, then, I affirm, that religion is a living principle in the souls of good men. I cannot better describe the nature of religion, than to say it is a nature; for so does the apostle speak, or at least allows us to speak, when he calls it a participation of a divine nature, *2 Pet. i. 4.* Nothing but a nature can partake of a nature; a man's friend may partake of his goodness and kindness, but his child only partakes of his nature; he that begets, begets a nature; and so doth he that begets again. The sun enlightens the world outwardly, but it does not give a nature like its own to the things so enlightened; and the rain doth moisten the earth, and refresh it inwardly, but it does not beget the nature of water in the earth:

But this water that I give, says our Saviour, becometh a well of water in the soul. Religion is not any thing external to a man, hanging upon him, or annexed to him; neither is it every thing that is in a man, as we shall soon see; but it is a divine principle forming and actuating the souls of good men; a living and lively principle, an inward and spiritual principle. I must not speak of all these separately in this place, for it would interfere with my discourse.

When I say religion is a principle, a vital form actuating the soul, and all the powers of it, an inward nature, &c. saith not the scripture the same here: a well or fountain of water? And elsewhere, a *new man, the hidden man of the heart, the inward man*, Eph. iv. 24. 1 Pet. iii. 4. As the soul is called an inward man, in respect to the body, 2 Cor. iv. 16. so religion is called an inward man in respect to the soul itself, Rom. vii. 22. It is a man within a man.—The man that is truly alive to God, hath not only inward parts, (for so a dead man hath,) but an inward man, an inward nature and principle. Again, it is called a root, Job. xix. 28. or, if not there, yet plainly, in Mark iv. 17. where temporary professors are said to have no root in themselves. And this is by the same propriety of speech, as that by which a wicked principle is called a *root of bitterness*, Heb. xii. 15. Again, it is called a seed, *the seed of God*, 1 John iii. 9. where this seed of God is called an abiding or remaining principle. In the first creation, God made the trees of the earth, having their seed in themselves, Gen. i. 11. and in the new creation, these trees of righteousness of

God's planting, are also made with seed in themselves, though not of themselves: it is said to be the seed of God indeed, but remaining in the godly soul. Again, it is called a treasure, in opposition to an alms or annuity, that lasteth but for a day or a year; as a well of water, in opposition to a draught of water; and a treasure of the heart, in opposition to all outward and earthly treasures, *Matt. xii. 35.*—It is a treasure affording continual supplies, not exhausted, but increased by expending; wherein it exceeds all treasures in the world. By the same propriety of speech, sin is called a treasure too, but it is an evil treasure, as our Saviour says in that same place. Do you not see what a stock of wickedness sinful men have within themselves, and although they have spent upon it ever since they were born, yet it is not impaired, nay, it is much augmented thereby; and shall not the second Adam bestow something as certain and permanent upon his offspring, as the first Adam conveyed to his posterity? Though men have something without them, to guide them in the way of life, yet it is a living principle within them, that denominates them living men. The Scripture will abundantly inform you which is the true circumcision, *Col. ii. 11.* the true sacrifice to God, *Ps. li. 17.* And indeed the law itself is not so much to be considered as it was engraven in tables of stone, as, *being written in the heart, Jer. xxxi.* The Jews needed not to have taken up their rest in the law, considered as an outward rule or precept; for they knew, or might have known, that God requireth *truth in the inward parts*, as one

of themselves, a prophet and king of their own, acknowledgeth, *Ps. li. 6.* I doubt not but many christians are also sick with the same disease, whilst they view the gospel as a history, and an external dispensation; whereas the apostle, when he opposeth it to the law, seems altogether to make it an internal thing, a vital form and principle seated in the minds and spirits of men, *2 Cor. iii. 3.*

The law was an external rule or dispensation that could not give life, though it shewed the way to it, *Gal. iii. 21.* but the gospel, in the most proper notion of it, seems to be an internal impression from God, a living principle, whereby the soul is enabled to express a real conformity to God himself. If we consider the gospel as a history only, and as a human composition, it is as weak and impotent a thing as the law was; and men may be as remiss and formal in the possession of this as they were of that; which we see by daily experience. But if we consider the gospel as an emanation of life and power from God himself upon the soul, producing life wherever it comes, then we have a clear distinction between the law and the gospel; to which the apostle seems to refer, when he calls the *Corinthians the epistle of Christ, not written with ink, nor in tables of stone, but with the spirit of the living God, in fleshly tables of the heart, 2 Cor. iii. 3.* According to which notion of the law and gospel, I think we may, with a learned man of our own, understand that text, *Jer. xxxi. 33.* quoted by the apostle, *Heb. x. 16.* *This is the covenant that I will make, I will put my law into their minds &c.* The

gospel doth not so much consist in words as in virtue; a divine principle of religion in the soul, is the best gospel; and so Abraham and Moses under the law, were truly possessed of the gospel, and, on the other hand, all carnal christians that converse with the gospel only as a thing without them, are as truly legal, and as far short of the righteousness of God, as any of the Jews were. Thus we see that religion is a principle in the souls of good men,—*shall be in him a well of water.*

We shall now notice the difference between true religion, and all counterfeits. Religion is that pearl of great price, of which few men are possessed, though all pretend to it, Laodicean-like, saying, *they are rich and need nothing*, when indeed *they are poor and have nothing*. This, then, shall be the test by which, at present, we will try the counterfeit pearls. True religion is an inward nature, an inward and abiding principle in the minds of good men, *a well of water.*

1. Then we must exclude all things that are merely external; these are not religion. Religion is not something annexed to the soul, externally, but a new nature put into it. And here we shall glance at two things:

1st, A godly soul does not find the whole of his business lying without him. Religion does not consist in external reformations, though ever so many and precious. A false and slight religion serves to tie mens hands, and reduce their outward actions to a fair appearance in the eyes of men; but true religion's chief domain and power is over the soul, and its business lies mostly in

reforming and purging the heart, with all the affections and motions thereof. It is not an engine working outwardly, and serving to beat down the out-works of open and visible enormities of life; but it enters with a secret and sweet power into the soul itself, and reduces it from a rebellious temper, and persuades it willingly to surrender itself, and all that is in it. Sin may be beaten out of the outward conduct, and yet retire and hide itself in the secret places of the soul, and there bear rule as perfectly by wicked instigations, as it ever did by profane and notorious practices. A man's hands may be restrained from open revenge, by some external cords cast upon them, and yet murders may lodge in the temple of his heart, as murderers lodged in the temple of old. Men's tongues may be tied up from the foul sin of uttering fair words concerning themselves; shame itself may restrain them from proud boastings, and self-exaltings, when, in the mean time, they are puffed up with self-conceit, and are not afraid to bear a sinful love towards their own perfections, and adore an image of self set up in their hearts. What a fair outside the Pharisee had, he himself will best describe, for indeed it is one of his properties to describe himself, *Luke xviii. 11. God I thank thee that I am not, &c.* But if you will have a delineation of his inside, you may best take it from our Saviour, *Matt. xxiii. 23.* Neither doth religion consist in external performances, though ever so many, and seemingly spiritual. Many professors of christianity, I suspect, sink all their religion into a constant course of duties, and a round of performances, being mere strangers to

the life, and strength, and sweetness of true religion. Those things are needful, useful, and helpful, yea, and honourable, because they have a relation and some tendency to God; but they are apt to become snares and idols to superstitious minds, who conceive that God is some way gratified by these; and so they take up their rest in them. That religion, that only varnishes and beautifies the outside; tunes the tongue to prayer and conference; guides and extends the hands to diligence and alms deeds; that awes the conduct into some external righteousness or devotion, is here excluded, as also by the apostle, *1 Cor. xiii. 1*. Much less can that pass for religion, that spends itself about forms, opinions, parties, and many disputable points of which we have seen so much in our own generation. The religion that rests in modes, and turns upon interests, as a door turns upon its hinges, is a contracted thing, and may be easily viewed through its whole extent, at a single glance. Men may be as far from the kingdom of heaven in their more spiritual forms, and orthodox opinions, as they were in their more carnal and erroneous, if they take up their rest in them: neither is it the pursuing of any interest that will denominate them religious, except the grand interest of their souls.

2dly, A godly soul in its more inward and spiritual acts, hath not its motive external to it: for a man may be somewhat more inward in his actions, and yet as outward in his motives as the former. Religious acts, and gracious motions, are not originally and primarily caused by some weights suspended to the soul, either by God or

men; neither by the worldly blessings which God gives, nor the heavy afflictions which he sends. The wings, by which the godly soul flies towards God, are not cemented to it, as the poets feign Icarus's to have been; but they grow out of itself, as the wings of an eagle that flies swiftly towards heaven: on the other side, a soul may be pressed down unto humiliation under the heavy weight of God's judgments, though it has no mind to stoop, no self-denying or self-abasing disposition in it. Thus you may see Jehu flying upon the wings of ambition and revenge, borne up by success in his government; and Ahab his predecessor bowing down mournfully under a heavy sentence. The laws and penalties, encouragements and injunctions of men, sometimes put a weight upon the soul too; but they produce a more sluggish, uneven, and unsteady motion in it. You may expect, that under this head I should say something of heaven and hell; and so I may very pertinently, for they belong to this place. If you take heaven properly, for a full and glorious union to God, and fruition of him; and hell for an eternal separation and wandering from the divinity; and suppose, that the love of God, and the fear of living without him, be fully imbibed by the soul; then verily these are pure and religious principles. But if we view them as things merely without us, and reserved for us, and under those common carnal notions of pleasure and pain; they are no higher nor better motives to us, than the carnal Jews had in the wilderness, when they turned their backs upon Egypt, where they had been in bondage; and set their faces towards

Canaan, where they hoped to find milk and honey, peace, plenty, and liberty. A soul is not carried to heaven, as a body is carried to the grave, upon men's shoulders; it is not borne up by props, whether human or divine; nor carried to God in a chariot, as a man is carried to see his friend; the holy fire of ardent love, wherein the soul of Elijah had been carried up towards God, was something more excellent, and indeed more desirable, than the fiery chariot by which his body and soul were translated together. Religion is a spring of motion, which God hath put into the soul itself.

And as all things that are external, whether actions or motives, are excluded in our examination of religion; so neither,

2. Must we allow every thing that is internal to be religion. And therefore,

1st, It is not a mere animal excitement, or a sudden passion of the mind, caused by the power and strength of some present conviction in the soul; which, in its warmth, will needs seek after God in all haste. This may well be compared to the rash and rude motion of the host of Israel, who being reprov'd for their slothfulness the night preceding, rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, *Lo, we be here, and will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised, for we have sinned,* Numb. xiv. 40. And indeed it fares with these men oftentimes as it did with those, both as to the undertaking, and as to the success; their motion is as sinful as their station; and their success is answerable; they are driven back and discomfited.

in their enterprize. Nay, though this passion might rise to an ecstasy or a rapture, yet it deserves not the name of religion: "For religion is," as one speaks elegantly, "like the natural heat that is generated in the hearts of living creatures, which hath the dominion of the whole body and sends forth warm blood and spirit, and vital nourishment into every part and member; it regulates and orders the motions of it in a due and even manner." But though these ecstatic souls may blaze like a comet, and swell like a torrent or flood for a time, and shoot forth fresh and high for a little season, they are soon extinguished, emptied, and dried up, because they have not a principle, a stock to spend upon; or, as our Saviour speaks, *no root in themselves*. These men's motions and actions are no more religion, than a land-flood that swells high, and runs swiftly, but only during the rain; or, in the scripture phrase, than a morning dew that soon passes away, *Hosea vi. 4.* is like a well or fountain of water.

2dly, If religion be a principle, a new nature in the soul, then it is not a mere piece of mechanism, a work of art. Art imitates nature: nothing more ordinary, I suspect, than for religion itself, though a new nature, to become an art. I need not describe how all the external acts and emanations of religion, may be counterfeited and imitated by art, and be acted over by a hypocritical Pharisee, who finds nothing at all of the gentle and mighty heat, nor the divine and noble life of it in his own soul, whereby he may fairly deceive the credulous world. But it is possible,

I wish it was not common, for men who are more convinced, enlightened, and affected, to imitate the very power and spirit of religion, and to deceive themselves too, by thinking they possess some true living principle. In this they exceed the most exquisite painters. Now, this may be done by the power of a quick and refined fancy; men hearing such glorious things spoken of heaven, the city of the great King, the new Jerusalem, may be induced by the power of self-love, to wish themselves there, being mightily pleased with their idea of the place. But how shall they attain it? Why, they have read in books, and heard in discourses, of certain signs of grace, and evidences of salvation; and now they set their imagination to work, to find or make such things in themselves. The imagination is well acquainted with the several affections of love, fear, joy, and grief, which are in the soul; and having a great command over the animal spirits, it can send them forth to raise up these affections, at almost any time; and when it hath raised them, then by merely adding a few thoughts of God and heaven, they have apparently a fine delineation of true religion drawn in the soul; which they presently view, and fall in love with, and think they do even taste of the powers of the world to come, when indeed it is nothing but a self-fulness and sufficiency upon which they feed. Now, you may know this artificial religion by this; these men can vary it, alter it, enlarge it, abridge it, and new-mould it at pleasure, according to what they see in others, or according to what they themselves like best; at one time imitating the joy and confidence of some Christians; the humili-

ation and broken-heartedness of others. But this fanciful religion, proceeding from nothing but low and inadequate conceptions of God and heaven, is of a fleeting and vanishing nature. But true Christians are gently, yet powerfully moved by the natural force of true goodness, and the beauty of God; and they move on steadily and constantly in their way to him, and in pursuit of him. The spirit of regeneration in good men spreads itself upon the understanding, and sweetly diffuses itself through the will and affections; which makes true religion to be a consistent and thriving principle in the soul, not actuated by the imagination, but by the highest powers of the soul itself; and it may be discerned by the evenness of its movements and the immortality of its nature. For though a good man cannot go on always with like speed and cheerfulness in his way, yet he is not willing at any time to be quite out of the way.

By this same nature of true religion you may try all those spurious and counterfeit religions, that spring from a natural belief of a deity; from convictions, observations, fleshly and low apprehensions of heaven from human learning, and the precepts of men, as the prophet calls them; and the rest, which are seated in the fancy, and swim in the brain; whose effect is but to gild the outward man; or, at best, but to move the soul by an external force, in an unnatural, inconstant, and transient manner. In a word, all these pretenders to religion may seem to have water, but no well; as there are others, who are deep men, principled indeed with learning, policy, ingenuity,

&c. but not with true goodness, whom the apostle calls *wells*, but *without water*, 2 Pet. ii. 17. But the truly godly, and God-like soul, hath in itself a principle of pure religion. *The water that I shall give him, shall be a well of water, springing up unto eternal life.*

CHAP. III.

Containing the first property mentioned of true Religion, viz. The freeness and unconstrainedness of it: this discovered in several outward acts of morality and worship; as also in the more inward acts of the soul. This freedom considered as to its author; in which is considered how far the command of God may be said to act unto a godly soul. Secondly, Considered as an object. Two cautionary concessions; 1st, That some things without the soul may be said to be motives; how far afflictions and temporal prosperity may be said to be so. 2dly, That there is a constraint lying upon the godly soul; which yet takes not away its freedom. An inquiry into forced devotion, and first into the causes of it. viz. Men themselves, and that upon a threefold account, other men, or the providences of God. 3dly, Into the properties of it, proving that it is for the most part dry and spiritless, needy and penurious, uneven, and not permanent.

I PROCEED NOW, from the nature of religion, to explain such properties of it, as are couched un-

der the phrase, *springing up into everlasting life*. Not to press the phrase any farther than it will naturally afford discourse, I shall only take notice of these three properties of true religion, contained in the word, *springing up*, viz. the freeness, activity, and permanency, or perseverance of it.

The first property of it, couched under this phrase, is, that it is free and unconstrained. Religion is a principle, and it flows and acts freely in the soul, after the manner of a fountain; and, in the day of its mighty power, makes the people a willing people, *Ps. cx. 3.* and the soul, in whom it is truly seated, to become a free-will offering unto God. Alexander the Great subdued the world by force of arms, and made men rather his tributaries and servants, than his lovers and friends: but the great God, the King of souls, obtains an amicable conquest over the hearts of his elect, and overpowers them in such a manner, that they love to be his servants, and do willingly and readily obey him without dissimulation or constraint, without being mercenary or covetous: in which they are unlike to the subjects of the kingdoms of this world, who are kept in their duties by fear and force, not from a pure kindness and benevolence of mind, to whom "the present yoke is always grievous." Hence it is that the increase of this people is called their flowing unto the Lord, *Isa. ii. 2.* *The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established, and all nations shall flow unto it;* and again, *Jer. xxxi. 12.* *They shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord.* And the dis-

position of this people is described to be a hearty and willing frame, *Eph.* vi. 6. 7. and elsewhere often to the same purpose. Now, this willingness or freeness of godly souls might be explained and confirmed by the consideration both of their outward and inward acts.

1. As to the outward acts of service which the true Christian doth perform, he is freely carried out towards them, without any constraint or force. If he keep himself from the evils of the place, and age, and company, wherein he lives and converses, it is not by a restraint which is upon him merely from without him, but by a principle of holy temperance planted in his soul; it is the seed of God abiding in him that preserves him from the commission of sin, *1 John* iii. 9. He is not kept back from sin as a horse by a bridle, but by an inward and spiritual change made in his nature. On the other hand, if he employ himself in any external acts of moral or instituted duty, he does it freely, not as of necessity, or by constraint. If you speak of acts of charity, the godly man gives from a principle of love to God, and kindness to his brother, and so cheerfully, not grudgingly, or of necessity, *2 Cor.* ix. 7. An alms may be wrung out of a miser, but it proceeds from the liberal soul as a stream from its fountain: therefore he is called a deviser of liberal things, and one that standeth upon liberalities, as those last words of *Isa.* xxxii. 8. are rendered by the Dutch translators. If you speak of righteousness or temperance, he is not over-ruled by power, or compelled by laws, but indeed actuated by the

power of that law which is written or engraven upon his mind. If you speak of acts of worship, whether moral or instituted, in all these he is also free as to any constraint.

Prayer is not a task, or a penance, but it is the natural cry of the new-born soul; neither does he take it up as a piece of policy, to bribe God's justice, engage men's charity, to purchase favour with God or man, or his own clamorous conscience: but he prays, because he wants, and loves, and believes; he wants the fuller presence of that God whom he loves; he loves the presence which he wants; he believes, that he that loves him will not suffer him to want any good thing that he prays for. And therefore he does not bind himself severely, and limit himself penuriously to a morning and evening sacrifice and solemnity, as unto certain rent-seasons, wherein to pay a homage of dry devotion; but his loving and longing soul, disdainng to be confined within stated hours, is frequently soaring in some heavenly rapture or other, and sallying forth in holy ejaculations. He is not content with some weak essays towards heaven, in set and formal prayer, once or twice a-day; but labours also to be all the day long imbibing in those divine influences, and streams of grace, by the mouth of faith, which he begged in the morning by the tongue of prayer; which hath made me sometimes think it as proper to say, the faith of prayer, as the prayer of faith; for believing, and hanging upon divine grace, doth really drink in what prayer opens its mouth for; and is, in effect, a powerful kind of praying in silence: by believing, we pray: as well as in praying we do believe.

A truly godly man hath not his hands tied up merely by the force of a national law; no, nor yet by the authority of the fourth commandment, to keep one in seven a day of rest; as he is not content with mere resting upon the sabbath; knowing that neither working, nor ceasing from work, doth of itself, commend a soul to God, but doth press after intimacy with God in the duties of his worship; so neither can he be content with one sabbath in a week, nor think himself absolved from holy and heavenly meditations any day in the week; but labours to make every day a sabbath, as to the keeping of his heart with God in a holy frame; and to find every day to be a sabbath, as to the communications of God unto his soul. Though the necessities of his body will not allow him, it may be, (though indeed God hath granted this to some men) to keep every day as a sabbath of rest; yet the necessities of his soul do call upon him to make every day, as far as may be, a sabbath of communion with the blessed God. If you speak of fasting, he keeps not fasts merely by virtue of a civil, no, nor of a divine institution; but, from a principle of godly sorrow afflicts his soul for sin, and daily endeavours more and more to be emptied of himself; which is the most excellent fasting in the world. If you speak of thanksgiving, he does not give thanks by laws and ordinances; but having in himself a law of thankfulness, and an ordinance of love engraven upon, and deeply radicated in his soul, delights to live unto God, and to make his heart and life a living comment upon the goodness and love of God; which is the most divine

way of thank-offering in the world; it is the hallelujah which the angels sing continually. In a word, wherever God hath a tongue to command, true godliness will find a hand to perform: whatever yoke Christ Jesus shall put upon the soul, religion will enable it to bear, yea, and to count easy too; the mouth of Christ hath pronounced it easy, *Matt. xi. 30.* and the Spirit of Christ makes it easy. Let the commandment be what it will, it will not be grievous, *1 John v. 3.* The same spirit doth, in some measure, dwell in every Christian, which without measure, dwelt in Christ, who counted it his meat and drink to do the will of his Father, *John iv. 34.*

2. And more especially, the true Christian is free from any constraint as to the inward acts which he performeth. Holy love to God is one principal act of the gracious soul, whereby it is carried out freely, and with an ardent love towards the object that is truly and infinitely lovely and satisfactory, and to the enjoyment of it. I know, indeed, that this springs from self-indigence, and is commanded by the sovereignty of the supreme good, the object that the soul seeks; but it is properly free from any constraint.—Love is an affection that cannot be extorted as fear is; nor forced by any external power, nor indeed, by any internal power: the revenues of the king of Persia, or the treasures of Egypt, cannot purchase it, *Heb. xi. 26.* neither indeed can the soul itself create and destroy this spirit at pleasure; which made the poet complain of himself, as if he were not sole emperor at home,

Non amo te, Sabidi; nec possum dicere quare, &c.*

[Sabidius, I do not love thee; neither can I give a reason why, &c.]

Though the outward bodily acts of religion are ordinarily forced, yet this pure, chaste, virgin affection cannot be compelled; it seems to be a kind of peculiarity in the soul, though under the jurisdiction of the understanding. By this property of it, it is elegantly described by the Spirit of God, Cant. viii. 7. *If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.* It cannot be bought with money, or any price; cannot be purchased with gifts or arts; and if any should offer to bribe it, it would give him a sharp and scornful cheek in the language of Peter to Simon, *Thy money perish with thee;* love is no hireling, no base-born mercenary affection; but noble, free, and generous. Neither is it low-spirited and slavish, as fear is; therefore, when it comes to full age, it will not suffer this son of the bond-woman to divide the inheritance, the dominions of the soul with it; when it comes to be perfect, *it casteth out fear,* says the apostle, 1 John iv. 18. Neither indeed is it directly under the authority of any law, whether human or divine; it is not begotten by the influence of a divine law, as a law, but as holy, just, and good, as we shall presently show: *Quis legem dat amantibus? ipse est sibi lex amor.* [Who makes laws for lovers?—Love itself is a sufficient law to them.] The law of love; or, in the apostle's phrase, *the spirit of love, and of power,* in opposi-

* Mart. cp. I. 30.

tion to the spirit of fear, 2 *Tim.* i. 7. doth more influence the godly man in his pursuit of God than any law without him: this is as a wing to the soul; whereas outward commandments are but as guides in his way; or, at most, but as spurs in his sides.

The same I may say of holy delight in God, which is indeed the flower of love, or love grown up to its full age and stature; which hath no torment in it, and consequently no force upon it. Like unto which are holy confidence, faith, and hope, ingenuous and natural acts of the religious soul, whereby it hastens into the divine embraces, *as the eagle hasteneth to the prey*, swiftly and speedily; and not by force and constraint, *as a fool to the correction of the stocks*, or as a bear to the stake. These are all genuine offsprings of holy religion in the soul; and they are utterly incapable of being forced; violence is contrary to the nature of them; for to use the apostle's words, with the change of one word, *Hope that is forced, is not hope.*

Now to explain this excellent property of true religion a little farther, let us consider the Author, and the object of it.

The Author of this noble and free principle is God himself, who hath made it a partaker of his own nature. He is the free agent; himself is the fountain of his own acts. The uncreated Life and Liberty hath given this privilege to the religious soul, in some sense, to have life and liberty in itself, and a dominion over its own acts. I do not know that any created being in the world hath more of divinity in it than the soul of man,

Qua nihil homini dedit Deus ipse divinius, [God himself hath given to man nothing more divine,] as Tully speaks it. Nor do I know any thing in the soul that doth more resemble the divine essence, than the noble freedom that the soul hath in itself; which freedom is never so divine and generous, as when it has God himself for its object. This excellent freedom is something of God in the soul of man, and therefore may justly claim the free Spirit for its author, *Ps. li. 12.* *2 Cor. iii. 17.* or the Son of God for its original, according to that in *John viii. 36.* *If the Son shall make you free, then shall ye be free indeed.*

But here it may be demanded, whether the command of God doth not actuate the godly soul, and set it upon its holy motions? I confess indeed that the command of God is much revered by a godly man, and is of great weight with him, and does in some sense lay a constraint upon him; but yet I think that the authority of the law does not so much prevail with him, as the reasonableness and goodness of it. The religious soul does not so much regard the law under the notion of a command, as under the notion of holy, just and good, as the apostle speaks; and so embraces it, chooses it, and longs to be perfectly conformable to it. I do not think it so proper to say that a good man loves God and all righteousness and holiness, and religious duties, by virtue of a command to do so, as by virtue of a new nature that God hath put into him, which doth instruct and prompt him so to do. A religious soul being reconciled to the nature of God, does embrace all his laws by virtue of the equitableness and

perfection that he sees in them; not because they are commanded, but because they are in themselves to be desired, as David speaks, *Ps. xix. 10.* In which psalm the holy man gives us a full account why he did so love and esteem the laws and commandments of God, namely, because they are perfect, right, pure, clean, true, sweet, and lovely, as you will find *ver. 7—10.* To love the Lord our God with all our heart, and strength, and mind, is not only a duty, by virtue of that first and great commandment that doth require it; but indeed the highest privilege, honour, and happiness of the soul. To this purpose may that profession of the psalmist's be applied, *Ps. cxix. 173. I have chosen thy precepts;* and *ver. 30. I have chosen the way of truth.* Choosing is an act of judgment and understanding, and respects the quality of the thing, more than the authority of the command.—David did not stumble into the way of truth accidentally, by virtue of his education, or acquaintance, or the like circumstance; nor was he lashed or driven into it by the mere severity of a law without him; but he chose the way of truth as that which was indeed most eligible, pleasant, and desirable. What our blessed Saviour says concerning himself, is also true of every true Christian in his measure; he makes it his meat and drink to do the will of God. Now, we know that men do not eat and drink because physicians prescribe it as a means to preserve life; but the sensual appetite is carried out towards food, because it is good, sweet, and suitable; and so the spiritual appetite is carried out towards spiritual food, not so much by

the force of an external precept, as by the attractive power of that higher good which it finds suitable and sufficient for it. As for the object of this free and generous spirit of religion, it is no other than God himself principally and ultimately; and other things, only as they are subservient to the enjoyment of him. God, as the supreme good, able to fill, and perfectly satisfy all the wants and indigencies of the soul, and so to make it wholly and eternally happy; is the proper object of the soul's most free and cheerful motions. The soul views God as the perfect and absolute good, and God in Christ as an attainable good, and so finds every way enough in this object, to encourage it to pursue after him, and throw itself upon him. Religion fixes upon God, as upon its own centre, as upon its proper and adequate object; it views God as the infinite and absolute good, and so is drawn to him without any external force. The godly soul is overpowered indeed, but it is only with the infinite goodness of God, which exercises its sovereignty over all the faculties of the soul; which overpowering is so far from straitening or contracting it, that it makes it truly free and generous in its motions. Religion wings the soul, and makes it take a flight freely and swiftly towards God and eternal life: it is of God, and by a sympathy that it hath with him, it carries the soul out after him, and into conjunction with him. In a word, the godly soul being loosed from self-love, emptied of self-fulness, beaten out of all self-satisfaction, and delivered from all self-confining lusts, wills, interests, and ends, and being mightily overcome with a sense

of a higher and more excellent good, goes after that freely, centres upon it firmly, grasps after it continually, and had rather be that than what it-self is, since the nature of that supreme good is infinitely more excellent and desirable than its own.

Thus have I briefly explained and confirmed the freeness of this principle in the truly godly soul: I would now make some little improvement of it; but it seems needful that I should here introduce some cautionary concessions.

1st, It must be granted, that some things without the soul may be motives, and encouragements to the soul to quicken, and hasten, and strengthen it in its religious acts. Though grace be an internal principle and free from any constraint, yet it may be excited, or stirred up, as the apostle speaks, 2 *Tim.* i. 6. by such means as God hath appointed hereunto, as prayer, meditation, reading, as the apostle intimates in the body of that fore-quoted epistle. But perhaps there will a question arise concerning some other things, which seem to lay a constraint upon the spirits of men. I deny not but that the seemingly religious motions of many men are merely violent, and their devotion is purely forced, as we shall presently see: but I affirm, and I think have confirmed it, that true and sincere religion is perfectly free and unconstrained.—This being premised, now, if you ask me, what I think of afflictions: I confess God doth ordinarily use them as means to make good men better; and it may be, sometimes to make bad men good; these may be as weights to hasten and speed the soul's motions

towards God, but they do not principally beget such motions. If you ask me of temporal prosperity, commonly called mercies and blessings, of promises and rewards proposed; I confess they may be as oil to the wheels, and ought to quicken and encourage the study of true and powerful godliness; but they are not the spring of the soul's motion; they ought to be unto us, as dew to the grass, to refresh and fructify the soul; but it is the root which properly gives life and growth.

2d, It may be granted, that there is a kind of constraint and necessity lying upon the godly soul in its holy and most excellent motions; according to that of the apostle, 2 Cor. v. 14. *The love of Christ constraineth us*; and again, 1 Cor. ix. 16. *Necessity is laid upon me to preach the gospel*. But yet it holds good, that grace is a most free principle in the soul; and that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. For the constraint that the apostle speaks of is not opposed to freedom of soul, but to not acting; now, although the soul, so principled and spirited, cannot but act, yet it acts freely. Those things that are according to nature, though they be done necessarily, yet they are done with the greatest freedom imaginable. The water flows, and the fire burns necessarily, yet freely. Religion is a new nature in the soul; and the religious soul being touched effectually with the sense, and impressed with the influences of divine goodness, fulness, and perfection, is carried indeed necessarily towards God, as its proper centre, and yet its motions are pure, free, generous and with the greatest delight and pleasure conceivable.—The

necessity that lay upon Paul to preach the gospel is not to be understood of any external violence that was done to him, much less of bodily necessity; by reason of which many men serve their own appetites in that great function, more than the Lord Jesus; for though he preached the gospel necessarily, yet did he preach freely and willingly, as he often professeth. The godly man cannot but love God as his chief good; yet he delights in this necessity under which he lieth, and is exceedingly glad that he finds his heart framed and enlarged to love him. I say enlarged, because God is an object, which does not contract and pinch and straiten the soul, as all created objects do, but ennobles, applies, and enlarges it. The more the sinful soul exerts and spends itself upon the creature, the more it is straitened and contracted, and the native freedom of it is enslaved, debased, and destroyed: but grace does establish and ennoble the freedom of the soul, and restore it to its primitive perfection; so that a godly soul is never more at large, more at rest, more at liberty, than when it finds itself delivered from all self-confining creature-loves and lusts, and under the most powerful influences and constraint of infinite love and goodness.

By this that hath been said of the free and generous spirit of true religion, we may learn what to think of the forced devotion of many reluctant soldiers of Christ in his church militant; that there is a vast difference and distance between the reluctant and voluntary Christian. Though indeed the freedom of the will cannot be destroyed; yet, in opposition to a principle,

many men's devotion may be said to be wrung out of them, and their obedience may be said to be constrained. I shall explain it briefly in two or three particulars.

1. Men force themselves, many times, to some things in religion that are foreign to, yea, and against their nature and genius. I need not allude to their slight conformity to the letter of the law, and some external duties which they force themselves to perform, such as hearing, praying, giving alms, or the like: in all which the violent and unnatural obedience of a Pharisee may be more popular and specious than the true and genuine obedience of a free-born disciple of Jesus Christ. If going on hunting, and procuring venison might denominate a good and dutiful son, Esau may indeed be as acceptable to his father as Jacob; but God is not such a father as Isaac, whose affections were bribed with delicious food; he feeds not upon the pains of his children, nor drinks the sweat of their brows. I doubt not but that an unprincipled Christian, that hath the heart of a slave, may force himself to imitate the more spiritual part of religion; and, as it were, to act over the very temper and disposition of a son of God. Therefore we read of a semblance of joy and zeal which was found in some, whom yet our Saviour reckons no better than *stony ground*, Mark iv. 16. and of great ecstasies in some, whom yet the apostle supposes may come to nothing, *Heb. vi. 5.* and what appearance of the most excellent and divine graces of patience and contempt of the world, many of the morose sort of monastic Papists, and our

modern kind of Papists, the Friends, do make at this day, all men know: nay, some of these last sort do seem to themselves, I believe, to act over the temper and experience of the chiefest apostles, rejoicing with Peter, and the rest, that they are *counted worthy to suffer shame*, Acts v. 41. and keeping a catalogue of their stripes with Paul, 2 Cor. xi. 24. and in these things I am confident, to use the apostle's words, that they think themselves *not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles*: nay, they are not ashamed to lay claim to that grace of graces, self-denial, which they have forced themselves to act over so artificially, that even a wise man might almost be deceived into a favourable opinion of them, did we not know that whilst they profess it they destroy it; for it is contrary to the nature of self-denial, to magnify and boast itself; and indeed it is very evident to a wise observer, that these men, by a pretence of voluntary humility, and counterfeit self-denial, do, in truth, endeavour most of all to establish their own righteousness, and erect an idol of self-supremacy in themselves, and do really fall in love with self-sufficiency, instead of the infinite fulness of God.

Now there seem to be three things in a formal hypocrite that do especially force a kind of devotion and shew of religion from him, namely, conscience of guilt, power of self-love, and false apprehensions of God. 1st, There is in all men a natural conscience of guilt, arising from that imperfect and glimmering light they have of God, and of their duty towards him; which, though it be in some men more quick and pungent, in

others more remiss and languid, yet, I think, is not so utterly extinguished and choked, even in the worst and most dissolute men, but that it doth sometimes beget a bitter sadness in the midst of their sweetest merriments; and doth disturb their most supine and secure rest by fastening its stings in their very souls at some time or other, and filling them with agonies and anguish, and haunting them with dreadful apparitions, which they cannot be perfectly rid of, no more than they can run away from themselves. This foundation of hell is laid in the bowels of sin itself, as a preface to eternal horror. Now although some more profligate and desperate wretches do furiously bluster through these briars, yet others are so caught in them that they cannot escape pangs and sorrow, except they make a composition, and enter into terms to live more honestly, or at least, less scandalously. In which undertaking they are carried on, in the second place, by the power of self-love or a natural desire of self-preservation: for the worst of men hath so much reason left him, that he could wish that himself were happy, though he have not so much light as to discover, nor so much true freedom of will as to choose the right way to happiness. When conscience discovers the certain reward and wages of sin, self-love will easily prompt men to do something or other to escape it. But now, what shall they do? Why, religion is the only expedient that can be found out; and therefore they begin to think how they may become friends with God; they will up and be doing. But how is it that they

run into so great a mistake about religion? Why, their false and gross apprehensions of God, in the third place, do drive them from him, into the way of superstition and hypocrisy, instead of leading them into the way of sincere love, and resignation to him. Self being the great Diana of every natural man, and the only standard by which he measures all things, he knows not how to judge of God himself, but by this; and so he fancies God as in a dreadful manner, an austere, passionate, surly, revengeful majesty, and so something must be done to appease him: but yet he fancies this angry deity to be of an impotent, mercenary temper like himself, and not hard to be appeased; and so imagines that some cheap services, specious oblations, external courtesies, will engage him, and make him a friend. A sheep, or a goat, or a bullock, under the Old Testament; a prayer, or, a sacrament, or an alms, under the New, is sufficient: for it is reconciliation to an angry God that he aims at, not union with a good God; he seeks to be reconciled to God, not united to him; though indeed these two can never be divided. Thus we see how a man void of the life and spirit of religion, forces himself to do God a kind of worship, and pay him a kind of homage.

2dly, Sometimes men may be said, in a sense to be forced by other men, to put on an appearance of holiness, a dress of religion. And this constraint men may lay upon others by their tongues, hands, or eyes. By their tongues in the business of education; often and ardent exhortation and inculcation of things divine and heav-

enly: and thus an unjust man, like the unjust judge in the gospel, though he fear not God sincerely, yet may be overcome by the importunity of his father, friend, minister, tutor, to do some righteous acts. This seems to have been the case of Joash king of Judah, the source of whose religion was no higher than the instructions of his tutor and guardian Jehoiada the high priest, *2 Kings* xii. 2. By their hand, that is, either by the enacting and executing of penal laws upon them, or by the holy example which they continually set before them, *exempla trahunt*, [examples influence.] By their eyes, that is, by continually observing and watching their behaviour; when many eyes are upon men, they must do something to satisfy the expectations of others and purchase a reputation to themselves. It may be said, that sometimes God doth lay an external force upon men; as particularly by his severe judgments, or threatenings of judgments, awakening them, humbling them, and constraining them to some kind of worship and religion. Such a forced devotion as this was the humiliation of Ahab, *1 Kings* xxi. 27. and the supplication of Saul, *1 Sam.* xiii. 11, 12. For God himself acting upon men, only from without them, is far from producing a living principle of free and noble religion in the soul.

Now, the better to discern this forced and violent religion, I will briefly describe it by some of its properties, with which I will close this branch of my subject.

1. This forced religion is, for the most part, dry and spiritless. I know, indeed, that fancy

may be strained up to a high pitch of joy and transport, so as to raise the mind into a kind of rapture, as I have formerly hinted in my discourse upon these words. A merely artificial and counterfeit Christian may be so strongly actuated by imagination, and the power of self-love, that he may seem to himself to be more full of God than the sober and constant soul. You may see how the hypocritical Pharisees, swollen with self-conceit, gloried over the poor man that had been blind, but now saw more than all they, John ix. 34. *Thou wast altogether born in sin, and dost thou teach us?* and indeed over the whole people, John vii. 49. *This people that knoweth not the law is cursed.* A counterfeit Christian may rise high as a meteor, and blaze much as a comet, which is yet drawn up by mere force from the surface of the earth or water. And as to the external and visible acts and duties of religion, which depend much upon the temper and constitution of the body, it may easily be conceived and accounted for, how the mimical and mechanical Christian may rise higher in these, and be more zealous, watchful, and cheerful, than many truly religious and godly men, by having greater power and quickness of fancy, and a greater flow of animal spirits; upon which the motions and actions of the body do mainly depend. The animal spirits may so nimbly serve the soul in the corporeal acts, that the whole transaction may be a fair imitation of the motions of the divine Spirit, and one would verily think there was a gracious principle in the soul itself. This seems to be notably exemplified in Jehu, whose religious actions, as he

would fain have them to be esteemed, *2 Kings* x. 16. were indeed rather fury than zeal, and proceeded more from his own fiery spirits, than from the spirits of fire, or spirit of burning, which is of God, *Is. iv. 4*. But commonly this forced devotion is jejune and dry, void of zeal and warmth, and drives on heavily in pursuit of the God of Israel, as Pharaoh did in pursuit of the Israel of God, when his chariot-wheels were taken off, *Exod. xiv. 25*. When God draws the soul from within by a principle of love, he doth indeed cause that soul to run after him, *Cant. i. 4*. but the motion of those things that are drawn by external force is commonly heavy, slow, and languid.

2. This forced religion is penurious and needy. Something the slavish Christian must do to appease an angry God, or to allay a storming conscience, as I hinted before; but it shall be as little as may be. He is ready to grudge that much of his time and strength are spent in God's service, and to find fault that sabbaths come so thick, and last so long, and that duties are to be performed so often: so he is described by the prophet, *Amos viii. 5*. *When will the sabbath be past, and the new moon gone?* But yet I will not deny, but that this kind of religion may be very liberal and expensive too, and extend much into the branches of external duties, as is the manner of many trees that bear no fruit; for so did the base spirit of the Pharisees, whose frequent fasting and long prayers are recorded by our Saviour in the gospel, but not with approbation. Therefore these are not the things by which you must take

measure, and make an estimate of your religion. But in the great things of the law, in the grand duties of mortification, self-denial, and resignation, this forced religion is always wanting and penurious. In the duties that do nearly touch upon their beloved lusts, they will be as strict with God as may comport with their pleasures; they will break over duty to him for a small matter: God must have no more than his due, as they blasphemously phrase it in their hearts; with the slothful servant in the gospel, *Lo, there thou hast that is thine*; self and the world surely may be allowed the rest. They will not part with all for Christ, *Matt. xix. 22*. Is it not a little one? Let me escape thither, and take up my abode there, said Lot, *Gen. xix. 20*. They will not give up themselves entirely unto God: *the Lord pardon me in this one thing*, cries *Naaman*; so they say in this or that, let God hold me excused. The slavish Christian is never more contracted into himself, than when he is to converse with God indeed: but the godly soul is never more free, large, or glad, than when he doth most intimately and familiarly converse with God. The soul that is free as to liberty, is free also as to liberality and expenses; and that not only in external, but internal and spiritual obedience, and compliance with the will of God: he gives himself wholly to God; knows no interest of his own; keeps no reserve for himself, or for the creature.

3. This forced religion is uneven, depending upon inconstant causes. As land-floods, that have no spring within themselves, vary their motions,

are swift and slow, high and low, according as they are supplied with rain; even so these men's motions in religion, depending upon fancy for the most part, (than which nothing is more fickle and flitting,) have no constancy nor consistency in them. —I know indeed, that the spirits of the best men cannot always keep one pace, nor their lives be always of one piece; but yet they are never willingly quite out of the call or compass of religion. But this I also touched upon formerly. Therefore,

4. This forced religion is not permanent. The meteors will fall to the ground, and be choked in the earth whence they arose. Take away the weight, and the motion ceases; take away Jehoiada, and Joash stands still, yea runs backward. But this I shall speak more unto, when I come to speak of the last property of religion, *viz.* its perseverance.

CHAP. IV.

The active and vigorous nature of true religion proved, by many scriptural phrases, of the most powerful importance: more particularly explained in three things; 1st, In the soul's continual care and study to be good. 2dly, In its care to do good. 3dly, In its powerful and incessant longings after the most full enjoyment of God. In all which the causes and reasons of the same are either more obscurely intimated, or openly assigned.

I COME NOW to the second property of true religion, which is to be found in this phrase, *springing up*, or leaping up; wherein the activity and vigourousness of it is described. Religion, though it be compared to water, yet is no standing pool of water, but *a well of water springing up*. And here the proposition that I shall go upon, is, "That true religion is active and vigourous." It is no lazy and languid thing, but full of life and power: so I find it every where described in Scripture, by things that are most active, lively, vigourous, operative, spreading, powerful, and sometimes even by motion itself. As sin is, in Scripture, described by death and darkness, which are a cessation and privation of life, and light, and motion; so religion is described by life, which is active and vigourous; by an angelical life, which is spiritual and powerful; yea, a divine life, *Eph. iv. 18.* which is, as I may say, most lively and vivacious. *Christ liveth in me, Gal. ii. 20.* and the production of this new nature in the soul is called a quickening, *Eph. ii. 1.* and the reception of it *a passing from death unto life, John v. 24.* Again, as sin and wickedness are described by flesh, which is sluggish and inactive, so this holy principle in the soul is called Spirit, *Gal. v. 17. The Spirit lusteth against the flesh;* yea, the *Spirit of power, 2 Tim. i. 7.* and the *Spirit of life, Rom. viii. 2. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.* How can the power and activity of any principle be more commended, than by saying it is life, and the *Spirit of life*, and the *law of the Spirit of life* in the soul? which hath made

me sometimes to apply those words of the prophet, as a description of every godly soul, *Micah iii. 8. I am full of power and might by the Spirit of the Lord.*

Yea, further, the holy apostle seems to describe a godly principle in the soul by activity and motion itself, *Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14.* where he gives this excellent character of himself, and this lively description of his religious disposition, as if it were nothing else but activity and fervour; I follow after, that I may apprehend; I forget those things that are behind, and reach forth unto those things that are before; I press towards the mark, &c. It is needless to comment upon those phrases of like importance, *labouring, seeking, striving, fighting, running, wrestling, panting, longing, hungering, thirsting, watching,* and many others, which the Holy Ghost makes use of throughout the Scriptures, to express the active, industrious, vigorous, diligent, and powerful nature of this divine principle, which God hath put into the souls of his elect. The streams of divine grace, which flow forth from the throne of God, and of the Lamb, into the souls of men, do not cleanse them, and then pass away, like some violent land flood, that washes the fields and meadows, and so leaves them to contract as much filth as ever; but the same become a *well of water*, continually springing up, boiling, and bubbling, and working in the soul, and sending out fresh rivers, as our Saviour calls them, *John vii. 38. Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*

But more particularly, to unfold the active nature of this divine principle in the soul, we shall

consider it in these three particulars, *viz.* as it is still conforming to God, doing for him, and longing after him.

1. The active and sprightly nature of true godliness, or religion planted by God in the soul, appears and shews itself in a continued care and study to be good, to conform more and more to the nature of the blessed God, the glorious pattern of all perfection. The nature of God being infinitely and absolutely perfect, is the only rule of perfection to the creature. If we speak of goodness, our Saviour tells us, that God alone is good, *Luke xviii. 19.* of wisdom, the apostle tells us, that God only is wise, *1 Tim. i. 17.* of power, he is omnipotent, *Rev. xix. 6.* of mercy and kindness, he is love itself, *1 John iv. 8.* Men are only good by participation from God, and assimilation to him; so that, though good men may be imitated, and followed, yet it must be with this limitation, as far only as they are followers of God: the great apostle durst not press his example any further, *1 Cor. xi. 1.* *Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ.* But the nature of God being infinitely and absolutely perfect, is to be eyed and imitated singly, entirely, universally, in all things wherein the creature is capable of following him, and becoming like unto him. So Christians are required to look up unto the Father of lights, the fountain of perfections, and to take from him the pattern of their dispositions, and conversations, to regard him continually, and regarding him, to receive an image of him, not into their eye, as we do by sensible objects, but into their souls, to polish and frame them into the most clear and live-

ly resemblances of him; that is, in the language of the Scripture, to be *perfect, as their heavenly Father is perfect*, Matt. v. 44, 45—48. to be *holy as God is holy*, 1 Pet. i. 16. And thus the genuine children of God are described by the Holy Ghost, *Eph. v. 1.* they are *followers of God*. This is the shortest, but the surest, and clearest mark that can be given of a good man, *a follower of God*: they are not all owned for the children of God, who are created by him; nor are they who have a speculative knowledge of him, who profess him, or exhibit some external worship, and service to him in the world; but they that imitate him are his children; the true children of Abraham were not those that were descended from him, or boasted of him, but they that did the works of Abraham, *John viii. 39.* even so are they only the offspring of heaven, the true and dear children of the living God, who are followers of him: *be ye followers of God, as dear children.*

A godly soul, having its eyes opened to behold the infinite beauty, purity, and perfection, of that good God whose nature is the very fountain, and must needs then be the rule of all goodness, presently comes to undervalue all created excellencies, both in itself and all the world besides, as to any satisfaction that is to be had in them, or any perfection that can be acquired by them; and it cannot endure to take up with any lower good, or live by any lower rule than God himself. A godly man, having the unclean and rebellious spirit cast out, and being once reconciled to the nature of God, is daily labouring to be more intimately united thereunto, and to be all that which

God is, as far as he is capable, the nature of God being infinitely more pure and perfect, and more desirable than his own. Religion is a participation of life from him who is life itself; and so must needs be an active principle spreading itself in the soul, and causing the soul to spread itself in God; and therefore the kingdom of heaven, which in many places of the gospel I take to be nothing else but this divine principle in the soul, which is both the truest heaven, and most properly a kingdom, (for thereby God doth most powerfully reign and exercise his sovereignty, and most excellently display and manifest his glory in the world,) is compared to *seed sown in the ground*, which both springeth up into a blade, and bringeth forth fruit; to *mustard-seed*, which spreadeth itself, and groweth great, so that the birds of the air may lodge in the branches thereof; to *leaven*, spreading itself through the whole quantity of meal, and leavening the whole and all the parts of it, *Matt. xiii. 23—31—33.*

By a like similitude, the path of the just is compared to a shining light, whose glory and lustre increase continually, *shining more and more until the perfect day*, *Prov. iv. 18.* which continued growing up of the holy soul into God, is excellently described by the apostle in an elegant metaphor, *2 Cor. iii. 18. We all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory;* that is, from one resemblance of divine glory to another. The gracious soul not being content with its present attainments, and having in view a perfect and absolute good, forgets that which is behind, and labours, prays, strives and studies,

to get the perfections of God more clearly enstamped upon itself, and itself as much as may be, absorbed in the divinity. It covets earnestly these best things; to be perfected in grace and holiness, to have divine characters more fair and legible, divine impressions more deep and lively, divine life more strong and powerful, and the communicable image of the blessed God spread quite over it, and through it.

A godly soul is not content to receive of Christ's fulness, but labours to be filled with the fulness, with all the fulness of God; he rejoices indeed that he hath received of Christ grace for grace, as a child hath limb for limb with his father; but this his joy is not fulfilled, except he find himself adding daily something to his stature; nor indeed then neither; nor can it be, until he come to the measure of the stature of his Lord, and be grown up into him in all things who is the head, even Christ, *Eph. iv. 15*. He delights and glories in God, beholding his spices growing in his soul; but that does not satisfy him, except he may see them flowing out also, *Cant. iv. 16*. He is neither barren nor unfruitful, as the apostle Peter speaks; but that is not enough, he desires to be fat and fruitful also, as a watered garden, as the prophet phrased it, even as the garden of God. The spirit lusteth against the flesh, and struggles with it in the same soul, as Jacob with Esau, until he had cast him out, *Gen. xxv. 22*. The seed of God warreth continually against the seed of the serpent, raging and restless, like Jehu, shooting, and stabbing, and strangling all he meets with, till none at all remain of the family of that Ahab who had formerly been his master.

O how does the godly and devout soul long to have Christ's victory carried on in itself; to have Christ going on in him conquering and to conquer, till at length the very last enemy be subdued, that the Prince of Peace may ride triumphantly through all the coasts and regions of his heart and life, and not so much as a dog move his tongue against him! This holy principle, which is of God in the soul, is actually industrious too; it doth not fold the arms together, hide its hand in its bosom, faintly wishing to obtain a final conquest over its enemies; but advance with a noble courage against lusts and passions, even as the sun glorieth against the darkness of the night, until it have chased it all away. The godly soul puts itself under the banner of Christ; fights under the conduct of the Angel of God's presence; and so marches undauntedly against the children of Anak, those earthly loves, lusts, sensual affections, which are indeed taller and stronger than all other enemies that do encounter it in this wilderness state: and the gracious God does not desert it in its endeavours; he, remembering his promise, helpeth his servants, even that promise, Isa. xl. 31. that *they that wait upon the Lord shall renew strength.* A true Israelitish soul, endued with this noble and heroic principle, is not like those slothful Israelites, that were content with what they had got of the holy land, and either could not, or would not enlarge their border, *Judges i.* But he makes war upon the remainder of the Canaanites, and is never at rest till he has, with Sarah, cast out the bond woman and her son too. You may see an emblem of

such a soul in Moses holding up his hands all the day long, till Amalek was quite discomfited, *Exod. xvii. 12.* As often as the floods of temptation, springing from the devil, the world, or the flesh, come in upon him, he opposeth them in the strength of Christ; or, in the prophet's phrase, *Isa. lix. 19. The Spirit of the Lord lifteth up a standard against them;* so that he is not carried down by them; or, at least, not overwhelmed with them. In the beginning of my discourse upon this head, I hinted the reason why the godly soul continually studies conformity to God; even because he is the perfect and absolute good, and the soul reckons that its happiness consists only in being like unto him, in partaking of a divine nature. But I might also here take occasion to speak of three things, which I will but briefly name, and then proceed.

1st, A godly man considers that conformity to the image and nature of God, is the most proper conversing with God in the world. The great, and indeed only employment of an immortal soul, is to converse with its Creator; for this end it was made, and made capacious as we see it; now, to partake of a divine nature, to be endued with a god-like disposition, is most properly to converse with God; this is a real, powerful, practical, and feeling converse with him, infinitely to be preferred before all notions, professions, performances, or speculations.

2dly, A godly man reckons that the image of God is the glory and ornament of the soul; it is the lustre, and brightness, and beauty of the soul, as the soul is of the body. Holiness is not only the

duty, but the highest honour and dignity that any created nature is capable of: and therefore the godly soul, who hath his senses exercised to discern good and evil, pursues after it, as after his full and proper perfection.

3dly, A godly man reckons, that conformity to the divine image, a participation of the divine nature, is the surest and most comfortable evidence of divine love; which is a matter of so great inquiry in the world. By growing up daily in Christ Jesus, we are infallibly assured of our implantation into him. The spirit of God descending upon the soul in the impressions of meekness, kindness, uprightness, which is a dove-like disposition, is a better, and more desirable evidence of our sonship, and of God's favour towards us, than if we had the Spirit descending upon our heads in a dove-like shape, as it did upon our blessed Saviour.—These things may pass for a reason, why the religious Christian, above all things, labours to become god-like; to be formed more and more into a resemblance of the supreme Good, and to drink in divine perfections into the very inmost of his soul.

2. The active and industrious nature of true godliness, or religion, manifests itself in a good man's continual care, and study to do good, to serve the interest of the holy and blessed God in the world. A good man being overpowered with the sense of the infinite goodness of God, and the great end of life, cannot think it worth while to spend himself for any inferior good, or bestow his time and strength for any lower end than that is; and therefore, as it is the main hap-

pineness of his life to enjoy God, so he makes it the main business of this life to serve him, to be doing for him, to exert himself for him, and to display, and propagate his glory in the world. And as he is ravished with the apprehensions of the supreme goodness, which doth infinitely deserve, and may justly demand all that he can do or expend for him; so he doth indeed really partake of the active and communicative nature of that blessed Being, and himself becomes active and communicative too. To say a godly soul is sluggish and inactive, is like saying, a godly soul altogether unlike to God; a complete contradiction. I cannot dwell upon any of those particular designs of serving the interest of God's glory, which a good man is still pursuing in the world: only this, in general, whether he pray, or preach, or read, or celebrate Sabbaths, or administer private reproof or instruction, or indeed, plough or sow, eat or drink, he constantly lives not to himself, but serves a higher interest than that of the flesh, and a higher good than himself, or any created being. True Christian activity doth not only appear in those things which we call duties of worship, or religious performances; but in the whole frame of the heart, by its contriving, and the conversation, by its expressing and unfolding the glory of God.

○ A holy, serious, heavenly, humble, sober, righteous, and self-denying course of life, does most excellently express the divine glory by imitating the nature of God; and most effectually allures all men to the imitation of it; according as our Saviour hath plainly stated in the case, *John xv.*

3. *Hereby is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit*: by which fruit are not to be understood only preaching, praying, and conference, which are indeed high and excellent duties; but also righteousness, temperance, and self-denial, which things are pure reflections of the divine image, and a real glorifying of God's name and perfections. A good Christian cannot be content to be happy alone; to be still drawing down heaven into his own soul; but he endeavours also by prayer, counsel, and holy example, to draw up the souls of other men heaven-ward. This God witnesseth of Abraham, Gen. xviii. 19. *I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord*: And this Moses doth excellently witness of himself in that holy rapture of his, Numb. xi. 29. *Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!* By such examples as these, a good man desires to live, yea, by higher precedents than even Abraham or Moses, even by the example of the Father and of the Son: he admires and strives to imitate that character which is given of God himself, Ps. cxix. 68. *Thou art good, and doest good*: and that which is given of Christ Jesus, the Lord of life, Acts x. 38. *who went about doing good*: who also witnessed elsewhere concerning himself, that he came not into the world to do his own will, nor seek his own glory, but the will and glory of him that sent him: and again, Luke ii. 49. *Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?* O how happy would the godly soul count itself, if it could,

but live and converse in the world at the same rate, and with the same devout, fervent, exalted spirit, as Christ Jesus did, whose meat and drink it was still to be doing the will, and advancing the glory of his Father! But, alas! the poor soul finds itself ensnared by passions, and selfish affections from within, clogged with an unwieldy body, and distracted with secular affairs from without, that it cannot rise so nimbly, run so swiftly, nor serve the infinite and glorious God so cheerfully, nor liberally, as it would; and therefore the poor prisoner sighs within itself, and wishes that it might escape: but finding a certain time determined for it in the body, which it must be contented to live out, it looks up, and is ready to envy the angels of God, because it cannot live as they do; for they are always doing God's will; and it much regrets that itself is not a ministering spirit, serving the pure and perfect will of the supreme Good, without grudging or ceasing. The godly soul, under these powerful apprehensions of the nature of God, the example of Christ, and the honourable office of the holy angels, is ready to grudge the body that attendance that it requires, and those offices which it is forced to perform for it; judging them impertinent to its main happiness, and most excellent employment; it is ready to envy that more cheerful and willing service, which it receives from the heavy and drossy body with which it is united; and to cry out, O that I were that to my God, which my body, my eyes, hands, and feet are to me; for I say to one of these, *Go*, and he goeth; and to another, *Do this*, and he

doeth it. In a word, a good man being feelingly acquainted with the highest good; regarding diligently the great end of his coming into the world, and his short time of being in it, serves the eternal and blessed God, lives upon eternal designs, and by consecrating all his actions unto God, gives a kind of immortality to things which are in themselves flattering and transient: he counts it a reproach to any man, much more to a godly man, to do any thing insignificantly, much more to live to no good purpose, and he reckons all things that have not a tendency to the highest good, and a subserviency to the great and last end, to be impertinencies, yea, and absurdities in an immortal soul, which should continually be *springing up into everlasting life.*

3. The active and vigorous nature of true religion manifests itself in those powerful and incessant longings after God, with which it fills that soul in which it is implanted. This I superadd to the two former, because the godly man, though he be formed into some likeness to God, yet desires to be more like him; and though he be somewhat serviceable to him, yet desires to be more instrumental to his will: though he be good, yet he desires to be better; and though he do good, yet he desires to do better, or at least to do more. And, indeed, I conclude that these sincere and holy hungerings after God, of which I shall speak presently, are some of the best signs of spiritual health that I know in the world, and the best mark of a true Christian: for, in this low and corrupt state, we are better acquainted with loving and languishing, than with fruition

or satisfaction: and the best enjoyment that we have of God in this world is very limited, indeed is only a kind of longing to enjoy him. Love is certainly a high and noble affection; but, alas! our love, whilst we are here in the body, is in its infancy, in its weak and sickly state; rather a longing than a loving; much unlike to what it will be when it shall be grown up unto its perfect stature in glory. But this sickly kind of languishing affection is a certain symptom of a healthful constitution; or, as the apostle calls it, *of the spirit of a sound mind*. Godly souls are thirsty souls, always panting after the living springs of divine grace, even as the parched desert openeth its mouth for the dew of heaven, the early and the latter rain. We might wonder what kind of magic there was in Elijah's mantle, that the very casting of it upon Elisha should make him leave oxen and plough; yea, father and mother, and all to run after a stranger: Elijah himself seems to wonder at it, Kings xix. 20. *What have I done to thee?* O what a mighty charm is there in divine love! which when once shed abroad in the soul, makes the soul spread itself in it and to it, as the heliotrope* attending the motions of the sun, and turning itself every way towards it, welcoming its warm and refreshing beams. Elijah passing by Elisha as he was at the plough, and catching him with his mantle, is but a faint resemblance of the blessed God passing by a carnal mind, and wrapping it in the mantle of his love, and thereby causing it to run, yea,

* Commonly called *Sun Flower*.

to fly swiftly after him. If divine grace do but once touch the soul, the soul is presently attracted to it, as the needle to the loadstone. They that heard Christ Jesus chiding the winds and the waves, cried out, *What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!* But if one had been present when he called James and John from their nets, Matthew from the custom-house, and Zaccheus from the tree; and by calling made them willing to come, he would have cried out, surely, *What manner of God is this!* that, by his bare word makes poor men leave their trades and livelihood, and rich men their gainful exactions, usuries, and oppressions, to follow him, and shews them no reason why. What a mighty virtue is there in the ointment of Christ's name, that as soon as it is poured out, the virgins fall in love with him? *Cant. i. 3.* Micah cried out, when he was in pursuit of his gods; and, need they ask him what ailed him? And will ye wonder that a holy soul, in pursuit of the holy God, should be in earnest; that he should run, and cry as he runs? as I have seen a fond child whom the father or mother has endeavoured to leave behind them. When God breathes into the soul, he makes the soul breathe after him, and in a mixture of holy disdain and anger, to thrust away from itself all distracting companions, occasions, and concernments, saying with Ephraim to his idols, *Get ye hence.* The soul thus inspired is so far from yielding itself to any earthly, sensual, selfish lusts, and pleasures, that it cannot brook any thing that would weaken it in the prosecution of the highest good; it is impatient of every

thing that would either stop or slacken its motions after God.

The godly man desires still to be doing something for God; but if it so happen that he cannot spend his life for God as he desires, yet he will be spending his soul upon him: though he cannot perpetually abide upon the knee of prayer, yet he would be continually upon the wing of faith and love: when his tongue cleaves to the roof of his mouth, that he cannot speak for God, yet his soul shall cleave unto him, and complain because it can speak no longer: for faith and love are knitting graces, and do long to make the soul as much one with their object, as is possible for the creature to be with its Creator. Religion puts a restless appetite in the soul after a higher good, and makes it throw itself into his arms, and wind itself into his embraces, longing to be in a more intimate conjunction with him, or rather entirely wrapped up in him: itself is an insatiable and covetous principle in the soul, much like to the daughter of the horseleech, crying continually, *Give, give.* What the prophet speaks rhetorically of hell, *Isa. v. 14.* is also true concerning this offspring of heaven in the soul, *it enlargeth itself and openeth its mouth without measure.* The spirit of true godliness seems to be altogether such that it cannot rest in any measures of grace, or be fully contented with any of its attainments in this life; but ardently longs to receive the more plentiful communications of love, the more deep and legible impressions of grace, the more clear and ample experiences of divine assistance, the more sensible evidences of divine

favour, the more powerful and ravishing illapses and infusions of divine consolation into itself; *let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth*, Cant. i. 2. Such is the spirit of true godliness, that the weakest that is endowed with it, longs to be as David, and the Davids to be as God, as the angel of the Lord, according to that promise, *Zech. xii. 8*. The godly soul, that is in his right senses under the powerful apprehensions of the loveliness of God, and the beauty of holiness, cannot be contented to live by any lower standard than that of David, whose soul even broke for the longing that it had unto the Lord, *Ps. cxix. 20*. or that of the spouse who was even *sick of love*, Cant. ii. 5. You have read of the mother of Sisera looking out at the window, waiting for his coming, and crying through the lattice, *Why is his chariot so long in coming; why tarry the wheels of his chariot?* But this is not to be compared to the earnest expectation of the creature, waiting for the manifestation of God; which the apostle elegantly expresseth and yet seems to labour for words, as if he could not sufficiently express it, *Rom. viii. 19*. You have read of the Israelites marching up towards the promised land, and murmuring that they were held so long in the wilderness: but the true Israelitish soul makes more haste with less discontent, marches as under the conduct of an angel of God's presence, and longs to arrive at its rest; but, alas! it is held in the wilderness too; and therefore cannot be fully quiet in itself, but sends forth spies to view the land, the pioneers of faith and hope, like Caleb and Joshua, those men of another spirit;

and these go and walk through the holy land, and return home to the soul, and come back, not as Noah's dove with an olive leaf in her mouth; but with some clusters in their hands; they bring the soul a taste of the good things of the kingdom, of the glories of her eternal state; yea, the soul itself marches up to possess the land, goes out, with the spouse in the Canticles, to meet the Lord, to seek him whom her soul loveth. Religion is a sacred fire kept burning in the temple of the soul continually; which being once kindled from heaven, never goes out, but burns up heaven-wards, as the nature of fire is: this fire is kept alive in the soul to all eternity, though sometimes, through the ashes of earthly cares and concerns cast into it, or the sun of earthly prosperity shining upon it, it may sometimes burn more dimly, and seem almost as if it were quite smothered: this fire is for sacrifice too, though sacrifice be not always offered upon it; the same fire of faith and love which offered up the morning sacrifice is kept alive all the day long, and is ready to kindle the evening sacrifice too, when the appointed time of it shall come. In this chariot of fire it is, that the soul is continually carried out towards God, and accomplisheth a kind of glorification daily; and when it finds itself firmly seated and swiftly carried herein, it no longer envies the translation of Elijah. The spirit of sanctification is in the soul as a burning fire shut up in the bones, which makes the soul weary with forbearing, and so powerful in longings that it cannot stay; as the spirit of prophecy is described, *Jer. xx.* It is more true of the Spir-

it of God than of the spirit of Elihu, that the spirit within constraineth, and even presseth the soul, so that it is ready to swoon and faint away for very vehemence of longing. See the loving spouse falling into one of these faintings, *Cant. ii. 5.* and crying out earnestly for some cordial from heaven to keep up her sinking spirits, *Stay me with flaggons, comfort me with apples; for I am sick of love.* O what a beautiful and blessed sight is a soul working towards God, panting, and longing, and labouring after its proper happiness and perfection! Well, the sinking soul is relieved; Christ Jesus reacheth forth his left hand to her head, and his right hand embraceth her; and now she recovers; her hanging hands lift up themselves, and the beauties of her fading complexion are restored; now she sits down *under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit is sweet unto her taste.* See here the fairest sight on this side heaven; a soul resting, and glorying, and spreading itself in the arms of God, growing great in him, growing full in his fulness, and perfectly ravished with his pure love! O my soul, be not contented to live by any lower standard! *Did not our hearts burn within us,* said the two disciples one to the other, *whilst he talked with us?* But the soul in which the sacred fire of love is powerfully kindled, doth not only burn towards God, whilst he is more familiarly present with it, and, as it were, blows upon it; but if he seems to withdraw from it, it burns after him still; *My beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone; I sought him; I called him,* *Cant. v. 6.* And if the fire begin to languish, and seems as if it

would go out, the holy soul is startled presently, and labours, as the apostle speaks, *2 Tim. i. 6.* to revive it, and blow it up again, and call upon itself to awake, to arise and pursue, to mend its pace, and to speed its heavy and sluggish motions. This divine active principle in the soul maintains a continual striving, a holy struggling and stretching forth of the soul towards God, a bold and ardent contention after the supreme good; religion hath the strength of the divinity in it; its motions towards its object are quick and potent. That elegant description which the prophet makes of the wicked heart, with some change may be happily brought to express this excellent temper of the godly soul; it is like the working sea which cannot rest: and although its waters do not cast up mire and dirt, yet in a holy impatience, they rise and swell, and work and mount towards heaven. In a word, that I may comprise many things in few expressions, no man is so ambitious as the humble; none so covetous as the heavenly-minded; none so voluptuous as the self-denying: religion gives a largeness and wideness to the soul, which sin, and self, and the world, had straitened and confined. But a saint's ambition is only to be great in God; his covetousness is only to be filled with the fulness of God; and his voluptuousness is only to drink of the rivers of his pure pleasures: he desires to taste the God whom he sees, and to be satisfied with the God whom he tastes. O, how are all the faculties of the soul awakened to attendance upon the Lord of life! It hearkens for the sound of his feet coming, the noise of his hands knock-

ing at the door; it stands upon its watch-tower waiting for his appearing; waiting more earnestly than they that watch for the morning, and rejoices to meet him at his coming; and having met him, embraces him, holds him, and will not let him go; but brings him into the house, and entertains him in the guest-chamber; the soul complains that itself is not large enough; that there is not room enough to entertain so glorious a guest; no, not though it have given him all the room that it hath: it entertains him with the widest arms, and the sweetest smiles; and if he depart and withdraw, fetches him again with the deepest groans, Return, return, O Prince of Peace, and make me an everlasting habitation of righteousness unto thyself!

It will not be amiss here briefly to touch upon the reason why the godly soul so ardently pants after God. And I might shew first, negatively, that it springs not from any worldly ambition of being better and higher than others; not from any carnal hope of impunity and safety; nor merely from the bitter sense of pressing and tormenting afflictions in this life. But I shall rather insist upon it affirmatively. These earnest breathings after God spring from the feeling apprehensions of self-indigence and insufficiency, and the powerful sense of divine goodness and fulness: they are begotten of the divine bounty and self-sufficiency, manifesting itself to the spirits of men, and conceived and brought forth by a deep sense of self-poverty. One might almost apply the apostle's words to this purpose, 2 Cor. i. 9. *We receive the sentence of death in ourselves, that we*

should not trust in ourselves, but in him. I shall not discourse upon these two heads separately, but frame them into one; and you may understand it thus, these holy longings of the godly soul after God, arise from the sense of its distance from God, who is life and love itself, and the proper and full happiness of the soul. This distance is grievous to the soul that is rightly affected towards him: and hence it is, that the soul cannot be at rest, but still longs to be more intimately joined to him, and more perfectly filled with him: and the clearer the soul's apprehensions are of its object, and the deeper its sense is of its own unlikeness to him, and distance from him, the more strong and impatient are its breathings; insomuch that not only fear, as the apostle speaks, but even love itself sometimes seems to itself to have a kind of agony and torment in itself; which made the spouse cry that she was sick of love, that is, sick of every thing that kept her from her love; sick of that distance at which she stood from her beloved Lord. The godly soul being ravished with the infinite sweetness and goodness of God, longs to be that rather than what itself is, and beholding how it is estranged from him, by many sensual loves, selfish passions, corporeal clogs, and distractions, bewails its distance, and cries out within itself, *O when shall I come and appear before God! O when will God come and appear gloriously to me and in me! Who will deliver me from this body of death! O that mortality were swallowed up of life!* David's soul did wait for God as earnestly, and more properly than they that watch for the morn-

ing; for they may be said rather to be weary of the long, and cold, and troublesome night, than properly desirous of the day; but he, out of a pure and spiritual sense of his estrangement from God, longs to appear before him, and be observed in him. Heal the godly man of all his afflictions, grievances, and adversities in the world, that he may have nothing to trouble him, nor put him to pain, yet he is not quiet, he is in pain because of the distance at which he stands from God. Give him the whole world, and all the glory of it, yet he has not enough; he still cries, and requests, *Give, give*, because he is not entirely swallowed up in God. He openeth his mouth wide, as the Psalmist speaks, and all the silver, and gold, peace, health, liberty, preferment, that you cast into it, cannot fill it; because they are not God; he cannot look upon them as his chief good. In a word, a godly man doth not so much say, under a sense either of sin or affliction, *O that one would give me the wings of a dove, that I might fly away, and be at rest!* as, under the sense of his dissimilitude to, and distance from God, *O that one would give me the wings of an eagle, that I might fly away towards heaven!*

CHAP. V.

An exhortation with Christians concerning their remiss and sluggish temper: an essay to convince them of it by some considerations; which are,

- 1. The activity of worldly men.*
- 2. The restless appetites of the body.*
- 3. The strong propensities of every creature towards its own centre.*

An inquiry into the slothfulness and inactivity of Christian souls: two things premised, and an answer is given to the inquiry in five particulars. The grace of faith is vindicated from the slander of being merely passive. A short essay to awaken Christians unto a greater vigour and activity.

WE have seen in what respects religion is an active principle in the soul where it is seated: give me leave to enlarge a little here for conviction or reprehension. By this property of true religion we shall be able to discover much that is false and counterfeit in the world. If religion be no lazy, languid, sluggish, passive thing; but life, love, the spirit of power and freedom, a fire burning, a well of water springing up, as we have sufficiently seen; what shall we say then of that heavy, sluggish, spiritless kind of religion that most men take up with? Shall we call it a spirit of life, with the apostle; and yet allow of a religion that is cold and dead? Shall we call it a spirit of love and power, with the same apostle; and yet allow of it, though it be indifferent, low, and impotent? Or will such pass current with the wise and holy God, even if we pass a favourable

sentence upon it? And why should it ever pass with men, if it will not forever pass with God? But, indeed, how can this inactivity and sluggishness pass for religion amongst men? Who can think you are in pursuit of the infinite and supreme good, that sees you so slow in your motions towards it? Who can think that your treasure is in heaven, that sees your heart so far from thence? The more any thing partakes of God, and the nearer it resembles him who is the fountain of life, and power, and virtue, the more active, powerful, and lively will it be. We read of an atheistical generation in *Zeph. i. 12.* who fancied to themselves an idle and slothful God, that minded not the affairs of the world at all, saying, *The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil*; which was also the false and gross conceit of many of the heathen, as Cicero confesses of some of the Philosophers themselves, *Qui Deum nihil habere negotii dicunt et nihil exhibere alteri*: [Who say, that God takes no care of any one, nor shews him any favour.] And indeed, though it be not so blasphemous, yet it is almost as absurd, to fancy an idle saint, as an idle deity. Sure I am, if it be not altogether impossible, yet it is altogether a shameful and deformed sight, to see a holy soul in a lethargy, a godly soul that is not in pursuit of God. Moses indeed bids *Israel stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord*; but there is no such divinity in the holy Scriptures as this, stand still and see the salvation of the soul, though some have violently pressed those words, *Exod. xiv. 13.* to serve under their slothful standard: No, no, the scripture speaks to us at another rate, *Phil.*

ii. 12. *work out your own salvation*: and indeed the Spirit of God doth every where describe religion by the activity, industry, vigour, and quickness of it, as I hinted in the very beginning of this discourse; and could abundantly confirm and explain if there were need of it.

But that I may more powerfully convince and awaken the lazy and heavy spirit and temper of many professors, I will briefly touch upon a few particulars, and propose them to their serious consideration.

1. The children of this world, earthly and sensual men, are not slothful, lazy, or indifferent in the pursuit of earthly and sensual objects. You say you have laid up your treasure in heaven; we know, they have laid up their treasure in the earth: now, who is it that behaves himself most suitably and wisely towards his treasure? you or they? You say you have a treasure in heaven, and are contented to be able to say so; but make no haste to be fully and feelingly possessed of it; to enjoy the benefit and sweetness of it. But they *rise up early and sit up late*, and either starve themselves, or eat the bread of sorrow, to obtain an earthly and perishing inheritance; they traverse the world, travel far, sell all to purchase that part which is of so great price with them: and when they have accomplished it, O how do they set their heart upon it; bind up their very souls in the same bags with their money, and seal up their affections together with it: yea, and after they have acquired great wealth, they are not at rest, but find a gnawing hunger upon their hearts after more still, to add house to house,

and land to land, and one bag to another; the covetous miser is ready to sit down and wring his hands, because he hath no more hands to scrape with; the voluptuous epicure is angry that he hath not the neck of a crane the better to reach his dainties; and ambitious Alexander, when he domineers over the known world, is ready to sit down and weep, because there are no more worlds to conquer. What Christian can but be ashamed of himself, when he reads the description which Plautus the comedian gives of a covetous worldling, under the character of Euclio; who hid his pot of gold, heeded it, watched it, visited it almost every hour; would not go from it by day; could not sleep on account of it by night; suspected every body that so much as looked towards it; and by all means kept it even as his life? For where is the like eager and ardent disposition to be found in a Christian towards God himself? Tell me, is it possible for a man that vehemently loves an object, to be content all his life to have it at a distance, and not care whether ever he do actually enjoy it or not? Or will not such an one necessarily seek by all means to obtain the object of his wishes? Let us now confess the truth, and every one judge himself.

2. This dull and earthly body is not so little concerned about meat and drink, and rest, and the things that do serve its necessities, and gratify its temper. Hunger will break down stone walls, and thirst will give away a kingdom for a cup of water; sickness will not be eased by good words, nor will drowsiness be bribed by any entertainments of company or recreation; no, no,

the necessities of the body must and will be relieved with food, and physic, and sleep; the restless and raging appetite will never cease calling and crying to the soul for supplies till it arise and give them. Behold, O my soul! consider the mighty and incessant appetites and tendencies of the body after sensual objects, after its suitable good and proper perfection, and be ashamed of thy more remiss and sluggish inclination towards the highest good, a god-like perfection!

3. No creature in the whole world is so languid, slow, and indifferent in its motions towards its proper rest and centre. How easy is it to call heaven and earth to witness the free, pleasant, cheerful, eager approximation of every creature, according to its kind, towards its own centre and happiness? The sun in the firmament rejoices to run its race, and will not stand still a moment, except it be miraculously overpowered by the command of God himself; the rivers seem to be in pain, till by a continued flowing they have accomplished to themselves a kind of perfection, and be swallowed up in the bosom of the ocean, except they be benumbed with cold, or otherwise overpowered and retarded by external violence; I need not adduce instances of sensitives and vegetatives; all which you know with a natural vigour and activity grow up daily towards a perfect state and stature. Would it not be a strange and monstrous sight to see a stone resting in the air, and not working towards the earth? Such a spectacle is a godly soul settling upon earth, and not endeavouring to obtain a

nearer and more intimate union with its God. Wherefore, Christians, either cease to pretend that you have chosen God for your portion, centre, happiness; or else arise, and cease not to pursue and accomplish the closest union and the most familiar conjunction with him that your souls are capable of: otherwise I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day: and the day is coming, when you will be put to shame by the whole creation. Doth every one, even the meanest creature of God, pursue its end and perfection, and proper happiness, with ardent and vehement longings; and shall a soul, the noblest of all creatures, stand folding up itself in itself, or choking up its large and divine capacity with dust and dirt? Shall a godly soul, the noblest of all souls, drop the wing, and suspend its motions towards the supreme good, or so much as once appear to faint and languish in its enterprises for eternal life? Tell it not at Athens, publish it not at Rome, lest the heathen philosophers deride and hiss us out of the world.

But you will ask me, When a Christian may be said to be sluggish and inactive? And who these lazy souls are? I will presume two things, and then give you a brief account of them. 1st, When I speak of a sluggish and spiritless religion, I do not speak as the rash Anabaptists or Chiliasts, who being themselves actuated by a strange fervour of mind, miscalled zeal, are wont to declaim against all men as cold and benumbed in their spirits, who do not call for fire from heaven to consume all dissenters from them, as Antichristian; who are not afraid to reproach the

divine, holy, gentle, yet generous spirit of religion; calling it weak, effeminate, cowardly, low, cold, and the like. These men, I believe, so far as I can conjecture their motives, if they had lived in the days of our Saviour, and had beheld that gentle, meek, humble, peaceable, and quiet spirit, which did infinitely shine forth in him, would almost have reproved him for not carrying on his own kingdom with sufficient vigour and activity, if not have judged Christ himself to be much Antichristian. I hope you see nothing in all my explanations of the active spirit of religion that savours of such a spirit as this is. *2dly*, When I do so highly commend the active spirit of true religion, and the vigorous temper of truly religious souls, I would not be understood as if I thought all such souls were alike swift, or that any such soul did always move with the like swiftness, and keep a like pace towards God. I know that there are different sizes of active souls; yea, and different degrees of activity in the same soul, as may be seen, *Cant. v. 3.* compared with the sixth verse of the same chapter; and in many other places of Scripture.

But yet, that none may flatter and deceive themselves with an opinion of their being what indeed they are not, I will briefly point out the sluggishness and inactivity of Christians in a few particulars. Take it not ill, though the greatest part of Christians be found guilty; for that is no other than what Christ himself hath prophesied.

1. The active spirit of religion in the soul will not suffer men to take up their rest in a constant course of external performances; and they are

but slothful souls, that place their religion in any thing external. By external performances I mean not only open, and public, and solemn services; but even the most private and secret performances that are in and by the body, and, *ab extra*, [from without,] to the soul. It is not possible that a soul should be happy in any thing that is extrinsick to itself, no not in God himself, if we consider him as something without the soul: the devil himself knows and sees much of God externally; but having no communications of a divine nature or life, and being perfectly estranged from the life of God, he remains perfectly miserable. I suspect it is a common deceit in the world; that men toil and labour in bodily acts of worship and religion in a slavish and mercenary manner; and think, with those labourers in the parable, that at the end they must needs receive great wages, and much thanks, because they have borne the heat and burden of the day. Alas, that ever men should so grossly mistake the nature of religion, as to sink it into a few bodily acts and services, and to think it is nothing else but running a round of duties and ordinances, and keeping up a constant set and course of actions! I know indeed that men will be loth to confess that they place their religion in any thing without them; but, I pray, consider seriously wherein you excel other men, except in praying or hearing now and then, or some other outward acts; and judge yourselves by your nature, and not by your actions.

2. the active spirit of religion, where it is in the soul, will not suffer men to take up their rest

in a mere pardon of sin; and they are but slothful souls that could be so satisfied. Blessed is the man indeed whose iniquities are pardoned, *Ps.* xxxii. 1, 2. But if we could suppose a soul to be acquitted of the guilt of all sin, and yet to lie bound under the dominion of lusts and passions, and to live without God in the world, it would be still far from true blessedness. A real hell and misery will arise out of the bowels of sin and wickedness, though there should be no reserve of fire and brimstone in the world to come. It is utterly impossible that a soul should be happy out of God, though it had the greatest security imaginable that it should never suffer any thing from him. The highest care and ambition indeed of a slavish and mercenary spirit is to be secured from the wrath and vengeance of God; but the breathings of the ingenuous and holy soul are after a divine life, and godlike perfections. This right gracious temper you may see in David, *Ps.* li. 9, 10, 11, 12. which is also the temper of every truly religious soul.

3. The active spirit of religion, where it is in the soul, will not suffer men to take up their rest in mere innocency, and freedom from sin; and they are slothful souls that could count it happiness enough to be harmless. Men are much mistaken about holiness; it is something more than mere innocency, or freedom from the guilt or power of sin; it is not a negative thing; there is something active, noble, divine, and powerful, in true religion. A soul that well understands its own penury and self-sufficiency, and the emptiness and meanness of all creature-good, cannot

possibly take up its rest, or place its happiness in any thing but in a real participation of God himself; and therefore is continually pressing on towards that God from whom it came, and is labouring to unite itself more and more unto him. Let a low-spirited, fleshly-minded Pharisee take up with a negative holiness and happiness, as he doth, *Luke, xviii. 11. God, I thank thee that I am not so*: a noble and high spirited Christian cannot take up his rest in any negation or freedom from sin. Every godly soul is not so learned, indeed, as to be able to describe the nature and proper perfection of a soul, and to tell you how the happiness of a soul consists, not *in quietness*, but *in action and vigour*; not in cessation and rest, as the happiness of a stone doth, but in life, and power, and vigour, as the happiness of God himself doth; but yet the spirit of true religion is so excellent and powerful in every godly soul, that it is still carrying it to the fuller enjoyment of a higher good: and the soul doth find and feel within itself, though it cannot discourse philosophically of these things, that, though it were free from all disturbance of sin and affliction in the world, yet still it wants some supreme and possible good to make it completely happy, and therefore it bends all its powers thitherward. This is the description which you will every where find made in Scripture of the true spirit of holiness, which hath always something positive and divine in it, as *Isa. i. 16, 17. Cease to do evil, learn to do well*; and *Eph. iv. 22—24. Put off the old man, put on that new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness*. And accordingly a

truly godly person, to use the apostle's words, though he know nothing by himself, yet doth not thereby count himself happy.

4. The active spirit of true religion, where it is in the soul, will not suffer men to take up their rest in some measures of grace received; and so far as the soul doth so, it is sluggish and less active than it ought to be. This, indeed, oftentimes comes to pass when the soul is under some distemper of proud selfishness, earthly-mindedness, or the like, or is less apprehensive of its object and happiness; as it seems to have been the case of the spouse, *Cant.* v. 3. Some such fainting fits, languishings, surfeitings, insensibleness, must be allowed to be in the godly soul during its imprisoned and imperfect state: but we must not judge ourselves by any present distempers, or infirmities. The nature of religion, when it actuates the soul right and powerfully, produces a more lively resemblance of God; which is the most proper and excellent enjoyment of him. A mind properly and actually sound, is most sick of love; and the nature of the love is, not to know when it is near enough to its object, but still to long after the most complete conjunction with it. This well of water, if it be not violently obstructed, is ever springing up till it is swallowed up in the ocean of divine love and grace. The soul that is really acquainted with itself and its God, sees something still wanting in itself, and to be enjoyed in him, which makes it impossible for it to rest, but is still springing up into him, till it come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of its Lord. In this holy loving, longing, striving,

active temper, we find the great apostle, *Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14.* And by how much the more of divine grace any soul hath drunk in, the more thirsty is it after more.

5. The active spirit of true religion, where it is powerfully seated in the minds of men, will not suffer them to settle into a love of this animal life, nor indeed suffer them to be content to live for ever in such a kind of body as this; and that soul is in a degree lazy and slothful, that doth not desire to depart and be with his Lord. The godly soul viewing God as its perfect and full happiness, and finding that its being in the body doth separate it from God, keep it in a poor and imperfect state, and hinder its blissful communion with the highest good, groans within itself that mortality might be swallowed up of life, with the apostle, *2 Cor. v. 4.* I know not how much, but I think he hath not very much of God, neither any sight of him, nor love of him, that could be content to abide for ever in this imperfect, mixed, earthly state, and never be perfected in the full enjoyment of him. And it seems that they in whom the love of God is truly predominant, potent, and flourishing, do also look earnestly *for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, Jude 21.* without doubt they ought to do so. *2 Pet. iii. 12. What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God?* Let this suffice by way of general reprehension.

2. More particularly, the consideration of the active nature of true religion may well serve to

correct a mistake about that noble grace of faith. How dishonourably do some speak of this excellent and powerful grace, when they make it to be a slothful, passive thing, an idle kind of waiting, or a melancholy sitting still; while, indeed and in truth, it is life and power. Be not mistaken in so high and eminent a grace: true faith doth not only accept the imputed righteousness of Christ for justification, but, by a lively dependence upon God, drinks in divine influences, and eagerly imbibes grace, and virtue, and life, from the fountain of grace, for its more perfect sanctification: and for this cause, I think, a purifying virtue is ascribed to it, *Acts xv. 9*. Faith is not a lazy, languid thing, content to wait for salvation till the world to come; but it is even now panting after it, and obtaining it too, in a way of mortification, self-denial, and growing up in God: it is not contented to be a candidate, waiting for life and happiness, but is actually drawing down heaven into the heart, attracting God to itself, and participating of the divine grace and image in the soul: its motto is that of the famous painter, *Nulla dies sine linea*; [No day without a line;] it longs to find some divine lineament, some line of God's image drawn upon the soul daily. Faith is a giving grace, as well as receiving; it gives up the whole soul to God, and is troubled that it can give him no more: it binds over the soul afresh to God every day, and is troubled that it can bind it no faster nor closer to him. The believing soul is wearied because of murderers, murdering loves, lusts, cares, earthly pleasures, and calls mightily to Christ to come and take

vengeance upon them: it is wearied because of those robbers that are daily stealing away precious time and affections from God, which are due unto him; and calls upon Christ to come and scourge these thieves, these buyers and sellers, out of his own temple. In a word, the godly soul is active, and faith is the very life and action of the soul itself.

Lastly, Let me exhort all Christians from hence, to be zealous, to be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, and longing after him; *stir up the grace of God that is in you; quench not, i. e. blow up, inflame the Spirit of God in you.* Awake, Christian soul, out of thy lethargy, and rejoice, as the sun, to run the race that is set before thee, and, as a mighty man refreshed with wine, to fight thy spiritual battles against the armies of uncircumcised, profane, and earthly concupiscences, loves, and passions. Regard God as your centre, the enjoyment of him as the happiness, and full conformity to him as the perfection of your souls; and then say, Awake, arise, O my soul, and hide not thy hand in thy bosom, but throw thyself into the very heart and bosom of God; lay hold upon eternal life. Again, observe how all things in the world pursue their several perfections with unwearied and impatient longings; and say, come, my soul, and do thou likewise. converse not with God so much under the notion of a Law-giver, but as with love itself; nor with his commands, as having authority in them, but as having goodness, and life, and sweetness in them. Again, consider your poverty, as creatures, and how utterly impossible it is for you to be happy in yourselves; and say, arise,

O my soul, from this weak and tottering foundation, and build thyself in God: cease pinching thyself within the straits of self-sufficiencies, and come stretch thyself upon infinite goodness and fulness. Again, pore not over your attainments; do not sit brooding upon your present accomplishments; but forget the things that are behind, and say, awake, O my soul, there is yet infinitely much more in God; pursue after him for it, till thou have gotten as much as a created being is capable of receiving of the divine nature. In a word, take heed, that you live not by the lowest examples, (which thing keeps many in a dwindling state all their days) but by the highest: read over the temper of the spouse, sick of love; David's temper, waiting for God more than they that watch for the morning, breaking in heart for the longing that he had to the Lord; and say, Arise, O my soul, and live as high as the highest. It is no fault to desire to be as good, as holy, as happy as an angel of God; and thus, O my soul, open thy mouth wide, and God hath promised to fill thee!

CHAP. VI.

That religion is a lasting and persevering principle in the souls of men, proved by several Scriptures. The grounds of this perseverance assigned; first, negatively, it doth not arise from the absolutely un-failing nature of grace in the creature, nor from the strength of man's free-will.—Secondly, affirmatively, the grace of election cannot fail. The grace of justification is neither suspended nor violated; the covenant of grace is everlasting; the Mediator of this covenant lives for ever; the promises of it immutable. An objection answered concerning a regenerate man's willing his own apostacy. An objection answered, drawn from the falls of saints in Scripture; as also from those Scriptures that seem to imply a man's falling away. A discovery of counterfeit religion, and the shameful apostacy of false professors. An encouragement to all holy diligence, from the consideration of this doctrine; the rather that we may stop the mouths of those that falsely affirm that the same is prejudicial to true godliness.

THE third property of true religion contained in the words of the text is, the *perseverance* of it.—And the foundation of my following discourse shall be this proposition: “True religion is a lasting and persevering principle in the souls of good men.”

It is said of the hypocritical Jews, that their goodness was as the *early dew that soon passes away*, Hosea vi. 4. But that principle of goodness

which God gives to the souls of his people is compared to a *well of water*, ever sending forth fresh streams, and incessantly springing up towards God himself. Our Saviour compares hypocritical professors to *seed sown upon stony ground*, that springs up indeed but soon withers away, *Mark* iv. 5, 6. but this well of water, which is in the sincere godly soul, springs up into everlasting life; it springs and is never dried up; *it is a spring of water, whose waters fail not, or lie not*, as it is expressed by the prophet *Isa.* lviii. 11. or if you look upon it under the metaphor of oil, as it is sometimes expressed in Scripture, then it is truly that oil that faileth not, whereof the widow of Sarepta's cruise of oil was but a faint resemblance. Amongst other texts which the learned Dr. Arrowsmith brings to prove the infallibility of the perseverance of saints, this speech of our Saviour's, which is the subject of my whole discourse, is one; who also quoteth Theophylact for the same mind, viz. the perseverance of this principle, yea, and somewhat more, even the growth and multiplication of it. To the same purpose the same excellent author quoteth *John* x. 27, 28. *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.* In which words our Saviour strongly asserts the certain glorification of his elect, by using a verb of the present tense, *I give unto them eternal life*; he will as certainly give it them, as if they had it already, unless the words do imply that they have it already, viz. the beginning of it, even in this

life : and if so, then the words do yet more strongly assert the doctrine of perseverance ; for how can that life be called eternal, which may end ? In the same words he seemeth purposely to prevent fears, and beforehand to answer objections, by securing them both from internal and external enemies ; they shall never perish, viz. of their own accord, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand ; for the word in the original is such as doth secure them from the power of devils as well as men ; and what is said of the church in general, is also certain concerning every true member of it in particular ; *the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* Christ hath not only chosen and ordained his people that they should be holy, but also that they should persevere in holiness ; not only that they should bring forth good fruits, but that their *fruits should remain,* John xv. 15, 16.—Hence they are said to be born again of incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth *for ever,* 1 Pet. i. 23. And he that is born of God, is said to have the seed of God in him, and remaining in him ; and in such a manner remaining in him that he shall never again commit sin ; that is, shall not become any more ungodly, 1 John iii. 9. To all which may be added that strong and strengthening text, Rom. viii. 38, 39. *I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord ;* which one text doth excellently assert both those precious and comfortable doctrines of assurance

and perseverance; and they are worthily to be honoured in the church of God, who have vindicated it from the corrupt glosses and cavils of the papists, who have endeavoured to deprive Christians of the sweetness which may be extracted from that full honey-comb. In a word, let the holy Psalmist's experience of the supporting virtue of this doctrine close the proof of it at present; who found himself wonderfully comforted by it after all his fears and defeats, *Ps. lxxiii. 24.* where he sings of the loving kindness of the Lord in time past; *Thou hast holden me by my right hand;* and, at present, *I am continually with thee;* that is, thou art continually with me; and, with the like courage and confidence, he speaks of all time to come, *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory.* Now, although the doctrine of the perseverance of saints be thus fully and clearly laid down in Scripture, yet it is easy to err in giving an account of it, and of the grounds of it. And therefore I shall proceed to the grounds of it, which I will briefly explain, negatively and affirmatively. First, negatively.

1. The certain perseverance of the saints in a state of grace doth not arise from the absolute impossibility that grace in the creature can be lost: it is one thing to affirm, that grace shall not be lost, and another thing to affirm, that it absolutely cannot be lost. God hath told us, that the world shall no more be drowned, but who will say, notwithstanding, that it is not in itself capable of drowning? Whilst we think to honour God by asserting the permanency of grace,

we must take heed lest we make grace a god, and so dishonour him. Grace, as it exists in God, in the fountain, which divines sometimes call active grace, is eternal and unchangeable, not subject to any defect or alteration. There is no time, or place, or circumstances, wherein the love and goodness of God fail towards his elect. This love and goodness are one and the same in God towards his people, even when they are under the greatest desertions, and have no sense at all of them. We must not say the sun is grown dark, as often as a dark cloud interposeth between it and our sight. Yea, however certain it is that the pure and holy God hateth sin even in his elect, yet it is also certain that the good and gracious God loveth the persons of his saints, even when they sin: "For the love of God towards the regenerate," saith Davenant, "is not bottomed upon their perfect purity and holiness, but upon Christ Jesus the Mediator, who hath transferred their sins upon himself, and hath redeemed them from the wrath of God." The love and kindness of God towards his people is absolutely unchangeable and everlasting. But grace in the creature, being itself a creature, is not simply and absolutely unchangeable or impossible to be lost: there is a possibility of losing inherent grace, if it be considered in itself; yea, and it would actually be lost and perish, if God did not uphold his people with one hand, whilst he exerciseth them with the other. Though with all my might I desire to maintain the perseverance of the saints; yet I dare not, as some do, ground it upon the firmness and fixedness of faith in man; but upon

the goodness and faithfulness of God; which are such towards his elect, that he will keep them by his mighty power *through faith unto salvation*, as the apostle expresseth it, *1 Pet. i. 5.*

2. It doth not arise from the strength of man's free-will, as if he were of himself able to keep himself forever in a state of grace, when God had once put him into it. The saints indeed shall forever will their own perseverance, as we shall presently shew; but it is God that worketh in them even this will. *Phil. ii. 13.* Man's own free-will, or self-sufficiency, is so far from being the ground of his perseverance in grace and holiness, that I do believe nothing in the world is more directly contrary to grace, than habitual and predominant self-confidence; and, even in the saints themselves, there is nothing that doth strike a greater stroke towards their apostacy, than this self-conceit and confidence of their own strength, as something distinct from God, though the same be not habitual and predominant; for they themselves are many times sadly weakened and set back by that means, and suffer many lamentable spiritual decays. This seems to have sometimes been the case of Hezekiah and of David too, and was nearly the case of Paul, when he had so much abounded in revelations, *2 Cor. xii. 7.* Sure it is, that nothing doth more estrange the hearts of God's people from him, nor more withhold the influences of divine grace and favour from them, than this security, confidence in the strength of their own wills, and vain opinion of self-sufficiency; which thing the sad experience of holy Christians doth attest. Not only the apostles James

and Peter, but indeed all the true disciples of Christ in the world do agree to that proverb, *God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.* In a word, though *to do justly, and to love mercy,* have indeed much of religion in them; yet to persevere, it is also required that a man deny himself and the sufficiency of his own free-will; and, in the prophet's expression, *Walk humbly with his God.* You know that Peter boasted, *Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended;* and again, *Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee;* and what the lamentable consequence of this self-confidence was, you know likewise: wherefore *let him that standeth by his own strength, take heed lest he fall.*

I proceed now to speak affirmatively concerning the grounds of the saints' perseverance in a state of grace. I have already shewed, that active grace is absolutely of an immutable nature: and although passive grace be not so, yet it shall not be lost totally and finally. For,

1. The grace of election cannot fail. When I think of that uncertain, conditional, mutable decree of saving men, which some ascribe to God, who is infinite and eternal wisdom and of one mind, methinks I may, with great reason, apply the apostle's words concerning himself and say, when God is thus graciously minded to elect his people to eternal life, *Doth he use lightness, or the things that he purposeth, doth he purpose according to the flesh,* after the manner of men, who are unsteady and wavering in their determinations? Is there with him yea, yea, and nay, nay? What

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doth the apostle mean by those words, 2 Tim. ii. 19. *The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his?* The apostle, in the foregoing verse, having related the apostacy of Hymeneus and Philetus, and the overthrow of some men's faith by their means, immediately subjoins this comfortable doctrine of the stedfastness and firmness of God's decree of election, to prevent the offence which the saints might take at the falls of others, and to relieve them against the fears that they might possibly entertain concerning their own perseverance. The import of what he said is this, let no one be offended, as if the salvation of the elect rested on uncertainties; it appears that these men were none of God's elect, because they are seduced, and the faith that they had is overthrown; and as for you who are elected, fear not lest ye also should apostatise; it is not possible to deceive the elect in the necessary and fundamental truths of the gospel, *Matt. xxiv. 24.* Fear not lest ye also should be drawn away by the error of the wicked unto perdition, *for the foundation of God standeth sure, &c.* In which sentence, says Dr. Arrowsmith, almost every word breathes firmness and performance; nothing is more firm in a building than the foundation; that you may doubt of that, it is also sure, or steady; this sure foundation is said to stand, that is, say the Dutch Annotators, abideth stedfast and certain; for it is the foundation not of man's laying, but of God's; with whom there is *no variableness nor shadow of change.* Yea, farther, this foundation is said to be sealed: now, what is accounted more firm and

sure than those things which are sealed with a seal? especially such a seal as this, *The Lord knoweth who are his.* Though the wisest of men are often deceived in their opinions, yet the knowledge of God is infinitely infallible; according to St. Austin, "If any of the elect perish, God is deceived; but God is not deceived, therefore none of the elect can perish, for the Lord knoweth who are his." When Samuel went to separate one of the sons of Jesse from the rest of his brethren to be king over Israel, he first pitched upon Eliab, and afterwards rejected him, *1 Sam. xvi.* but God is guilty of no such inconstancy in that eternal election which he makes of men to be kings and priests unto himself. Though the several acts of divine grace mentioned *Rom. viii. 29, 30.* are many links, yet they run one into another, and all from first to last make but one chain; concerning which divine and mysterious concatenation one may boldly use that peremptory prohibition which our Lord useth concerning a less indissoluble connexion, *Matt. xix. 6. What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.*

2. The grace of justification is neither suspended nor violated; it admits neither of interruption nor end neither of pause nor period. There is nothing between justification and glorification in the apostle's sentence, but the copulative *and*, *Rom. viii. 30.* There is nothing between a justified soul and glory, but a mere passage into it. We may be allowed to triumph with the holy apostle in the chapter, just quoted, Who will bring an accusation against God's elect? *It is God that justifieth.* But what though you be at present

justified, may some say, is there not a possibility of losing your justification? May not the righteousness of the righteous be taken from him? may you not be condemned hereafter? *But who is he that shall condemn us? it is Christ that died:* As if the apostle had said, the love of God towards his justified ones, is not grounded upon their purity, loveliness, or perfection; but it is founded in their Redeemer; which Redeemer hath done enough, both to bring them into a justified state, and to keep them in it forever; it is Christ that died to free them from sin, it is Christ that is risen again for their justification; *that is at the right hand of God,* to deliver them from all their enemies, that maketh intercession for them, for their perseverance. God loves nothing but the communications of himself: so far as any thing partakes of the divine image, so far it partakes of divine favour and complacency; so that whilst a good man bears a resemblance unto God, so long he shall be accepted of him, and embraced in the arms of his love; and that shall continue forever, as we shall see under the head. Until you have blotted out all the image and superscription of God from a godly soul, until you have erased all the stamps and impressions of goodness; in a word until you have rendered him wicked and ungodly, you cannot drive him from the embraces of God; which thing men and devils shall never be able to do, as I have partly shewed already, and shall yet shew more at large.

It is true indeed that Adam fell from a just state, though not from a justified state; for that supposes sin formerly committed. But this is no

great wonder; for he had his righteousness in himself, and his happiness in his own keeping: but the condition of believers is now more safe and firm, depending not upon any created power or will, but upon the infinite and effectual help and strength of a Mediator, which will never fail.

3. The covenant of grace is everlasting. It hath pleased God to enter into a covenant of grace and peace with every believing soul; which I need not take pains to prove, as all Christians acknowledge it, though they do not all agree in their ideas of it. Now this covenant, wherein God engages himself to be their God, (for that is the sum of it on his part,) is expressly called by the apostle, *the everlasting covenant*, Heb. xiii. 20. And again, Jer. xxxii. 40. *I will make an everlasting covenant with them*: which covenant, and the everlastingness of it, are fully explained in the following words, *I will not turn away from them to do them good*: the inviolable nature of this covenant is also expressly asserted in that remarkable passage, Jer. xxxi. 31, 32. *I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, which my covenant they broke*: as if he had said, "I will make a covenant that shall not be subject to breaches. In the former covenant with their fathers I gave them laws to keep, which they keep not; but, in the new covenant, I will give them also a heart to keep my laws:" it is not possible that covenant should be broken, one principal part of which is, a heart both able and willing to keep it. The similitudes which God useth in the 35th, 36th, and 37th verses of that

same chapter, do also further confirm and illustrate this doctrine of the everlastingness of this covenant of grace.

Under this head let me notice three things :

1. The Mediator of this covenant lives for ever, and lives to make intercession for believers, *Heb. vii. 25.* and from this the apostle argues, that they shall be saved to the uttermost, or evermore, as the margin reads it. From this also the apostle argues the unchangeable state of believers, as we observed before from *Rom. viii. 34.* Christ Jesus is always heard and accepted of the Father in all the requests that he maketh to him, according to that in *John xi. 41, 42.* *Jesus lift up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee, that thou hast heard me, and I know that thou hearest me always.* If these things be so, then the perseverance of the saints is built upon a most certain foundation, is secured against the very gates of hell; for Christ hath prayed for them that they may be where he is, *John xvii. 24.* and in the mean time, that they may be kept from the evil, ver. 15. and that their faith fail not, *Luke xxii. 32.*

2. The promises of this covenant are immutable, *they are in Christ Jesus yea and amen, 2 Cor. i. 20.* as if one should say in Latin, *Certo certiora,* perfectly sure and certain. God, who is truth itself, will not, cannot be, unto his people as a liar, or *as waters that fail,* as the prophet expresseth it. The infinite fountain of grace and truth cannot possibly become like one of the brooks of which Job speaks, which seem to be full of water, and are so at a certain winter season; but when the poor parched Arabian comes to look

for water thence in summer, he goes away ashamed, because they are now vanished; they are consumed out of their place, *Job. vi. 19, 20.* Now the promise is concerning not only grace, but the final perseverance of it: if he promise pardoning grace, it is in these full and satisfying expressions, *I will remember their sin* (any one of their sins) *no more, Jer. xxxi. 34.* If he promise purging and purifying grace, it is with the like amplitude of expression, *that they may fear me forever;* and again, *they shall not depart from me, Jer. xxxii. 39, 40.* with many other places of like import.

3. God is said, *2 Cor. vi. 16.* to dwell in the souls of his people, in opposition to a way-faring man, *who turneth in to tarry for a night, Jer. xiv. 8.* God indeed hath promised that it shall be said to them that were not his people, *Ye are the sons of the living God, Hos. i. 10.* but never the contrary; he hath no where threatened them that are the sons of the living God that it shall at any time be said to them, *Ye are not my people.* True indeed, as to external profession, church-membership, mere covenant holiness, and outward communion, God doth many times disinherit and reject them that were so his people; but as to true godliness, participation of the divine image, internal and spiritual communion, we may confidently say with the apostle to the Corinthians, *1 Cor. i. 9. God is faithful, by whom we were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;* or, with the same apostle to the Thessalonians, *1 Thess. v. 24. Faithful is he that calleth you who will also do it:* Do what? why, that which he was speaking of and praying for in ver. 23. viz.

Preserve spirit, soul, and body, blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I conclude then, that grace in the creature is a participation of him who is essential and perfect grace and goodness, a communication made by him of his holy nature, which becomes a living principle in the souls of men, a fountain sending forth a continued stream of holy dispositions and affections without intercession or cessation: though these streams run sometimes higher, sometimes lower, sometimes swifter, sometimes slower, yet they are never wholly dried up as the brook of Tema was. For, where God hath once opened a fountain in the soul, he feeds it with fresh supplies from himself; as a fountain itself would dry up, if it were not nourished by the supplies of subterraneous waters. The perseverance of grace depends purely upon the supports and supplies of uncreated essential life and goodness. But how do we know that God will certainly afford these supplies? we build upon his goodness and love in Christ towards his elect, which is infinite and unspeakable; and upon his faithfulness in accomplishing his promise, viz. that he will never leave nor forsake them, *Heb. xiii. 5.* that he will keep them by his power unto salvation, *1 Pet. i. 5.* They that are of the number of God's holy and chosen ones shall, no doubt, continue of that number according to that passage in *1 John ii. 19.* They that are truly in Christ shall abide in him, *John ii. 27.* The seed of God remaineth in the godly, and they cannot sin, because they are born of God, *1 John iii. 9.* *He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and*

that wicked one toucheth him not, 1 John v. 18. What can be more express and ample than that consolatory promise of our Lord made to his poor frail sheep, John x. 28. *I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand.*

But some one may say perhaps, What if man will apostatise? What if the saints themselves will forsake God? Will he not then say of them, as the apostle of the unbelieving husband, *If they will depart, let them depart?* Will not God forsake them that forsake him?

Ans. Yes, God will forsake them that forsake him; but they never forsake him: they being really renewed after the image of God, and perfectly overpowered by his grace, shall never will any such departure: *I will betroth thee unto me forever,* Hosea ii. 19. "It is certain," saith Dr. Arrowsmith, "that God will condemn all impenitent sinners; but it is as certain that all justified and regenerate sinners shall repent; *semper fit, procurante Spiritu;*" [The Spirit always causes it.] It seems unreasonable to ask, What if man himself will apostatise? seeing he is, by the grace of God, so renewed in his will, and put into such a condition, that he cannot will any such thing. "God doth not give unto his saints, saith Austin, only such help without which they could not persevere if they would (which was that which he gave Adam;) but he also worketh in them the will; that because they shall not persevere except they both can and will, his bountiful grace bestoweth upon them both the ability and the willingness; for their will is so assisted

by the spirit of God, that they therefore can, because they so will; they therefore so will, because God worketh in them to will." Neither is it any disparagement or injury to the freedom of man's will, that it should be overpowered by divine grace, and determined only to that which is good. The indifferency and fluctuation of the will of man is indeed the imperfection of it; and the more God reveals himself to the soul, as the chief good, the more this indifferency of the will is destroyed, and the faculty is determined; not by being constrained, but indeed perfected. O happy liberty, for a soul to be indifferently affected towards its own happiness, and to be free to choose its own misery! The noblest freedom in the world is, when a soul being delivered from its hesitations, and healed of its indifferences, is carried like a ship with spread sails and powerful winds by a most speedy, cheerful, and steady course into its own harbour, into the arms and embraces of its own object. The grace of God doth never so overpower the will of man, as to reduce it to a condition of slavery, so that man should not have a proper dominion over his own acts; but I think we generally conclude that, in the world to come, in the future state, the wills of all glorified saints shall be so advanced and perfected in freedom, as not in the least to verge towards any thing that is evil, but shall in the most gladsome and steady manner be eternally carried towards their full and glorious object, which the glorified understanding shall then represent in a most true, clear, and ample manner; and this we conclude is the soul's truest liberty in the highest elevation

of it. Now although it be not altogether thus with us in this present world, (for by reason of the weakness and darkness of our understandings, which do here represent God unto us so faintly and disadvantageously, it comes to pass that the will cannot so freely and fervently, with so ardent and generous motions, pursue its excellent object, as it shall do hereafter,) yet I believe that the more God reveals himself to any soul, the more its fluctuations are healed, and a true liberty of will increased; and that he doth so far reveal himself to every truly godly soul, as to establish this noble freedom in it, in such a degree as will keep it from willing a final departure from him, and carry it certainly (how remissly and faintly soever) towards the supreme and sovereign Good, till it come to be perfectly swallowed up in it. A will thus truly and divinely free, though it be not the proper efficient cause, yet certainly is an inseparable concomitant of final perseverance. So then the more God communicateth himself to any soul, the more powerfully it willeth a nearer connexion with him; and no soul, I conceive, to whom God communicateth himself savingly, can at any time will an utter separation from him. As for the foulest falls of saints that are any where recorded in Scripture, I know not what more can rationally be inferred from them, than that grace in the creature admits of ebbs and flows; is subject to augmentation and diminution; which no sober person denies. But I think the history of their lapses, if we take it altogether, hath a very favourable bearing upon the doctrine of perseverance; yea, for aught I know,

one great design of God in having those relations recorded, might be to confirm this very doctrine, by giving us so express and ample account of their repentance and recovery, that we are indeed to believe they were strengthened by their falls; so far were their falls from proving mortal to them. One would think, that if ever the habits of grace could be utterly suffocated and extinguished, if ever they could languish even unto death, it would be under the power of such heinous acts as David and Peter committed; and especially Solomon, whose acts, I conceive, were as foul, and as often repeated; which conduct is very destructive to gracious habits. I know there are instances given of Joash, Hymeneus, Alexander, and Demas, who utterly fell from that gracious state, wherein they once had been. But it did never yet appear to me beyond contradiction, that they were any of them in such a state. Joash is put amongst the number of hypocrites by some that have examined his story: and for aught that can evidently appear to the contrary, Demas might be no better. More is pleaded in favour of Hymeneus and Alexander; who put away a good conscience, and made shipwreck of faith, 1 *Tim.* i. 20. But it does not yet appear that the faith of which they made shipwreck, was any other than the profession or doctrine of the true faith; yea, rather it doth appear that it was no more. Neither does it at all appear, that they ever had that good conscience, which they are said, in our translation, to have put away, which may as properly be rendered; rejected; *arceo, prohibeo, resis-*

to, renitor, repello, to reject, repel, or thrust away from one. I am not confident that their apostacy was total neither, supposing it to be an apostacy: for however their faith was shipwrecked, possibly some plank or other of it might be left. And who dare say that it was final? The apostle doth not, that I perceive, give them up for lost, but executes discipline upon them, as it seems, for their recovery; of which one might think, by the following words, that he had some hopes,—*that they may learn not to blaspheme.* In short then, as to these two men, I conceive, that the good conscience which they put away, they never had; and the faith which they had, was not that good faith. And as to the other two that were named, and indeed as to all other instances of the like nature, I suppose we may give this general answer, that either they did not really stand, or they did not really fall; the former perhaps was the case of Joash, and the latter of Demas.—Whenever you observe therefore the backslidings of any seeming Christians, take heed of concluding rashly against the perseverance of saints, but rather infer with the holy apostle, 1 John ii. 19. *They went out from us, but they were not of us: had they been of us, they would, no doubt, have continued with us:* which words, if they be meant only of a communion in doctrine and profession, so as to conclude against the separation of such as are indeed in such a communion; then we may argue the more strongly, *a minore ad majus*, [from the less to the greater,] against the final apostacy of any that are in a higher and more excellent communion.

As for those texts of Scripture that seem to suppose a man can fall from grace, and turn from righteousness, I conceive a fair answer may be given unto them, by distinguishing this kind of righteousness: it may be granted, that many men have turned away from, and utterly made shipwreck of their legal righteousness, consisting of an external conformity to the letter of the precepts of the law, but void of the supernatural and divine principle; it is indeed the common lot of these men that spring up thus fairly, and yet have no root; to *wither away*, Matt. xiii. 6. Luke viii. 6. And yet on the other hand, it abides an everlasting truth that, *Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.* 1 John iii. 9. If there be any texts that seem to speak of apostatising from an evangelical righteousness, a righteousness of faith, and so cannot well be solved by this distinction, as that in *Heb. x. 38.* and some others, it must be considered that suppositions are made of things impossible as well as possible, yea, and that even in the Scriptures themselves, as some have observed from *Gal. i. 8.* 1 *Cor. xv. 14.* which texts do not at all imply what they suppose. I know indeed that eternal salvation is ordinarily annexed to perseverance, and so is promised to us in Scripture, as it were conditionally, John viii. 31. *If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.* Col. i. 21, 22, 23. *You hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh, through death, to present you holy, and unblameable, and unproveable in his sight, if we continue in the faith, and be not moved away from the hope of the*

gospel, &c. To the same purpose are those words, *He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved;* and *Rev. ii. 26. He that overcometh, and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give, &c.* All which do strongly imply that there is no salvation but in a way of perseverance; and the words being laid down thus conditionally, especially the words first quoted, are given as a caution and quickening to the dull and sluggish minds of men, but do not necessarily imply any uncertainty or doubtfulness in the thing itself, any more than those words of the apostle Peter, *1 Pet. i. 10.* compared with the latter end of the 12th verse, where he doth affirm them to be *established in the truth*, and yet at the same time doth speak to them by way of caution and encouragement. There are many texts that seem to assert the apostacy of men from a state of regeneration, but not one that doth really assert it, that ever I could yet find; but they are almost without number, that, to my apprehension, do more than seem to assert the contrary, *viz.* their final perseverance: of which perseverance we have also, through the goodness of God, thousands of instances; but no man could ever yet produce one instance of the contrary, but by mere conjectures; and let them that make these conjectures see that they be neither too charitable towards men, nor uncharitable towards God.

Wherefore do I conclude that what is said concerning heaven and hell in the parable, as to one branch of it, is true of grace and wickedness; a gulf is fixed, and they that would pass from God to sin and the devil cannot: not that there

shall ever be in any a real and predominant desire so to pass, as I suppose I have already proved; but it denotes the impossibility of the thing. It is equally impossible that a godly soul should fall from God, and become a hater of him, fall from his love and image, and take upon him the image of the devil, as it was for Lazarus to quit Abraham's bosom for the flames of hell: the case seems to be the same, the former being the most real heaven, and the latter the truest hell. True religion is that holy fire which, being once kindled in the soul from heaven, never goes out; whereof the fire of the altar was but a faint and imperfect resemblance: it is as true in this respect of good men, as it is of wicked men in another, *their fire never goes out.*

And here we are presented with another great difference between true and counterfeit religion. All counterfeit religion will fade in time, though ever so specious and flourishing; all dew will pass away, though some lie much longer than other; all land-floods will fail; yea, the flood of Noah at length dried up, though it was of many months duration. But this well of water, of which our Saviour here speaks, will never utterly fail; cold adversity cannot freeze it; scorching prosperity cannot dry it up; the upper springs of uncreated grace and goodness will evermore feed those lower springs of grace and holiness in the creature. Though heaven and earth pass away, yet shall the seed of God remain; *He that hath begun a good work will certainly perform it, Phil. i. 6.* Where the grace of God hath begotten a divine principle and spirit of true religion in a

soul, there is the central force of heaven itself still attracting and carrying the soul in its motions thitherward, until it have lodged it in the very bosom and heart of God. If any principle lower than true religion actuate a man, it will certainly waste and be exhausted; though it may carry him swiftly in a rapid motion, yet not in a steady one; though it may carry him high, yet not quite to heaven. A meteor that is exhaled from the earth by a foreign force, may mount high in appearance, and glitter in a blaze, enough to be envied by the poor twinkling stars, and to be admired by ordinary spectators, yet its fate is to fall down, and shamefully confess its base origin. That religion which men assume only for a cloak, will wear out and drop into rags, if it be not presently thrown by as a garment out of fashion. You have read of the seeming righteousness of Jehu, founded in ambition and cruelty; the piety and devotion of Joash, grounded upon a good and virtuous education; the zeal of Saul for the worship of God, and his fat sacrifices, proceeding from superstition, as Samuel, that man of God, interprets it, 1 Sam. xv. 22. and you have seen the shameful end of all these dissemblers; and the offensive snuff in which all this candle-light religion ended, very much unlike that lustre of true and genuine goodness, *which shineth more and more unto the perfect day*; according to that elegant description which the Spirit of God makes of it in the writings of Solomon, whose pen hath as much adorned this great truth, as his life hath blotted it, *Prov. iv. 18.* To this purpose I might fairly allege the frequent testi-

monies which the Holy Ghost in Scripture gives concerning such hypocritical and unprincipled professors; that, having no root, they wither away in a scorching season; that they are again entangled in the pollutions of the world and overcome; that, like dogs, they turn to their own vomit, and like sows wallow in the mire from which they had been washed, *2 Pet. ii. 20, 22.* together with many others of the same nature; as also the prophecies that are made concerning them; that what they seemed to have, shall be taken away from them, *Luke viii. 18.* that they shall proceed no further; *for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, 2 Tim. iii. 9.* that evil men and seducers, and of those, self-seducers are the worst, *shall wax worse and worse, 2 Tim. iii. 13.* with other places of the like nature. It were easy to record many histories of men, especially of great men, who have speedily, I had almost said disdainfully, thrown off all semblance of humility, meekness, self-denial, justice, and faithfulness, which they had put on for a mask during their probation for preferment, the better to accomplish their selfish designs, and to be possessed of some base ends of their own. But yet I will not deny, but that a hypocrite may maintain a fair conformity to, and correspondence with the letter of the law of God; he may continue fair and specious to the very end of his life; yea, perhaps may go to his grave undiscovered either to himself, or any in the world besides.

I believe many men have lived and died Pharisees; have never apostatised from that righteousness which they professed, but have perse-

vered in their formality and hypocrisy to the last. But, although that counterfeit righteousness and religion may possibly not fade away, yet, nevertheless, being of an earthly and selfish constitution it is transitory and fading; and if it were soundly assaulted and tried with persecutions and temptations, no doubt would actually vanish and disappear; on the other hand, the promise of God is rich and precious, Isa. xl. 31. *They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall walk and not faint.*

Take encouragement from hence, all ye that love the Lord; go on in the strength of God; be the more lively, by how much the more you are assured that this well of water shall spring up in you into everlasting life. Make this good use of this comfortable doctrine: will God indeed work in you *both to will and to do*? why, then, so much rather *work out your own salvation*, according to the apostle, *Phil. ii. 12.* Will the Lord God *be with you*? Will he *not fail you nor forsake you till you have finished all your work*? Why, then, *be strong and of good courage*, and do as good David infers and argues, *1 Chron. xxviii. 20.* Have you this hope, this firm ground of hope in the promise and goodness of God? Why, then, *purify yourselves as God is pure*, according to the apostle, *1 John iii. 3.* Stop the mouths of those men that say the doctrine of perseverance is prejudicial to godliness: let them see, and be forced to acknowledge it, that the more a godly soul is assured of the infinite and unchangeable love and care of God towards him, the more he is winged with love and zeal, with speed mounting up thither

daily, where he longs to arrive. They that understand the doctrine of perseverance, do also understand that they must accomplish it in a way of dutiful diligence and watchful willingness; and if any grow profane and licentious, and apostatise from the way of righteousness which they have known, it is an evidence to them that they are not saints; and then what will the doctrine of the perseverance of saints avail them?

CHAP. VII.

Religion considered in the consequence of not thirsting: the phrase explained two ways, both resulting in the same general truth, viz. That divine grace gives a solid satisfaction to the soul. This aphorism confirmed by some scriptures, and largely explained in six propositions. The first, That there is a raging thirst in every soul of man after some ultimate and satisfactory good. The second, That every natural man thirsteth principally after happiness in the creature. The third, That no man can find that full satisfaction in any creature-enjoyment which every natural man principally seeketh therein; this prosecuted in two particulars. The fourth, That grace takes not away the soul's thirst after happiness, but much increases it; the reason assigned. The fifth, That the godly soul thirsteth no more after rest in any worldly thing, but in God alone; this prosecuted in both the branches of it; in the former more largely, where inquiry is made how far a godly man may be said to thirst after the creature, and

answered in four particulars ; the latter briefly touched upon. The sixth, *That in the enjoyment of God the soul is at rest ; and this in a double sense, viz. so as that it is perfectly suited with its object ; two things noted to explain this. Secondly, so satisfied as to have joy and pleasure in in him ; a double account given of that joy. The chapter closes with a lamentation over the levity and earthliness of Christian minds.*

HITHERTO we have taken a view of true religion, as it is described in this prolific text, by its origin, nature, and properties ; we are now to consider it in the certain and genuine consequent of it ; and that is, in one word, affirmatively, *satisfaction* ; or, negatively, *not thirsting* : for so it is, in our Saviour's phrase, *Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst.*

Whilst I attempt the application of this phrase, I need not exactly and methodically describe with scholastic gravity, first what is not, and then what is meant by it : for I presume no body will dream that a corporeal or gross kind of thirsting is meant. Grace doth no more quench the thirst of the body, than water can relieve the panting of the soul. Nay, he himself was subject to this gross kind of thirst, who gave to others the water whereof, if they drank, they should never thirst more. If it be understood of a spiritual thirst, yet I suppose I need not to tell you, that then it must not be understood absolutely : for it cannot possibly be, that the thirst of a soul should be perfectly allayed till all its faculties be filled up to the brim of their respective capacities, which will

never be until it be swallowed up in the infinite and unbounded ocean of the supreme good.

But I conceive we may fairly come at the meaning of this phrase, *never thirst*, either by adding, or distinguishing.

1. Then let us supply the sentence thus, *Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst after any other water.* There is no worldly liquor that can be so accommodated or attempered to the palate, as to give it an universal satisfaction, so as that a man should be perfectly mortified to all variety: but this heavenly water, which our Saviour treats of here, is so fitted to the palate of spirits, and brings such satisfaction along with it, that the soul that is made to drink of it does supersede its chase of all other delights; counts all other waters but filthy and unsavoury; thirsts no more after any other thing, neither through necessity nor for variety. The more the soul drinks of this water indeed, the more it thirsteth after greater measures and larger portions of the same; and does not only drink in divine virtue and influences, but even longs to be itself absorbed in the divinity; as we shall see further in the procedure of this discourse; but its thirst after all created good, all the waters of the cistern, is hereby extinguished, or at least mastered and mortified. Or,

2. By distinguishing the thirst, the sense of the phrase will be clearly this, *Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him* shall never be at a loss more, never need to seek any more, never be uncertain or unsatisfied as to his main happiness or supreme object; he shall not rove and range

hither and thither in an unfixedness and suspense any more; shall not run to and fro to seek satisfaction and rest any more. From an internal unsatisfiedness of the body spring violent and restless motions and agitations, by which thirst is contracted; so that, by metonymy, thirst comes to be used for unsatisfiedness, which is the remote cause of it; and, by a metaphor, the same phrase comes to be applied to the soul. I suppose I am warranted, by the sacred style, thus to interpret, especially by the use and explication of the phrase in *Jer. ii. 25.* where the prophet intimates, that by thirst is to be meant a restless and discontented running up and down to seek satisfaction; *Withhold thy foot from being unshod, and thy throat from thirst;* which two phrases are of the same import, and signify no more than cease from hastening after your idols; and that this is the meaning of that thirsting appears by the answer that the wilful and desperate people make in the sequel of the verse: for instead of saying, No, but we will thirst; they cry, *No, but after them will I go.* Thirst then is in an unsatisfiedness and spiritual disquiet to range up and down seeking something wherein ultimately to acquiesce. And, in this sense, it is most true what our Lord here pronounceth, that *Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst.* Of which thirst that notable proclamation of our Saviour is to be understood, *John vii. 37. If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink;* in which place also, we must necessarily understand what is here expressed, that then he shall never thirst more.

It matters not much by which of these two ways we explain the phrase of *not thirsting;* for,

according to either of them, it will result in this theological maxim, viz. that "Divine grace, or true Christian religion, gives a real and solid satisfaction to the soul that is principled with it."

This will appear plain though we adduce in proof of it but one text out of each Testament of the holy Scriptures. I think it cannot reasonably be doubted, but that the prophecy and promise made in *Isa. xlix. 10.* is to be performed unto believers in this present life; for so must the foregoing verses necessarily be understood; and there we have the doctrine expressly asserted, *They shall not hunger nor thirst, &c. for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.* To which those words of our Saviour are parallel, *John vi. 35. He that believeth on me shall never thirst:* which doctrine of his is yet amplified and enlarged in *John vii. 38. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* What greater security from thirst can be desired, than that one should be led by springs of water? Yes, one may be led by the springs of water, and yet not be suffered to drink of them: well therefore, to put an end to all fear, the godly soul shall contain within himself a spring of water; he shall have rivers of living waters in himself; and for his great security, these rivers shall be forever flowing. It shall suffice at present, thus briefly to have established this conclusion. And now, having expressed the meaning of the words in this short position, I shall endeavour to explain it in the six following propositions:

1st, "There is a raging thirst in every soul of man after some ultimate and satisfactory good." The God of nature hath implanted in every created being a secret but powerful tendency towards a centre of good; whose dictates, arising out of the very constitution of it, it cannot disobey until it cease to be such, and utterly apostatise from the state of its creation. And the nobler any being is, the more excellent is the object assigned to it, and the more strong and potent, and uncontrollable are its rapidity and motions thereunto. Wherefore the soul of man must also have its own proper centre; which must be something superior to, and more excellent than itself, able to satisfy all its wants, to fill all its capacities, to overcome all its cravings, and give a plenary and perfect satisfaction: which therefore can be no other than uncreated goodness, even God himself. It was not possible that God should make man of such faculties, and those so capacious as we see them, and appoint any thing below himself to be his ultimate happiness. Now, although it be sadly true, that the faculties of the soul are miserably maimed, depraved, benighted and distorted; yet I do not see that the soul is so deprived utterly of its nature by sin, as that any other thing should be obtruded upon it for its centre and happiness, than the same infinite good that was from the beginning such; or so as that its main and cardinal motions should be ultimately directed to any other than its natural and primitive object. The natural understanding hath not indeed any clear or distinct sight of this blessed object; but yet it retains an indistinct and

general apprehension of him, and may be said, even in all its pursuits of other things, to be still groping in the dark after him: neither is it without some secret and latent sense of God, that the will of man chooses or embraces any thing for good.

The apostle hesitates not to affirm, that the idolatrous Athenians themselves did worship God. *Acts xvii. 23.* though at that time indeed they knew not what they worshipped: their worship was secretly and implicitly directed unto God, and did ultimately resolve itself into him, though they were not aware of it,—*whom ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you*; and that he declared God unto them, appears abundantly by the following verses. What he says in point of worship, the same I may say in point of love, trust, delight, dependence, and apply it to all sorts of idolaters, as well as image-worshippers, and affirm that the covetous idolater, even when he most fondly clings to his gold, and most firmly confides in his riches, doth “ignorantly” love and trust in God; the proud idolater, in the highest acts of self-seeking, and self-pleasing, doth “ignorantly” admire and adore God, the ambitious idolater, even in the hottest pursuit of secular glory, and popular applause, doth “ignorantly” seek and honour God. For that rest, contentment, peace, happiness, and satisfaction, at which these mistaken souls aim, what is it but God, though they attribute it to something else which cannot yield it, and so commit a real blasphemy? for they that do in their hearts, and the course of their lives, ascribe a full and satisfying virtue to

riches, pleasures, or honours, do as truly, though not so loudly, blaspheme, as they who cried out concerning the calf of gold, *Exod. xxxii. 4. These be thy gods, O Israel! &c.* And in this sense that I have been speaking, one may safely affirm, that the most professed atheist in the world doth secretly pursue the God whom he openly denies, whilst his will is seizing that which his judgment renounceth, and he allows that deity in his lusts which he will not own in heaven. The hypocrite professes to know God, but in works denies him; on the other hand, the atheist, though in words he deny God, yet in his works he professeth him: so natural and necessary it is for all men to acknowledge a deity, though some are so brutish and senseless as to make a God of their own bellies; of whom the apostle speaks, *Phil. iii. 19. Whose god is their belly; I say natural;* for they are not a few men only of a better education, and more contemplative minds who hunt after this invisible and satisfying good; but the most vulgar souls, retaining still the nature of souls, are perpetually aiming at an ultimate happiness and satisfaction, and are secretly stung and tormented with the want of it. Certainly the motions of a soul are more strong and weighty than we are ordinarily aware of; and I think, one may safely conclude, that if there were no latent sense, or natural knowledge of God, the poor man could not spend the powers of his soul so intensely to purchase a little food and raiment for the body, nor the covetous man so insatiably thirst after houses and land, and a larger heap of refined earth: did they not secretly im-

agine that some contentment, happiness, or satisfaction, was to be received together with these acquisitions, they would seem to be but dry and insipid food to a soul. And this ultimate happiness and satisfaction, as I said before, can be no other than God himself, whom these mistaken souls do ignorantly adore, and blindly seek.

Neither let any one think that this ignorant and unwary pursuit of God can pass for religion, or be acceptable in the sight of God; for as it is impossible that ever any man should stumble into a happy state, without foresight and free choice, and be in it without any kind of sense or feeling of it; so neither can God accept the blind for sacrifice, or be pleased with any thing less than reasonable service from a reasonable creature. As the Athenians, worshipping God by altars and images, are counted superstitious, not devout; so the whole generation of gross and sensual souls, admiring, loving, and ignorantly coveting after God in the pictures and images of true goodness, are indeed, truly blasphemers and idolaters; but religious they cannot be. We cannot excuse those from idolatry, who pretend to direct their worship to the true God by or through images; much less can we be favourable to those who bestow their love, joy, confidence, and delight, ignorantly upon the supreme and self-sufficient good, by or through any created good, in which they, as far as they understand, do terminate their devotion. I do not say that all souls have a distinct discovery of the good at which they aim; it is evident they have not; but yet the will of every man is secretly in pursuit of some

ultimate end and happiness; and indeed in its eager tendencies outflies the understanding. All which mystery seems to be embraced in that short but forcible inquiry, (which, if it were a little otherwise modified, would be an excellent description of the natural soul,) Ps. iv. 6. *Many say, Who will shew us any good?* The nature of the object is exhibited in the word *good*; the eagerness of the motion, in the form of the question, *Who will shew us?* and the ignorance of the inquirer appears in the indeterminateness of this object, which is well explained by the supply of the word *any*; *Who will shew us any good?* And that this is the cry of every rational soul is intimated by the word *many*; which *many* is also in metre multiplied into the greater sort, and must indeed necessarily be extended unto all.

2dly, "Every natural man thirsteth principally after happiness and satisfaction in the creature." The fall of the soul consisteth in its sinking itself into the animal life; and the business of every unrenewed soul is, in one kind or other, still to gratify the same life: for although, as I have shewn, God is the remote object of these men's cares, and loves, and desires, and is implied in all their thirstings; yet I may well say of them, as God says of the Assyrian monarch, when he executed his pleasure in correcting his people Israel, Isa. x. 7. *Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so.* God is not in all their thoughts, whilst they pursue that in the creature which really none but God alone can be unto them. They do ultimately direct, as to their intention, all their cares, and covetings, and thirstings, to

some created object; all which are calculated for the animal life, for gratifying and accomplishing their own base lusts. This is very apparent in the idolatry of the Pagans, whose lusts gave being to their gods; and so their deities were as many as their concupiscences and filthy passions: to sacrifice to their own revenge and sensuality, under the names of Mars, Bacchus, and Venus, what else was it but to proclaim to all the world that they took the highest contentment and satisfaction in the fulfilling of such kind of lusts? this was to them their god or supreme felicity.—The case is the same, though not so expressly and professedly, with all carnal Christians, who although they profess the true God, yet in truth make him only subservient to their own lusts and base ends; though they *name the name of Christ*, yet they in very deed deify their own passions, and sacrifice to the gratification of their animal powers. The Psalmist, as we have seen, determines the main end of all men to be good, *Ps. iv. 6.* but, lest any man should be deceived in them, he presently tells us where this good was placed, *ver. 7. viz. in corn and wine*; by which we must understand the animal life, and whatsoever administers to the delight thereof. And certainly this will extend far; for, not only meats and drinks, carnal pleasures, gorgeous apparel, sumptuous buildings, splendid descent, honourable preferments, popular applause, inordinate recreations, and an unweildy bulk of earthly riches; but also orthodox opinions, philosophical, political, and even scholastic learning, fair professions, much pompous worship, yea, and worship industriously void of pomp, spe-

cious performances; to which we may add, the most comely exercises of undaunted valour, unshaken constancy, unbribed justice, uninterrupted temperance, unspotted chastity, and unlimited charity, (if much giving may deserve so sacred a name;) even all these, and many more, may serve only as fuel for the rapacious fire of lust and self-love, to maintain and keep alive the mere animal, or at most, intellectual life; and are ordinarily designed as sacrifices to that which we significantly call *self*, in contradistinction from God.

I need not here declaim against covetous, luxurious, ambitious souls, the apostle having so expressly prevented me by his plain and pointed arraignment of such men, *Col. iii. 5. Phil. iii. 19.* where he charges them with making a deity of their treasures and their bellies: otherwise I dare appeal to all the world that are not parties themselves, whether it be God or themselves that these persons do intend to serve, and please, and gratify: whether it be a real assimilation to God, and the true honour of his name, or some lust or humour of self-pleasing, self-advancing, and self-enjoying, to which they devote their cares and pains, and the chief desires of their souls. I am confident it will be readily acknowledged, that the covetous, voluptuous, and ambitious, do sacrifice all they are and possess to the latter; but, alas! it is not yet agreed among men who are these persons; the hypothesis is granted; but the explication is disputed: and indeed this is no wonder; for it is as natural for the animal life to excuse guilt, as it is to contract it; and the pride

of the natural man is no less conspicuous in his wrong endeavours to seem innocent of what he is indeed guilty, than his covetousness and voluptuousness are apparent in the matter wherein his guilt consisteth. It is not only these, and some few of the grossest and profanest sorts of souls, that are guilty in this way which I have been describing, though they indeed are grossly and most visibly guilty; but verily the whole race of mere animal men, who have no principle of divine life implanted in them, do spend all their days, bestow all their pains, and enjoy all their comforts, in a real and uninterrupted course of blasphemy. What a blasphemous kind of philosophy was that which professedly placed the supreme good and chief happiness of man in the fruition of pleasures. And indeed all those kinds of philosophy which placed it in any thing below God himself, and the enjoyment of him, were no less profane, though they may seem somewhat less beastly: for whether the Epicureans idolized their own senses, or the more exalted Stoics deified their own faculty, placing their chief contentment in their self-sufficiency, and the perpetual serenity and tranquillity of their own minds, it is too apparent that both the one and the other still moved within the narrow and low sphere of natural self, and grasped after a deity in the poor dark shadows, and glimmering representatives of him. But I am speaking to Christians: and, amongst these, let no man tell me how orthodox his opinions, how pure and spiritual his forms, how numerous and specious his performances are, how correctly he pays his homage,

and prays to one living God by one living Mediator; I willingly allow, and do with delight observe these things wherever they are; but yet all this doth not determine a man to be a Christian: for still that truth of the apostle must hold good, Rom. vi. 16. *His servants ye are to whom ye obey*; and I may add by a similar phraseology, *His children ye are whom ye resemble*; his creatures ye are, as far as ye can make yourselves so, whose sufficiency and power are most magnified in your hearts; his worshippers ye are whom ye most love, trust in, delight in, and depend upon; in a word, that is your god in which your soul doth chiefly rest, and centre, and involve itself. And, alas! how visibly dear and precious is the selfish life, which is so universally pampered, cherished, and sacrificed unto, besides the invisible and more spiritual oblations that are made thereunto. This is as true an Antichrist in the mystery, as there is any literal Antichrist in the world; and of this one may as truly say, as St. John doth of the other, *All the world wondereth after the beast*. In a word then, whosoever saith in his heart concerning any thing that is not God, what the rich man in the gospel said concerning his goods, *Soul, take thine ease, in them, and be merry*, the same is an idolater and blasphemer: and this I affirm to be the language of every apostate spirit, and unregenerated soul of man.

3dly, "No man can find that happiness, and soul-filling satisfaction in any creature-enjoyment, which every natural man principally seeketh therein." Here are two things to be discussed, viz. the enjoyments of men, or what they possess, and the

satisfaction which the natural man seeketh in such possessions. For the first of these, I cannot easily believe that ever any natural man was satisfied with such possessions, I mean as to the quantity of them; he never had so much of them as to be able freely to say, "It is enough." The rational soul hath a strong and insatiable appetite, and wherever it imagineth its beloved prey to be found, and full enjoyment to be had, it is exceeding greedy and rapacious; whether the same will ever be able to afford it or not, it matters not. The animal life is that voracious idol, (not like Bel in the story, which seems only to eat up, but) which doth really devour all the rich good and sensual pleasures that are sacrificed unto it, and yet is not filled therewith. The whole employment of the natural man, *quantum, quantum est*, [however great that employment may be,] is nothing else but, as the apostle elegantly describes it, Rom. xiii. 14. *To make provision for the flesh, to fulfil it in the lusts thereof*; wherein yet, to speak the truth, he loses his labour; for he sacrifices all to an insatiable idol, and pours it into a gulf that hath neither bottom nor bounds, but swalloweth up all, and is rather made to thirst than to cease from thirsting by all that is or can be administered unto it. I consider that expression of Solomon, *Eccl. i. 8. to be a clear proof in general of what I affirm, The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing*; the eye of man, as little as it is, is bigger than the whole visible world; and although it may be wearied with looking upon various objects, (as the English annotators observe upon these words,)

yet still it desires new ones, and can gaze upon them with great delight; so that, although the acts of the eye be scant and finite, yet the lusts of the eye seem to have a kind of infinity in them. And indeed by the unsatiableness of the eye and ear, is meant the greediness or voracity of the flesh or animal life, as Mr. Cartwright hath well observed upon Prov. xxvii. 20. *Hell and destruction are never full, so the eyes of a man are never satisfied*; where, by not being satisfied, is meant not having enough in quantity, as appears by the similitude in the former part of the verse. To the same sense he speaks, *Eccl. iv. 8. and v. 10.* It would be endless to relate the monstrous and insatiable desires, of covetous, ambitious, voluptuous, proud, and vain-glorious minds after their respective idols. And indeed I need not descend to particular instances; for I suppose never any natural man could heartily say he had enough of riches, promotion, applause, sensual delights, eloquence, policy, prowess, or victory, or of any other thing which is accommodated to the gratification of the flesh, no more than a godly soul sojourning upon earth could ever be yet able to say it had enough of God and eternal life. So that, in a word, I know not how to apply any description to this insatiable and devouring principle more properly than that which the prophet makes of hell, Isa. v. 44: *She enlargeth herself and openeth her mouth without measure, and all glory, multitude and pomp, descend into it.* I know there are of these men that pretend to have enough in quantity of these fleshly provisions; but I fear falsely and unjustly: for, as for the rich and honour-

able of the earth, it is too evident that they are still climbing higher, and grasping after more; as Alexander the great is said to have wept for more worlds, when he conceited himself to be master of all this. As for the poorer and meaner sort of people, who are as ready sometimes to lay claim to this virtue of thinking that they have enough, as well as others; it is too manifest to a wise observer, that it is not a real apprehension that they have enough, but either a lowness or weakness of spirit, arising from the meanness of their education, or a downright despair of ever getting more.

But be it imagined that the enjoyments of some natural men are enough in respect of quantity, yet still there is certainly wanting a true and sincere satisfaction of soul in such possessions; no man of all these finds that real happiness in those things after which he so vehemently searches. Solomon reduces all the pleasure and contentment that is to be found in multiplied riches to a very pitiful *sum total*, Eccl. v. 11. *What good is there to the owners thereof, save the beholding of them with their eyes?* And, alas! what is the sight of the eye to the satisfaction of the soul! The whole visible world is utterly too scant for, and incommensurate to the wide and deep capacity of an immortal spirit; so that the same can no more satisfy, than a less can fill a greater, which is surely impossible. Whatever is in the world not of God, is described by the prophet, *Isa. lv. 2.* to be *not bread*, there is the unsuitableness; and *not to satisfy*, there is the insufficiency of it to the soul of man. On the other hand, this soul

of man is so vastly capacious, that though it be ever so greedy and rapacious, snatching on the right hand, and catching on the left hand, as the prophet describes his people, *Isa. ix. 20.* yet still it is hungry and unsatisfied. Which ravenous and insatiable appetite of the sensual soul, is elegantly described by the prophet in the similitude of an whorish woman, who prostituteth herself to all comers, and *multiplieth her fornications*, yet it *unsatiable, is not, cannot be satisfied*, *Ezek. xvi. 28, 29.* The soul may indeed feed, yea, and surfeit upon, but it can never satisfy itself from itself, or from any created good; nothing can ultimately determine and concentrate the motions of a soul, but something superior to its own essence; which whilst it misses, it is as it were divided against itself, perpetually struggling and fluctuating and travelling in pangs with some new design or other to be at rest; like the old lioness in the parable of Ezekiel, breeding up one whelp after another to be a lion wherein to confide, but disappointed in all; or like the poor discontented butterfly, lighting and catching every where but resting no where; adoring something for a god to-day, which it will be ready to cast into the fire to-morrow, after their manner of creating gods to themselves, whom the Poet introduces as saying—

———*Hodie mihi Jupiter esto,
Cras mihi truncus eris ficulnus, inutile lignum.*

[To-day be thou my God;
To-morrow thou wilt be to me a despised and
useless block :]

Neither the quantity, variety, or duration of any created objects, can possibly fill that large and noble capacity wherewith God hath endued the rational soul; but having departed from its centre, and not knowing how to return to its original, it wanders up and down as it were in a wilderness, and having an imperfect, glimmering sight of something better than what itself as yet either is or hath, but not being able to attain to it, it is miserably tormented, even as a man in a thirst which he cannot quench; and the more he exerts himself in seeking water, the more is his thirst increased whilst he misses of it; so this distempered and distracted soul, whilst it seeks to quench its thirst at the creature-cistern does but inflame it, and in a continual pursuit of rest becomes most restless. That every unregenerate soul is in such a distressed, weary, restless state as I have been describing, appears most evidently by those remarkable gospel proclamations; one in Isa. lv. 1—3. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters;* where, by the thirsters are meant those unfixed, unsatisfied souls, as appears by the second verse; the other in Matt. xi. 28. *Come unto me, all ye that labour, &c.* where the promise of giving rest does plainly imply the restless state of the persons invited. There is a certain horror and anguish in sin and wickedness, even long before it be swallowed up in hell; a certain vanity and vexation are folded up in all earthly enjoyments, though the same do not always sting and pierce the soul alike; so true is that notable aphorism of the prophet Isaiah, *There is no peace to the wicked.*

4thly, "Grace takes not away this thirst of the soul after happiness and plenary satisfaction." Love and desire, and a tendency towards blessedness, are so interwoven into the nature of the soul, and inlaid in the very essence of it, that it cannot possibly put them off; however it is the work of grace to change and rectify them, as we shall see under the next head. The soul of man is a kind of immaterial fire, an inextinguishable activity, always necessarily catching at some object or other, in conjunction with which she thinks to be happy: and therefore, if she be stripped of herself and the word, and be mortified to the love of fleshly and animal lusts, she will certainly cleave to some higher and more excellent object; as will soon more clearly appear. Grace does not stupify the soul as to its sense of its own indigence and poverty, but indeed makes it more abundantly sensible and importunate. There are more strong motions, and more powerful appetites in the godly soul towards its true and proper happiness, than in the ungodly and wicked. For the understanding of the regenerate soul is so enlightened, as that it doth present the will with an amiable and satisfactory object; which object therefore being more distinctly and perfectly apprehended, doth also apprehend or lay hold upon the soul, and attract her unto itself. *Oculi sunt in amore duces*, [the eyes are the inlets of love,] is most true of the eye of the soul, I mean the understanding, which first affects the heart with amorous passions. The first and fundamental error and mistake of the rational soul seems to lie in the understanding; here is the very root of the degen-

ate soul's distemper; and if this were thoroughly restored and healed, so as to present the will with pure and proper ideas and representations of God: it might be hoped that this ductile faculty would soon cleave unto him entirely; nay, it may be doubted whether it could possibly resist the dictates of it. Now in the regenerate soul this faculty is repaired; yea, I may say, that the spirit of regeneration first of all spreads itself upon the understanding, and awakens in it a sense of self-indigence and of the perfect, all-sufficient, suitable, and satisfactory fulness of God; in whom it sees all beauty, sweetness, and loveliness, in an infinitely ineffable manner wrapped up and contained; which will be so far from allaying the essential thirst of the soul, and stifling its eager pantings, that it must necessarily give a mighty edge and ardour to its inclinations, and produce a more bold and earnest struggling towards this glorious object, and charm the whole soul into the very arms of God. Therefore not thirsting in the text, must not be understood absolutely, as if grace did utterly extinguish the natural activities of the soul, and finish its propensions: but the regenerate and gracious soul doth not thirst in such sense, as to imply a want of a suitable good, or dissatisfaction, or to include torment properly so called. In this notion of thirst grace doth indeed quench it, as I intimated in the beginning of this discourse, and will further appear in the procedure of it. But this most essential, this natural thirst or vergency of the soul towards a central rest and happiness, is so far from being either extinguished or moderated by divine grace,

that it is greatly improved, and mightily increased thereby. I need not dwell upon a theme so popular, and a subject so readily acknowledged; therefore, I will only present you with the instances of holy David in the Old Testament, and gracious Paul in the New, and then quit this head. I need not magnify the holy and divine frame of David's spirit by any rhetoric of mine; God himself hath given the amplest testimony, and fairest character of him that ever was given of any man, when he owns him for *a man after his own heart*: and what a longing, thirsting soul this was, I need do no more to demonstrate than to refer you to some passages and professions in his devout Psalms, such as *Ps. xlii. 12. lxiii. 1. cxliii. 6.* where he borrows the strongest expressions that are to be found in the whole creation, to represent the devout ardours of his own soul; *As the heart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee; my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is. I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land: yea, he seems like one that would faint away for very longing: Hear me speedily, O Lord, my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit; I lift up my soul unto thee; I flee unto thee, &c.* The very same temper you will find in holy Paul, that chosen vessel of God, if you peruse his Epistles; in all which you will meet with devout and strong breathings of the same kind; particularly *Phil. iii. 11, 12, 13, 14.* where he seems so thirsty after a state of heavenly perfection, that

he longs after, (if I mistake not the meaning of the 11th verse,) something that he knows he cannot reach whilst he is in this world; even the resurrection of the dead, or such a perfect state of purity and holiness, as belongs to the children of the resurrection.

5thly, "The godly soul thirsteth no more after happiness in any creature, nor rests in any worldly thing; but in God alone." This particular consists also of two branches: the former and negative part whereof seems to me to contain in it the scope and meaning of our Saviour, in these words which I am now interpreting. We have already seen that every unsanctified soul is restless, and craving, wavering, unsatisfied, inconstant to itself, and its choice: by reason of its natural activity, it is always spending itself in restless and giddy motions, as we observed under the first head of this discourse; but by reason of its ignorance, and unacquaintance with the one supreme and all-sufficient good, and the multiplicity of lower ends and objects, it is miserably distracted, and doth necessarily meet with inevitable disturbances, in a continual unsteadiness; putting forth itself now towards one thing, presently to another; courting every thing, but uniting with nothing; like a fickle lover, that is always enamoured with the last feature he saw; or a greedy merchant, that being equally in love with the pleasure of being at home, and the profit of being abroad, cannot be contented to stay long in any place, but has always most desire after the place where he is not; as the Poet, elegantly describes—

Romæ Tybur amo ventosus, Tybur Romam.

[When at home, I am discontented and desire to be at Tybur; when at Tybur, to be at home.]

The description that our Lord gives of the unclean spirit that is gone out of a man, *Matt. xii. 43.* seems very aptly to agree with that unclean spirit that is in man, which being departed from God, its proper rest and habitation, walketh through dry and desart places, (I mean, empty and unsatisfying creature-enjoyments,) seeking rest but finding none. It was an accidental affliction of believers, but it is the natural and necessary affliction of every unbelieving and wicked soul, to wander up and down the world destitute, afflicted, tormented. Sinful self is so multiform, and that one root, the animal life, has such a multitude of branches, that it is impossible to administer due nourishment to them all; and yet they are all importunate and greedy: so that he must have a difficult task, and painful province, that is constrained to attend upon so many, so different, and yet all of them so impatient and imperious masters. But I shall lose labour by thus returning to my second head, except I can make this advantage of it, to inforce my subject with the greater strength and clearer evidence. The case standing thus with the unregenerate soul, as we have seen in this short review, I now say, that divine grace allays the insatiable thirst of the soul after other waters, that are foul, of which it could never yet drink deeply, or if it drank ever so deeply, could not be quenched; it determines the soul to one object, which before

was distracted with many. It does not destroy any of the natural powers, nor dry up the innate vigour of the soul, as I proved under the last head; but it takes it off from the pursuit of all inferior ends, and inadequate objects, setting it upon a vehement pursuit of the highest good, and causing it to spend all those its powers not less vigourously, but far more rationally and satisfactorily upon that *objectum par amori*, [object able to satisfy its love,] the infinitely amiable and all sufficient God. When the soul hath once met with this glorious object; is once delighted with this supreme good; is, by divine grace, expanded and enlarged; it cannot, with any ease, be satisfied with the creature any more; that is too scanty and insufficient for it. Certainly the soul that understands its own origin, nature, and capacity, and once views itself in God, will see itself too large to be bounded by the narrow confines of self, or any creature, and too free to be bound down to any earthly object whatever. The world indeed may, yea and will labour to take off the soul: *What is thy Beloved more than another beloved, that thou art so fond of him? Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?* Be content, here is hay and provender; stay with me this night; let us rejoice and make merry together a little longer. But these Syren songs are sung to a deaf ear; they cannot enchant the wise and devout soul, that hath her senses well awakened, and exercised to discern between good and evil: *O no, I am sick of love, and sick of every thing that keeps me from my Beloved; and therefore,*

however you may injure me through fraud or force, through surprize or violence, yet I will not yield myself unto you. The gracious soul hath now discovered the most beautiful, perfect, and lovely object, even him whose name is love itself; which glorious vision hath so blasted and withered the choicest flowers in nature's garden, that they have now no such form nor comeliness, beauty, or fragraney, as to deserve to be desired; she hath tasted the pure and perfect sweetness of the Fountain, which hath so imbittered all cistern-waters, that she finds no more thirstings in herself after them; which is that which our Saviour promised here, *shall never thirst*. A godly man cannot possibly be put off with any thing short of God; give him his God, or he dies; give him ever so much fair usage in the world, ever so much of earthly accommodations, they are not accommodated to his wants and thirsts, if they have not that God in them, separate from whom all worldly pleasures are even irksome and unpleasant, and all fleshly ease is tedious and painful: creature-employments are but a wearisome task to a soul that is acquainted with the work of angels; and creature-enjoyments, in themselves considered, are very insignificant, if not burdensome, to a mind that is feelingly possessed of the highest good.

But here it will be proper to take into consideration a grand inquiry, *viz.* Whether a godly man may not be said in some sense to desire the world, and how far such a person may be said to thirst after it. This I shall discuss as briefly, and yet as clearly as I can, in the four following particulars:—

1. "All godly souls are not equally mortified to worldly loves, nor equally zealous and importunate lovers of God." This is so evident, from the fact, that I need not insist upon it. Abraham seems to have been as much higher and nobler in spirit than his brother Lot, as Lot was more excellent than one of the ordinary sons of Adam, I had almost said, than one of the Sodomites amongst whom he dwelt. The one leaves all the pleasant and plentiful accommodations of his native country, at the very first call, going out, not knowing whether he went, relying wholly upon the gracious guidance of him whom he followed; he seems to reckon all countries alike for his sojourning, and the whole habitable world as his own city and home; as appears by his readiness to take down his tent, and quit his present habitation, rather than interfere with the conveniences of his nephew, *Gen. xiii. 9*. The other preferred a fruitful soil before a faithful society; and so, in some sense, his body before his soul; and yet, as if it had not been enough to make so unadvised a choice, he rests in it too; yea, though he was so severely reprov'd by the captivity that besel him there, whereby he was not so much called, as indeed carried away thence, yet this will not loosen him from his earthly conveniences, but he returns to Sodom, and from thence he will not part till he be driven out by fire; nay, and then also it is with much lingering and lothness, *Gen. xix. 16*. It is evident I say, from facts, both from this and many other instances which I purposely omit, that all godly souls are not equally regardless of these earthly things, nor carried

out with equal ardour and intemperance, as I may call it, towards the supreme and most glorious object; of which I can assign no better reason than this, that they are not all equally godly. For,

2. "So far as grace prevails, and religion in the power of it actuateth the soul in which it is planted, so far earthly loves decay and wither." For these two cannot stand together, *mutuo se pellunt*, [they mutually repel each other;] the love of the world is inconsistent with the love of God, 1 John ii. 15. *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* So far as any soul is sanctified, so far is it mortified also to all creature-enjoyments, to all things that are only fuel for the animal life, such as honour, ease, victory, plenty, liberty, relations, recreations, all the entertainments and delights in this lower life, yea, and this very life itself. Earthly and heavenly loves are to each other as the two ends of a pair of balances, only they are never found equally poizing, as the one rises the other falls; just so much advantage as this gets, that loses. The more the sensual and self-central life thrives and prospers, and the creature is exalted, the more religion and the divine life faint and flag in the soul: and so certainly, on the other hand, the more divine grace prevails, and the divine life flourisheth in the soul, the more all earthly objects wither and lose their beauty, and the soul cooleth and languisheth in its love and desire of them. So far as a regenerate soul is unregenerate, so far she will be hastening after other lovers: which regeneration will not, I con-

ceive, be thoroughly perfected, and therefore these lustings not utterly extinguished, till this mortal put on immortality; or, as the apostle speaks elsewhere, till *mortality be swallowed up of life.*

3. For the preventing of rash and uncharitable judging, I do affirm, that "divine and holy souls are often mistaken by them that behold their ordinary conversation and actions in the body." They are thought sometimes to take pleasure in the creature, and to gratify the flesh, when indeed it is no such matter; but they take pleasure in the work of God, or the evidence of his fatherly love, which they contemplate therein; and do, perhaps, most of all subserve a spiritual end, and an eternal design in those very actions which others may think are calculated for the animal life, and the service of the flesh. Let not the blind world, nor the self-befriending hypocrite, be the judge, and it will appear that the truly godly soul counts nothing savoury to itself, but what represents, teaches, exhibits something of God, nothing pleasant but what hath a tendency to him: such a man doth not feel himself in his highest raptures, doth not view himself in his noblest accomplishments, doth not seek himself in his most excellent performances. Be not mistaken; he doth not so much thirst after long life, riches, friends, liberties, as indeed after God in them all; these all signify nothing to him, if they bring him not nearer to his God, and conduce to his real and spiritual happiness. Yea, possibly, in his most suspicious actions, and those that seem most foreign from religion, and most

designed to please the flesh, he may be highly spiritual and pure : so was our blessed Saviour, we know, even in his conversing with scandalous sinners, eating and drinking with publicans and notorious offenders, though he was traduced by a proud and hypocritical generation; and so I doubt not is many a good Christian, according to his measure, pure as Christ was pure. When a painted hypocrite, who can conjecture the temper of others in no way but by that which he finds in himself, and which he should be and do, if he were under the same circumstances, judges of the actions or disposition of one who is transformed into the image of the divine freedom and benignity, you may easily imagine what a perverse sentence he will pass. It need not seem very strange, methinks, in spiritual things, any more than it is in corporeal, that the most sound and healthful constitutions should, upon a lawful call, adventure themselves further than the crazy and sickly, and should familiarly converse with and handle, yea, and make good work with those briars and thorns, which would prove a snare, or a wound, or a pricking temptation to others. If it were possible for any man to arrive at the purity and perfection of his Saviour, and his firm and immoveable stability in true goodness, he would find himself so wholly dead to sin, and all temptations, and motions thereunto, that he would be able to dare to walk upon the most boisterous waves, without fear of being swallowed up in them, and to take up in his hands the most venomous serpent, not dreading the sting of it. However, the apprehensions and actions of

more perfect and refined souls are not rashly to be judged; for they may easily be mistaken, either by the unhallowed hypocrite, or the more imperfect and impotent saint.

4. To answer yet more fully, I do affirm, that "no truly religious soul in the world doth so thirst after the creature, as to place its main happiness in it, or to seek satisfaction from it." However, all holy souls may not be alike weaned from the world, nor equally love God, though the affections and actions of some may really be, and of others may seem to be, too gross and fleshly, yet no one of all these, in whom this new and divine life is indeed found, doth erect a self-supremacy in his own soul, nor consider his full and complete rest and happiness to consist in any creature-communion whatsoever. Surely this not thirsting is so far a consequent of true religion, that no religious soul in the world can be content to exchange the presence of God and acquaintance with him, for any thing, for all things besides; or, to be more plain, no such person could be content, no, not for all the world, the glory of heaven not excepted, if it may be supposed, to be wicked and ungodly: so that by thirsting here must not be meant some weak wishes, and faint propensions of the soul towards created objects; for certainly there is no soul found in an earthly body in which these are not found; and not only found, but there are some lively and strong strugglings after them, (how strong they may be in a good Christian, and yet predominated over by grace, we cannot punctually determine;) but, by thirsting here, must be

meant the most quick and powerful breathings, the highest and strongest ardour, the predominant and victorious motions and desires of the soul, which do, as it were, serve the whole soul, and lead all its powers and faculties with it into a grateful captivity. Thus shall he thirst no more, who hath once drunk of these waters which flow forth from the presence of the Lord of life, and which the blessed Redeemer of the world is here said to give.

But the latter branch of this particular is, that this inspired soul which we have been describing, thirsteth after his happiness in God alone; that is, in the enjoyment of him. We have already seen that grace does not destroy the natural and essential longing of the soul after a satisfactory good, but rather enhances it; and that the godly soul is most thirsty of all, but not with a thirst for created good, as is before proved: it remains then, that his thirsting after rest and happiness is terminated upon God alone. And so indeed it appears in the instances of holy men recorded in holy writ, to which I alluded under the last head, and so partly anticipated my present subject. But to those passages and expressions which were quoted out of *Ps. xlii. 1, 2, &c.* may be added such as *Ps. iv. 6.* which is the voice of every godly soul; *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us: Ps. xxxix. 6, 7. Surely every man walketh in a vain show; surely they are disquieted in vain; he heapeth up riches, &c. And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee:* where you have the different seekings and centrings of the ungodly, and of the godly soul, ele-

gantly described. Lastly, you may, in *Ps. lxxiii. 25.* again view the object or end of the godly man's ambition; *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee!* Which translation of the words doth in a lively way describe the godly man's end, and aim, and object, and happiness, and indeed his all: or if we translate, perhaps more fitly, with Mollerus, yet they afford us the same doctrine, *Who will give me to be in heaven and with thee? On earth I desire nothing.*

And thus have we despatched the fifth proposition, viz. that the godly soul thirsteth no more after happiness in any creature, or rest in any worldly thing. We now come to the sixth and last particular designed for the explication of this not thirsting of the religious soul, which is this:—

In the enjoyment of God, this soul is at rest, is fully satisfied. I do not mean so satisfied as not to thirst after any more of him, as I have often hinted; but so satisfied, as to be perfectly matched with an object transcendently adequate to all its faculties, and their respective capacities; and so satisfied as to have peace and joy, and triumph in him. These two I will discuss distinctly, and then proceed.

Now for the better understanding of the first of these it should be noted, that the reasonable soul and the faculties of it are of a vast, large, and noble capacity. It is universally granted by all that are not Sadducees, that the capacity of angels is very great and noble; and that the condition of the human soul is not much inferior to

theirs, may, I think, be gathered from the Psalmist's words, Ps. viii. 5. *Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels*: which words, although the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews applies to Christ, Heb. ii. 9. and indeed they are peculiarly applicable to him, according to the Dutch translation, which runs thus, *We see Jesus crowned with glory and honour, who was become a little lower than the angels, by reason of the sufferings of death; that he should by the grace of God, &c.* Yet I see nothing to hinder but that they may be well applied to the excellent condition of man by creation; especially considering that many other passages of the Old Testament have a double aspect, one more ordinary and obvious, which was most clearly understood by the prophet that wrote them; the other more abstruse and mysterious, principally intended by that Spirit that inspired him, and only to be understood by the revelation of the same Spirit; such are those passages, I conceive, which are found in Isa. vii. 14. Hosea xi. 1. interpreted by the evangelist, Matt. i. 23. and ii. 15. as also Jer. xxxi. 15. with many more. But however it may be with that text, and whether or no the souls of men be so near of kindred to the angels, as to their own comprehensions; yet, that they are capable of a most noble and excellent happiness, and much allied to God himself, doth appear from such texts of Scripture as require them to be *holy as God is holy*; to be *perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect*. Neither need it seem to any incredible, that the rational soul should be so capacious; for we are no more to judge of

the angelical temper, and noble acts of the soul separated from the body, by what we see it to be and do in this body of flesh, than to judge of the prowess and strength of a renowned warrior at the head of an army, by what we discern in him when he lies bound in chains; or of the power and splendour of the sun, by what we discern of it when it is eclipsed, or beclouded; or, no more than we can judge of a man, by the imperfections, stammerings, and weaknesses of his childhood: for so the apostle Paul seems to state the case, *1 Cor. xiii. 10, 11.* plainly implying, that the present and future condition of the soul is comparable to the minority and adult state of a man; as if he had said, "the soul, in its future and separate state, will act as much nobler than what it doth now, as the soul of the wisest and most discreet man in the world acteth more nobly than what it did when he was a child:" yea, and what is still more to our present purpose, he seems clearly to intimate in the 12th verse, that this improvement shall happen, not so much by the more ample illumination and corroborations of the faculties. In the next place it will be easily inferred, that all created good is too scant and insufficient for this capacious spirit of man; too short a bed to stretch itself upon; nay, it cannot contract itself so as to be accommodated to any worldly good, without pain and anguish. From both which it will be naturally and necessarily concluded, that God alone is that adequate object which can match the soul of man, and satisfy it, as being infinitely superior and transcendent to it. The enjoyment of God is that ultimate

end, and only perfect good that is able to fix the spirit of man; which otherwise, not meeting with its match, would be tossed to and fro, and labour under perpetual disquietude and restless fluctuations. God is that almighty goodness and sweetness, who alone is able to draw out all the appetites of the soul unto himself, satisfy all its cravings, charm all its restless motions, and cause all its faculties, in the purest and most complacent manner, to conspire together to give up themselves wholly and entirely to himself.

Secondly, From this conjunction with omnipotent goodness, ariseth pure peace, yea, joy and triumph, to the religious soul. For the clearer understanding of this, I should premise, what some have wisely observed, that there is a natural congruity between God and the soul, it being a spiritual substance and he being a spiritual good, only suitable unto it. This seems to be evident by experience; for we see how difficult, I had almost said, impossible it is, utterly to eradicate and extinguish all sense of virtue and goodness out of the soul of man; to which purpose I think our divines generally speak, when they allow of some holy relics, something of the image of God remaining in the most degenerate souls, though all men have reduced the same to a very poor and inconsiderable spark, and many have buried that very spark under ashes too, and imprisoned that remainder of truth in unrighteousness, living according to those unnatural and foreign principles and conceptions that they have unhappily imbibed. Hence it is, I suppose, that sin and wickedness are so often styled the defilement of

the soul: now, we know, that whatsoever defileth, is adventitious and improper; and hence it is, that sin many times stings and wounds the consciences of those that take most pleasure in it, being so perfectly contrary to this noble and inbred sense of the soul; allowing, then, this natural sympathy that the soul of man hath with its Creator, it will be easy to give a philosophical account of that peace, joy, and triumph, of which the soul must needs be possessed, or rather indeed transported with, that finds and feels itself in conjunction with its centre, and in the dearest embraces of its Creator. It need not seem strange, that the soul should congratulate itself on its arrival at its own haven; nay, it were strange if it should not dissolve into secret joy and pleasure in the hearty entertainment of so blessed and proper a guest as God is unto it; nay, indeed it were unreasonable to imagine, that the conjunction of such noble and discerning faculties with so perfect and proper an object, should not beget the truest and sincerest delight and pleasure imaginable. The delights of an earthly and sensual mind are filthy and impure, in comparison of these pleasures of the refined and purified soul, which must live most gracefully, triumphantly, and deliciously, when it converseth with God most intimately. Certainly if there be any innocent and good natured self-feeling, or self-pleasing, in the world, this is it; though indeed to speak truly, it deserves a better name. It is not possible but that a godly soul, in its right senses, should taste a sweetness in these pure and divine accomplishments wrought in it by the eter-

nal Spirit of righteousness; which self-pleasing is no more blameable, than that natural pleasure which every creature finds in the enjoyment of that which is most aptly accommodated to its necessities, and most perfective of its happiness; which pleasure, I say, ariseth in the soul from its sensible union with God in the spirit, and enjoyment of him, by which enjoyment of God, you will easily perceive that I do not mean the bare pardon of sin, or an abstract justification; for this is not the attainment that is perfective of the soul, neither could it alone, if we could suppose it alone, fill the capacities of the soul, or make it happy, though the rapturous joys of the unprincipled hypocrite spring principally from the opinion and false apprehensions of this pardon; which indeed I take to be a notable, though not infallible, sign of a mercenary, low-spirited, and fleshly minded Christian; but by it I mean that the soul is really regenerated into the image of God, consisting in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, and implantation into the root Christ Jesus, by which it partakes of his divine life, power, and Spirit.

And yet besides this, I conceive there is a more theological account to be given of these joys and pleasures which the renewed soul doth so plentifully reap upon her return to God, from whom she had so long strayed by sin and wickedness. For the *God of hope filleth the godly soul with all peace and joy in believing*, Rom. xv. 13. Christ doth on purpose speak words to the hearts of his disciples, that *their joy may be full*, John xv. 11. But whether the most benign and gracious Father of spirits doth immediately from himself

inspire the holy soul with divine joys and pleasures, kindled, as I may say, with nothing but his own breath; or whether he bring them to his holy mountain, and into his house of prayer, and by that, or any other like means, make them joyful, and of a glad heart, as in the day of a solemn festival, as he hath promised to do, *Isa. lvi. 7.* and *Isa. xxv. 6.* however it be, I say, sure it is, that he frequently puts a gladness into their hearts beyond that of the harvest, or the vintage, *Ps. iv. 7.* and makes them to rejoice with *joy unspeakable and full of glory*, 1 Peter i. 8.

Having now unfolded the meaning of the expression that the gracious soul thirsts no more, I should pass to the last thing contained in the text; but finding myself oppressed in spirit by the consideration of this necessary consequent of true religion, when I compare the temper of Christians with it, I must beg leave to dwell a little upon the thought. And what shall I say? Shall I breathe out a sad and bitter complaint over that low, earthly, selfish, greedy spirit which actuateth the world at this day, yea, and the generality of the professors of that sacred religion which we call Christianity? Alas! what a company of thieves and murderers, I mean, base and sensual loves and lusts, lodge in those very souls which would be taken for temples consecrated to the name, and honour, and inhabitation of the eternal God, the Spirit of truth and holiness. O what pity is it, that the precious souls of men, yea, and of Christians, the best of men, that are all capable of so glorious a liberty, so high and honourable a happiness, should be bound

down under such vile and sordid lusts, and feed upon dust and gravel, to whom the hidden Manna is freely offered, and God himself is ready to become a banquet! And O, what a shame is it, for those who profess themselves children of God, disciples of the most holy Jesus, and heirs of his pure and undefiled kingdom of heaven; for these, I say, willingly and greedily to roll themselves in filthy and brutish sensualities, to set up that on high in their souls, which was made to be subject to their bodies, and so to love and live as if they studied to have no affinity at all; but would be as unlike as they could, to that God, and Redeemer, and unfit for that inheritance! How often shall it be protested to the Christian world, by men of the greatest devotion and seriousness, that it is utterly mad, and perfectly vain, to dream of entering into the kingdom of heaven hereafter, except the kingdom of heaven enter into our souls during their union with these bodies? How long shall the Son of God, who came into the world on purpose to be the most glorious example of true and divine purity, exact and perfect self-denial, and mortification, how long shall he be neglected in his word, as an antiquated pattern, only fit for the apostolical ages of the world, and only suited to some few morose and melancholy men? Is it not a monstrous spectacle, and to be hissed out of the world with the greatest indignation, to see a covetous, voluptuous, ambitious sensual saint? With what face can we pretend to true religion, or a feeling acquaintance with God, and the things of his personal service and kingdom, whilst the continual pantings of our souls af-

ter created good betray us so manifestly, and proclaim before all the world that the beast, the brutish life, is still powerful in us? *If ye seek me*, saith Christ to his followers, as he did also once to his persecutors, *then let these go*; let go the hold of these earthly objects; let vanish these worldly joys and toys; *withhold your throat from thirst, and your feet from being unshod*, and come, follow me only, and ye shall have treasure in heaven; for he that will not deny all for me, is not worthy of me. But, *O curvæ in terras anima*, &c. [O these souls that are so prone to the earth, &c.] Ah sad and dreadful fall, that hath so miserably crippled this royal offspring, and made the King's son to be a lame Mephibosheth! Ah doleful apostacy! How are the sons of the morning become children of darkness, and the heirs of heaven, vassals and drudges to earth! How is the King's daughter unequally yoked with a churlish Nabal, that continually checketh her more divine and generous motions! *How unhappily art thou matched, O my soul!* And yet, alas! I see it is too properly a marriage; for thou hast forgotten *thine own people, and thy Father's house*. Take up, O take up a lamentation, thou virgin, daughter of the God of Zion: once indeed a virgin, but now, alas! no longer a virgin, but miserably married to an unworthy husband, that can never be able to match thy faculties, nor maintain thee according to the grandeur of thy birth or the necessary pomp of thy expenses, and way of living; nay, thou art become not only a miserable wife; but, in so being, thou art also a wicked adulteress, prostituting thyself to the very vilest

of thy lawful husband's servants. If thou be not incestuous, it is no thanks to thee, there being nothing in this world so near of kin to thee, as to make way for incest. *Return, return, O Shulamite, return, return; put away thine adulteries from between thy breasts, and so shall the king yet again greatly desire thy beauty; for so he hath promised, Jer. iii. 21. that when there shall be a voice heard upon the high places, weeping, and supplications of the children of Israel, because they have perverted their way, and forgotten the Lord their God, and the backsliding children shall return, that then he will heal their backslidings.*

CHAP. VIII.

The term or end of religion, eternal life, considered in a double notion: First, as it signifies the essential happiness of the soul. The second, as it takes in many glorious appendices. The former more fully described; the latter more briefly. The noble and genuine breathings of the godly soul after, and springing up into, the former; in what sense she may be said to desire the latter. The argument drawn from the example of Christ. Moses and Paul moderated. A general answer given to the query. It ends in a serious exhortation made to Christians, to live and love more spiritually, more suitably to the nature of souls, redeemed souls, resulting from the whole discourse.

I AM NOW come to the last thing whereby this most noble principle is described, *viz.* the term or end of it; and it is said in the text to be *everlasting life*. This is the highest pitch of perfection, toward which the new creature is continually advancing; which the apostle Paul hath expressed with as much eloquence as words will allow, calling it *the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*: this is that unbounded ocean into which this living fountain, by so many incessant issues, and unwearied streams, perpetually endeavours to empty itself; or rather to unbosom itself in it. Now what this is, we must confess with the apostle John, and indeed we have more reason to make such a confession than he had, that it doth not yet appear, *viz.* neither fully nor distinctly: but yet, since I am thus upon the contemplation of it, it will be a pleasant and profitable task a little to inquire into it; and though it surpass the power and skill of all created comprehensions to take the just dimensions, and faithfully give the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of it; yet we may essay to walk about this heavenly Jerusalem, as the Psalmist speaks of the earthly, *and tell the towers thereof, mark her walls, consider her palaces*, that we may tell it to the generation following.

1. Then, we will consider *eternal life* in the most proper notion of it, as it implies the essential happiness of the soul; and so it is no other than the pure, perfect, and established state of the soul. By a state I do designedly disparage that grosser notion of a place, as that which scarce deserves to enter into the description of

such glory; or, at best, will obtain but a very low room there; by purity, I do purposely explode that carnal ease, rest, immunity, affluence of sensual delights, accommodated only to the animal life; which last, Mahometans, and the former, too many professed Christians, and the Jews almost generally, do dream of, and judge heaven to be. By perfection I do distinguish it from the best state to which the best men upon earth can possibly attain. So then, I consider eternal life, in the primary and most proper notion of it, to be full, and perfect, and everlasting enjoyment of God, communion with him, and a most blissful conformity of all the powers and faculties of the soul to that eternal goodness, truth, and love, as far as it is or may become capable of the communications of the divinity.—This life was, at the highest rate imaginable, purchased by our ever blessed Lord and Saviour in the days of his flesh, and here in the text promised to every believing soul.—Now, since we are ignorant both of the present capacity of our own faculties, how large they are, and also ignorant, how much more large and ample they may be made, to receive the more rich and plentiful communications of the divine life and image, therefore can we not comprehend either the transcendent life, happiness, and glory, or that degree of sanctity and blessedness to which the believing soul may be advanced in another world. The Popish schoolmen nicely dispute about the sight of God, and the love of God, to wit, in which of these the formal blessedness of the soul consisteth, improperly separating those whom God hath so firmly join-

ed together ; as if it were possible, that either a blind love, or a dry and unimpassioned speculation, could render a soul entirely happy : but it is much safer to say, that the happiness and eternal life of the soul consisteth in the possession or fruition of God ; and this doth necessarily imply the proper perfection of every faculty. Nothing can be the real happiness of a spirit that is either inferior or extrinsical to it ; it must be something divine, and that too must be wrought into the very nature and temper of it. I hesitate not to affirm, that if the soul of man could possibly be advanced, so as to receive adoration or divine power, yet if it were in the mean time void of divine dispositions, and a god-like nature ; it were far from being glorified, and made happy as to its capacity. What health is to the body, that holiness is to the soul ; which perhaps the apostle alludes to when he speaks of the *spirit of a sound mind*, 2 Tim. i. 7.

2. There is another notion of *eternal life*, for which some contend, by which they mean not barely the essential happiness of the soul ; but that, with the addition of many suitable and glorious circumstances, the essential happiness of a glorified body, the beholding of Christ, the amicable society of angels, freedom from temptations, the knowledge of the secrets of nature and providence, and the like : to which may be also added, though of a lower degree, open absolution, or a visible deliverance of the saints out of the overthrow of the wicked at the conflagration of the world ; also power over devils, eminence of place, enjoyment of friends, and other things of the like

Kind. Now let us briefly consider what tendencies there are in the religious soul towards each of these: and here I must beg leave to speak jointly both of the end, and of the motion thereunto; though it may be thought that the former only falls fairly under our present consideration.

First, then, I suppose that *eternal life*, in the first sense of it, is intended here, to wit, the essential happiness of the soul, or its perfect and everlasting enjoyment of God. For the description is here made of religion itself in the abstract, or that principle of divine life which Christ Jesus implanted in the soul; and being so considered, it is hard to conceive how that should spring up into any of these appendent circumstances, or into any thing but the completion and perfection of itself; though the religious soul, taken in the concrete, possible may. And indeed though we should allow, (which we shall take into consideration under the next head,) that many of those high scriptural phrases which are brought to describe the future condition of believing souls, do principally respect the appendices of its essential happiness, (as a kingdom, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, an inheritance reserved, a place prepared, and the like) yet it seems very unnatural to interpret this phrase, *life*, and *eternal life*, any otherwise than of that which I call the essential happiness of the soul: but if we interpret it of this, the sense is very plain and easy; thus this principle of divine life is continually endeavouring to grow up to its just altitude, to advance itself unto a triumphant state, even as all other principles of life do naturally tend to-

wards a final accomplishment, and ultimate perfection. Carnal self, or the animal life, may be indeed said to be a well of water too, poisonous water; but that springs up into a sensual life, popular applause, self accommodations; or in the apostle's phrase, into the fulfilment of the lusts of the flesh. This I speak only by way of illustrative opposition: for, to speak more properly, this corrupt principle hath in it the central force of death and hell, and always gravitates downward; whereas this divine principle is always attracted upward: but they do both agree in this, that they both seek their own gratification, and study to acquire their respective perfections. The everlasting and most glorious enjoyment of God is certainly most perfective of the soul; and therefore is most properly and most deservedly said to be its *eternal life*, according to our Saviour, *John xvii. 3*. Now this *eternal life* is not a thing specifically different from religion, or the image of God, or the divine life, but indeed the greatest height, and the most possible perfection of itself: even as the sun at noon-day is not a light really distinct from what it was in the first dawns of the morning, but different in degree, and in its far more glorious state; which seems to be the very similitude whereby the Spirit of God illustrateth the matter in hand, *Prov. iv. 18*. or, as a man of perfect age is not a distinct species from a child, but only more complete and excellent in that species; to which the apostle refers, treating of this subject, *1 Cor. xiii. 11*. Man hath not two distinct kinds of happiness in the two distinct worlds, in which he is made to live; but

one and the same thing is his blessedness in both ; which, as I said before, must be the enjoyment of God. The translation made of the text is very suitable to this notion ; for this divine principle is said to spring up, not unto but into everlasting life ; in other words, it springs up till it be swallowed up in the perfect knowledge, love, and enjoyment of God. Even as youth is swallowed up in manhood, so this grace is swallowed up in glory, and is not so much abolished as perfected.

By this phrase the genius of true religion, and excellent temper of the truly religious soul, is most aptly described. This is the soul that, being in some measure delivered from its unnatural bondage, and freed from its unhappy confinement, now spreads itself in God, lifts up itself unto him, stretches itself upon him, is not contented merely with a heaven to come, but brings down a heaven into itself, by carrying up itself unto and after the God of heaven. God is become great and the only great in the eye of such a Christian ; he is indeed become all things to him ; whilst this principle is rightly and actually predominant in him, he knows no interest but to thrive and flourish in God ; no will but to serve the will, and comply with the mind of God ; no end, but to be united to God ; no business, but to display and reflect the glory and perfections of God upon the earth ; the main business of his life, I say, is to serve him ; the main ambition of his soul to be like unto him ; and his main happiness in this world to be united to him ; and in the world to come, to be swallowed up in him ; in this world to know, and love, and rest, and delight in, and

enjoy God more than all things, and in the world to come to enjoy him more than is possible here. The pleasant springing up of the tender flowers unto the friendly sun, having been blessed with his precious and benign influences, and the cheerful haste with which the sympathetic needle pursues the enchanting loadstone, when once rightly touched and affected with it, do a little, though but a little, resemble and represent the motions of a spirit impregnated with this divine principle, and strongly impressed with the image and stamp of God: he puts in his hand by the hole of the door, and the bowels of the espoused soul are presently moved, yea, melted for him, *Cant. v. 4.* He casts the skirt of his garment, the mantle of his love, and presently the converted soul leaves all to follow him. Faith, hope, and love, are knitting and springing graces, and this eternal life is the end and perfection of them all; not that any one of them, I conceive, shall be utterly made void and abolished, as some conclude concerning the two former, though without good ground, I think, from the apostle's words, *1 Cor. xiii. 13.* But faith will be ripened into the most firm and undisturbed confidence, affiance, and acquiescence in God; hope will be advanced into a more cheerful, powerful, and confident expectation, having for its object the perpetuation of the soul's felicity; and love will become much more intense, and more clearly distinguishable from the imperfect longings and languishings of this present state, when it shall blossom into pure delights and complacency, resting and glorying in the arms of its adequate, satisfactory, and eternal object. The

faith of the hypocrite, and indeed his hope too, is still springing up into self-preservation, deliverance, liberty, a splendid and pompous state of the church, (that is, of his own party) or some such thing as will gratify the animal life, and there it terminates; but the faith of the sincere and religious soul springs up into eternal life; it knows no term but *the salvation of the soul*, 1 Pet. i. 9. as its hope knows no accomplishment but a state of god-like purity and perfection, 1 John iii. 3. The mere natural man lives within himself, within a circle of his own, and cannot get out; whether he eat, or drink, or pray, or be zealous for the pulling down of the political Antichrist, he is still in his own circle, he is still sacrificing in all this to that great *helluo*, [glutton,] the animal life, as I have already made evident: but the godly soul is disinterested in regard to self, and so is still contriving the advancement of a nobler life within itself, and moving towards God as its supreme and all-sufficient good. Give a saint all that the whole world can afford, he cannot fix, nor settle, nor centre here: God hath put within him a holy restless appetite after an higher good, which he would rather possess than what he now has. I know indeed that the soul that is thus divinely free may be hindered in its flight; but it will deliver itself from the clog at length; you may obstruct and dam up the streams of this fountain perhaps, but they will burst out again; you may cast ashes upon this pure fire for a time, but it will flame again: such a damp cannot arise, no not from hell itself, as to extinguish it. The Philistines stopped the wells of

water which Abraham had digged in Gerar, *and filled them with earth*, Gen. xxvi. 15. But this well of water which God diggeth in the holy and humble soul, cannot be stopped, neither by the devil, that king of Gerar, that is, of wanderings, *Job i. 7.* nor by any of his servants, but it will find a passage upwards: though you endeavour to fill it with earth, which indeed is the likeliest to choke it, (*for amor rerum terrenarum est viscus spiritualium pennarum*) [for the love of terrestrial things weighs down our spiritual wings,] though you cast the dust and gravel of earthly pleasures, profits, or preferments into it, yet it is a well of living water, and will work its passage out. The hungerings of the godly soul are not, cannot be satisfied, till it feed upon the hidden Manna; nor its thirstings quenched, till swallowed up in the unbounded ocean of life and love.

But I see I cannot separate *springing up* from *eternal life*, nor pursue the term of religion, but I must also take in the motion of the religious soul, whereby it pursues it; which I have already handled in my discourse; therefore I will quit this head, and take a short view of the second.

The secondary and more improper notion of eternal life I told you, was that which includes the circumstances or appendices of it. And here we must allow, that the holy Scriptures openly avouch some of these circumstances, as those especially of the first rank that I named, of some of which it seems to make great account; and possibly the Scripture may somewhere or other imply all the rest, even those of the inferior rank. Again, we will allow, that many of those

phrases which the Scripture uses to describe the blessed state of the other world, principally respect these appendices of the soul's essential happiness; such perhaps are the *crown of righteousness* mentioned by the apostle, *1 Tim. iv. 8.* *The prize of the high calling*, mentioned by the same apostle, *Phil. iii. 14.* *The house which is from heaven*, spoken of in *2 Cor. vi. 2.* *A kingdom, an incorruptible inheritance, a place prepared, mansions, a reward, praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ*, *1 Pet. i. 7.* and that *glory, honour, and peace*, spoken of by the apostle Paul, *Rom. ii. 10.* These are all Scripture descriptions of the other state, and I suppose we may grant them to have a peculiar reference to this secondary and essential happiness of the soul: though I know not any necessity there is to be so liberal in our concessions; for it may be fairly said concerning all, or most of them, that the design of these phrases is not so much to establish this less proper notion, or to point to the circumstances of the glorified state, as to insinuate how much more ample and glorious that state shall be than this in which we now are; as a prize is looked upon as somewhat more excellent than what is done or expected to acquire it; (it must needs be so esteemed by runners and wrestlers;) a kingdom is a more glorious state than that of subjection, and an inheritance is incomparably more ample than the pension that is allowed to the heir in his minority.

But these things being conceded, it doth not appear how far, or under what notion, the religious soul, as such, doth spring up into these addi-

tional glories, and thirst after them. I know there are many that speak very highly of these appendices, and allow the godly soul a very high and irrelative valuation of them: and this they do principally infer from the example of Christ himself, as also of Moses and Paul. Give me leave, therefore, to suggest something, not to enervate, but to moderate the argument drawn from these persons; and, after that, I shall briefly lay down what I conceive to be most scriptural and rational in this matter.

1. As for the example of Christ, it seems to make not much for them in this matter. For however the text is very plain, that *for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross*; and this joy seems plainly to be his sitting *at the right hand of God*, Heb. xii. 2. yet, if by this joy we understand a more full and glorious possession of God, and a more excellent exaltation of his human nature to a more free fruition of the divine, then it cannot be applied to any thing but the springing up of the gracious soul into its essential happiness; which I have already contended for, as being the proper disposition of such a soul: or if by this joy and throne we understand the power with which Christ foresaw he should be vested, leading captivity captive, trampling under foot the powers of hell and darkness, and procuring gifts for men, which seems to me to be the most likely; then it belongs not at all to men, neither can this example be drawn for imitation.

As for the instance of Moses, who is said to have had *respect to the recompence of the reward*,

Heb. xi. 26. it is not yet granted, that that *recompence of reward* relates principally to these appendents of the soul's essential happiness; neither can it, I suppose, be evinced: but though I should also allow that, which I incline to do, yet all that can be inferred from it is but a respect that Moses had, as our translation well renders it, or some account, which he in his sufferings made of this recompence; which was a very warrantable contemplation.

The apostle Paul indeed doth openly profess that he looked for and desired the coming of Christ from heaven, upon the account of that glorious body with which he would then clothe him, *Phil. iii. 20, 21.* and so he might surely, and yet not desire it principally and primarily, but secondarily, and with reference.

And this leads me to the general answer that I was preparing to give, which is this. Some of these circumstances which I have named, especially that of the glorified body, may be reduced to the essential happiness of the soul, or included in it, so that the soul could not otherwise be perfectly happy. It is the opinion of all divines, I think, that a Christian is not completely happy till he consists of a soul and body both glorified. And indeed considering the dear affection, and essential aptitude that God hath planted in the human soul for a body, we cannot well conceive how it should be perfectly happy without one: and this earthly body is, alas! an unequal yoke-fellow, in which she is half stifled, and rather buried than conveniently lodged; so that it seems necessary even to her essential happiness, that

she should have some more heavenly and glorious body, wherein she may commodiously and pleasantly exert her innate powers, and whereby she may also express herself in a spiritual and noble manner, suitable to her own natural vigour, and to her infinitely amiable and most beloved object.

Concerning the rest of the circumstances which cannot be thus reduced, I conceive that such of them as are necessary to the essential happiness of the soul, by way of subserviency, may be eyed, and desired, and thirsted after secondarily, and with reference, as I said before: that is, under this notion only, as they are subservient to that essential blessedness; I confess I do not understand under what notion a religious soul can lift up itself unto them, I mean so far as it is holy and religious, and acts suitably to that divine principle which the Father of spirits, or rather the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath implanted in it. And if there be any other circumstance which cannot be reduced to one of these kinds, I suppose it may be reckoned among the objects and gratifications of the animal life, and not to make up any part of the godly man's heaven, or that eternal life into which religion springs up: for I can easily imagine, that a fleshly fancy may be mightily ravished with the desire of such a heaven as is suitable to it; and that a mere animal man may be as heartily desirous to be in such a kingdom of God as he hath marked out to himself, as he is utterly unwilling that the kingdom of God (such as the apostle describes, *Rom. xiv. 17.* consisting in

righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost) should be in him. If our continual cry be after safety, self-preservation, liberty, redemption, and deliverance from those things only that oppress and grieve our fleshly interest; and our thirstings principally terminated in knowledge, though it be of God himself, freedom from condemnation, power over devils, yea, or any visible pomp, glory, or splendour, though it be of ever so ethereal and heavenly a nature, what do we more than others? What is all this more than may naturally spring up from the animal life, and may be ultimately resolved into carnal self?

Wherefore, as a result from the whole discourse, especially from this last part of it, let me earnestly intreat all the professors of this holy religion, which the blessed Messiah, Christ Jesus, hath so dearly bought for the world, and so clearly revealed in it, not to value themselves by any thing which the power of natural self-love may exert or desire, perform or expect, nor by any thing below the image of God, and the internal and transforming manifestations of Christ Jesus in them; the perfection of which is eternal life, in the most proper and true notion of it, as you have heard. I know that I have often suggested the same lesson in this short treatise, but I know also that I can never inculcate it often enough; nay, the eloquence of angels is not sufficient to imprint it on the hearts of men. Possibly it may startle some hypocritical professors, and carnal-gospel souls, (God grant it may effectually!) and make the ears of many that

hear it to tingle; but yet I will proclaim it, "It is possible for a man to desire not only the things of this world, (which St. James speaks of, chap. iv. 3.) but even heaven itself, to consume it upon his lusts; and he may as truly be making provision for the flesh, to fulfil it in the lusts thereof, in longing after a kind of self-salvation, as in eating, and drinking, and rising up to play." Certainly a true Christian spirit, rightly invigorated and actuated by this divine and potent principle, Christian religion, cannot look upon heaven as merely future, or as something perfectly distinct from him; but he eyes it as life, eternal life, the perfection of the purest and divine life communicable to a soul, and is daily thirsting after it, or rather, as it is in the text, growing up into it. I know that heaven is sometimes called a rest, in opposition to the dissatisfaction of the unsettled and unbelieving soul; but, in opposition to a sluggish, inert, and dormant rest, it is here said to be *life, eternal life*. Let us show ourselves to be living Christians, by springing up into the utmost consummation of life; let it appear that Christ Jesus, the Prince of life, who was manifested on purpose *to take away our sins*, 1 John iii. 5. hath not only covered our shame, and, as it were, embalmed our dead souls, to keep them from putrefaction, and strewed them with the flowers of his merits, to take away their offensive odour from the nostrils of his Father, but hath truly advanced, re-instated, and made to flourish, the souls that sin had so miserably degraded and deflowered. Deliver-yourselves, O immortal souls! from all those unsuitable and unseemly cares,

studies, and joys, from all those low and particular ends and lusts, which do not only pinch and straiten, but even debase and debauch you: let it not be said that the king of Sodom made Abraham rich; that your main delight, happiness, and contentment are derived from any prosperous, plentiful, peaceable, pompous state, any thing that may be called a self-accommodation, either in the world that now is, or that which is to come; but from the righteousness of faith, and your vital union with the Father and the Son: to whom, in the unity of the Spirit, be honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

COMMUNION WITH THE DEITY.

PART I.

1 JOHN I. 3.

Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

THESE words express the Christian life, and that kind of converse whereby a good man is distinguished from all other men.

A good man does not differ from other men by any thing without him, any church privileges which are common to hypocrites and sincere Christians; any external visible performances, in which the disciples of the Pharisees may be more abundant and more specious than the disciples of Christ, *Matt. ix. 14.* much less by any corporeal or temporal enjoyment or ornament, strength, beauty, riches, descent, &c. nor by any natural relation, though it were to Abraham, as the Jews boasted of their father Abraham, *John viii. 33.* but by something internal, substantial, by a relation to God; the character of a good man must be derived from his correspondence to the chief good; and the happiness of a soul must be judged of by its relation to life, and love, and blessedness itself. Things external, corporeal, temporal, make some difference among men, but

it is comparatively nominal and titular: by these, men are said to be rich or poor, noble or ignoble; but men are really and substantially different by the relation that they have to God; by this, they are good or bad, godly or wicked. This is the most certain and proper mark of a good man, viz. Communion with God: in all other things he may be like other men, but in this he differs from and excels them all. This is a character proper *quarto modo*; [as logicians say;] for it agrees to every good man, to none but a good man, and always to him, as we shall see hereafter. The ground of my discourse, then, shall be this short and plain proposition, viz. "A godly man hath communion with God."

In order to the more distinct handling hereof, I must premise a few things briefly.

1. "That the gracious and loving God made nothing miserable of all that he made." There are none born slaves in this great house of the world. He made all things out of himself, and he hath no idea of evil in himself, so that it was not possible that he should make any thing evil or miserable. Every thing was good, *Gen. i. 31.* and so in some sense happy. He was free to make the world; but making it, he could not make it evil or miserable. Every thing is the product of almighty love and goodness.

2. "The happiness of all creatures consists in their acting agreeably to that nature that God gave them, and those ends which he proposed to them, and suitably to those laws which he gave them;" which laws were contrived with the greatest suitableness to those natures, and

subserviency to those ends. Every creature is in its kind happy, whilst it acts agreeably to that nature which the wise Creator implanted in it; as the sun runs its race without ceasing, and rejoices so to do, and is, in some sense, happy in so doing. Departing from that nature, the creature becomes miserable; as the earth, bringing forth briars and thorns, instead of those good fruits which it was appointed to bring forth, is said to be cursed, *Gen. iii. 17, 18.*

3. "The happiness of the creature is higher or lower, greater or less, according as it comes nearer to God, or is farther off from him;" according as it receives more or less from him; according to what communion it hath with him. The life and happiness of the sun is much lower than that of a man, because it cannot enjoy such high and excellent communications from, or communion with God as man doth.

4. "There can be no communion without likeness." The sun shines upon a wall, as well as upon a man, but a wall has no communion with the sun, because it hath no eyes to see the light of it as man hath; nor can it receive the benign influences of its heat as the herbs do. A log of wood lieth in the water as well as the fish, but it hath no communion with the water, nor receives any advantage by it as the fish doth. God is present, according to his infinite essence, with the devils as well as with the angels, but they have no likeness in nature to him, and so no communion with him, as these have.

5. "God hath given a larger and more excellent capacity to man, than to any other of his

creatures upon earth." God hath endued man with reason, and so made him capable of a higher life, and a more excellent communion with his Maker than all the rest. The rational soul of all sublunary creatures, is alone capable to know, love, serve, enjoy, imitate God, and so to have a glorious communion with him. The sun, in all its glory and brightness, is not so excellent a being as any soul of man upon this account. And although man, by his fall, lost his actual communion with God, yet he is a reasonable creature still; he hath not lost his capacity of receiving influences from him, and enjoying communion with him. The world, when it is at the darkest, is yet capable of being enlightened.

6. "When the nature of man is, by divine grace, healed of its distempered condition, and restored to its former rectitude, to act suitably to the end for which it was made, and to spend itself upon its proper object, then man comes to have a right communion with God, and to be happy."—All rational souls are capable of holding communion with God, but all do not hold communion with him; but they that express the purity and holiness of the divine life, that know God, and live like him, are his children, *Matt. v. 45*, and those only do rightly and really converse with him. When the Spirit of God informs these rational souls, and infuses the strength of a divine life into them, and stamps the lively impressions of divine perfections upon them, rendering our hearts, wills and ways, conformable to that glorious pattern, that infinite good, then do we enjoy a proper communion with him, and are truly

blessed; though we are not completely blessed, till this conformity be perfected according to what those souls are, or may be capable of.

This is the true and proper notion of man's communion with God, and relation to him, which we cannot fully describe, till we more fully enjoy. That soul that truly lives and feeds upon God, does enjoy more than it can tell; and yet it can tell this, that this is the most high, noble, excellent, glorious life in the world.

This communion, as also the intimateness and closeness of it, are described variously in the holy Scriptures, by the similitude of members being in the body, 1 Cor. xii. 27. of branches being in the vine, John xv. 1, 2. by being formed according to God's image, Rom. viii. 29. changed into his image, 2 Cor. iii. 18. by God's dwelling in the soul, and the soul in him, 1 John iv. 16. by Christ's being formed in the soul, Gal. iv. 19. by the soul's having Christ, 1 John v. 12. by Christ supping with the soul, and the soul with him, Rev. iii. 20. Because nothing is more our own, nor more one with us, than that which we eat and drink, for it is incorporated into us; therefore is this spiritual communion between God and the godly soul oftentimes in Scripture described by our eating and drinking with him. Thus God was pleased to allow his people under the law, when they had offered up a part of their beasts in sacrifice to him, to sit down and feast upon the rest, as a token of that familiarity and oneness that was between him and them. By the like action our Saviour shadowed out the same mystery, when, in the sacrament of his supper, he appointed them

to sit down to eat and drink with him, to intimate their feeding upon him, and most close communion with him: yea, the state of glory, which is the most perfect communion with God, is thus shadowed out, *Matt. viii. 11. Rev. xix. 9.* And what is worth noting, I think the sacramental eating and drinking hath some reference to that most intimate communion of the saints with God in glory: our Saviour himself seems to imply as much in that speech of his, *Luke xxii. 30. That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom:* in which words he seems plainly to allude to the sacramental eating and drinking which he had a little before instituted, *viz. ver. 19.* Which makes some to believe, that that gesture is to be retained in that ordinance, which is most proper and usual to express familiarity and communion; and to take away that gesture, is to destroy one great end of our Saviour in appointing this supper, which was to represent that familiar communion which is between himself and every believing soul. I will not here examine the validity of their argument, which possibly, if pressed home, might introduce a rudeness into the worship of God, under pretence of familiarity: but it seems very plain, that the nature of that ordinance doth shadow out the intimate communion between God and a godly soul.

I have already, in part, prevented myself, and shewed you wherein the soul's communion with God consists: but yet, to give you a more distinct knowledge of this great mystery, I shall unfold it in these three following particulars.

1st, "A godly soul hath communion with God

in his attributes." When the soul of man is moulded and formed into a resemblance of the divine nature, then hath it a true fellowship with him. Now, this communion with God in his attributes is to be seen two ways.

1. "When the soul is in its measure, according to the capacity of a creature, all that which God is." This is the communion which the angels have with God; their beholding of the face of God is not to be understood of a mere speculation, or an idle gazing upon a Deity; but they see him by receiving his image upon themselves, and reflecting his glory and brightness; they partake of the goodness, purity, holiness, wisdom, righteousness of God, which makes them such glorious spirits; and the want of this makes the other, whom we call devils, to be what they are. Thus godly men shall have communion with God, they shall see God, *Matt. v. 8. Heb. xii. 14.* Yea, thus they have communion with him in some measure: they do not only see God in the world, as the devils do, nor see him in the word, as many hypocritical and wicked men do, but they see him in themselves, in the frame of their own souls; they find themselves moulded in his image, and a resemblance of him drawn upon them. This is a beautiful vision of God, true and real, though not full and complete. This is set out in scripture by being *holy as God is holy, 1 Pet. i. 16. perfect as God is perfect, Matt. v. 48.* This our Saviour exhorts us to seek after, *Matt. xi. 29. Take my yoke upon you, learn of me; for I am meek and lowly:* and the apostle *Eph. v. 1. Be ye followers of God, as dear children.* When the

nature and perfections of God, his holiness, goodness, righteousness, wisdom, &c. are copied out upon our natures, and the same spirit is in us which was in Christ Jesus, then have we a true communion with God; which blessed communion, when the soul becomes all that which God is, is by a conformity of nature.

2. "When the soul, in its actions as a creature, doth rightly answer to the attributes of the Creator." As when the soul doth answer the goodness of God with suitable affections of love, and joy, and delight; when the soul doth correspond to the sovereignty and wisdom of God by the acts of self-denial and resignation; and doth converse with the righteousness of God by patience, and a holy acquiescence. When the soul doth rightly exert those acts which are proper and suitable to the nature of God, then it may be said to hold communion with him in his attributes. Now this suitability of the soul is especially with reference to the incommunicable attributes of God, where there is no place for imitation, though it hold good in the rest also.

2dly, "A godly soul hath communion with God in his word." To read, profess, or hear the word, is not to hold a real communion with God therein: many do so that are strangers to God: a man may read my letters, and yet correspond with my enemy. That son in the gospel, that heard his father's command, and answered, *I go, Sir*, but went not, had no right communion with his paternal authority. But when the soul is ennobled into such a frame as this word doth require, then it holds communion with God in his word; *e. g.*

when the soul puts forth those acts of humiliation, holy fear, and reverence, godly trembling, which do suit the nature of a divine threatening, when the soul answers the command of God with suitable resolutions, repentings, reformations, and real obedience, when it entertains the promise with suitable acts of holy delight, joy, refreshment, recumbency, and acquiesces in the same, then doth it truly converse with God in his word.

3dly, "A godly soul hath communion with God in his works." And that is, when the soul doth answer the several providences of God with suitable and pertinent affections and dispositions. The godly soul doth not only eye and observe the hand of God in all things that occur, but doth comply with those providences, and is moulded into that frame, and put upon those duties for which such providences call. Then doth the soul rightly hold communion with God in his works, when it is humbled under humbling providences; is refreshed, strengthened, and grows up under prosperous providences, as they did, *Acts ix. 31.* who, having rest given them, were edified, comforted, multiplied, &c. When the soul doth rightly comport with every providence, and the will is moulded into the will of God, then do we hold communion with him in his works. This theme is large, because the works of God are manifold; works of creation, redemption, preservation, works towards other men, and towards ourselves, both towards our outward and inward man: a godly soul hath communion with God in all these, in the same sense just named, though perhaps not equally in all, yet sincerely and truly.

By what hath been said, you understand that right fellowship with God is not a bare communion of names. To have the name of God called upon us, and to be called Christians, or the people of God, or to name the name of God, to profess it; to cry Lord, Lord, doth not make any one really and truly the better man, doth not make a soul really happy. It is not enough to cry, *The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord*, with them in *Jer. vii. 4*; to make our boast in the law with them, *Rom. ii. 23.*; to call ourselves the children of Abraham, as the Jews did in John the Baptist's time, *Matt. iii. 9*. These privileges and professions are extrinsical to the soul, and do nothing to the true ennobling of it. But right fellowship with God is a communion of hearts and natures, of will and affections, or interest and ends; to have one heart and will, the same interest and ends with God, is to be truly godly; a God-like man is the only godly man, a Christ-like nature brought into the soul doth alone denominate a man a true Christian. It is not speaking together, but loving and living together, that brings God and the soul into one; *I live, yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me*, *Gal. ii. 20*. And thus, I suppose, you have a fair account why the apostle James, chap. ii. does so much prefer works before faith, (for indeed faith is nothing worth, save only that faith which joins the soul to the object, and makes the thing believed one's own;) as also why the apostle Paul prefers love before a faith of miracles, *1 Cor. xiii. 2*. Though indeed a justifying faith is the most miraculous; that faith that unites the soul and God together is more ex-

cellent, and indeed more miraculous than the faith that removes mountains. When I consider the proper happiness, and perfection of a soul, and the nature of this blissful communion with God, I cannot but wonder how it is possible that men should take their communion with God to consist in a slight acquaintance with him, profession of him, and performances to him. I am confident it is not possible that men should have any true feeling of happiness in such acquaintance, any more than a man can be really filled with the seeing or carving of meat which he eats not.

Before I apply the doctrine, give me leave to lay down some rules or positions tending further to explain and clear it.

1. This must be held, which I touched upon before, that, "there can be no communion between God and man, but by a likeness of nature, a new, a divine principle implanted in the soul." A beast hath no communion with a man, because reason, the ground of such communion, is wanting. Of all the creatures, there was none found that could be a meet help for Adam, that could be taken into the human society, till Eve was made, who was a human person. So neither can there be any conjunction of the soul with God, but by oneness of spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 17. *He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.*

2. "There can be no communion with God but by a Mediator;" no Mediator but Christ Jesus, who is God-man. Two cannot walk together, nor hold communion, except they be agreed: and there can be no agreement made between God and man but by Christ Jesus. Therefore

it is said here, *Our communion is with the Father and the Son*, q. d. with the Father by the Son: and faith, whereby the soul and God are united, is still said to be *faith in Christ*, as we find throughout the Scriptures.

3. "There can be no perfect communion with God in this life." Our communion with heaven, whilst we are upon earth, is imperfect: our resemblance to God is scant and dark in comparison of what it shall be. We know but in part, love but in part, enjoy but in part; we are but in part holy and happy. There can be no perfect communion with God, till there be a perfect reconciliation of natures as well as persons; and that cannot be whilst there is any thing unlike to God in the soul, whilst any impure thing dwells in the soul, which cannot truly close with God, nor God with that. The Holy Spirit can never suffer any defiled thing to unite itself with it; it is not lawful for "any impure thing to mix itself with pure divinity," said Socrates the heathen. *What communion hath righteousness with unrighteousness?* saith the apostle, 2 Cor. vi. 14.; and so far as a righteous man is in any part unrighteous, so far he is a stranger to God: the unregenerate part of a regenerate man hath no more communion with God than a wicked man, than the devil himself hath, no more than darkness hath with light.

4. "Our communion with God must be distinguished from the sense and feeling of it." Many have erred exceedingly, whilst they place communion with God in the sense and feeling of it, in raptures of joy, ecstasies, and transports of soul:

which indeed, if they be real, are not so much it, as the flower of it, something resulting and separable from it. Communion with God cannot be lost in a saint, for then he is not a saint; for it is the peculiar characteristic of a saint to have communion with God: and a saint under desertion hath communion with God even then as really, though not so feelingly, as at any other time, so far as he is sanctified. But the sense of this communion may be very much, if not altogether lost, and oftentimes is lost.

5. "A soul's communion with God cannot be interrupted by any local changes." It is a spiritual conjunction, and is not violated by any confinement; the walls of a prison cannot separate God and the godly soul; banishment cannot drive a soul from God,—*Cælum non animum mutant, &c.* [Men may change their situation, yet they cannot change the disposition, &c.] The blessed angels, those ministring spirits, when they are dispatched into the utmost ends of the world upon the service of God, are even then beholding the face of God, and enjoy as intimate communion with him as ever: the case is the same with all godly souls, whose communion with God does not depend upon any local situation; it is not thousands of miles that can beget a distance between God and the soul. Indeed nothing but sin does it, or can do it:—*Your iniquities have separated between you and your God*, Isa. lix. 2. nothing but sin is contrary to this divine fellowship, and so nothing but that can interrupt this spiritual society. To speak properly, sin does not so much cause the soul's distance from God, as itself is that

distance. Man and wife remain one, though a hundred miles distant; and believing souls maintain a certain spiritual communion one with another, though in several parts of the world. The society and communion of godly souls one with another, so far as it is spiritual, cannot be interrupted by bodily distance; much less can the fellowship of God with the godly man, who carries about with him, and in him, a divine nature, the image of God, a holy God-like disposition whithersoever he goes.

6. "This communion with God of which I have been speaking, is much better than all outward acts and enjoyments, duties and ordinances whatsoever, though they be ever so many or specious." God himself long since decided the matter, that a broken and contrite heart is better than all sacrifices, *Ps. li. 17.* that to obey was better than sacrifice, *1 Sam. xv. 22.* that mercy was better than sacrifice, *Hosea vi. 6.* that to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God, was to be preferred before thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil, *Mic. vi. 7, 8.* It holds good in reference to gospel duties, though they may seem more spiritual than the oblations of the law. A real soul-communion with God, a communion of hearts and natures, of wills and affections, of interests and ends, is infinitely more excellent than all hearing, praying, celebration of Sabbaths or sacraments, *James i. 25.* as the end is more excellent than the means: for so stands the case between them.

Yea, I will add, (though some proud and wanton spirit have made strange work of it, yet) it is

a sure and most excellent doctrine, that this spiritual communion is a continual Sabbath, (a Sabbath of communion is much better than a Sabbath of rest;) this is the Sabbath that the angels and saints in heaven keep, though they know no such thing as a first day in the week; have no reading, preaching, or praying, among them. This is a continual praying, and effectual way of praying in silence. A right, active, imbibing faith does virtually contain a prayer in it; right believing is powerful praying. The knees, eyes, and tongues, bear the least share in prayer; the whole of the work lies upon the soul, and particularly upon faith in the soul, which is indeed the life and soul of prayer. Faith can pray without words; but the most elegant words, even the phrase of angels, is not worthy to be called prayer, without faith. I speak not so much of faith inditing a prayer, or giving life to it, as of its being virtually prayer, if not something more; for faith indeed is a real bringing down of that God, and imbibing of those influences into the soul, for which prayer only looks up.

Communion with God is a continual fast; it is that spiritual and most excellent way of fasting, whereby the soul emptying itself of itself and all self-fulness, self-sufficiency, self-confidence, receives of God alone, and is filled therewith. A soul communing rightly with God, is a soul emptied of, and, as it were, fasting from itself; which is the most excellent way of fasting.

It is a continual thanksgiving; and indeed the best way of thanksgiving in the world. To render up ourselves to God purely and intirely, to

reflect the glory of God in an holy and god-like temper, is a real and living thank-offering. This is that hallelujah so much spoken of, which the angels and saints in glory do sing perpetually: what other adjunct of it there may be, I will not here presume to say.

This communion of hearts and wills is a constant and most excellent celebration of sacraments. The soul that is really baptized into the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, and feeds upon God, and is one with him, keeps a continual sacrament; without which the sacramental eating and drinking is but an empty and dry devotion. In a word, it is not possible for any thing that is extrinsical to the soul to make it happy; but the soul that is advanced into the noble state of communion with God, is made partaker of a new nature, and is truly happy.

Nay, further, I will add, that this communion with God is not only better than all duties and ordinances, but even better than all revelations, evidences, discoveries, that can be made or given to the soul, *ab extra*, all that are from without. A manifestation of God, i. e. of a divine life in the soul, is much better than such a manifestation as Moses had of his glory in the cleft of the rock, *Exod. xxxiii. 22.* Many think, O if they might but be assured of the love of God, of the pardon of sin, of an interest in Christ, they should be happy! Why, I will tell you, if you had a voice from heaven, saying that ye were the beloved children of God, as Christ had; an angel sent from God to tell you that ye were beloved, and highly favoured of God, as his

mother Mary had; yet communion with God ought to be preferred before these: for these things could not make a soul happy without real communion with God; but communion with God, can and doth make a soul happy without these: and to this purpose, I suppose, I may apply that notable speech of our Saviour by way of allusion, *It is more blessed to give than to receive*, to give up one's self, one's heart, will, interests, and affections to God, than to receive any external discoveries and manifestations from him. Why do we so earnestly seek after signs from without us of God's presence with us, as if there were any thing better or more desirable to the soul than Immanuel, God with us, as the apostle speaks, *Christ in us the hope of glory*? He that desires any other evidence of grace, but more grace, does not only light up a candle to see the sun by, but indeed he acts like one that thinks there is something better than God himself; though I do not say that all do think so who are desirous of such manifestations. But this I will say, and you may well think upon it, that holy longings after a true and spiritual communion with God do certainly spring from a divine principle in the soul; whereas a thirst after assurance of God's love, and reconciliation of our persons with him, may be only the fruit of self-love and interest. *Let me die the death of the righteous!* was the wish of a wicked man.

7. "Though communion with God concerns the whole soul, and all the faculties, affections, and motions of it," (it is God's spreading his influences, and exercising his sovereignty over all

the powers of the soul, and their mutual spending of themselves upon him, and conforming to him) “yet the great acts of the soul, whereby it chiefly holds communion with God, are loving and believing.” Love is the joining and knitting of the soul to God; faith is the soul’s labouring after more intimate conjunction with him, receiving influences from him, and participations of him into the soul. We may say that faith draws in supplies from heaven, and love enjoys them; faith imbibes sweetness and virtue from Christ, and love feeds upon it. Certainly these two eminent graces grow, live, and thrive together, and are inseparable companions. It is somewhat difficult to distinguish them, or to assign to each his proper place and work in the soul; they seem mutually to act, and to be mutually actuated by each other: perhaps the apostle might have respect to this mystery, when he speaks so doubtfully, *Gal. v. 6.* We know indeed that in the state of perfect communion, which we call glory, love shall abide and flourish more abundantly, and there shall be no room for faith there, not as to the principal act of it; but which of them hath the greater part in maintaining our communion with God in this world, is not easy, nor indeed needful to determine. The godly soul is the most proper temple wherein God dwelleth, according to that *2 Cor. vi. 16.* *Ye are the temple of the living God; faith and love are the Jachin and Boaz,* the two great pillars which keep up the soul as a temple; take away these, and it remains a soul indeed; but the soul does not remain a temple to the Lord. In a word, these two are the

soul's principal handmaids which she useth about this blessed guest; faith goes out and brings him in, and love entertains him; by faith she finds him whom she seeks, and by love she kisses him whom she finds, as the spouse is described, *Cant. viii. 1.*

8. "The communion that is between God and the godly soul is altogether different from that communion that is between creatures." Here I might shew you how it exceeds and excels that, in many respects; but I shall not insist upon any of those particulars, nor indeed upon any of those many differences that are between them, save only upon this one: the communion that is between creature and creature is perfect in its kind, and so, consequently, gives mutual satisfaction; I mean, it terminates the expectations, so that nothing remains to be enjoyed in them more than what is enjoyed. The creature is shallow, and soon is fathomed, we soon come to the bottom of it: a finite can grasp a finite being, and enjoy it, as I may say, all at once. A man may come so near to his friend that he can come no nearer; enjoy him as fully as he is capable of enjoying, or the other of being enjoyed: created sweetness may be exhausted to the very bottom. But the soul's communion with God does not give it any such satisfaction, though indeed, in some sense, it gives a satisfaction of a much higher and more excellent kind. I told you before, that the soul's communion with God is imperfect in this life; and therefore it must needs follow, that it cannot satisfy; that is, not terminate and fill up the desires of it. Communion with God is maintain-

ed by faith and love, (as you have heard,) which proves it to be very sweet; but it also admits of hope, which proves it to be not satisfactory: for where there is yet any place left for hope, there is no full or satisfactory enjoyment. This may serve as a certain mark whereby to judge of the truth of that communion with God; it is not glutting to the soul, but will certainly manifest itself in incessant hungerings; *inter opes inops*, the soul is in the midst of plenty, and yet cries out as if it were ready to starve for want. When I consider the temper of some who claim to be perfect, who decry duties and ordinances, as low and unprofitable rudiments, and boast of their full and perfect attainments, to which there can be no addition, and compare it with the temper of the great apostle, who did not reckon that he had attained, but still followed after, that he might apprehend; who forgot the things that were behind, and reached forth unto those things that were before, pressing towards the mark, &c. *Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14.* I am ready to cry out, *Aut hic non est apostolus, aut hi non sunt apostolici;* [Either he is not an apostle, or they are not apostolic.] but an apostle he was, and had very intimate communion with his Lord: and therefore, I confess, I cannot allow these men so high a place in my opinion, as they have in their own. God is infinite, and therefore though the soul may be ever grasping, yet it can never comprehend; and yet the soul finds him to be infinitely good, and so cannot cease grasping at him. The godly soul sees that there is yet much more to be enjoyed of God, and in him; and therefore, though it be

very near to him, yet cries out and complains of its distance from him, O when shall I come and appear before him! Though it be united to him, yet it longs to be yet more one with him still, to be in a closer conjunction. The godly soul forgets, with Paul, what it hath received, not through disingenuity or unthankfulness, but through an holy ardour and covetousness; all that he hath of God seems little, because there is yet so much to be had. Though the godly soul drinks of the fountain, yet that is not enough, it would lie down by it; though it do lie down by it, yet so it is not satisfied neither, except it may bathe itself, and even be swallowed up therein. Behold a paradox! the godly soul is most thirsty, though, according to Christ's promise, it thirsts no more: it is most restless, though, according to his promise, it has rest. It is proper to God alone to rest in his love; for the creature cannot, in this imperfect state: by this we know, that we are not yet in heaven; for it is a state of perfect rest, not sloth, or cessation, but satisfaction. Faith is the fever of the soul, rendering it more thirsty, by how much the more it drinks of the water of life; the living streams that flow from the throne of God and of the Lamb. As the waters of the sanctuary are described by the prophet, growing deeper, and deeper, *Ezek. xlvii. 3, 4, 5.* so hope, which is the soul's appetite, grows larger and larger, and cannot be satisfied till the soul's capacity be filled.

COMMUNION WITH THE DEITY.

PART II.

1 JOHN 1. 3.

Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

THE doctrinal part of this subject being now briefly dispatched, it will be easy to infer some things by way of corollary.

1st, "All wicked men are strangers to God." We know indeed that God, according to his infinite essence, is present with all his creatures: not only men, but even devils too, have their being in him; he hath spread his omnipotence, as the foundation whereupon the whole creation doth stand; he reared up the world in himself, and in him it doth subsist at this day. However angels and men had sadly fallen from God, yet they may be truly said to live in him still; and although all wicked souls wander from God, as to their dispositions and affections, ingrafting themselves into another stock by sin and wickedness, yet they cannot possibly wander from him as to their subsistence, as the apostle teaches the Athenian Philosophers, Acts xvii. 27. *He is not far from every one of us, though few feel after him or find him.* And it may be truly said,

in some sense, that all the creatures, yea, the very worst of them, have a communion with God; all partake of him; no creature hath any thing of its own really distinct from him. Every thing that hath a being hath a relation to that infinite and supreme Being; and every living thing may be rightly said to have communion with him who is life itself. And all those several excellencies that are in the creatures are effluxes from God, who hath impressed various prints of his own beauty and perfection upon every thing that he hath made. God's making of a thing is no other than the communicating of himself thereunto. And therefore when you look into the world, do not view any creature in the narrow point of its own being, but in the unbounded essence of God, and therein love and admire it. But upon the immortal soul of man, God hath copied out his divine perfections more clearly and gloriously than upon any other creature in this world. God could not make a rational soul, without communicating his own infinite wisdom, life, and freedom unto it: so that there is more of the divine nature to be seen in the understanding and will of any one man, than in the whole fabric of heaven and earth.

Notwithstanding this, wicked men are strangers to God. They live and move in God indeed, but they know it not, they consider it not, they act as if they had no dependence upon him, no relation to him. Though they have some kind of communion with God, as creatures, yet this makes them not at all happy: for they are departed from God in their affections and dispo-

sitions, they have degenerated from that subserviency and subordination to the divine will, which is the proper perfection of the creature, and are *alienated from the life of God*, as the apostle speaks, *Eph. iv. 10.* It is not the soul's moving *in* God, that makes it truly and happily nigh unto him, but its moving *towards* God as the chief object, and according to the will of God as the chief rule; and therefore wicked men, who pitch upon other objects, and walk by other laws, even by the lusts and ordinances of their own flesh and fancy, are properly strangers to God, and miserable. He is not properly said to know God, who hath a notion of him formed in his head only; but he whose heart and will are moulded into a conformity to God, and to delight in him; so that a wicked man, though he know and believe, and tremble, as much as any of the devils, yet not loving nor delighting in God as his chief good, not being conformed to his image as the highest and purest perfection, may be truly said to be estranged from him; which is a state of hell, and death, and darkness. This is the man who, though not in words, yet interpretatively and really, saith unto God, *Depart from me, I desire not the knowledge of thy ways*, with them in *Job xxi. 14.* Sinners really exempt themselves from the dominion of Christ, and do really, though not audibly, say with them in the gospel, *Luke xix. 14. We will not have this man to reign over us.* However men pretend, and boast of their relation to, and acquaintance with God, certainly all that live a mere sensual life, not conformed to the image of God, are truly said to be strangers to him, and without communion with him, *1 John i. 6. 2 Cor. vi. 14.*

2. "The life of a true Christian is the highest and most noble life in the world; it exceeds the life of all other men, even of the greatest men. The character that is here given of the godly man is the highest that can be given of man, or indeed of any creature. It is the highest glory and excellency of the creature to partake of the life of God, of the perfections of the Creator; and such is the description that the Spirit of God here makes of the godly man. What an unreasonable and senseless reproach is that which this wicked world doth cast upon religion, calling it a low and despicable thing; and upon religious and godly men, calling them low-spirited, mean people! Can a man be better spirited than when he has the Spirit of God? Can any thing more truly ennoble a soul than a divine nature? Can a man be raised any higher than to heaven itself? So noble is the godly soul, *Prov. xv. 24. The way of life is above to the wise*; and consequently all wicked men lead a low life, and are bound under chains of death and darkness: the righteous man is of a high and divine origin, born of God, born from above; and therefore is more excellent than his neighbour, than any of his neighbours, even a king himself being judge, *Prov. xii. 26.* What wicked baseness is that sinful gallantry of spirit; what a brutishness is that sensuality of living, which the degenerate sons of Adam do so much magnify! True goodness and excellency of spirit must be measured by the proportion that it bears to the supreme good, the infinite pattern of all perfection. What excellent persons were those renowned saints of old, of whom the apos-

He says, that *the world was not worthy*, Heb. xi. 38, however they were thought *not worthy to live in the world*. What a noble and generous spirit of true Christian valour, patience, meekness, contempt of the world, and self-denial, was that which was to be seen in the blessed apostles, though they were esteemed as the filth and sweepings of the world, the *off-scouring of all things*? To which of the noble, wise, mighty men of the world, as such, did God ever say, "These are the men that have fellowship with me: these are the men that lead a noble and divine life?" No, no, *not many noble are called*; and when they are called, they are made more noble than ever they were by birth or descent, by places of preferment or command. The life of every wicked man, of what rank or station soever he be in the world, is but a low life, a life in most things common to the very beasts with him. If the chief of his business and delight be to eat, and drink, and sleep, and enjoy sensual pleasures, what doth he, what enjoyeth he more than *the beasts that perish*? But the life of the meanest soul, that hath true and spiritual communion with God, is a life common to him with the blessed angels, those *sons of the morning*, the flower of the whole creation. That life which hath self for its centre, must needs be a penurious and indeed a painful life: for how can the soul of man possibly feed to the full upon such spare diet, such scant fare as it finds at home? Nay, indeed, how can it choose but be in pain and torture whilst it lays out itself upon a self-sufficiency, or creature-fulness, which is not at all commensurate to it? But

the soul that rightly lays out and spends all its faculties upon the infinite and blessed God, finds all its capacities completely filled with that fountain of goodness, and itself perfectly matched with a suitable and satisfactory object. This is the true and only nobleness of spirit, when all powers and faculties of this immortal soul are exalted and advanced into a true and vital sympathy and communion with the chief Good, formed according to his will, conformed to his image.

And O that wisdom might be more *justified of her children!* O that the life of God did but clearly manifest itself, and shine forth in the lives of them that call themselves godly! Alas, that ever God himself should suffer reproach by reason of the low-spiritedness and laziness of his servants! For this cause is religion evil spoken of; the Lord awake and enable us to express and show forth the divine life with all power and vigour, to live as high as the calling where-with we are called, and so roll away this reproach!

3dly, "The life of a Christian is not a heavy sluggish thing, but active and vigorous," as the phrase, communion with God, imports. Religion is a communication of life and vigour from him who is life itself; which makes the truly god-like soul to be quick and powerful in its motions. Every thing is by so much the swifter and stronger in its motions, by how much the nearer it is to its centre, as philosophy tells us. Certainly the nearer any man is to God, who is the centre of souls, so much the more does he covet after more intimate communion with him,

and the more eagerly lay hold upon him. Communion does necessarily imply reaction or reflection: the soul that receives of God, and his fullness, will certainly be returning itself into him again. Communion, in the very force of the phrase, implies a mutuality; we cannot suppose a soul partaking of God, but it must needs mutually render up itself to him again. There can be no commerce nor correspondence without returns: but what return can the godly soul make unto God? Why, it renders up its whole soul unto him. Faith is a giving grace as well as receiving; it gives the soul back to Christ, as well as takes Christ into the soul; it receives strength and grace from God, and reciprocally spends the same, and the whole powers of the soul upon him. The happiness of a godly soul doth not consist in cessation and rest; the soul itself being a powerful and active being; the happiness of it, the very rest of it, must also be active and vigorous. Where there is communion there must needs be quick and lively returns, reciprocations, reflections, and correspondencies; the drawings of God are answered with the soul's running, *Cant. i. 14.* The motion of Christ's fingers begets a motion in the Christian's soul, *Cant. v. 4.* *My Beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him.* These are the divine and harmonious responses which are made and maintained in the godly soul, the temple of the living God. O shake off that lazy and drowsy spirit, which hath so benumbed many in this cold and stupid age of the world; work out your salvation with care and diligence! If

your religion be nothing but a spiritual kind of sleep, your heaven will prove to be nothing but a pleasant kind of dream.

Communion with God speaks something divine, active, vigorous. The life of a Christian doth not consist only in cessation from evil, reformation of sin, or dying thereunto; mortification is but one part of regeneration. It is the opinion, and, I suspect, the deceit of many nominal Christians, that if they can but keep up an indifferent, even spirit and conversation, free from gross and scandalous sins from day to day, they are happy enough; their utmost ambition is to be innocent and harmless. This indeed is necessary and praise-worthy; but surely the happiness of a soul lies higher: thus happy are all the creatures that keep in the station, and keep up the order prescribed them of God: thus happy is the sun in the firmament, running its race continually, and never departing from the office which is assigned to it. But the soul of man is capable of a higher kind of happiness, viz. communion with God; which is, when the faculties thereof being awakened, refined, and actuated by the Spirit of God, do reciprocally act, and spend themselves upon him, longing to be perfectly swallowed up in him, and to be all that which God himself is, as far as the creature is capable of drinking in the perfections of the Creator, and becoming one with his Maker. This is that truly noble and divine life, which is here called communion with God, which the high-spirited and generous soul labours yet more and more to be growing up into, and perfected in.

Keep yourselves, with David, from your iniquities; it is something to be freed from the guilt and power of sin; but there is something higher than this, a more excellent attainment, a more divine accomplishment; go on therefore with the same David, and aspire after this pure and blissful state, this heaven upon earth, waiting for the more ample and glorious manifestations of God to you and in you, more than they that watch for the morning, as he did, *Ps. cxxx. 6.* This inference was drawn only for instruction, but the sweetness and necessity of the subject induces me to turn it into an earnest exhortation, from which I would not prevent myself. Therefore I proceed to improve this doctrine, by way of conviction or reprehension.

1. If our fellowship *is*, that is, now exists, it reproves them that can take up with a *shall be*, a heaven to come. I am now speaking, not to the worst of men, whose very souls are swallowed up in sensual enjoyments, and imprisoned in their senses: for these men either think of no heaven at all, or else they place their heaven and happiness in the enjoyment of themselves or of the creature. Nor yet do I speak to those men who, being persuaded of a future state, do indeed wish for a heaven to come, but then it is a poor kind of low and earthly heaven, consisting in ease, rest, safety, freedom from troubles or torments, which is the best happiness that most men understand, the highest heaven that any carnal mind can see or soar after. But I am speaking to a better and finer sort of souls than these, that verily possess a sense of a pure and

spiritual heaven in the world to come; yea, they are so overpowered with the foresight of it, as earnestly to expect and wish for it; yet, the hopes of it sustain and strengthen their hearts under the many temptations and persecutions of this present world; they are so really persuaded of the truth of it, and of their own title to it too, that they are content to endure this long and disconsolate night of dimness, and anguish, and frightfulness, merely in expectation of the dawning of that day, that clear and bright day of their glorious and everlasting redemption. And in this I am far from blaming them, nay, I must needs commend their magnanimous faith and self-denial. But, in the mean time, they dwell too much upon heaven as a future state, and comfort themselves only in a happiness to come, not longing and labouring to find a heaven opened within themselves, a beginning of eternal bliss brought into themselves; they are too well contented with a certain reversion, and do not eagerly enough endeavour to obtain a present possession, to be actually instated in so much of the inheritance of souls as may fall to their share even in this lower world; this slothful temper and inactivity I do condemn wherever it is found; though it be in my own soul. Every thing in the world, by a natural principle, thirsts after its proper rest, and a happiness suitable to the nature of it: no creature can be contented, though it may be constrained, to be at a distance from its centre, but it is still carried out towards its own perfection. And why then should a godly soul, who is God's only new creature in the

world, be contented with a state of imperfection? Why should not the saint as eagerly covet, and as earnestly pursue the most intimate and close communion and conjunction with his God, as they do with their respective centres? Can any earthly, sensual man be contented with an inheritance in reversion, so as to suspend his seeking and following of the world till some future time? Can any ambitious spirit, who places his chief happiness and contentment in popular estimation, and worldly greatness, be contented to stand gazing at preferments; will he be willing to sit still, and wait till they offer themselves to him? No, no, there is a raging thirst in the soul, which will not suffer it to be at rest, but is still awakening and provoking all the powers of the whole man, till they arise and obtain water to quench it. And therefore we read of men making haste to be rich, *Prov. xxviii. 22.* and hastening after another god, *Ps. xvi. 4.* which eager and ardent passions towards earthly objects, you may see lively described in the Bible in the instance of Ahab, Amnon, and Haman. And is there any reason to be given, why that new nature and divine principle, which God putteth into regenerate souls, should not carry them as hastily and as forcibly to a present fruition of their proper object and happiness, (so far as at present it may be enjoyed) as that corrupt and degenerated nature doth hurry on them in whom it ruleth, towards the satisfaction of their base lusts? Divines speak sometimes of making heaven and eternal life present to themselves, and say that this is the work of faith; which is a high and

excellent doctrine, but, I suspect, not thoroughly understood by ordinary Christians. To make heaven present to one's self, is not only to insist upon a state of future happiness in frequent meditations, to think much of it, neither is this that noble employment of saving faith: but the life and power of faith is most eminently exerted in imbibing participations of life and grace from Christ, and in a real bringing down of God and heaven into the soul. The truth is, heaven is a state of perfect communion with God, a state of love, joy, peace, purity, freedom; and as far as any soul is in such a state upon earth, so far it is above the earth, and may be said to be in heaven. Therefore a right active soul, that truly understands its proper and spiritual heaven and happiness, so far as it is thus active and sensible, cannot be contented to stay for all its happiness till the world to come; cannot be contented to be unhappy, no not for an hour, but is still growing up in God, and springing up into everlasting life, *John iv. 14.*

2. This subject reprehends them that make a stir about the kingdom of Christ in the world, and men's being brought into the communion of the church, but who advance not his kingdom in their own souls, nor long to have their own souls advanced into that noble state of communion with *the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* There is, doubtless, a generation of such popular Christians, who being strangers to the life, and power, and spirit of true religion, endeavour to exhibit themselves to the world, and commend themselves to the charity of their brethren, by a

pretended zeal for the kingdom of Christ in the world, and the glorious manifestation of it, as they say. I know indeed that it is worth the cares and prayers, and utmost diligence of every serious Christian, to spread and propagate the knowledge of the Gospel, to diffuse the ointment of Christ's name far and near. A more pure and spiritual administration of all Gospel ordinances throughout the world is highly desirable; yea, and I think an indifferent and careless disposition towards the worship of God, argues much of an earthly and atheistical mind. But I fear, that the kingdom of Christ, and those glorious manifestations and discoveries which are so much pretended to by many, if they should be thoroughly examined, would be, at length resolved into nothing else but the advancement of some one party or interest above all the rest, or the exchanging of an old form and dress of religion for a new one; and that this zeal would be found little better than the blazings of self-love, a fire kindled not by a coal from the altar, but by a spark of their own. But, be it so, that this disposition of their's is sincere and spiritual; should not their charity begin at home? The most proper kingdom of Christ is that whereby he ruleth in the hearts of men; the most excellent worship is when the soul itself becomes a temple for the living God to dwell in, and to receive and reflect the manifestations of his glory, when a fire of divine love is kindled in it, and therein it doth offer up, not bulls and goats, no, nor so much prayers and meditations, as indeed itself unto God, which is a reasonable service, as the

apostle speaks, far more glorious than either the Mosaic or evangelical dispensation, if you consider it in the letter only. Whatever men may pretend, no man can be truly and rightly studious of the advancement of the kingdom of God in the world, that hath not first felt the mighty power, and blessed effects of it in his own soul. Communion with the church is only so far to be valued, as it lies in order to a real and spiritual communion with God; which communion with God, if we do indeed sincerely wish to others, we shall more abundantly labour to promote in ourselves. I cannot believe that he doth heartily seek the happiness of others, who himself sits still, and is content to be miserable, especially when their happiness and his is one and the same.

3. It condemns them as not Christians, whose fellowship is only with their fellow creatures. We have seen that it is the character, the distinguishing character of a godly man, to have fellowship with God; it must needs follow then, that those degenerate souls that rise no higher than the world, that converse only with self or any other creature, are verily strangers to true Christianity, whatever their confidence or presumption may be. Christians, tell me not what you profess of Christ, what you believe of the Gospel, to what orthodox opinions you hold, or honest party you side with, how many and specious duties you perform, no, nor what hopes or wishes you have of going to heaven; but tell me where is your principal communion; what do you principally mind, follow, converse with; to

what pattern do you conform; by which rule do you live; at what object do you ultimately aim? The whole world of ungodly men doth hasten after another God, as the psalmist's phrase is, though not all after the same god; they spend their souls indeed on various objects, and use different methods to obtain rest; but yet all their happiness and contentment are ultimately resolved into creature communion. That dreadful sentence, that the apostle delivers universally concerning all men, is to be limited to all wicked men only; and of them it is undoubtedly true, Phil. ii. 21. *All seek their own, and none the things of Jesus Christ*; and of all these the psalmist's *many* is to be understood, Ps. iv. 6. *There be many that say, who will show us any good?* i. e. any creature-good, as the words following do explain it. All unregenerate souls are bound up in the creature, some creature or other; and therefore the noblest of them, whatever boasts they may make, are low and ignoble; their main converse is but with their fellow creatures, and indeed creatures much inferior to themselves, *corn and wine*, says the psalmist, *earthly things*, says the apostle, Phil. iii. 19. *Who mind earthly things*. In a word, though it be true, as the apostle says in one place, that all men in the world do live in God, *Acts xvii. 28*. yet it is also true, that most men, as the same apostle speaks elsewhere, do live *without God in the world*, have their hearts fastened down to one creature or other, and so fall short of this honourable character which the apostle here gives of godly men; *Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*.

I shall close the remainder of this discourse with an humble request and earnest expostulation.

“Reckon not on any happiness short of this communion.” There are many things which a Christian may take as comforts; but only one, this one, that he ought to take as the happiness of this life. I design not to say any thing to the prejudice of natural or civil ornaments or accomplishments, much less to the disparagement of any of those endowments or employments, which are, in a sense, spiritual, commonly called gifts and duties; but I confess, I wonder that such a noble and intelligent being as the soul of man should attend to, and pursue after things either extrinsical or inferior to itself, and in the meantime carelessly forget, or wilfully reject its main happiness, principal end, and proper perfection. As for those sensual persons, those mere animals, whose souls are incarnate in their senses, and seem to perform no higher office in the world than the souls of beasts, that is, to carry about their bodies, who value themselves by their bodies, or, which is baser, by the apparel that clothes them, or the estates that feed them, I shall not now trouble myself about them, but leave them to be chastised by Seneca or Plutarch, or indeed any ordinary heathen philosopher.

I shall rather apply myself to a sort of high-spirited people, whom by a condescension of charity, we call Christians, who, valuing themselves by external professions, privileges, performances, may indeed be said to be somewhat more

scrupulous and curious, but no less mistaken than the former; for if the grosser sort of sensualists deny and professedly abjure their own reason, and the finer sort of hypocrites more cunningly bribe their's, each method amounts to more than a cheat, and both parties will be alike miserable, only the latter will be somewhat more tormented in missing of a happiness for which he looked and hoped. It does not suit my present discourse, to speak so highly and honourable of these externals of Christianity, nor to press them so zealously, as I do at all times when I have occasion; for I do verily value all ordinances of Christ, and duties of God's worship at a high rate; nay, I know not any serious and truly godly soul in the world, who is not of the same profession with me; but I must confess, I think it is one of the greatest and most pernicious cheats in the world, for men to feed on the dish instead of the meat; to place their happiness in those things which God hath only appointed to be means to convey it.

This was the great destruction of the Jewish church; by this they perished; thus they are every where described in Scripture, as a people resting in their privileges and performances, boasting of their sacrifices and temple service; they expected a strange kind of flesh-pleasing heaven, something distinct from them, and reserved for them, to be given them by way of reward for the righteousness which they themselves had wrought by the power of their own free will; (which free will, they say is an effect of man's fall, but they make it a cause of man's rise;

for now he can purchase and merit a happiness, which happiness is also more illustrious than that given of mere grace;) which righteousness, if we look either into their own writings, or God's writings concerning them, we shall find was nothing else but a strict observance of the precepts of the law, according to the letter and external dispensation of it. Such a low and legal spirit was generally found among the Jews; I wish the greatest part of us, who are in profession and name evangelical, may not be found as truly legal in spirit and temper as they were. If we cry, the Gospel of Christ, the Gospel of Christ, with the same spirit as they cried, *the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord*; our confidence will as surely betray us into final misery as their's did. True, indeed, prayers, sacraments, sermons, are finer sounding words than the old obsolete ones, the law, sacrifices, ceremonies; but, alas! they are but words; at least they are not gods, of course, no more fit to terminate our devotions and affections than these. I beseech you, therefore, Christians, be not mistaken in this matter. True Christianity is not a notion but a nature; that is not religion which is treasured up in books, or laid up in men's understandings; but it is laid in the very constitution of the soul; it is a new principle implanted by God in the highest powers of the soul, refining and spiritualizing all the faculties thereof, and rendering them as like to God himself, as a creature can resemble its Creator.

It is a truth as clear as the sun, that nothing can make a soul truly happy but what is wrought into the nature of it; which must be something

more excellent than itself, and can be nothing less than divine, even the image of the blessed God. If you be Christians in deed and in truth, value all the ordinances of God, and the duties of the Christian religion, but value not yourselves or your happiness by these; attend upon them all for maintaining and increasing real fellowship with God; for though these are not it, yet they are the way wherein it pleases God to give it; drink the sincere milk of the word, but let it be only with a holy design of growing thereby, of growing up into God, and a divine life. Away with those low and base thoughts of happiness; the happiness of a soul is a high and excellent, indeed a divine thing; it is in some sense common to God and the soul; God is happy in himself alone, and the soul can be happy only in him. What contentment, what real happiness, Christian, can the rising of thy party in the world, or the rising of thy name in the country bring thee, if, in the mean time, thou thyself harbourest any carnal will or self-interest that doth rise up in opposition to the pure and perfect will and nature of God? How art thou happy in thy prayers, if thou cast sin out with thy mouth, and also in the mean time a fountain of iniquity be springing up in thy heart? What avails it towards a state of perfection to be of the most orthodox opinions, the most honorable society, the fairest profession, the most popular and sanctimonious form, or the most plausible performances, if the soul is in the mean time alienated from the life of God, and feeds upon some earthly trash or other, which destroys the native powers and vigour of it, and

keeps it under a perpetual languour? As much as a silken stocking on a broken leg; or a princely diadem on an aching head, avails towards a state of ease and soundness of body. Let nothing limit your ambition but a state of god-like perfection; let nothing set bounds to your loving and longing souls, but a real fruition of God himself; nay, let not that bound them neither; but the more you enjoy, see, and taste, the more let your love be strengthened; after the manner of fire, which, the more it is fed, the more hungry and devouring it grows. In a word, let nothing satisfy you but the highest character that can be given of mortal man, to be men *after God's own heart*, to have God dwelling in you, to be filled with his fulness, to have this real and excellent *communion with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*. To whom be all honour, praise, and glory, for ever and ever! *Amen.*

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

THE Rt. Rev. THOMAS BARLOW, bishop of Lincoln, who is said to have been a great reader, and very good judge of books, as well as considerable casuist, having perused the True Christian's Test, wrote to Mr. SHAW a very respectful letter, in which he stated that he had read all his book, and some parts of it more than once, with great satisfaction and benefit; for, he adds, in your meditations of your love of God and the world, I am neither afraid nor unwilling to confess it, and make you my confessor, you have instructed me in several things which I knew not before, or considered not so seriously and so often as I might and ought.

The Rev. JOB ORTON. I wish this book was re-printed. It is a most serious, useful and entertaining book, short chapters, and many excellent stories, and references to the Classics.

Mr. SHAW's Welcome to the Plague, and his Immanuel, saith Dr. WILLIAMS, of London, in his Appendix to his Preacher, have been often re-printed, and are deservedly in high estimation. The latter treats with much depth and unction of the divine life in the soul.

Being requested to give our opinion respecting the religious discourses of the Rev. SAMUEL SHAW, we would state, that we have for several years possessed the principal volume of his works, and have often perused particular parts of them, and that, in our opinion, his writings contain more than an ordinary spirit of practical and experimental piety, and cannot be attentively read without profit to eve-

Recommendations.

ry serious mind. We rejoice sincerely in the prospect of their re-publication in this country, and believe the publisher will do a real service to the cause of religion by printing and circulating a large edition. The price at which the volumes are proposed is reasonable, and places them within the reach of the great body of Christians among us. We wish the undertaking entire success.

Theol. Seminary.

MOSES STUART, D. D.

Assoc. Prof. Sacred Literature.

JAMES MURDOCK, D. D.

Brown Prof. Sac. Rhetoric.

With the above recommendations I cheerfully concur.

Rev. JOHN CODMAN.

So far as our knowledge of SHAW's writings extends, we perfectly coincide with the opinion above expressed, and most heartily wish success to the publisher.

LEONARD WOODS, D. D.

Abbot Prof. Christian Theology.

EBENEZER PORTER, D. D.

Bartlet Prof. Sac. Rhetoric.

THOMAS BALDWIN, D. D.

EDWARD D. GRIFFIN, D. D.

Rev. SERENO E. DWIGHT.

JAMES WILSON, D. D.

We have read the Rev. SAMUEL SHAW's Welcome to the Plague; his Angelical Life; his Communion with the Deity; his Farewell to Life, and his Immanuel. With respect to experimental religion, we know of no writings which are more edifying and animating. We can recommend them as writings worthy the attention of all real Christians, and in many respects instructive and useful.

ASA BURTON, D. D.

SETH PAYSON, D. D.

In the above recommendations I cordially concur.

Rev. DANIEL SHARP.

Recommendations.

We have read the several discourses last mentioned of the venerable SAMUEL SHAW, and judging by what they so edifyingly state and exhibit of genuine religion, have no hesitation in expressing our earnest wish, that the whole of his works above proposed may be re-published.

JOSEPH DANA, D. D.

DANIEL DANA, D. D.

SAMUEL WORCESTER, D. D.

New-York, March 1821. We entertain a high opinion of the writings of the Rev. SAMUEL SHAW, and most cheerfully recommend them to the Christian community.

JOHN B. ROMEYN, D. D.

GARDINER SPRING, D. D.

Rev. R. B. E. M'LEOD.

We have read portions of the Immanuel, and other pieces of the Rev. SAMUEL SHAW. They contain intimate views of experimental and practical religion; and are adapted by their serious and affectionate strain, and warmth, and power of expression, to edify and quicken devout readers, and make an impression on the careless.

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ELIJAH PARISH, D. D.

Our acquaintance with the writings of the Rev. SAMUEL SHAW, that eminently pious and devoted minister of CHRIST, is chiefly confined to his *Welcome to the Plague*, and his *Immanuel*. These, however, we esteem so highly that we can have no doubt of the useful tendency of all his works, and rejoice that an American edition of the whole is intended.

SAMUEL MILLER, D. D.

JEDIDIAH MORSE, D. D.

Rev. BROWN EMERSON.

Recommendations.

With the writings of the Rev. Mr. SHAW, generally, I am not acquainted. His Immanuel I have read with much satisfaction; and judging of the tenour of his whole works from this interesting specimen, I rejoice in the prospect of their re-publication, and recommend them to the patronage of all my friends.

WILLIAM STOUGHTON, D. D.

Philadelphia, Aug. 30, 1820.

We can with much pleasure recommend to the Christian public the works of the Rev. SAMUEL SHAW; and are well persuaded that you will do an interesting service to the Church of our Lord JESUS, by publishing an edition which shall contain the whole which he has written. His productions are greatly esteemed in Great Britain, and must be so wherever they are known. They present us with principles which afford support under the severest trials, and which supported the author amidst the desolations of the church in the period in which he lived.

SAMUEL BLATCHFORD, D. D.

Lansingburgh, Feb. 1, 1821.

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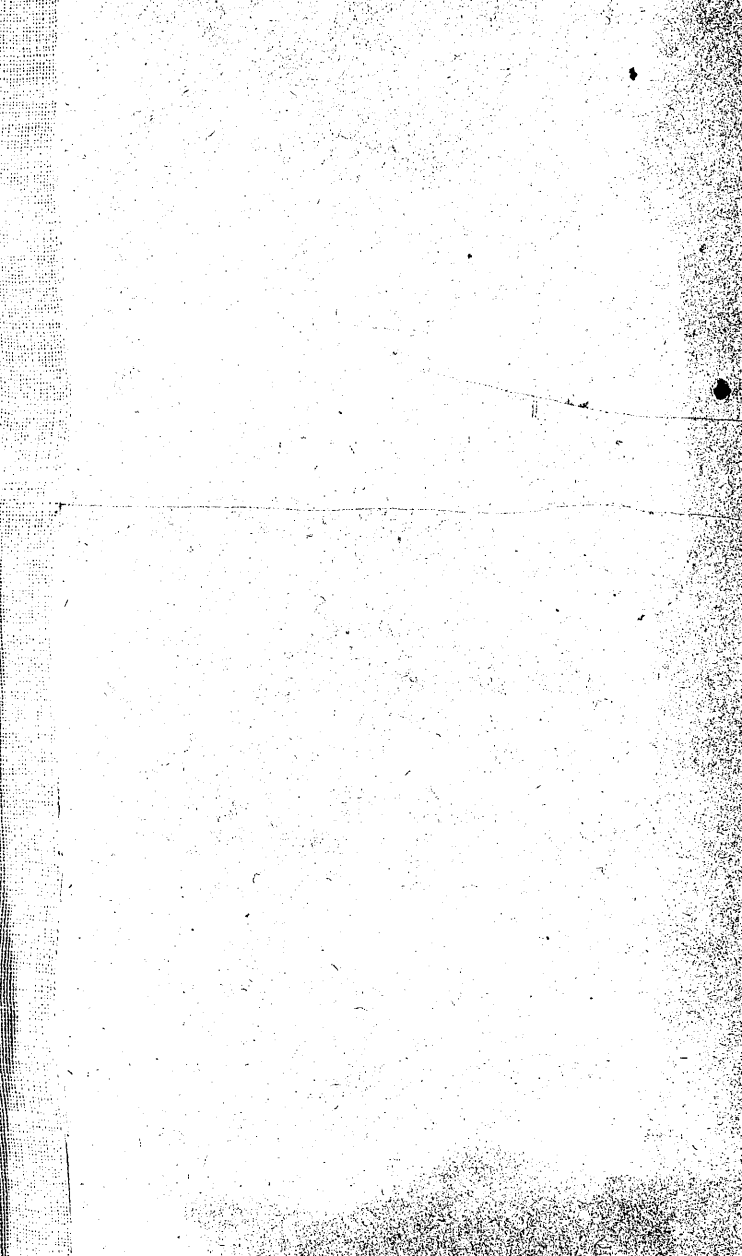
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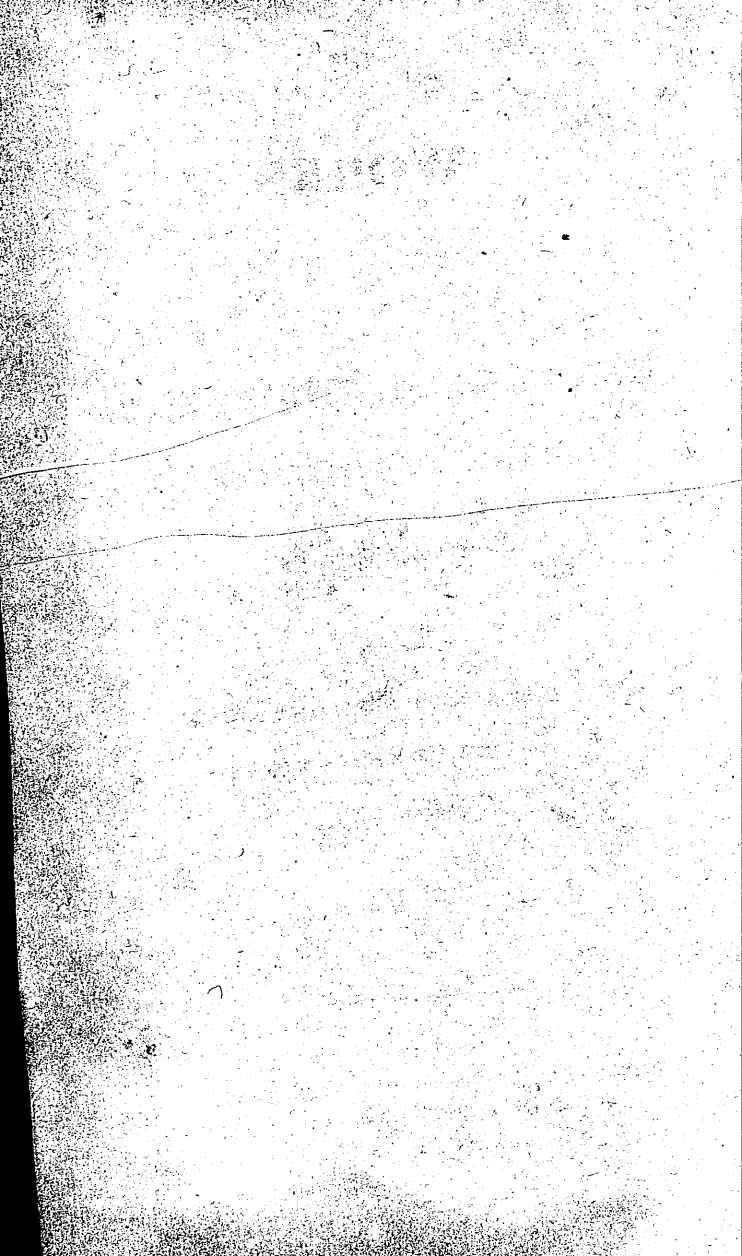
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BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the twenty-sixth day of July, A. D. 1820, in the forty-fifth of the independence of the United States of America, DANIEL OLIVER, of the said District, has deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words following, *to wit*: "The Works of Rev. Samuel Shaw, M. A. Minister of the Gospel in London. In two volumes. First American, from the English editions, corrected and improved. Vol. I."

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Non dubium est quam illud magis amemus quod anteponimus.

SALV.

In so saying thou reprovest us also.

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry should be supported by a valid receipt or invoice. The second part outlines the procedures for handling discrepancies and errors, including the steps to be taken when a mistake is identified. The third part provides a detailed breakdown of the financial data, including a summary of the total income and expenses for the period. The final part concludes with a statement of the overall financial health and a recommendation for future actions.

To the Right Honourable THEOPHILUS, Earl of
Huntingdon, Lord Hastings, Hungerford, Bot-
reaux, Molyns, and Moyls.

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

WHEN men are once firmly persuaded of the certainty of another world, and do verily believe the doctrine of eternal life revealed in the holy Scriptures of God; there is all reason in the world, methinks, to conclude, that the first inquiry should be, How they themselves shall become partakers of it? For who can be imagined to be sincere in this belief of so glorious and blissful a state, who takes no thoughts how he shall obtain it, or not so many thoughts as what he shall eat and drink, and put on; who sits down contented, having given himself that cold answer which was given to the mother of Zebedee's children, *It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared?* Therefore to justify the sincerity of their belief, most men do fancy to themselves something or other that will entitle them to this happiness; though not so much perhaps because they account it so blessed a thing to obtain, as dangerous and shameful to miss it.

Among the many particulars that they do imagine will give them a claim to everlasting life, *the love of God* is one of the greatest, and as much pretended to as any. It is so universal a plea, that I scarce think there is any man who calls himself a Christian, but he will make it. Not to love God sounds so ill, that it makes the ears of the most profligate Christian to tingle, when it is charged upon him. But notwithstanding all these pretences to the love of God, it is most evident that a great part of the pretenders are indeed strangers to it; inasmuch as they may be convicted of *the love of the world*, which is inconsistent with it. To find out and cast out therefore the love of the world must needs be the most important inquiry and endeavour of man, of every man in the world.

Your Lordship will easily believe me, if I tell you, that although men be ever so great and high in the world, if the world be great and high in their hearts, the love of God is not in them. Although men have ever so much of this world's good, if at the same time they be unmerciful and uncharitable, the love of God dwells not in them. This is expressly the doctrine of the apostle James.

But to speak a little closer, though a man be instructed in all wisdom, and furnished with all variety of arts and sciences, that he can name all things as properly as Adam, or discourse of their natures as learnedly as Solomon; if yet the love of the world be predominant in him, he is but a vain pretender to the kingdom of heaven, a great stranger to the life of angels. Though a man know and believe all the wonderful doctrines delivered in the Holy Book, if this faith do not operate to the purifying of the heart from the love of the world, he is at present as far from having a true title to the kingdom of heaven, as they of whom the apostle gives this character, That they *believe and tremble*. In a word, although a man be a member of the purest and most reformed church, be ever so orthodox in his judgment, ever so constant and specious in external acts of worship, ever so even and blameless in his conversation, ever so exact in works of righteousness, and abundant in works of charity and mercy, if yet in his heart he prefer the world before God, he will be interpreted a lover of the world, and consequently an enemy of the Father.

I do verily believe, my Lord, that I do here present you with a treatise written about the most important inquiry in the world. They are Morning Meditations; stolen from the ordinary employment of my life; which I do present to the world, merely to advance the love and honour of God among men, and do dedicate to your Lordship in a grateful acknowledgment of your kind respects to me; and in testimony of the honour that I bear to your Lordship's good design of promoting piety, and establishing peace in this nation. I beseech your Lordship favourably to accept the oblation, and I heartily pray God, that as his providence hath made you *Κεράτιος* (very illustrious among the English families) so by his grace you may ever approve yourself *Tam re quam nomine Θεόφιλος*, [A Theophilus, a "friend of God," as much in reality, as in name.] Oh how blessed and honourable a thing will it be found, sooner or later, to be a sincere and ardent lover of God! To his grace and guidance I heartily recommend your Lordship, and rest,

My Lord,

Your Honour's most humble servant,

SAMUEL SHAW.

To the Right Honourable THOMAS, Earl of Stamford, Lord Gray, of Grooby.

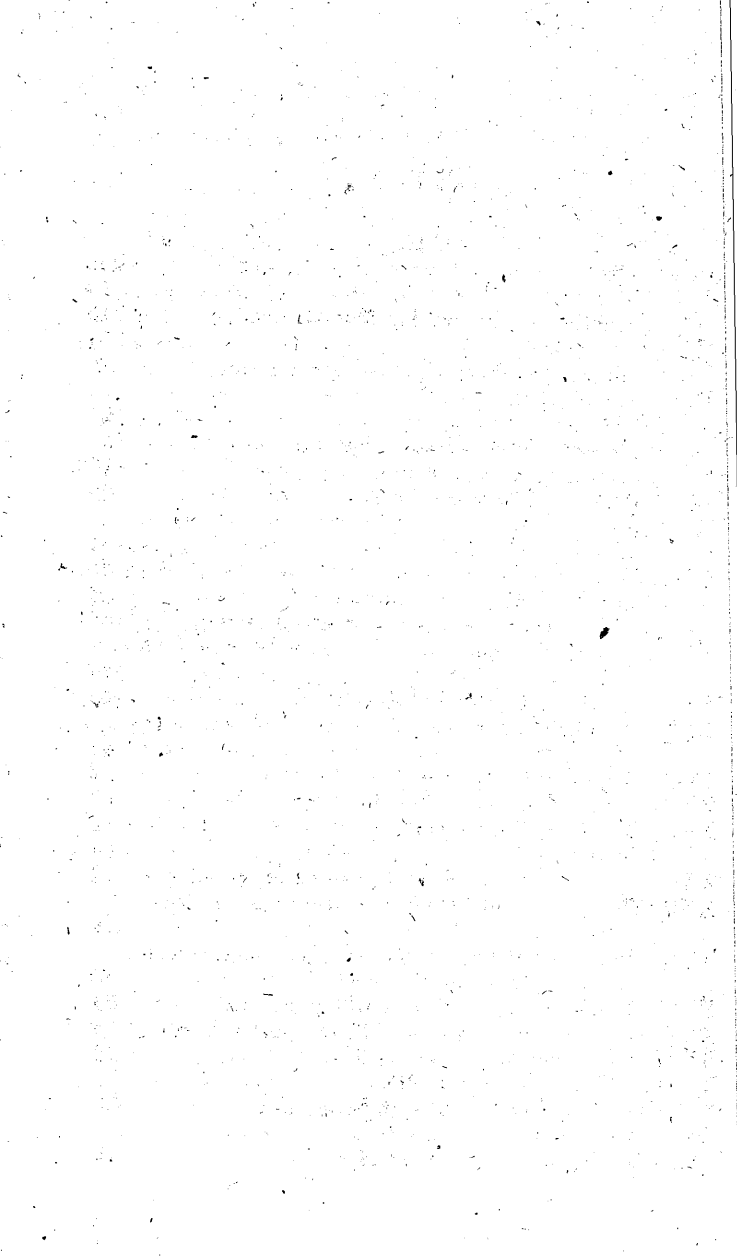
MY LORD,

I HAVE little more to recommend me to your Lordship, than that I am your countryman and neighbour; which yet is a relation that your singular humility and affability is not wont to despise, though in a person otherwise despicable enough. But your Lordship's love of, and great desire to serve the interest of your country, does recommend you abundantly to the world, and does tempt me to speak of it in this dedication.

My Lord, I intend not a panegyric of your Lordship, which they who are actuated by a worldly spirit, and design worldly advantages, may think worth their while to contrive. May your praise be of God, and not of men! And of God I am sure your praise will be, if you be a predominant lover of him. I beseech your Lordship to strip yourself of all your worldly quality but an hour or two, whilst you peruse the black characters of a lover of the world, and the just motives to the love of God; and then, (whatever exceptions learned, or witty, or worldly men may make against these Meditations, which I believe will be many,) if you do not judiciously account the love of God to be the highest honour and purest happiness of man, I will be content (how loth soever) to be accounted not to be, what really I am,

Your Honour's most humble servant,

SAMUEL SHAW.



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MAN CONSIDERED IN HIS MORAL CAPACITY.

PART I.

MEDITATION I.

INTRODUCTORY.

RETURN, O my mind, return. What dost thou so early in the world? Art thou not afraid, lest this unseasonable excursion should be a symptom of a lover of the world? And think, Oh think, what a dangerous, what a deadly thing it is, to be a lover of the world! Thou needest no more to convince thee of this, than that one plain text of the devout apostle St. John, *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

Are not these words easily understood? Are they not alarming to every one who understands them? But if thou wilt reflect a little, thou wilt find that the whole Gospel runs in this strain. There is no doctrine delivered either more plainly or more frequently than this. The apostle James does as fully agree with John in this doctrine, as if they spake with the same mouth, James iv. 4. *The friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world*

is the enemy of God. And this he speaks, either as a truth generally known, or very important; as appears by the interrogatory form of speech, with which he introduces it, *Know ye not?* As if he should either say, It is a thing well known, or, well worthy to be known.

The apostle Paul, though junior to both these, knew this great doctrine as well as they, and delivers it almost in the same words with them, Rom. viii. 7. *The carnal mind is enmity against God.* He makes the spirit of the world and the Spirit of God directly contrary the one to the other, 1 Cor. ii. 12. Writing to the Galatians, he makes the plain end of Christ's giving himself for us to be, that he might deliver us from *this present evil world*, Gal. i. 4. and vi. 14.

He makes this to be the great privilege that he had by Christ Jesus, that by him he was crucified to the world. Writing to the Philippians, he makes it the short, but sure character of the enemies of Christ, that they *mind earthly things*, Phil. iii. 18, 19. And writing to his son Timothy, he gives him the reason why Demas had forsaken him, and the work and profession of the Gospel, viz. Because he loved this world; plainly intimating, that the Gospel and the world are inconsistent; one heart cannot hold them both; And all these do, though in different words, utter that which they had heard, or had been taught by their Lord and Master, who, in the days of his ministry, openly declared, *That no man could serve God and Mammon*, Mat. vi. 24. And at another time (as I suppose) in the same words, Luke xvi. 13, *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.*

If this doctrine, delivered by so many and so worthy hands, be true, and cannot be spoken against, Return, O my soul, return.

Fuge, nata Deo, teque immundo eripe mundo.

[Fly, offspring of the Deity, and snatch thyself from a polluted world.]

Strengthen me, O my God, unto the hearty and effectual belief of this proposition, that I may be as afraid of the prevalent love of the world, as I would dread to be accounted (what is not to be named without horror) a hater of God!

MEDITATION II.

The Method of the ensuing Meditations.

My great design shall be, to determine who are *lovers of the world*, and distinguish them from the *lovers of the Father*. Since the love of God is the great commandment, and the great test of Christians; and the love of the world is so contrary to it, and so excludes it, it must needs be worthy of the most serious consideration of the most serious Christians, rightly to state and know the condition of their own souls in this matter.

But it will not be amiss first to take a general survey of the words of the apostle, 1 *John* ii. 15. and in a primary manner to glance at the several terms in the text. After that, I will consider the world in a physical and theological sense; and man in a moral and civil capacity. The world, considered in a physical sense, will afford

but little matter pertinent to my design; but the world, considered in a theological sense, will comprehend the things of the world, the persons of the world, the business of the world, the fashions of the world, the wisdom of the world, and the god of the world.

Under the things of the world, I shall comprehend the profits of the world, the pleasures of the world, and the honours of the world.

Whilst I consider such as love the profits of the world, I must meditate on injustice, worldly confidence, covetousness, carefulness, discontentedness, impatience, and uncharitableness.

When I consider injustice, I must treat of those that use undue means for worldly advantage; and those that use due means in an undue manner. Under the first of these will come to be taxed, stealing, defrauding, lying, oppression, bribery. Under the second will be taxed all those that offend in the degree, and in the season of seeking the world.

When I come to meditate on the lovers of the pleasures of the world, I must consider fleshly pleasures as unlawful in their matter, measure, manner, and season; and fantastical pleasures, under which I must meditate on revenge, idleness, and the desire of ease. And under this last, shall be considered worldly fear, viz. fear of sickness, fear of the death of friends, fear of poverty, and of persecution.

When I come to consider such as love the honours of the world, it will be proper to meditate on seeking the approbation of men, of pride in birth, pride in beauty, in apparel, in children,

in wit and learning, in riches, in strength, in privileges, in power and distinction, in virtuous actions, and in a party.

After the things of the world, shall be considered the persons of the world. And these are either one's self, one's relations, or other men. Under the first will be considered self-love, and the several kinds of it. To the last, will be reduced the base sin of flattery. When I come to consider worldly business, it will be proper to distinguish between a holy activity, and a sensual curiosity.

When I come to meditate on the fashions of the world, I shall have a fit opportunity to mention the sin of swearing.

When I come to consider worldly wisdom, the apostle St. James will direct me to meditate on it in this order, viz. on impure wisdom, on envious wisdom, on contentious wisdom, on implacable wisdom, on merciless wisdom, on unfruitful wisdom, on partial wisdom, and on hypocritical wisdom.

When I come to consider the god of this world, I must consider his servants, his allies, and his children. Under the first, I must treat of idolatry. Under the second, of witchcraft. And under the third, more particularly of self-will and ingratitude, and in general of the devilish nature.

And so I will conclude this first part, which concerns man, considered in his moral capacity, with a cautionary meditation, lest any one should falsely judge another man to be a lover of the world, who is not so; and will thus endeavour to prevent misjudging.

In the second part I will first endeavour to undeceive false pretenders to the love of God, and here treat of monastic persons, of the votaries of virginity, of the votaries of penance, of the Friends, and of pretenders to charity and righteousness.

And having discharged that examination, I will proceed to consider men in their civil capacity, and treat of conformists and non-conformists; of parents, guardians, tutors; of persons marrying, and giving in marriage; of patrons; of chaplains; of judges and magistrates, arbitrators, electors, jurors; of landlords and tenants; of tradesmen; of inn-keepers; of beggars; of wagers; of gamblers; of debtors; of creditors, particularly of usurers. And so conclude with some dissuatives from the love of the world, and motives to the love of God.

MEDITATION III.

Of the World.

THE world is taken either in a physical sense, or in a theological. In a physical sense, it signifies that vast globe that makes up heaven, and earth, and sea, and all things contained in them. But in a theological sense, it is put in opposition to God; as here in this text of the apostle John, and often elsewhere. The world, taken in a physical sense, is lovely; and its strength, beauty, order, and variety, are to be reverently regarded and admired, as the workmanship of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness. It is very

proud and profane, or very foolish, to despise the world in this sense, and to disregard the operation of God's hands. To despise the workmanship, reflects a dishonour upon the workman; and those that see nothing excellent in the world, may be justly suspected to see nothing above it. The Psalmist says, Ps. cxi. 2. *The works of the Lord are sought out of all that have pleasure in them;* and, I think, if we translate it, *have pleasure in him,* the divinity will be as good, if the grammar should not.

The best men are the best philosophers; for they make the best observations upon the admirable structure and furniture of the world; they see most beauty in it, who behold and admire the Divine Wisdom, Power and Goodness shining forth in it.

He that converses in the world, and beholds the many demonstrations there given, and the lectures there read, and does not from thence learn the Eternal Power and Godhead, is blindly stupid. He that does understand and know them, and does not love and admire them, is profane and proud; and so notwithstanding all his knowledge, may be truly said to *know nothing*.

Of these profane philosophers I shall have occasion to treat hereafter, among the lovers of the world. At present I only conclude, That philosophy, especially the philosophy that discovers and comments upon the stately fabric, the harmonious order, the magnificent furniture, and the admirable variety of the world; the proper causes and ends of things; is a very laudable study in its own nature, and may be a singular

means for the advancement of the name and honour of the blessed Creator.

It was an extraordinary expression of a person of great quality amongst us, when he was but about two and twenty years old, "That he could be content (even then) to quit this world, and all the pomps and hopes thereof, though it were for no higher felicity, than to be perfected in the knowledge of natural things." I cannot tell precisely what degree of value we ought to set upon philosophical learning; but this we know, that no man in the world, in any age, was more famous and admirable, than were those two princes of the Jews, Moses, and Solomon, who excelled in this kind of learning. And the great God himself has given much encouragement to study it, by those lessons of philosophy which he gave from the whirlwind to the eastern prince, and which are contained in the book of *Job*, chapters 38—41.

MEDITATION IV.

Of the world, taken in a theological sense.

THE world, taken in a theological sense, is put in opposition to God; and so it signifies all that which is contrary to the spiritual kingdom of Christ, and warreth against it, and against true religion; all that which doth not comply with the will of God, or which withdraws the hearts of men from him; and consequently all that, which, besides the knowledge and love of God, men covet, delight in, or lament. In this sense it is said, 1 John

v. 4. *Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world.* And, *Gal. vi. 14.* that the true believer is crucified to the world, and the world to him. In this sense, the friendship of the world is said, by the apostle James, to be *enmity against God*; and by the apostle John, to be *hatred of him*. This is sometimes called Mammon, and is put in opposition to God: sometimes it is called our own things, in opposition to the things of Jesus Christ. And this appears to be the meaning of it in this text, upon which I am meditating, by the following verse; which explains the world, by the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life; which, certainly, if they be put together, are of a large extent. In this sense we read of worldly lusts, *Tit. ii. 12.* of the *τὰ τῆ ἀσέβειας*, or, &c. or, the things of the world, *1 John iv. 5.*; of the *fornicators of the world*, *1 Cor. v. 10.*; of the *rulers of the darkness of this world*, *Eph. vi. 12.*; of the *spirit of the world*, the *wisdom of the world*, the *nations of the world*, *Luke xii. 30.*; the *men of the world*, which have their portions in this life. *Ps. xvii. 14.*; the *sorrow of the world*; *2 Cor. vii. 10.* The world in a theological sense is in general, whatever is not God; and so even life itself may be called the world. The apostle James puts the theological notion of the world out of dispute, in that famous text, wherein he describes pure religion to be a keeping of one's self *unspotted from the world*, *James i. 27.* So then the apostle St. John means, if any man love any created being, he is a lover of the world, and consequently no lover of the Father, and therefore has not any true religion.

MEDITATION V.

Of the noble affection of Love.

If any man love, &c. The noblest affection with which God hath endued the sons of men, or even the angels of heaven, is love. For when that blessed Being determined to enstamp his own image upon the rational creature, He made it apt to love, as He Himself is love. God is love; and the power of loving, is his image. However liking, and lusting, and appetite, belong to beasts, love properly belongs to the rational creature; neither can there be any proper love, without understanding and choice. And those species of the rational creation that are most able to love, or able to love most, are the most noble and divine. Love is the union of the soul with the object beloved, and makes it as much one with it, as it is possible to be with a thing that is not itself.

Now how shameful a thing is it, that such noble affections should match themselves so basely; especially when such an excellent object is in view! The daughter of a mighty prince choosing a scullion boy for her husband, is not so incongruous, as the soul of man enamoured of the world; neither is the eagle catching flies, or the king of Israel hunting a flea, so ridiculous. The prodigal gentleman grovelling with the swine; or great Nebuchadnezzar herding with oxen, is not so absurd. The beautiful sun indeed, in its kind condescension, doth visit the very dunghills,

(as the glorious God is said to be even in hell itself) but will not lodge its beams there. But alas! this noble offspring of heaven, the rational soul; how familiarly doth it lodge and lie down with the world, and rest in the embraces of that which is not God! A debauchery of the most abominable kind.

Our bodies indeed are a part of the machine of the world; and it is no great wonder if they be delighted in it, as the beasts are. But for souls and spirits to immerse themselves in, to unite themselves to material objects, and transitory things, is as odious and as monstrous to behold, as the coupling of living men to dead bodies, which the poet describes as a great piece of cruelty in the tyrant Mezentius.

The style of the prophets makes it an argument of extreme desolation, when filthy birds and beasts do rest in a land, when wild beasts of the desert lie there, when their houses are full of doleful creatures, and owls dwell there, and satyrs dance there, and wild beasts of the wood cry in their houses, and dragons in their palaces, as the prophet Isaiah elegantly expresseth it, *Isa.* xiii. 21, 22. when the wild beasts of the desert meet with the wild beasts of the islands, and the satyr cries to his fellow, the owl rests there, the great owl makes her nest, and lays, and hatches, and the vultures be gathered every one with his mate, as the same prophet expresseth it, *Isa.* xxxiv. 14, 15. Filthy affections do certainly argue a desolate soul, forsaken of God, and forlorn; and they do extremely defile that which once was, and which ought to be the temple of

God. And what shall be the portion of these profaners, the apostle Paul tells us, 1 Cor. iii. 17. *If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy.*

MEDITATION VI.

Of the Love of the World.

YET we must consider, what this love of the world is, that is so dangerous. And surely it must be granted, even by the devoutest lovers of the Father, negatively,

1st, That it is not every kind glance toward the world that constitutes this love. If so, we may well stand and wonder, and ask with the disciples of old, *Who then can be saved?* Although we may apply our Saviour's words to this, and say, *If any man look upon the world, to lust after it in his heart, he hath committed adultery with it.* Although discontent, nay, even the very desire of things is to be suspected; yet certainly it is too severe to determine that every single fond glance toward the world is this damnable love of it. There was a certain time, wherein the sons of God beheld the daughters of men; and I think there will be no time, in which they will be perfectly blind to them; whilst we carry about with us these bodies, it is to be feared that the beauties and gaities of this world will be creeping in at our senses or fancies, and more or less infesting and infecting our hearts.

2dly, That a moderate seeking of the world, so as to provide things honest in the sight of God

and man, does not constitute this love. If it did, as the apostle speaks in another case, we must go out of the world: For we see there is no living in it, without some degree of caring for it.

No, it must needs be an immoderate, an excessive love that is so dangerous and fatal. If it be asked, What that is? I answer, Whenever it prefers the world, or any thing therein, to God, and to that which God is.

Alas, then, every single act of covetousness, in which the world is preferred to God, is vicious! yes, so it is, and pernicious, and necessarily to be repented of. And if it be a temper, it is that damnable love of the world here spoken of. This love must be predominant, and it must be a temper, or else it cannot denominate the man a damnable lover of the world. Lot committed incest, and I doubt not was drunken too; but I do not think the love of wine or women was predominant in him. David committed adultery, but I do not think that he was of an adulterous temper. But they that are influenced by a predominant and habitual love of the world, are the lovers of the world here spoken of; whether they be the covetous whom God abhorreth; or the proud, whom he resisteth; or the voluptuous, who are dead to the living Lord.

MEDITATION VII.

Men are to try themselves by their Love.

If any man love, &c. It seems that God doth estimate men by their love, not by their impul-

ses, nor their professions; not by their words, nor by their actions. For although it is true, that pure affections will ordinarily produce pure actions; and that as faith worketh by love, so love showeth itself by works: yet actions materially good, do often proceed from a principle not divine and pure, but carnal and corrupt. Therefore the great *καρδιανόμος*. [Searcher of hearts,] trier of the reins, visits and views the hearts of men, and from thence he values them. It doth not only appear from this text, but indeed from the whole current of Scripture, that the estimate that God makes of men, is from their hearts. Hence it is that we read so often concerning such and such men, that they had such and such faults and failings in their conversation or government; yet nevertheless their hearts are perfect with the Lord. And other men were thus and thus specious and zealous in their conversation; yet their hearts were not perfect with the Lord. And of others, that they were very formal and forward professors, but in the mean time their heart went after their covetousness. It were endless to show the special regard that God has to the hearts and affections of men.

And ought not we to estimate ourselves, as God estimates us? *If any man love, &c.* This surely is the chief, and, one would think, the easiest thing in the world to be known.

It is, without controversy, the chief thing, and most material for man to know concerning himself, what he loves best. If I know that God is the Supreme Good, and that it is my greatest duty and highest perfection to love him best; it

must needs follow, that it is my greatest concernment to know that I do so. For if I once attain to this understanding, I will not be beholden to any fortune-teller, to acquaint me with my future condition in this world; nay, I will thank no divine, to foretel me my condition in another.

Man hath nothing better than his affections, nothing nobler than his heart. Love is better than beneficence. Lazarus in being able to love; had a nobler portion than Dives in being able to give. And shall this heart, this love be given to the world? A man may converse in the world, and be concerned about it, and yet not love it; that is well; that may comfort us. But a man may also know God, talk of him, profess him, perform many duties to him, worship him with much pomp and seeming devotion, and yet not love him; that may startle us.

It is easy, in all other things, for a man to tell what he loves best. Cannot every man tell, what dish of meat, or what sort of drink pleases him best, or what neighbour he prefers most? And is it not a wonder that men should not know whether they love God, or the world best?

Is it not a wonder that men should be so mad or blind, as not to see themselves lovers of the world? Surely the heart of man is deceitful, and that, not only to other men, (as some would have the meaning of the text to be) but to himself also. I never yet knew a man that would confess himself to be covetous, though all the symptoms of covetousness were upon him. Though the plague-spots and sores are upon them, yet they will not confess themselves to be infected. To

undeceive (if it may be) the lovers of the world, is the design of the publication of these Meditations.

Lord, be merciful unto us; and suffer not our hearts to be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin!

MEDITATION VIII.

Of the extent of worldly Love.

If any man, &c. Methinks this phrase supposes that all sorts of men are subject to this evil, and liable to this disease. And indeed the more I think of it, (whether the text suppose it or not) the more certain it seems to be. When I consider *great* men, I do not see that they are so elevated above the world, as to despise it; neither are the *poor* so depressed below the world, as to despair of it; as it is in some cases. No; all sorts of men are subject to this plague; nothing secures us from it. *Riches* do not; it seems from the Psalmist, that the increase of them rather causes men to set their hearts upon the world; *If riches increase, set not your hearts upon them.* *Poverty* does not secure us; the poorer are the proudest oftentimes, and sometimes the most covetous too. *Holy orders* do not secure us; witness the greediness of the clergy of all churches. *Retiring into a monastery* cannot secure us; as the many unclean practices committed there will testify. *Holy profession*, or an early resolution in baptism cannot secure us; witness the multitudes that fight under the world's banners,

who then promised to fight against it to the end of their lives.

It is a great evil, and is found in company with learning, with inspiration, and the spirit of prophecy; as in Balaam; in company with prayers and sacrifices, as in Saul; in company with fortitude, as in Jeroboam; in company with zeal and profession, as in Jehu; in company with legal righteousness, much gravity, demureness, seeming self-denial and mortification, as in them, who in the Gospel are said to love *the praise of men, more than the praise of God*. It is found in conjunction with circumcision; neither is it washed away by that ordinance, that is called a *putting away of the filth of the flesh*.

But if we will come to a strict examination, we must consider man in his *moral*, and in his *political* capacity. And this (God willing) I intend to do in its proper place.

MEDITATION IX.

Of the evil of worldly Love.

If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Lord, what a terrible thing is this that is predicated of so small a fault! He doth not love God! Why, what could have been said worse of him? If a man do not love God, he is as bad as a devil; he is cursed with the greatest curse; *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, Mōran atha.* Who would believe that so fearful a thing should be predicated

of so small a matter! If he had said, if any man blaspheme God maliciously, oppose him spitefully, commit murder, be rebellious against all superiors, beastly in all behaviour, dwelleth in all pride and malice, or the like, then it had been proper enough that he should be esteemed a hater of God: But to say, *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*; who can believe this? Is it so great a matter to love the world?

Yes, from the predicate, we may infer how great a matter it is. The Spirit of God would not have predicated this of a thing of an ordinary consequence; every body declares against the sins of the flesh, rails at drunkenness, adultery, murder, injustice, extortion; every body brands thieves, and such like people with infamy: But the sins of the spirit are unnoticed, and destroy men's souls more effectually.

See how destructive a thing it is to misplace affections. Oh how sadly is the world mistaken! How weakly do men judge! How many will find themselves in hell shortly, who had hoped that they were in the suburbs of heaven! The common cry is, a very good man, a very honest man, a civil good natured neighbour; but a little too close, *Paulo attentior ad rem*, [rather too attentive to gain.] A small fault they think. But is idolatry and adultery a small fault? This the love of the world really is: one may as well bow down before a graven image, as love the world.

It is very observable that the commands of the Gospel are mostly calculated for regulating the affections of love, care, joy, grief; and

that it forbids and inveighs against the sins of the spirit; pride, malice, distrust, envy, covetousness, and the like.

The renovation of the will, and regulation of the affections, is the great work of regenerating grace. It is completely pharasaic to mind paying of tythes, and to neglect the love of God.

Say not, Oh say not, it is a small thing to love the world; but say, Oh how it defiles, how it exposes, how it damns; what idolatry, and adultery, and blasphemy is it! Arise, O my precious soul, sully not thy beautiful wings, by resting upon so filthy a dunghill, by preying upon so loathsome a carcass.

How evil and abominable the love of the world is, I shall have occasion to consider more particularly in some future meditation.

MEDITATION X.

Of the inconsistency of the Love of the World with the Love of God.

It seems to be the plain doctrine which the apostle teaches, That the love of the world and the love of God are inconsistent with each other. God and Mammon cannot agree. There is no serving two masters, especially if contrary the one to the other. *What communion hath light with darkness?* The reason of the incompatibility and inconsistency, seems to be laid in the opposition, *Contraria mutuo se pellunt*, [Contraries mutually repel each other.] The same fountain

cannot send forth sweet water and bitter. Here the reason seems to lie in the limited, straitened nature of the fountain. The narrow heart of man cannot contain two such guests at once. If the world has occupied the inn, the chambers of the soul, Christ must be cast into the stable. The same soul cannot at once send forth the sweet aromatic breathings of divine love, and the filthy noisome stench and exhalation of earthly love. How should such a limited agent perform two such contrary acts at the same time?

But what! May not a man love God well, and love the world too? No. No man loves God well but he that loves him best. He only loves him right that loves him with all his heart. There cannot be two bests. One cannot love God with all his heart, and the world with all his heart too.

But may not one love God best, and yet love the world? No. For if you love the world unduly, you do not love God best; and if you love God best, then your love of the world is not the undue love here forbidden.

The pure and conjugal love admits no rival; *Thalamus non patitur consortes*, [the marriage-chamber is sacred to the spouse.] There is an attempt, no doubt, to compound the matter, and to make a medley; and this medley, I fear, is the religion of most. It is too evident that they entertain the world chiefly; yet in good manners they would allow some room for God, some little room, upon a Sunday or an holy day, or perhaps at some other times, in some easy and cheap things. The harlot in the comedy was content

to entertain two; the one indeed she properly loved; but because the other gave her presents and good gifts, she was content that he should *Harere in aliqua parte saltem apud eam*, [continue with her, at least under some condition,] some little corner of her house she would allow him too. It is as certain a sign of an unholy heart, to devote itself to two, as it was of a false mother to admit of the division of the child.

The world indeed has no title at all to the heart of man, and therefore modestly desires only a little part, an inferior love, a subordinate love. But together with this seeming modesty, the world is very cunning, for it knows that that part will very nearly bring in the whole; and that God will reject the whole if any part of it be withheld. But God has a right to all, and therefore demands all or none. He will not take up with a corner of the heart. The love of God fills the soul where it comes, as the light fills the firmament.

MEDITATION XI.

Of the evil of not loving God.

The love of the Father is not in him. Look about you, all you that love the world! Nay, rather let us all look into ourselves; let us fear and search lest we be found lovers of the world; for here is the most dreadful sentence that ever was pronounced; the blackest brand that can be put upon a rational being; such love not God. He

might as well have said, They hate him. For indeed (saving a little philosophical nicety) it amounts to the same thing. *He that is not for us is against us*; and yet more plainly, *The friendship of the world is enmity against God.*

Now if we consider that it is the most natural, necessary, reasonable, easy and excellent thing in the world to love God; and that it is the foundation of all other duties, it will better appear, how sad a character this is, *The love of the Father is not in him.* I will but glance upon some of these in this place, and reserve the rest to another.

MEDITATION XII.

The love of God is most natural.

It is most natural for man to love God. However it is true, too true, that, considering man in his state of apostacy, sin is most natural to him; yet if we consider man as a rational being only, abstracting him from his depravation, virtue, particularly the love of God, is most natural to him; and all sin, particularly worldly love, is unnatural and alien to him; which the Scripture plainly signifies, when it tells us so often of the defilements of sin. Now we know that which defiles, must needs be alien to that which it defiles.

To love God was the duty of man before the Gospel was given, yea or the law either; necessarily resulting from the relation between the creature and the Creator. It is most agreeable to the dictates of nature. Though it be so sad-

ly depraved, it has not quite put off its essence. For what are honour, and reverence, and adoration, but love exalted, love determined to a superior object? And this the heathens always thought just and equal to give to their gods.

It is as natural for the soul to cleave to something without itself, as for the ivy to cling to the oak. The soul naturally understands its own indigence, and therefore goes out to one thing or another to find rest; and though through her apostacy she is mistaken in her object, and fancies rest where it is not; which indeed is rather blasphemy than atheism; the love of a superior object, of a centre, is so natural that it cannot be separated from the very constitution of the soul. That centre must needs be some superior being, and more excellent than itself; and what can that be but God? Or what beside him can be said to be more excellent than the soul itself? God is remotely concerned in the pursuits even of the covetous and ambitious; howbeit they mean not so, and therefore their undesigned tendencies are no thanks to them; nor will ever make them happy.

To love the Lord our God with all our heart is the great commandment indeed; it is the law of nature inlaid in the very constitution of the soul, belonging to all men in all ages of the world.

MEDITATION XIII.

Of the easiness and pleasantness of loving.

To love is easy, cheap, and pleasant. It is easy, it requires no pains, it breaks no bones. Whatsoever curse lies upon all sublunary provisions, we may eat the heavenly manna without labour. Those devils, the heathen gods, required painful services indeed; sometimes Herculean labours. But the true God requires our love, he takes it as the most acceptable sacrifice; so acceptable, that it shall stand instead of all other duties, where they cannot be performed. He that is dumb and cannot pray, deaf and cannot hear, blind and cannot read, so poor that he cannot give, so close shut up that he may not receive, shall yet be well accepted of the Father, if he can love. Christ Jesus has a yoke indeed; but it is a yoke of government, not of punishment; it is not galling to the necks of his disciples, *My yoke is easy.* He has a burden too, but it is light; *Christi sarcina pennas habet.* [The burden of Christ has wings.]

To love is cheap, it costs nothing. Love indeed will grudge no cost, will stick at no charge if it be required; but there is none required to the exercise of love. This is the best way in the world for a poor man to be happy, (as we read the poor woman was, whose whole inventory amounted but to two mites,) and indeed a readier way for the rich, than though they should lavish gold out of the bag, and make oblations of

rams by thousands, and oil by rivers. For, what cares the self-sufficient God for these things. What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul? *Deut. x. 12.*

To love is *pleasant*. The very acts of love are pleasant to him that exerts them. They had a dismal way of serving their gods anciently, in an extatic frantic manner, *cum sacro horrore*; [with a sacred horror,] as Baal's priests, cutting and slashing themselves; or as the priests of Apollo or Bacchus, swelling, raging and distracted. Lucan, I remember, somewhere in his *Pharsalia* describes the devotion that the Massilians paid to certain dreadful deities which they worshipped in a dark grove, so terribly, as would make one wish to get as far off from such deities as possible. Nay he tells us that the priest himself that went to atone them, was afraid of nothing more, than lest he should meet one of them, lest they should draw nigh to him in his drawing nigh to them. *Dominumq; timet deprendere luci.* [And dreads to meet the Genius of the grave.]

But love, divine love, the love of God, is serene, composed and sweet, pleasant in its very actings, ravishing the soul that exerts it; who takes just so much pains in loving, as the rivers do in running, the wind in blowing, or the sun in shining.

Good God! how infinitely and astonishingly kind and gracious art thou to the sons of men; all whose very commands consist with our ease, and are calculated for our pleasure! Lord, what can be more pleasant than to love, to love that

which is infinitely lovely! What can be safer, than to trust in Almighty Power! What easier, sweeter way of living, than to cast all our care and lay all our burden upon Infinite Wisdom and Goodness! What more sweet and cordial than to hope in Infinite Mercy and Veracity! These, Oh these sweet things are the matter of the law! And Oh thou that hast so mercifully accommodated thy laws to my pleasure, mercifully accommodated my soul to thy laws, that I may take pleasure in them.

MEDITATION XIV.

Of the excellency and necessity of the love of God.

THE love of God is excellent and honourable; it puts a beauty and lustre upon the soul. This beautifies, dignifies, glorifies, yea, and in a sense, deifies the soul, uniting her to God, and so making her one with her Maker. As worldly love dishonours and defiles; as he that is joined to an harlot, is one with an harlot, even a limb of a harlot; and he that is joined to the world in spiritual adultery, is a limb of the world; so he that is joined to Christ is a member of Christ. The soul acts most nobly, exalts itself most bravely, when it spends its powers upon the supreme good. If there be any apotheosis of souls, this is it. The saints are the most excellent of the earth; and this is the character of saints, that they love God: *Love ye the Lord, all ye his saints.*

Of this I shall have occasion to enlarge in my meditations hereafter. I will therefore proceed

to think a little of the absolute necessity of the love of God.

The love of God is so *necessary* to the happiness of souls, that no soul can be happy that hath it not predominant in him. The precept makes it necessary, which commands it in both Testaments, and that over and over again, and that as the principal duty of man. It is a commandment, nay, it is a great, it is the *great* commandment, as our Saviour's words are translated, *Matt. xxii. 38.* Now after all these inculcations, can we imagine that God will dispense with this; nay, (with the leave of the Popish casuists be it spoken,) he cannot; for it is a necessary means of happiness. God himself cannot make a soul happy that hates him.

Considering the constitution of the rational soul, it is impossible that any thing should be his happiness below communion with God. Now there can be no communion, no converse without love. Can a soul dwell with him forever, and be happy in so doing, that does not love him? Ye hated me, and cast me out, says Jephthah. Certainly the haters of God do, in fact, cast themselves out of the presence of God.

MEDITATION XV.

Why called the love of the Father.

The love of the Father is not in him. But why the love of the Father rather than the love of God. This seems to be done on purpose, and to be

more elegant and emphatical, than if he had said the love of God. For it is a great aggravation of this unnatural sin, the love of the world. Father is an endearing relation, as appears by many texts, but methinks by no one more than that which proceeded from the mouth of Christ, and is now in the mouth of every Christian, *Our Father.*

God is fully our *Father*, yea, and *Mother* too ; * the words both of begetting and bringing forth, are ascribed to him ; of him we are begotten and brought forth. Were it not monstrous, that a man should prefer his horse or his hounds, and the lives of them, before his Father ; provide for them and let his father starve ? More monstrous it is to prefer the world before God. Moreover, the *Father* seems to be put elegantly in opposition to the world. As if one should say, What ! love the world more than the Maker of it ?

The moralist (I think it is Cicero) somewhere inveighs against the absurdity of those men, that adore images, and do not rather admire and reverence the skill that made them, and the ingenuity of the carvers and painters. God is the Father of the world (*the Father*, as well as *our Father*) *the Father of light*, the Maker of all that is pleasant, profitable, and honourable, the Creator of riches, the Fountain of pleasure and honour. So that to love the world rather than the Father, whether he be considered as our Father, or the Father of the world, is wicked and absurd.

* It is observable that the *Chinese* say of a good Emperor, " He is the father and mother of his people."

MEDITATION XVI.

Of men's apprehensions concerning the love of God.

If any man love the world, &c. I foresee, that after all that I shall meditate upon this subject the issue will be, either that men will be secure and never mind this thundering expression, it will not startle nor make any impression upon them; or they will a little open their eyes, and inquire into themselves, and ask, whether they be lovers of God or of the world.

I foresee the greatest part of men into whose hands these meditations shall fall, will be secure and unconcerned, as they are under the weightiest doctrines, and loudest thunders of God. It is the nature of worldly love to stupify, it drowns in perdition; It chokes the word; it makes men blind and bold; senseless and secure. It stifles, chokes, deadens, takes away all heart, and turns men into mere lumps of earth.

But perhaps there are others, some others, that will inquire. Well be it so; yet I suppose that the power of self-love is so great, that the inference they will make, will be one of these two. Either, Oh, I love God, and therefore am not a lover of the world; or, Oh, I am not a lover of the world; therefore I love God.

MEDITATION XVII.

What it is to love God.

But possibly there may be some ingenious inquirer, that with Philip, will ask and say, *Show us the Father, and it sufficeth.* To him Christ answered, *Have I been so long with you, and sayest thou, show us the Father?* As if he had said, the invisible God is seen in me; I am the image of the Father. So I say to these, God is invisible, but the image of God is visible in the world.

The image of God indeed is seen in the whole creation, and the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, are to be observed and admired therein.

But especially it is to be admired in man. Man is more especially the image of God; and if we say we love God, whom we have not seen, and love not our brethren whom we have seen, we deceive ourselves.

More especially it is to be observed in good men. Therefore is the love of God so often described by the love of the brethren, and of the saints.

But principally, True goodness is the nature of God. God is goodness, truth, love, holiness; and he that loveth the world more than these, is the idolater and adulterer here spoken of. If any man habitually, in his judgment or affections, prefer the pleasures, profits, or honours of the world, before righteousness, goodness, truth and holiness, he is dead, accursed.

I suspect that the love of Christ's person is mostly a notion amongst men. To follow his example, to imitate his graces, to copy out his perfections, is to love him. For although we have not heard God's voice, nor seen his shape at any time, yet if his word abide in us, we love him, *John v. 37, 38.*

He that loveth Christ must keep his commandments. If any man therefore prefer the world before the commands of Christ, before the favour of God, or the peace of his own conscience, so far he is a lover of the world. The son of the bond-woman, and of the free, cannot dwell together; fleshly wisdom, and the grace of God, cannot at the same time predominate. The love of God is a nature, not a rapture or ecstasy, much less a mechanical thing, acted only upon the stage of fancy.

MEDITATION XVIII.

Of the false love of God.

BUT what, is the love of the world so pestilent, so malignant, so poisonous, that no love of God will grow by it in the same soul?

Yes, there may be a great deal of spurious love; love of a false kind, more properly called flattery than friendship. Men may fancy they love God much, and may cry, God forbid but they should love him above all things. Perhaps there may be some true love in a weak degree; true, I mean, in opposition to dissembled, physically true. (For, why may there not be a true love,

that is not saving?) But he that loves God aright, as the supreme good, must needs love him with a supreme and superlative affection.

But be it true or not in a physical sense; that love of God is not highest, doth not prevail nor predominate, that is easily crushed, cast out, gainsaid. If the tares get above the corn and smother it; if the cares of the world choke the word, those tares and cares are predominant.

The men of Keilah made love to David, perhaps they had some real kindness for him; but their kindness for Saul was greater; so that if he offered himself, they would cast forth David and his men.

The love of God and the love of the world are inconsistent. And that appears from the nature of the objects, which are contrary the one to the other. As also from the nature of love. *If any man love the world*, must be understood of a predominant love; then *the love of the Father is not in him*, must be understood of a predominant love also. God being the chief good, the love of him must be the highest and strongest, or else it is not such as the object requires. If a woman love her husband well, yet if she love him not above any other man, she does not love with a right conjugal love, which ought to be stronger than all others. The proper and acceptable love of God must needs be predominant, otherwise it is not fitted to the nature of the supreme good. Now it is impossible there should be two predominant loves in the same soul at one and the same time.

MEDITATION XIX.

Of predominant Love.

BUT it will be asked, what constitutes a predominant love?

Love, yea, even the love of God, is capable of intension and remission. There are some that depart from their first love in a great measure. The spouse was one while sick of love, another while so lazy and languid, that she would not so much as arise to open to her beloved when he knocked. Particularly, as much as worldly love prevails, so much Divine love languisheth and is invalidated. They are like the houses of Saul and David; the rise of the one is the fall of the other, and they cannot be both supreme in one Israel. They are like a pair of scales in this; as the one rises, the other falls, but they differ in this, that they are never equally poised.

A predominant love must be intense in degree, habitual and durable.

The intenseness of the love of God is emphatically described, Luke x. 27. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.* How many *alls* are here? And yet if we had ten thousand times more powers and faculties, we ought to love God with them all too. It is an emphatical translation of that elegant text of the apostle, Rom. v. 5. *The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts;* which if I might paraphrase in Scripture style, I would call it a cover-

ing of the soul, as the waters cover the sea. The soul of a lover of God seems to itself too scant to comprehend the supreme good; wishes itself wider and larger. Oh that one would give me the large heart of an angel! Oh that God would fill all my capacities, and make me yet more capacious, Oh that he would take up all the room in me; and Oh that he would make for himself more room in my soul, than yet there is, to entertain him!

And certainly this predominant love may be discerned. If I know not what I love best, I know nothing. Why may I not as well know whether I love God or the world best, as I know whether I love bread or husks best? By what we constantly choose, when things come in competition, we may know what we love best.

But may not the palate of the mind be so altered or vitiated, (as well as that of the body,) that what I choose at one time, I may refuse at another, and prefer its contrary? Yes certainly. In every single wilful, deliberate act of covetousness or impatience, worldly love does predominate *pro hic et nunc*: [in this special instance:] But it will not denominate the man a lover of the world, except it be habitual.

MEDITATION XX.

Of habitual Love.

THE love that is so predominant, as to dominate, must be habitual. But may not an habitual lover of the world be converted into an habi-

tual lover of God? Yes, surely. This is the conversion of which the Gospel speaks. To turn men from idols to the acknowledgment of the true God is not a saving conversion. To turn them from the commission or love of some single sin of the flesh, as drunkenness, fornication, swearing, is a partial, but not a saving conversion. The great and saving conversion consists in changing the temper, the nature, and introducing divine habits. The habit of worldly love may be destroyed, and is destroyed in all sincere converts. The habit of divine love may be interrupted in its acts, weakened in its vigour, but shall not be quite destroyed. We read of some indeed that had left their love, (*Rev. ii. 4.*) But it does not appear that they had quite lost it; or if we will say that they had lost it, yet it was not it, but some degrees of it that they lost; not their love but their first love, or some degrees of that love which they had at first. I know not what should hinder, but that every truly regenerate and habitual lover of God, may make the same challenge as the apostle did, *What shall separate us from the love of God?* If it be said that the love of God towards his elect is immutable and indefectible, yet their's is not so towards him—One may well reply, that consequently the love of the elect is lasting, everlasting too. If it be true, that whom God loves he loves to the end, and that he loves none with this peculiar love, but those who love him, it will fairly follow, that their love is endless too.

MEDITATION XXI

Lovers of the world willing to be deceived.

AND now methinks I see the secure world stand unconcerned; every one blessing himself, Oh I am not this accursed lover of the world. I do indeed now and then prefer the world, my gain, my pleasure, my reputation, before God, and the observation of the dictates of my own conscience, as I perceive all men do, but I do not make a constant custom of it; I have no habit of it.

But though it be but in one single act that thou preferrest the world before God, or in a sin committed now and then, yet glory not, account it not a light thing. It is something surely, and indeed enough to humble and amaze all men on earth, to be now and then guilty of such folly and filthiness, such blasphemy, unrighteousness and idolatry, as this is, to but be once guilty of preferring the devil before God.

But examine, Oh look inwardly. Do not these acts proceed from a habit, these sprouts from a root? We had need to search narrowly, and examine strictly; for if we be mistaken here, we are mistaken indeed, fatally, everlastingly mistaken.

The worldly mind generally denies and palliates its worldliness. Men are generally ashamed to be called worldly minded, and very loth to believe themselves to be such. Notwithstanding which, it is most certain that there are many

such; so that somewhere there will be found a deadly fatal mistake.

MEDITATION XXII.

The lovers of God most sensible of their worldliness.

ON the other hand, the heavenly mind, the habitual lover of the Father is most sensible of, and complains most of his own worldliness.

Lord, how little do I discern this disease, or lay it to heart in myself? How little do I mourn over it in others, where it is apparently predominant, notwithstanding it is so deadly?

If I be not a predominant lover of the world, yet, alas! in how many single acts have I given preference to it, every one of which was horrible disloyalty and treachery!

Alas! How early, how earnestly, how eagerly, have I pursued the world in my thoughts, in a whole train of thoughts, from morning to evening! How unseasonably too, has it put itself into my meditations, how boldly intruded into my devotions; how impenitently thrust in itself, to interrupt my communion with Heaven, with an excessive impudence and importunity!

Wo be to me, if thinking more, if speaking oftener of this world than of God, be a certain mark of a predominant lover of the world; who then could be saved! Yet when I consider, that where the treasure is, the heart will be also; and again, that out of the abundance of the heart

the mouth speaketh; how can I choose but be ashamed and afraid?

Lord, deliver me from levity of spirit, from earthliness of mind, from meanness of temper and conversation! Oh wind up my heart to heaven, let my converse be there and with thee! Employ my mind in contriving, my soul in exerting acts of love; fill my mouth with thy praises, and let holiness to the Lord be written upon all my actions and enjoyments.

Oh how are the mighty fallen, the high sunk down into a most mean and miserable condition! How is the gold become dim! How shamefully does the noble human nature *embrace a dunghill*, and the souls that came originally out of the blessed Creator's hands purer than snow, have contracted a visage blacker than a coal!

Good God, I believe; Oh help my unbelief! I love thee, Oh pardon my want, my weakness of love; and shed abroad thy love in, and quite over my dry and parched soul! Rather take from me whatever takes any part of my heart from thee, than that I should be a partial, an imperfect, an insincere lover of God!

MEDITATION XXIII.

Nowithstanding men's self-deceptions, there are many lovers of the world.

AND because no man will confess himself to be a lover of the world, are there therefore none such? Has the apostle supposed an impossibility

or a *non-entity*, when he says, *If any man love the world, &c.* or are men therefore not of the world, because they say they are not of the world? Whether it be meet to hearken unto God, and believe him, or man, let us now judge.

We may easily suppose man to be bribed and blinded in his own case. What the judgment of God is we shall soon discern in his word; by which we may briefly examine all the ages of the world.

The primitive state of man, no doubt, was a state of pure and divine love. As the Creator is said to take pleasure in the workmanship of his hands, so doubtless the rational creature delighted himself in his Creator; and in him only admired himself and the rest of the creation.

But this lasted not long. Alas, how soon did the worldly spirit begin to prevail! Cain, the heir of the world, chose the world for his portion; and the love of the Father was not in him. *For if a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen!*

The old world neglected righteousness and the preacher of it. We read what their main study was; they were intent upon marrying, building, planting, and such like sensual entertainments, and chose that part, till they were taken away from it. If we consider the Antediluvian world, we shall find that it had but few men in it who were not worldly men. Next take a view of the world that followed the flood, and resolved that the flood should never follow them, I mean the builders of Babel, and the men of that age, the

sensual Nimrods, the rapacious giants, the idolatrous Canaanites, Amorites, Perizzites; and the rest of that race, and what can we find among them but worldliness, violence and uncleanness.

But there was another seed, and surely that was all holy; I mean the children of Abraham, the seed of Israel; no, it is too evident that all Israel were not Israelites indeed; witness the many hundred thousands that lusted after the flesh-pots, nay, the very onions and garlick of Egypt; that preferred their bondage before the promised land, and the free exercise of their religion.

Follow them into that land, and take notice of their great idolatry, and other iniquities committed frequently and almost generally, under the government of their judges. Nay, view them under the government of their best kings, and take an account from David's own mouth, and you will find that even then there were many, that said, *Who will show us any good?* or, in other words, the greater part craved worldly goods. Not long after, the Israelites become so bad, that the poor prophet thought that he was left the only worshipper of the Father.

In the days of the prophet Jeremiah, rich and poor, and all had so universally apostatized, that throughout the streets of Jerusalem, one good man was not to be found, Jer. 5.

In the days of the Son of man, the best sort of men (so reputed) were lovers of the world, more than of the Father; or, in our Saviour's own words, *They loved the praise of men, more than the praise of God*; they received honour one of another.

And how men stood affected in the following times, his followers will tell us; one apostle declaring, *That all men sought their own things*; and another complaining, *That the whole world lay in wickedness.*

And if the world be so amended in these later times, that none of this race are left, we shall need expect no new heavens, nor new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. But, alas! we are so far from that refinement, that we must still cry as they of old,

O curvæ in terras animæ, et cælestium inanes!

[How are souls bent to the earth, and void of heavenly things!]

MEDITATION XXIV.

Who are the lovers of the world in general.

THERE are then, nay, there are many lovers of the world. But what Jehu will now appoint us a sacrifice for the worshippers of Baal (for they are concealed among the people) whereby we may discern them. Give them an invitation, an encouragement, lay a bait before them, and we shall find them out.

In general, it is certain, That in the matters of doing and suffering, there are multitudes to be found.

In doing, They that account any of the known commandments of God so heavy, ungrateful, and troublesome, that they wilfully refuse to do them,

are lovers of the world. The lovers of God do whatsoever things he commands them, (*John xv. 14.*) they follow the lamb, let him lead them whither he will. Abraham, that friend of God, is famed for his cheerful obedience in hard and grievous things; as in forsaking his own land, to go he knew not whither, and in sacrificing his beloved Isaac. Oh severe command! but Oh angelical obedience! To the lovers of God, his commands are not grievous. Paul, whom the love of Christ constrained, was ready to do any thing, to take any pains, for the name of Jesus, and the honour of it.

In case of suffering, They that will not quit all worldly interests, rather than disown Christ, or wilfully and deliberately violate a known commandment, are lovers of the world more than of God.

Sufferings try men. If ye seek me, if ye cleave to me, saith God, let these things go, leave your hold of the world, quit your worldly interest. This is so frequently inculcated in the Gospel, that it seems needless to bring any particular proof. A glance at those famous general texts is enough. If any man take not up his cross, he cannot be my disciple. If any man will not deny father and mother, house and lands for my sake, he is not worthy of me. If a man will not cut off his right hand, and pluck out his right eye for Christ, he is not a lover of him.

MEDITATION XXV.

Of the lovers of the world more particularly.

BUT because *dolus latet in universalibus*, [deceit lies in generals,] I will consider more particularly, that if possible, some one or other may be convicted.

If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

I will consider the world in a physical, and in a theological sense; man in a moral and political capacity; and God under those notions in the 17th meditation.

Consider the world in a physical sense, and it is certain, that whosoever loves, admires, enjoys the world, and the beauties thereof, in a way of opposition to God, or competition with him, or indeed separation from him, is not a right lover of the Father.

However beautiful the fabric of the world is, we ought not to love it in opposition to God, nor esteem the creature in a way of derogation from the Creator. It is true, a man may (with Jannes and Jambres) say, *Digitus Dei est hic*, [This is the finger of God,] and seem to own the goodness and power of God in the Creation, and yet be a mere Egyptian. But yet no true Israelite will say, *Digitus Dei non est hic*; [This is not the finger of God;] no lover of the Father, will exalt the power of natural causes so, as to exclude the author of them. It becomes a Royal

Society to admire the King of Heaven;* and if any man study and admire the world in opposition to God, he is an atheistical lover of the world.

He that loves the world, or values it in competition with God, is (at least) a false friend of God; and acts, as if he would set the creature at variance with the Creator.

Yea, he that loves the creature in a way of distinction or separation from God, is, in a degree, unspiritual, and in some sort of bondage.

Men are commonly proud of much knowledge; but the apostle speaks of some that are proud, and yet know nothing, (1 *Tim.* vi. 4.) So were those philosophers that knew not God in the world, nor apprehended the invisible things of him, by those works of his, of which they took so much notice.

MEDITATION XXVI.

Of the ordinate Love of Life.

CONSIDERING the world physically, I must a little meditate upon natural life, as a physical good. I need not employ my thoughts about the lawfulness of a subordinate love of life, a doctrine easily entertained, without the assistance of any arguments or motives; but I will here meditate upon these three following positions.

1st, If any man love this natural life more

* Alluding happily to the foundation of the Royal Society of Great Britain, in 1662.

than truth and righteousness, that he would rather choose to live sinfully, than not to live, he is a predominant lover of the world.

2dly, If a man be not willing to lay down his life at the will of God, he is a lover of the world.

3dly, If any man be content to spend his eternity in this world, though it were a sinless state, but imperfect, he is not arrived at that degree of divine love after which it becomes us to aspire.

Concerning the *first* of these: It must be confessed, that the devil wisely conjectured, that Job, as good as he was, would quit his integrity, at least to save his life; go about to take that from him, and he would quit that patience and submission that he had showed in his other losses. And, Oh God, how many have quitted their integrity, to save their lives! How many have prostituted their bodies in acts of adultery, their souls in acts of idolatry, to preserve the union betwixt soul and body! How many cowardly soldiers of Christ, to save their lives, have surrendered their colours, forsaken their profession, renounced the truth! It is said that the papists, in the Irish Rebellion, made some renounce the truth, to save their lives, and then killed them. A complete murder indeed, to kill soul and body at once. How many have denied the Lord that bought them, blasphemed, said even to sin itself, *Make me as one of thy hired servants, put me to any drudgery whatsoever, so I may but eat bread and live.* These are they that *find* their lives in the *loss* of their souls, but they shall lose them. Alas! there are too many that will commit any sin, as well as undergo any slavery, to live. Many

Jebusites, that to save their lives, suffer (at least) one of their eyes to be put out; I mean, embrace idolatry in a blind obedience.

And is life so sweet, as to be preferred before truth, righteousness, and holiness? So sweet, as to be preferred before God, the uncreated life? It is indeed the highest temptation, as the devil too truly intimated; and they are more excusable that sin to preserve life, than they that sin to maintain honour or estate; but yet inexcusable too. The Church would not do so, Ps. lvi. 17. *All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, nor dealt falsely in thy covenant.*

But did not Peter, to save his life, deny his Lord? Yes, and Peter was in that act a predominant lover of the world. We know how dear it cost him. And if any man will encourage himself by his example, let him be sure of Peter's repentance, before he venture as he did. Many have denied their Lord, and never owned him more; have so run away, as never to return or look back; and that by a just judgment of God, who thereupon gives men up to believe lies; and commonly the next thing is, to find out ways to justify and defend their sin.

To prefer life before truth under any temptation, is a single act of worldly love; but being convinced of the sin, and yet to live in it, only to preserve the life so stolen, denominates an habitual lover of the world. Peter saved his life, by abjuring his Lord; but he did not maintain it so. Yea, some have given back their lives so feloniously obtained to the flames; have sought out the executioner, have voluntarily offered up their

lives, as being unwilling to keep them upon such base terms.

All that use unjust means to preserve life, and allow themselves in the use of such means, are predominant lovers of the world.

Lord, let me hate that life, that must be purchased at so dear a rate, as Divine displeasure!

The kings of Israel, one consulting the God of Ekron, the other the witch of Endor, are recorded for wicked men, and were sadly rewarded too; both lost their lives, seeking unduly to preserve them; so true is that saying of Christ, in more senses than one, *He that findeth his life, shall lose it.*

Many things may be quitted to preserve life. Whether Abraham told a lie or not to save his life, or David sinned in denying his reason, before the king of Gath, or the Hebrew midwives lied to save the lives of the infants, is doubtful; much may be said to exculpate them all. But that a man may with Abraham, deny himself the conversation of his wife for a time; forsake his country with David, yea, though the house of God were there; that he may in some degree disguise himself; that he may use some pretences and excuses; is evident from the example of Samuel, when he went to anoint David; and Jeremiah, when he discoursed with the king about rendering up the city to the Chaldeans. It is evident, that men may part with their estates to save their lives, as when in danger of shipwreck; or with some part of their liberty, as Christ quitted his opportunity of teaching the people for a time; that they may with Moses, forsake their country,

and their father's house. But it will in no case become lawful, to quit one's integrity for the preservation of life; to prefer life, before virtue; and so, *Propter vitam vivendi perdere causas*, [for the sake of life to destroy the means of living.] Lord, mortify this love, this inordinate love of life, which puts us upon so many sinful methods to maintain it, and let us love life only in thee!

MEDITATION XXVII.

Of unwillingness to die.

2dly, *If any man be not willing to lay down his life at the will of God, he is a lover of the world.*

The will of God is just, righteous, pure, perfect, and more desirable than life itself. The will of God is God himself, and he that resisteth, or opposeth, or is not cheerfully subject to the will of God, whether his preceptive or disposing will, is a rebel.

Alas! How little conscience do men ordinarily make of inward, hearty submission to the will of God! They are always reckoning these murmurings and discontents, and acts of self-will, among human infirmities, at worst; but such as they desire not to be cured of. God says, *Come away*; the selfish worldly nature cries, *I will not come*; or, *I will tarry yet a while longer*. And what is rebellion, if this be not? It cannot be, but that God takes ill all that reluctance and unwillingness that is found in us, as he did in Lot, and especially Lot's wife.

Remember her, O my soul, whenever thou offerest fondly to look after worldly things, in any way of reluctancy against the will of God!

But it will be said, Have not good men been unwilling to die, when they have known it to be the will of God to remove them? was not Hezekiah loth to die when he had a message sent him from Heaven, *Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die?*

To this I reply, if good men have been guilty of this unwillingness and non-compliance, it is no part of their goodness. Good men are never the better for many things that are recorded of them in Scripture; yea, at the best, certainly, it is an imperfection to be loth to die; and if it be no worse, I am sure a wise man will not be proud of it, nor a good man pleased with it.

The best and most perfect saints have been usually willing to die. There was no more necessary to be said to Aaron, but, *Go up into this mountain, and put off thy clothes, and die there; and he went up and undressed himself, and died.* No more was said to Moses, but, *Go up into this mountain, and see the land of Canaan, and die; and he went up and saw, and died.* If I should here dwell, and take a view of the way in which the saints entertain death, I should find that all of them entertained the summons of death contentedly; many cheerfully; and some not so much cheerfully as greedily; only Hezekiah desired to live a little longer, to see the kingdom settled, and (as it appears) to see an heir of the crown; and it must be made an example to encourage lingering, and lothness to die. It is true he prayed to

live, but whether he was absolutely unwilling to die or not, or whether he resisted the will of God, I dare not determine, nor can any one prove. For even Christ himself prayed, *That the cup might pass from him: yet with submission of his will, Not my will, but thy will be done.*

MEDITATION XXVIII.

Of not longing after a better Life.

3dly. If any man be content to spend his eternity in this world, in this imperfect state, though it were supposed to be sinless, he hath not arrived at that degree of divine love, after which it becomes every Christian to aspire.

If the prodigal soul do truly repent, if he do see there is a dearth in the whole creation, an insufficiency in the world to entertain him, he will resolve to return to his father's house. And he that could be content forever to dwell in a strange land, and take up with the husks that are there, declares himself a stranger to the bread of his father's house.

It may be, some one will doubt, and ask, Whether there be any man so fond of life, as to wish to live eternally in this body?

To which I answer, That men plainly see and know that they cannot, they must not spend their eternity here, and therefore will not confess they desire any such thing, accounting it a shame to be thought to be fond of a thing impossible.

But yet really many men wish it might be so, as having no view, belief, or hope of a better state. The extremities of old age indeed do force men to wish for death, who yet have no mind to die; but if any worldly man could live in health, peace, and youthful vigour, it is not to be doubted but that he would be well content to live here always. The poets make themselves sport with one Tithonus, who wished for immortality in this world; and it was granted him, that he should never die. But he had forgot to put in this, that he should not grow old neither; so that when he was extremely grown with old age, and good for nothing, he would fain have died, but could not. But if God would add indefectibility of wealth, health, and strength, to immortality, no doubt but that every worldly man would put up Tithonus's prayer.

And indeed, wishing to live another day, and yet another, and then another, is a kind of wishing to live eternally here.

He is strangely forgetful of himself, and his true interest, unkind to his own soul, who does not breathe after a state of perfection to come. And he that does so aright, will be growing up into it here. He that rightly desires heaven, would not willingly wait for all of it till the world to come. That which the poet accounted vicious in the sons of men, is virtuous and laudable in the sons of God, even in this present life, to lay hold upon eternal life.

What then, must men leap out of the body? No, but live above the body, grow up into a God-

like nature, into a resemblance of Christ Jesus, which is heaven.

Whilst we live in this body we cannot be happy, by reason of our senses, fancies, appetites; we must therefore desire a better body, if we study our own felicity. Yea, suppose the best; that we could live without sin, yet all this while we are but of a low form, we are capable of more excellent accomplishments. It becomes a truly generous mind to aspire after perfection, after a complete rest in its centre, after the fullest enjoyment of the supreme good.

And what meanest thou, O my soul, to cling so close to this foreign, this unsuitable relation! is there any thing more to be enjoyed here? Are there any more children in this barren womb of the world? And what meanest thou, O my lazy soul, that thou flaggest in thy motions, art content with thy attainments, that thou art continually feeding upon the creature, upon husks, and dost not mind thy journey! What an ass was Issachar, who saw that the land was pleasant, and bowed down his shoulder to bear, and became servant to tribute! What a fool art thou to fancy any rest here, and couch down so tamely under thy burden! They knew not what they said, who cried, It is good for us to be here. Consider what that here was, and that they had more temptation to be there, in that mount, than thou hast to be in this vale of tears. Surely thou knowest not what thou doest, who sittest down contented to be here.

MEDITATION XXIX.

Of desiring to be dissolved.

BUT is it possible that any man should desire to die?

Absolutely to desire dissolution, philosophers will not allow; but all divines will allow a desire of perfection, to be with Christ, and fully to enjoy the supreme good. Now this (I think) supposes a quitting of this life, and a putting off this body.

This thirst after holiness and happiness, is often made a characteristic of the lovers of God, and of his Son, Jesus. Christ desired, that where he was, his followers might be also; and why should not his followers be as kind to themselves?

If we view those texts seriously, which describe the lovers of God, we shall find this constantly to be their character, That they love the appearance of Christ Jesus; and that they wait for the mercy of Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

But is it not a sin, to be discontented at our stay in this world?

- To be discontented at the will of God, must be evil; for true happiness consists in conformity of will to the will of God. But to long after rest, and that in God, cannot be interpreted to be an intemperate act.

It is an act of faith and patience to be content to live. To desire death out of weariness of afflictions, and of the discipline of God, is weak and

cowardly. But to be weary of our distance, absence, imperfect state, and to long after perfection, and daily to grow up into it, is safe, good, proper, generous, and commendable.

O God, loosen my heart; break the league, I pray, if I may not pray that thou wouldst break the bonds! If I may not leap out of the body, make me very desirous to go out when the way is open. If my captive soul may not break prison, and free itself, yet make it willing to go out, when the great Redeemer shall open the prison doors, and say to the captive, Go forth. Is it not enough, O my soul, to have the prison doors set open; but wilt thou say also, Nay, but let them come themselves and fetch me out? What entertainment findest thou in husks, that thou art so unmindful of the bread of life? What an unseemly thing is it to be dragged home; to hide thyself (with Saul) amongst the stuff, when thou art sought for to be crowned.

Lord! that I could wait for thee, more than they that wait for the morning; more than the servant desireth the shadow, or the hireling looketh for the reward of his work! Oh that I might never think myself well, but when I am sick, sick of love.

MEDITATION XXX.

Of the profits of the world.

Now I will consider the world in a theological sense, and thus it denotes any thing that has op-

position to God. And so we read of the spirit of the world, the wisdom of the world, the men of the world, the fashions of the world, the sorrow of the world, &c. The world in general is, whatsoever is not God; and so even self may be called the world.

Whosoever loveth any thing, or cleaves to it more than to God, or habitually prefers it before him, is a lover of the world.

But I will view more particularly, what the Scripture comprehends under the notion of the world, in a theological sense.

And here I shall begin with the profits of the world, the riches and treasures of it; which have almost engrossed the name of the world, as being a principal part of it, to which the generality of men are addicted.

This I take especially to be meant by *mammon*, which one cannot serve in consistency with God. Whosoever prefers the profits and riches of the world before God, the same is a lover of the world.

To speak my judgment freely, I think there are many things more valuable than silver and gold. Learning and valour are better; all the ornaments and accomplishments of the mind are better than they; friends are better; health and peace are better.

It is a wonder to me, that men should lose their peace, forfeit their friends, expose their health for these things. Although (I confess) it is not idolatry, because these things are not God; yet it is absurd, unseemly, and disingenuous, to

prefer riches before these things, because these are really better.

To say I had rather be a prince than a philosopher, is proof of a low mind.

But to value these riches more than God, more than truth, goodness, and purity, makes an idolatrous lover of the world. To seek these more than the kingdom of God, to hunger after them more than after righteousness, to confide in them more than in the promise and providence of God, doth denominate the accursed person here spoken of.

MEDITATION XXXI.

Of stealing.

UNDER this head, of the love of the profits of the world, come to be condemned, injustice, worldly confidence, covetousness, carefulness, discontentedness, and uncharitableness, and the several branches of these.

I begin with injustice. They are all unjust, who either use undue means, or due means in an undue manner, to get worldly advantage, and therein are lovers of the world, more than of God.

The first sort of injustice is in the use of undue means. And so stealing, defrauding, lying, oppressing, bribery, are a preferring the world before righteousness, truth, and mercy; and consequently denominate a lover of the world more than of God.

According to this method, I must begin with stealing. God is righteous; the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; whosoever therefore loves it not, loves not him; whosoever steals, prefers the world before righteousness, and consequently does not love it.

Stealing is a violation of property. Let property be what it will in its own nature, be it not a sacred thing, be it a necessary evil, be it a good not simply necessary; yet it is now necessary, as things are with mankind. It cannot well be denied, that theft supposes property, and property supposes apostacy. If man had continued in his primitive state, it is likely the earth would have been as free to his innocent offspring as the air is at this day. At first, there was no enclosure but of one single tree; neither shall there be any in the world to come, though we should grant the doctrine of the saints reigning upon earth.

In utmost extremity, to violate property for the preservation of life, is no theft, or at least that theft is no sin; yea it becomes a duty. For no man can be necessarily placed between two evils. The one of them will be a duty.

Since the fall of man, property is necessary to avoid that confusion, which the lusts of men would introduce; yet perhaps it is not so determinate and severe as some men imagine. The poor have an interest in the estates of the rich; they have a part; which yet these ought to give; not the other to take. If they do not give it, they are the thieves. For detaining a right is theft, as well as taking any thing away wrongfully. I cannot deny but that every thief is cov-

etous, but I do also affirm, that every covetous man is a thief.

If we could suppose the sons of men free from all self-interest, and worldly love, there would be no need of property; neither would there be any poor; for there is enough in the world to serve all men that live in it, if they would be content with a due way of living. But God having (it may be for the hardness of men's hearts) established property, and national laws having determined it; to steal is to prefer the world before righteousness and order; whether poor men steal bread, or great men steal kingdoms.

Lord, grant, that I may never reckon myself, to have any more, than the use of things, lest I rob thee, (for in truth, thine is the property,) nor ever deny so much of these things as I can spare, to them that stand in need of them, lest I rob the poor; from whom to withhold, is as thievish as to take away!

MEDITATION XXXII.

Of defrauding.

DEFRAUDING is a deceiving, either by words or actions; and both these are either *good* or *bad*.

There is a *pious* fraud; whether that of which the papists talk so much, be it or not, I doubt; whether that of Jehu were such, I know not. There is enough in both of them to make them *frauds*; but whether there be enough in either to make them *pious*, I cannot tell.

But St. Paul being wise, caught the Corinthians with guile, 2 *Cor.* xii. 16. This was doubtless pious *fraud*.* This always designs the glory of God, and the good of the person deceived, and does not use ill means to accomplish the end; which indeed a man cannot do, and design the glory of God; for the glorifying of God, is our conformity to his will and laws.

I have always doubted whether Jacob's deceiving of his brother Esau, in the matter of the blessing, were pious or not; however, since the Scripture passes it over in silence, so will I.

Bad frauds also are either in words or actions. And so they are committed in representing things otherwise than they are, whereby ourselves are advantaged and another is injured; in extravagant commendations, undue disparagements, in false reckonings, false weights and measures. Yea, if the buyer for self-advantage, undervalue a commodity, crying, it is naught, it is naught, as far as in him lies, he defrauds the seller; as well as the seller out of covetousness, magnifying a thing that he knows to be naught, either cheats, or proclaims that he would cheat the buyer if he could.

The fraud of the Gibeonites brought a perpetual bondage upon them, though (except what direct lies there might be in it) I cannot see much of an impious fraud in them; no more than the greatest part of nominal Christians would adventure upon, if they were in the same circum-

* With respect to 2 *Cor.* xii. 16. the apostle only repeats the charge made against him. This text is, therefore, improperly alleged to justify cunning. See Dr. Macknight.

stances, and were sure of the same success. And it is plain that men in war, use stratagems to deceive their enemies, and are blameless; yea, I remember some instances of this in Scripture, approved by the Lord of hosts; although for my own part, without a revelation, I would judge simplicity and Godly sincerity to be the best policy.

Impious defrauding is, in some sense, worse than stealing; at least in this, that it offers a greater abuse to my brother. If I steal from my neighbour, I offend against his will; but if I cheat or deceive him, I abuse his understanding; wherefore most men had rather a hen were stolen from them, than be cheated of an egg; and it commonly grates more upon men to be accounted *fools*, than *knaves*.

And certainly the imposing upon a man's understanding, and that to his hurt, and my own gain, is very disingenuous. If he that *calls* his brother *fool*, be in so much danger; what of him, that *makes* him so? Every man that defrauds, imposes upon his brother's understanding, and makes his brother a fool. If Moses had indeed put out the eyes of the twelve tribes, as some of them falsely insinuated, and had made himself altogether a prince over them, he had better justified their murmurings against him, than any of those things did, that they objected against him.

MEDITATION XXXIII.

Of lying for worldly advantage.

ALTHOUGH it should not prove successful, and that thereby men do happen not to deceive; yet to lie, with a respect to worldly gain, is a predominant love of the world; for it is a preferring of the profits of the world before truth, and God is truth.

They that maintain any known erroneous opinion or practice, only to maintain a party, a name, an interest in the world, are liars, and lovers of the world. Truth ought to be dearer to us than our lives, much more than liberty, estimation, or interest. And Oh! would to God, that some of the greatest pretenders to religion, one way or another, would thoroughly examine themselves here! I am very jealous, that many palpable errors are defended, and many plain truths are dissembled and concealed; or at least many doubtful things imposed for truth, merely in favour of worldly interest, and that by many that carry their heads very high, and that to very pernicious consequences.

It is confessed indeed, that all truth is not so weighty, as to be professed to the loss of life; but all truth is so specious, (as much as St. Paul's cloke, and parchments that he left at Troas) as not to be denied; no, not for the preservation of life.

MEDITATION XXXIV.

Of oppression.

THERE are two things especially that hurt the wise, and spoil their wisdom, oppression and bribes put together, *Eccl. vii. 7.* Oppression makes men mad, and impatient, fretful, and so to depart from their wisdom. Gifts blind their eyes, and make them foolish in acting; these must needs therefore be great evils. It is strange, that giving should do men as much mischief as taking away; and yet so it is, both alike spoil men's wisdom.

The very threatening of oppression made ten tribes in twelve so mad, that they turned rebels, and made a defection from Rehoboam.

This oppression is properly found in the rich, such as kings and law-givers. The law is so far from excusing oppression, that the greatest oppression in the world is done by law. The greatest oppression that ever was committed in the sight of the sun, (nay indeed the sun hid his face, as being ashamed to see it,) was justified by a law; *We have a law, and by our law he ought to die,* John xix. 7. And we do elsewhere read of great oppressors, that framed mischief by a law, *Ps. xciv. 20.* Landlords oppress in rents; masters in work; yea, any man may oppress, that has but so much as an horse to ride on, in preferring worldly advantage before righteousness and mercy.

A man may be an oppressor, in an undue, severe, cruel exaction of that which is his own.

The servant in the Gospel that cast his fellow-servant into prison, who was willing to pay, but at present could not, *Matt. xviii. 29.* was a notorious oppressor. And indeed, the most monstrous oppression of all, is when the poor oppresseth the poor; they who feel the burden themselves, and consequently should pity others; they who are not able to make restitution, as soon as the rich can.

It is one of Solomon's aphorisms, *He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker*; that is, either God who made him after his own image, or God who made him poor; for even poverty itself may be called the gift of God, *μακάρων δῶρις αἰὲν ἰσότης*, [a bestowment of the happy beings who live forever,] as the heathens could acknowledge. As if he should say, Shall he be reproached or wronged, whom the master of the family has employed in the meanest offices of the family? It is not the servant's fault that he is so mean; if any man reproaches, he reproaches not so much him, as his master. The foot cannot help it, that it is not the head. Most men are poor of God's making; but if any make themselves poor, it is not for any man to oppress them, nor for every man to reproach them neither; for reproach is a sort of punishment, which every man may not inflict.

There are several sorts of oppression; in goods, in money, (as they that detain the hire of the labourer,) in racking of rents, in selling, (making men pay the more for their necessity,) in rights, in liberty, &c. some of which I shall have occasion to meditate upon hereafter, and therefore will dismiss them at present.

MEDITATION XXXV.

Of Bribery.

THEY that take gifts to pervert justice, or favour any cause in judgment, are lovers of the world; for they prefer it before truth and righteousness. I do not think that every present is a bribe; but I think, it is safest for a minister of justice not to take gifts at all, lest he should be corrupted.

There is certainly a wonderful power in gifts, to blind the eyes even of the wise, *Exod. xxiii. 8.* *Every man* (saith the wise man) *is a friend to him that giveth gifts*; which argues the great interest that worldly profit hath in the heart of man; and consequently, how hard and noble a thing it is to be purged of worldly love.

Giving is indeed noble; *Beatius est dare, quam accipere*; [It is more blessed to give than to receive.] Giving to the poor is a god-like act; but either to give or receive gifts for the perverting of justice, is abominable.

Bribery, in this respect, is generally a greater sin than stealing; in that stealing is mostly committed by men that have need, and bribery, commonly, by them that have none. The lesser the temptation, the greater the sin.

Bribery may be committed in many things besides money; the bottle and the bag do speak as corrupt language, as the purse.

And there are many kinds of indirect bribery *per alium*, [by another,] as bad as that which is direct and *per se*, [by one's self.]

There is a kind of bribery in ecclesiastics, that seek after popular acceptance; and chaplains that preach pleasing things, or stifle doctrines that they know will be displeasing (however edifying) to gain preferment; which, if the law would allow the exposition, might, perhaps, more properly, be called simony, than bribery.

Yea, there is a strange kind of blasphemous bribery that men use towards God. I suspect the greatest part of worship in the world is intentional bribery. Some go about to bribe God with their prayers and fastings, and forms of devotion, some with their alms and acts of charity; as they of old did with their oblations and sacrifices, of whom the satyrist speaks wittily:

*Illorum lachrymæ mentitaque munera præstant
Ut veniam culpis non abnuat, ansere magno
Scilicet et tenui popano corruptus Osiris.*

[With tears and insincere presents they seek indulgence for their faults, and Osiris is bribed by the offered goose and cake.]

Nay, it is to be feared, that however precious a doctrine faith is, there are many, that under the notion of believing, do indeed go about to bribe the justice of God with the righteousness of Christ; as indeed all those do, who lay great stress upon the righteousness of Christ, and themselves take no care to be righteous. Although our apostle hath so plainly told us, *That he that worketh righteousness is righteous.*

There is also a great deal of political bribery in the world; when counsellors, senators, or oth-

er trustees, betray that sacred thing, their trust, for money, or money's worth. Perhaps some of this will be appropriate, when I come to consider man in his political capacity; if it should not, I know it is easy for any man to enlarge upon it in his own meditations.

MEDITATION XXXVI.

Of those that offend in the undue degree of seeking riches.

UNDER the notion of unjust, are comprehended not only those that use *undue means*, but also they that use due means in an *undue manner*, to get worldly riches; and these are equally lovers of the world.

These are of two sorts; either such as offend in the *degree*, or such as offend in the *season* of seeking the world.

They offend in the degree, who although they follow merchandize or trades in themselves lawful, yet pursue them so ardently, so eagerly, with so much intenseness of mind, (which is an excess of diligence, as idleness is a defect of it) that they plainly appear to make the world their *ἔργον*, [first object,] and other things their *πάρεργον*, [secondary object,] the world their God, and the things of God a by-business. They invert our Saviour's divine counsel, and seek first the world, (which is the *alia* [other things] spoken of in *Matt. xi.* or rather *aliena* [another's things] to the soul) but about the kingdom of God and his

righteousness, they are very indifferent. They work out their livelihoods with more fear and trembling, than their salvation; give all diligence to make their callings and the effects of them sure, but little or none to make their calling and election sure. They seek and grasp the world with great eagerness; they rise up early, sit up late, eat their bread in carefulness, waste their strength, spend their age in toil and sorrow, perhaps shorten their days with immoderate labour, and will be found at last to be *felo de se*. [Self-murderers.] For a man may be a murderer as well by employing his hands too violently for himself, as by laying violent hands upon himself. They are resolved to secure their worldly interest; but they will trust God with their souls, as if they hoped those would fare well enough of course. To trust God with our souls is good; but to pretend to do it, and in the mean time to neglect them ourselves, is a profane kind of faith; men do not thus trust him with their bodies, or estates. The faith that rightly trusts, does also love, and work, and work by love.

MEDITATION XXXVII.

Of those that offend in the undue season of seeking the world.

THEY offend in the season of seeking the world, who follow their worldly employments in any season that ought to be devoted to the service of God by his special command.

Concerning the special season of prayer, we have nothing certain that I know of, though it is most proper and becoming to begin every day with God; most reasonable that the devout ejaculation of thanksgiving or supplication, should take place of worldly cares and contrivances, and should keep house in the soul at night, when they are all dismissed. A dog is a man's servant, which he turns out of doors at night, when he takes his children to bed with him; the dog may not enter in the morning without leave, till the door be opened for him; whereas the children get up, and come into the house when they please.

We do indeed read of the hour of prayer, but it is hard to say, which hour it was; or if we could, Where is the divine authority, the stamp of God for the observation of it?

But the Lord's day is certain, known and commanded to be observed. They that then ordinarily prefer the management of worldly business, before the worship of God, appear to be lovers of the world.

I know we must allow here for the works of necessity and mercy; these are to take place of the Sabbath. The preservation of life, though it be but of a beast, is an act of mercy, which God himself prefers before sacrifice; and so did the Lord of the Sabbath, by his example, teach us to do.

A physician is excusable in travelling to relieve his patient, if it be, in the sight of God, rather in merciful care, than worldly covetousness. But if the expectation and desire of a fee be most predominant, it is in vain to pretend necessity; God

shall find it out; before him it will bear them out but badly, to plead, The law allowed it.

But who shall excuse the lawyers, and other men that travel journies upon ordinary occasions, and upon business of light moment, and violate the Lord's day to save a little money, or a little labour, or for more convenient dispatch of worldly business?

To contrive to take a sermon in their way, to be at church at such a place by such an hour, I suspect will not mend the matter before a jealous God. Christ says, *Ye cannot serve God and mammon*: But these ingenious worldlings have found out a way to do it. They can travel a good day's journey, of twenty or thirty miles perhaps, and yet contrive to be at some church twice the same day. Then they say to God, Lo there is that which is thine; the rest is my own. Why may I not make the best use of it? Thus they divide the day betwixt God and the world. But whether he that requires a whole day for his service, will accept such partnership, *viderint illi*, it is good to consider well of it.

MEDITATION XXXVIII:

Of worldly confidence.

AFTER injustice, comes worldly confidence to be condemned. Trust and confidence is a part of worship; worldly confidence therefore is idolatry. Yea, it is blasphemy to rest in and upon

the creature, since God alone is the rest of souls, and the confidence of the ends of the earth.

To confide in the duration of riches, is a piece of folly, because they are winged, and so uncertain; *Thou fool, this night, &c.* But this is not the folly that I mean.

To trust in riches, to repose one's self upon them, therefore to account ourselves happy or safe because we have them, to rejoice mainly in them, crying, *Be merry, thou hast goods laid up for many years:* This is the worldly confidence that God has so often condemned and forbidden.

God shall destroy thee for ever, says the psalmist, (Ps. 52.) *The righteous shall laugh at him, (saying,) Lo this is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches!*

Job reckons it amongst the greatest of sins, to say to gold, *Thou art my hope;* or to the fine gold, *Thou art my confidence,* Job xxxi. 24.

Those that trust in riches, shall not be profited by them; either to bribe the enemy, who shall despise their silver and gold, as the prophet speaks; or to purchase health in time of sickness; strength and swiftness shall not avail; God will baffle these, by making the enemy swifter and stronger to pursue. *Ye said, we will ride upon the swift; therefore shalt they that pursue you be swift,* Isa. xxx. 16.

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they do not trust in uncertain riches, says the apostle. Lord what a strange thing is man! He must not only be admonished, but charged. Why, what's the matter? That he do not trust in rich-

es, uncertain riches. Why, if they be uncertain, there is no danger of trusting in them. Yes, they are uncertain, and he knows it, yet he must be charged not to trust in them.

It were endless to give an account both from sacred and profane history of the disappointments of those that have relied upon, and thought themselves safe in their temporal prosperity and worldly riches; or of the princes of the earth, that have been miserably deceived with the number and strength of men, horses and ships, wherein they have confided, more than in the Lord of hosts.

MEDITATION XXXIX.

Περί ἐπιθυμίας, or, of covetousness.

I will now consider of covetousness, which is an undue desire of worldly wealth. This desire is undue, by the kind of the wealth, or by the degree of the desire: And so we are covetous, either when we lust after that which is another man's; or intemperately desire worldly wealth of our own, though we use no indirect means to obtain it.

The first of these, is that covetousness directly aimed at in the tenth commandment, called in Greek *ἐπιθυμία*; and it is a sort of invading of another man's right.

There is a good covetousness, a coveting earnestly the best gifts; but this is improperly called covetousness. For to speak properly, we are

not to covet the gifts and graces that are in other men, although in themselves they are desirable, yet as they are other men's, they are not the object of our desires. There may be a bad desire of a good thing.

Evil covetousness is of earthly things, and it supposes an impotent and worldly mind, and an over valuation of earthly things; it proves us to be led by our senses, and not by right reason.

This covetousness is a kind of spiritual adultery. Not only he that looks upon his neighbour's wife, but he that looks upon his neighbour's house, or land, or goods, to covet them, is guilty of worldly love; and that is spiritual adultery. A sin little regarded, I suspect, but certainly very dreadful.

The first unchaste glances of the eye towards any thing that is our neighbour's, are forbidden; and it becomes us to be offended at them, to make haste to suppress them. But if we allow them to grow up into wilful and steady desires, they are that predominant love of the world that the apostle tells us is so pernicious.

See what severe notice God takes of this kind of covetousness; how he visited it in Eve, who coveted an evil covetousness to her posterity; in Achan and Ahab, who coveted an evil covetousness to their own houses.

There is no man that is over-greedy of possessing, but will sometimes desire to have what is none of his own. If this be the standing maxim, *Oportet habere*, [We must have;] it will follow, *Unde habeat querit nemo*, [it is no matter how he comes by it.]

They deceive themselves, that excuse their covetousness, by saying, I covet nothing of your's, I desire nothing but mine own. This cannot be; every worldly minded man is guilty of this covetousness; for the same nature and principle that prompts men so greedily to grasp their own, will certainly put them upon a desire to obtain other men's.

This kind of covetousness has a great deal of injustice in it; it is a kind of stealing. He that lusts after a woman, is an adulterer; he that hates his brother, is a murderer; and by a parity of reason, he that covets is a thief.

Lord, who knows how oft he is guilty in one degree or other! Help me to make a covenant with my eyes, lest they betray me in looking upon my neighbour's house, as well as his wife!

There may be covetousness, in too vehement desiring of what is another man's, though one be willing to give a sufficient price for it. I do not think it will excuse Ahab from covetousness, that he offered a full price or a good exchange for Naboth's vineyard. Nay, the very over-buying of a thing, (if it be judicious) is an argument of covetousness; if some present necessity, or unseen convenience do not excuse it. And what can one make of them that cry, I wish such a thing were mine to bestow upon you; or, I wish it were mine, so that no body were the worse for it? What, I say, can any man make of these, but fools and covetous?

To heal us of this disease, let us learn not to overvalue earthly things. They are all lovely only in God. In him we may enjoy the sweet-

ness of all these things, without possessing the things themselves; so far as we are spiritualized, we live upon God, and enjoy all things in him, and cannot be covetous.

The sin of **Eve** was, that she coveted to be like unto **God** in his incommunicable properties. If she had been omniscient as God, then God had not been omniscient; for there cannot be two omniscients. But the only laudable covetousness is, to covet to be like unto God in his communicable perfections.

MEDITATION XL.

Περὶ πλεονξίας, or, of covetousness.

AN immoderate, greedy desire of worldly things, though not attended with another man's hurt or loss, is covetousness.

To seek an unwieldy greatness and fulness in the world, to extend one's care to children's children's children; what does this import, but an over valuation of the world, and an atheistical distrust of God?

To be more studious of worldly accommodations, than of enriching the mind with virtue; of gaining an estate, than of saving the soul; of portions for children, more than of their education; is palpable preference of the world before God, and rank covetousness.

And what excuse can be made for those greedy tradesmen, that appoint to themselves no end, no measure of getting? I know indeed that an

employment is good; and I know also, that there are many good ways of men's employing themselves, besides hoarding riches. I suspect these men do never sincerely examine themselves, whether all this time, in all these pains that they take, they act out of pure, conscientious desire to live in an employment. Methinks it is very agreeable to the temper of universal charity, to say, Now that I have provided for my own house, when shall my brethren provide for their houses also! I will make room for those that are straitened; I have eaten and drunken, now let them also eat and drink. Or if pure conscientious desire of an employment keep them in their station, that they will still work with their hands the things which they account good, let it be to give to him that needeth.

Much wealth necessarily brings along with it much care; many fears do usually increase; worldly desires will be followed with great accounts. And to prefer this before the peace and quietness of our minds, and the easiness and sufficiency of our accounts, favours of great imprudence, and impiety.

I know covetousness is hard to be discerned, and it is of so ill a name that few will own it. But the Searcher of hearts does discern it; and his word does describe the men that are guilty of it, by their hastening to be rich, by lading themselves with thick clay; by their willing to be rich, (1 *Tim.* vi. 9.) by their rising up early, late taking rest, eating the bread of sorrow, and the like. And we can partly discern men's necessities, their families, and their dependants; if their

worldly care exceed what these do in reason call for, it is to be suspected, that it is degenerated into covetousness.

To these intemperate desirers after wealth, I commend that plain but terrible text of our Lord's, *It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.* What a strange task is this! Yea, though we should be so favourable as to interpret it of a cable rope, which yet the spelling of the word will not endure. A camel go through the eye of a needle? it implies the greatest human impossibility.

Oh, but (says the worldling,) God can effect this; for the text tells us for our comfort, *That with him all things are possible.*

But I pray, friend, How know you that God will? Is it not that God, who hath commanded you not to covet, not to labour after the meat that perisheth, not to be careful what to eat and to drink, not to seek great things for yourselves, not to lay up treasures for yourselves on earth?

Oh, but they can evade the reproof at least by distinguishing. By rich men are there meant, Those that trust in riches. Now, say they, we can avoid that well enough.

Nay, not so easily neither. If it were so easy a thing, What need rich men be charged so severely that they do not trust in riches? It seems rather to be very difficult, next to impossible; in that Christ hath made having riches, and trusting in riches, to be phrases of the same import, *Mark, x. 23, 24.* The Scripture records those few that were rich and good, as wonders of di-

vine grace, as instances of omnipotence. And indeed there are but very few of them. He was considered a prodigy, *Quisquis ingentes oculo irretorto spectat acervos*, [who could look calmly on vast heaps of wealth;] and so he may be now.

It is the character of a disciple of Christ, To forsake house and lands for his name's sake. And is it an argument of a mind so disposed, a sign of a soul so prepared, to be perpetually grasping after more, and to be joining house to house, and land to land?

If they that hunger after righteousness, are therefore blessed, because they shall be filled, I am sure they must needs be cursed, that hunger after the *mammon* of unrighteousness; for they are not, cannot, shall not be filled.

Oh the shame that is upon the professors of the religion of Christ Jesus! Men that pretend to a life more excellent than that of a prince, to be guilty of covetousness! All their religion is vain, who mind earthly things. O Lord, incline my heart to thy testimonies, and not to covetousness!

MEDITATION XLI.

Of carefulness.

I will descend a little lower, to consider of worldly carefulness. This is directly contrary to faith in the promises and providence of God, and so is preferring of the world before him.

It proceeds from a distrust of God's providence, which distrust is very sinful and dishonourable; nay, it is as if one should refuse to take God's word for sufficient security. However light men make of it, and however small a fault the worldling represents it to himself, sure I am, our Saviour connects it with gluttony and drunkenness, and seems to make it as bad a fault and as dangerous as those, (Luke xxi. 34.) *Take heed lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting or drunkenness, or cares of this life, &c.*

It argues a want of ingenuous affiance in God, and is perplexing to the mind, hindering converse with God, which is the highest perfection, and the greatest happiness of the souls of men.

What can I say worse of it, than that it is unseemly, uneasy, unsafe, and unprofitable? For after all our cares, all events depend upon God; and all human solicitude cannot alter or fix one event, nor make the least change in the course of things, *Not one hair white or black.*

I do not remember that Christ Jesus was ever more industrious in arguing against any thing, than against this worldly carefulness, *Mat. vi.* Read the Gospel throughout, and I do not think you will find him to have set himself more against any sin than this.

Our heavenly Father is very gracious in offering his help for our relief against this carefulness. *The curse be upon me,* said Rebekah to her son Jacob. Kind mother! Such is the kindness of our Father, *Cast your care upon me.* It is an easy and pleasant thing to depend upon another,

to trust to Almighty Goodness, in comparison of what careful anxiety is.

Diligence is not this carefulness; care is not so much forbidden us as carefulness. This solicitousness about the world is known to be sinful, by the unreasonableness of it, the immoderateness of it; when men take more care, and exercise their minds much more about the things of the body, than of the soul; of time, than of eternity.

Lord, make me to understand the value of my soul, and the danger that it is in, that my thoughts and cares may be mainly bestowed upon the preservation of it! Let me see the particular providence of God, which reaches even to every sparrow, and single hair of my head; and believe all his gracious promises, so as not to be any more solicitous about this world!

MEDITATION XLII.

Of discontentedness.

DISCONTENT is the tumult or mutiny of the soul. In civil affairs, mutiny is accounted a degree of treason; and it is no less in spiritual.

A restlessness and unsatisfiedness of mind with our present condition, is preferring of our own wills, or our own ease and accommodation, before the will of God.

This I distinguish from impatience, for impatience always supposes evils; but discontent may be in plentiful and good condition.

When this discontent is predominant, it argues a worldly temper, a soul too much affected towards worldly things, and an unsubduedness to the will of God; it argues, I say, pride and unbelief.

It is plainly our duty to be contented with such things as we have.

What then, may some one say, May we not pray to be delivered out of affliction, out of prison, debt, or disease?

This objection belongs to the head of impatience, to which I refer it.

But may not a man seek to have more, though he have enough; to be still richer and richer?

Ans. In general, it is an admirable temper to seek nothing. If we have enough we ought not to desire more; for by the same rule we may desire still more than that, and yet more, and no measure will be put to our desires.

But it will be asked, What is enough?

Which is a very hard question to answer. It is not the same to all; yet there is such a quantum as enough in the world. To the apostle Paul food and raiment were enough, *1 Tim. vi. 8.* To Jacob, bread to eat, and raiment to put on, were enough, *Gen. xxviii. 20.* A little is enough if we reckon right, if we reckon wrong nothing is. *Natura paucis contenta*, was the old saying, Nature is content with few things; and sure grace desires no more. Let us contemplate the holy Jesus, and consider what he accounted enough. It is most certain that he might have had more, therefore his was not a forced contentment; so far as can be gathered from his

story, a small pittance in the world was enough to him.

I know it may be replied, Christ had no children to provide for.

I answer, that he had a great deal of kindred whom to make great. We are told in the history of Nepotism, That those that pretend to great holiness are much given to hoard for their nephews, though they have no children.

Suppose we have children, if we know what is truly enough for ourselves, we may know what is enough for them. Will it certainly be the better for them to be left rich? I am sure it proves worse to many; a fuel to vice, and that is worst. Poor men's children commonly prove the best; not only the best men, but the best scholars, the best artists. To marry children richly, is not the way to make them better, but prouder, and idler. The best provision for children, is education; the best matching them, is the uniting of their souls to God.

But what shall we say to those that covet for they know not whom; that have neither child nor brother, yet are not satisfied with riches, *Eccl. iv. 8.* If this be not vanity, I know not what is.

But still it will be pretended, We desire more only to have to give away, and to do good with.

This, I doubt not, is but a pretence, and a mere fallacy. Has any man indeed so great a desire to do good, that he will load himself with certain accounts, for the uncertain thing of doing good; venture upon temptations and snares, endanger his soul to do good? This would be a

fervent lover of God indeed. But who will show him to me!

Lord, convince me of the wisdom of the Divine will, that cares for all men most suitably. Let my soul be so overpowered with the sense of it, that I may prefer nothing! Mortify in me all proud preference to my own will and wisdom before thine! Suffer me not to allow myself in any discontent, but a holy weariness of my distance from thee, and a holy restlessness in my motions towards my centre! Amen, Amen.

MEDITATION XLIII.

Of immoderate Mourning, or Impatience.

IMMODERATE sorrow for the want or loss of worldly things, springs from an intemperate love of the world. It is certainly a preferring of worldly things before the will and wisdom of God. Hereby we contradict it, resist it; we would destroy it if we could, and set up our wills in its stead.

It is very foolish too; for if we bind up our hearts in worldly things, and they happen to fly away, they carry away our hearts too, and leave us dead and stupified.

It worketh death sometimes in the plainest sense; men go down into the grave by mourning; but in a spiritual sense certainly it is fatal and destructive, if predominant.

It must be confessed, that many good people have had seasons and passions of this; but this

will not justify others; it was unseemly in them; let us beware that that be not predominant and habitual in us, which in them was only a violence, a sudden fit of passion, which they subdued presently, and ever repented of.

This impatience of evils is very unreasonable, *Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not also receive evil?* Who am I, poor, proud, sinful wretch, that I should fancy myself to be such a darling of Heaven, that it should not so much as suffer the cold air to breathe upon me? Shall I be glad to receive the good which I have not deserved, and be angry to bear the evil that I have?

It is unreasonable upon God's account too. The degree and duration of all sickness is weighed out exactly by an infinitely wise mind. The cup that is given us to drink is mingled, and presented by our heavenly Father. Moreover, this wise God is infinitely kind too; *He doth not willingly afflict, nor delight to grieve the children of men,* Lam. iii. 33. He would not afflict them but for some good that he hath in view.

When we pray, That the will of God may be done, it seems we mean his will of kindness only. Lord, we are willing that thou shouldest bless us, and do us as much good as may be; but nothing of thy afflicting will; Oh no. Or if that must be done, let it be done upon others, not upon us. Oh rarely distinguished; as if we should say, Our Father, we desire that thy will may be done and executed universally; but yet with this limitation and restriction, that it do not cross our wills at any time. - Or will we understand

our prayers so, as that all men should be ready to do the will of God, but not that God should do his own will? Rare divinity!

Oh but my impatience and immoderate mourning over losses of estate, relations, health, doth not proceed from any over-valuation of them, but from the sense of God's displeasure, he afflicts me for my sin; thus providence is a judgment, a punishment; and may I not, ought I not to lay it to heart?

Ans. You believe so; and therefore you infer, that it is reasonable to be impatient. You do well, to be angry, and intemperate. And I pray, why should we not be content that God should punish us for our faults? Ought we not to submit to the discipline of our heavenly Father, as well as to the parents of our flesh? It is hard to say when God punishes his children for their faults; but be sure however, that it is for their amendment. And to be impatient that we are corrected for our faults, is an ill kind of repentance, it adds faults to faults.

Good God, mould my will into thy holy will! Thou art fatherly and friendly in thy corrections; rather smite me, than not recover me; rather make up my way with thorns, than suffer me to wander from thee; make me more willing to give my back to the smiter, than to perish for want of chastisement! Let my afflictions bring forth the pleasant fruits of righteousness, not the sour and harsh fruits of impatience!

MEDITATION XLIV.

Of uncharitableness.

THERE are many sorts of uncharitableness; but because I am considering the riches of the world, I will confine myself to that of not giving alms.

Not to give at all, and to have bowels perfectly shut up against the indigent, is the grossest uncharitableness. So gross, that I think few are guilty of it, and none will confess it.

To give something, but grudgingly, and with an ill will, is uncharitableness; not to take pleasure in this exercise, spoils it. Men may be many ways forced to give, and yet no thanks to them; it does not proceed from a charitable mind.

To give sparingly, is uncharitableness. Not that true charity consists in the quantity, but in the principle. The Gospel-widow gave much in giving her mite. But not to give proportionably to what God hath given us, and as the necessities of our families will permit, is uncharitableness. Nay I suppose that the nature of true charity requires, that a man do sometimes deny himself, and straiten his own family in some degree, to relieve the necessities of others.

If any one would know the just proportions of charity, I confess I do not find them precisely stated in the word of God, neither is it an argument of a charitable mind to be curious in this inquiry; I suspect those who are so, as I do those who labour much to know the lowest degree of

saving grace. To those that ask, How much more must we give? I will not answer as our Saviour did in a similar case, *If you will be perfect, go, sell all, and give to the poor*; but I will desire them seriously to consider of the proportion which God expressly required the Israelites to give to the Levites and to the poor; and of that tenth part, which it is reported that Dr. Hammond and many other charitable persons, have thought themselves bound to devote to charitable uses; and then only add with our Saviour, *Go thou and do likewise*. But it is against the nature of charity to be stinted. I think therefore if we lived by this short rule at present, it might do well; to give what we can spare, and to spare what is more than enough for our own use. When I and my family have eaten a dish of meat, I do not grudge to give the rest to the poor. And so I argue "when I have enough for myself and mine, the rest belongs to the poor." And would to God men would know when they have enough of riches, as they do, when they have eaten and drunk sufficiently!

To give that which is another man's is not charity; or at least it is an ill governed charity, that is not in conjunction with justice.

O thou that takest pleasure in the communications of thyself, that gloriest in sending forth rays of thy own perfections, who rejoicest in thy works of bounty and mercy, conform me also to this divine disposition, that I may rejoice to do good; account it a better and more blessed thing to give than to receive; be better pleased to find an object, upon whom to bestow a treas-

ure, than to find a treasure! And let this rejoicing be pure; not springing from the hopes of a reward, (lest my very charity at last should be found to be covetousness,) nor from applause in this world (lest it should be pride) but from a principle of God-like love, Christ-like compassion, and rational belief, that it is better to give to them that need, than to keep what one needs not!

And O my soul, what does it profit, what signifies the mere profession of gold more than of stones? The use then is all. And what better use can there be of any thing, than to make it serve a public good? *quo communius eo melius.* [the more common a thing is, so much the better it is.]

MEDITATION XLV.

Of pleasure in general.

THE general notion of pleasure is a gratification of any faculty; or a satisfaction resulting from the union of the faculty with the object. From whence it follows, that there must needs be the greatest pleasure in the enjoyment of God; especially when all the faculties shall be advanced and enlarged.

It is not hard to say, nor hard to conceive, that man's chief happiness consists in pleasure; for the happiness wherein man takes no pleasure is not happiness. Heaven itself cannot make a mind happy that cannot delight in it.

It is lawful to take pleasure in the things which we possess. Solomon seems to make it an argument of a worldly mind not to do so; sure I am a man may do so, and yet not be sensually voluptuous. It is strange that covetous men, who love the world most, should yet find the least pleasure in it; they can take no pleasure in what they have, on account of their grasping after what they have not.

Covetousness seems to be more unnatural than voluptuousness. Innocent nature aims at the gratification of itself, even in the creatures that have not sinned. To enjoy present good things, and not to lay up in store, is the commendation of birds, the moral virtue of sparrows.

Yea, pleasure seems not only to be lawful, but necessary. Life would not be life without it. If there were not a thing called enjoyment, as well as possession, the bird, that makes her nest where she pleases, would be as rich as the greatest landlord. It is impossible but that nature should take pleasure in the supply of her wants, in the gratification of her appetites. Pleasure is as natural to sensitive creatures, as appetite, and appetite as being.

But however natural the pleasures of sense are, there is a mighty difference between the pleasures of minds and spirits. The pleasures of the flesh last no longer than whilst the necessities of nature are supplying themselves; enjoy them and you lose them. The pleasures of the spirit are fine and strong, and (like itself) lasting, everlasting, *pleasures for evermore.*

MEDITATION XLVI:

Of worldly pleasure.

THERE have heretofore been, and it is prophesied that there shall be hereafter, men that love pleasure more than God. Whoever these sensualists are, the love of God is not in them. For the predominant love of sensual pleasures is inconsistent with the saving love of God. If the belly be our God, our end will be destruction; God shall destroy both it and us. If we serve our own bellies, we serve not the Lord Jesus Christ; whom if any man serve not, love not, he is *anathema maran atha*.

The predominant love of pleasures is deadly; *if ye live after the flesh ye shall die*. Yea, it is death itself. What the apostle says of every widow that liveth in pleasure, is true of every woman, yea, and man too, *They are dead whilst they live*, 1 Tim. v. 6. This was the father's opinion of his voluptuous, prodigal son, during his riotous course of life, *he was dead*, Luke xv. 24.

To take more pleasure in the gratification of the bodily senses, than of the soul, What is this, but to advance the beast above the man? To give up one's self to the pleasures of the flesh, more than of the mind; to prefer them before the enjoyment of God, before the exercise of virtue, is to be a *lover of pleasures more than of God*, and consequently to be the lover of the world here spoken of.

I know it is hard to convince a man that he is habitually intemperate in his pleasures. But certainly, when men do industriously, from time to time, pursue their pleasures, and that in things unlawful, these must needs be the pleasures of sin, and this is manifest sensuality. Yea, though it be not in things directly forbidden, if the pursuit be with more zeal and industry, and more expense of time, than is given to the interest and concernments of the soul, it must needs be accounted sensuality, and a living after the flesh.

When every particular man has exculpated himself, (as the worst of men will do) and denied the charge of being sensualists; yet it remains a certain truth, that there are many lovers of pleasure, more than of God; such as live in pleasures upon earth, as the apostle terms it, *Jam. v. 5.* not lap and be gone as a dog at Nilus; but they wallow in them; they swim in them; they immerse themselves in them; they delight in them as in their proper elements. Such as *love pleasures*, as Solomon speaks, *Prov. xxi. 17.* Such as are *given to pleasures*, as the prophet describes them, *Isa. xlvii. 8.* Such as *serve divers pleasures*, as the apostle speaks, *Tit. iii. 3.* Such as *fare deliciously every day*, as is said of Dives. Such, like beasts, nourish their hearts as in a day of slaughter. These surely are predominant lovers of pleasure. And are there not many such now, as well as there were in the days of those prophets and apostles? Let us not mistake; a man may sin in his pleasures, who does not take pleasure in sin.

Carnal pleasures I reckon to be either sensual, or fantastical. Thus I will distinguish them for

method sake. Although those of the fancy may, for ought I know, be properly called sensual. I think divines reckon them so; and fancy itself may well be called a bodily sense, being found in beasts as well as men.

Now these sensual pleasures become unlawful, either by their matter, measure, manner, or season. And in this order I will address my meditations to them, and afterwards consider the pleasures of fancy.

MEDITATION XLVII.

Of breaches of the seventh commandment.

AMONG the sensual pleasures that are unlawful in the very matter, fornication and adultery offer themselves especially to be considered. To prefer these pleasures of the flesh, and gratifications of the beastly appetite before purity, is a predominant love of the world.

Whilst we carry about such bodies as these, we shall have an appetite to conjunction, as well as to eating or drinking; and to think perfectly and properly to mortify it, (for I do not call restraints, mortification,) seems to be somewhat like the fanatical humour, of living without meat.

The lust of hunger is best mortified, by being *duly* gratified; and perhaps the best, if not only way of subduing this appetite, is to accommodate it, in the ways and seasons allowed by the God of nature; and shall no more be interpreted a making provision for the flesh, to fulfil it in the lusts

thereof, than the most innocent kind of cookery is so.

Who can blame the philosopher that would eat, though he took no delight in the meat, yet who did it to be rid of the importunity of hunger, which solicited him and wearied him so, that he could not follow his studies, and was glad when the trouble of eating was over. *Dare operam liberis* is but a toil; and such an one as a wise man is afterwards ashamed that he has taken. To find no need, and to have no appetite, in this case, (as indeed in most others) is more easy and pleasant to a good and wise man, than to have relief and satisfaction. For my own part, if I were put to my choice, I would much rather choose, never to be hungry or thirsty, than to eat and drink at pleasure.

But however natural this appetite is, God has founded it, and determined it to its object. Eating is a natural action, and to hunger is a natural lust; yet some meats we know were forbidden, so are some conjunctions, on pain of everlasting ruin.

As the case now stands with man, I think marriage is a merciful institution, and much for man's ease. it is better to be restricted here, than left at liberty; as it is better for a traveller to be bound up to one safe way, than to have many ways from which to choose.

And as it is a merciful institution, because it avoids perplexity; so because it escapes superfluity, &c. One woman is sufficient for one man; which makes adultery more inexcusable in the males, than in the females.

Marriage is also very much for order. What a miserable confusion would there be in the world, if promiscuous connection were allowed! Yea, even those more than brutish epicures, who will plead for it to be allowed to themselves, do not allow it to their horses and dogs. For they that would keep up a right strain, and a generous breed, will not suffer the female to couple with every male.

Marriage, and the just observation of the marriage covenant, is also for the health of men; whereas fornication and adultery bring diseases, filthy and loathsome diseases upon the body.

And who can sufficiently bewail the defilement of the land? Alas! that so many families in one city, of the most reformed nation upon earth, should be maintained by the curing of diseases, brought by such sins, as the better sort of the heathens abominated, and ought not to be once named among us, as becometh Christians!

Whether there would have been separation of goods in the state of innocence, is justly doubted; but for wives, no doubt there would. For even innocent Adam was formally married. God has made an inclosure of the females, and wo to him that violates it. The adulterer therefore is as properly a thief, as he that robs his neighbour's orchard, and much more heinously so.

Oh thou blessed Spirit of purity, help me to make a covenant with mine eyes, that I do not look upon a woman to lust after her! Let my soul be wholly charmed with the beauty of holiness! Give me always to possess my vessel in sanctification and honour, that I be not defiled in flesh nor fancy!

MEDITATION XLVIII.

Of gluttony and drunkenness.

NEXT to the sensual pleasures that are unlawful in the matter, come to be considered those that are unlawful in the measure. The matter of the pleasure in eating and drinking, is lawful; but the measure makes them both no pleasure, and sinful too. Whosoever takes pleasure in meat or drink more than in God, is a lover of the world.

For the gratification of the sensual appetite, to eat or drink things forbidden, was to prefer the service of sense, before the authority of God; since the difference of meats and drinks is taken away, to eat, though it be honey; and to drink, though it be wine, to excess, is the same.

But this excess is not simply to be estimated by the quantity. Some men may and ought to eat and drink more than others, and in so doing are not excessive, because nature is but well relieved in these by such a quantum, though in others it would be oppressed. It is unphysical and unchristian, to judge another man by my proportion. He that should appoint the same measure of manure to feed, or desire the same measure of rain to refresh all sorts of ground, and should make no difference between the land of Canaan, and the land of Egypt, would forfeit his skill in husbandry. Yea, though a thirsty traveller or labourer; or an unwary Noah should chance to be drunk with a draught of wine, he

would be innocent, in comparison of the tippler, who yet can wipe his mouth, and go home, and say, *He is not drunk.*

Much less is excess to be estimated by the distemper consequent upon eating and drinking. Many men are gluttons, that do not surfeit; and drunkards, that are not drunk. The sober and temperate are sometimes distempered with that quantum with which the intemperate are not affected. Many can sit by the wine from morning till night, and not be inflamed; and yet if a very good call do not justify them, a wo may belong to them for all that, and they may be reckoned among the drunkards.

The truth is, it requires much skill in physic, as well as in divinity, to know exactly how not to offend in eating or drinking. And certainly if we cannot be perfect casuists concerning ourselves, much less can we be concerning other men. Such is the constitution of this body that perhaps few men go to bed not unduly affected, in some kind or degree or other, with meat or drink. Let wise men judge, whether they be altogether so wise and well at night, as they were fasting. By the time we have well thought how small a mistake either in the kind, or measure, or season of meat and drink, may in some degree offend, we shall have reason to subscribe to the proverbial aphorism, *Anima sicca est sapientissima*, [The fasting soul is the wisest.] But yet there are such sins as gluttony and drunkenness, and they are symptoms of a worldly mind, and they are to be judged by the predominant inclination and appetite.

The preference of the meat and drink that perisheth, before that which endureth to everlasting life, denominates a carnal man, (if not, properly speaking, a glutton or drunkard,) Christ himself being judge. I know it is not spoken against sensuality, but covetousness, and yet it may indifferently be applied to either, that taking thought what to eat and to drink, does make us to symbolize with heathens, *Matt. vi. 31, 32.*

To be studious for the palate, to pamper and indulge the appetite, to make provision for the flesh, *to fare sumptuously every day*, to mind the gratification of the senses more than the service of God, the public good, the relief of the poor, the nourishment of the soul, is a gluttonous, at least a sensual way of living.

To follow after strong drink, to provoke to intemperate drinking, to be mighty to drink and to exercise that might, to strive to drink down others, to drink for wages or victory, to prefer a drinking life before business and usefulness, is awfully sensual, and a kind of drunkenness too, though it neither stammer nor stagger.

What then? are we limited in eating and drinking to a bit or a sup; as, in speaking, to yea and nay? Lord, what man upon earth so wise as to know, so exact as to observe such a point!

Surely there is an innocent entertainment; as well as a necessary relief of nature; but what casuist can state it? Any degree of eating or drinking that fits us for higher offices seems to be lawful.

Lord, I beseech thee grant that my appetite may be always subject to my will, my will to my reason, my reason to thy holy word! Grant that I may not take undue pleasure in wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with thy Holy Spirit! That I may not serve my own will or lust in eating or drinking, but make it my meat and drink to do thy will! That I may, by a divine communion, continually eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God; in which there is no danger of surfeiting! Oh there let me insatiably hunger and thirst!

MEDITATION XLIX.

Of pleasures unlawful in the manner.

PLEASURE, which is neither sinful in the matter nor measure, may be so in the manner.

To eat and drink is in itself innocent, and a natural, innocent delight may be reaped from it; but to relish and delight in these innocent pleasures, as natural gratifications, is gross and sensual.

The most refined souls, whilst they are in conjunction with these earthly bodies, must find pleasure in what gratifies the natural appetite; but they find more pleasure in other objects, pleasure of another nature.

The soul ought to taste the sweetness of God, as well as the palate relish the created sweetness of meat and drink; it ought to behold the

amiableness of God, as well as the eye behold and admire any created beauty.

If we do not rise by the particular, created goodness of the creature, to the uncreated goodness, the Father of lights, we are gross and sensual. How gross are the Amorettoes of the world, who stand gazing upon the sweet features and charming complexion of a mistress; the worldlings, who dote upon the fabric of a house, or the shape of a horse, and contemplate nothing higher.

How can I commend the convenience of riches, the refreshments of meat and drink, the pleasantness of sleep, the sweetness of friends, or of life, and not ascend to riches, refreshment, rest, love, life itself.

That whereby any thing is in any kind excellent, is some communication from God, something of and from him. Why then stand we gazing and doting upon beautiful objects? Why so ravished with melodious sounds? Can we not contemplate harmony in the abstract; nor beauty, except it be incarnate? Can we enjoy nothing but what we can see or hear, or handle? O dull and degenerate souls!

O thou most blessed and eternal Spirit, refine and spiritualize my apprehensions and sensations; that I may see thee in every thing that I see, taste thee in every thing I eat and drink! Thou leadest me by the streams, but suffer me not to lie down there, but help me to pursue them up to the Fountain. Oh that I were a Jacob, and that every creature were a ladder, whereby thou mightest descend upon me, and my soul might ascend up unto thee!

MEDITATION I.

Of pleasures unlawful as to the season.

THERE is a season for every thing, and the right time of things makes them beautiful.

The pleasures that are lawful and honest, nay, and seem almost to have some relation to religion, may at some times be intermitted. The disciples could not fast whilst the Bridegroom was with them; but that is not wonderful. Aaron could not feast before the Lord when such and such things had befallen him, (*Lev. x.*) and Moses could not blame him. There may be a time when the very pleasant praises of the Lord may seem unpleasant, and the songs of Sion be discordant. The apostle, by his disjunctive discourse, seems to imply some such thing, concerning the Christian psalmody, that it is not seasonable in a time of affliction; *If any be afflicted, let him pray; If any be merry, let him sing psalms.*

But to lead a merry, jocund life, to give up one's self to eating and drinking, and sports, in a time when God calls to weeping and mourning, is proof of a profane and profligate sensualist, and seems to be an unpardonable presumption. *Isa. xxii. 14. It is revealed in my ears by the Lord God of hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged away from you till you die. How unseemly is it for me, said David, to dwell in cedar, and the ark of God in curtains? For me to rest myself upon a soft bed, when my general lies upon the hard ground. To solace myself with my beautiful wife, whilst the ar-*

mies of God are looking death in the face, is not seemly for me, said that noble captain Uriah.

If adultery had been lawful and genteel, yet the conduct of Zimri was absurd, when all Israel were then mourning under God's judgments. The text imputes it as an act of great weakness in that king, who was drinking himself drunk in his tent, when the enemy was upon him, and he should have been ordering his battle; which puts me in mind of the reproof that the old man in the comedy gives an idle servant, *In ipsa turba, atque in peccato maximo, potasti, scelus; Quasi re bene gesta,* [It is a crime to be intoxicated in the midst of a multitude, and of the greatest danger; as though all things were succeeding well.] To be fiddling when the city is on fire, is a character fit for Nero. For an old woman to dance, according to the Latin proverb, makes death laugh in his sleeve.

To sport when the afflicting hand of God is upon ourselves or the church, when imminent dangers threaten; in a time of universal wickedness, (with the old world,) to give up ourselves to all fleshly pleasures, is far worse than to eat flesh in Lent.

Lord, how like is the new world to the old one! But shall there not yet be a newer, *wherein dwelleth righteousness?* There, then, shall be *pleasures for evermore.*

Oh but it is the part of a brave, bold spirit to be unconcerned, not to be baffled nor frightened out of the enjoyment of itself. Give Horace his mistress, and come on him what can.

What an heroic thing is Atheism! Nay, rather, this is a beastly valour; such as the courage of the horse in Job, *that mocketh at fear, and saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha*; or of the leviathan, *that laugheth at the shaking of the spear.*

Lord, the pleasures of the flesh are mean and beastly things at best; but when they are thus unseasonable, it adds wickedness to their meanness, and devilishness to their beastliness. Enable me to observe the operation of thy hands. Teach me to distinguish the time to weep from the time to laugh. Let my reason ever maintain a just dominion over my appetite, my senses, yea, and my fancy too!

MEDITATION LI.

Of fantastical pleasures.

THERE are pleasures of the fancy, which may be distinguished from the pleasures of the senses, though divines use to confound them. To prefer these before God, is to be a predominant lover of the world.

I know of no sin but what may be acted over in the fancy, and affect the body no further.

A mental dalliance with a mistress, though it injures not another person, yet is adultery, and is a preference of the world before chastity and purity. The vigour of the fancy both prevents and survives bodily uncleanness. There are earlier and later adulteries in fancy than in senses.

Incestos amores a tenero meditatur ungui, [He

meditates unlawful loves in his tender years,] says the poet; and fancy acts over again the uncleanness to which the body is insufficient.

Covetousness is acted, yea, mainly acted in the fancy. Oh the full bags and barns, the large fields, the mountains of gold that are to be found in a covetous fancy! Sure these men who fancy such great things to themselves, and delight in such fancies, are they whom the prophet Ezekiel speaks of, *whose heart goeth after their covetousness.*

Pride is acted mainly upon the stage of fancy, though sometimes it breaks forth into words, as in Nebuchadnezzar; yea, sometimes it never goes further than the fancy, and yet is mortal and deadly, as seems to have been the case of Herod, whose fancy was pleased with the blasphemous acclamations of the people, *and he gave not God the glory.*

The distractions and strange roving of fancy, after impertinent things, in a careless and incoherent manner, is a great corruption. And to give the reins to a roving desultory fancy, without seeking to reduce and reclaim it, is a predominant sensuality. Methinks that even to think nonsense for an hour together, should shame a wise man; what can any man think of those that are more solicitous to reclaim the wild ranging of their dogs, than of their fancies, except that the bestial part doth predominate over the rational.

Who can sufficiently lament the sad disorder of the fancy, and the evil to which it betrays us? How unseemly and unjust it is, that our thoughts,

which are the first-born of our souls, should be so squandered away in a manner more foolish than children's pursuing of butterflies, or following of birds through thick and thin, [*testaque lutoque.*]

O my mind, hast thou so lovely an object, and such important matters to bestow thyself upon as God, and the things of eternal life; and canst thou have leisure to dream away thy time, and spend thy powers upon things that are not, that need not be, that never will be? Dost thou laugh at the chimeric fictions of poets, and yet spend thy strength in poetry? Dost thou account it time next to lost, to read romances, and yet canst be at leisure every day to make them?

Lord, what a fickle, ungovernable thing is man's fancy! How is this contexture of the body a snare to my soul; diverting, hindering, spoiling its operations? Fancy is a necessary faculty, without which I can perform no action; and alas how has sin got into it, and defiled it, poisoned the very fountain?

To a worldly fancy, I might add also a worldly memory. For, certainly, to be able to remember all worldly concernments, and still to forget the matters of the soul, and the world to come, is a sad symptom of a worldly mind. But among the corrupt pleasures of the fancy, I must insist a little upon revenge, because it is frequently acted only upon the stage of fancy, and does not proceed into action. And all this while vain men are apt to think themselves free from it. To this therefore I will now apply my thoughts.

MEDITATION LII.

Of revenge.

UNDER the head of fantastical pleasures, I place revenge, partly because I do not foresee any head to which it will be so fitly reduced; and partly, because I think it is more usually terminated in the fancy, than other sins are. If a man be of a proud, lustful, covetous fancy, undoubtedly he will show it one time or other, in words, actions, or behaviour, that shall be significant. But revenge may be, and I think is usually terminated in the fancy, for want of power or opportunity to show itself.

Revengefulness is a temper that does most certainly indicate the predominance of the worldly nature above the divine.

It seems, in short, to be nothing else, but a retaliation or retribution of injuries either contrived or executed; which is a thing so difficult and nice, and requires so much clearness of apprehension, and purity of mind, that no mortal man may meddle with it. It is beyond all created skill, and therefore God does challenge and appropriate it to himself alone. He allows men to share with him in his other perfections; to imitate his wisdom, mercy, patience, justice. *But vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord, Rom. xii. 19.* And again, *Vengeance belongeth to me, saith the Lord, Heb. x. 30.*

It is a great mistake in men, to imagine that so long as they restrain their hands, they have com-

mitted no murder, because no one can indict or arraign them. For a revengeful temper is murder; *He that hateth his brother is a murderer, 1 John iii. 15.*

Revenge does not consist in the doing of mischief. To desire it, to contrive it, to meditate with pleasure upon it, to rejoice in it if done by any other, is revenge; yea, to suspend necessary and usual kindnesses, not to give meat to an enemy if he hunger; yea, not to love an enemy, is a degree of revenge.

The Gospel excels all philosophy, in the doctrine of revenge. The philosophers, yea, and the Jews generally, held it no sin to do evil to one that had hurt or wronged them. They said, *Thou shalt hate thine enemy.* But the Gospel forbids all hatred, even of an enemy, and consequently all revenge. For there can be no revengefulness, without some degree of hatred.

It is a very spiritual and secret sin; it may exist, and yet not be discerned. It puts on divers shapes. Sometimes it would be mistaken for zeal, as in the case of the two disciples, calling for fire from heaven; themselves in the meantime little better than set on fire from hell. Sometimes it mingles itself with justice; *Bring her forth, said Judah, and let her be burnt. Yes, burn her by all means, rather than Shelah my youngest son shall marry her, lest he die as his brethren died.* Yea, sometimes it would fain pass for kindness, and be interpreted good nature, thus the king of Israel gave his daughter Michal to David to be a snare to him. And the philosopher with a crooked foot very charitably wished

his shoes might fit the feet of him that had stolen them. So far was he (good man) from revenge. A charitable, revengeful man gives his neighbour the hook. Malicious Absalom entertained his brother Amnon to his destruction. They say the devil's gifts are *Donata hamata*, there is a hook under the bait. And no doubt but the devil, as ill-natured as he is, does help some men to be rich; as he preferred the dog Hazael to be king of Syria, for no good will to him, but ill will to Israel.

Neither is revengefulness the sin of great men only. A poor man may be as revengeful, and take as much pleasure in fancying and meditating revenge, as the great ones of the world in executing it; who, for a word spoke amiss, presently termed an affront, must have satisfaction.

And to the carnal, whether rich or poor, no doubt but revenge is very sweet; and the fancy as much pleased and delighted with the imagination of it, as the bodily senses, with any act of intemperance or uncleanness. Who can but apprehend the pleasure that the swaggering giant took, in fancying revenge to be taken upon Ulysses, who had deceived and blinded him, when he hears the poet expressing it thus—*O si quis referat mihi casus Ulysses, Aut aliquem ex sociis, in quem mea seviat ira, Viscera cujusdam, &c.*

*Oh that some happy luck would bring
That rogue Ulysses, who's the king
Of that base crew, or any other
Belonging to him, son or brother!
That I might tear him limb from limb,*

*Before life hath forsaken him,
 Whose very guts I'd rend and eat,
 (My fattest venison not such meat.)
 How would I make my teeth to meet
 In 's trembling head and hands, and feet!
 Oh how I'd quaff the rogue's heart's blood,
 Till in my throat I made a flood!*

One would think he saw him tearing the flesh, and drinking the blood of these men.

And indeed what was the greatest part of the renowned bravery of the Romans and Grecians in their wars, but revenge. But if we will stand a little, and compare the provocations done to Christ Jesus, and his behaviour under them all, we must confess and say, so great fortitude all the revengeful champions in the world never showed, as he, in not revenging himself at all; as he, in his *Father forgive them, they know not what they do.* No, nor as his dear disciple Stephen, in his *Lord lay not this sin to their charge,* Acts vii. 60.

I do not think it is simply unlawful to go to law. But if any man go to law without the least mixture of uncharitableness, or revengefulness, the same is a perfect man. I think lawyers do as truly live upon the diseases of men's minds, as physicians on their bodies.

Well, I see there is no revenge allowed me towards my neighbour, and yet there is such a kind of appetite in my nature; I will spend it therefore upon its proper object. Though self-murder is the worst of murders, yet self-revenge is the best of revenges.

Be revenged upon thine eyes, O my soul; not by pulling them out, but by shutting them, by

bringing them into covenant. Have thy senses betrayed thee? Deny them their liberty in some things lawful. Keep under that body, that has been petulant and troublesome. It was too severe revenge in the popish saint, who cut off his right hand that had suffered a too affectionate kiss of a female. But if thy senses abuse their liberty, retrench them; deny them sometimes of things lawful, if they will adventure upon things unlawful.

Oh blessed God, whose infinite purity, impartial justice, all-wise love, do render thee alone fit to take revenge, and to retaliate thy own injuries and mine too; perfectly mortify in me this appetite, and all that pride and self-love, that are the fuel of it. And inasmuch as I see it is by no means safe that such a sword be committed into the hands of such a mad man as I am, help me to commit my cause to him that judgeth righteously, without forestalling him, or prescribing to him; not determining the way, nor hastening the time, nor so much as desiring the thing! Oh that I may be able to say, I have not desired the evil day, Lord thou knowest; that I may seek the peace of Babylon, though I be a captive in it; yea, though in her peace I should be no sharer!

MEDITATION LIII.

Of cursing.

As a species of revenge, or at least a product of a revengeful mind, I may here seasonably meditate a little upon cursing.

There is a solemn cursing, or delivering up to mischief, performed by church-censure; which is a kind of revenging of God's quarrel, a discipline that he himself has committed into the hands of men, which they must take heed to use for him, not for themselves. The greatest thing, for ought I know, that God has committed into the hands of men.

This is easily, but wretchedly perverted, when the ministers of it revenge their own cause and quarrel, serve their own interest, and not God's; gratify their own lusts, more than the will of God; when they had rather that men should suffer than be reformed; be damned, than be amended.

There is an extraordinary and prophetic cursing, proceeding from an extraordinary motion of the Holy Spirit; found only in pure minds, and but seldom in them. Such was Elisha's cursing the wicked children, *2 Kings ii.*

Those passages of David in the Psalms, I rather consider as prophetic denunciation, than a cursing of the wicked. Let us be sure we know what spirit we are of, before we adventure to imitate these inspired men.

And alas! Why should we curse the wicked, who are hastening to greater evil than we can wish them! Besides, charity would rather command us to pity them, and pray for them. So did Christ Jesus, so did holy Stephen, so did St. Paul for his judge Agrippa, and his persecutors the Jews, *Acts xxvi. 29.*

There is an extraordinary self-cursing by way of protestation, to be used sparingly, in weigh-

ty matters. I refer this to extraordinary swearing.

There is a profane cursing. And this is either extraordinary or ordinary; and both are symptoms of a worldly mind.

Extraordinary profane cursing is, when people in cool blood, knowing what they say, from a malicious mind, and sometimes with great solemnity of kneeling down, lifting up their hands, putting off the hat, do imprecate mischief upon a person that has wronged them, or offended them. This, when it is done formally, looks like a sacrament of the devil, an ordinance of hell, a kind of an exorcism. But a horrible presumption certainly it is, a prescribing to infinite wisdom, a taking of God's work out of his hands, an usurpation of divine prerogative. Wicked, bold man! How darest thou take upon thee the government of the world, and judge any man before his time? Darest thou employ the Almighty in a work, wherein he takes no pleasure; engage Love itself to act against his own nature unmercifully? To pray God, not to have mercy upon man, is the highest blasphemy. It is as if one should pray him to cease to be God.

Ordinary profane cursing, is either of ourselves, or others; and each is threefold; upon slight occasions, upon none at all, or worse than none

First, Of ourselves. When men upon every slight occasion, to confirm every inconsiderable truth, which it is no great matter whether it be believed or not, or may as well be confirmed and believed by a bare assertion, will wish they may never see the sun more, never open their hands more, that the drink might never go through

them, the meat might be their poison, that they might never stir more, might be hanged, that God would judge them, or that they might never enter into the kingdom of heaven, if such or such a thing, be so, or so. This I am sure is more than yea and nay; it is highly foolish, and indeed profane.

Man's knowledge is fallible, his memory frail, senses deceitful. And if this thing should prove otherwise, then, thou wicked man, out of thy own mouth thou shalt be condemned; so shall thy judgment be.

There are instances of God's taking such men at their words; but I need not insist upon them. It is an argument that men stand not in awe of God, when they dare invoke his judgments, and challenge his justice.

2dly, But when upon no occasion at all, to confirm nothing, men will dare God to damn them. Oh horrible and impudent impiety! These men have not so much mercy for themselves as the devils. They prayed that they might not be tormented before their time; these pray that they may. Of these, surely, if of any unbelievers, it may be properly said, that they are *condemned already*.

3dly, It is worse than no occasion, when men use cursing designedly, to commend themselves to acceptance, as an ornament and embellishment of speech.

Secondly, Of others.

1. When, constantly, upon every small provocation or offence, men will passionately call for vengeance, imprecate the plague upon others, or

it may be send men to the devil, upon no other errand, but to tell him, they are making haste after them.

2. When upon no provocation, in no passion, but in a familiar, jocular way, men curse one another; nay with the same breath, curse their friend, and swear how much they love him.

3. It is by some reputed a piece of familiarity. You must take it as a kindness, especially if you be an inferiour, that they will be so great with you, as to curse you, *Sic solent beare amicos*, [so they are accustomed to bless their friends.]

There is another sort of profane cursing, inferior to all these, a cursing in short-hand. Many men are ashamed to curse in words at length, but scruple not to do it in characters and abbreviations. If these men know the true original of these characters, and the meaning of them, it is the same as if they spoke in words at length. If they do not, but yet suspect them, it is bold, it is an adventuring upon an appearance of evil, which is strictly forbidden. Suppose they suspect nothing of this meaning in these common words. If they have no meaning, they are idle words; and that is bad enough. And if they profess sincerely, they know not what they mean, they proclaim themselves fools, that know not what they say. It is a miserable shift to embrace foolishness and madness to avoid profaneness.

But it is to be suspected, that they that mince the matter, do know the meaning of these characters well enough; how else could they apply them so aptly, so seasonably as they do? One may know they stand instead of a curse, because

they come in the order and place of one. When I hear a man say a pound on him, or a shackle on him, for I am much beholden to him, and he has much befriended me; then I will believe he knows not what he says.

It seems to be cleanly and charitable to wish men in heaven, and that God had them. But I have heard it come out of as profane mouths, and with as spiteful a design, as any curse.

Blessed God, who blessest us daily; communicate to us of thy gracious nature, that we also may bless and not curse! Let us never presume to reckon ourselves a part of Christ's purchase, till we find ourselves actually redeemed from our vain conversation received by tradition from our fathers!

MEDITATION LIV.

Of idleness.

AMONG sensual or fantastical pleasures, or a mixture of both, idleness must be ranked.

The greatest sensualists are usually most idle; yea though they take more pains in pursuit of their pleasure, than other men in their honest employments.

It is strange that pleasure should be painful, and idleness laborious; yet so it is.

Whosoever is not ordinarily well employed in good business, is idle. Such is the generation of all those that play away, sleep away, trifle away, visit away their time, from day to day; or who fearing lest time should not pass away fast enough,

make use of that sovereign recipe called pastime. This idleness turns man into a cypher, makes him insignificant; and surely I do not know a greater reproach to man, than to be unprofitable. An idle person is convicted and shamed by the whole creation, in which there is nothing insignificant or useless. I am persuaded, the devil himself would account it a shame to be idle; he seems to glory in his activity, (*Job* ii.) though it be in mischief. The sun never rises nor sets, the year never begins nor ends, but it is to the reproach of the idle person.

We have all great cause to lament the idleness and playfulness of our childhood and youth; and the many idle hours and days that we have spent, in which we have been no factors for God, no one the better for us, nor we ourselves been bettered.

Some say, They have no trade, they have nothing to do.

And are they too old to learn? Can they no way assist their neighbour by head nor hand? Can they not read good books, write good letters, or give good advice? Oh how is the want of education to be lamented! Parents teach their children nothing when they are young, and so they are good for nothing when they are old. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ*, [hence those tears.]

But have they indeed nothing to do, but to dress and feed themselves? How do many of them live then? They live on their money. But what, they cannot eat money. No, but they live upon usury. And will that excuse idleness? Or rather, Is it not a monstrous thing, that the mon-

ey, the dumb, inanimate metal should be active, and the man idle. Therefore, O man, thy money shall be thy judge. The brightness of the usurer's money shall be a witness against his idleness, as well as the rust of the covetous hoarders against them. If the money-man would turn his money, or part of it, into some kind of stock or other, and trade therewith, buy and sell, and maintain commerce in the world, he might serve the public good, and at least have the comfort of being an example of righteousness.

But still it will be pleaded, we need not work.

To which I answer; If the command of God make a necessity, all have need. Men should not be employed only to get wealth to themselves, but as members of the public, they ought to be doing some good. God never gave men estates to make them idle; neither do rents or riches exempt any man from business. It is a perverting of the end of talents, to wrap them up in napkins. No man need to complain for want of work, whilst there are so many businesses, besides worldly business, to keep men from being idle.

O eternal Spirit of life and power, inspire me with a divine activity, that I may account it nothing different from death to live unprofitably, nothing different from a judicial sentence, to bind myself hand and foot by my own slothfulness.

MEDITATION LV.

Of the love of ease.

Under the head of worldly pleasure, and as being much of kin to idleness, I must now meditate a while upon ease, carnal ease.

Idleness is opposed to action, ease to suffering. Idleness is freedom from business, ease is freedom from adversity, or any thing that is grievous to the senses, as sickness, losses, poverty, restraint, trespasses and injuries in word or deed, &c.

To prefer freedom from any of these sensual adversities, before submission to the will of God, a sanctified use and improvement of them, and the exercise of patience, charity, fortitude, and constancy under them, is sensual, and denominates a man a lover of the world, of worldly ease.

I do premise, (which every body knows,) that we are to value ourselves by our souls, not by our bodies, or secular concerns. And to prefer the body before the soul, is the same as to prefer the world before God. For that certainly is most to be loved and preferred, that makes most for the perfecting of the soul in a Christ-like nature. He that thinks himself too good to be laughed at, or spoken ill of, is a very proud Christian. To be unwilling to venture upon any affliction, to dare to venture nothing for truth's sake, not to take up any cross, is a character of a person far from true discipleship. For the true disciples are described, by their taking up their cross, and following their Lord.

The Captain of our salvation valued subjection to the will of God, and charity for the souls of men, before sensual ease; when these came in competition, he accounted him a devil, who cried, *Master, spare thyself*. It was indeed in his power to have spared himself; but he was an hardy Captain, and would not save himself, rather than deliver us.

It is true, nature desires ease from adversity; the soul has a wonderful sympathy with, and kindness for the body. But those soft and delicate persons that cannot endure that the flesh, or any fleshly interest should smart, though it be the will of the sovereign wise God, though this plaster might work a cure, though affliction might bring forth the pleasant fruits of righteousness, are strangely immured in flesh, and sunk in to sense.

MEDITATION LVI.

Of fear of sickness.

Under this head of the love of ease, I may seasonably meditate of fear of sickness.

And here I cannot deny, but that sickness is troublesome to the senses; yea, I think I may confess, that the soul cannot but sympathize with the body; for there is a strange and unaccountable dearness which springs from their conjunction.

But yet the soul hath an health belonging to it distinct from the body, called in Scripture, *The*

spirit of a sound mind. The soul's ease and soundness lies in subjection to the will of God; she ought to value her own ease more than that of the body, to prefer patience before health or recovery.

We know that patience is divine, and that health is but a worldly good; and also that that may be wholesome to the soul, which is grievous to the senses.

So that to be afraid of, and to stand in awe of sickness, is a preferring of carnal ease before spiritual, and before the will of God; and to be more solicitous for recovery, than for a sanctification and improvement, is sensual.

Much more then, to fly to undue means for prevention, is a manifest preferring of the worldly, fleshly interest, before God and his holy authority.

It is possible, it is seemly, to be so influenced with the sense of the purity and perfection of the divine will, as to be well pleased with diseases, to overlook pain, to embrace a dunghill, to smile over the worms that fill our sores, as if they were our sister and mother.

Art thou so delicate a thing, O my body, that thou must not be touched? Are you, my senses, so sacred, that you must not be thwarted, nor your interest violated? Oh, take heed of the young man Absalom; though he be a traitor, a rebel, an incestuous fratricide, yet he is a handsome and proper gentleman, a goodly young prince; deal tenderly with him; yes, by all means. My soul thou hast smarted, and dost smart daily for the treacherousness and flattering

insinuations of the bodily senses; yea, they affect the dominion of the soul, and seek to dethrone reason. And must they be thus humoured and pleased? Ah! breed up a bird to pick out thy own eyes!

Lord, is it true that no sickness is joyous! But though sickness be not joyous, yet surely there may be joy in and under sickness, as well as in the spoil of goods, or in reproaches. And I do remember those that took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and those that rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus. Let me be lame all my days, and a cripple, if I may be the king's son, and eat at the king's table continually! Let me keep my bed all my days, if thou, Lord, wilt but please to make it, and thy holy Spirit will vouchsafe to rest with me. Let the pleasure of submission, self-examination and resignation, out-weigh the pain of the gout or stone, or strangury?

If the devil meant it of all men indifferently without exception, good as well as bad, Job as well as other men, when he said, *All that a man hath will he give for his life*; he is a liar, and a slanderer, and divines do ill to justify the father of lies in this matter, and to say, as some do, *That he was in the right. All that a man hath?* What, think ye, he will give his soul to the devil for recovery from sickness, will he? He will part with his integrity, make shipwreck of a good conscience, he will curse God? Thou liest, Satan. Job himself proved thee a liar, who held fast his integrity, although thou movedst God against him to destroy him. And many of the servants of

God do confute thee, who have refused to accept of recovery from sickness upon sinful terms, or by sinful means; and instead of giving all that they have, soul and all, for life, would not part with the peace of their minds, not the purity of their consciences, to purchase health.

MEDITATION LVII.

Of fear of the loss of friends.

Another thing grievous to the sensual life, is the death of friends, and beloved relations. This, I foresee, will fall under a subsequent meditation, therefore I will but lightly touch upon it here, although a fair opportunity be given for it.

It is the part of a delicate sensual soul, a lover of the world, to fear the removal of his dearest friends, to prefer their lives and company before the will of God, and its being done.

I do willingly grant that friends and relations are to be loved and delighted in; yea, I think of all the pleasures of the senses, this is the most innocent, and the least beastly, (though some beasts are very fond of their relations, and others are great lovers of society;) and good men have been more apt to fall into fits of this sensuality, than any other. Any one that reads the story of Jacob and Joseph, and Benjamin; of David and Absalom, and Adonijah, will be apt to think so. Nay, indeed it were a part of gross beastliness, not to leave off sorrowing for the asses, and cry, What shall I do for my son? Alas, lest the young man Saul should be lost!

Yet as relations are to be loved only in God, so they are readily to be quitted and forsaken for him, or at his command. His will ought to be dearer to us, than their company.

Many are so fond of their children, that they cannot abide to look off from them. They contemplate them by day, dream of them by night. This love, as great as it seems to be, is not perfect; for it hath fear in it, and this fear hath torment.

I will not here say how evil this love is, but I am sure these people are ill prepared, to forsake children for Christ's sake.

Abraham was not so fond of his only beloved Isaac. No, he shall die, if he were a thousand Isaacs, if God call for him. Nay, he shall die by his hands, rather than he will oppose the will of God.

Every good Christian is of the same temper, of the same predominant disposition, to be willing to give up Isaac. And no doubt, but that if we had the same command, the same thing would be our indispensable duty. But alas! *Quotusquisque est Abrahamus*, How few Abrahams does this age afford!

If we sit loose from husbands, wives, children, if we be in a chearful disposition to resign them at all times, it is an act of faith as acceptable as Abraham's. A man may offer up his son, though he do not bind him upon the altar, as there are many martyrs that were never brought to the stake. The three young men in Daniel were as properly martyrs, in venturing upon the fiery furnace, as if they had been burnt.

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To mortify this worldly fear, let us believe and consider, That whatever is lovely in children will still live, and may be as well enjoyed in God, as if they were alive.

Besides, it is worth the while to ask, Who knows how those children will prove? If we had a prophet here, perhaps he would answer us as he did Eli, 1 Sam. ii. 33. *The child of thine that shall not be cut off, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart.* But I shall wave the further prosecution of this, and postpone it, till I come to consider of the worldly love of persons.

MEDITATION LVIII.

Of the fear of poverty, and loss of goods.

Poverty is formidable to men, not so much (I suppose,) because it is deadly, (few fearing to be so poor as to starve,) as because of the disgrace that attends it.

*Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se
Quam quod ridiculos homines facit.*

[Poverty has nothing dreadful in itself; only as it makes men ridiculous.]

But this is a cross that we must be ready to take up, if we will approve ourselves to be lovers of God, disciples of Christ.

Moses took it up, and his countrymen the believing Hebrews took it up. Of latter times the noble Marquis Caraccioli took it up. It is a

tribulation, which all that will enter into the kingdom of God, must be content to pass through, if it lie in their way. To use sinful evasions or comply with sinful terms, to avoid poverty, denominates a lover of the world. Lord, what lying, flattering, deceiving, and disengenuous stifling of conscience is used, to prevent poverty. And is there any thing in it so formidable? May not a man be all that which is good and happy, and yet be poor? May he not be wise and poor, virtuous and poor, poor and blessed? *Blessed are the poor, &c.* Nay, are there not many immunities in poverty, a freedom from many temptations to pride, luxury and oppression, which do attend a rich condition? Are there not in it many advantages to virtue, humility, contempt of the world, dependence upon God, and thirsting after eternal life? But when I say, poverty hinders nothing in which riches can help us; a poor man may be as learned, valiant, virtuous, wise, yea, and as charitable too as the rich. It will be replied, Oh, but he cannot be so well esteemed. The poor is neglected and hated of his brethren; the poor man's wisdom is not regarded. I answer, No matter for that, if it deliver the city, regarded or not regarded. For what is the regard and valuation of men! This very respect to estimation, acceptance and honour, is one of the worldly lusts to be mortified, so far is it from being able to justify the worldly fear of poverty.

Blessed Jesus, who willingly becamest poor, to make me and many rich; thou hast taken the sting out of poverty; nay, thou hast sanctified, thou hast enriched it. Thou didst leave all to

come and seek me, make me willing to leave all to follow thee; make me able to follow thee, even in leaving all for thee!

MEDITATION LIX.

Of fear of persecution.

To be reluctant and delicate in venturing upon persecution, restraint, wrongs, for truth and the Gospel's sake; and to prefer deliverance from these, before the will of God, before a sanctified use of them, and exercise of grace under them, denominates a lover of the world.

Whosoever represents persecution (including the loss of estates, goods, good name, favour of the world, liberty of life,) to himself so formidable, as that, for fear of it, he will deliberately forsake God, deny his truth, profess error or falsehood, go contrary to, and continue in a contradiction to the known word of God, and the sentiments of his conscience, is a lover of the world.

Persecution is a cross that every faithful disciple of Christ must be ready to take up, whenever his Master calls him to it. Holy Paul was ready to take it up, in the whole weight of it, *not only to be bound at Jerusalem, but to die for the name of the Lord Jesus.* The believing Hebrews took it up. They might have escaped persecution, by denying Christ; but they were not so fickle, although they were but young Christians. They would not accept of deliverance, *Heb. xi. 35.*

And the same is the predominant temper of all the genuine disciples of Christ, *Whosoever will not forsake house and lands for my sake, is not worthy of me.*

Who would value a friend that would not encounter the least danger to help his friend? How would he then expose his life for him? Such professors Christ may well upbraid in the words of Absalom to Hushai, *Is this thy kindness to thy friend; why wentest thou not with thy friend?*

It is very observable how faithful worldly men are to their worldly designs and Delilahs. What pains does the mammonist voluntarily take; what diseases and dangers does the sensualist hazard; to what persecutions does the ambitious expose himself? These all take up their cross and follow their Delilah.

At what a chargeable and costly rate do giddy opinionists maintain error and humour, at the price of confiscation, and imprisonment and banishment. And will not the servants of truth be at as much charges for her? Are the children of this world not only wiser, but kinder than the children of light? Surely, if we were the children of wisdom, we should justify her, stand for her to the last drop of sweat, yea and of blood too.

I know no reason indeed nor revelation for the courting of persecution. But inasmuch as it must be the lot of all that will be godly, in one kind or degree or other, it is good to get our minds possessed with it, prepared for it, reconciled to it; that when it comes, we may not fly from the serpent, but take him by the tail, and he will turn into a rod in our hand.

If there be any excellency in righteousness, any thing desirable in blessedness, then surely there is some good, at least eventually, in persecution; for they are nearly related; *Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness sake,* Mat. v. 10.

MEDITATION LX.

Of honour in general, and of pride.

THE third of the things of the world, is its honours. A predominant lover of worldly honour, denominates a man a lover of the world, and consequently void of the love of God.

See how our Saviour opposes faith and ambition, making them inconsistent, John v. 44. *How can ye believe, that receive honour one of another?*

There is an honour which is not worldly, a praise that is of God, and not of man. This renders men, yea the meanest and obscurest of men, honourable, the excellent of the earth. And to be ambitious of it, is an argument of a truly heroic, and exalted mind; I mean to desire to be a son or a daughter of God.

An immoderate affectation of worldly honour, is pride; and to prefer it before innocence, to seek it, glory in it, maintain it, rather than truth and a good conscience, makes a lover of the world.

To have a right sense of one's own worth in any kind, is not pride, but justice. It is no man's perfection to be deceived, nor his duty to think

worse of himself than he is; for then he must needs think falsely; which is the infirmity of understanding; whose perfection it is to apprehend things as they are.

But there is less to be feared in this respect, less danger in it, than there is of an overweening attachment.

To expect a just estimation is but just, and modest enough, nay, sometimes laudable; for it may be very serviceable, and may make a man serviceable. So that every man may well be allowed to be tender of his reputation.

But yet patiently to bear disgrace, and not to repine at disappointment, is generous; and to go through bad report, is Christ-like.

To require, and exact a reverent behaviour from inferiors, is just; though oftentimes they that stand most severely upon it, miss of it most; respect being such a kind of thing, as often flies from him that follows it, and follows him that flies from it.

There are many objects of pride; such as birth, wit and learning, and standing, strength and power and victory, riches, interest, a party and the propagation of it, children, beauty, privileges, apparel, yea, even virtuous actions. To glory in any of these unduly, is pride, and denominates a lover of the world.

MEDITATION LXI.

Of the honour of God, and the way of seeking it.

God's glorifying himself is not such a thing as vain man's seeking to make himself great by selfish means. It is in short, the beaming forth of his own perfections, the displaying of himself, the communications of his own goodness.

Men's glorifying of God is not a fancying or speaking much of the glory of God; but it embraces a double notion.

The less proper notion, is the exalting of the name and honour of God, ascribing all good to him, owning him as the fountain of all. So we glorify him in the reverend thoughts that we have of him, in making honourable mention of him, dedicating things to his use and service. In this sense, Atheism and unbelief are dishonours to God; as also all taking his name in vain, swearing, spending all upon our lusts, &c.

The more proper notion is, the displaying of his perfections, imitating his goodness, justice, patience, mercy, charity; acting suitably to what his inimitable perfections do require; as submitting to his sovereignty, depending upon his omnipotence, behaving ourselves sincerely in the sense of his omniscience; observing such rules and measures in all our actions as make them agreeable to his holy will. In a word, our Saviour, who best knew his will, and who was so entirely devoted to it, who came into the world on this very errand, has more clearly and compendiously

told us what it is, John xv. 8. *Herein is my Father glorified, if ye bring forth much fruit.*

MEDITATION LXII.

Of self-honouring.

MAN was not made for himself. However common a thing it is, it is low and base for man to make himself his own end.

There is nothing more absurd or unreasonable than pride; nothing more excellent or honourable than humility. It is truly said, *Quo minus sibi arrogat homo, eo evadit clarior et nobilior*, Man does most honour himself by debasing himself; and so on the contrary. And as there is nothing more absurd, so there is nothing more dangerous. It were ten thousand times more safe to stand in the front of the hottest battle, than that God should set himself in battle array against us; and yet that is the import of that phrase, *He resisteth the proud.*

There is pride in unbelief, and refusing the terms of the Gospel. *The wicked, through the pride of his heart, seeketh not after God.* Yea, indeed, pride seems to be the cause of all disobedience; *If ye will not hear, says the prophet, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride.*

To seek the advancement of our names, our own credit and estimation, more than the name of God, is worldly. *Come, see my zeal for the Lord,* says Jehu. There lies more emphasis on the word *my* than on *the Lord*. How this should

be pardonable in men, I know not, when it is no less than treason in an ambassador of a king.

Hezekiah was guilty of this when he made a show of his treasures; and David, when he numbered the people; with both of whom God was displeased. But the one humbled himself for the pride of his heart; the other repented, and called himself a fool; yet neither escaped punishment.

The church did not so, *Not unto us, Lord, not unto us, &c.* Christ Jesus, the Head of the church, did not so; he sought not his own honour, but his Father's. The church triumphant do not so; they cast down their crowns before the throne. Do not thou so, O my soul; *for what hast thou that thou hast not received?*

MEDITATION LXIII.

Concerning the seeking of the approbation of men, more than of God.

To prefer the applause of men before the acceptance of God, is to prefer a great name before a good conscience; and consequently the world before God; the good word of the world, before the good will of our heavenly Father.

It is impossible to act sincerely in any thing, and to do that which is right and good, if we intemperately seek or thirst after the applause of men, if we love the praise of men more than the praise of God; for this will corrupt the judgment, dispense with sins as if they were not sins,

and divert the mind from truth and rectitude. When Saul had more mind to humour the people than to approve himself to God as his executioner of the Amalekites, we see how it perverted his administration, and caused him to spare that which God had condemned.

Men are incompetent judges. They cannot discern the heart, nor its integrity.

And the approbation of men is at best but filthy, and not fit for any wise man to estimate himself by. Alas! What profits it? It makes no man the better man; yea, it often hinders them from being so good as they might.

Oftentimes it is false. For those things that are highly esteemed in the sight of men, are abominable before God.

It is always fickle and uncertain. The good word of men is soon lost. He that is exalted to be a king to-day, shall be voted to the cross to-morrow. Paul and Barnabas, that are this hour cried up for gods, the next must die like men, and be stoned like the vilest of men. Every man is subject to error and mistake; and he that once mistakes, forfeits all his reputation for wisdom; he that once sins, destroys all the good name that he had got, as Solomon assures us, Eccl. ix. 18. *One sinner destroyeth much good; and explains it well in the following verse, Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour; so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.*

O my soul, study to approve thyself to God, the Searcher of hearts, who judgeth righteous judgment, by whose judgment thou must stand or fall at the last.

For dost thou not know that the ill opinion of men is one of the crosses that thou must take up?

And why shouldest thou covet that which makes thee miserable, that is declared a wo unto thee? Wouldest thou have all men to speak well of thee? And dost thou believe it can be done without a wo? *Wo unto you when all men speak well of you.*

Art thou better than thy Saviour, who suffered himself to be contradicted by sinners, and endured their contradictions against himself?

Lord, though I may not expect a voice from heaven, saying, *Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,* yet let me hear the voice of thy Spirit, witnessing with my spirit, that I do always the things that please thee! And then, though the earth murmur, and the great waters roar, there will be a calm within. Oh blessed calm, like that of the upper regions, which the winds and clouds, and vapours below cannot infest or disturb!

MEDITATION LXIV.

Of pride in birth.

To be proud of, and glory in our descent and parentage, is to be a lover of the world.

If it be asked, who these are that are proud of their birth? I confess I cannot tell how many are guilty, but I conclude that the following are:

Those that prefer being sons of princes before being sons of God.

Those that glory more that they are born of noble parents than of Christian parents.

Those that value their birth so highly, that they think religion to be below them, or a disparagement to their quality.

Those that undervalue holy bishops or pastors, or any other holy men, in their hearts, because they were not born gentlemen.

Those that esteem men because of their birth, and prefer nobility before virtue; in whose eyes not the vile are contemned, but the poor are vile.

The apostle James was no Quaker, and yet he accounted it carnal to prefer a gentleman in affection, or at least in judgment, before a meaner man. We receive only our bodies from our parents; our better part is the noblest, as being immediately from God; and so a beggar, (if the denomination be taken from the nobler part,) may well enough be said to be noble.

How can any man be proud that he is descended of an ancient family; that he is the thousandth from Inachus, or the Etrurian kings? The original of all men is the same; and if we reckon right, the beggar is as well descended from the beginning as the prince. Oh what a cause of boasting it is, "I and my ancestors have dwelt in this house, and been owners of this estate so many hundred years!" When, perhaps, every bat, or owl, or swallow, may say as much of their wall, or barn, or chimney.

Oh but the family has always been noble and honourable. Doubtless within a few generations, some or other of them have been deformed, or vicious, or cowards, or fools, or traitors, or idola-

ters, or factious. Nay, do but look into the present generation; and those that are at present alive of the same family; and one may well reckon with the Italians, That he that hath neither rogue, nor harlot, nor beggar, of his kindred, was born of a flash of lightning.

But suppose all this; what cause of pride have I in it? Am I really the better, or the more honourable for what others have been or done? *Quæ non fecimus ipsi vix ea nostra voco*, [Those things which were not done by us, I scarcely call ours.]

Or what thank is it to me that out of my first nothing I sprung up in this place, rather than in another; that I crept into the world a wretched infant by this crevice, rather than by that?

I was so far from being called to counsel, to choose of what womb I would be born, or what body I would animate, that I knew not so much as how I came into the world; and am more beholden to my mother's midwife for my nobility, than to myself, or any thing that I could contribute.

Wretched man! Dost thou not believe such plain and easy things as these? And yet, shall neither philosophers and poets laugh thee out of thy folly, nor divinity reform thee?

Blessed God, the Father of lights, and the Fountain of honour, let me esteem it most noble to be akin to thee, and to be like thee!

MEDITATION LXV.*Of pride in beauty.*

THAT pride in beauty does denominate a lover of the world, I suppose nobody will deny; but the great inquiry will be, who they are that are proud of it?

I will venture to answer negatively:

Not they that pray for perfect, healthful, comely children.

Nor they that esteem a comely proportion and just symmetry of parts, an ornament and a blessing of God.

Nor they that endeavour moderately and justly to rectify deformities, to preserve beauty, or to improve it.

But to speak affirmatively: All that prefer beauty before virtue, modesty, chastity, and esteem it higher than these, either in themselves or others, are lovers of the world.

Those that prefer it in themselves, are such as seek the beautifying, adorning, and recommending of the body, more than the adorning of the mind with virtue, or the life with good manners.

Such as use undue means to recommend beauty, either too costly or too splendid, or spend excessive time in setting it off, more than in dressing the inward man.

Such as set off beauty for sinful and carnal ends, to dazzle unwary eyes, and captivate wanton minds, as tradesmen keep a gloss upon their

goods, the better to expose them to sale. And what do many fair ladies do, but pay homage to themselves, and worship their own faces; who stand gazing from hour to hour in their glasses, and cannot be got from them, any more than Ovid's Narcissus from the Fountain.

Those that prefer beauty in others, are such as esteem a fair woman, before a discreet; an handsome before an honest.

The fairest souls do not always inhabit the finest bodies. *Ingenium Galbæ male habitabat*, [the soul of Galba had a poor habitation.] The best guests are not always lodged in the best rooms. What a deformed, lustful, murderous, ambitious, rebellious soul dwelt in the body of Absalom, in which there was no blemish!

Beauty is very dangerous, and a great snare; *Rara est concordia formæ, atque pudicitia*; It is hard to be fair and chaste.

Be sure it is fading; it needs nothing, but its very being, to destroy it. *Dum contemplamur, corrumpimus*; whilst we dote upon it, we destroy it. Vain mortal! Wouldst thou contemplate thy beauty to the best advantage? Go then, view thy face in the next fair rose, or tulip, or lily, that thou meetest with; those will best represent thee.

*Such flowers, which in the morning gay and fine,
Rise with the sun, and mount their heads,
But noon once past, look down upon their beds,
And tow'rd the earth their grave, with him at
night decline,*

And oh! Where is that beautiful woman to be found, that values herself more by her faith, than by her face; by her good manners, more than by her good features; who sometimes views herself in her glass, but always in God, who is unspotted beauty; who stands in awe of every thing that may defile her soul, more than of the small pox, or a leprosy; who, although this body in its complexion and features, be more lovely than her neighbour's, yet despises it, in comparison of the more glorious body; and desires to put off this, that she may put on that? Poor Lucretia abhorred her own beauty, and life too, when her chastity was violated. But how many ladies have we, that therefore especially prize their beauty, because it qualifies them the more to be unchaste.

MEDITATION LXVI.

Of pride in apparel.

FROM the body I descend to the clothes, by which to value one's self, is the meanest and most paltry sort of pride that can be. He that values himself by his body, values himself by something that is part of himself; but he that values himself by his clothes, values himself by a mean thing, that is perfectly extrinsic to him, and nothing at all related to him:

But the inquiry, is, What is this pride in apparel?

Negatively, It is not to wear good clothes, nor handsome ones, nor fashionable ones, nor costly ones, suitable to one's quality and estate.

Nor is it to be careful of them, to preserve them from injury.

Nor is it to express the extraordinary festivity of our minds by extraordinary apparel.

But it is pride in apparel, To prefer apparel before health and modesty, as naked necks and breasts do. Though indeed I know not well which to call this, pride in apparel, or in want of it.

To prefer apparel before charity, and the clothing of the naked, is an undue valuation of it.

To value ourselves by our apparel, to fancy ourselves the better men for it, or to design that others should so esteem us, as it seems Herod and Haman did, is gross pride in apparel; *Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour.* A proud fool! Is there so much honour in a suit of fine clothes? He might have thought of twenty more estimable pieces of honour than that.

But there may be as great a piece of pride as any of these, in an affected plainness and meanness, and unfashionableness of apparel. To design that men should estimate our humility by this, is as proud a part as the Pharisees' desiring to recommend their worth and learning by their long robes. To put on plain cloth instead of humility is deceitful, a bad exchange, somewhat like an image with a pillow of goat's hair, instead of David.

Men may go in sheep's clothing, plain and homely; and yet be inwardly proud and haughty. This seems to be a worse pride than the former,

because it adds hypocrisy to it. What wise or good man, can value himself by that, wherein many rogues, and harlots, yea, and heathen, yea and birds, and beasts, and flowers, do match and excel him?

To make gay apparel stand instead of true nobleness, and excellence of mind, or homely apparel instead of true humility of mind, is a proud superstition, only suitable to worldly minds. A deceitful kind of metonymy in manners, putting the sign for the thing signified.

To affect bravery in apparel, for the recommendation of beauty, or ostentation of riches, is a mean, and oftentimes a deceitful policy. Plain beauties are the loveliest to uncorrupted eyes; and excessive finery serves rather to make people poor, than to prove them rich.

Lord what a wicked thing is man; to make his shame his glory; to make that his pride, which ought to serve for his humiliation; to make that fuel for his lust, which was at first a punishment for his lusting!

MEDITATION LXVII.

Of pride in children.

To glory in children, or to prefer them before God, before the image of God in them, or the will of God in removing them, is worldly.

To glory in their persons, parts, or number, more than in their virtuous qualifications, or dutiful behaviour. What a wicked woman was that,

who was content her son should be a murderer, if he might be an emperor; *occidat modo imperet*, [let him kill, provided he may but rule.] To glory in the propagation and perpetuation of our names by children, is foolish and unreasonable. Virtue gives a better name, than posterity; and to the virtuous, God will give a name, *better than of sons and of daughters*; Isa. lvi. 5.

To depend upon the provision that by them is made for old age, more than upon the providence and promises of God, is carnal and profane. This comfort is very uncertain. True, indeed, children are accounted the staff of old age; but sometimes God beats men with these staves, instead of supporting them thereby; as he did Eli, Samuel and David.

I know that multitudes of children were promised under the law, and valued as a great blessing; a blessing wonderfully coveted by men, and more by women. Abraham seems to have a mind of an heir; *what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?* Gen. xv. 2. But his grand-daughter Rachel was too, too passionate; *Give me children or I die.*

The women accounted it a great reproach to be barren; that is very plain. And it is conjectured that they still hoped that the Messiah might spring of their line. Whether that be true or no I know not; but I think it was no such great matter, if he did, as some would make it. For I observe that Christ after the flesh sprung from some of the most infamous families; as of Pharez, a child of incest; and of Rahab, an harlot.

I observe also that some of the greatest favourites of Heaven wanted this blessing of nume-

rous offspring. Abraham, the friend of God, left behind him but one (Isaac) of the promised seed. Moses, the man of God, had a family indeed; but I think if we consult the genealogies, it was one of the least of the families of Israel. And as for the Gospel, to say no more, I am sure it is very sparing of this kind of blessings.

To be proud of children, is very silly and unreasonable upon many accounts. More grief and vexation is usually brought to people by their children, than by any other cause. Besides, they are begotten and born at uncertainty; who knows, what wise man knows whether he shall be a wise man or a fool that succeeds him? It seems by Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, that wisdom does not always run in the blood; and I think Solomon himself alluded to this son of his, *Eccles.* ii. 18, 19.

But suppose they do prove good, and wise, and virtuous, How can the virtues of children any way redound to their parents, more than the parent's virtue can redound to the honour of the children? A tutor may more reasonably glory than a parent.

If thou be good, thou wilt glory in God, and not in thy good children; if thou be wicked, thy good children are a shame to thee, and not a glory.

Lord, What an unreasonable thing is it, that children who were given to draw the minds of men to thee, in whom they may read thy image, should be so abused, as to draw away their hearts from thee, whilst men use them only as looking-glasses, to reflect their own image!

MEDITATION LXVIII.

Of pride in wit and learning.

UNDERSTANDING and knowledge may justly, I think, challenge to itself the place of the highest natural perfection.

But to glory in knowledge and learning, more than in God that gives them, and more than in the end for which they serve, will denominate a lover of the world.

They are proud of their wit and learning, who ascribe their wit to themselves, their learning to their own study, ingenuity and industry, and not to the blessing of God. If Heriod had in a sober sense said of his eloquent oration, It is the eloquence of God, and not of man, he had said true; but to suffer the people to say so, in a base flattery, and to make himself the God, was proud and atheistical.

They are so that will not submit their wisdom to the wisdom of God, that will believe nothing, but what their reasons can fathom; the wise Greeks, the Scribes, and disputers of this world.

They are so that use their wit and learning to maintain error, to justify falsehood; especially they that are learned to dispute against God, and wise to prate against wisdom itself.

It is very much to the disparagement of learning, and may serve for the humbling of the learned, that oftentimes the best artists are the worst men, and so sometimes are the greatest clerks.

However, It is certain that wisdom and learning are as dear to the animal life, as the divine;

yea, and that the devil himself is as good a scholar as the best of us all.

To this head may be reduced a generation of fools, who although they do not excel, nor indeed match their neighbours in art or learning, do yet glory in their standing, and in the advantage that they have had to know more than others, though they know not so much. These think to conciliate authority to their discourse, not by its strength, but their own standing; not by their being wiser, but older than other men. Cicero jeers his son Mark, that he was of a year's standing under Cratippus, and that at Athens, and yet was not a good philosopher. How much more shameful is it for them who are of twenty or forty years standing in the university, to be inferior in learning to many that were never there. To think to make ourselves or our discourses seem wiser or weightier, merely by reason of our age or education, is a most pedantic piece of pride. As old age is no otherwise honourable, than as it is found in a way of righteousness; so neither is standing, otherwise than in conjunction with a proportionable understanding.

MEDITATION LXIX.

Of pride in riches.

CONFIDENCE and affiance is one species of pride in riches; but this I met with fitly under another head, therefore I will think no more of it here.

To be content with what we have, is no piece of pride in itself. Though he was a proud worldling, who bid his heart be merry, because he had goods laid up for many years; yet it was a good saying of a bad man, *I have enough, my brother.*

There may indeed be pride in refusing presents; but it is not simply a piece of pride, no, nor folly neither, to refuse them. Balaam was proud enough; but I do not take it to be any part of his pride, to refuse the preferments offered him by the king of Moab. Who dare censure Abraham of pride, though he speaks much like a gentleman to the king of Sodom, *Gen. xiv. 23.* and swears *that he would not take from a thread to a shoe-latchet, lest he should say, I have made Abraham rich?* Or Elisha either, though a poorer man than he, who obstinately refused to receive any gift at the hand of the Syrian prince?

But to bless ourselves secretly in riches, and think ourselves better men than our neighbours, or indeed at all really valuable for them, is pride, and an undue estimation of riches. And thus I suspect, some of the plainest and obscurest men are the proudest.

Much more is it pride to make ostentation of riches, either in words by bragging of them, or in deeds, by pompous buildings, gaudy apparel, or the like. Yea, possibly there may be a proud ostentation even in founding churches, hospitals, and alms-houses. Come, see my charity to the Lord and to his poor, sounds as suspiciously, as, *Come, see my zeal.*

But of all ostentation, it is most odiously foolish, for a man to bring his estate, as an argument for

his opinion or party, or the goodness of either. And to bring riches and worldly prosperity as an argument of the special love of God, is next to blasphemy; as if we thought God to be altogether such an one as ourselves. From this false conceit perhaps it is, that men grown rich from mean beginnings, are most apt to be proud; but when they are, they are most ridiculous. *This fellow came in but yesterday, and he will needs be a judge.*

To ascribe our riches to our own care or industry, or ingenuity, so as to exclude the providence of God, or not to allow it the highest place, is carnal. We know indeed that God gives riches usually in a way of ingenious industry, and men of understanding usually have bread; and to know that God has given us riches in a way of industry, is but just.

But yet we must think withal,

First, That it was he that gave that ingenuity, and enabled to that industry. *It is God*, saith the prophet, *that instructeth even the husbandman to discretion*, Isa. xxviii. 26. See also *Deut.* viii. 18. especially.

Secondly, That there is not such a necessary conjunction between these things and riches, but that they are often disappointed; it is the blessing of God only that makes them successful, that makes men rich; without which, *μηδὲν ἰσχυροῦ πόνου* [labour is of no avail.] So that to ascribe to ourselves, and exclude that particular and powerful providence, is gross and carnal.

Lord, What have I, but what I have received? Thou art the great householder, that givest

to all the members of thy family their several portions, to one more, to another less; and which of them may boast over another, or how dare any of them boast against thee? And why should I glory in a thing that is extrinsic to me, a separable adjunct, that may be, and yet I be never the better; or may not be, and I be never the worse? Nay, in a thing that many enjoy, and yet are really very contemptible and hateful, whom I myself do not think ever the better for them? And why should we admire and value ourselves for those things, for which we do not value other men?

MEDITATION LXX.

Of pride in strength.

To be proud of our strength and power, denominates us lovers of the world.

They are proud of their strength, who glory in it distinct from the Almighty; that glory in it, as if they had girded themselves with strength:

That make ostentation of their strength in words, as the Philistine boaster did; or in deeds, using the utmost strength for accomplishing a small matter; as if a king should raise a mighty army of horse and foot to hunt flies, or catch partridges.

To make laws about trivial matters, more for ostentation of one's authority, than for the establishment of any thing that is really good, is ridiculous, and an abuse of power.

To eat, or drink, or fight for wagers; to get one another's money, or to make others sport, is

something worse than a beast would do; it approaches to the barbarous custom of the heathen Roman gladiators, who killed one another, for a pastime to the people.

To abuse power to oppression, is like the lion in the fable. One part of the prey is mine, because I am the worthiest; another is mine, because I took most pains in hunting; and if ye will not give me the third, try for it who dare.

To ascribe victory to one's own arm, to the arm of flesh, is to be proud of one's strength. How unseemly these brags are, we may see in the Assyrian monarch, and how God took him up for his pride, and presently took him down too, *2 Kings* xix. I wish these self-confidents would consider, that it is God alone who girdeth with strength; he often baffles the strength of the strongest, and that by despicable means; as he chastised the monstrous Goliah by a shepherd's boy.

God requires that our strength be employed for him; that it be laid out in maintenance of the truth, in defence of the weak and helpless.

He has charged us against this wickedness expressly by the prophet, *Let not the strong man glory in his strength*, *Jer.* ix. 23.

And how ridiculous a thing is it, for a man to be proud of that, wherein his horse or his ox excels him, more than he excels a child? Is a man mighty to eat, or to drink? And is not a beast more? For who can eat like the behemoth, or drink like leviathan?

Lord, strengthen me with might in my inner man, that I may obtain the victory over principalities and powers; triumph over the powers

of hell and darkness, the devil, and my lusts! As for bodily strength, endow me with so much as may serve to make me useful, and give me grace to use it in thy service, never glorying in that, which, before I am well aware, will be turned into weakness and rottenness!

MEDITATION LXXI.

Of pride in privileges.

THERE are indeed spiritual privileges belonging to the saints, wherein they may well glory; yet so, as it be in Christ only, and not in themselves. Who can but glory in the relation of a son or daughter of God, of an heir of the kingdom, of an interest in all the promises of the Gospel, of free access unto the throne of grace, and entertainment there; in an interest in the prayers of the faithful, especially in the intercession of the blessed Mediator? These are privileges more noble than the most princely; in which no man can rejoice or glory too much, except he can rejoice with a joy greater than unspeakable.

But there are privileges in which it is easy and usual to rejoice and glory excessively and carnally. I have already insisted upon pride in parentage and education. That which I fix my thoughts upon here is church privileges, or the privilege of being in covenant with God, as all the members of the visible church are.

I take all that are admitted into the church, and have taken upon them the profession of the

Gospel, in opposition to Jews and heathens, to be in covenant. But to them that are faithful in covenant, and answer the terms of it, to them only it is advantageous to salvation; to the rest, an high aggravation of their condemnation and sin.

It is doubtless a great mercy to be born within the pale of the church, taken into the number of its members, to sit under the sound of the Gospel; because it is the ordinary means of men's conversion to God, and the road that leads to the church above. But yet to be within the pale of the church, and not be of the little flock, to be a member of the church, and yet a rotten and corrupt one; to be a branch in Christ that bringeth forth no fruit, to live under the sound of the Gospel, and in the mean time the Gospel to be no more than an empty sound to men; how little matter of glory is in all this!

And yet, how do the generality of men glory in these privileges, rather than in the answer of a good conscience; in a form of godliness, rather than in the power of it? These are the lovers of the world and carnal.

How impudently did the Jews glory in their father Abraham, the law, the temple, their circumcision and sacrifices; when in the mean time, they were strangers to the faith and obedience of Abraham; broke and made void the law; refused to make their souls the temple of God; were uncircumcised in heart; would not hearken to God's voice, which is better than sacrifice, and more acceptable than the fat of lambs?

And is it not as usual, is it not as unreasonable, is it not as impudent, to glory in the profession of

the Gospel, and yet reject the terms of it; to be proud of being baptized into the name of Christ, and utterly refuse to be baptized into the Spirit of Christ? Shall a dog brag of his communion with the family, and his membership, because he lies by the fire, as the children do, or eats part of the same bread that they eat? But who are proud of their church privileges? All that value themselves and their Christianity by these. All that bless themselves in the font, and in the altar; whilst they are not at all washed from their sins, neither know what communion with God in the Spirit, with Christ in his graces, means. Who take up their rest in these, not seeing any necessity of regeneration, or thinking the baptismal one to be sufficient. That boast that they are not excommunicated from the society of the saints upon earth, when they stand excommunicated from the inheritance of the saints in light; that make more reckoning that they are Protestants, than that they are converts. They are Protestants; they understand by this no more, but that they are not Papists; nor no more by that than that they come to church. And is not this a great matter to be proud of? To glory in this, and rest here, is notorious hypocrisy and carnality.

Lord, pity the deluded and mistaken multitude, who come and sit before thee as thy people, but their hearts are not with thee; these run after their covetousness, their pride, their revenge and luxury!

MEDITATION LXXII.

Of pride in power and great place.

To prefer power and advancement, an high and honourable station in the world, before God, before truth, and a good conscience, is to be a lover of the world. It will be asked, Who do so?

I answer, They that climb up to preferment by undue means, by injustice, flattery, by sinful compliance with the guise of a corrupt age, or that swim to a throne in a sea of innocent blood.

They that insinuate themselves into the favour of great men, by administering to their lusts, and procuring fuel thereunto, by humouring them in their unlawful desires, by commending them for nothing, or for that which is naught. It is impossible to reckon up all the follies, falsities, flatteries, lyings, dissemblings, detractions, and back-bitings, calumnies, cruelties, omissions, which are the by-ways that the lover of the world uses in order to preferment. The most of these we find exemplified in Absalom and Hazael affecting the crowns of Israel and Syria. Nay, they that play at a smaller game than crown-catching, will not hesitate at such sinful methods, as appears by the story of Zibah. And indeed it is impossible for a man that intemperately thirsts after the favour of great men, to be innocent; he must either do what he should not, or basely neglect to do what he should.

The king of Moab jeered the foolish prophet, because the Lord had kept him from honour.

Lord, If thou keep me from honour, if thou interpose and stand in my way, that I cannot get to honour but by dishonouring thee, and violating thy authority, let me account it a blessed disappointment; nay, let me account it a singular honour to me, to be so addicted to thee and thy commands, to the seeking of thy face and favour, as that, in comparison thereof, I can despise the favour of men, of the greatest of men! For what will the favour of great men signify, in comparison of the acceptance of the great God?

MEDITATION LXXIII.

Of pride in virtuous actions.

To speak properly, that is not a virtuous action, nor a religious duty, which a man is proud of; for it is necessary to a virtuous action, that it be done to the glory of God, and not for self-exaltation.

But we may call many actions or duties religious, in contradistinction from civil; and many of those religious duties, in this sense, may be as irreligious as any other. If a man preach, or pray, or hear, or receive the sacrament, to commend himself to men, for the advancement of his own name and interest, or the augmentation of his own estate, he is as carnal in those actions as in any civil actions whatsoever. Jeroboam's setting up a worship, (though it had not been idolatrous,) merely to strengthen his kingdom, would have been carnal; for if self be the highest end,

it denominates the action selfish; be it civil or religious, it matters not.

But there is yet a more mysterious and spiritual piece of pride, when men do virtuous actions ultimately for good ends, and yet, when they have done, take an unholy pleasure in them, and bless themselves in the performance. The devil will be ready, if he cannot get us to be so gross as directly to seek ourselves in performing these duties, to tempt us to feel ourselves in the performance, and to set the crown upon our own heads.

I speak not of that gross way of glorying in our own good works, or making ostentation of them, which is palpable to every ordinary discerners; but that secret kind of self-applauding, or self-feeling, which is contrary to that self-nothingness and exinanition, of which Christ Jesus was the pattern.

To rejoice and glory in God purely and only, and be nothing in our own eyes; to be perfectly emptied of self, and wholly swallowed up in God, is a high attainment; and yet it is predominantly the desire and design of all truly renewed souls.

Oh Lord, thou art all things, I am nothing; thou art the giver of all grace, the ocean from which all excellencies do flow, and into which they ought to return. Let me not feel myself, but thee in my best actions! Let me be so far from contriving the advancement of my own sorry name in any good action, as that I may not without displeasure so much as hear myself commended or spoken well of for it; that I may not

commit a sacrilege upon thine honour, though it be ever so secret, and that there be no danger of being arraigned in man's court for this theft; but may live in the exercise of self-emptying, self-humbling, continually! Grant that I may look upon thee, not under any particular and limited notion, but as being the universal Goodness, Truth, Life and Love; and may view myself, not as any thing distinct from thee, but in thee! That I may sink into nothing, and be swallowed up in thee, the infinite abyss of all perfection! Amen.

MEDITATION LXXIV.

Of pride in worldly interest, and a party.

NEAR of kin to pride of power and preferment, is that carnal disposition of seeking one's worldly interest and grandeur, and preferring a party, or the advancement of it, before the propagation of the Gospel, and the advancement of true godliness in the world.

Some men have so espoused a party, and are so addicted to a way, that nothing must stand before it. All that they can wrap and wring is little enough to sacrifice to this Bel. This must be carried on, let peace or purity stand or fall, let the Gospel itself sink or swim.

The faith delivered to the saints does challenge indeed our zeal, and we are required to contend earnestly for it; but for the Pharisees to contend so vehemently for the tradition of the fathers, which were not contained in the law,

was a mad and carnal zeal, notorious hypocrisy; especially when, in the mean time, they neglected the weightier matters of the law.

To prefer the advancement of a party, or a worldly interest, which God hath not consecrated, before peace, order, unity, before the propagation of the Gospel, the advancement of true godliness, and the salvation of men's souls, is to be a predominant lover of the world. To say, *I am of Paul, and I am of Apollos*, in contradistinction from Christ, is carnal, says Paul himself. And he was a competent judge; for he himself, whilst unconverted, was unreasonably and fiercely devoted to a party. But behold the vast difference between carnal Saul and regenerate Paul; compare *Acts xxii. 3—5.* with *Phil. i. 15—18.*

But who may be thought to be guilty of this foul fault? And what is it to be proud of worldly interest?

I answer, To be so addicted to an interest or party, as to prefer the prosecution of it before the exercise of justice, charity, or mercy; to violate any man's right to establish our own party.

To prefer it before the exercise of charity; to think that every man must needs be exclaimed against, excommunicated, forbidden, that follows not our way. This Christ condemns in as plain words as if he should say, Let them preach the Gospel, let them cast out devils; I will not forbid them, though they do not follow me. The apostle Paul cried, Let them preach in God's name, though they do not say, We are of Paul, *Phil. i. 18.* and I suppose Cephas was of the same mind.

To prefer it before mercy. What, must all the world rather go to wreck, than our own Diana should be spoken against? Must every man be stretched longer or cut shorter, that will not exactly fit our bed? Must they be accounted not worthy to live that do not live just as we do? If God will have mercy rather than sacrifice, then surely much rather than ceremonies that are not of his appointing. It was fit indeed that the interest of Egypt should be maintained, but it was not fit that the Israelitish children should be drowned, to keep it from sinking.

To be so addicted to an interest, as to use and encourage undue instruments in the prosecution of it; to make priests of the lowest of the people, to strengthen the party, with Jeroboam; to make unlawful matches or leagues to strengthen a kingdom, with Asa the king of Judah, and Jehoshaphat his son, both sharply reprov'd for it by Hanani and Jehu, the father and son, *2 Chron.* xvi. 7. and xix. 2.

To make laws on purpose to make men offenders. One party, by an ordinance, exclude all from their employment, that will do thus and thus; another, succeeding, exclude all that will not. Good God! It is not divine truth and charity, but human interest, that governs the world. When shall we leave off judging one another, but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block in his brother's way! It seems to be a bold thing for any party of men to make the terms of communion straiter than Christ Jesus made them. Must all the children be cast out of the family that are not of the same shape and

stature? Shall the mother refuse to nurse the child that does not exactly resemble her? If it resemble the father it is a sufficient argument of its being legitimate; nay, those are accounted more legitimate than the other. It is no good maxim in divinity, *Partus sequitur ventrem*, [the offspring follows the mother.]

To admit of sin for political ends; as either to oppress and impoverish a people, to keep them peaceable, as the king of Egypt did; or to hoodwink the people, and keep them in ignorance, that they may the more absolutely depend on the judgment of their dogmatical guides, as that church does that is *spiritually called Egypt*. Such a kind of carnal wisdom is it to tolerate profaneness, to prevent faction; to pull down pulpits, for fear of sedition; or schools, for fear of controversies.

Who can sufficiently lay to heart the miseries and mischiefs which self-interest hath brought on the world! How many lives have been sacrificed to the interest of a triple crown! It was said once, *Quantum lucri attulit ista fabula Christi!* [How much gain has that fable of Christ produced!] Nay, but, *Quantas strages et cædes ista fabula Papæ!* [How great desolation and slaughter have flowed from that fable of the Pope!]

In short, he that forbids a man to cast out devils, merely because he is not of his party, and follows not him, prefers the devil before God; and if that be not idolatry, then I think there is none in Matt. iv. 9. *Fall down and worship me.* One would think an hearty enemy to Satan's kingdom, (such as Christ Jesus was,) should al-

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most do and suffer any thing in order to the subversion of that kingdom, the dispossession of unclean spirits; I mean the conversion and salvation of precious souls.

Do I look upon it as an unworthy act in Jonah to prefer his own reputation, and the credit of his own prophesy, before the repentance of the Ninevites; and shall I dare to prefer my own interest, or the credit of my own party or opinion, before the salvation of souls? Do I look upon it as a carnal part of Joshua, to prefer the interest of his master Moses, before the edification of the Lord's congregation; and shall I dare to prefer the interest of any, though they sit in Moses' chair, before the good of souls?

Good Lord, grant that I may have no interest but the interest of truth, righteousness, peace, purity; Oh how infinitely more worthy to be advanced is the interest of Christ than our own sorry name! Lord, come and take up the highest room and place in my heart, that I may prefer the glory of thy name, the exercise of grace, the advancement of truth, the propagation of the Gospel, the welfare of souls, before my chiefest joys, my dearest interests! And Oh, that thou wouldest mightily prevail in the hearts of all men; that whether they sit in Moses' chair, they may be of Moses' temper, wishing that all the Lord's people were prophets; or whether they be apostolical men, they may resemble the great apostle of the Gentiles, who rejoiced, and was resolved to rejoice, that Christ was preached, though the preachers designed thereby to derogate from his fame, and to eclipse it; or wheth-

er they be private Christians, they may follow Christ, who would not forbid them that showed compassion to men, and opposed the common enemy, although they followed not him! Oh how sweetly do these great and holy persons conspire with one another in the same pure and public spirit! And Oh, would to God we all may conspire with them!

MEDITATION LXXV.

Of self-love.

AFTER the things of the world, come to be considered the persons thereof.

If any man prefer any person in the world before God, *the love of God is not in him.* The world loveth its own persons, as well as things.

The persons may be divided into one's self, one's relations, and other men.

First, Of self-love.

Self-love is directly contrary to the love of God; and where it is predominant, does exclude it.

I have partly prevented myself in many things, that might be reduced to this head.

Self is the great centre of all worldly men, in-
somuch that sin seems to be nothing else but the sinking down of the soul from God into self.

It is an instance of predominant self-love, to stand viewing and admiring our own particular being, as something distinct from the unbounded essence of God, and independent on him; or to

seek its gratification without any reference to the Supreme Being, endeavouring ultimately to accommodate it with something, that shall no way redound to him.

To dote on our own perfections, as if they were the distinct excellencies of our own beings, and not communications from God.

To allow that in ourselves, which we condemn in others of the same circumstances with ourselves.

To love our lives in opposition to, in competition with, in a way of separation from God, I have already considered. There is yet somewhat higher.

A man may be guilty of an unchaste love of his own soul, as the Stoics with their *αὐτάρκεια*, their self-sufficiency, proudly magnifying the excellency of their own souls, and their own sufficiency, at least in a way of independence on God, if not in opposition to him. What mean else those great brags, *Sapiens contendet cum ipso Jove de felicitate*, [A wise man may contend with God himself for happiness;] and the strange encomiums that they give to their wise man, *Compar deorum, deorum conviva*, [An equal with the gods, a companion of the gods,] and the like?

The Stoics sought the salvation of their own souls in a corrupt manner. Let no one hesitate at the phrase of seeking the salvation of their own souls. For the salvation of the soul is nothing but the happiness and perfection of it.

This they sought out of God; and we, if we will excel them, must seek it in him. They sought it as the perfection of their own beings,

as something distinct from God; we must seek it as a participation and enjoyment of him.

Will it seem strange to any to hear it said, that men may be selfish in seeking their own salvation? How were the Stoics? Why may not a man be selfish in the undue love of one part of himself as well as of another?

To account salvation nothing else but preservation from misery, and to seek such a salvation, is as compatible to the carnal as to the spiritual man. To account heaven a state of ease, peace, honour, everlasting safety, and a paradise of pleasure, and to desire it as such; why is not this consistent with a carnal heart?

But further, To account salvation something positive, the perfection and highest accomplishment of our souls, and to seek it as the accomplishment of our own particular beings, as something distinct from God, and to set up ourselves as anti-deities, what is this better than Stoicism?

If we take salvation in the true Gospel sense, for the perfecting of the soul in God; then indeed we cannot seek the salvation of our souls more than the glory of God. But in this false notion of it which I was just now speaking of, we may; the Stoics did, and many do. Take it in a true Gospel sense, and it is impossible to disjoin the glory of God and our own salvation. The stronger the love of God is, the purer is the love of our own souls. The salvation of the soul comprehends its being perfected in humility, self-nothingness, as well as other graces. Thus the glorified spirits cast down their crowns before God, and ascribe all worthiness to him; they seek

not themselves, nay, they feel not themselves at all distinct from him. It is perfect nonsense in religion to desire heaven as a self-accommodation.

Oh thou Almighty Goodness, Omnipresent Life, Perfect Beauty, deliver me from fancying a self-sufficiency, doting upon self-excellencies, and settling upon a self-centre! I am straitened at home; the more I seek to wring a happiness out of myself, the more I pinch and pain myself. I see something beyond myself, something better than I am, something that I had rather be than what am; my soul stretcheth itself upon thee. Oh widen it, enlarge it, that it may stretch itself more upon thee! Oh blessed God, the supreme and sweetest good, wrap up my mind in thyself, increase my longings, till they be perfected into loves, and those loves into pure and endless delights!

MEDITATION LXXVI.

Of the love of relations.

To love any relations more than God, or to prefer them before him, is to be a predominant lover of the world.

To be pleased with faults, or so much as to dispense with them, because they are found in our children, or any other relations, is to prefer them before truth and justice, and consequently the world before God. The priest Eli is said to have preferred his children before God, because he did not severely enough correct, or punish, or restrain them.

Christ Jesus undervalued all carnal relations, in comparison of the Father, his will, and the doing of it. *Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?* He undervalued all things in comparison of his Father's image; *Whosoever doth the will of my Father, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.* And he requires us to do so; *Whosoever will be my disciple, let him forsake father and mother.*

The apostle Paul valued no man according to the flesh, by any outward thing, riches or poverty, relation or not relation, 2 *Cor.* v. 16.

When the interest of God stood in competition, Levi did not know father or brother, *Deut.* xxxiii. 9.

And if my brother or child do not walk according to the law, his relation shall be no relation; his circumcision accounted as uncircumcision.

To prefer the relation of children to us, before their relation to God, to love our own image more than the image of God in them, is to make self the standard of our love, and the creature to surpass the Creator.

To speak properly, that kindness and benignity in parents, that dutifulness and obedience in children, that faithfulness and sweetness in husbands and wives, that tenderness and helpfulness in brothers or sisters, or any friends, by which chiefly they are lovely, is of God, is God, and so to be loved and relished. And to love them under a distinct, limited consideration, as ours, or as a kin to us, is not so pure and spiritual as it ought to be.

The truth is, there is nothing our's. For God is the proprietor, we are only the possessors; and why should we be so fond of that which is another's? It looks like a piece of melancholy; as if a man should go into a jeweller's shop, and there fondly hug a jewel which is only shewed him; or put into his hands, to judge of the worth of it. How do poor worldlings act over the part of mad men, when they seem to themselves very wise! The part of that melancholist that I have read of, who would stand upon the shore, and make much mirth at the coming in of every ship, saying, It was laden with his own goods.

And as for relation, what is it but a notion? It is something, I know not what, extrinsic to us. And why should I be fond of every man that is called by my name? Or why should any man be proud that he is called Charles, and is name-sake to a great king?

And what is relation to us? What are we, that it should be so lovely a thing to be like us? To be like to God, to be a kin to him indeed is something; the nearer to him the nobler, and the happier. I must needs have a foolish, and false, and proud conceit of myself surely, that am fond of a child, because he resembles me.

Lord, Thou art nearer of kin to me than all the world. The material world is nothing at all of kin to my soul, not so much as my cloaths are to my body. But in thee I subsist; thou hast done that for me, that father and mother could never do. Let all relation be swallowed up in thee, that I may be in a spiritual sense another Melchisedeck!

MEDITATION LXXVII.

Of the love of other men.

To love and esteem man, any man more than God, denominates a lover of the world.

To love man *qua* [as he is] is a Christian duty, and an high perfection. It is as if it were to be transformed into the nature of that blessed Being, whose name is Love.

God is recommended to us by this, *God is Love*. Christ commends him to our imitation in this especially, *Matt. v. 44, 45*.

Christ Jesus is commended to us by this. Oh the wonderful love that he shewed to mankind, in laying down his life for them! Yea, his whole life, before he laid it down, was love; it was teaching, healing, feeding men, serving the necessities of souls and bodies.

The best of men are commended for this: Moses the meekest of men; David sympathising with his very enemies in their afflictions; Jeremiah mourning over the sins of Israel, and the calamities even of Moab; Paul most passionately desirous of the salvation of the persecuting Jews.

The best of heathens is commended for it. Socrates professed, That he knew nothing but to love; he styled himself *διδάσκων ἐραστής* a servant of love.

It is the speech of a Jesuit, *Neminem odit, qui Deum amat*; He that loves God, hates no man.

By this epithet things are commended. The best wisdom, is that which is gentle and loving;

and the best valour is kind, and apt to forgive.

But it will be asked, Is every man lovely?

Yes there is something lovely in every man, something of God that love will delight in. No man is so bad, but there may be found something of good nature, good manners, good offices, at some time or other; all this is an emanation from God.

If none of this were, yet the relation wherein man stands to God, as a reasonable creature, makes him lovely.

We love our sown corn in hope, and many other things. Let us love the worst of men, in hopes that they may yet, by divine grace, become truly pious.

Lord, shed abroad this large, liberal, generous grace into my heart! Enlarge my heart, that it may comprehend all mankind! This is better, than, with Barzillai, to entertain a king and his army; or with Ahasuerus, to keep open house for a kingdom. Thus shall I, though I have nothing to give, be as charitable as the rich, and more munificent than the princes of the earth.

I charge thee, O my soul, this day, in the presence of the God, whose name is Love, that thou hate no child of man; and that thou mayest be sure not to do it, that thou do not so much as secretly despise the meanest, or suspend good offices towards the worst, or rejoice in the sins or sufferings of the most injurious of men, on the earth.

But (alas!) what pity is it that this divine affection should be depraved, that love itself should become filthy and unchaste. Separate man and

his perfections from God, and then love him or them distinctly, and this love becomes adulterous. For although all men are to be loved in God, and for his sake, yet no man is to be loved any otherwise than so.

They prefer man before God, who stand admiring the excellencies and perfections of any man, as the accomplishments of this or that particular being, and not as beams from the Father of Lights. It is the part of unrefined minds to admire diversity of gifts, and overlook the same Spirit. How nobly does the refined soul live and act, who viewing the perfections of all men in God the Fountain, enjoys them all as fully and deliciously, as if they were his own!

They also, who have men's persons in admiration, being partial in their estimation or commendation of men, by reason of their greatness, or of some advantage to be got by them. This the apostle taxeth as a carnal thing.

There is indeed a kind of civil honour and respect due to men by virtue of their office, authority, and higher station in the world, and a peculiar, grateful respect to be shewed to benefactors.

But to have the eyes blinded, the judgment bribed, the noble affection of love made mercenary, by any secular greatness; either to love men the more, or to think that God does so, because of their temporal prosperity and grandeur, is to call the proud happy, and to bless the covetous, whom God abhors; it is to prostitute that affection, that should be preserved chaste.

We ought to think and estimate according to God, to love as he loves, and to hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which he also hateth; otherwise we prefer the world before God.

To delight in the company, and either profane or jejune communication of worldly or wicked men, more than in the society of the godly, is a worldly love.

In our hearts to love or esteem any vile person, be he of what civil capacity he will, before them that fear the Lord, be their civil capacity ever so mean, is as good an argument of an unsanctified mind, as the contrary is of a citizen of Zion. (Psal. xv. 4.) *In whose eyes a vile person is contemned.* In this courtly age it would be looked upon as an unmannerly behaviour in the prophet, who would not vouchsafe to look towards the king of Israel, 2 *Kings*, iii. 14. But certainly it is worse than unmannerly, to have the greatest respect and kindness for them that are not at all of Israel.

MEDITATION LXXVIII.

Of flattery.

THIS brings me to think of the foul vice of flattery, which although it be not always an estimation of men, (for men often flatter those whom in their hearts they disesteem and despise,) yet it would be thought so, and is as worldly as the other.

An humble behaviour indeed is ornamental; soft answers are good and useful.

To approve and commend a good man, or a good action, is so far from being simply evil, that sometimes it is duty, and may serve good ends.

But it requires a great deal of wisdom. For, First, It easily mingles itself with something evil, and is corrupted by covetousness, slavish fear, or self-love. Men may most set off themselves, and study to endear themselves most, when they commend other men.

Secondly, It is easily perverted to ill ends, and may as soon make me prouder, as better.

Commendation therefore must be given justly, seasonably, proportionably, and should be mixed with the remembrance of God; as Paul's was to Philemon, *ver* 4, 5.

Flattery is sometimes gross, in words; commending evil, and calling it by good names; assenting to every thing at a venture, or denying without reason; magnifying some little thing beyond its desert, and extenuating some foul fault into a mere peccadillo, or unavoidable infirmity.

Sometimes it is more fine and subtile, in actions; in a crouching, truckling, over-obsequious behaviour.

I need say no more of flattery, than that it is,

First, An argument of a mean and slavish mind. The truly generous mind that adores truth, knows not how to give flattering titles.

Secondly, That it is of most mischievous consequence, and very pernicious in its effects; because it infects princes' courts and great men's houses. Flatterers by blinding the judgment of princes, do at once put out the eyes of a nation. For they lead those out of the way, who when

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they are misled, cause the rest of the world to err.

We know how fatal it proved to Ahab, when his chaplains the prophets, and the courtiers conspired together to deceive him. *Go up and prosper, say the prophets; Let thy word be as one of their's, says the courtier.*

And with what indignation God resents the daubing of these prophets, and their putting pillows under men's heads and arms, the prophet Ezekiel does acquaint us.

Lord, what is man or his power, who can only kill the body, that I should fear and flatter him in any thing, that is hateful to thee! What profit or preferment can I expect from man that shall countervail thy dishonour, or the prejudice done to truth and holiness, by sordid flattery, or sinful compliance! Oh that the interest of God and religion be exalted in my soul far above all these petty, carnal considerations! And oh that the messengers of God would seriously examine, whether they be not the servants of men, of the worst part of men, even their lusts, by imprisoning the truth, lest it should fly in some honourable or worshipful face; whether they do not tremble to speak of temperance, before incestuous Felix; or whether they can take such fair leave of their patrons, as Paul took of his Ephesians, *I have kept back nothing that was profitable to you!*

MEDITATION LXXIX.

Of worldly business.

UNDER this phrase, the world, is comprehend-
ed also the work, employment and business of
the world.

To prefer the business of this world before
God, denominates a predominant lover of the
world.

God has endowed man with active principles,
designing him for business.

To be active, is to be like God, who is life it-
self. He is not an idle spectator, enjoying him-
self, and minding nothing else; neither doing
good nor evil, (as some profane men in the proph-
et imagined him,) but he is good, and doth good.

An idle and inactive life is unmanly and in-
famous. No station does exempt men from busi-
ness. Gentlemen and ladies have their callings.
There is business accommodated to all sorts of
men. Having already spoken of idleness, I will
say no more of it here, but this, a good man must
needs love business, as it is a vehicle of grace.
For how can a man exercise righteousness, mercy
or charity, without business?

The necessities of human life are so many,
either our own or other men's, that it is impossi-
ble any man should be idle, but who is of an idle,
sensual temper.

To prevent mistakes, I will first consider what
is not to prefer the business of the world before
God.

To be diligent and industrious in our callings, with a good design, is not it.

To be more in worldly business, than in heavenly, is not it. God himself has allowed six days to one.

To employ our hands in working more than in lifting up to heaven, is not worldly. If we speak properly, to observe due measures, and propound right ends in worldly business, is conformity to the will of God, and heavenly.

God acted like himself in the creation of the world, as well as in the redemption of it; and so godly men, in employing themselves about worldly objects, as well as spiritual. The angels are as well in heaven when they are employed upon earth, in preserving the goings of the saints, as in their most immediate contemplations.

To give the precedency to worldly business, as to management and action, is not simply, and always it. A lesser business, and more ignoble, may be *pro hic et nunc*, [under present circumstances,] more necessary than a greater, and preferable to it. The necessities of the body may take place of the convenience of the soul.

To do every thing in its proper season, is a point of high wisdom, and indeed religion. Let us always remember that religion is in the due management of worldly business, as well as otherwise.

To do works of necessity or charity on the Lord's day, is not it.

To have a reverend esteem for that day, is good and necessary. Religion flourishes in a kingdom, or a soul, as that is observed. But yet

there may be a superstition in it ; which our Saviour, by his example and doctrine, has endeavoured to heal. The Sabbath was made for man, and must give place to him. But let all take heed they do not create necessities, or pretend them, as I doubt too many of the *παῖδες ἰατρῶν*, the chirurgical tribe do.

To put one's self upon business ; to offer one's service for the good of a neighbour ; to meddle in other men's matters uncalled, by way of assistance or advice ; to prevent sin or mischief, (as Lot ;) to reconcile differences, (as Moses,) is not it. I do not think that either Lot in his *Nay, my brethren, do not so wickedly* ; nor Moses, in his *Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?* were pragmatical, as it seems they were then interpreted.

There is such a fault as pragmaticalness [or, officious interference ;] but a generous activity, and public-spiritedness, which proceeds from an universal love, is unjustly branded. Yea, I will say it is base cowardice in some men of abilities, to hide themselves from business, and from the necessities of mankind, (that is, from their own flesh) under this pretence, that they will not be busy-bodies.

It is better to offer one's self ten times where there is no need, than to deny assistance once where there is.

Blessed are the peace-makers, said the great Peace-maker.

And I cannot but account it a base humour, to reproach active men for busy-bodies.

It is true, Christ Jesus would not meddle with things not belonging to him ; but as to the things

belonging to him, he sought opportunities for business. He went up and down doing good to souls and bodies of men.

MEDITATION LXXX.

Περὶ τῆ πολυπραγμασιῶν,

Or, of the love of worldly business.

But there is a love of worldly business, which is intemperate, and a symptom of a worldly mind. And although one should say, That they that are guilty of it, are the best sort of sensualists, (because business and action is a better thing, less gross, more agreeable to the active nature of the soul, than the dull love of riches,) yet this is very small comfort.

Some dote too much upon their own worldly business, which yet is materially lawful. It is an easy thing to over-do, to be over-diligent, over-industrious, over-painful. Do not they dote upon business, who are employed about it by day, dream of it by night, pursue it with a hurry inseparable from fear, perplexity and discontent, that will be ready to fall out with God or man, if they put any stop to them in their business?

Suppose business to be lawful, yet it must also be necessary, or highly convenient, to justify men's zeal about it. What necessity is there, or convenience either, that rich men should be still richer, or that one man should have all the trade of a town?

To clog one's self with worldly business, in order to self-enriching, and growing up into un-

necessary grandeur, or unwieldy bulk in the world, argues a worldly spirit.

To busy one's self, in order to the molesting and troubling of other men, to be encouragers of law, troublers of Israel, argues a worldly mind.

To busy one's self so in worldly matters, as to exclude or retrench heavenly business, not to subordinate the former to the latter, to love business for business' sake, without respect to any good to be done thereby, argues an intemperate lover of worldly business.

Some concern themselves too much in other men's business. To meddle in things that we know not, or in things no way belonging to us, is foolish; but to meddle in the matters of other men, to do them mischief, is wicked. The *sycophantic delators*, or informers, so much inveighed against by the old comedians, peeped and pried into every conversation, to pick quarrels, and find faults; and yet the varlets accounted this *εὐεργεσίην τὴν πόλιν*, [to benefit the city,] and *Βοηθεῖν τοῖς νόμοις τοῖς κειμένοις, καὶ μὴ πιτέρεπω ποτ' ἢ τις ἀμαρτάνη*, [to aid the insulted laws, and allow no one to offend,] as he in Aristophanes brags. Such a kind of fellow was Zibah the servant of Saul; such an one the king of Israel suspected the king of Syria, Naaman's master, to be, *2 Kings* v. 7. David often complains of this sort of men; Doeg the pick-thank, the emblem of a sycophantic courtier, and other of Saul's courtiers, that digged pits for him, laid snares for him; that said, *When will he slip or fall, that we may surprise him?*

To love to know the faults of men is not a good temper; yea, it is painful to a godly mind.

To look into the faults of men, to bring them to punishment, may be a good work ; it may be done sincerely, for the execution of some good law that is of moment ; it may possibly be in mercy to the offender, and out of pure kindness ; as if one should say, I love him, therefore I will get him punished.

But men are not generally of so pure and public a spirit. They are so revengeful, so covetous, that this makes the office of informers thought hardly of ; and it is accounted a fault to be inquisitive into the faults of other men. It is hard to find an informer out of pure zeal or love to truth ; but mercenaries and pickpockets enough. Flatterers are generally busy bodies. For how shall they ingratiate themselves with their great masters, but with the faults of other men ?

But to lay snares for the righteous, to watch for their halting, to seek occasion against a man in the matter of his God, though a law would favour, is wicked, and much resembles that great busy body, that goes up and down continually seeking to devour. Daniel's accusers had a law to justify them ; yet I doubt not but they were wicked informers for all that.

Curiosity, or an intemperate desire to be acquainted with other men's secrets, nothing belonging to us, argues vanity of mind, and a spirit not well conversant at home, and may be reduced to the disease of itching ears. There are secrets of nature, of religion, of one's own soul, to be inquired into, and it is laudable to inquire into them. We need not lust after the secrets

of other men. Besides one is uneasy to be trusted with them. It makes a man a slave if he do not reveal them, and a knave if he do.

Lord, thou art life itself, and a pure act; thou art good, and doest good continually; thou hast endowed me with an active nature, thou hast furnished me with business enough of my own, and other men's, for this world, and for the future. Suffer me not to hide my hand in my bosom, and to look on as an idle spectator, unconcerned, but notwithstanding all temptations from the flesh, the devil and the world, imitate thy active and beneficent nature! But O Eternal Wisdom, teach me to order my actions with discretion, to lay out myself in actions pure, proper, profitable. Grant that I may not be impure and unprofitable, like a stagnant pool; nor yet troublesome nor offensive, like an overflowing torrent; ever flowing, but without inundation; ever running, but as ever within my own banks; not hiding my light under a bushel, yet shining within my own sphere!

MEDITATION LXXXI.

Of the fashions of the world.

THERE are some things in the world that are not properly called business, which yet to prefer before God denominates a man worldly; and these are the fashions of the world.

I cannot properly call it pride, covetousness, or voluptuousness, to conform to these, and yet it is carnal.

There are, indeed, civil and innocent fashions of the world, to which to conform is no fault; nay, considering man as a member of society, seems expedient.

Matters of apparel, so far as one's quality, estate, health, and other considerable circumstances, will allow. Matters of salutation, of civil courtesy, and respect, seem to be of this sort. Nay, to be singular in these, especially to place religion in them, and to make conscience of non-conformity to them, seems to be an argument of superstition and weakness, and of a mind not understanding its just liberty, or valuing itself by false measures.

But to follow any evil, or suspected mode or guise, because it is a custom, and fashionable, is a fashioning one's self according to the world, or being conformed to this present evil world.

To lust after every new fashion, though ever so costly, inconvenient, exotic, and to follow it greedily, is an argument of a light mind, and inconsistent; yea, it is a very troublesome thing, not to be able to keep in a fashion till one be well warm in it.

For a free nation to dote on the fashions of other nations, seems to be ungenerous, and a kind of subjecting themselves, and to be a cause of confusion; and it is observed to be prejudicial to the trade and wealth of a nation.

I think I have read of laws somewhere made against bringing in strange fashions; at least the precept of the wise preacher will fairly reach them, Prov. xxiv. 21. *Meddle not with them that are given to change.*

All following of fashions that are in conjunction with pride, prodigality, wantonness, and is either the parent or child of fleshly lust, is a symptom of a worldly mind, and denominates a lover of the world. And to prefer the fashions of the world before sobriety, modesty, charity, humility, or truth, is to prefer the world before God.

I restrain not fashion to apparel, but extend it to all matters of opinion or conversation.

If they be works of darkness, we are flatly forbidden to have any fellowship with them, though they be committed at noon-day, though they have a general approbation, or public sanction. If it be an evil, though a multitude have made it a fashion, we are not to follow it.

Alas! How great a number of people are led wholly by example; that examine nothing, judge nothing, make no choice of any thing, but live merely by this maxim, to do as the most do; yea, and that even in things relating to religion itself.

The greatest part follow what is most fashionable, even in the worship of God. It may happen indeed that what is most fashionable may be good; but whether it be so or not, it matters not to them; for they proceed not by the goodness of the thing, but by the fashionableness of it; so that though it be good, it is no virtue in them that follow it; for if any other way quite different should be in fashion, they would follow that too.

If we could suppose a thing purely indifferent, it were no fault to follow it, according as it is usual or fashionable. Nay, it would rather seem

an argument of a proud and quarrelsome mind, not to do it. But I cannot conceive how any thing *in actu exercito*, [in deliberate action,] can be called indifferent. For when human acts are circumstantiated, they become prudent or imprudent, comely or uncomely, fit or unfit for their ends, that is, good or evil, all of them.

What is the worship of the whole vulgus of the Papists, but an apish imitation of a received mode and fashion? And it were to be wished, that Protestants, who have a better worship, had generally any better ground for it than they.

Lord, I know that man is a sociable creature, apt to imitate what is exemplified to him, loth to be singular; and also that his soul is now so sunk into his senses, that he is more prone to follow the sight of his eyes, than the light of reason, which thou hast set up to guide him. Alas! I see such a fashion is not safe to imitate, yet I find it hard to resist. If I be carried down the stream, I may be drowned in perdition; if I strive against it, I must take much pains, and be counted foolish for my pains. Oh that by thy grace thou wouldest so refine, exalt, enable and ennoble my reason, that it may exercise a just dominion over flesh and sense, and powerfully direct me to the pursuit of whatever is just and holy, and good in thy eyes, though it be not fashionable in the eyes of men!

MEDITATION LXXXII.

Of swearing.

AMONG the fashions of the world, I cannot but a little think, (and yet cannot well endure to think,) of swearing.

I cannot well tell to what head of the worldly life to reduce swearing, except it be to the fashions of the world. Surely it cannot be the love of profit, nor of pleasure, nor a desire of honour, that puts men upon this; and yet it is worldly, and a symptom of a profane mind.

Men do not ordinarily get any thing by swearing, except it be in cases of false swearing, where they sell their oaths to serve another man's interest. This is so hateful a practice, so like Judas, (for indeed it is the setting of God himself to sale,) that though it should bring in thirty pieces of silver, or some such small matter, one would think no man should dare to make the bargain.

But the ordinary fashionable swearing in common discourse gets nothing; nor is it with any design to get that I can imagine. Nay, it may reasonably be supposed to be to men's loss; for it very much tends to the weakening of a man's reputation in the apprehension of all sober men, (with whom it is a maxim, That he that will swear will lie,) and that is certainly a worldly disadvantage to men.

In the common notion of pleasure, it cannot be pleasant; it relieves no hunger, quenches no thirst, gratifies no sense. Nay, it is harsh to the

ear, and must needs be unpleasant to the conscience, that at any times reflects upon it.

It is shameful and dishonourable among all sober persons; and conciliates no honour or real respect with those that are themselves addicted to it; being common to the meanest and basest of men, as well as to the best gentleman of them all. Nay, they that are addicted to this vice, do not ordinarily allow it in their servants and children; and sometimes will not fail to tell us so.

And what, has the devil found out something that is devilish and damning, that is neither profitable, pleasant, nor honourable? Is it not strange that that monster should have any volunteers in his service, that will serve him without any wages at all, and serve him so vigorously too, as if they would take hell by storm, and the kingdom of darkness by violence! Oh it is the fashion, it is an argument of an agreeable temper, and a mind not hatefully squeamish.

And Oh God, how should thy soul be avenged on such a nation as this, that has entertained such a fashion as this! What pity can possibly be shown to such desperate wretches, who will needs go to hell in state, and perish modishly!

And is there no more plausible pretence than fashion? Yes, some think they come off better that impute it to passion. They were angry, they were affronted, abused, they could not be believed. In short, such and such things would make any man mad, and who could forbear swearing?

Alas! What miserable shifts are these, to confess madness for the excuse of folly; to take

sanctuary in Scylla to escape Charybdis! Shall violent passions be brought to excuse swearing, when themselves cannot be excused? If it be a sin to swear, is it not a greater to swear in a mad mood? To be at all possessed of a devil of passion is sad and grievous, though it be a dumb devil; but if it be such a devil as we read of in *Luke ix.* that makes a man cry out, and foam again, it is much more dreadful. Or shall we say that sin is lessened by being multiplied, after the manner of a river cut into many channels? A river so cut, will indeed be the less river; but it will have never the less water, if you take it in all the channels. If swearing in a mad mood and violent passion be the less sin because of the passion, yet that part of the sin which is wanting in the oath will be found in the passion.

Some excuse the matter by the infrequency of it. Now and then they rap out an oath, but it is out of forgetfulness and unawares; yea, possibly theyswipe their mouths with a, God forgive me that I should swear.

This indeed will excuse a *tanto*, the seldomer the better. But Christ Jesus commands, *Swear not at all*, which refers to time as well as things. This now-and-then swearing is an argument of a mind forgetful of God; which is a character bad enough. Allow ourselves in this, and it will soon multiply.

I wonder men should excuse themselves in this sin by the infrequency of it, more than in others. No body says, I steal but a horse or two in a year; I play the whore or the whoremaster but twice or thrice a week; yet one would think

there were more temptations to either of those than to swearing.

How many soever the faults of good men are, yet it is a very rare thing to find a godly swearer, a man of true seriousness and hearty religion, that will adventure by this method to vent his passion, adorn his discourse, or humour the company.

If by seldom be meant, that we never swear but solemnly, in a weighty matter, and such a one too as cannot otherwise be known, or will not be believed, accompanied with a just reverence of God, (such as we read of sometimes in the history of Abraham, Jacob, David, and in the writings of St. Paul,) let such swearing pass for a part of God's worship. But rash and unnecessary swearing, though it be ever so seldom, proceeds from the devil, says our Saviour; and leads to him, says his apostle, *James v. 12.* and therefore I may safely say is a preferring of the world before God. If it be by the Creator, it is blasphemous; if by the creature, idolatrous.

This puts me in mind of another excuse for swearing. They only swear some petty oath; no blasphemy, no bloody oaths, as they call them.

But I suppose these petty oaths are more than yea or nay, and if so, they are forbidden in that *ὅλας*, *Swear not at all.* Nay, that prohibition seems to be meant principally of swearing by the creature, as appears by what follows in the text.

To attest a creature, as if it knew our hearts, or were able to judge us, is ridiculous idolatry. To swear by the creature, is to take God's name in vain; for it is a manifest abusing of his works.

The blessed virgin was an excellent piece of divine handy work, but she was not made to swear by. This is an honour that she never dreamed of, when she prophesied that all generations should call her blessed. All our divines, I think, agree that swearing is an act of worship. How strangely, then, do Protestants contradict themselves, that deny the worshipping of saints, and yet swear ordinarily by the lady; and yet more nonsensically than so too, when they swear by the mass, which yet they deny to be.

The example of David and others, saying, *As thy soul liveth*, will not justify. The best expositors say it is no more than, *As sure as thou livest*. Nay, Estius, and other learned commentators, say that Joseph's *life of Pharaoh*, (for so the words are in the Hebrew,) are but a vehement obtestation; others make them a prayer; and those that make them an oath, blame him for it. Sure I am, the example of Joseph will not so much justify, as the express prohibition of Jesus will condemn. And what a weight does the apostle James lay on this? He ushers it in with an *Above all things, my brethren*; and backs it with the greatest argument, danger of damnation, *James v. 12*.

God grant me to live under the authority of thy holy word! Lord, charge it severely upon my heart, and the hearts of all men, frequently and affectionately to consider such passages of thy holy word as these are: *Whatsoever is more than yea and nay, cometh of evil. Swear not, lest ye fall into condemnation; for every idle word men must give account. By thy words thou shalt*

be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. If any man bridle his tongue, the same is a perfect man.

MEDITATION LXXXIII.

Of worldly wisdom in general.

AMONG other things of the world, the Scripture also makes mention of *worldly wisdom*. This is so corrupt a thing that it is put in opposition to *the grace of God*, by the apostle Paul, 2 Cor. i. 12. and in the same place to *simplicity and godly sincerity*. It is described by the apostle James to be *earthly and sensual*, and is said to be accompanied with envyings and strivings of heart. We may more fully see what it is by its opposite, *the wisdom that is from above*; this is *pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without hypocrisy and partiality*. So then the worldly wisdom is envious, contentious, cruel, unmerciful, unfruitful, hypocritic and partial, and the worldly-wise man is a hater of God.

This worldly-wise man is not one that understands the world, and knows the fashion of it; though he know it so well that a cripple is not able to halt before him.

He is not one that understands the business of the world, the best markets and bargains, the most advantageous way of trading, the best seasons of buying and selling, and getting gain.

He is not one that is subtile in counsel, and knows how to anticipate, suppress, overreach an

enemy. So wise was Hushai, the friend of David, the friend of God.

But, in general, he is wise to do evil, (as the devil is) to advance the interest of the world, and the flesh, above the interest of God, above justice, truth, charity, peace, purity; and is more particularly described by the apostle Paul and St. James. He is described by the apostle Paul, as one double and insincere; by the apostle James, as one impure, envious, contentious, harsh, implacable, merciless, unfruitful, partial, and hypocritical.

It is evident by the light of Scripture, that all these things, *viz.* impurity, envy, contentiousness, &c. are works of the flesh, earthly, devilish, and certain symptoms of the spirit of the world, and of a lover of the world, in whom the love of the Father is not found.

It is a pity to let all these pass with a general animadversion only; they are proper subjects of a distinct meditation.

But in the mean time, what matter of sorrow and astonishment does this general observation administer!

Good God, If these sins of the spirit be certain symptoms of a worldly mind, and companions of the worldly wisdom, how does the whole world lie in wickedness! How far has the serpentine poison diffused itself! Alas, Who has not some of the spawn of it in him! I see man did not in vain eat of the tree of knowledge, of the tree to be desired to make one wise. For he is thereby grown very wise to do evil; and the children of this world are more skilled in their impure wisdom, than the children of light in the pure.

MEDITATION LXXXIV.

Of impure wisdom.

The wisdom which is from above is pure, says the apostle James. From hence it follows by the opposition, That the worldly wisdom is impure.

I take *pure*, to be a general description of the heavenly wisdom, and all the species following do partake of it, so the worldly wisdom is in general impure. All sin indeed is impurity, the most proper description of it. Therefore the devil himself is in the Gospel described by this especially, *The unclean spirit*. So that I will not make impurity in the abstract a distinct head of meditation, but will a little insist upon impure wisdom in the concrete, (as it exists in the subject of it,) without interference with any of the particulars that follow in the text.

Impure wisdom is a symptom of a worldly mind.

Now as the pure wisdom is, as the apostle calls it, to be *wise unto that which is good*, Rom. xvi. 19. so the impure wisdom is, to be *wise to do evil*, as the prophet speaks, *Jer. iv. 22*. Of this there are several kinds, besides what the apostle reckons up in the following words.

They are impurely wise, who make use of their cunning or subtilty to undermine or overreach others in transactions, contrary to plainness and simplicity. That take advantage of the ignorance or weakness of others, in matter of consultation, bargain, law, or the like, to hurt them.

That also is impure wisdom, which serves oppression and violence. Thus wise were Pharaoh and his Egyptian counsellors. They took a wise course, but what was it for? to oppress and murder, *Exod. i. 10. Come, let us deal wisely, &c.* Was it not a cunning way of killing, to make the midwives, the *Lucinæ*, to be instruments of ushering the children into the shades of death; to escape the guilt of drowning them, by only bidding them to drown one another?

That also is impure wisdom, that serves the lust of fornication and adultery. I have read of many witty devices for the satisfaction of lust; the poets furnish us with abundance of them, even among their very gods. And I think the moral of all those transformations of himself that Jupiter made, is nothing else but to describe this amorous impurity, this impure wisdom. That of the golden shower especially, is acted over every day; whereby many handsome bodies are debauched, and fair persons corrupted. What female constitution so hard and dry, as not to be softened by a shower of gold, especially if it comes from above? But the Scripture instance is most authentic, of subtile Jonadab, who taught his friend Amnon a way how he might satisfy his lust in respect to his sister Tamar, *2 Sam. xiii.*

That also is impure wisdom, that serves ambition. How wonderful sagacious some men are to contrive their own advancement! How courtly and complimentary is Absalom! He condescends to kiss the ordinary sort of people, to gain them. Oh how humble is the proud Absalom! Would any one have thought that his kissing their faces,

was only in order to their kissing his hand? Yea, the good man is troubled to see all Israel to be as sheep without a shepherd; he pities them that ailed nothing; he asperses the government, though it was the government of his father; and promises fairly, if he were made judge in the land.

That also is impure wisdom, that makes laws for snares; in what kind of society it be, it matters not. God gives no laws, but what are for our good, and if men make laws, which they matter not much, whether they be broken or kept, so they may but have an occasion to exact the penalty, it is far from the nature of God, and the method of him that governs the world. This is to debauch justice, and make her a bawd to covetousness or revenge. This was the wicked wisdom of Daniel's enemies, and of the heathens, persecuting the Christian.

Near of kin to this, is that wisdom that lays baits, and offers temptations to men, to cause them to offend, and then punishes them for offending. The Egyptians first oppressed the Israelites, and made them mad, and then punished them for complaining and mutiny. It is good to have faithful servants; but to lay baits for them, and tempt them to unfaithfulness, seems to be the method of impure wisdom. Whatever may be said in commendation of Jehu's zeal in destroying the Baalites, his wisdom in inviting them to a sacrifice, and engaging them in idolatry first, looks like a serpentine device. It is the wisdom of the devil, to make men to sin, and then torment their consciences even to despair, because

they have sinned. There are several other kinds of impure wisdom, but possibly they may fall under some of the particulars that follow in the text. I will therefore next meditate on those particulars.

MEDITATION LXXXV.

Of envy and envious wisdom.

The earthly, fleshly, and devilish wisdom, is described more particularly by the bitter envying with which it is attended, or which it does attend upon.

Envy springs from poverty. And although it be found in great and rich men, yet it is when they fancy themselves poor; and herein indeed they are inferior to them whom they envy.

The more pure and perfect any being is, the more free from envy. The all-sufficient God envies no good to his creature, however these words are to be understood—*Now lest he put forth his hand, and take of the tree of life, &c.*

It is plain and certain, that God desires that all men should be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth. He was so far from envying the station of man, that he hedged him in with a severe threatening; and so far from envying his recovery, that he sent his Son to make a painful inquiry, a diligent search for him, *to seek and to save that which was lost.*

The holy angels, his menial servants, imitate him; they continue their despised ministry to wretched man, contribute what they can to his

conversion, and rejoice in it. The rhetorical description that the prophet makes of the welcome that the damned or the miserable give to the Babylonish monarch, *Isa. xiv. 9.* as fitly agrees to them. Their charity rejoices, as much as the others' malignity.

The sun in the firmament, as if it were afraid that man should lie in darkness, rises and rejoices to run its race, and without disdain or envy sheds abroad its influences upon the fairest, and the vilest parts of the world.

The rain descends upon the barren ground to enrich it, and upon the rich to make it yet richer.

The richer any man is in any endowment or accomplishment, the less he is grieved at the prosperity of others. The contented man, be he who he will, is the richest; therefore he is the freest from envy.

When the devil was fallen from his happiness, he envied the happiness of man yet standing, and sought to bring him into the same condemnation with himself; so that the wisdom that serves envy, may well be called devilish.

But it is well called earthly too; for it is found predominant in none but earthly minds. David, indeed cast an envious glance at the prosperity of the wicked men of his time, *Psal. viii. 3.* But it was but a glance, he did not allow himself in it; he calls himself a fool, and a beast for it, *ver. 22.* But a predominant envious temper is worldly; it is contrary to the divine temper of charity, and to the nature of that blessed Being, whose name is Love.

The wisdom that serves envy, is a worldly wisdom.

Envy travails with many plots and projects, and serpentine wiles, to supplant its rivals, and undermine its superiors. Envious men are the eldest sons of the old serpent; they resemble him, as being his genuine offspring, and most natural spawn. Them therefore he inspires, and assists with his wiles and methods.

O my soul, let not thine eye be evil, because God's is good. But rejoice rather in all the bounty of God expressed towards all men. Rejoice in them all, as if they were thy own, which is the honest way of making them thine own. Do men excel thee in virtue? imitate them. Do they excel thee in wealth, power, or preferment? Rather pity them, and fear for them, lest their prosperity destroy them, than envy them.

The instances of the envious wisdom are such as these.

One while envy will break out into open wars, kill and slay all before it. How did the two proud princes fill all Italy with blood and confusion; of which their own poet assigns a cause, in the character that he gives of them—*Nec ferre potest Cæsarve priorem, Pompejusve parem*, [neither can Cæsar bear a superior, nor Pompey an equal.]

Another while it lays snares privily, and like a deadly pestilence, walks in the dark; like a serpent in the way, like an adder in the path, that biteth the horse-heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.

One while it rages, and professes itself an enemy; another while it flatters, and makes great

show of friendship. Saul possessed with this devil, will give away his daughter; if by her he may ensnare the man that had killed his thousands.

One while it will behave itself proudly, to outvie a competitor; another while it will behave itself humbly, lick the dust, prostrate itself shamefully, lie down under the feet of its rival, if by that means he may be made to stumble and fall. He croucheth and humbleth himself, that the rival may fall by that means.

Sometimes it acts by cruelty, as in Cain; sometimes by policy, as in the Patriarchs; sometimes it is covetous, and receives money, as in the chief fathers, *Gen. xxxvii.* sometimes it is prodigal, and spends money, as in the chief priests, *Mat. xxvi.*

Sometimes it will put on the vizard of devotion, as in Jezabel. This same was a dear daughter of the serpent; her he inspired with special wiles to get Naboth's vineyard, as we read in the history, *1 Kings. xxi.*

All these, and the like to these, are instances of the serpentine wisdom; and such a kind of wisdom, to serve the designs of envy, is a symptom of a lover of the world.

Lord, Give me that full contentment with my own condition, that true valuation of things, that sincere love of all men, that I may not envy any; and that this may be my rejoicing at the last, the testimony of my conscience, that in simplicity, and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, I have had my conversation in the world!

MEDITATION LXXXVI.

Of contentiousness, and contentious wisdom.

CONTENTIOUSNESS and strivings are another work of the flesh, and a symptom of a worldly mind.

To contend, and that earnestly too, for the truth, is not the worldly contention. Though the truth be ever so mean, we ought to contend earnestly, and suffer all things, rather than deny it. But some truths are so mean, that a man ought not to contend for the propagation of them, nor suffer for the profession of them. I believe that Paul had a cloak, and I would suffer a man to take my coat, and cloak also, rather than deny it. But it is such a truth, as I would not contend for the profession or propagation of, nor trouble the churches' peace, nor the consciences of men about. I cannot tell whether many matters of order and discipline may not be of the same value with the apostle's cloak. Possibly they hang as loose from the essentials of religion, as his cloak did from him, and religion may live and be kept warm without them.

But to contend earnestly, to strive unto blood for the defence of the essential things of religion, is heroic, and an argument of a powerful lover of God.

To contend about worldly interests, if they be weighty, if they cannot be amicably adjusted, so it be with moderation, charity, and meekness, and no more zeal than bears proportion to the thing in controversy, before a lawful judge, is not the worldly contention.

There is a sort of magisterial men who will condemn every man for contentious that appears in vindication of his own right, though ever so duly; nay, that will brand every man for obstinate and quarrelsome, that will not tamely suffer himself to be captivated by their reasonings, be they ever so weak; and pin his faith upon their sleeve, though it be ever so ragged or rotten. These men themselves are the most contentious, and the truest authors of schism.

But the worldly contention is, when men contend eagerly or chargeably about small matters; or are resolved to part with nothing of their right in any case for peace sake.

When men delight to be in controversies, and to have their hands against every man. As some fishes delight in muddied or troubled waters, so some men are never in their own element but then.

When men contend to show their own parts, to make ostentation of their power, or merely for the sensual pleasure of overcoming; all this is carnal.

It is contentious wisdom, when men are cunning and active to beget and promote differences in the world. It is strange but true, that some men love divisions in the world, for divisions' sake, after the example of the devil; though many do it out of pride or covetousness.

The serpent was cunning to sow discord between God and man, and they are of a serpentine breed that are ingenious and studious to make dissention.

There are several instances of this contentious wisdom. The choosing of a fit season is one instance; as the *inimicus homo* that came by night, (Mat. xiii. 25.) *While men slept, the enemy came and sowed tares.*

The observing of the temper of men, and falling in with them, when they are angry or discontented; as the counsellors of Ahasuerus did, when they perceived him to have taken an offence against the queen :

Or observing the condition of men, as being oppressed, to put them upon sedition, or tumult, after the example of Jeroboam :

Or aggravating injuries and faults. What, put up with this affront, this wrong, this injury, this loss? *Mori te satius est*, [It is better you should die.]

They that hang peace and union on unnecessary and impracticable terms, are contentious, though they make ever so many pretensions to hide the matter.

To prefer contention before peace, division before union, though by that division we might serve a worldly interest of our own, is worldly. It is to trouble the waters that we may fish in them, I mean get money, or strengthen our parties.

How dear ought peace and union to be to all good men!

Are not dissentions devilish? The devil himself has his name Satan, from being an adversary.

Are they not beastly? For the beasts merely for appetite sake, fall out with, and worry one another.

Be sure contentious men are the worst, and the most lustful sort of men. *Whence come wars and fightings among you, but from your lusts, &c.* James iv. 1.

Wilt thou, O my soul, imitate devils, or beasts, or the worst of men! God forbid.

O blessed God, infinite Wisdom, how peaceable are all thy wise counsels, to reconcile men to thyself, and to one another! Thy laws serve to this end. Thou hast created a beautiful harmony in the whole world; yea, the very contending parts thereof make for the union of the whole. Thou hast joined peace on earth with glory to thyself in the highest. Thou hast promised the greatest blessing to peace-makers. Oh inspire me, and all men, with that Divine Spirit of love, that peaceable wisdom which comes from above, and conducts the souls of men thither, from whence it and they proceeded, even to thy blessed self!

MEDITATION LXXXVII.

Of implacableness, and implacable wisdom.

AN implacable spirit is a worldly spirit.

The only holy implacableness is, never to be reconciled to sin, to hate it with a perfect hatred.

The nature of God can never be reconciled to sin, till light and darkness be reconciled. But God is easily reconciled to the penitent sinner, and so ought we to be.

Good men are very placable, as appears in the examples of Joseph towards his brethren, of David towards Abigail and Shimei, and many more. For they remember what is charged upon them, *If thy brother sin against thee seven times a day, and so often repent, thou shalt forgive him.* I suppose also they think and argue with themselves, What are the injuries done to me, in comparison of the offences that I commit against God? And have not I much more reason to forgive, than to expect forgiveness?

It is not implacableness to suspend trust and confidence towards a person, that has notoriously deceived, though he profess repentance, till we have had good experience of his faithfulness; but when we have good proof, we ought to restore him to the same place in our hearts that ever he had.

It is implacableness, when men will not forgive and forget; that is, not to remember so as to retaliate, or upbraid, or so much as to bear a grudge; especially if satisfaction be offered, or repentance professed; yea, though neither be, yet we ought to be easy to forgive, and of a readiness to be reconciled, whenever terms are offered. Yea, though no terms of reconciliation be offered, no satisfaction made, no repentance professed, we ought on our part to lay down all enmity, to be free from all hatred towards our brother.

Hatred, (says the excellent Dr. More,) lies cross in the heart of a good man.

If thy brother repent, forgive him. True, but that does not imply, that if he do not repent we

should not forgive him. We ought, after the example of God, to seek reconciliation, and propound terms of reconciliation, though we be the party offended, and to seek to bring an offending brother to repentance, not so much in order to our forgiving him, as because it is the saving of a soul from hell; because it is for his good to repent. For vengeance is not ours; the sun should not go down upon our wrath. *Anger* may pass through the mind of a wise man, but it *resteth* and lodgeth only *in the bosom of fools*.

Some are so implacable that no tract of time shall wear out their resentments; no submission can allay, no gifts remove, no intercession assuage them; but they demise their hatred unto heirs and executors, and entail the quarrel on posterity. If these men could allege an ordinance of God for this, such an one as Israel had to authorise them to an endless war against Amalek, it would excuse them well; but till then it must pass for a work of the flesh, and an imitation of the grand hater of mankind.

The implacable wisdom is cunning to conceal its resentments that they shall not be discerned, that in due time it may execute revenge so as not to be avoided.

It instructs men in many wily methods, to contrive ways of revenge, to make and take fit opportunities. Absalom made as if he took no notice of the injury done his sister for the space of two full years. After that he invites his brother Amnon to a feast, to make him drunk, that he might then quarrel with him, and kill him. He conceals his anger from his brother; *He spake*

neither good nor bad to Amnon, (a Hebrew phrase, signifying to take no notice of a thing.) Nay, I suppose he concealed it from his sister too, praying her not to regard it, because he was her brother. He makes show of extraordinary love, he invites him especially to the sheep-shearing. All this while his heart gathers mischief to itself, and treasures up wrath against the day of the execution of it.

Blessed God, the most gracious natured Being, who has forgiven me an hundred talents, let it not seem grievous in my eyes to remit a few pence to my offending brother. Let thy forgiveness be my example to encourage me to forgive; and let my aptness to forgive, be my argument to prove that I am forgiven!

MEDITATION LXXXVIII.

Of unmercifulness, and merciless wisdom.

THE wisdom which is from above, is full of mercy; therefore that which is cruel and merciless, is sensual, worldly, and devilish.

Mercifulness is an attribute of God, wherein he seems to glory; he makes it his name, whereby he would be known and called. The Lord proclaimed the name of the Lord, *The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, Exod. xxxiv. 6. 7.* Here are ten phrases of like importance. And as for his justice, it is only added

in short, that he *will by no means clear the guilty.*

What comparison can there be in infinites? And yet the psalmist, exalting the merciful nature of God, tells us that his mercies are over all his works; and elsewhere, his mercies are far above the heavens.

Angels and good men are commended for this. The angels watch for the good and safety of the elect, and bear them up in their hands. Good men are merciful, they give, they lend, they pity, they help and heal, they do good to enemies, they forgive, and pray that God would do so too; *Lord lay not this sin to their charge.*

On the other hand, the nature of the devil is cruel, murderous; he was a murderer from the beginning; and his eldest son Cain imitated him exactly for envy and murder.

There is a great deal of cruelty in taking away the life of a man unjustly; in extreme corrections, that do not reach the life; yea in the execution of a just sentence of death or punishment, there may be much cruelty in the executioner or spectators; according to that true saying of the moralist, *Ferus est qui fruitur pœna*, [he is savage, who takes delight in punishment.]

In many other things there is much cruelty. There are not only bloody soldiers, cruel gladiators and assassins; but cruel masters to servants, both in imposing of work, and withholding of maintenance. Cruel landlords, that squeeze and grind their poor tenants.

Cruel patrons, that consume what their clients have, in procuring for them what they want.

Cruel physicians and chirurgions, who maintain diseases and prolong sores; who take pleasure in the pain, and find their own health in the sickness of their patients.

Cruel magistrates, who govern their people with scorpions instead of sceptres.

Cruel ministers, that either starve or poison the souls of men.

Nay there are cruel friends. I expect it will be asked, How that can be? For ought I see, the greatest cruelties are practised under the notion of friendship. The oppressing usurer would have you think, he befriends you, when he consumes you; that he supports you, when he supplants you; that he heals your disease, when he increases it; that he secures you, when indeed he secures your estate to himself. A kindness much like that of him who opened the eyes of our mother Eve a little at present, but spoiled her sight forever after.

Your oppressing neighbour would be thought friendly, when he gives you the bitter pill of a dear bargain, sugared with six months' time for payment.

This kind of friendship is just like the dealing of Hercules with Anteus in the story; you would have thought he had been lovingly hugging and embracing the giant in his arms, when he was indeed choaking and strangling him.

They that have no compassion on the miserable, whether they be poor or sick, or sinful; much more they that trample upon those whom God hath cast down, scorn them whom men have harmed, and take away the garment of the naked from him, (as Eliphaz speaketh,) are nothing of

kin to God, nor God to them, nor shall ever be owned for his children, till ostriches are found hatched under the wings of storks.

The cruel worldly wisdom is that which is cunning to invent torments.

Many heathenish tyrants of old have been famous for this hellish ingenuity.

And the modern Papists have endeavoured to match them; as may appear to any that reads the story of the persecutions in Piedmont, written by the ingenious and faithful historian, Sir Samuel Morland; and by the history of the Irish rebellion.

The holy history furnishes us with examples of many whom the devil (the great *Proloctonus*,) has inspired with cruel wisdom.

Thus cruelly wise was Ahithophel against the life of good king David; and Haman and his accomplices against the Jews.

What an hellish device was that, to cut off such a mighty nation, man, woman, and child, by the edge of the sword, and all for a little un-martialness found in one mal-content melancholist among them!

The offering up of poor children to Moloch was cruel and unmerciful. But the wisdom of this cruelty appeared in the loud beating of drums, and other noises, made on purpose to secure their ears from any complaints that might affect them, and bar up their hearts against all compassion. To burn the children was cruelty; to drown their cry was cruel wisdom.

And do we not every day see what devices and shifts unmerciful men use, that they may not

show mercy, and to prevent all occasions or temptations so to do; stopping their ears, shutting their doors, getting out of the way, pretending not to be at home, or not at leisure, when the poor would beg or borrow ought of them? The comedian Plautus has well described this churlish uncharitable wisdom in the person of Euclio; and the wise Solomon in his Prov. iii. 28. *Go, and come again to morrow.*

Lord let me be rather accounted a poor shiftless fool, than either be wise to do evil, or not to do good!

MEDITATION LXXXIX.

Of unfruitful wisdom.

THE heavenly wisdom is full of good fruits; the unfruitful then must needs be earthly and worldly.

Concerning unfruitfulness I have in part prevented myself in my meditation of idleness. But yet there are several things to be considered further.

To do ill, and to do nothing, are both kinds of idleness. And though it may not look like good grammar, I am sure it is good divinity, that to be wise to do nothing, is to be wise to do evil.

Eliphaz indeed in Job says, that he that is wise may be profitable to himself; and surely he ought to be profitable to others also. Whatever gifts the good Spirit of God sheds forth upon men, are given them to profit with, saith the apostle.

The most precious metals profit nothing; *Nisi temperato splendeant usu*, [unless they shine by moderate use ;] and elsewhere, *Celata virtus paulum distat inertie*, [concealed virtue differs but little from idleness.]

A fool holding his tongue (they say) may pass for a wise man. But sure I am that a wise man holding his tongue differs little from a fool.

Is there not a wise man among you? The apostle implies, that it becomes wise men to be active, to do good, to compose differences.

Oh, but our wise men account it a piece of their wisdom, not to put their fingers into the fire, (as they call it,) when there is no need. It is very true ; but if there be ever so much need, it is all one with many of these wise men.

For my part, I believe it will be an hard thing to find any place of society of men, where there is not need of wise men's advice and interposition, which some invidiously brand by the phrase of putting their fingers into the fire. To these wise men one may well apply the text, *It is better to put a finger into the fire, than having all one's fingers safe to be cast into hell-fire* ; for that it will come to ; *Take and cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness*, Mat. xxv. 30. The particular account of the servant's wickedness, is his slothfulness and unprofitableness.

Poor fools! One would pity them that have a prize put into their hands, and know not how to improve it. But these wicked wise men, who will pity, that have a prize put into their hands, and will not improve it?

Every man ought to esteem all his endowments as a common good, in which all mankind

has some interest. He that wrapped up his talent in a napkin, was to his lord as if he had embezzled it.

The covetous, of whom it is expressly said that God abhors them, though they have neither child or brother, and have abundantly enough for themselves, yet are griping and heaping, and love riches for riches' sake.

And are not they somewhat akin to them, that scrape together a great deal of wisdom, and learning, merely for their own pleasure, and satisfaction; by which no body shall be the better, but themselves; and indeed themselves the worse; *for to him that knows to do good and does it not, to him it is sin.*

The industry of the bee is to be commended in gathering honey; but her sensuality in eating it all up, and invidiousness in forbidding others to partake of it, spoils her character.

To bring forth a cluster now and then will not serve to denominate a man fruitful. There must be a proportion between wisdom and communication. *To whom much is given, of him much shall be required.* The heavenly wisdom is full of good fruits.

Communication is the wise man's charity, *Such as I have, I give thee.* The poor wise man's charity was his advice, *Eccles. ix.* And it is almost as good in earnest, as it was in jest, *Scire tuum nihil est, nisi, &c.* [thy knowledge is of no value, unless another knows it.]

Lord settle this persuasion in my heart, that I was not born, nor any way accomplished for myself alone; and that nothing is to be sought or

desired as an ornament and embellishment of my own particular being, but as a common good; which every one that needs, has some title to, as well as I! And that although it is a pleasant life to live in the meditation and love of God, yet that an active life, and a life of communication, is no less amiable and loving too. Oh give me a store of things new and old to communicate, a free heart to communicate them, and an aptitude to do it; that I may neither be an empty vessel, nor as a full vessel sealed up, nor as a vessel unsealed, but wanting vent; but full, free, and having a faculty to communicate!

MEDITATION XC.

Of partiality, and partial wisdom.

To value any party or person more than truth or equity, is a branch of worldly love, and a symptom of a worldly mind.

God is an impartial estimator, and will be an impartial judge. He has often declared himself *ἀπροσωπολήπις*, and we ought to resemble him. He will neither favour the rich in judgment, nor pity the poor; but righteous and unrighteous shall divide the world.

Oh that this doctrine were thoroughly believed. Great men would not then think of breaking through, as they do now; and poor men would not hope to skulk, and be overlooked.

It is not partiality to esteem one man above another, according as they are valuable for true worth.

To value men or things according to truth, as they deserve, is a perfection; God does so. Different dealings with men, is not sinful partiality, when they deserve to be differently dealt with. To discriminate between a penitent, and tender-hearted offender, and an obstinate one, in administering correction, is a sort of justice, not partiality, because gentle usage and a moderation of punishment is due to their temper.

But to estimate persons by any carnal or secular consideration, or to favour them for selfish and worldly advantages, or to prefer the maintaining of a party, because it maintains us; the defence of an opinion, because we have espoused it, before truth and righteousness, is partiality.

Partial wisdom finds out wiles and ways to excuse that in a man's self, which he would condemn and punish in another, and to punish that in one whom he hates, which he would not punish in himself, or any person beloved. Thus partial was the patriarch Judah; he had a mind to punish that fault in his daughter-in-law, which he himself was most guilty of, *Bring her forth and let her be burnt.*

Partial wisdom instructs men to find out arguments to defend a party that they live by; a craft that they get their wealth by; an opinion that custom or worldly interest commands them to support.

What is all that witty rhetoric, that cunning logic, which the Papists use to defend the way and doctrine of the church, in whose bosom they lie, and are kept warm, but so many instances of this partial wisdom. They seek the prosper-

ity of Babylon, merely because in her prosperity themselves do prosper.

Lord, grant that truth may be the standard, by which I may weigh and measure, estimate and judge of all things! That I may know no interest, but the interest of righteousness, to command my apprehensions and sentiments; no worldly bias to pervert the regular and steady motions of my judgment or affections! That I may judge of all things as they are; and of those that are, according to God!

MEDITATION XCI.

Of hypocrisy in general.

HYPOCRISY is an artificial kind of lying. God is truth, and he abhors hypocrites and hypocrisy; that is, they are directly contrary to his nature

The general notion of hypocrisy is, pretending to be, and have, and do, what one is not, hath not, doth not.

This is not simply, and in itself evil. Have we not read what David did, 1 *Chron.* xiv. and that by Divine command; and the Israelites in the civil wars against Benjamin, how they pretended to run away, but did not, and yet were guiltless.

Nay, God himself sometimes makes things to seem otherwise than they are; as when he made the waters to seem like blood, to bring in the Moabites to battle, and made the Babylonians to hear noise of war, when there was no enemy.

But this hypocrisy becomes sinful by accident, (established by use,) by some ill attendants, or ill designs in the action.

It is not absolutely sinful for a man to dissemble his person; for a wise man to seem as if he understood not, for a fool to seem understanding, for a rich man to dissemble his riches, or a poor man his poverty. Christ Jesus himself sometimes concealed his purposes, and made show of the contrary; as in the case of the disciples going to Emmaus.

But this dissembling becomes evil, by evil accidents; and is carnal, if it be attended with pride, unbelief, slavish fear, atheisticalness, or if it serve a *dolus malus*, [an evil design.]

The king of Israel might disguise himself, and go into the battle; but if he think to escape the eye, or escape the hand of God by this means, his atheisticalness, not his hypocrisy, is sinful.

The queen of Israel might disguise herself and seem another woman; but if she think to deceive the prophet, or the God of the prophet, therein she is atheistical.

It was not Saul's disguising himself, but his consulting with the devil, that was his sin.

What was extraordinary in David's dissembling before Achish, and Jacob's before Isaac, I know not; but there seems to be so much in it, that I had rather excuse them charitably, than boldly imitate either of them.

This sinful hypocrisy is either in things civil or religious.

The civil hypocrisy may be very wicked, and a symptom of an earthly mind.

As when men profess and pretend to trades, arts or sciences, which they understand not; when men profess to be teachers of others, when themselves had need to be taught. Hereby they deceive men, in imposing false wares or doctrines on them:

Or when men pretend to love and friendship, on purpose to deceive, to make men less jealous to trust them, and rely on them. ——— *per amici fallere nomen*, [by the name of a friend to deceive.]

Abner died as a fool, that is, by deceit, as the manner of fools is to perish.

Or when men pretend much love and kindness, and yet mean no such thing; but do fail them to whom they pretend it:

Or pretend much love, on purpose to make a prey of men; as the harlot in the Proverbs of Solomon, *Prov. xxx. 20.*

MEDITATION XCII.

Of Scripture hypocrisy, and hypocritical wisdom.

THE hypocrisy which the Scripture so often condemns, and so vehemently inveighs against, is in short a pretending to that religion which indeed a man has not. And this is done two ways, by the amolition or putting away of vice, and by the ostentation of virtue.

In general, all Christians, (taken in opposition to heathens,) that are not renewed in the spirit

of their minds, nor conformed to the image of Christ, are hypocrites.

All professors of religion, that profess the true God, are entered into a covenant relation, are baptized into the name of Christ, have taken on them to fight for him against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and yet are strangers to true regeneration, are of a worldly spirit, and a fleshly mind, are hypocrites.

We use indeed to distinguish between the profane and the hypocrites; and the profane bless themselves that they are not hypocrites, they think they do not act deceitfully in their profession, because they make no profession at all. This were a miserable excuse, if it were true, but it is false; for they do profess Christianity, and by being concerned in the sacraments of the Gospel, do undertake the duties of the Gospel, and lay claim to the blessings of it. Nay, they themselves will tell you, That they hope to be saved, as well as the greatest professors of them all. And surely they cannot think to be saved by a Gospel which they do not own.

It seems as if hell were inhabited with these two sorts of people, hypocrites and unbelievers; as if the text should say, Unbelievers and false believers, heathens and Christians; for there must be a kind of believing to make up a hypocrite. So then, profaneness does not hinder men from being hypocrites; it only makes them the more gross and impudent dissemblers, the more notorious mockers of God.

To profess religion and virtue, is not of itself hypocrisy, but indeed the necessary duty

of all men, especially of those to whom the Gospel is come; but because the profession of religion has been so abused, therefore some think it best to make none at all; or rather, indeed, it is an argument of the great hatred that wicked men bear to religion, that they hate the very name and show of it, as they say the panther does the very image of a man.

To desire to appear virtuous is not simply hypocrisy. A man may both love religion, and love the beautiful character of religion too. To be virtuous is for our own good; to appear such is for the good of others, and for the glory of God, *Matt. v. 16.*

To be zealous for religion, and the promoting of it, is not hypocrisy; however it is traduced by some, and suspected by more. True, indeed, all is not zeal, pure zeal for religion, that seems so. But yet there is a zeal for religion, and wherever it is in truth it is highly commendable. Alas! What a careless and graceless age are we fallen into, wherein men's hearts are so coldly disposed towards religion, that it should be accounted ecstasy or hypocrisy to be zealous for the interest of religion, which yet all profess, and many profess to be their greatest glory.

It is not simply hypocrisy for a man to conceal his faults. That which was Sodom's shame cannot be our duty surely, to proclaim our sin. The next to being innocent, is to be ashamed of our faults. And who will exhibit a thing that he is ashamed of?

But to pretend to a religion which we have not, nor care not to have; to profess it, or any

part of it for worldly ends, and so to make it subservient to carnal selfishness; to desire to be approved of men for any grace or virtue, and in the mean time not to approve ourselves to God in the exercise thereof, is the more special, sinful hypocrisy.

And this hypocrisy is very cunning. Many wiles men use to serve hypocrisy, and to seem what they are not.

One instance of this worldly hypocritical wisdom is, when men either deny or mince their sins, that they may appear righteous before men, when in the mean time they love them, and live in them. Nay, rather than not cover their sins, they will make a cloak of the vail of the sanctuary. Thus the dissembling Pharisees in our Saviour's days made long prayers to hide their covetousness, and covered their uncharitableness, and undutifulness with the pretence of *corban*. The same worldly wisdom instructs the hypocrite to bann and swagger against sin in general, and the sins of other men, in the mean time hugging his own. For would not any one think that he that preaches frequently and severely against covetousness, were some charitable and heavenly soul? If a man had seen Jehu raging and hectoring against Baal, would he not have thought that he had perfectly abhorred idolatry? But follow him to Dan or Bethel, and you would be of another mind. A great artifice whereby men make their own sins seem little or none at all, is to represent other men's as big as may be. Thus I have heard some men excuse their own swearing by aggravating other men's

lying and deceitfulness; their own formality and carelessness in religion, by railing against the hypocrisy and heady zeal of another sort of men. And indeed nothing is more usual than to endeavour to drown the cry of the sins of the present times, by talking loudly of the crying sins of the former. Oh, cried the Jews, Our fathers, what wicked men were they to kill the prophets! when themselves persecuted and hated the great Prophet of the church. Another great instance of hypocrisy is, when men assume to themselves an ostentatious religion, and do not heartily embrace nor love it. The worldly wisdom has invented a great many artifices in this matter. Sometimes the hypocritical wisdom will instruct men to commend virtue and virtuous persons, to seem virtuous. Yea, it will preach up many good works, and press them most confidently, (I had almost said impudently,) with many arguments and motives, that they will not meddle with the practice of; bind severe duties on their hearers, which themselves will not touch with one of their fingers. Who has not, with astonishment and loathing, heard the loose and careless exhort to devotion and diligent godliness; the covetous to liberality; the heedless require others to pray continually; and the profane charge the rest that they swear not at all.

This wisdom will instruct men to pray, (especially if it be in a public place, where they may do it *clare et ut audiat hospes*,) [distinctly, and so that a stranger may hear,] for many good gifts and graces, which they have no mind to receive; to be enabled to do many good things, which yet

they never so much as once go about, and to be adorned with that holiness which they deride and hate in them that are adorned with it.

Sometimes the hypocritical wisdom instructs men to take a good and constant care of their outward behaviour and conversation, that it be demure, and sober, and honest, and as to any scandalous thing unexceptionable. All this is good, and yet is nothing but an artifice of the hypocritical wisdom, if the heart in the mean time be full of pride and covetousness, malice and revengefulness, impurity and impatience; if the will be selfish, and reluctant against the will of God. This was the devilish wisdom of the hypocrites of old, whom the wisdom of Heaven detected, and told them, That notwithstanding their sheep's clothing, they were inwardly ravening wolves; notwithstanding their outward cleanliness, and many washings, they were inwardly full of excess and rapine; notwithstanding their external whittings and garnishings, they were inwardly corrupt and rotten.

Another artifice to seem religious, is to be scrupulous of little faults, and zealous for lighter duties; not but that tenderness of conscience, and zeal for all the commands of God, are excellent accomplishments; but they are nothing but an artifice of the hypocritical wisdom, when at the same time the great and camel-like sins are swallowed down, and the weighty matters of the law are neglected.

O take heed of coming into the judgment hall, for fear of being defiled; but venture to condemn and hang the innocent, if you envy him.

Be as punctual as may be in paying the tythes to the Levite, so exact as to be a cutter of cummin, but it is no great matter for faith and the love of God. All the art is here, to find out what is really little or light; for according to men's prejudices, a little variation in ceremony or order, must needs be interpreted a sin as mortal as blasphemy; and on the other hand, a seemly, handsome, ceremonious observation, have as great weight laid on it, as the love of God and our neighbour.

Oh that God would give us to see the necessities of our own souls, the nature of true substantial holines, that transforms us into the image of God; to eye the example of Christ, who was not wont to lay stress on little things! And, Oh Lord, that we may all see how odious hypocrisy is to truth; and that if the show of holiness be desirable, itself must needs be much more beautiful!

MEDITATION XCIII.

Of the god of this world.

AMONG other worldly things, I read of the god of this world, and the prince of this world; whom to adore and obey, is certainly a symptom of a worldly mind.

The Eternal Jehovah is the rightful and only proper God and Prince of the world; but yet, by an improper speech, the devil is also called, the god of this world, 2 Cor. iv. 4.

He is thus called either by a metonymy of the adjunct, or by a metaphor.

By a metonymy, a thing is said to be that, which it is only in opinion, *κατα δοξαν*, [according to estimation,] not *κατ' αληθειαν*, [according to truth.] And thus the devil is the God of this world in his own opinion; for he boasts himself as such, *Matt. iv. 8, 9. All these things will I give thee;* and *Luke iv. 6, 7. All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them, for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it;* and in the opinion of men, who take and worship him for God; as the dog is said to be the god of Egypt, because it is worshipped by them instead of God; and the belly is said to be the god of Epicures, *Phil. iii. 19.*

Or else by a metaphor. The name of God is metaphorically applied to the devil; for as the true God administers his kingdom of grace in believers, and is devoutly worshipped by them, so the devil worketh his malignant works in the hearts of wicked men, and is obeyed by the children of disobedience, *Eph. ii. 2.* That is god to every man which he doth most esteem and advance in his heart. And so, although there is really a difference between God and Mammon, yet it may be metaphorically said, that Mammon is the god of covetous men.

When I consider how often in Scripture things are said to be that which they only seem to be, or are taken to be, either by a man's self or others, I cannot but wonder at the unreasonable clamour that some people make; not sticking to rail at us for lying and equivocating, when we

thus speak. If the Spirit of God had not authorized and consecrated this expression, of the devil's being the god of this world, how may we imagine that the pretenders to simplicity and propriety of speech, would have hooted it out of the world for blasphemy.

And methinks the necessity of human learning, and particularly of rhetoric, may fairly be commended and established from this consideration.

There are so many passages of this nature in Scripture, that I cannot but record some of them, to stop the mouths of irrheterical censurers.

The diabolical spectrum is expressly called Samuel, which was only so *φαινομένως*, [apparently,] *1 Sam. xxviii. 12.* Hananiah is called a prophet, *Jer. xxviii.* because he was accounted for such. And so is Epimenides called by the apostle, *Tit. i. 12.* the prophet of the Cretans; for, as Laertius tells us, he was so accounted of by them, and after his death they sacrificed to him.

Joseph is called the father of Jesus, *Luke ii. 48.* only because he was so reputed, as the text afterwards confesses, *Luke iii. 23.*

The preaching of the Gospel is called foolishness, *1 Cor. i. 2.* only because it was so in the judgment of the wise men of the world.

We read of *clouds without water, and wandering stars*, *Jude 12, 13.* whereas philosophers will not yield that those are *νεφέλαι*, but say they are mere *εμίχλαι*, nor properly stars, but inflammations of the dry air extended, resembling falling stars.

Ivory is often called the elephant's tooth, wherein Varro saith, The Scripture accommodateth itself to the vulgar opinion, affirming that they are horns having their root in the temples of the beasts, and bending down through the upper jaw, rise again, and so resemble teeth. It is evident that ivory is softened by fire, which does not agree to teeth, but horn. The text seems elsewhere to speak out, *Ezek. xxvii. 15.* and calls them *the horns of ivory.* It is said, *Mark vi. 48.* that Christ would have passed by the poor distressed disciples, when he only seemed as though he would. Paul's shipmen deemed that some country drew near to them; *Acts xxvii. 27,* that is indeed, that they drew near to some country; spoken, according to appearance, like that of the poet,

Provehimur portu, terræque urbesque recedunt.

[We are borne from the harbour, and lands and cities retire.]

They come from the end of heaven, says the prophet, *Isa. xiii. 5.* A speech borrowed from the opinion of the vulgar; who, following the judgment of their eyes, think that the heavens are but hemispherical, and do end at the utmost parts of the earth, upon which the extremities of heaven seem to them to rest. With allusion to which vulgar opinion, (how false soever,) the mountains are said to be the foundations of the heavens, *2 Sam. xxii. 8.* and the pillars of heaven, *Job xxvi. 11;* because it seems as if the heavens rested on them, as on foundations or pillars.

But to return from this digression. The devil is the god of this world, and all his followers are worldly men.

These, for method sake, I will briefly meditate of under three ranks, viz. The servants, the children, and the confederates of the devil.

By servants of the devil, I mean idolaters, that serve dumb idols as they are led, and know not the living God.

By his children, I mean all that imitate him, and are of his wicked nature, though they be not idolaters.

By his allies, I mean such as are in a formal covenant with him, who consult his pleasure, and act by his power and skill.

To the first he is a kind of high priest, by whom they expect reconciliation and atonement; to the second a king; and to the third a prophet. So he is a prophet, priest, and king, of worldly men.

MEDITATION XCIV.

Of Idolatry.

THAT the servants of the god of this world are worldly men, will not be doubted by any; but, possibly, it will be doubted who are his servants. All wicked men that love and work the works of darkness and uncleanness, are indeed his servants; but they are in Scripture also called his children, therefore I shall refer that general consideration of them to that head. More especially, idolatry is the service of the devil, and idolaters are his servants.

It is most generally supposed, that the apostasy and ruin of the devils, was their aspiring to be as God. And the highest pitch of pride is described by this. This was the satanical suggestion that prevailed with Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, *Ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil.*

Though the devil failed then, and miscarried foully in his attempt; yet such is the pride of his nature, and his envy and malignity against God, that still it is his desire to be taken for a god.

He has prevailed with many, so to be esteemed and worshipped; if not for love, yet for fear; as they report of the Indians that worship him, *Ne noceat*, lest he should do them a mischief.

He has put off himself to some as a great benefactor to mankind, and so has obtained a reverential worship. The devil at Delphos had obtained so much reputation, as the people generally consulted him about future contingencies, which is a divine honour, and sacrifice to him there and elsewhere.

It was the pride of the devil that suggested to the philosophers a twofold eternal principle, *Boni et Mali*, [of good and evil,] to make himself an anti-deity, rather to be the god of mischief, than no god at all.

And from the same proud nature it was, that he directed all the ancient heathens to feign a god of hell, as well as of heaven; a Pluto, as well as Jupiter.

Whether it was his pride or malice that put him upon tempting Christ, to fall down and wor-

ship him, I cannot tell; but certainly he must needs have an high opinion of himself, that durst make such a bold motion to the Son of God. Yea, grant him to be such a fool, as not to know him to be the Son of God; it must needs argue a proud conceit of himself, to suggest such a thing to any son of man that was in his right wits.

It must be confessed, this is the grossest sort of idolatry; and, possibly, some will deny that it is possible that any should be so gross as to commit it. But the apostle puts it out of doubt, saying, *The things that the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, not to God.*

There are indeed other sorts of idolatry more common, when men worship the sun and moon for gods; or intentionally, and yet remotely worship the true God, by the medium of images made with hands. To think these images are gods, is exceeding gross; and yet it should seem by the prophet Isaiah, as if some were so gross as to esteem them so. But suppose they only fancy that these images are only inhabited by some special presence of the Deity, still it is idolatry, and an interpretative worshipping of the devil; for it is a service that God has forbidden, and the devil invented.

Nay, suppose these images to be only monitory, and to be of no further use, than to put in mind of God, or to excite devotion; yet how can it escape the brand of idolatrous will-worship? For who has required this at men's hands? Yea, who knoweth not, that God hath flatly forbidden the worshipping of him by the likeness of any thing in heaven or earth, or under the earth?

This, I suppose, was the case of the golden calves, which no one ever imagined to resemble the Deity, nor to be inspired or inhabited by him; only they served to put in mind of God, and excite devotion. And yet this moscholatry was cursed and abhorred of God; and so were all those that were addicted to it.

And art thou so gross, O my soul, and so sunk into matter, that thou canst not see God, except thou look out at the eyes of the body! Canst thou not direct thy devotions to the invisible God, except thou fix thy corporal sight upon matter? Be ashamed, O noble spirit, of the imputation of such grossness and weakness, and be afraid of such boldness; lest the jealous God should interpret that damnable idolatry, which possibly thou art not convinced of, but yet hast a suspicion of, and at best hast no need of. Canst thou not as well worship and pray to the invisible God, without the help of a monitory image, as love and delight in thy absent friend, without the assistance of his picture, or a present? How dost thou think to see and serve God shortly, when thy bodily eyes shall be full of dust, and all corporal organs so utterly out of tune, that thou shalt not be able to make use of any of them? Do that now, which thou must do then.

And if there be any need of any monitor, of any visible help to devotion, (inasmuch as in this complex state, I find my soul to be much afflicted by my senses, or at least, that it does desire and depend upon their help and direction) Lord, from what object should I rather look for direction and admonition, than from those that do most

clearly represent thy infinite power and wisdom ! The things that thou hast made do more clearly demonstrate the invisible things of thee, even thy eternal power and Godhead, than all the productions of mortal men can do. Shall I, that have the heavens above me, the seas round about me, and the earth under my feet, need any human figment to represent thee to me, or admonish me of thy divine perfections ?

If I must needs have an image, is not this glorious, beautiful world a more excellent, a more lively one, than any thing that man can make of gold, that is one of the meanest things in it ? That very light, yea, if it be but the light of a candle, whereby I may see my monitory image, has more in it to admonish me of my God, and direct me to him, than the image that I see by it.

Lord, help me devoutly and seriously to observe and contemplate the operation of thy hands ; to regard the footsteps of thy power, wisdom, and goodness in the whole creation ; to rise up by every thing that I see, and hear, and taste, to the meditation and love of thy name ; and by all these, to excite myself to a dependance upon thy power and goodness ! And then, I shall find no need of admonition, direction, or excitation from any workmanship of man ; the finest of which, is by no means so worthy of regard or worship, as the skill of the mechanist that made it.

MEDITATION XCV.

Of formal witchcraft.

THE second sort of the devil's followers are his allies, that are in covenant with him, either formal or implicit.

It is credibly reported to us, by those that have heard the confessions of witches, that there are some who have so perfectly put off human nature, that they have entered into a covenant with the devil, a league with hell; so as to profess to put their trust in the devil, to be obedient to him, to depend on him for assistance; to pray unto him, to consult him in all difficulties. And for ratification of this covenant, they have signed articles written with their own blood, or given him a kind of possession of themselves, by yielding themselves to be nurses to the impure spirits. And yet these are professed Christians. And others, that have been so great with the devil, as to entertain him for their bedfellow; these impure spirits, in their assumed bodies, dallying with mortals both as Incubi and Succubæ. I will not stand to question the generation of those heroes that are ascribed to Jupiter, Apollo, and the rest of them.

This, if any thing, is, as the ancient philosophy speaks, μεταβαίνειν εἰς ἄλλο γένος. [to change into another race.] And men are disposed and prepared thereunto, by that spiritual acquaintance and converse which they have with the devil, by the lusts of pride, covetousness, envy and revenge.

We read of some that have been so transported with pride, that they have entered into a formal covenant with the devil, to be eminently instructed in some art, or indued with something that they accounted a great accomplishment. And it is not to be doubted, but that he is a great scholar, and has a singular faculty in communicating.

Others have been so mad upon the world, that they have devoted themselves to the god of this world, to be enriched by him. And, no doubt of it, he is as good at this as any Mercury or Hercules of old was supposed to be; both in recovering for them the things that they themselves had lost, or causing them to find things lost or hidden by others.

Others, to gratify their envy and revengefulness, have confessed that they have bargained with the great Abaddon or Apollyon; who has accordingly (when the righteous Governor of the world has been pleased to permit him) executed their malice upon the goods, children, and persons of such as they have hated.

When the devil espies any one of a discontented, troubled, raging mind, full of wrath and jealousies, and blasphemies against God, or fretful envy and malice against men, then is he ready to offer his service, and to give his hand in a way of assistance, if they will give him their hand in a way of covenant. And so the bargain, the fatal bargain is struck up, and the miserable soul is gratified to its own destruction.

Neither need it seem strange. The transition is easy; for having already obtained a possession

of the soul, need it seem hard for him to get possession of the body, (for so I reckon he has of witches;) having engaged their hearts, it is easy to suppose he may get them to set to their hands.

Neither need it seem strange, that God in his righteous judgment should suffer them to give up themselves to the father of lies, to believe him, and believe in him too, who have been long wilfully disobedient to the truth; that they should be suffered to enter into a covenant with hell, who wilfully burst the bonds of Heaven, and violate their covenant with God.

Lord, what swift progress does sin make in the souls of men, in how short a time do the shades of hell overspread the whole face of the soul! Of how great moment is it to resist the wicked one in his first insinuations, and to pluck up those seeds, that when they are grown up, will make such snares for the soul!

O my heart, give all diligence to keep thyself pure. If it may be, entertain not the first motions of pride, covetousness, revenge, or discontent. However, take heed of sitting upon the cockatrice eggs, lest thou hatch them into serpents, deadly serpents.

MEDITATION XCVI.

Of interpretative witchcraft.

BESIDES this gross and formal witchcraft, there is another sort not so gross and palpable, which

denominates men allies to the god of this world.

There are among men allies by covenants, articles, and formal ratification. And there are also allies by kindness, of interest, and faithful correspondence. So it is here. There are many that keep correspondence with the evil spirit, that have not articulated with him, or delivered themselves up to him by a formal covenant.

I dare not positively conclude, that the spirit of prophecy has quite forsaken the world. But I apprehend there is not much need of it, since the perfecting of the canon of the Scripture. I suppose it is very rare, (if it be at all,) and that it only rests upon pure and holy minds, and on very weighty occasions.

Whether the skilful may astrologically or chiromantically guess at the future state of nations or persons, has been disputed often among learned men. And for my part, I do not see such convincing arguments on either part, as to adventure to interpose.

I do believe that the devil can tell many things which we cannot, and that he is very officious to them that consult him. But withal I think that no man ought to consult him, though it were an important case, as king Saul's was. For he is the grand apostate and rebel against God. And the loyal subjects of the Almighty commit a kind of treason, to keep any correspondence with the wicked one.

Besides, it is wonderfully unsafe to be so great with him; for his *Dona*, are *Hamata*; [gifts, or baits, have hooks concealed in them,] and his

very gratification of our curiosity, only serves to a further and pernicious acquaintance. It is not likely he will communicate his skill for nothing, nor his secrets, without a further secret design of making his clients to be his votaries.

Besides, it is imprudent. For his sworn enmity against man is such, that no man can be assured but he will deceive him. He will be true to his clients in one thing, that he may deceive them in many. Nay, by this ambiguous nature, he often deceives, even in speaking the truth.

As for necromancy, I confess I know not what converse separate souls do hold with the embodied; neither know I whether it pleases God at any time to send any of them, or suffer them to come among us on any errand of his, or of their own. But I believe it is out of the power of the devil to disturb, or employ any blessed souls on his errand. And if by his interest one might come to an acquaintance with some of the other sort, it were unwarrantable and unsafe, and indeed superfluous too; for why should he be employed to fetch another person to tell a thing, which himself can tell better?

But besides all these, there are ordinarily a sort of bold people, that consult the devil blindfolded, and are a kind of conjurers, and do not know it. Such (at least,) I take all the augures and aruspices, and priestly persons of old to have been, who consulted the entrails of beasts, the flying of birds, and the like, thereby to know future contingent events. And among ourselves there are many that use rites and ceremonies, words and phrases, of which no rational account

can be given, which nothing in the Scripture divinity does direct. I confess if God do propound or direct a thing, of which we can give no philosophical account, yet it is to be believed. If the true prophet, whose authenticity was well known, bade, *Go and wash in Jordan*; If Christ dressed the eyes of the blind man with mortar, it is not to be wondered at nor disbelieved. But when we have no divine authority, nor can give any philosophical account, it is very suspicious and hazardous.

It is observed by some, that the devil loves to be believed at a venture, such is his pride. And that he loves to be worshipped in the dark, his best servants being they that do his will without inquiring into the reason of his commands; whereas God loves to be conversed with in a way of light and understanding.

And that the devil should give life and operation, and signification to his own institutions, and be virtually present by his influences, to deceive the simple, or gratify the curious, needs not to be wondered at. Many stories tell how fain he would be reputed a god, as we have partly seen before; and therefore he courts the implicit faith of men, and their blind obedience.

Aaron cast the ear-rings into the fire, and *there came out this calf*. How far the devil might assist in this action, I cannot tell; but it is easy to believe he does assist in the curious inquiries, and unwary attempts of astrological men, and others, and enables them by his unseen hand to predict and perform many things, which yet they never give him thanks for; but either ascribe

to some false natural cause, or wonder at, as a stupendous secret, of which no account can be given.

The merciful Jesus apprehended little Zaccheus climbing up into the tree, out of mere curiosity to see him, and brought salvation to him. The cruel Apollyon is courteous also, to gratify the curiosity of vain men, and meet them half the way, and go home with them too; but it is not to bring salvation to them, but them to damnation.

Blessed God, heal me of all licentiousness and unsubduedness of understanding! Clothe me with humility, that I may be wise according to what is written; both on this side heaven, and on this side hell; lest by over-daring on the one hand, I provoke thee to blind me; or on the other hand, tempt the devil to enlighten me. And as I am a reasonable creature, so grant that I may always act rationally; not smothering the candle of the Lord set up in my soul, not quitting the guidance of it, to be led in ways of darkness and blind mazes, wherein I can neither walk with safety nor satisfaction!

O my soul, put not out thine eyes, lest thy grand enemy catch thee, (as they caught Sampson of old,) and make sport with thee; yea, make a drudge of thee to grind in his mill. Go no further in thy inquiries or experiments, than thou canst feel firm ground to set thy foot on, than thou canst discern thy way; lest in thy unwary and licentious ramblings, thou be spirited, as many silly children are; caught up and defiled, as it

happened to the daughter of Jacob, who was first unwary, then unchaste.

MEDITATION XCVII.

Of the children of the devil, and particularly of self-will.

THE third sort of the devil's followers, for distinction's sake, I call his children; a phrase authorized by the Spirit of God, and therefore not to be rejected.

But here, for distinctness in proceeding, I must consider the devil under a double notion, viz. as a particular being, an apostate spirit; or a corrupt nature, or the spirit of apostasy.

Thus I think the Scripture considers him; sometimes as an apostate spirit, as in Job ii. and Mat. iv. and frequently in the Gospel, where he is said to be cast out of the bodies of demoniacs. Sometimes as a nature or spirit of apostasy, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience. So learned interpreters by the context, interpret that of the apostle, *Resist the devil, &c.* and that of our Saviour, *Get thee behind me, Satan.*

This need not seem strange; for so the Scripture speaks in other cases. Thus it speaks of Christ frequently as a person, in the whole history of his life; sometimes as a new and divine nature, *Christ formed in you, and Christ in you the hope of glory.* The like may be said of antichrist. The spirit of deceit and delusion is called antichrist; *This is a deceiver, and an antichrist.*

These apostate spirits (for there are many of them) are frequently spoken of in Scripture in the singular number, and called the devil, the wicked one, and Satan, although there be devils many, and Satans many. The reason of this, I conceive, is either because one and the same principle of rebellion and malignity actuates them all, as if they were but one person. Or one is called the devil by way of eminence, as being ring-leader and prince of devils. Or in opposition to God who is but one, the wicked spirits are called the devil, to make the opposition the plainer, between the two principles of good and evil, the two kingdoms of light and darkness.

This apostate spirit, though he have no issue of his own body, yet is said to have many children among those that are properly the children of men.

The apostle John makes their number very great, when he divides the whole world into the children of God and the children of the devil, *1 John. iii.* Our Saviour, whose reflections were always very modest, yet makes their number very considerable, when he affirms to the whole generation of the malignant Jews, *Ye are of your father the devil;* therefore they must needs be his children.

According to the Hebrew idiom of speech, persons and things are said to be the children of those whom they most resemble. For resemblance seems to result from the relation of a child to his parent; and therefore they lie under some suspicion of illegitimacy, who carry nothing of their parents about with them, but their names only,

Thus they are the children of God, who do the works of God, *John* viii. 41. Who are followers of him, as the apostle speaks. They are the children of Abraham, who imitate the faith and piety of Abraham, *John* viii. and the daughters of Sarah, who resemble her, *1 Pet.* iii. 6. Whose daughters ye are, so long as ye do well. Thus men are called the children of the devil, *Ob simile pravitatis ingenium et imitationem*, [for imitating him, and possessing a similar disposition to sin.]

And, Oh good God, what a numerous offspring has this apostate spirit! How great a part of earth is inhabited with the children of hell! Of the proud, envious, false, malicious, contentious, and others, who are the children of the devil, I have already meditated.

Besides all which, I find two things more that make men much like to that wicked one, and denominate them his children, *viz.* self-will, and ingratitude.

Self-will, or the unsubduedness of our own will to the will of God, expressing itself in discontent, fretfulness, murmuring, or impatience, is the express image of that apostate, proud, restless spirit. The heathens expressed this wicked temper, by an elegant invention, of the giants, the sons of the earth, making war against Heaven. Away with fables, says Lipsius somewhere, *Vos queruli ii estis*, [ye are those very complainers.] The impatient, querulous, and self-willed, are those monsters, that do indeed take up arms against God, and rebelliously oppose the sovereignty of Heaven. Oh the divine and lovely temper of the blessed Jesus,

who, in the sharpest case, in the bitterest cup, showed forth the exinanition of his own will—
Not my will, but thy will be done.

Oh, dear Redeemer, redeem me also from the remainder of all enmity and opposition, that I may account the will of my heavenly Father absolutely pure and perfect, and more eligible than my own, if I were left to my choice! Yea, rather, that I may be so perfectly swallowed up in the divine will, that I may have no will of my own, distinct from his; but that, as a true friend of God, (Oh sweet character,) I may love and abhor the very same things with him!

MEDITATION XCVIII.

Of Ingratitude.

THE proper notion of ingratitude is, not to be sensible of a good turn done to us, when we know it.

Nothing can excuse ingratitude but ignorance. Impotence cannot. A man may be grateful, although he cannot act, nor speak.

Ingratitude is the most notorious when it is malignant, and wishes ill, or does ill to a person that we know has done us good.

To proceed justly against any benefactor, is not simply ingratitude; for my love to truth and righteousness ought to prevail against any particular affections, or the sense of any personal kindness. And yet gratitude will oblige me to abate something of my own interest, and to be

more remiss in the prosecution of my private injury.

But to be injurious to a person that I am beholden to, adds ingratitude to injustice. This is the very natural complexion of the devil, who hates the God from whom he has received his very being.

All sin in man wilfully committed against God, has ingratitude in it; but especially the rebellious disposition of the devil, who knows when he sins, and has received greater obligations from God than mankind.

What greater obligation could God have laid on any creature than he laid on the devil, in creating him in so happy a state, and of so noble a capacity; his extraction divine, his capacity large, his condition not only happy, but glorious? And now for the son of the morning to despise his own native glory and brightness, and sink into sin and hellish darkness; to forsake his own mercies, and to be still endeavouring to put himself, and poor mankind, out of a capacity of receiving mercies; to fall from the glorious image of his Creator, and then to hate and oppose it wherever it is found; to take up arms against the eternal God, from whom he had his very being and existence; to fly from the very light, and hate love itself. Lord, what created understanding can comprehend such horrible ingratitude!

And Oh poor wretched man, how dost thou resemble this black and devilish temper! Whose ingratitude, if thy obligations had been equal to his, would have been as great; and if thou refuse the offers of mercy made to thee by a Re-

deemer, which are not made to him, will be accounted greater. What a generation of vipers is mankind become, who do what in them lies to be the death of him who gave them life!

Lord, do I well to be angry at the affronts and injuries, the neglects and unkindnesses done to me by those of whom I have deserved well! Let the sense of my own more abominable ingratitude towards thee, abate my resentment of their's towards me!

Is not the wilful profaner of the Sabbath an ungrateful wretch, to deny one day to his Maker, who gives him six for one?

Is it not shamefully ungrateful, by oaths and blasphemies, to speak evil of him by whom alone it is that we speak at all? To murmur against him, for taking away any thing, who gives us all things? To lift up ourselves proudly against him, by whom we stand; and to brave it against him, from whom we receive all our excellencies?

Is it not proportionably shameful ingratitude for children to dishonour, neglect, or hate their parents, the immediate instruments of their very beings? For subjects to rebel and conspire against their kind princes, by whom they enjoy great quietness, and by whose providence worthy deeds are done to the nation? For people to let their pastors starve for want of their carnal things, who administer to them of their spiritual things? For pupils and scholars to spit out that learning in the faces of their tutors and masters, which they received from them? For those that are ransomed from the gallows to be the first in cutting the throat of him that ran-

somed them? For the poor abjects, whom Job fed with his morsel and clad with his fleece, to abhor him in his calamity, and spit in his honourable face?

Nay, is it not shameful ingratitude for any man to forget, or ill requite, the kindness of his neighbour or equal?

For Pharaoh's butler to forget the afflictions of Joseph, who had but foretold good concerning him, is branded with disingenuousness. What brand deserve they then, that forget the good that is done to them, done with care, with cost, perhaps with hazard too? Of these Job complained, David complained, Samuel complained, and Moses complained; men of whom one might almost say, they never complained of any thing else. All these good men were almost provoked to be angry at the observation of this ill temper, as may appear by David's rash resolution to cut off Nabal, and his house; *In vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, &c. and he hath requited me evil for good.*

It is made an argument of the singular meekness of Moses, that he endured so ungrateful a people. And God himself undertakes to comfort Samuel in his resentment of the ingratitude of the Israelites, by taking it on himself; *They have not, that is, not so much rejected thee, as me, in desiring a king.* How does the psalmist, in his own person, or in the person of the Messiah, resent this unkindness? If it had been an enemy, or if it had been a stranger, he could have borne such usage; but to find such returns from a friend, from a confidant, from one obliged, noth-

ing less than the patience of God, or a patience divine, can bear. In short, I know nothing that ingenuous and good men are less able to bear; nothing that God himself doth more frequently and pathetically complain of, than ingratitude.

Oh loving and gracious, and bountiful God, who art never behind hand with any of thy creatures, who givest wages even to the king of Babylon, if he do thy work, (though he do it blindfolded;) who rewardest a cup of cold water duly administered to one of his fainting children; who makest the world ring of a poor widow's mite offered with a devout and grateful mind. Oh thou that art kind even to the unthankful, forbid, Oh forbid, that I should be unthankful to the kind! Bestow on me such an ingenuous soul, that I may ever maintain a grateful sense of all benefactors and benefits; if it be in the power of my hand to do it, render good for good, yea, a greater good for a less! However, grant that I may never so far put off the divine and human, and put on the devilish nature, as to return hatred for love, and conspire against the welfare of those that have contrived mine!

MEDITATION XCIX.

Of the devil, considered as a nature.

CONSIDERING the devil as a nature, I cannot but cry out, wherever I observe pride, envy, wilfulness, wrathfulness, revengefulness, uncharitableness, ingratitude, or the like, here and there is the devil.

For if men and devils agree in the same temper and disposition, it is no great matter though they differ in name. The devil is content men should call themselves by what names they please, yea, Puritans or Jesuits, so that in the mean time they will be content to be what he is.

As I doubt not but that there are many men who love God and resemble him, and are in the best sense godly, that is, God-like men, who yet cannot discourse of him metaphysically, nor understand clearly, as to the notion, what relation they stand in to him; so it is not to be doubted, but that many who are strangers to the person of the devil, are, in a Scripture sense, his children, whilst they are and do all that which in truth he is and does.

Yea, many that are afraid of the person of the devil, and almost tremble at the mention of his name, and cry, God bless us from him, do, by the impression of a devilish nature, maintain converse and familiarity with him. If one had been present then, and seen Moses playing with his rod that was in his hand, would he not have wondered and said, Is not this the serpent that this very Moses even now ran away from? And who can but stand and wonder to see the astonishment and fright of men, at a discourse of the devil and his actions, to see them crossing, and hear them blessing themselves against him, and yet at the same time taking him by the hand, yea, hugging him in their bosom; running away from the *mischievous* devil, but gladly entertaining the *unclean* devil.

Many that hate the devil and defy him, and boast against him with all the anathemas imaginable, are yet very good friends with him; for however they curse his name, and the number of his name, yet they receive his mark, not on their foreheads, but on their hearts. Yea, I believe one may say of the devil, as the proverb says of the fox, that he is no where better entertained than where he is defied and exclaimed against. *No man*, says the apostle, *speaking by the Spirit of Christ, calleth Christ accursed*; but doubtless men curse the devil by a devilish spirit. Perhaps hatred of his person is not a thing so divine as some take it to be. For my own part, I am more inclined to pity than to hate him. Men do by the devil as they say the Trojans did by the Grecians; they hated them, and yet at the same time unawares opened their gates for them, and received them into the very heart of the city.

Yea, how many people that seem zealous for religion, and forward reformers of the ill manners of the world, may be supposed to be reconciled to, yea, and actuated by the devilish nature? And so Satan may cast out Satan, and yet no dividing of Satan against himself neither.

I need not employ my thoughts so far off, as to tell how the devil of cruelty and covetousness in the Spaniards, went about to reform the devil of idolatry among the Indians. If we look nearer home, we may see that true concerning false Christians which was falsely said concerning Christ, *They cast out devils by devils*; the devils of heresy and stubbornness, by the Beelzebub of cov-

etousness and ambition; they scourge the devil of dissention by the devil of revenge; like king Jehu, casting out Baal to make room for the golden calves; and showing much zeal for the Lord, as they would have it thought, when indeed they are actuated by the satanical spirit of pride and malice, and their design is nothing but to rule, or be revenged. If a man had as good eyes as Jacob had, he might see the rams that leap on these cattle, to be speckled and grisled, the spirit that impregnates them to be no other than the spirit of apostasy, and a black incubus ascending up out of the bottomless pit.

Neither let any one think that the spiritual sins of pride, malice, and the like only, are to be called the devilish nature. For what though the person of the devil do neither eat nor drink, nor heap up silver and gold, nor acquaint himself with strange flesh? Yet drunkenness and gluttony, covetousness and lasciviousness, are really branches of the devilish nature, and belong to the spirit of apostasy; for so it is described by our Saviour, *Mat. xvi. 23.* That is satanical, be it what it will, that savoureth not the things of God. *Get thee behind me, Satan.* And why Satan? Because he, though ignorantly, opposed the redemption of mankind. True; but our Saviour puts it into a more general phrase, *Thou savourest not the things of God;* implying, that whatsoever opposes the will and ways of God, is satanical.

Men fear hell, as a place of wretchedness and punishment, rather than as an evil and wicked state; and so they hate and bann the devil, as a

name, or person at most, rather than as a sinful and apostate nature.

We read indeed of the devil possessing the bodies of men, which ordinarily occurred in the days of the Son of man. But, (though it be not so much observed, nor does so much astonish,) the possession that he has of the souls of men, is much more common, and far more dreadful. Is it not much more lamentable, that the devil should possess the souls of men, than their bodies? And does he not really possess all unregenerate minds? Is not that spirit, that apostate nature, which worketh in the children of disobedience, he? Is not diabolical impression, a real impregnation? As good men are the children of God, and *pleni Deo*, more than wicked men, by a God-like nature; so are all unregenerate men, all lovers of the world, children of the devil, under his dominion, possessed by him, impregnated by him; and indeed by Scripture warrant, they are so many Satans in the flesh, and devils incarnate.

Learned men think, that in *Zech. iii. 1.* the word *Satan* is to be read *apostate*, as if the spirit of apostasy did denominate the devil. And the wicked and apostate nature, wherever it is found predominant, denominates men devilish; otherwise Judas was no more a devil than any of us.

The devilish nature is mischievous and unrighteous, and ever opposing and perverting the right ways of the Lord. And they that are actuated by it, are, on this very account, called by the apostle, *Children of the devil*, Acts xiii. 10.

The war that the Captain of our salvation manages, is not so much against the accursed bands, the apostate spirits, (though he has plainly triumphed over them, and, I suppose, his bright legions do still under his banner oppose and rout them; as manifest hostility being kept up among them, as we read of between the troops of Joab and Abner,) as against that wicked nature, and those wicked works, which estrange the souls of men from God; as the apostle John compendiously tells us, when he describes the design and errand of the Redeemer, he says, *It was to destroy the works of the devil.* So then, all that work the works of darkness and wickedness, are his followers, and each man of them in his measure diabolical. Or whether you call them his subjects, servants, slaves, children, apprentices, (with relation to his work,) his inspired ones, his scholars; the Scripture will warrant all these.

Lord, how unpleasant and wearisome a meditation is this! What an universal defection is here! How strong is the conspiracy! What a numerous issue hath the god of this world; who, although they are thy creatures, yet are his children! No less than a *world wondering after the beast!* No less than a *whole world lying in wickedness!* No fewer than *all men seeking their own things!* Sure there is something figurative in these sad expressions. Yes; for besides the whole world that lies in wickedness, there are a *We that are of God*, 1 John v. 19. The apostasy is not so epidemical, but that there are seven thousand knees that have not bowed themselves to Baal. The whole rational nature hath not so

herded itself under the beast, but that there remains a *little flock*. The whole field of the world is not so overspread with tares, but thou hast some handfuls of wheat in it. Blessed be thou, O God, who hast not quite thrown away the world out of thy hands; who hast not utterly forsaken thy own workmanship; or rather, hast not suffered them utterly and everlastingly to forsake thee!

Be comforted, O my soul, in the great number of glorious, angelical, loyal natures, who are yet faithful, and reign with their God. And do not desperately conclude, but that there may be abundance of other intellectual beings, pure and unspotted, who still deserve to be called the children of God.

Be comforted in what thou hast seen, and dost see daily; I mean, the great Shepherd of souls rescuing out of the mouth of the lion, two legs, and a piece of an ear, *Amos* iii. 12. The Lord of the harvest gathering some gleaning grapes, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches, *Isa.* xvii. 6. The mighty angel, with the everlasting Gospel in his hand, calling now and then one of a city, and two of a tribe, out of darkness into his marvellous light. And Oh cease not to pray the Lord of the harvest, the compassionate Father of spirits, that he will mercifully look down on the miserable apostate world, rebuke the power, retrench the dominions of the wicked one, and reap unto himself a more plentiful harvest of souls.

MEDITATION C.

Cautionary.

AND now what Oedipus shall solve this riddle? What divine philosopher, what secretary of Heaven shall give us an account of this strange phenomenon?

Is there any greater wonder to man in the world, than a worldly man? What decrees of Heaven, what providence of God, what fate of Providence, what temptations from without, what inclinations from within, shall we run to, to give an account of this fearful apostasy of so great, so noble a part of the creation from his blessed centre, his pure life, his paradisaic state!

Whether we think of the corruption of the human nature in Adam, yet it is a marvellous mystery how a person of his purity and soundness come to sin, and how persons of that remoteness from him as we are, should sin in him. Though neither of which seem incredible, yet both of them seem inexplicable. If we lay the fault at the door of each pre-existent soul, it seems indeed to be just, but still it is as strange as it was before. For so every single soul is an Adam for purity, and soundness of constitution. And how shall we do to account for the apostasy of so many Adams, if we be puzzled at the fall of one?

But alas! The mysterious intricacy of this, is not so great, but that the manifest evidence of the matter of fact is as great. It is enough, Ah

Lord, it is more than enough, to know and see (which indeed we cannot hide our eyes from) that this noble vine is turned into a degenerate plant; that the native friends and favourites of God are become lovers, yea, servants, yea, worshippers of the world. And the greatness of their number is too, too evident in these meditations; which yet I am sensible have not described all. Some possibly will think these too many. I cannot help it; but the discovery is in order to their being recovered. Others, possibly, in another extreme, will think these too few; and will extend the predominant love of the world further than I do or dare.

Some are so fierce, that every body must needs be carnal, and corrupt, and of a worldly mind, who is not exactly of their mind, but of some way, persuasion or opinion different from them. These cry, *Get thee behind me, Satan.* And why Satan? Why, because thou favourest not our things, our doctrine, our discipline, our worship, our way. They cry to every one that does not please them, *Thou child of the devil.* And why, child of the devil, I pray? Not because they pervert the right ways of the Lord; but because they oppose their ways, and weaken their party. True indeed, heresy and schism are works of the flesh, and symptoms of a worldly mind. But they are very cunning, close things, which are very hard to be discerned, and of so lubricous a consideration, that it is very difficult to hit of them right; so difficult, that even the inspired messengers of Heaven have been mistaken for emissaries of hell, and the very pillars

of the church cast out of the church for heresy. I believe perverseness is a very devilish temper. But it is very unreasonable, without any more ado, to judge every man perverse, that does not (perhaps he cannot,) in all things think as I do, or whom my arguments cannot convince.

Some are so conceited of their own extraordinary purity, that they look down with a disdainful pity on all the rest of miserable mortality, as if they were all irrecoverably lost, and themselves, with Job's messenger, left alone to tell it. A person of the apostle John's infallibility indeed may say, *We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in wickedness.* But for a company of Pharisees, impregnated with self-conceit, to conclude that all the world were born in sin, but themselves, and that all the vulgar sort of mortals are ignorant and accursed, this, I say, the candor of Heaven itself could not endure. Luke xvi. 15. *Ye are they that justify yourselves, &c.* The *Pseudocatharists* [or false professors of purity] in the prophet, *Isa. lxxv. 5.* cry to their neighbours, *Stand off, come not near me; for I am holier than thou; Sanctificabo te, I shall sanctify thee; that is, defile thee, as that word is often used.* As if he should say, If thou touch me who am so holy, thou shalt be defiled, and guilty before God, as those common persons were accounted, who touched the altar, the blood of the sacrifice, or any holy thing which they ought not to touch.

Some are so severe, as to determine flatly against the salvation of all rich men, because Christ has declared it very difficult; and to think

not any of them are called, because the apostle says, Not many. And the grandees for wit and wealth, are meet with them, crying, *These poor people are foolish, (Jer v. 4.) They know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God; they know not the law, and are cursed.*

Others pass hard censures on all heathen men, yea, and on Christian unbaptized infants too; whether true or false I know not, but I could wish they were false, and the learning of some more charitable divines has endeavoured to prove them not true.

There are others besides all these, who (though perhaps out of no bad principle,) are ready to judge many things to be symptoms of a predominant love of the world, which are not. It is true, the love of the world is so dangerous and pernicious, that it ought to be the constant care of every awakened soul to flee from it; and one would almost pardon the scrupulosity and fear of those that run away from it, though they should be supposed to run too far. And the love of God is so pure and divine a thing, so great a perfection, that the exercise of it admits of no excess; if the whole soul were turned into a pure flame of love, it would not be a sacrifice too costly or precious, to be offered up to that ever blessed Being, the supreme Good; neither would there be any room for the envy of hell itself, to put in a *quorsum perditio hæc*, [to what purpose is this waste?]

But though it admits of no excess, yet I conceive it admits of mistakes; and though men cannot outdo in it, yet they may do amiss about it. As I conceive they do, (how pardonable soever

their mistake is,) who condemn them for lovers of the world, who do any works of necessity, charity, or common civility on the Lord's day; who think oftener of the world, than they do of God; or who in their practice sometimes prefer a worldly business that is important, before a sermon or a prayer.

Devotion itself, how excellent a thing it is, may be irregular; and there needs judgment, as well as affections, to denominate a man a right Christian; without which, even the highest perfections of love and zeal do degenerate into something worse than the notation of the words imports.

And although I do reckon that it is highly laudable and reasonable to live in continual weariness of this world and life, and holy longings after the presence of God, endeavouring to attain to the resurrection of the dead, yet I do not believe but there are many languishings, and fainting fits that befall the most devout lovers of the Father here in the body. Neither dare I condemn every man for a predominant lover of the world, who in some passion, some temptation or other, has almost lost his sight and taste of God, and casts a fond eye on this life and world, as wretched as it is. It is best to wish with Paul, to be dissolved. It is next best to groan with Paul, *O wretched man that I am, &c.* It is pious to keep up a predominant estimation of heaven, and to make the main business of our lives, a doing of God's will, and a preparation for his kingdom. But yet I dare not conclude it to be a symptom of predominant worldly love, when I hear David crying in some case, *O spare me a*

little, &c. For when we urge the predominant love of God as absolutely necessary, we do not mean by predominant, that it should be in the strictest sense perfect. The love of the meanest saint is predominant, and the love of the most devout is imperfect.

There are many other mistakes about the predominant love of the world, which are occasionally met with and corrected in the foregoing meditations.

Lord, suffer not my inflamed heart to rest in the lowest evidences of a predominant love to thee; no, nor to be at rest, till it arrive at the highest demonstrations, expressions, and exercise thereof! Though the consideration of sincerity and predominancy may sustain and comfort me, yet let nothing short of perfection content and satisfy me! Oh Almighty Love, wrap up my loving soul in thyself! And Oh cast forth thy cords of love, and draw the estranged souls of men unto thyself! Pity the infinite numbers of prodigal apostates, that have forsaken the bread of their Father's house, and, like swine, feed on empty husks; those many noble souls, all of them like so many kings by their creation, that, as it were, with their thumbs cut off, lie gathering crumbs for their sustenance! Restore their maimed faculties, and lift up their heads out of prison, change their prison garments, and let them eat bread before thee continually! And Oh grant that all lovers of the Father may be judicious and regular in their own devotions, and charitable towards the devotions and affections of their brethren! Amen, Amen.

MAN CONSIDERED IN HIS POLITICAL CAPACITY.

PART II.

MEDITATION I.

Of the false despisers of riches.

It is too, too evident that the many sorts of persons, before named, are in the judgment of God, lovers of the world, even all that prefer the profits, pleasures, honours, persons, business, fashions of the world before God; that is, before righteousness, truth, peace, public good, holy order, charity, purity, and the sacred will of God. But because there are really many of these that will not yet acknowledge themselves to be such; let us examine a little more closely, to find out, if possible, who they are that lie under this black character, and to whom it doth agree. And now I will a little examine man considered in his political capacity, for in that he is more discernible than in his moral.

And here, methinks, I hear a generation of monastical people, (whether Papists or Protestants, it matters not,) blessing themselves, and saying, it is apparent that they, of all people in the world, are no lovers of it. They are so far

from coveting the riches of the world, that they give away all they have, and reject the kindness of those that would give them more. They embrace poverty as a great perfection, and nakedness as an ornament. It was a high character of them, that took joyfully the spoiling of their goods. But what perfectionists are these, that spoil themselves?

The disciples of Jesus were mortified men, who reckoned two coats superfluous, but these evangelists are even weary of the incumbrance of one. Nay, they seem to out-vie the Son of man himself, of whom it is said, *That he had not whereon to lay his head*. As if he stood in need of some house, or artificial conveniences; whereas the cold earth every where affords these hardy soldiers of his a sufficient bed, and the spangled heavens a canopy.

To all which great pretensions, I only suggest these two or three inquiries,

1. Is it highly reasonable, that these pretenders to a contempt of worldly riches, do inquire into themselves, Whether in deed, and in truth, they do what they seem to do? Whether there be no fallacy, hypocrisy, or deception in this matter? For we have read of those that pretended to part with all to the church; who yet kept back a part for their own dear selves, and by laying their money at the apostles' feet, seemed to trample it under their own; who yet, for all their seeming faith and contempt of the world, did not so strip themselves of all, but that they kept a rag for a sore finger. Ananias and Sapphira are examples,

2. It may be proper to inquire, Whether some of the heathens themselves, whom you so undervalue as the refuse of men, have not done as much as all this comes to? This I take for granted, according to the logic of divinity itself, that it is but a sorry perfection in a Christian, that does not excel all that can be found in a heathen, *Mat. vi. 32.* If they seek after these and these things, it becoms Christians to seek after higher; if they do such and such things, it behoves Christians to do greater.

Now, I suppose, it is an easy thing to find many men as perfectly and voluntarily poor among the heathen philosophers, as among Christians; among the Cynics, as well as the hermits; as much contempt of the world, to any man's thinking, in a tub, as in a cloister.

But it will be said, these men did not neglect the world out of a pure design; therefore,

3. It will not be amiss, that these Christian contemners of the world do examine their principles and ends; for if this voluntary casting away of the world be only a trick to draw and convert the eyes of the world to themselves, and to procure an estimation of mortified men; or a piece of bribery to merit, or purchase the rewards of Heaven; or a design to get riches, by a pretended contempt of them; or a cloak for idleness, that they may eat and drink of the best without doing any thing for it; choosing rather to eat their bread in the sweat of other men's brows, than of their own: if any such things as these, I say, happen, all this contempt of the world is spoiled, and becomes contemptible in the eyes of God;

may, indeed, it proves to be a device for the more effectual maintaining of the worldly life. And who knows but that it may so happen, or rather, who knows not that it does? Contempt of the world must be impartial and regular, or else it will not pass for devotion. And if a man predominantly love the world in any branch of it, he is justly denominated a lover of the world, however he may seem to despise it in many other branches of it. It is a sorry shift to endeavour to be thought to despise the riches of the world, and in the mean time to be enslaved to worldly ease and idleness. To some men it is the greatest sensual pleasure in the world to do nothing.

Has not the same God, who commanded us not to covet, nor love the world, also commanded to work, and get our livings? Oh but they have spiritual work to do. What merchant so industrious as they, that compass sea and land to make proselytes? And did not Paul abound in this work of the Lord, as much as any that pretend to an imitation of him? Yet he made his own hands administer to his necessities, rather than be chargeable to the churches; though I suppose the churches then, were as free and as kind-hearted as they are now.

In short, as a man may give away all his goods to feed the poor, and yet have no charity; so he may cast away the world, and yet not rightly contemn it; and to a wise observer show himself to be more a fool, or a fanatic, than a saint.

Good God, since the world is so manifold, grant that I may be mortified to one branch of it as well as another; that I may not maintain

the worldly life in one sense, whilst I seem to destroy it in another; that I may not cleave to the golden calves, nor haunt the high places, whilst I seem to renounce Ashtaroth; lest in breaking one commandment, I be found guilty of all.

MEDITATION II.

Of the false despisers of pleasures, and of the votaries of virginity.

If any one love the pleasures of the world the love of the Father is not in him. Fleshly pleasures are the bane of the soul, they are deadly enemies to it; they do, in an especial manner, *war against it*, says the apostle, yea, and they kill it too! For he or she that lives in them, is dead whilst they live. He that travels or negotiates in a strange country, had need to take heed of enemies, especially the natives of the place. And so had this pilgrim soul that sojourns here in the flesh, need to beware of the pleasures of the flesh, which are, as it were, the *indigence* or natives; for they do most endanger and ensnare. The poet could tell us that the wise wanderer stopped his ears against the inchanting syrens. And the holy text tells us how ill the pilgrim sons of Jacob fared, for not abstaining from the wine and women of Moab. These did them more hurt, than all the opposition they had met in their march. What if we reckon with ourselves, that we are so many Ulysses, wandering homeward in many uncertainties; like

so many Israelites, trying our fortune to find the Canaan, out of which sometime we came; so many younger brethren that have taken our journey into a far country where now we are. Should we not, with ardent contention of soul, pant and breathe after our home, our own country, our Father's house, and consequently beware of the enchanting syrens, and Circees, the Cozbis, the harlots; I mean all the fleshly pleasures that obstruct our return, and war against our souls.

Agreed, cry the votaries of virginity and penance, we are the only despisers of the world, we have stopped our ears and all our senses against the enchantments of it. In comparison of us, Samson was as weak as the new cords that himself broke off his arms; and Solomon himself void of understanding. We have made ourselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. We will pluck out our right eye if it look upon a maid, and cut off our right hand if it chance to suffer a kiss of a female. We keep under our bodies, and chasten our rebellious flesh, till we make it crouch as obsequiously as any spaniel. We persecute our own flesh as severely as we would do an heretic. And though the apostle will not allow us to hate it, yet we cannot but be ashamed of it. We are true followers of that holy doctor of the Gentiles, whose many journeyings we match, if not overdo, in our long and frequent pilgrimages, and his self-castigations by our penances. These are high pretensions indeed! But it is worth the while for the pretenders to inquire, whether they be just, and whether they be conclusive of a contempt of the world?

For certainly all single life does not deserve the honourable name of virginity. One may allude to the prophet's riddle, and apply it here with a little pardonable absonancy; *The children of the barren are more than of her that bore.* The Scripture describes marriage by the coalition of two into one; *They two shall be one flesh.* If this metonymical marriage must pass for current, I doubt the votaries of virginity will be diminished by this test, as much as the soldiers of Gideon's army, who, at the first trial, shrunk from thirty-two thousand to ten thousand. But further, Christ, the best discerner of purity, tells us, That there may be many no-virgins, whose bodies are yet untouched; as if it were not so much the conjunction of two bodies, as of two minds, that made a marriage, or worse. It is not enough not to have known a man. Virgin purity is a tender thing, and may be spoiled even by some kind of seeing a man. He that looks on a woman, to lust after her, defiles himself; and she that looks on a man, violates her purity. And now I wish our virgins, both males and females, be not shrunk again, as much as the fore-named captain's soldiers, at the second trial, who fell from ten thousand to three hundred. Yea, and it is further to be wished, that of this little number that is left, of those that have not known nor seen any of the other sex, the rest have not, at some time or other, heard of them, read of them, or thought of them, otherwise than becomes them, and so be not like the three hundred soldiers even now named, that carried lamps within their vessels, I mean, that burn, though they marry not.

And now, methinks, I could find in my heart to grant, that if the claim to this pure, perfect, unspotted, unsullied virginity be just, it is conclusive; because I am very confident it is not just.

But yet it will not be amiss to inquire, whether this unspotted chastity be accompanied with the profound self-exinanition, and entire self-resignation, and especially with that divine charity that it ought? The true virgin is the soul that chaste-ly adheres to God, the blessed Being whose name is Love. And she is an adulterous soul that cherishes wicked hatred, as well as she that allows wanton love. What if I do not burn in unlawful love, if I burn in hatred and be inflamed with revenge, I have defiled my soul, and lost my purity in the sight of God. The high priests would not defile themselves by the judgment hall, but with envy and murder thy would. Or what if this pure virgin flee from all mortal embraces, yea, and loathe the sight and thoughts of any man, if she settle into a self-admiration, fondly doting on her own beauty or virginity, or wantonly dallying with her own fortitude or perfections, she has played the harlot from God, who alone ought to be supreme in the soul, and is become unchaste in her loves.

It may be very pertinent to examine, whether a great part of the virginity that is found in the world, be not merely constitutional. No thanks to them not to burn, who are not combustible. Another great part political, when people live single, merely that they may live. It was accounted bad devotion in Saul, when he forced himself, and offered a sacrifice. And how shall

she be accounted an acceptable virgin, who, though she flies from men, forces herself.

Pure chastity is indeed a delicate and divine thing, if it be any where to be found; but this does not at all disparage conjugal love justly placed, and purely exercised and observed. Nay, I do verily think that there is as much or more chastity to be found in a conjugal state, as in a single. To the conjugal bed it is that the apostle gives the epithet of *undefiled*. I wish the virgins can any of them say as much of their's; more, I am sure, they cannot. I will allow a pure virgin state to be excellent, perhaps more excellent than a conjugal; but it is enough for the conjugal to be accounted honourable, and that it is in plain terms by the holy Author of it, God himself. But whatever excellencies in some sense or other may be found in the virgin state, yet I hope its virgin modesty is such as will forbid it to vie with the conjugal for usefulness, which I am sure is one famous species of excellency. And indeed for goodness, or excellency in general, I cannot see how that can be bad now, which even in the state of innocency itself was declared to be good, Gen. ii. *It is good for man to have a wife.*

MEDITATION III.

Of the votaries of penance.

As for the votaries of penance, though it may well be doubted whether they feel a smart an-

swerable to the shrugs and sour faces that they make; and though it may be charitably supposed that they sustain themselves very well with rich cordials and good fare, whereby many pilgrimages, of a hundred or two hundred miles long, become less troublesome to them than many a poor man's journey or labour of a day, and so their pretensions are not just; yet suppose all to be true that is pretended, how will it certainly conclude a contempt of the world.

For will not Diogenes among the heathens pretend to as much neglect of the pleasures of the world, and the ease of the flesh, by lying in his tub, as any body can do by travelling abroad bare-foot and bare-legged? Will not the disciples of the pharisees put in for the severity of frequent fasts, and match the disciples of John, outdo the disciples of Jesus? And will not the priests of Baal put in for a share of the honour due to lashing and slashing devotion, as well as any Gospel priests? There will never be any firm and comfortable inference, so long as it may be inquired, What do you more than others, and those none of the best neither? So then, the inquiry will be, At whose command, out of what principle, for what end, are all these severities executed? If any of these fail, the contempt of the world is but a pretence. And who knows not but that the worship of the Gentiles, and of the Baalitish Jews too, performed with so much smart, and sacred horror, is accounted of God and all good men, slavishly superstitious, and a hateful will-worship. If the principle out of which all these severities are performed be so

pure as it ought, it will produce an uniform self-denial, and holy obedience, and a contempt of the world and all the branches of it, as well as in the pleasures; so that, if there be not a humility, charity, faith, hope, zeal, answerable to these bodily exercises, they will profit nothing. If a man give his body to be burned, and in the mean time have a mind to burn his brother, he is no martyr, no, nor saint neither.

And may not the worldly life be maintained and cherished in the acts of self-love, self-seeking, self-confidence, pride, and self-feeling, amidst all this abstemiousness, and these severities exercised on the body?

Yea, what if all these things should be nothing but to bribe the justice of God, to tie the hands of his holy vengeance, to establish a righteousness of one's own, to purchase by merit a sorry, carnal kind of heaven, merely external and future. If so, then they are symptoms of a slavish and superstitious, but are utterly inconsistent with a holy and religious mind. And who knows not but that all this may be so, yea, and every discerning Christian does vehemently suspect that it often is.

From hence, O my soul, take an occasion to consider, that thou, as to thy natural capacity, art able to act without the help of the flesh, and without any dependence thereon, and consequently capable of committing sins of the spirit as well as sins of the flesh; however in a lax sense, whatever is contrary to God may in Scripture be called flesh, and so all sins may be called works of the flesh. When thou hast laid aside this

flesh, thou canst not reasonably think of, nor patiently endure to think of a long sleep, till the time that thou shalt re-assume it; and if after thy release from flesh, thou shalt still be able to act, then surely it may be fairly concluded, that even some of thy acts, even whilst thou art in the body, are purely spiritual, and do little or nothing depend on the body.

Though thou canst not be guilty of adultery or drunkenness, without the help of the body, yet it is no fault of the body, or a very remote one, that thou art proud, self-willed, unbelieving, and uncharitable. All filthy and unrenewed souls will not be the less, but rather much more such, by leaving the flesh. Distinguish therefore carefully between the sins of the flesh and of the spirit; and reckon that thy firm and chaste adherence to the ever blessed God thy centre, and entire resignation of thyself to him, is thy unspotted chastity, and much to be preferred before temperance and continency. What if thou have kept thy hands from "picking and stealing," if in the mean time by pride thou rob God of his honour, or, by unbelief, Christ of his glory, how art thou honest? What if thou hast not smitten with the fist of wickedness or violence, if by self-will thou hast rebelliously contended against the authority of Heaven, and secretly opposed the will of God, how art thou loyal? What if thou have not prostituted any of thy fleshly members to adulterous aspects or embraces, yet if thou have in a way of self-love fondly admired and wantonly dallied with thy own perfections, as something distinct from God, how art thou

chaste? What if thou hast so severely chastised the body, that thou mayest seem to have battered the out-works of sin, yet if it still lodge in the castle of thy heart, if thy body be empty with fasting, and the heart full of pride, and conceits of thy own righteousness and merits; if the flesh by severe discipline, and many macerations, be made obsequious to thee, and thou in the mean time remainest unsubdued to the authority and will of God, what real profit hast thou by this bodily exercise, or how canst thou think, without blasphemy, to commune with God? If thou think by penance to commute for true conversion and repentance, as men by money commute for penance, thou art in the worst sense Simoniacal, and it will be said to thee, Thy penance perish with thee.

Lord, make me to feel the mighty power of holy religion on my soul, subjecting it to thy authority, reconciling it to thy will, uniting it to thy perfection, and conforming it to thy purity; purging me from all secret selfishness, cleansing me from all hypocrisy, unbelief, pride, and sacrilegious conceits of my own worthiness! And then I will not fear, whether in a virgin or conjugal state; whether by the austerity of John, or the freedom of Jesus, to be accepted of thee, and either wholly to escape, or victoriously to prevail against the sins of the flesh!

MEDITATION IV.

Of the Quakers, or Friends.

FROM these false despisers of pleasures, I will now proceed to consider a generation of men that pretend to be mighty lovers of God, inasmuch as they reject and undervalue the honours of the world. For as the predominant love of honour will certainly denominate a man a lover of the world, so it seems that the just contempt of it should argue a lover of God. And here, though there be many pretenders, yet the people called Quakers seem to be the most famous species. I beg their pardon that I call them Quakers (which name they seem not to relish well,) for I profess I do it not out of a way of reproach, but merely for distinction sake. I confess I do not know what the *proprium quarto modo*, [the peculiar character] of a quaker is; for he has many things common with other separatists, and with other men that are not separatists, so that I shall not meddle with him under any consideration, but this, of undervaluing the world, expressed either in words, actions, or fashions, because he pretends more to this, than any sort of men that I can think of; and yet herein I will not judge him neither, but in kindness put him upon judging of himself. And I will digest my meditations into this order, first briefly lay down as far as I know the Quaker's judgment and most general practice about this matter. Secondly, show what authority or argument he brings for it. Thirdly, exam-

ine the strength of those arguments, and consider what answers may be given to them. And lastly, suggest some things whereby he may try his sincerity and spirituality in this matter.

I will willingly grant by way of premise, that worldly honour, respect and applause are very dear and grateful to the animal life and fleshly mind, so dear, that he does prefer it before the approbation of God and the witness of a good conscience. I do grant that to love the praise of men more than the praise of God, is a symptom of a pharisaical and hypocritical person.

That all honour in a Scripture sense is due to God, and that all the glory of men is nothing but a reflection of divine glory.

That the proper honour consists in due estimation, and reverence of mind, and that the external expressions of it by words or gestures are less properly called honour.

That it is an argument of a weak, corrupt and carnal mind, to honour those whom he knows to be unworthy of honours, to bless those whom God abhors.

That it is a great perfection to be mortified to the sense and expectation of worldly honour, approbation, applause, and respect of men, and an excellent, Christ-like attainment and fortitude, to be able rightly to bear contempt, and in no degree to complain of unjust neglect.

And now I shall proceed to the first head which I propound to myself in this meditation, *viz.* What is the Quaker's judgment and most general practice about this matter. I think indeed they are not all agreed, (whether it be be-

cause some are less perfect than others, or because some are more deluded than others, I know not,) but yet their most received opinion is that they ought not to give honour to men. And yet this they mostly limit to external honour, for I never met with any of them that seemed unwilling to be loved, to be esteemed well of, and to be valued according to his worth or wealth either.

And so with them the bowing of the body in a way of reverence looks like idolatry, the putting off the hat is superstitious, the giving titles of honour is carnal, and so much as to thank the fellow creature is at best vain; and so are all worldly fashions in apparel, compliments in words, civil distinction, and the like.

MEDITATION V.

Of the Quakers' arguments.

FOR this severe kind of denying of honours and fashions of the world, they allege many plain precepts, and noble examples. Neither will I dissemble, there seems to be a great deal to be said for it.

They will tell you, that, as to this matter, the great Moses was a Quaker as much as they, when he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; preferring the profession of a despised religion with the professed Israelites, before the worldly honour of the Egyptian court; when he undervalued his own reputation for a

prophet, and would not engross that honour to himself, but was desirous that all the Lord's people should share in it; when he married an Ethiopian woman at a time when he might have had rich and noble matches, and took so meekly the reproachful reflections that his brother and sister had made upon him, for his so great undervaluing of himself.

Of the same spirit was the prophet Elijah, who treated the king of Israel as like a Quaker as ever you heard, 2 Kings iii. 12, 14. *What have I to do with thee? Get thee to the prophets of thy father, and of thy mother.* And he swears, (and therein he seems to be less perfect than a Quaker,) *As the Lord liveth, were it not that I regard the presence of the king of Judah, I would not look at thee.*

Somewhat like this freedom of spirit, and plainness of speech, void of compliments, and courtly respect of persons, may be found in the history of all the prophets, almost from Samuel, down to Malachi.

And lest this should be thought to be only an unpolished Old Testament spirit, they come as near to the Gospel times as may be, and quote the Baptist, a greater than whom the daughters of men had not borne, whose plain and unfashionable dress, and diet, severe conversation, and uncomplimental usage of all sorts of men, even Herod the king, and the viperous generation of the formal Pharisees, they fancy does much resemble and justify the evangelical Quaker. They think they resemble him in his looks and doctrine, and life, and say, they would not hesitate

to be conformable to him in his death too. But if John seem also to have a little too much of the sourness of the law in him, and so his example should be rejected, they hope the author of the Gospel, and his most intimate friends and constant followers, will justify their spirit and behaviour.

The sharp answer that Jesus sent to Herod, (the fox,) the plain reprehensions that he gave to the hypocritical, blind, and superstitious Pharisees, notwithstanding their great authority in the church; his poor and harmless way of living; his disowning of relations, in comparison of the doers of the will of God; his free and friendly converse with the poorest, and the worst too, in order to their good; shows how little of stateliness, or compliment, or worldly respects was in him. And he taught men so too. He ever and anon commands a simple and irrelative discourse and behaviour. *Let your speech be yea and nay. Call no man father or master on earth. Be not called of men rabbi. Affect not the uppermost places in synagogues, or at feasts, love not greetings in the markets; when thou makest a feast call not the rich, who can requite thy kindness, but the poor that cannot, to thy table.* He reprov'd the fashionable robes of the Pharisees, with which they used to conciliate respect, he preferred honest John in his camel's hair, before the courtiers of the world in their camelet coats and soft raiment; poor fishermen before the Nimrods of the earth; beggarly Lazarus before the voluptuous rich man, whom he does not deign to name, although according to the flesh, he was the son of

Abraham. He magnified the two mites given by the poor widow, above the costly oblations of the rich; and commemorates a box of ointment devoutly bestowed by a poor woman, more than all the sumptuous feasts he was ever bidden to by the wealthy; nay he seems to make the giving and receiving of honour one from another to be inconsistent with the Gospel faith, when he says, *How can ye believe that receive honour one of another?* And elsewhere gives this reason why many did not profess, because they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

And were not his apostles and disciples followers of his simplicity and plainness? Jacob was a plain man dwelling in tents, and so was Paul too, and a maker of tents to dwell in, and he tells us of himself and the rest, that they used great plainness of speech. (2 Cor. iii. 12.) Peter and James were angry at the honourable thoughts that they perceived the Jews had of them, *Why look ye on us, &c.* And the same Peter refused the compliments of the captain, Cornelius. Paul and Barnabas were grieved at the respects offered them by the heathen people, insomuch that they rent their cloaths and cried out. These apostles are still exhorting to uncomplimental speech, speech not according to men's wisdom or the wisdom of the world, plain and unfashionable apparel, and commending a dress of grace and good works, before an adorning with silver and gold, and costly apparel. They require men not to be respecters of persons, and not to be conformed to this world. *In all things to give thanks to God the Father by Christ, Col. iii 17.*

In a word, who knows not what a Quaker Mordecai was under the law, who would rather lose his head, than put off his hat to profane Haman.

And the apostle James under the Gospel, who requires us not to be many masters, whereas at the present time every body will be a master; not to have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons; and does so plainly tax the worldly partiality of his days, for giving honour and respect to the gaudy gentleman with gold rings, and goodly apparel, rather than to the poor saint in mean apparel, as if he had by the spirit of prophesy seen the partiality of our conversation; or to allude to the story of the prophet, as if his heart had gone along with us, when the man alighted from his chariot to salute us.

And now what can be said more, except we say that the very angels refuse honour from their fellow-creatures, and refer it all to God. And God himself, to whom it justly belongs to receive honour from all, yet is pure and impartial in his regards to every one, having often declared himself to be no respecter of persons.

MEDITATION VI.

The strength of the Quakers' arguments considered.

I SUPPOSE we are all agreed thus far, that when the Scripture forbids, or seems to forbid giving or receiving honour, it cannot be understood of

the real, proper, inward honour, which is no other than reverence, or due estimation, and is little else than the love that we bear to a superior. The text has commanded us expressly, *To honour our parents, to honour the king, to honour all men.*

This must be understood, at the least, of this inward honour and reverence, which indeed is primarily due to God, the Father of lights; but secondarily, and for his sake, to men also, to whom he has communicated most of himself. And according to this greater or lesser communication of himself, I suppose our honour or estimation of men ought to be greater or less. And so consequently we are all agreed, that there is no honour due, where there is no real worth or excellency; and to esteem persons unduly, is an imperfection of the judgment, and a departure from truth, which must needs be evil.

But the excellency and worthiness that God gives to men is of several sorts, natural, political, moral, supernatural, and all these the objects of honour. So that there is an honour due to parents, though they be ever so unkind; to kings and magistrates, though they be bad men; to a moralist, though he never heard of Christ; and especially to saints, though they be ever so poor, and otherwise unaccomplished, by reason of the supernatural worth that God has communicated to them. And because the image of God in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, is the most excellent communication of God to man, therefore the saints are, in the psalmist's phrase, *the excellent of the earth*, and the greatest honor

is due to them on that account; let Christ Jesus himself be judge, who esteemed the supernatural excellency of them that did the will of God, more than the natural excellency of all relations according to the flesh; and let his apostle Paul be judge, who honoured Christ himself more on a spiritual account than on any fleshly consideration whatever, *Though we have known Christ after the flesh, &c.* The controversy, then, will be about the external and less proper honour, or rather the outward expression of honour by words or gestures. That there may and ought to be such expressions of honour, according to the different customs of different countries, is plain, both by precept and example. To rise up before the hoary is expressly commanded, and it is made the same with the honouring of old men, *Lev. xix. 32.* The relieving of parents is accounted an honouring of them by our Saviour, *Matt. vii. 10.* And the paying of tribute is an external expression of honour that is due to kings, and it is expressly required, *For this cause pay ye tribute also, &c.* It is needless, and it would be almost endless to record all the examples of the wise and holy men in Scripture, that justify the giving and receiving expressions of honour, in words and gestures.

Neither can we reasonably imagine that all nations and ages of the world are bound to the very same expressions of honour which the Jews used, or those ages of the world that the Scripture writes the history of. If the Jews fall flat before a prince or a prophet, and we only kneel before them, we are not more complimentary than

they, but less. There is less suspicion or appearance of worship, in giving the right hand of fellowship, and putting off the hat, which we use, than there is in their bowings and prostrations of old, which were so common among them.

And as for verbal expressions of honour, we are no more complimentary than the best of men have ever been, in commending things well done, and praising them that do them, in praying for the long life and prosperity of kings and magistrates, in saluting our neighbours, and wishing them a good day, or good speed, inquiring after their welfare, rejoicing in it, or thanking them for their good will, or any good turn. That very apostle who so often *gave thanks to God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ*, does not scruple to give thanks to his fellow creatures, *Rom. xvi. 4.*

This, I think, is enough to justify the sober use of these civilities in words and gestures, which they call compliments. But I do not think any thing of this does justify the hypocrisy, falsity, flattery, and either undue or excessive expressions of respect, which all sober men do complain of, as well as the Friends. And would to God we were all so wise and righteous, as to honour and respect all men agreeably to their real worth; and so simple and sincere, as to use only such outward expressions, as for their nature and degree, are agreeable to that honour!

MEDITATION VII.

The Quakers' arguments answered.

BUT still it remains that I do invalidate or moderate the arguments taken from Scripture examples and doctrines, against giving and receiving honour.

Moses, indeed, was a person of admirable humility, fortitude, patience, meekness, and contempt of the world, but far from our modern Quakers; for however he refused a certain kind of honour that was offered him at one time, as being in the matter inconsistent with the religious course he had entered on, yet at other times we read that he was very much honoured by the people, and it was the pleasure of God that he should be honoured by them. God himself did magnify him in the sight of all Israel. I believe he esteemed it as great an honour to be accounted a son of Abraham, as the son of Pharaoh's daughter; and to lead and feed so great a people so miraculously in the wilderness, as to live in the pomp and ease of the Egyptian court. As for the instances that are brought out of the behaviour of Mordecai, who would not vouchsafe his cap and knee to the proud Agagite; of Elisha, who would not vouchsafe a look to the wicked king of Israel; by that time something be allowed to the constitution of these men, something to their extraordinary spirit, and something to the extraordinariness of their circumstances, especially the former, the argument from

hence will be very much moderated. And when it shall be observed, that these very men at other times both gave honour to men, and themselves received great honour from men, as is very evident in their story, it will appear that they were no Quakers in that point. In the mean time I confess I could heartily wish that this civil respect might not be so indifferently bestowed, and prostituted, by being made common to all men alike, both good and bad. For if all men professing the Gospel, were of that purity and fortitude which becomes them, and so free from folly and flattery, slavishness and partiality, as the true spirit of the Gospel requires, there would be a great distinction between the precious and the vile, in honour, and all expressions of it, although there would be a just respect kept up to all men with relation had to their authority; which is something divine. For honour ought to be agreeable to the worth, and it is reasonable to think, that the outward expressions of honour which we show, ought to be proportionable to the honour we bear; otherwise we shall be chargeable with something of hypocrisy, flattery, or partiality, which the simplicity of the Gospel knows not.

The Baptist indeed was an austere man, (a Nazarite) but his particular fashion of apparel, and his way of diet, and converse, were not intended to be an example to the rest of the world; for neither did his Lord and Master conform to his guise, (*John came neither eating nor drinking,*) nor yet do the Quakers feel bound to gird themselves as he did, nor with him, to feed on locusts and wild honey.

If they imitate him in the doctrine of repentance, it is no other than what every evangelical minister will consent to be a Quaker in, as well as they; only perhaps he will not be content to preach it so nakedly, as they do sometimes, and as I myself have seen them.*

As for that familiar phrase and those plain reprehensions which both the Baptist and Christ Jesus used toward Herod and the Pharisees, let all divines that have the same understanding in points of divinity, and the same spirit of discerning hearts, be as plain and as positive as they. And Oh that the smooth flatteries, and colloquing addresses of many ministers, did not so much tempt the Friends to a contrary extreme, of handling men rudely, and without any respect to their civil quality, as they do at this day!

As for the familiar converse that Christ held with the worst of men for their edification, his loving and undisdainful behaviour to the poor, his valuing of all persons according to their real worth, and preferring the spiritual cognation before the carnal, I would to God we were all thus far Quakers, I mean faithful followers of his humility, patience, zeal, charity, and compassion! which I doubt not but many men are as much, or more, than those that call themselves Friends.

But what shall I say to the plain commands of not being called rabbi, of not calling any man father or master on earth, of sitting down in the lowest places at feasts, and the like? Why, I have this to say, that they are not plain com-

* This passage alludes to several extravagancies in the early history of this denomination.

mands, nor must they be understood in the plainest and most literal sense. It is not fair for the Quakers to make Christ speak for them, so as to make him speak against himself.

These passages can no way be understood to establish the doctrine of not giving and receiving honour; for we know Christ himself was called Rabbi, and commends, elsewhere, the good manners of his disciples, in calling him Master. And when he himself speaks of men's natural parents, he calls them their father and their mother, (*Suffer him not to do ought for his father or mother.*) And Paul owns himself the father of the Corinthians. But they do teach the doctrine of humility in general, and not to depend on the authority of any man as absolute and supreme.

As for our Saviour's doctrine, John v. 44. *That they cannot believe, who receive honour one from another*; it cannot be understood in the Quaker's sense, because we are so expressly required to honour one another; which would be utterly in vain, if none were allowed to receive the honour that is given them.

Some therefore interpret it by way of comparison, *q. d.* that is given of God, and make it the same in sense with John xii. 43. *They loved the praise of men, more than the praise of God.* I confess, for my part, I cannot embrace this interpretation as genuine; for I do not see any comparison in the text, nor discern that they loved the praise of God at all. Neither will the word *μᾶλλον* infer it; for the word is often used by way of correction or opposition, where there is no comparison at all; as in John iii. 19. *Now men*

love darkness more than light, because their deeds are evil. Where the meaning is, that men loved darkness, and not light. For so it follows in ver. 20. *Every one that does evil, hates the light.* And so in divers other places. But it is plainly to be understood of being carried away with the affection of vain glory; *Ye cannot believe, that receive honour one from another*; i. e. that seek and strive, and covet to receive. For in Scripture that is said to be done, which is only endeavoured or sought to be done. Thus, Ezek. xxiv. 13. *I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged.* Amos ix. 3. *Though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea.* Rom. ii. 4. *The goodness of God leadeth*; that is, seeketh to lead thee to repentance. In this very chapter, ver. 34 and 41. Christ says, *He received not honour from men.* And again, *I receive not testimony from men.* Though we know well enough he received the testimony of John. The meaning is therefore, That he sought not, strove not, coveted not to receive the honour and testimony of man. So here, *Ye cannot believe, that receive honour one from another*; that is, that are carried away with popular applause; and seek and study the honour that is from men, as appears by the opposition in the latter clause of the verse, *Ye seek not the honour that is from God only.*

MEDITATION VIII.

Some suggestions to the Quakers.

AND now I should pass on to suggest something to the Quakers, whereby they may examine themselves and their sincerity in this matter, when they fancy themselves to be the only despisers of the honours of the world, and so comfortably infer for themselves, that they are the lovers of God. But when they pretend so much to an irrelative and impartial behaviour, they quote the Apostle James for their patron, James ii. 2, 3, 4. Who seems to speak so plainly for them, and quite to cut the throat of all carnal mannerliness and compliment, that I should not be true to them, nor my own reason neither, if I did not take that text into consideration.

First, then, I will confess that the texts do condemn partiality, and respect of persons, and the preference of one before another, upon a mere worldly account, in our judgment or affections. And do declare, that the greatest honour is to be given to men upon an evangelical account; and that it is this day a shameful sin among Christians, that they estimate men by their estates, parentage, apparel, retinue, rather than according to the example of God, who values men according to their resemblance to himself, and honours them that honour him.

That the persons of men are not to be accepted, but all judgment to be administered exactly according to the merits of the cause.

But what shall we say to the text? Does it absolutely forbid the giving of any honour, or showing any respect to men upon a mere worldly account?

Shall I sit down with the English annotators, and confess, that “it is a fault, and that this fault is found among us too commonly at this day.”

Shall I content myself to say in general with the Dutch annotators, that “partiality, or respect of persons, is here forbidden.”

Is there no way to rescue the text out of the hands of the Quakers, and keep it from patronizing an irrelative and unmannerly behaviour?

Dr. Hammond has found out one way, by interpreting the assemblies of the courts of judicature among the Jews, among whom it was a law, that if a rich man and a poor had any matter to be judged by the court, they should both have one and the same usage, and the like place and posture should be allowed them both. So that according to that learned commentator, the sense is no more than this, that judgment should be indifferently administered to all men, according to the merit of the cause, without suffering ourselves to be swayed with the person; that is, with any thing extrinsical to the cause, as Mollerus expounds it on *Psal.* lxxxii. 2. Such as power, parentage, riches, affinity, apparel, acquaintance, or the like, according to that saying of Cato in Plutarch, *Τὸν κριτὴν οὐδὲ μὴδὲ ὑπὲρ δικαίων λιπαρεῖσσι, μὴδὲ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδίκων ἐκλιπαρεῖσσι.* [A judge should not be too respectful towards the innocent, or too disrespectful towards the guilty.]

Or else the text may be interpreted of any other assemblies, but then the rich and fine man

must be understood with his adjunct of wickedness, and the poor man with his adjunct of faith and piety; and so the sense is, that a wicked rich man ought not to be respected or preferred before a godly poor man. And it seems by the context, that the apostle speaks not of rich men and poor men simply as such, but with their adjuncts of good and bad. For presently after he tells us what kind of rich men they are whom he would not have respected, *Even contentious, oppressive, blasphemous*, ver. 6. 7. And what poor men they are whom he would not have disrespected, *Even such as have faith and love*, ver. 5.

And now I could heartily wish, that the Quakers were as sincere contemners of the worldly honour, as their homely and uncomplimental behaviour does pretend to; and that all Christians were in that sense as much Quakers as they. But notwithstanding all these pretensions, I will suggest a few things to them, worthy perhaps, of their most serious consideration.

A man may be a predominant lover of the world in other respects, though he seem to himself perfectly dead to the honours of it.

A man may be as true a lover of worldly honour, though he seems to neglect, and do indeed neglect the modish expressions of it, as another man; and take as carnal a pleasure in *thee* and *thou*, as in *sir* and *madam*.

Plato thought Diogenes as proud in trampling on his fine bed, as he thought Plato to be in having such a bed.

It is an evident argument that they do not choose *thee* and *thou* for humility, or a denying of

the honours of the world; for they contend hotly, that this is the most proper grammatical way of speaking, (it is not a case of conscience, but of grammar;) and they also give the same expression to God himself, when yet they intend to honour him as we do.

As for giving and receiving honour, let them examine themselves, whether they be not desirous to be well thought of, well esteemed of, when they think they deserve it? Whether themselves can take it well, to be slighted and neglected by those of whom they deserve well.

To advance one's own righteousness, to be righteous in one's own eyes, as the Pharisees were; and to stand on our own justification by the perfection of our own holiness, is as proud and legal a spirit as any, and the highest kind of self-honouring. To have men's persons in admiration, to value them as having any thing of themselves in them, is a carnal way of giving honour to men.

MEDITATION IX.

Περί ιδιωτέρων, Or, of public benefactors.

ANOTHER sort of pretenders to a just contempt of the world, and a predominant love of God, are those rich men of the world who bestow a great part of their estates in public works; buildings, or endowings of churches, schools, hospitals, work-houses for the poor, or the like.

This charity is very commendable, especially when we consider, how most great men spend their estates.

But it is more highly commendable in those that have children of their own, and who in their life-time part with so considerable a share of their estates to charitable uses.

But yet even among these, the love of the world may be found predominant. A worldly heart may be found not only among them that squander away their estates prodigally, and all they have in riotous living, *Luke xv. 13.* But even among them that bestow all their goods to feed the poor, *1 Cor. xiii. 3.* It was a plausible argument that the Pharisees used to our Saviour, when they argued, that a certain gentleman loved their nation, because he had built them a synagogue. But I do not think it to be a concluding argument, to prove the predominant love of God. For this, as well as building and garnishing the sepulchres of the prophets, may agree to an hypocritical generation.

How plausible and commendable soever therefore the charity of these great benefactors may be, yet if any such benefactor design, and provide for the celebration, and perpetuation of his own name, more than the advancement of the name of God, and the propagation of religion and virtue in the world, he will be found ultimately to sacrifice to that great idol, self-interest, and not to God.

If any such benefactor build up churches of stone, and at the same time, hate, demolish, or neglect the living temples of God, and love not his saints above all other men, it is but like the silly mockery of those whom the Gospel exposes to contempt, that honoured the dead prophets

with many outward shows, and in the mean time persecuted the living to death. Or if any rob Peter to gratify Paul; build almshouses, out of the alms that they have kept back out of the gain of oppression and usury. It is possible a man may build and endow schools for the instruction of others, and yet himself remain in a state of ignorance, not caring to know even so much as the necessary things that belong to his peace. That a man may build work-houses for others, and yet sit down careless and slothful in the matters of his own soul, nor take pains to work out the salvation thereof. That a man may provide comfortably for the future state of widows, and impotent in this world, and yet make no provision for his own eternity in another, and so (if I may allude to the apostle) be poor, whilst he makes many rich; or at least, relieves their poverty.

All external acts of charity and beneficence, as well as of devotion, are compatible to the animal life, as well as the divine, and may be acted over as plausibly to a purblind observer, by a self-lover, or a lover of the world, as by a lover of the Father.

MEDITATION X.

Of the pretenders to righteousness.

As the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, so certainly the predominant lovers of righteousness are lovers of the righteous Lord. Looking

upon these, one cannot but love them at first sight, as it is said of Christ. This righteousness is such a qualification, as that without it no man can have the confidence to lay any claim to the Gospel character of a good man. It seems to be so famous a species of virtue, that it is in Scripture tropology put for goodness or virtue in general, as fortitude was among the heathens, *fortes creantur fortibus et bonis*, [the brave are born of the brave and good.]

Sacrifices were of divine institution, and an honourable way of men's drawing nigh to God; and rightly offered up, were very acceptable to him, yet charity is preferred before them, (*I will have mercy, &c.*) and yet righteousness seems to have the precedency of charity itself. If the obligation to justice be not stronger than the obligation to mercy, yet it seems to have a priority, and requires to be first served, if there be a competition; for charity itself looks like a kind of felony, if it antevert righteousness, being a giving away of that which is of right another man's.

But as there are many things called unrighteousness, which indeed deserve not to be so clamored against, (which I think will fall under some of my future meditations,) so I doubt there is a great deal that is magnified for righteousness that deserves not to be so celebrated.

For suppose one of these pretenders to righteousness be ever so exact in matters of dealing with his neighbour, just in matters of bargain, faithful in matters of trust, punctual in payment of debts, wages, promises, if yet he be unjust to God in with-holding his heart from him, to whom

it is due, and entertain the world or carnal self, in the highest room, there he is a lover of the world, and not of the Father; as truly as a wife is unrighteous, who, although she does not waste her husband's estate, yet gives herself away from him, and opens her bosom to a stranger.

The righteousness that will denominate a man a lover of God, must be in conjunction with faith, meekness, temperance, charity, and purity; if our righteousness be not so, it is some spurious, or mechanical thing.

But is it possible that a man should be thus exactly righteous, and yet not a lover of the Father?

Why not? That self-love, the love of the world, may be the very spring from which external righteousness does flow. To be seen of men, accepted of men, to maintain a good reputation among men, and to have a good credit with them, was the best principle from which the righteousness of the Pharisees proceeded; which yet was as exact as most men can pretend to, so exact, that they would not cozen the Levite of a little mint, or cummin.

How many of these righteous men may we see every where, who notwithstanding their pretensions to justice, make no conscience of robbing God of the time which he has consecrated for his own service, and the poor of that part of their estates which God has assigned for their use.

They are so punctual in matter of commutative justice, that they challenge any man to say black is their eyes, and yet all their neighbours

know them to be black mouthed; which they show by their profane cursing or swearing, whereby they wrong God, or their reviling calumniation, back-bitings and detractions, whereby they wrong their neighbour.

However righteousness is a lovely character and a character of a lover of God, yet it is very necessary we should examine well whether our righteous conversation proceed from a righteous principle, whether it be universal and permanent, and whether it be accompanied with the faith and charity which go for the constitution of it; or whether it be not superstitiously designed as meritorious of favour and friendship at the hands of God. If so, thy righteousness becomes unrighteousness.

MEDITATION XI.

Of non-conformists.

LORD, what a dust is raised in this nation about conformity and non-conformity! Let the dew of thy grace lay it, before the rain fall, and there come a shower of persecution to do it! Alas, what pity it is that so many men, so wise, so pious, and so learned, should so differ one from another, and that in a matter of so great consequence; and yet all of them so doubtful, that they will scarce say themselves are in the right; or at least so modest, that they will scarce say the other is in the wrong. It is not so great a controversy as was of old, when the question

was, who were the prophets of the Lord and who the priests of Baal? And yet it is to be feared that God must manifest himself by fire before it will be determined.

Is it not strange and sad, that they that profess one (one and the same) God, faith, baptism, should yet themselves not be one! Lord, how hast thou forsaken the earth! How hast thou hid truth from the eyes of men! How is the spirit of discerning failed from among us! Here is utterly a fault among us somewhere, and a great one too; and yet be it where it will, it must needs be that many learned and holy men are guilty of it. For they are as shy to impute it to their adversaries, as they are loth to assume it to themselves.

This indeed makes the case less sad, but it makes it more strange. It is neither in my skill nor will, to enter into the controversy between them; for it is very nice, and I see no hopes of accommodating the difference by any amicable interposition or argument. But what then? Shall I sit down and be satisfied, saying with my Saviour, *It must needs be that offences come?* Alas! This affords me no satisfaction, so long as the next words stand of equal divine authority, *Wo unto that man by whom they come.*

If I in the integrity of my heart only lament the breach, some stander-by or other will be ready, with the midwife in the history, *Gen. xxxviii. 29.* to let fly at the one party or the other, and cry, *This breach be on thee;* and in despite of them, either in the conformist or the non-conformist, shall be a Pharez in the house of Israel.

What shall I do then? Why possibly among the one and the other, there may be found some that are lovers of the world, more than of God. I will endeavour to separate these, the vile from the precious. And then as for the sincere lovers of God, of what persuasions soever, they will be sure to escape at the last, though it should be as by fire.

Now, methinks, I may divide these disabled persons, as our Saviour did his eunuchs, into three sorts. First, such as have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom, &c. Secondly, such as are born eunuchs. Thirdly, such as are made eunuchs of men; non-conformists out of judgment, by virtue of education, or out of some worldly respects, or carnal principle.

The ecclesiastical eunuchs, that are such for the kingdom of heaven's sake, do not fall under my consideration. That they are such, themselves do aver, and their charitable adversaries are loth to suspect, nay, they are ready to say of them as the pharisaical scribes said of St Paul, Acts xxiii. 9. *We find no evil in these men, but if a spirit or an angel have spoken to them, let us not fight against God.* We find no fault with the temper or conversation of these men; therefore if they be thus persuaded in their consciences, let us not oppress or persecute them, seeing the root of the matter is found in them. By what arguments they come to be persuaded in their consciences to be such, I need not consider. Themselves have propounded them openly and plentifully enough, insomuch that all know the men, and their argumentations.

The second sort therefore are such, as are non-conformists by education, (as it were from their mother's womb,) who thereby received a prejudice, before they could judge of things that differ. I do not know that there are any such, but it is said there are, and it is not unlikely, for we know what the former times were, and what power breeding and education have to form the notions, and fashion the opinions of men. If these should hit of the right way, it is no thanks to them. However, not choosing it by a mature judgment, but being fashioned thereunto by company and converse, it cannot be supposed that they act ingenuously or rationally. And if there be any that give no better account of their non-conformity than this, that they were so bred and so taught, I think they themselves are carnal, though the things they hold are ever so orthodox. It is a vain non-conformity, as well as conversation, that has no other ground but this, that it is received by tradition from the fore-fathers. And it may truly be said, they worship they know not what, that have nothing to say for their way of worship, but, our fathers worshipped on this mountain.

They say there are of the third sort that are made eunuchs of men, that in their dissenting are actuated as carnal men, by obstinate humour, or worldly interest. Some say they are proud and wilful, and conceited; some say they are idle, and therefore they cry, Let us have our liberty, let us sacrifice unto our God in our own way. Some say they are obstinate and unruly, *They regard not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed.*

Others say they are actuated by worldly interest, either the interest of their reputations, which by their levity they are loth to forfeit with the people; or their estates, which are advanced and not impaired by their sufferings. I confess some of these charges seem to be strange and almost incredible. Others are perhaps too true. God will judge their hearts and principles; in the mean time, I would they should know that God does not estimate any man by his professions, be they ever so specious; nor his opinions, be they ever so orthodox; nor by his outward form, be it ever so pure and refined. It is easy, (I wish it to be not ordinary,) for man to be carnal in a fine spiritual mode.

And I beseech you, sirs, lay it to heart; who-soever prefers ease or honour, popular esteem, the good opinion of a party, or an opportunity of making himself and his name great, before unity and order, before the peace and settlement of the church, yea, or before his liberty and capacity of ministering in holy things, and propagating the Gospel of Christ, is so far carnal, and a lover of the world.

Faction and schism, and sedition, are works of the flesh, as well as flatteries, and bare compliance.

The propagation of a party, and the advancement of a name, are a part of the world, as well as fat benefices. And where they are preferred before peace and charity, do denominate a man a lover of the world, as well as those where they are preferred before truth. For God is peace and love, as well as truth.

To run away from ceremonial uncleanness, and at the same time to run into moral:

To be shy of white garments, and yet free to entertain black passions:

To avoid the sign of the cross, and yet to live in the spirit of crossness and contradiction, is as foolish as to be frightened at an apparition of a devil, and yet confidently to follow a real one in all his works, as most men do. And it is so much the more foolish, as it adds hypocrisy to the folly of worldly mindedness.

MEDITATION XII.

Of Conformists.

WHEN I begin to think of these, the words of the prophet Oded occur to me, 2. *Chron.* 28. which he spake to the children of Israel, who purposed to keep under their captive brethren, *Are there not sins with you, even with you, against the Lord your God?* For it is not my business to consider whether conformity be in its own nature good or bad, but supposing conformity to be good, to consider what conformists are, notwithstanding they are carnal, and lovers of the world. For as non-conformity, with all its pretences of purity, truth and simplicity, will not justify the unseasonable or schismatical non-conformist; so neither will the regularity, peaceableness and decency of conformity justify the carnal and ill-principled conformist; no more than the honourableness of marriage, will justify them that go together like brutes.

So far as I can apprehend or discern, there are three sorts of conformists :

Some out of conscience, some of out carelessness, and some out of covetousness.

Those that are conformists out of conscience, seem to be of two sorts; such as think that way in its own nature the best, and do in their judgment choose it, and think it reasonable to impose it; and such as are only persuaded in their consciences that it is not evil, and that it is best for peace sake to submit to it.

I see plainly, that all good men's consciences are not of one size, and I know no one below the Omniscient that can exactly take measure of them. Both these therefore I leave to the Judge of consciences.

But there seems also to be a number of the two latter sorts, whom all their conformity will not preserve from the censure of our apostle.

That some conform out of carelessness, without making any question for conscience sake, never having considered, or weighed the nature of the thing, but acting merely upon a public conscience, is too apparent by that little or nothing that they have to say in defence of themselves, or this way, when they are opposed in it; but with him in 2 Sam. xvi. 18. *Whom this people choose, his will I be.*

That some conform out of covetousness, will appear at least by the confession of those, who in words at length have declared, that they were of mean fortunes, and knew not how to live; otherwise they had no mind to it.

However they may glory in their conformity, yet sure the church has no cause to glory in

them; for they are but a company of pressed soldiers, and will either be easily routed, or run away. These love the world more than truth, which they take no pains to discover; and the peace of their consciences, which they take no care to preserve.

The careless prefer the custom and example of men, before right reason, judgment and conscience; and though they should chance to hit of the right, yet they act wrongly. The covetous prefer the bread of priests, before the priests' office, 1 *Sam.* ii. 36. with the degenerate posterity of Eli. It is fit indeed, that they that preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel; but to preach the Gospel only to get a livelihood or a living, looks like Simony inverted; a giving of holy things, to get money.

The heathen satyrist laughed at those magpie poets, who were instructed by the sound of their empty stomachs; and taught music, by the chiming of their own bellies; and I cannot see how these men are less ridiculous, I am sure they are more presumptuous.

The careless and inconsiderate, though their oblation should be of clean beasts, yet at best do but offer the sacrifice of fools. The covetous are either inconsiderate, and so they fall on, and never say grace; but, like Saul's hungry soldiers, fly upon the spoil, and in their hunger eat without discretion, blood and all; or else if they entertain any sober thoughts, the love and cares of the world presently spring up and choke them. Whether are more excusable, it matters not, in a case where both are inexcusable.

But this is plain, that where a doubt lies between truth and falsehood, he that admits worldly interest for an umpire to decide the controversy, is a lover of the world; and if worldly considerations be the predominant motives, let the matter he embraces be ever so true, he is false to his God and his own conscience in embracing it. The profession of the Gospel is a good thing, and yet the professors of it that are actuated by a carnal principle, are nevertheless bad men.

As to both these, I will not say, that every non-conformist is carnal, that will not part with his life, upon the same account as he parts with his liberty, or livelihood; nor that every conformist is carnal, who conforms with some regret, and had much rather no such things were required; yet surely they are farthest removed from the foul character of lovers of the world, whose consciences are most strongly persuaded, and who are actuated by no interest but the interests of truth and righteousness, in what they do, or leave undone.

MEDITATION XIII.

Of the education of children.

THE apostacy of man, and the depravedness of his present state, has made education necessary, and yet at the same time very painful. He is not only an ass's colt for folly, but a wild ass's colt for stubbornness, and untractableness; so that it requires a great deal of wisdom to teach

him, and as much fortitude and patience, in enduring so to do. Both which render them very honourable, and much to be revered by mankind, whom God has qualified for this employment; and it is a pity but the best of men were employed herein, and the best of encouragements were allowed them. But, alas! how few are there to be found in this employment, that are worthy of it! Many that undertake to teach, have themselves never well learned; and many others that are appointed to cultivate the minds, govern the passions, and form the manners of others, are themselves so immoral, so passionate, so uncultivated, that it is pity they should be made keepers of the vineyard, when their own vineyard they cannot keep. And besides these, there are many other corruptions crept into this honourable employment, which do most evidently denominate many of these persons, lovers of the world, more than of God.

What else are those ministers that baptize children into a faith, which afterwards they take no care to make them understand?

What else are those parents that make provision for the bodies, and neglect the souls of their children? Or those tutors, who bear the names, and defray the expenses of their pupils, but do not concern themselves about their manners? They are indeed more properly stewards than tutors. What else are those tutors or masters, that being entrusted to teach youth, do either not teach them, or teach them in a degree that bears no proportion, either to what the subject is capable of receiving, or what reward

they do themselves receive for instructing them? Or if they do skilfully and fully enough instruct them in human learning, yet are careless of divine, putting off that to the parson, or crying, Oh, in those things the children must be taught of God. Alas! What fatal consequences, what ignorance, error and worldliness in riper years, is this neglect the cause of! For by that time youth has withdrawn its hand from the ferule, and its back from the rod, it is usually settled in the temper that it is resolved to be of, and so engaged in some way of worldly pleasure or business or other, as that it is prepossessed, and has no mind or leisure to inquire for a law at the priest's mouth, to hearken to his words, *charm he ever so wisely*. And what else are these masters and servants, who either out of fondness withhold correction, or out of cruel harshness bestow it too liberally; who take pleasure in punishment, without respect to amendment; or out of some base principle, are partial in administering correction?

Not that all different usage of offenders is partiality; nay, rather, it would be partiality to use all offenders, great and small, alike; nor is it partiality always to use unequal degrees of correction to equal offenders. Respect ought to be had to constitutions, both of body and mind, and perhaps some other circumstances. That dose may possibly kill one, that is not sufficient to cure another. The husbandmen of Judea did not thresh their fitches with a threshing instrument, nor the cummin with a cart-wheel; but the bread-corn they bruised, according as their

God instructed them to discretion, *Isa.* xxviii. 26, 27, 28. But the partiality that proceeds from fondness, fear, flattery, covetousness, or the like, and is not according to justice, belongs to the head of worldly wisdom, and is a symptom of a worldly mind. I reckon that correction is a kind of administration of vindictive justice.

What do they prefer most, think ye, that will severely correct a piece of playfulness, idleness, unmannerliness, or it may be a piece of natural slowness or weakness; and in the mean time connive at a great deal of ribaldry, looseness and profaneness?

In short, whatever tutor, master or parent, had rather his pupil, apprentice or child, were a good scholar, or a good artist, than a good man, that endeavours and glories in the former more than in the latter, to him, of right, belongs the black character of a lover of the world.

MEDITATION XIV.

Of the disposers of children to callings.

WHEN children are grown up to a convenient age, parents or guardians use to dispose of them to trades or services, or bestow them in marriage.

They that dispose of them to no employment or calling, nor engage them in any liberal science or honest study, whereby they may be serviceable members of church or commonwealth, because they need no such thing to live by, and

think it is accomplishment enough for them to be able to court, to compliment, to entertain, to game, like a gentleman; are in the judgment of divines, ill stewards of the blessings of God, and sad managers of so great a talent as children are; and that they are severely accountable for such carelessness, cruelty, and injustice.

But they that do not talk like divines, do generally cry, that it is very impolitic; for by learning nothing, they come to learn two of the greatest vices in the world, luxury and idleness; and in one of them, I had almost said all others, for what is it not an inlet to? Besides, it is impolitic not to have some employment or art or other, to which one may have recourse in the greatest extremity, which extremity who knows but may befall him. It was well for the king of Syracuse, that he had a little more learning than his neighbours, that he might at least turn school-master when he was un-kinged.

The steward in the Gospel needed not to have betaken himself to the knavish shift of gratifying his lord's debtors, if he had been well educated in his youth. So that to educate children in some art or science, is pious and politic; but yet the piety of it is ordinarily and easily spoiled.

For what is predominant, think ye, God or the world, with those parents, who, with mere respect to a livelihood, or out of respect to a more plentiful livelihood, dispose of their children to employments in their own nature unlawful; in the management whereof their souls shall as certainly die as their bodies live? These do, in effect, bind them apprentices to the devil, and, as

the poet speaks, *Propter vitam vivendi perdunt causas*, [For the sake of a living destroy the very means of life.]

Perhaps it will be thought there are few such employments; but some there are, surely, perhaps more than will be commonly confessed. What shall we think of the trade of those young females, *Alunt quæ corpore corpus*, [Who prostitute the body for its own support,] as the poet speaks; and of the care of those parents, who, rather than not be panders, will mercenarily prostitute their own wives, which are members of themselves; or deliver up their own daughters, the fruit of their own bodies, to the bodies of other men? I cannot excuse, but yet, methinks, I cannot but pity righteous Lot, and the hospitable Gibeonite, who, to rescue their male guests, offered to expose their females, maidens that had not known men, to the lusts of the sons of Belial.

For aught I know, it was in just judgment of God, that Lot was left to commit incest with those daughters of his, whom he was so forward to prostitute to other men. But to play the pander or the pimp for money, is surely filthy lucre, if there is any in the world; and to sell at the same time both human souls and bodies, must needs be the merchandize of Babylon. What is predominant with those parents or guardians, think ye, although they do not dispose of children into callings and employments absolutely unlawful, yet into those that are apparently dangerous and ensnaring, and which a well confirmed Christian can scarcely manage with safety;

or commit them to the tuition of ignorant, carnal, profane masters, that can teach them nothing that is good save their trades, and it is ten to one will teach them many things which are naught; or that will dispose of their children as servants, into families, where they shall never have precepts or examples to lead them to virtue, but many temptations and inducements to sin and sensuality, and in the mean time employment only for the hands, and entertainment only for the back and stomach?

Whether these people be actuated by a worldly spirit, or by the Spirit of God, is easy for any man, whose eyes are open, to discern; for do not they proclaim, that they prefer the body before the soul, and mere living before living well? Although this be not downright destroying them, because the grace of God may miraculously intervene, and preserve the poor children in the midst of fire, yet it is no thanks to these merciless tyrants that put them in; for they devote them to destruction. I do not see but that they are as much guilty of murder as David, and of a worse murder than he, (whom yet the kindest divine that I have met with would never undertake to excuse,) who, though he did not fall on Uriah himself, yet placed him in the front of the battle, and then deserted him. And therefore the Spirit of God, the best casuist, says plainly, *That he slew him with the sword of the children of Ammon.* And although these parents do not themselves put out the eyes of their children, yet if they dispose of them into an enemy's country, and let in the Philistines on them to do it; f

they resign them up wholly to an ignorant, carnal, and graceless society, they are as treacherous as Delilah, though erewhile they were fond of them, and hugged them in their bosoms, and dandled them on their knees; yet they are giving them up to destruction.

MEDITATION XV.

Of persons that marry, and give in marriage.

MARRIAGE is now become necessary to the greatest part of mankind, and is made warrantable, yea, and honourable too, by the ordination of God. I have already allowed its just praises to a single state, (vide Med. 2.) and I hope there are many that live in that state, pure and undefiled. But to oblige ourselves, or any that are under our power, so to live, I imagine proves a snare to many, and perhaps an inconvenience to all.

But besides those that vow virginity on a religious account, there are a great many that prolong the single state of their children in spite of their inclinations, on a worldly account, in the grossest sense. And what can I think of those parents, who, knowing the inclinations of their children, of a just age, constitution, and discretion, and having fair opportunities of matching them comfortably, do yet constrain them to pass *the flower of their youth*, as the apostle stiles it, and to stay for so many hundreds or thousands, before they will part with them. I know there

are a great many shuffling excuses; but to prefer portions or jointures, an honourable or worshipful alliance, a particular serviceableness to ourselves, or to our affairs, before that peace, purity, satisfaction and contentment, which is in a desired conjugal state, must needs be a symptom of a worldly mind.

If these parents do not behave themselves harshly and bitterly against their children, according to the apostle's phrase, (*Eph. vi. 4.*) yet I am sure they behave themselves unseemly towards them, according to this phrase elsewhere.

It does not belong to my meditations at this time, to show the mischievous consequences of such restraint, whether lewdness and wantonness, inconvenient and pernicious matching of themselves, uncomfortable melancholy, diseases, and perhaps death itself. But I am heartily sorry to find this symptom of worldliness there, where it ought least of all to be found.

The Lord pity all those who never saw that they offended in this matter, till it was too late to see it! Of the like character are all those parents and guardians, who by threatenings or other severities, by perpetual importunities and solicitations, do force their children, for mere worldly respects, to accept of matches against their inclination and approbation. If there can be any defiling a maid without deflowering her, this is it; and it is the more abominable, because it is parents defiling their own children. And we need not wonder to see so bad consequences of so bad premises; no wonder if they prove to love where they marry not, who were forced to marry where they loved not.

But of all kinds of violences, methinks self-forcing is the most unnatural; and merely for the love of land or money, to commit violence on one's own reason, judgment, affection, and discretion, is next to barbarous; nay, I question whether there be any thing in barbarity like it.

It was good policy, and is brought for an example of good oratory, *Sic sacrilegus, sic fur, sic flagitiorum omnium vitiorumque princeps, ac est bonus imperator*, [although sacrilegious, and a robber, a ring-leader of every crime and villany, yet he is a clever emperor.]

But how it should be good divinity, or how it should ever be the language of the heart of any divines, "She is ignorant of the things of religion, proud, carnal, and many ways unsuitable; but she will make a good wife, for she has so much land, or so much money;" that this, I say, should be the language of any Christian's heart, I should be loth to believe, but how shall I help it? For what pretence can I have for my unbelief, when I do see so frequent examples before my eyes?

Does not every body, every day, see men and women professing religion, marrying, or giving themselves in marriage, to mates that are little else than enemies to religion, plainly preferring the advancement of their estates, and worldly interest, before their spiritual advantages, and the comfort of their souls, or indeed lives either? Oh but they themselves know no hurt by them, they have better thoughts of them; love is blind. Would to God, Christian people would deal sincerely with themselves, and then let any of these answer and say, whether they run on marriage,

or blindfold or no. If not, then they have either observed or inquired. And if both on observation and inquiry they have found nothing very desirable, but the estate or the portion, I would fain know what is the predominant motive. And to say love is blind, is a woful shift; it is but a sitting down tamely, and being content with the character of a fool.

It is too true, that the love of the world does so blind the eyes of men, that they can see none of these infirmities, deformities, inequalities, nor ill consequences neither, that do plainly enough accompany or attend their matching; but this does not render them the more excusable, nor, methinks, should it give them any ease.

It was a little alleviation of blind Samson's misery, grinding in the prison, to think that the Philistines had put out his eyes by force. But for men to put out their own eyes, and then cry they cannot see; or expect to be pitied in their drudgery, is utterly in vain. Their bondage and drudgery indeed renders them pitiable, but the blindness that is alleged for the cause of it, renders them ridiculous. But shall we think then that every man and woman is bound to seek after the best, and accept of none but the best persons in marriage?

I shall not trouble myself about this captious question. But sure I am, goodness with every lover of God ought to be a more powerful charm, than either wealth or beauty. It is the best match where they all meet, but that will not be always. However, if a man cannot have them all, he can tell which he is resolved to have, and

which he can be best content to want. This I am sure of, if it be not a man's duty absolutely to seek the best wife that he can get, it is much less his duty to aim at the richest. I conceive the whole world of wicked men and women is justly divided into unbelievers and hypocrites, and I cannot but wonder that men should think themselves bound by the express commandment not to match themselves unequally with unbelievers, and yet make no scruple at all of unequal yoking themselves with hypocrites; and such I am confident God reckons all unregenerate persons to be.

I conclude this black list with those, who rather than not have fortunes, will make their way to them by felony, at one blow breaking the fifth, seventh, eighth, and tenth commandments. For aught I can perceive, the marriage must be lawful, before the conjunction can be excused from being adulterous.

And he that takes a wife against the consent of parents or guardians, and against the prescribed method of the law, drinks stolen waters, though he may say, (as I have heard children,) that he takes them as his own.

Nay, though parents had no right in the disposing of their children to marriage, yet there is a shameful violation of commutative justice, in stealing fortunes, for which there is no satisfaction given.

And indeed they that steal fortunes, are commonly such as are not able to buy them, or pay proportionable jointures for them. But to what a height of worldly baseness does this arrive,

when this adultery and felony are exercised on children, when their infancy and estates, which ought to secure them, are both instrumental to betray them. To ensnare the child because she is a child, is like robbing the poor because he is poor.

————— *Magnum et memorabile nomen,
Stulta dolis astuti hominis si victa puella est.*

[A great and honourable name, forsooth, is gained, if a giddy girl be overcome by the treachery of a cunning man.)

MEDITATION XVI.

Of patrons.

How agreeable it is in a well constituted church, that mere lay men should have the power of presenting ministers to benefices, and what is the way in other churches, or whether their way or our's be better, does not belong to my present meditation. It seems likely to be attended with many conveniencies, if the people of each particular parochial church should freely elect their own pastor. But what inconveniencies might attend that too in time, I cannot tell, and therefore I will not determine any thing about it. I do not apprehend it to be any where contrary to the canon of the Scripture, that presentations be made to pastoral charges as they are here in England, considering the constitution and circumstances wherein we are. But that

among these patrons there is a great deal of corruption, and many things that denominate them carnal, and lovers of the world, is too obvious.

Simony indeed, as our law understands it, seems to be a sin of man's making, and I doubt men deal with it accordingly; few reckoning their consciences to be bound by it, otherwise than their oath that they take against it, does somewhat straiten them; which straits they think they may safely use all possible shifts to be delivered out of, never mattering to be *casti*, [innocent,] if they can but be *cauti*, [wary.]

But supposing it to be only forbidden by a human law, yet the reasons whereon that law is grounded, seem to be so just and strong, that the law does oblige on an higher account than its own. And many presentations will be found to be corrupt and carnal in the sight of God, which do not appear simoniacal in the eyes of men, or the sense of the law. To be a pastor to a congregation and a steward to any part of the household of God, is certainly an honourable employment, and does require much skill, faithfulness, and industry. To feed, and clothe, and conduct souls, is an employment which the great God does not disown, neither does he refuse to be called their Shepherd; and the stewards which he deposes must needs be so able, faithful and painful, as to give each of his family their meat in due season. It must needs therefore be the duty as it will be the great honour of all patrons, as far as in them lies, to prefer overseers to the flock of Christ, according to their worthiness and

fitness. Of how great use to the kingdom of Christ and the salvation of souls, the settling of such pastors in congregations has been, and consequently how great an honour those conscientious patrons are worthy of, who have been the instruments of their settlement, I can more easily contemplate with admiration, than tell to satisfaction. Who can, with a heart unbroken, consider the manifold fatal consequences of setting unworthy and unqualified pastors over the congregations of Christ's flock! The consequences are no less than the very ruin of multitudes of souls.

And what shall I think then of those patrons, who never at all regard the quality of the person, but the quantity of the gift? They remember surely the sin of Jeroboam, who made priests of the lowest of the people; and therefore are resolved to run far enough from him, and make pastors of the richest of the people. But their covetousness is no less carnal than his prodigality. They will not be so base as those of whom the prophet complained, *That they polluted the holy office for handfuls of barley, and pieces of bread*; but they will not stick to do it for handfuls of silver, and pieces of money. There is no such famine in Samaria surely, that an ass's head should be so much esteemed, and the souls of men be fed with dung. No, no, the famine is in the appetites of covetous patrons, who care not what silly refuse of men they present, nor how they infect or starve the souls of men, so they can but fill their own pockets with the shekels of the sanctuary, with gold chymically extracted out of these leaden priests.

There are a more wary sort, that can make a shift to escape the censure of the law, who are yet actuated by as strong a worldly love as these. They can match a daughter or an handmaid with a presentation, saying to their clerk, as Boaz to his kinsman, *At what time thou buyest the field, thou must buy it also at the hands of Ruth.*

Or if sufficient security be given for the resignation of it, to see how grateful the clerk will prove within that time, or to see whether by that time a son or daughter may not need it for a portion, it makes the matter a little the more safe, but never a whit the more honest. For considering the great importance of this matter, whosoever prefers consanguinity or affinity, acquaintance, or importunity of friends, before learning and piety, and aptness to teach, must needs appear to be actuated by a worldly spirit, and to bear the black brand of our apostle.

Alas! How rare is pure, sincere, ingenuous, judicious proceeding in this matter. How few pastors are married to their flocks, without the predominant mediation of friends, monies, importunity, good turns received, or expected, relation, or some such thing, which is alien to the true qualifications of a minister!

MEDITATION XVII.

Of Chaplains.

The employment of a chaplain is accounted honourable, by virtue of the relation that such

bear to princes, or peers, or persons of great estate or quality. But it seems to be more honourable, on the account of the relation that they bear to the great God, whose agents and messengers they are. For as the pastors and rectors of diocesses and parishes are accounted God's ambassadors, even by Scripture authority; so these domestics may well be accounted his *nuncios* or envoys, and their duty, no doubt, is to deliver errands from God, to them that are called gods, but must die like men. And they seem to have a greater advantage, and a fairer opportunity of doing good, than their brethren.

If Timothy, who, for ought I can perceive, was no chaplain, was yet charged to charge the great and rich to be humble and religious; much more is it the duty of these, who may have the care of their prince or patron, when the bishop or the pastor cannot. And to be the instrument of converting one prince and his court, yea, or one peer and his family to the serious and diligent service of God, of how great honour and use would this be! Oh that all our chaplains would propound to themselves the prophet Nathan for their pattern; and his success in bringing David to repentance would be for their encouragement.

It is not fit indeed to be so clownish, as to say to princes, *Ye are wicked*; but yet it is fit enough to say, *Ye are the men*, with Nathan; and with Elijah, *ye are the troublers of Israel*. And the same Elihu says, *It is not fit to give flattering titles to men*. I would fain know of these men, if they do not charge their patrons, and warn them, who

shall; and where their blood will be required, if they die in their sins?

I hope there are many upright men in this relation in the world, who design not so much to live on their patrons, as that their patrons may live to God; to sanctify their tables, rather than to be fed at them.

But if there be any that prefer ease and secular advantage, before the discharge of a good conscience; that seek to be accepted of their patrons, more than to approve themselves to God, their great Master, the sacredness of their function will not excuse them from being lovers of the world.

What then shall we think of those, who because one puts into their mouths and purses, are silent, and say nothing, or to no purpose, in matters that ought to be spoken loud and often, plainly and frequently; and so for a bribe, betray the souls of them, whom they are entertained on purpose to preserve; or, as the text speaks, transgress for a morsel of bread; who stand by and see the sinful, sensual, proud, covetous, profane conversation of their patrons, and of their families and retinue, and never yet so much as once expostulate with them, as Eli, *Why do ye such things?* Nor softly whisper in their ears, *Nay, my brethren, do not so wickedly.* Such a chaplain was Amaziah, who prophesied at Bethel.

And what of those, who do plainly encourage their patrons to pride, idleness, excess, oppression, and to a formality and indifference in religion; persuading them, that so much strictness and ex-

actness does not become their quality; magnifying an half-faced devotion for perfect; and that for a very good deed, which they know is done by halves?

And what of those, who run into the same excess of riot, the same sensuality, it may be into the same profaneness too, for compliance sake, and to humour those on whom they have dependence?

Such a chaplain was the young Levite of Bethlehem-Judah, who, for a suit of apparel, and about twenty shilling a year, and his victuals, did not scruple any idolatry that his master Micah was given to, *Judges xvii.*

In any way to prefer self-entertainment or advancement, or the humouring, pleasuring, or gratifying of men, before the exercise of grace, the using of a good conscience, the reformation of sin, the promotion of godliness, and the advancement of the glory of God, is a symptom of a worldly mind; though it be found among pastors of congregations, or chaplains of families.

MEDITATION XVII.

Of judges and magistrates.

THE great Judge of the world has deputed here and there some among men, to be his vicegerents in the administration of justice. This certainly renders their employment very honourable, and he is a very bold and wicked man who dares contemn so much as the reflections of

the authority of God or the Majesty of Heaven, at what rebound soever. But as this relation renders them honourable, and a sort of gods, or sons of God; so it does engage them to the greatest purity and impartiality imaginable, lest they bring a reproach on their Lord, and the sons of Belial take occasion to invert the proverb, and say, *As are the servants, such is their master.* The truth is, they that are imitators of the divine purity, justice and goodness, are in a far better sense the sons of God, than they that only act in the world by his commission. For how far soever the inferior multitude are bound to obey them, it is evident that the God, whose pure eyes cannot endure to behold iniquity, does not farther own them for his, than as they act by his authority, that is, agreeably to his holy nature, and just laws. I wish it were generally looked on as a traiterous position against the Majesty of Heaven, that any man may act contrary to his nature and laws (which is a taking up arms against him) by his authority. Nay, the commission of these men is so far from patronizing any of their iniquity, that I doubt not but that they who pervert justice, and commit violence and cruelty in his name, shall be destroyed with a double destruction, and be twice condemned; once for being ungodly sons of men, and again, for being ungodly sons of God.

If a righteous king will hang a man who commits simple murder, he will not fail to hang and quarter him who commits murders and massacres, and produces his commission to justify the same.

Now among these grandees of the world, it may be suspected that there are many lovers of the world more than of God.

What else are all they, that either injuriously invade the subjects of other princes or rigorously rule over their own, forgetting that themselves have a Master in heaven?

They that prefer the gratification of their own lusts, the advancement of their own name, the enlargement of their dominions, or treasures, before truth, and charity, and the peace and welfare of the people committed to them, are of this breed.

They that abuse their authority, either in establishing iniquity by laws, (which is a setting of God's seal, the sacred sanction of a law, to a thing contrary to his own nature and word,) or ordaining severe and ruining penalties against light offences, (which is a prostituting the authority of Heaven,) or by making laws on purpose to make men offenders, nor caring whether they be broken or kept, so themselves may but have either the pleasure or profit of exacting the penalty; which is utterly unlike the government of God, all whose restraints and threatenings do principally aim at the good and happiness of his creatures, belong to this head.

And what else are all they that accept the persons of men in judgment, or in the execution of laws; that set justice to sale; that either defer or destroy the cause of the poor, because he is poor; or acquit the guilty, because he is rich, because they fear him, or love him, or are akin to him? Is not this to prefer worldly respects

and self-interest before righteousness, and the world before God? Let God himself be heard speaking to these men, who are so kind to Benhadad, because he is their brother, forsooth; **I Kings xx. 42.** *Because thou hast let go out of thy hands a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, &c.*

And what else are they, who in the execution of justice, are influenced more by private displeasure, than zeal for God or righteousness; who, under the cloak of law, do gratify their own sentiment, and, like justice Jehu, revenge their own quarrel, and serve their own malicious inclinations, whilst they pretend to be zealous for the law, or for the Lord?

MEDITATION XIX.

Concerning arbitrators, electors and jurors.

WHEN I consider the angry and malicious natures of men, who are so apt to take offence at every small matter, and so desirous to be revenged on the offender; and the latitude of the law, that makes so many things actionable, and the incredible multitude of men learned in the law, or learners of the law, many of whom are very ready to foment discontents, and promote trivial suits; together with the sinful concomitants and fatal effects of going to law, I cannot but think the employment of arbitrators exceedingly necessary, and highly commendable; and I would commend it above all worldly business, (though pos-

sibly it may deserve a better name,) to persons of good educations and understandings, estates and leisure; who commonly squander away their time to no purpose, or to bad ones, because, forsooth, they have nothing to do. In good earnest, I think that a studiousness to prevent or compose differences among neighbours, a tender care to preserve or restore peace and charity, and good will among men, and wise endeavours to prevent or rescind the expence of estates in law, does argue a mind divinely disposed, a truly noble and generous temper, and is an employment near of kin to the errand of the Son of God; *On earth peace, &c.*

And because it is a thing so excellent in its own nature, and commonly attended with so great difficulties, dangers and obloquies, it hath pleased the great Lover of mankind, the Arbitrator between God and man, to give us the greatest encouragement to it; *Matt. v. Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God.* And well they may, for he is the *God of peace*, and his name is *Love*.

But alas! With how little purity and integrity is this excellent employment managed; what invasions has the worldly spirit made on it, and what defilements has it mingled with it!

The good king of Judah, I recollect, bade his judges remember, *That they were to judge for God, and not for man*, 2 Chron. xix. 6. But I doubt our arbitrators, many of them, are of a different party, and arbitrate for man, and not for God; I mean, either for themselves or for their friend, and not for truth and righteousness.

Are not they lovers of the world more than of God, who suffer justice to be perverted, and consent to the crushing and oppressing of a righteous cause, merely to gratify the humour or importunity, or to conciliate or maintain the favour or friendship of the person that chooses them? Are not they very gross, who invert Moses, as forsaking Israel, and favouring Egypt, as having an eye to the recompence of reward? He was a corrupt judge, who, though he received none, yet looked that money should have been given him of Paul. And how remote soever this may be from popular observation, yet God, who takes notice of the hearts of men, does discern this very covetous cast of the eye; and if the respect to the recompence weigh down the respect to righteousness, he will sentence this Balaam for a worldly arbitrator, for having so much as a mind to be unrighteous, though, perhaps, he cannot or dare not show it.

How many of this breed there are I know not. I suppose few or none will confess it; but I fear the God who judges impartially will find many. And the number of those that live on this trade, and get as much by making peace as other men do by managing suits, does too plainly declare before men that there are too many.

But besides these, I have observed many, who, not sincerely regarding the merits of the cause, improve all the cunning and dexterous skill that they have, in the niceties of law, to baffle or ravel, or invalidate the just cause of their opponent; and, without any respect to right or wrong, account it their honour to stand up stiffly for the

person that chose them, and to speak and wrangle much in his behalf, merely that they may get the name of faithful arbitrators, and may be thought not to lose the day, without taking much pains to get it. Nay, some I have known so faithful, forsooth, to the person that chose them, that they suffer themselves to be bound up, and engaged not to yield a jot further than he shall give them leave, though righteousness, or the reason of the thing require ever so much. Rare faithfulness to their friend indeed, but shameful unfaithfulness to God and their own consciences! He that accepts of the office of an arbitrator on these terms, beforehand laid down, betrays a great meanness and vanity of mind; and he that acts by these terms afterwards, betrays a great deal of cowardice and falsity.

It seems not very improper to this head, to think a little of electors, who, by their votes and suffrages, are concerned to choose officers, magistrates, members of parliament, or the like. For these electors are a kind of arbitrators, determining the case between competitors.

That this is a business of great importance all will confess, as one on which the right observation of laws, and the administration of justice and judgment, and consequently the welfare of a kingdom, does much depend.

To have no regard to the qualifications of the person to be elected, but to vote at a venture; to vote for him who speaks first, or comes next, without any regard to his fitness for counsel or business, is a point of great folly.

To be led by the predominant consideration of relation or dependance, or to be influenced by humour or the pleasure of other men, or by a respect to private thanks or rewards, or entertainments, not regarding the just qualifications of a person fit to manage such employment, seems to add baseness to the folly, and argues a mind preferring private consideration before the public good, that is, the world before God.

Neither is slavish fear a less worldly principle. The poor heathens are to be pitied, who worship the devil for fear he should hurt them. But to advance men whom we suspect to be of a hurtful nature, into a capacity of hurting us, for fear of being hurt by them, is a nonsensical folly fit to be chastened.

If I should, under this head, take occasion to reflect on the generality of jurymen at assizes and sessions, it would make this meditation bulky and bitter; for all those who proceed not according to evidence, that act not from judgment and conscience, that knowingly favour the guilty, through foolish pity, base covetousness, worldly love, or slavish fear; or oppress the innocent, because he is poor, friendless, speechless, a stranger, or an enemy, do proclaim themselves to be lovers of the world, more than of God. And, O Lord, how loud is the cry! It reaches to the ends of the earth, and goes up to heaven.

MEDITATION XX.

Of landlords and tenants.

THE holy psalmist somewhere says, Ps. cxv. 16. *The heavens are the Lord's, but the earth hath he given to the children of men*; which is not to be understood according to the sense of the profane poet, *Jupiter in cælis, Cæsar regit omnia terris*, [Jove reigns in heaven, but Cæsar rules on earth,] as if God had thrown the earth out of his hands, and would take no more care of it, or had committed it wholly to the arbitrary government of men; for still it is true, *The earth is the Lord's*; and however he has granted the possession of it to men, yet himself keeps the property, and the rich are his tenants, and the poor his under-tenants. Now among those children of men to whom God is said to give the earth, some have so little a portion of it, that they may say with Him who was rich, but for our sakes became poor, that they have not where to lay their heads; or at best they can challenge no more of the earth for their's than where they may lay their dead bodies. But yet in this unequal distribution there is no iniquity; for though God, in dividing the earth among men, do not proceed by the law of gavelkind, yet he has made provision for his poor under-tenants, having charged his landed tenants, (whom we more improperly call landlords,) to see that they be not starved, nor so much as oppressed. It is true and proper speaking to say, that God has ap-

pointed the rich, all the rich, to be overseers of the poor, and has declared that he accounts them his enemies who are not their friends.

If any of you have this world's good, and see his brother have need, and shut up his bowels against him, how dwelleth the love of God in that man? 1 *John* iii. 17. God has not left it at the liberty of the rich whether they will administer to the poor or not, but has as much obliged them to charity towards them as to justice towards one another. And it is not to be doubted but that the poor have as good a right to some part of our estates, as we have to the rest; not to take it by theft, but to ask it of charity. And, for aught I know, this may be one principal reason of that saying of our Saviour's, (call it prophesy or promise,) *The poor ye have always with you*, that there may be an opportunity for the exercising of charity, and that they who have mammon may not want a way of doing good with it, and making themselves friends of it. If it be so, that the first worldly blessing is to be rich, I think the next is that there are poor about us, to share our riches.

The noblest use that can be made of riches is to give them away, (according to that golden sentence that it seems our Saviour was often wont to use, *Beatius est dare quam accipere*,) [It is more blessed to give than to receive;] and I am sure the most proper objects of giving are those who have little or nothing of their own.

But who can persuade the mammonists of this world that this is good divinity? Alas, how few live and act as if they believed it! Oh wretched

and barbarous guardians, who, instead of putting clothes on the skin, pull off the skin from the flesh; and live in all manner of pleasure and wantonness, spending profusely on their lusts of playfulness, intemperance, or uncleanness; and in the mean time exact the money of their poor tenants, whereby these provisions may be made for the flesh.

How dwells the love of God in that man, whose hounds and horses, and it may be mistresses too, are fat and fair liking, and in the mean time his poor industrious tenants and their children, so nearly related to their landlord, are almost ready to perish for want of bread. The poor in general, as men, are nearer related to us by the law of nature, than dogs and horses; as Christians, they are still nearer akin to us; and as tenants, seem to be related to their landlords in a political capacity, and to be, as it were, of their family. For who can think otherwise, but that God, in distributing the kingdoms and lordships of the earth, intended that kings should take all their subjects to be their children, as to paternal care, and landlords should esteem their tenants as their ward, and constituent members of their family. In the distribution of the holy land, God gave no lot to Levi, whom yet he loved as well as any of the rest, intending that the Levites should be maintained at the charge of the respective tribes among whom they resided. It is partly thus in the distribution of the world; where God could easily have made provision of land for every man, and have made all the inhabitants of the earth freeholders; but he has

passed by one tribe, even all the poor of the earth, on purpose, as it seems, to employ the care and charity, and pity of their brethren about them. It is a reasonable maxim in law, *Cujus est lucrum, ejus est damnum*. That he who receives the gains, should bear the loss; according to the custom of the holy commonwealth, that he who bought the land should also charge himself with the widow, and be content to have Ruth for his wife. So should every man who inherits or purchases a lordship, consider with what stock or poor tenants it is charged, and take care that by some honest means or other they be maintained.

But how dwells the love of God in those landlords, who, never considering the charge that God has laid on them, nor the relation wherein their tenants stand to them, exact the utmost worth of the land, by their good wills allowing nothing for the labour and pains of the tenants, nor for their hazards nor losses neither. It is a prerogative competent to God only, to do what he will with his own. For all men are stewards, and ought to eye the will of God more than their own wills. It is true indeed, that every landlord may, yea, and ought to make the best of his own; but then it must be considered in what sense his lands are his own; (sure I am they are so his own, that he must give an account of the management of them to a higher Landlord;) and it must be considered what it is to make the best of one's own. He makes the best of his estate, not who improves it and racks it to the utmost penny; not he who studiously adds land to land and lordship to lordship; not he who lays up

goods and monies for many years; but he who puts his estate to the best use, and improves it to the best ends; who does most glorify God with his substance; who loves to give rather than to receive. Go now, gentlemen, and in God's name make the best of your own.

And how dwells the love of God in those landlords, who, purchasing or inheriting open lordships, (where from generation to generation many poor families, partly by their labour, and partly by their right to commons, have lived comfortably,) do inclose them to their own proper use, without any just respect to the meaner sort, who have some small interest there, or any charitable respect to the poorest of all; and so drive those away from them, whom Christ has foretold they should always have with them. Job speaks somewhat rhetorically of the firstborn of the poor, whom he would have disdained to have set with the dogs of his flock; that is, he would not have them his shepherds. But these men, by a barbarous metamorphosis, turn the poor of the land into dogs of the flock, a shepherd and his dog supplying the place and employment of many families. It was a grievous complaint when they cried,

— *Jam seges est ubi Troja fuit,*

[Where Troy once flourished husbandmen may sow.]

The complaint is as just, though the poetry be not so good,

— *Jam canis est ubi seges erat,*

[Yet hounds now hunt, where crops were wont to grow.]

And how dwells the love of God in those landlords, who, when by their severe usage they have made their industrious tenants poor, or when some extraordinary hand of God hath touched them, and made them incapable of punctual payment, presently cry, "Let all that they have be sold, and payment made; or cast the insufficient tenant into prison, let him not come out thence till he have paid the utmost farthing; and let his wife and children seek their bread in desolate places, or starve the while." Good God, thou hast not dealt so with prodigal mankind, who have spent their primitive substance and stock in riotous living, and by their own fault reduced themselves to husks, but hast provided a ransom for them, and put a fresh stock into their hands to trade with. And what mercy can he expect, who shows no mercy to his fellow-servant? *He shall have judgment without mercy, &c.*

But on the other hand, as landlords do frequently offend through pride, luxury, covetousness, or cruelty; so the tenants, through idleness and knavery, do no less demonstrate themselves to be lovers of the world more than of God. It seems by the prophet Malachi, that God himself may be robbed. Sure I am, landlords are often defrauded; and many by the idleness and carelessness of their tenants in not paying their rents, or by the greediness and knavery of their tenants in impoverishing and dilapidating their lands and

houses, are very much wronged, and perhaps, by many such abuses, straitened and made less capable of paying their debts, keeping hospitality, or befriending their other industrious tenants who deserve well. For the poor to oppress the rich is not so usual, but it is as certain a symptom of a worldly mind, as for the rich to oppress the poor.

MEDITATION XXI.

Of tradesmen.

SOME are of opinion concerning trades, as the apostle speaks concerning the law, 1 Tim. i. 8. *That they are all good, if a man use them lawfully*; which, for aught I know, (if it be meant of trades that are allowed by law, concerning which the law has annexed rules, and to which the law has annexed privileges,) is very true; but yet these two things must be confessed, That all trades are not alike safe and laudable; nor may every age and temper be committed to any trade indifferently.

Tradesmen are a very substantial and useful part of a nation; and their way of living seems preferable to the living of gentlemen or husbandmen, as requiring more industry than the former, and more ingenuity than the latter. The all-wise God doth instruct them to discretion. Bezaleel and Aholiab did receive the spirit of architecture from him, as well as Saul the spirit of government. But yet, as if they were not beholden to him, how great a part of them do prefer the world, that great anti-deity, before him. So do

all they who make the getting of wealth, and the raising of themselves, or their friends or children, to a singular and unwieldy greatness, the main and highest end of all their occupations; little or nothing respecting charity to the poor, or the good of the public.

And so do they, who, by making false or un-serviceable wares, put a cheat on mankind, and elude the necessities of the world, instead of relieving them. What can be more directly a preferring of private gain before the public good?

And so do they, who, by lying or equivocating, by dark shops, or false weights or measures, or by a yea and nay simplicity, impose on the credulous or the ignorant; who seek to buy cheap by unjust disparagement, or sell dear by undue commendation.

So do they, who take apprentices, with promise to instruct them in their mystery, and on terms that may well challenge it, and yet through ignorance, or idleness, or jealousy, do not do it, or do it by halves; or else, through covetousness, employ them and spend their time in services and offices alien to their vocation; so that, at the end of seven years apprenticeship, instead of being skilful enough to set up a trade, they only understand how to dress a horse, or tend a child better than they did at first.

And indeed all those tradesmen are lovers of the world more than of God, who do not subordinate their trading to the glory of God, gain to honesty, and their private enriching to the public weal; who are more solicitous to secure and advance their worldly callings than *to make their*

calling and election sure; and take more pains to work out their fortunes than their salvation.

MEDITATION XXII.

Of inn-keepers.

I have no mind to consider the popular objections that are made against the very employment of taverners and inn-keepers. For although perhaps it is not proper to call it a trade, yet the employment seems to be ancient, and, as the world goes, is necessary, and rightly managed, may be honest enough. The example of Rahab, who seems to have kept an house of entertainment in Jericho, a long time ago, justifies the antiquity of this employment; though I confess the example of Rahab the harlot, does not add much credit to it. If any body be so witty, as to say the Hebrew word *Zonah*, and the Greek word *πόρνη*, do signify an hostess, as well as an harlot; I will not from thence infer, that an hostess and an harlot are *synonoma*, and that therefore every hostess is an harlot. Yet this confusion of the signification of words is apt to engender a foul suspicion in men, and therefore I think for their credit should not be much talked of. But if we allow the antiquity of this employment, I cannot see what considerable service it will do them; for it seems that harlotry, and many other bad things that I could name, are as old as it.

But be it ancient or new, it is now become necessary in several respects; though perhaps not

so necessary in some others, as the inn-keepers would have it, and many guests do make it. I say it is become necessary, as men are now. For in the primitive and purer ages of the world, the kind and hospitable temper of men seems to have superseded this employment, and to have well supplied the want of it. It is not likely, may some think, there were any inn-keepers on the road, when Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, travelled from one nation and kingdom to another, and no man wronged them, *Ps. cv. 14*. Nor any public house in Gibeon, a great city of Benjamin, when the Levite and his concubine had like to have lain in the streets for want of lodging. But yet there might be for all that; and for aught I know, those properly hired inns where Jacob's sons lodged, when they were fain to go as far as Egypt to market; and Moses, when he travelled to be their deliverer out of the same Egypt. But be this matter as it will; however kind and hospitable the first ages of the world may be supposed to have been, and these last ages are commanded to be, *Heb. xiii. 2*. we find it necessary now, to as many as go abroad, and cannot carry their houses and provisions along with them, that there be appointed places of entertainment, where they may buy the things which otherwise they must want; and hire lodging, or else lie out of doors.

I confess I do not well know, what, in the sense of this law, is called a laudable vocation; but I doubt not but that this employment, abstracted from all the ill manners of men that have corrupted it, is, in its own nature, warrantable and

honest. The lusts of men have mingled themselves with the best and purest employments on earth, no wonder then if they have brought a blame on this. The blame indeed is more general in this than in others, but yet it is to be hoped not universal neither. For if we except these that follow, and such like, for lovers of the world more than of God, the rest may pass for current Christians. I mean,

Such as are inn-keepers out of covetousness, who have other estates, or convenient ways to maintain themselves and their families comfortably, and yet will adventure to live in an employment so full of snares and temptations to sins, both of omission and commission. This seems to conclude a greater zeal for earth, than heaven.

Such as are inn-keepers out of luxury and intemperance; not so much to accommodate the necessities of other men, as to pamper their own lusts; who live in that way, merely because they have made it their element, and must be inn-keepers, to keep themselves out of inns. These make not provisions for the necessities of nature, but for the flesh, to fulfil it in the lusts thereof.

Such as are inn-keepers out of mere idleness; preferring a life of temptations and snares, before a life of pains and labour; venturing their salvation, to save their bones.

Such as over-value their wares, and observe no just proportion between the worth of the thing, and their own gain; who care not how much they get for how little.

Such as over-reckon their guests, demanding money of them for that which they never had, only because they think that they cannot tell but that they had it.

Such as draw in and inveigle men to spend their money, preferring their own gain before their neighbour's time, or business, or family; or if they do not draw them in, yet draw them on, by one wile or other, to spend more money, or consume more time than they ought or would. Is this to love one's neighbour as one's self?

Such as care not to what excess or intemperance they serve their guests, but will either put their bottle to their noses, or will never withhold it though they have drunk ever so long, or so largely, while they see the shot will be paid; that add fuel, when they see that men are already on fire.

Who make no difference between day and night, nor between one day and another.

Such as either seek to please their guests by profane and filthy speaking, or are afraid to displease them by offering any restraint or reproof. To sit still, and be content to see God's good creatures abused, and man, the best of them, abusing himself, and turning himself into a block or a beast; to be content to hear God's holy name profaned and blasphemed without reproof or regret; and all this to make up a reckoning, will make up a bad reckoning at the last.

Such hosts as will find men, women into the bargain, if they will but pay well for their drink.

Such hostesses as set themselves to sale, together with their liquors; or by their wanton behaviours inveigle the silly to mispend their time or money.

Such as cheat the king or his commissioners of what they ought to pay for, by the same law whereby they enjoy any thing.

In a word, all such victuallers, inn-keepers, ale-house-keepers, who prefer gain before godliness, worldly advantage before the public peace, or the peace of their consciences; who will expose the health of their bodies, the salvation of their souls, the order of their families, to live idly, gainfully, luxuriously, are predominant lovers of world, and the love of the Father is not in them. Go now, landlords and landladies, and comfort yourselves in the antiquity, necessity and lawfulness of your employment.

MEDITATION XXIII.

Of beggars.

AT the first naming of this sort of people, it will be expected by some, that I should give them all a pass, and pack them away to their own place. But I am not certain that one and the same place is assigned to them all, and therefore it is best to consider awhile of them.

I think there is a text somewhere speaking to this purpose, as if it forbade any beggar to be in Israel. And I do well remember there is another, that foretels that the poor shall never cease

out of the land. I think they may well be reconciled. There shall always be persons so poor as to need to be provided for, and yet there ought to be such provisions made for them that they shall not beg; so that it is rather the sin of the rich than of the poor, that there are any beggars. There seems to be an express law to preserve people from begging; but I know no law or reason that forbids people to beg who cannot otherwise live.

I know no promise that secures a righteous man from being reduced to a state of beggary, and indeed no substantial reason that will defend him; he may as well beg as be banished, diseased, martyred. But what shall we say to the psalmist, who tells us, *He never saw the seed of the righteous begging their bread*, Ps. xxxvii. 25.

I remember I once urged this text to a beggar woman at my own door, finding her to discourse understandingly and Christianly, and to pretend to religion; who, premising a sigh, answered me very readily, "True, sir, the psalmist does say so; but yet we know there was a time when he himself was forced to beg his bread;" and thereon quoted the history of David's begging the shew-bread of Abimelech.

This answer I laid to heart, and it made me kind to her at that time, and to think more charitably of that whole tribe of mankind ever since. For it is not only true that David begged his bread at that time, but it seems, as far as I can compute, that some years of his life were led in a more genteel kind of beggary. And I find those divines who urge the promises of the law

to preserve the righteous from beggary, and will have David's experience in this psalm to be accommodated to all ages, are yet fain to come off and tell us, "That all these temporal promises are to be understood, *cum exceptione castigationis et crucis*, saving to God the prerogative of correcting and chastening his people, how and when he pleases." For whatever David saw in his days, the apostle tells us of many in other days, *of whom the world was not worthy*, who were yet treated as if they were not worthy to live in the world. And we see them in our days reduced to a necessity of living on their neighbours, and asking relief too. That these are poor, may not be their own fault, but their Maker's pleasure. That they ask relief, is the fault of others, who will not relieve them without asking. And as for the formality of begging, which seems to be most shameful, and of worst report, I do not see but that it is possible for a good man to be reduced to this also. The blind and the lame who begged by the way-side, and at the gate of the temple, had some of them so much faith as to be healed. And if we could take a view of the inhabitants of Abraham's bosom, among the rest, we should find poor Lazarus as formal a beggar as could be imagined, translated thither from the rich man's gates. How would such a sight make us wonder and say, with them in the text, *Is not this he who sat at the way-side, and lay at the gates begging?*

The wisest of men tells us, Eccl. ix. 11. *That wise men sometimes want bread, and men of understanding are sometimes poor.*

It is accounted a shame for men to beg, but I think it is a greater shame to suffer them; and this shame lights either on the rich who do not relieve them, or the magistrates who do not restrain them, if they are relieved. The law of England has provided for all sorts of poor, either to employ the able or to relieve the impotent; and yet, to the shame of the executioners of the laws, we see that the hedges and highways are not compelled to keep in.

It is certainly a great reproach to the Christian world, and especially to our nation, that there are any itinerant and errant beggars found among us.

All which will not excuse the able who can work, nor the impotent who are by law provided for in any tolerable manner, from being akin to him whose character it is, that he compasses the world about, and, like an idle busy-body, continually walks to and fro therein.

Much less will it excuse that graceless generation, the worst of mankind, who beget children only to lay them at other men's doors; I mean, who take no care to educate their children in any commendable way of living, nor put them to any good work or business; but as soon as they are a little reared, as if they were heirs of the universe, send them forth to seek their fortunes, and to lay hold on that which comes next to them, as if it were their own.

MEDITATION XXIV.

Of wagers.

IN this licentious age, wherein men generally act hand-over-hand, and live *ex-tempore*, not troubling their consciences with any cases, nor reducing their actions to any considerations, the practice of laying wagers is grown very familiar to almost all sorts of men. I will not absolutely, without exception, condemn every wager whatever. For some are so small, and the winning or losing of them is of so little regard, the persons who lay them are so unconcerned, and free from fear or covetousness, and the end of them so innocent, as to determine some little doubtful truth, or to give a little life and vigour to some honest harmless achievement, and perhaps it is so seldom too, that there seems to be no danger arising therefrom.

But without controversy, the common and customary practice of wagering is very unjustifiable, and ought, with the rest of the symptoms of a worldly mind, to be exploded.

Such a symptom I take all wagering to be, that proceeds from a covetous desire of getting that which is another man's, or is accompanied with a vexatious fear of losing our own. For covetousness and distracting carefulness are ever bad, and that cannot be very good that is the proper, direct, efficient cause of them. If it be said, that in so saying, I condemn all wagers without exception, even the smallest, as being all at-

tended with some degree or other of covetousness, I think it is very falsely objected; for I know some men, now and then, lay some small wager, which they are very indifferent whether they win or lose, nay, which they had rather lose than win.

Such a symptom are all such wagers as are laid for the abetting and encouraging of scandalous or suspicious actions or sports. For if it be unseemly, and of ill report to men to run races naked, or women next to it; to abet the same by wagers, cannot be safe or seemly.

And such a symptom are all such wagers as impoverish or weaken him who lays them, if he lose, or his adversary if he win. It is a very uncomfortable way of coming to poverty, by losing great wagers; and indeed it is a sorry, paltry way of getting riches, to get them by winning. Abraham scorned a far more genteel way of enriching himself than this, by the spoil of his conquered enemies, that it might not be said, that the king of Sodom had made Abraham rich.

And such a symptom are all such bold wagers that are laid concerning events that are purely in the hand of God, no room being left for second causes to interpose, and make a human probability or improbability. This looks like a profane piece of presumption. For how can mortal man intermeddle with the counsels of the great God, to stint, limit, engage or excuse them, and be innocent? But I have known wagers also laid merely instead of arguments, when men have had nothing to say in defence of their cause; and others laid concerning things which can never be

proved or determined. And oftentimes they who are so forward to lay wagers, will not venture to pitch on a certain judge who may determine whether they win or lose. These also are symptoms like the former, only somewhat worse. For besides the impiety and impertinency, they argue a great degree of shameful folly.

MEDITATION XXV.

Of Gamesters.

I THINK it is generally concluded, that exercise is expedient, and indeed necessary for the health of the body. Physicians contend for the agreeableness of some recreations in particular to some constitutions, and so they allot ringing to some, shooting to others, hunting to others, and bowling to others. I had rather believe these artists than dispute with them; though it seems that the end of all these recreations may be attained as well by riding or walking. I shall esteem him a wise and temperate man, who is induced to these recreations by no other consideration but that of health. But I fear there are few such.

Recreations are also said to be needful to the relief of the mind, which I will not deny. And yet, so far as I can apprehend, the variety of business is the best recreation, and does as effectually relieve the mind as any sports whatever. For my own part, I would desire no better recreation of mind than to go from one business to another, that should be within my call and com-

pass; and then seasonably to lay down both the one and the other on my pillow. But whatever may be said in vindication of some sports, there are certainly many others which cannot be justified; yea, and the gamesters will be found lovers of the world more than of the Father.

Such gamesters are they, who follow sports in their own nature unlawful, being against the rules of justice, temperance, or modesty.

And such are they who follow sports in themselves lawful, unlawfully; that is, unrighteously, intemperately, or unseasonably. I reckon that they follow sports unrighteously, who make a calling of gaming, and recreation their business, thereby endeavouring to get other men's estates, or venturing to lose their own. The nature of commutative justice requires, that when I receive that which is another man's, I part with something of my own which is equivalent, and bears some due proportion to it. Hereby the gains of wagers and gaming comes to be ranked among other filthy lucre, and may be matched with the price of a dog, or the hire of a harlot.

And here, by the way, I cannot but stop a little, and complain of the carelessness and cruelty of those parents and masters, who instruct, or encourage, or so much as allow their children, servants or scholars, to play for money. Is not covetousness a sufficient blemish to our old age, but we must be inured to it in our youth? Is it not cruelty to instruct children to cheat and wrong one another, before they be in a capacity to make restitution? Is the love of money the root of all evil, and yet we take so much care to

plant it, and that in the minds of those whom we pretend to preserve from evil? It cannot easily be computed how much idle, covetous, contentious, cozening conversation is ushered into the world by this kind of education; nor how many mischievous consequences there are of it. Oh that all who pretend to love the Father, would diligently watch against the introduction of the love of the world into the hearts of their children by this means!

But besides those gamesters who unrighteously get or spend estates by gaming, there are others, *lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God*, who spend their time excessively in sports, pleasurably passing away their time, which, without pastimes, hastens away apace; and which, when it is past, cannot be called back, though one would give all the substance of his house to retrieve it. I know it is unjust to determine the same measure of time for sports to all men; and I think it is unsafe to determine an exact measure to any man. But every man's own conscience, if he examine it, can tell him whether he be a lover of pleasure more than of God; whether he lives in pleasure; whether he spends his time, either more largely or more gladly, in sports, or in devotion, or in good business, or which he delights in most. It seems the philosopher speaks in anger, who says, *Indignus est humano nomine qui vel unum diem velit esse in voluptibus*, That he does not deserve the name of a man who is content to spend one day in pleasures. But if he was in earnest, as he seems to have been, I think it is highly reasonable that

the professors of Christianity should be as serious and abstemious as any heathen philosopher of them all; and rather reduce the *unum diem*, [one day,] into *unam horam*, [one hour,] than enlarge their liberty. I wonder exceedingly what most of our gentlemen, and many of our scholars, think of themselves, (if ever they think of themselves,) and what opinion they have of their own temper and inclination; who, from week to week, spend more than a moiety of their days in sports and recreations, in needless visits, impertinent conversations, and either in doing ill or doing nothing, or doing that which is nothing to their purpose, nothing serving to their general or special calling. They cannot imagine, surely, that by saying a prayer, or reading a chapter in the morning, they have purchased all the rest of the day to their own use; as the Jews got the remainder of the fields, and of the flocks, by offering up the first fruits, and the first born; or that by beginning in the spirit, they have obtained a licence to go on, and end in the flesh. One would think that a Christian preacher should make as much conscience of his time as a heathen painter, and allow *Nulla dies sine linea*, No day without a line, to be a good motto. It is certainly a weak argument, that because men have good estates, and need not work nor trade to maintain themselves, that therefore God requires no business at all of them, but that their time is their own. And as for those who are in a clerical capacity, methinks the children of this world, (who act at a more industrious rate,) should shame the children of light, or the lights of the world, (let them call themselves by what

name they please,) out of that silly fancy, that because they have got a little learning they need study no more; or because they can make a sermon in one day in the week, and preach it on another, that therefore the other five are their own to play with.

Among the worldly gamesters, the unseasonable make up as great a number, as the unrighteous or intemperate. I reckon those unseasonable gamesters, who purloin from the Lord's day, to bestow in sports and recreations. I will not enter into the controversy about the morality of the Sabbath, nor the certain right of succession that the Lord's day hath to the holy rest of the Seventh day; but I do believe that the conscience of a good man is the best casuist in this matter. And that every such man in the world doth think it reasonable to appropriate some certain time to the more immediate and solemn worship of God; and that no such man will grudge a seventh part of his time to so good a Master, who gives him all the rest; and that there are many such men, who are so far from grudging God one day in a week, that they had rather every day in the week, and every week in the year, and every year of their lives, could be directly spent in the service of that God to whom they owe all they have, and in communion with whom, (and therein I place the true celebration of a Sabbath,) their true and proper happiness doth consist. And I am of opinion, with Mr. Hales, and many other good men, that "religion doth prosper or decay in church, family, or single soul, proportion-

ably as the Christian Sabbath is observed or neglected."

It seems that there are some pleasures allowed us in general, which are therefore called *our own*, Isa. lviii. 13. which yet we are required to refrain from on God's holy day. And I see no reason he has to complain for want of recreation on the Sabbath, to whom the Sabbath itself is the greatest recreation; which I pray God it may be to all who pretend to a predominant love of the Father.

As for those conscientious sensualists, who use sports on the Lord's day to prove that they are no Jews; the end may be good, possibly, but the method that they take, will, I doubt, indifferently serve to prove, that they are no good Christians neither.

Besides these, there are other worldly gamblers who indulge themselves in sports and pleasures, in a time of public calamity or danger; whom the prophet Amos describes, (*Amos*, vi. 1—6.) and God threatens above all sorts of men that I read of, except those who blaspheme the Holy Ghost, saying, *That their iniquity shall not be purged from them till they die*, Isa. xxii. 14. in short, it is the character of true Israelites, that they cannot make merry when Jerusalem is oppressed, *Psal.* cxxxvii. and by the rule of contraries, it is a symptom of a sensualist to nourish himself in a day of slaughter.

MEDITATION XXVI.

Of debtors.

SIN is properly a debt; but to be in debt, is not properly a sin. If it were, what consolation could be administered to them who were born in debt, and continue therein sore against their wills; to them who are engaged therein merely by the providence of God, or reduced thereunto by the injustice or oppression of men? But yet to be much in debt, and that inextricably, is a very great calamity, and especially burdensome to a just and ingenuous mind; and yet more especially, if contracted by any fault or folly of his own. For if to lose estates, and lay down life itself on a public or charitable account, be accounted generous and virtuous; to run into debt on such account, ought not surely to be esteemed scandalous.

Solomon somewhere tells us, *That the borrower is servant to the lender.* And indeed if there were no more in it, but this loss of liberty, it would make that condition troublesome and uneasy. But, alas, it is attended with many other mischiefs and dangers, which still enhance the calamity. The precept therefore, *of owing no man any thing*, Rom. xiii. 8. is given us in much mercy, and God does therein consult our ease, safety and quiet; as by commanding us to be chaste and temperate, and righteous, he does consult our health and credit. There are two commands in the text, *To owe no man any thing, and to love*

all men always. The former seems a very hard commandment to the poor, and it is almost impossible for them to perform it. (*Juvel idem qui jubet!*) [Oh that he who commanded it would help!] The latter is seldom, I doubt, performed by the rich; whose riches, for the most part, make them proud, disdainful, oppressive and covetous. The performance of the former seems to depend on the performance of the latter. For how is it possible that the poor should be out of debt, if the rich be not kind and charitable? But if all men did love their neighbours as themselves, then it were easy to conceive that no man need owe any thing to any. What then, does God command men to do impossibilities? Does he withhold straw, and yet command his servants to make brick? Does he send men naked into the world, and leave them destitute of all things, even of strength itself, and yet charge them neither to beg nor borrow, but to starve? No, this cannot be. We must therefore relax the seeming severity of this command, by some favourable interpretation, and say, we must not wilfully and needlessly contract debts, nor carelessly and unjustly continue in them. It is neither true nor charitable arguing, to conclude, that any man is unjust, because he is insufficient; no more than it was in the Egyptian tyrant, who concluded the poor people were idle, because they did not give in the wonted tale of bricks, when the straw was denied them. As there may be great charity, where there is but a mite, or possibly nothing at all given; so there may be true righteousness, where nothing is paid. And it becomes us to

imitate the gracious nature of God, who accepteth men for charitable, *In whom he findeth a willing mind, according to what they have, and not according to what they have not, 2 Cor. viii. 12.* And for righteous, according to what they can do, and not according to what they cannot. The consideration of the great debt, which we all, even the most solvent of the sons of men, owe to the Almighty God, should make us favourable both in punishing and censuring those who are indebted to us; and our short-sightedness and fallibility should make us take heed we do not prove ourselves uncharitable, whilst we so liberally condemn other people for unrighteous.

But yet there is a contracting of, and continuing in debt, which is very unrighteous, and a symptom of a worldly mind. Such is that, when men by riotous, idle or extravagant living, spend their own estates, and reduce themselves to a necessity of being beholden to other men's. If it be unskilfulness, unadvisedness, weakness or oversight, it is uneasy to be borne, and somewhat shameful to be imputed. But I dare not say it is wicked, because I do not know that any man is bound in conscience to be unsurprizably and indefeatably cunning in the management of any secular affairs, no, though his education have been in it.

Such is that, when men see the languishing of their trades or estates, and that they are no longer able to bear the weight of their expenses, and yet will rather choose to supply those expenses out of other men's estates, than they will retrench them. Nay, for aught I know, charity

itself (commonly so called) may be to blame here; for paying to another man what is his, ought to take place of giving away one's own.

Such is that, much more, when men make other men's estates maintain their lusts, their unnecessary pomp and grandeur of living, their unwieldy purchases or portions, or any thing superfluous.

Such is that, when men either unnecessarily delay to pay their debts, if they be demanded; or do not make satisfaction to their ability for any loss really sustained, if it be required by the creditor, which, according to the reverend bishop Juel*, is the only allowable interest.

Such is that, when men cast about, and seek ways to defeat the creditor; or will so much as make use of any trick or nicety in law, to avoid the payment of a just and honest debt. Nay, such is that, when men could wish with themselves, that they could by any plausible means defeat him. Nay, if they do not with as much cheerfulness, if their circumstances do capacitate them, pay what they have borrowed, as they borrowed what they needed, they cannot escape the blemish of covetousness, injustice, or a predominant love of the world.

MEDITATION XXVII.

Of creditors.

It hath pleased the wise Governor of the world so to order it that no one man in the world

* (His name is generally spelt *Jewel* now, although it be *Juellus* in Latin. It is spelt *Jewel*, p. 332, Shaw.)

should be furnished with all things; but that all men should, in some thing or other, some time or other, stand in need of the assistance of their neighbours. The greatest kings are sometimes forced to borrow auxiliaries, and the wisest to ask counsel of their friends. God will not have the head to say, so much as to the feet, *I have no need of you.* Whether it be by a sense of their own insufficiency, to maintain humility in every man, or by a sense of the necessities of mankind, to exercise charity and benevolence in all men, I know not; but so it is, that all the members of the creation, as well as of the body, mutually need the help of one another. And I doubt not but that it is a moral duty for all men to be ready to lend their assistance, to serve a good end, as far as their capacity will permit. For so commanded Love itself; *From him that will borrow of thee, turn thou not away.* There are many people of this middle-size in the world, who are not so rich as to give away; but yet they are well able to lend, at least small sums, for a small time. This to do, I reckon, is a great piece of charity, and the most considerable method, that a mean and inconsiderable man can use. It is almost like the miraculous feeding of thousands with a few loaves, which was our Saviour's charity, where the stock was laid out, and yet was not lost, nor so much as diminished. Money can do that without a miracle successively, which these loaves of his by a miracle performed at once. Now I believe if men were persuaded that they should take up so many baskets full, and that their money should be multiplied as our Saviour's bread

was, they would try to work wonders with their money too. And I pray, who knows but that the merciful God, who loves mercy, may, by a special blessing of his own, increase money so laid out, and will requite those who lend to him; *For there is that scattereth, and yet increaseth.* I do not think it was one of the same fishes wherewith he fed the multitude, that afterwards returned to give him thanks, or make requital; but we know that he who only gave fish with a little bread to it, received fish again with money in the mouth of it. But suppose it should not please God to make any such advantageous restitution, the lender has no cause to complain; for besides his principal, he has this interest of having done good and relieved the necessity of his poor brethren. If I lend an hundred pounds, and at the year's end receive back my principal, and get some six pound debt of my own discharged into the bargain, do not I properly receive six per cent. for my money? When I lend to the poor, I pay part of a debt to them, and there is my interest.

Well, lending is a great piece of charity, plainly commanded, and highly commended in the holy Book. And I doubt not, but that there are many in the world now living, who, if they were called, would come out and say, it has been their greatest relief, and that they had begged, if it had not been for borrowing. In some respect it is an higher act of charity, than giving.

But yet there are a sort of creditors, who even in lending, do declare themselves to be lovers of the world, and not of the Father. So do they who lend out of pride and vain-glory, rather to

exhibit their own fulness, than relieve their brother's wants; as the Persian monarch feasted his subjects, *Esth.* i. 4. not out of charity to them, but to show the riches of his kingdom.

So do they who lend out of malice, to have an opportunity to reproach the debtor, or insult over him; like the counsel that Shemaiah seemed charitably to give Nehemiah, to secure himself in the temple; the design of which was not indeed the good and safety of that prince, but that the enemy might bring up an evil report against him, and reproach him. Or if afterwards they make it a matter of reproach, it comes all to one. Or if they make it a common pleasant table-talk to others, it swerves wonderfully from the command of our holy Law-giver, who charges us to be reserved in all our acts of charity, that the left hand, as near as it is, should not know what the right hand doeth.

So do they, who lend out of carnal cunning; the more easily to wind themselves into the estates of other men, and to get a footing there, from whence they are resolved, if possible, never to be removed. This is like the wickedness of Saul to David; giving him his daughter to wife, only that she might be a snare to him, *1 Sam.* xviii. 21. and that he might be decoyed to his ruin. Whether the psalmist alluded to this kind of policy among the Jews, or not, I know not; but this phrase fits it very well, *Psal.* cix. 11. *Let the extortioner catch all that he hath.*

And so do they who lend out of covetousness, not out of any charitable design to relieve others, but out of a covetous design to enrich them-

selves. They do indeed accidentally feed others, but the main intention is to multiply their own loaves. Whoever predominantly seeks himself, or his own private gain, in giving or lending, depraves the sacred nature of charity, whose lovely character it is, that she *seeketh not her own*, 1 Cor. xiii. 5. Yea, so tender is the delicate constitution of this grace, that it is violated by an evil eye, by hankerings, and expectations, and respect to reward, where no bonds nor covenant do intervene. Read the story of Balaam, and you would think he was a man very free from covetousness, who would not go without express leave; and when he was come to Balak, would not take any bribe or reward of him at all. And yet, where man can see nothing, God can behold faults; for under all this seeming contempt of the world, the Searcher of hearts charges him, *That his way was perverse before him*. And again, in Jude, ver. 11. *He ran greedily for reward*. And this now brings me to consider of that notorious sort of lenders, called usurers, concerning whom I must necessarily enlarge my meditation.

MEDITATION XXVIII.

Of usurers.

I HAVE often said, when I have been consulted, that I was not so well satisfied with the lawfulness of usury,* as to practise it; nor yet dare I

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absolutely condemn it, without any limitation, in all those who at any time venture on it. It has of late years (for I never heard any man plead for it out of antiquity) crept into the conversation and judgment too; (and I fear out of the former into the latter; for men usually set themselves to justify what they do, and love to do;) of so many reverend divines and professors of religion, otherwise not scandalous, that mere modesty, I think, keeps many men from meddling against *it*, lest they should appear to meddle against *them*, and condemn a just generation. But yet it lies so fully in my way, and there being a necessity that I must either step over it or remove it, I will prefer the interest of truth, before the authority and friendship of men; lest while I condemn the predominant lovers of the world, I should betray myself to be one. Not that it lies on my hands to state and determine the controversy about usury, but to show that usurers are lovers of the world more than of the Father. If all should happen to be found such, it is their fault, and not mine; and, possibly, by the blessing of God, the discovery may tend to the cure.

Controversy about usury, did I call it? And, indeed, I cannot but wonder what has made it a controversy. I doubt we must give the same account of the origin of the controversy, as the apostle James does of wars and fightings in general, that *it comes from the lusts of men*. The

use of money, when that sum exceeds the rate established by law. Or,

Usury is an unlawful contract on the loan of money, to receive the same again, with exorbitant interest.

want of conscience makes the case of conscience. For God and his whole church seem to have stated this matter as fully and plainly as any other thing whatever, and I cannot find that till within these hundred years, or thereabouts, any body appeared openly in defence of it, or dared go about to oppose the authority of God and men, of Scriptures, councils, and fathers in this matter. So that although usury be a very old sin, yet the defence of it seems to be a very new one. Usury is chiefly condemned by authorities, and chiefly defended by arguments. I will chiefly insist therefore on those two heads, and then, in the last place, which is properly my business, determine the worldly usurer.

I know there are many arguments brought by philosophers, politicians and divines against usury. But I do not see that there is any need of the weak props of human reason to support divine authority. When God speaks, he speaks reason, whether we comprehend it or not. To his authority, therefore, I betake myself, as reckoning that I need no more, though much more might be had. The command in *Exod. xxii. 25.* and *Lev. xxv. 37.* is very plain and peremptory; *If thou lend money to any of my people who is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay on him usury. If thy brother be waxen poor thou shalt relieve him. Take no usury of him, or increase, but fear thy God, that thy brother may live with thee. Thou shalt not give him thy money on usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase.* Afterwards, when the Lawgiver comes to repeat this law, he explains it,

and enforces it, Deut. xxiii. 19, 20. *Thou shalt not lend on usury to thy brother, usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent on usury; unto a stranger thou mayest lend on usury, but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend on usury.* This repetition of the law differs something from the former, but whether it be in favor of usury or not, I shall see, when I come to consider the arguments brought in defence of usury. Now let any man cast his eye on the fifth chapter of Nehemiah, and consider in what a studious and fervent manner that pious and charitable governor goes about to reform this oppression, that was crept in among the covetous nobles and rulers of his time. He was very angry when he heard the complaint of the poor against the usurers. He enters into serious consideration with himself, and calls a counsel in his own generous breast, how he may redress this grievance. He rebuked them; that, I suppose, might be privately. But when that did not avail, his zeal did so transport him, that one would almost suspect it was beyond discretion; he stirs up the multitude against them; he argues the case with them; he presses it on their consciences from two or three weighty considerations; and at last condescends to entreaty, *I pray you let us leave off this usury.* And yet all the usury of money that they were guilty of, was but the hundredth part, ver. 11. How zealous may we suppose this good governor would have been against the twentieth part, which is esteemed kind usage in these days. When David describes the man whom God will accept, he requires that he be a man *who puts*

not out his money to usury, Ps. xv. 5. And when the prophet Ezekiel describes a man whom God will forever reject, he describes him *by giving forth on usury, and taking increase*, Ezek. xviii. 13. And again, describing a people whom God will judge, he describes them *by their taking usury and increase*, Ezek. xxii. 12. Where, by the by, we may do well to take notice of one of the most angry phrases that I think do occur in all the Scriptures, ver. 13. *Behold therefore I have smitten my hands at thy dishonest gain.*

These commands are very plain and express, one would think, these promises very great and precious, and these threatenings very dreadful. He had need of the reason of an angel certainly, who shall go about to evade *the sure word of prophecy*. And yet how plainly soever these things are delivered, there is this further to be observed in the delivery of them, that both in that twenty-fifth of Leviticus, and fifth of Nehemiah, the *taking of usury*, and the *not fearing of God*, are phrases of the same import, and it is as much in plain English as to say, He who takes usury has not the fear of God before his eyes.

O fearful character! Is there any man in the world who would in cold blood be content that this should be predicated of him? A like observation is to be made from both those texts in Ezekiel. How light a matter soever this licentious and wanton age makes of usury, scarce assigning it a place among the venial sins, and poor peccadillos of life, this inspired prophet ranks it with, and for aught I can perceive, makes it equal

in complexion and stature; to dishonouring of parents, oppression, profaneness, Sabbath-breaking, whoredom, incest, murder and idolatry. If I had ever so good an opinion of the lawfulness and innocence of usury, and were able to discourse ever so learnedly and rationally in the defence of it, yet I profess this black regiment of comrades that go along with it, in a list of God's own drawing up, would scare me from owning it, or taking acquaintance to it, *Me comitum vestigia terrent*, [the footsteps of its companions terrify me.] It is a pretty strange expression of the prophet Jeremiah, Jer. xv. 10. *Wo is me, my mother, &c. I have neither lent on usury, &c. yet all the people curse me.* I have somewhere read a paraphrase on these words to this purpose. "If I had been an usurer indeed, or some such notorious pest to mankind, it had been no wonder that every man's hand should have been stretched out, and every man's mouth opened against me. But this is my astonishment, that I am no such person, yet they curse me; they use me no better, than though I were the vilest of men." I hope for my friends' sake, that this private interpretation of the words is severe, (though a learned doctor of our own adheres to it,) and do much rather embrace the sense that the learned Glassius gives of them, who acknowledges a *Synecdoche speciei*, [one thing of a class or species put for the whole,] in the words, and so paraphrase them thus, "I have had no dealing in the world, which usually is cause of falling out, yet the people curse me." I have somewhere read it pleaded on the behalf of usury, that it is no where condemned by name

in the New Testament. Suppose this to be true, methinks it is but a small consolation, and should yield but a small encouragement to the usurer. The Holy Bible is divided into four parts, Moses, and the Prophets, and the book of Psalms, and the New Testament. May we think it safe to do a thing forbidden in three of these, because it is not spoken of in the fourth? I think I may say concerning the usurers that plead this, as our Saviour concerning the surviving brethren of the Gospel glutton, *If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither would they hear, though the Gospel should speak the same thing.*

And what, are false weights and measures too become lawful under the silent Gospel, though so thundered against by the law and prophets? Has the silence of the Gospel given a toleration to perjury, blasphemy, and false-witness-bearing too? If it be said, that these things are forbidden in the Gospel, under the general name of injustice and unrighteousness; it may be retorted, that usury also is condemned under uncharitableness and oppression. I remember bishop Jewel grounds his severe discourse against it, on 1 *Thess.* iv. 6. But what though the word should not be there, and that it should not be forbidden by the plain, hateful name of usury; if the same thing be forbidden and reprov'd by some other phrase, is it not as bad for the usurer?

And what else can be forbidden by the phrase, of not hoping for any thing again from what we lend; which occurs in Luke vi. 35. *Lend, hoping for nothing again.* This cannot well be interpreted of not expecting so much as the principal

again, for that would make the clarity to be giving, and not lending; and that Christ had spoken of, ver. 30. And yet there must needs be some sense in the words, being the words of one who spoke nothing in vain. It can be no less than this, then, that we must expect nothing over and above, nothing resulting from the kindness, and this the composition of the verb with the preposition *απὸ*, will fairly allow, if not enforce, in the judgment of any good grammarian. I am not ignorant, that the verb *ἀπελπίζω*, is said to be used sometimes to signify despairing. Neither am I ignorant, that there is nothing spoken in words so plain and easy, but that the wit and learning of men, especially when it is called in to aid their worldly interest, may perplex and pervert it. But it is a great satisfaction to me to consider, that all the translators of the Gospel into all languages that I understand, do translate the word, by *hoping for nothing again, or from thence*; and not one of them that I know of, by *despairing nothing*. And those translators are supposed to be of the most learned persons in every nation, as every body know they were in our own. But for once, to gratify these critics, I will see what sense can be made of the 33d, 34th, 35th verses put together, if we translate *μὴδὲ ἀπελπίζοιτε*, *despairing nothing, or, not despairing*. Our Saviour is earnestly exhorting his followers to higher virtue, and a greater degree of perfection, than the rest of the world attained to. Now, says he, *if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thanks have ye? But (mark the opposition,) I say unto you, lend, not despairing.* The

word *but* must make an opposition, all will grant; and I wonder what opposition, what difference there is between hoping to receive, and not despairing to receive. Sinners lend hoping, but Christians must lend not despairing. Is not this a high degree of perfection in a Christian, think ye, above an heathen? But there may be another subterfuge; *Not despairing*, that is, *But that God will repay you*. I confess, if the next words had given a reason of the former, and said, *For your reward shall be great*, there had been some colour for this interpretation. But the words are a distinct sentence, giving an encouragement to the practice of all the duties of mercy and charity before required; *And your reward shall be great*. Now then, if these words *μηδεν ἀπειπιζοντες*; do condemn mental usury, then surely much more that gross and formal usury which is owned and established by paper, wax, and witnesses.

This then seems to be our Saviour's doctrine, that his followers should not be usurers. Now I will a little consider his discipline; and that I find was very severe against usurers, reprovng them, spoiling their trade, and casting them out of the temple. The story is very famous, confirmed by the mouth of four witnesses, even every one of the evangelists, *Mat. xii. Mark xi. Luke xix. John ii.* There was good care taken, we see, that this passage should not be forgotten. And our Saviour's zeal in this thing is very remarkable, I think I may say singular. For I do not remember that ever else he exercised such discipline on any sort of men; that he ever beat any man besides, nor reformed abuses thus with

his own hands. The disciples might well take notice of it indeed, as a singular piece of zeal, when they saw their Master, a meek, peaceable person, who never used to concern himself in other men's matters, nor intermeddle in their affairs, though sometimes courted to it; and one who would rather pay money wrongfully, than give any offence; when they saw him bestir himself, and make such a bustle in the temple, overturning tables and seats, scattering money up and down, driving out men and beasts with a scourge made by his own hands. But here the learned usurer, (and indeed they say some learned men are usurers,) criticises on the words *κερμαλισται* and *κολλυβισται* which we translate *money-changers*; and tell us, that they signify such persons as sat usually in the market, and at this time profanely in the temple, to change greater money into smaller, for the convenience of buyers and sellers. I believe the words signify thus, and the etymology of them imports as much; but yet these critics themselves (as Ravanellus for example) confess that these men did *quæstum facere*, make a gain of their changing, or lending, or whatsoever it was. Usurers indeed are very modest, they will scarce own their own name at this day; and I suppose they might be somewhat shy then, rather choosing to be denominated from their changing money, than from letting out to usury. But yet it is very plain, that these money merchants here spoken of, who had their tables in the temple, were usurers, letting out their own, or other men's money, for advantage. This the constant signification of the word *trapezite*,

or table-men, in profane authors, does justify; and not only in them, but in the holy Gospel too, which tells us almost *in terminis*, [in the very terms,] that they were usurers, Mat. xxv. 27. *Thou oughtest to have put my money to exchange, (τραπεζιταις) and then at my coming, I should have received my own with usury.*

Well, but though these changers of money be granted to be usurers, yet say the theological usurers, (and indeed they say that some divines also are usurers,) "The severity that they met with from our Saviour was not because they were usurers, but because they profaned the temple with their tables; for how harmless a thing soever usury is, though it be as innocent as doves, yet it is not fit that either it or they should come into the holy temple." I confess with the apostle, it is true, *There is no agreement between the table of the Lord and the table of devils*; but yet if we look well into our Saviour's behaviour in this act, we shall find, that as by his overthrowing their tables, and thrusting them out, he chastised their profaneness; so by his verbal reproof he taxes their very employment, calling them a company of thieves, Matt. xxi. 13. *Ye have made it a den of thieves.* This [Ye] cannot be meant of the buyers and sellers. Buying and selling is a very warrantable thing, especially when it relates to the service of God, as their's did. Besides, Christ gave them their lesson by themselves, as St. John tells us, John ii. 16. *Make not my Father's house a house of merchandize.* It remains then that the [Ye] must be directed to the usurers, whom he ranks among thieves. If

any body has a mind to solve the matter and say, "Perhaps they were not honest usurers," I am of the same mind; and so, at last, we are unawares agreed.

MEDITATION XXIX.

Of human authorities against usury.

FOR my own part, I do not pretend to be a person of great reading. But I have read the books of some men, who have read many books; and I verily think by what I have found in them, that the very quotations out of books against usury, would of themselves make a considerable book. But I am resolved not to enlarge here, as depending rather on the sure testimony already brought. As for myself, I think if I had ever so great a mind to a thing, and plausible arguments for it too, I should hardly adventure on a thing so universally condemned both by heathens and Christians, and these both Papists and Protestants, councils, fathers, and modern divines of the greatest reputation. The general councils of Agatha, the first Nicene council, the first council of Arles, the first and second of Carthage, the Eliberitan council, the council of Tours, and the Lateran council, with others, are cited to this purpose, as condemning and censuring usurers more or less. The best recorders of the matters of primitive times assure us, that the person suspected of usury, was denied the common salutations in the streets, and the kiss of charity in

the church; his house, usually called the seat of Satan, and it was held unlawful so much as to fetch fire from thence. But how much fire is fetched from thence now-a-days, even to the consuming of the houses, and land too, of them who fetch it! It were endless almost to quote the passages out of the Greek and Latin fathers condemning usury, such as Clemens Alexandrinus, Basil, Gregory Nyssen, Gregory Nazianzen, Chrysostom, Tertullian, Lactantius, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, and many others. The canon law contained in the decretals, and the civil law give the same verdict. And our statute law, both in the time of the Britons, Saxons and Normans, until Edward the Sixth, is to the same purpose; for which I refer any one, who has a mind to be particularly acquainted, to Dr. Fenton's book written on this subject. The heathen writers generally tax it. Cato says, the usurer was condemned in a four-fold restitution by the law. The philosophers, Plato, Aristotle, and the rest, bring many arguments against it. The poets, after their manner, condemn it by *epithets*, calling it *Usura vorax, turpia lucra fœnoris, turpiter exhauriens privatas opes, depascens publica commoda*, [voracious usury; the base gains of usury; meanly exhausting private wealth, and preying on the public advantage;] and the usurer with them is a man, *Divitias injusto fœnore querens*, [who seeks riches by unjust usury.] It would be voluminous almost, to give in but the names of modern divines, (however different in their persuasions concerning other things,) that consent in the censuring of usury. For both the

Presbyterian assembly of divines in their annotations, (and how many eminent divines there were in that assembly I know not,) and the low country divines, select, learned men in their annotations, and the Episcopal divines in their books, (some of which were written on purpose,) do speak to the same import, and represent usurers to be what Erasmus in plain terms calls them, *Personas odiosas*, [hateful people.] As for the annotations, both English and Dutch, (in the composing of which, so many famous men were employed,) I need not, save to refer any man thither, that has a mind to know their sense. I will therefore conclude this testimony with three of the most learned casuists among the bishops of the Church of England, since the reformation; bishop Jewel, bishop Andrews, bishop Sanderson.

As for bishop Andrews, it is well known that he wrote a theological treatise, on purpose to condemn usury; and that he wrote it in defence of the Church of England, against the slander that she lay under; so that he seems to speak the mind of the whole Church of England, out of whom I will only observe what he quotes from Hottomannus, as to the civil law, (though he is otherwise full of authorities and arguments against usury.) From him he quotes these maxims against usury.

“That it is of the very essence of lending, that it be free and gratuitous.

“That men are not to receive certain profit, from uncertain negotiations or adventures.

“That nothing of gain is to be exacted, where nothing is exchanged.

“That society cannot subsist without the communication of damages and hazards, as well as profits.

“That things that are consumed in their using, are not capable of *usus fructus*, which is the use or profit of what is another's, the propriety or substance of the thing being still the owner's.

“That human laws, regulating the excess of usury, do not invalidate the divine law absolutely forbidding it.”

These things I have only briefly quoted out of him, to explain the sense of the civil law; and so I will dismiss him, because it is an easy thing for any conscientious man to have recourse to the book itself.

But there is a treatise of bishop Jewel, an exposition of the epistles to the Thessalonians, which possibly may be but in few hands, I will therefore tell more largely what he says to this point. I presume he is generally acknowledged to be a learned and pious Protestant. That he wrote much and well in the defence of the Protestant religion against Papists, his book (which has the honour to be kept in churches with the Bible and the homilies) does declare; and that he was exiled for the profession of it, our histories do assure us. This good and learned man, in his sermons on 1 *Thess.* iv. at Salisbury, takes an occasion from the sixth verse to discourse about usury, and says, in plain terms, that “It is such a kind of bargaining, as no good or godly man ever used; a monster in nature; the overthrow of kingdoms; the plague of the world, and the misery of the people.” And having showed

what a bad origin it is of, and what woful effects attend it, takes an occasion from the fore-quoted passage of Cato, to show, in many respects, that "the usurer is worse than the thief." And having largely quoted many learned and holy fathers, such as Ambrose, Augustine, Chrysostom, Jerome, speaking very positively and sharply against usury, he adds, that "There was never any religion, nor sect, nor state, nor degree, nor profession of men, but they have disliked it." They are the very words in the book. Philosophers, Greeks, Latins, lawyers, divines, catholics, heretics, all tongues and nations, have ever thought an usurer as dangerous as a thief. "And our forefathers," saith he, "so much abhorred this trade, that they thought an usurer unworthy to live in the company of Christian men; they excommunicated him; they suffered him not to be a witness in matters of law; they suffered him not to make a testament, and to bestow his goods by will; nor after his death, to be buried in the burying-place of Christians." Towards the end of his sermon, he calls God for a record on his soul, that "he has not deceived them, but had spoken unto them the truth;" and says, "If I be deceived in this matter, O God, thou hast deceived me. Thy word is plain. Thou sayest, *Thou shalt take no usury; and he who taketh increase shall not live.*" And, at last, applying himself to his auditors, he adds these words, "I hear that there are certain in this city who wallow wretchedly in this filthiness, without repentance. I give them warning, in the hearing of you all, and in the presence of God, that they forsake

that cruel and detestable sin; if otherwise they continue therein, I will open their shame, and denounce excommunication against them, and publish their names in this place before you all, that you may know them, and abhor them as the plagues and monsters of the world."

If this vehement testimony should be less regarded as being the testimony of an old-fashioned divine, as possibly some novices will speak, I will add a very late and learned one, a professor of divinity, a professed casuist, whose learned determinations in other cases are taken for oracles, even by those very men who refuse to hearken to him in this. I mean Dr. Sanderson, late bishop of Lincoln, who, in his fourth sermon, *Ad Populum*, having told us that most of the learned have concluded usury simply unlawful, delivers his own judgment presently after in these words; "The texts of Scripture are so express, and the grounds of reason so strong against all usury, that when I weigh these on the one side, and on the other side how nothing at all that is, which I ever yet saw or heard alleged to the contrary, I cannot find in myself charity enough to absolve any kind of usury, with what cautions or circumstances soever qualified, from being a sin." And again, towards the end of that discourse, he says, "It were not possible usurers should be so bitterly inveighed against by sober heathen writers, so severely censured by the civil and canon laws, so uniformly condemned by godly fathers and councils, so universally hated by all men of all sorts, in all ages and countries, (here, on the margin, he quotes *Jer. xv. 10.*) as histo-

ries and experience manifest they ever have been and are, if their practice and calling had been any way profitable, and not indeed every way hurtful and incommodious, both to private men and public societies."

MEDITATION XXX.

The arguments for usury considered.

AGAINST these authorities, divine and human, usury defends itself mostly by reasons; though indeed the usurers of the present age do justify themselves from some authorities of the last age; which I will also consider in its place. And here, first, if I had a mind to espouse a party, I might justly demand, since the word of God has so plainly and frequently condemned, forbidden, and threatened usury, with what confidence any mortal man can or dare justify it, lest he should be found *ἑκουχέειν*, [to fight against God,] as the great doctor of the Jews sometimes argued; and might ask with the great apostle, *Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?* Shall the creature demand of the Creator a reason of his law? That were bold. But shall he seek out reasons to evacuate and make void his laws? That is rebellious. St. Augustine somewhere says, "That as many things are forbidden because they are evil, so some things are evil because forbidden." Whether it be so or not, I cannot determine; but sure I am, that all things are evil that are forbidden. And cannot God have a reason of his

laws, except we can comprehend it? Are not his thoughts higher than our thoughts; his thoughts of commanding, higher than our thoughts of conceiving? And if we have not so much wit as to see a reason of every divine command, yet we ought to have so much grace, as to think there may be a reason which we do not see. Alas! Degenerate man is apt to make his own lust and interest the standard of right and wrong, but the Supreme Mind is the fountain of truth and goodness, and bestows reality and coherence on all things; so that a thing is therefore true and good, because comprehended by this infinite unerring Wisdom and Will. If there were no evil lusts in men, there would be no usury, no oppression, no unmerciful and covetous practices. And whilst there are these lusts, there shall be no law against unmercifulness or covetousness, which they will not quarrel with. And no wonder; for I have run over the ten commandments, those plain words, which, for their authority, Moses tells us, *were written with the finger of God*; and for their plainness, one might say, were written with a beam of the sun. And I find there is not one of them, but the wit of man has been carping at it. One may safely say, That not only a third part of the stars of heaven have been assaulted by this dragon's tail, but there is not a star in the Scripture firmament which has not been struck at thereby:

Et si non cecidit potuit cecidisse videri.

[And if it fell not, might have seemed to fall.]

I think it is a passage of Seneca's somewhere, "If it were enough to be accused, no one would be innocent." And I think it is as proper to say, If it be confutation enough for a law or doctrine to be questioned, or quarrelled with, nothing in the Scriptures shall be true.

But because men will cry out and clamour if they be not heard, I will hear what is said, and suppose every thing that I think may be said in defence of usury. So long as the texts stand translated against usury in our Bibles as they do, most men are so modest or so wary, that they think it not worth the while to go about to establish the doctrine of usury, till these texts be undermined; and therefore the first attempt is to prove, That usury is not condemned in those texts in the Old Testament, that men think do condemn it. The next is to prove, That though it be condemned in the Old Testament, yet it is not in the New.

To prove that usury is not simply condemned in the Old Testament, it is vehemently urged, that the word *Neshek* signifies biting and oppressing usury. This they are content should be condemned; but this does not hurt the usury, that does not hurt. Knock out the teeth of that usury that has none, and spare not.

To this is answered, That all usury does in one degree or other hurt, if it be compared to charity; and that the whole kind of it is born toothed, though some sorts of it have sharper teeth than others. And what matters it, if one sort be less rapacious than another, where every one is a harpy?

Again, arguments drawn from etymologies are accounted weak and deceitful, and very insufficient to build doctrines of divinity on. I am not ignorant of etymology, but yet where I am most sure and certain, I should tremble to venture the salvation of my soul on the derivation of a word.

But allowing that the word *Neshek* signifies only biting and oppressing usury, can any man infer, that therefore there is any usury that is not biting. Would not any good grammarian rather conclude, that all usury is biting, because the general word that signifies usury, comes from a root that signifies to bite. I think it as shrewd an argument against usury as grammar can furnish a man with, that it is called *Neshek*. As it is a good argument in grammar, that the nature of an *Holocaust*, is to be laid on the altar, and to ascend up towards heaven in the smoke, being consumed with the fire, because *Gnolah*, the word that signifies a whole burnt offering, comes from *Gnalah*, to ascend. And that the nature of an alms is to proceed from pity or mercy; and that every alms should do so, because the word *ελεημοσύνη* that signifies alms, comes from a root that signifies mercy, with thousands more of the like nature in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. If any argument is drawn from the notation of the word, it will be this, That all usury is as certainly biting, as that it is the nature of a serpent to creep. And, indeed, for creeping and stinging, I know not how one could bring a fitter word to match *Neshek*; *Ubi creditor mordet cum exigit quod, non dedit, debitor mordetur cum reddit quod non accepit*, [Where the creditor is biting

while he requires that which he has not given, there the debtor is bitten, while he restores that which he has not received.] Buxtorf.

But lastly, Supposing by *Neshek*, that oppressive usury only be condemned, and that there is some usury that is not so; yet I hope the word *Tarbitth* is of an innocent extraction, coming from a verb that signifies to multiply, and yet this is as flatly condemned as the stinging *Neshek*, Lev. xxv. 36. and the prophet Ezekiel makes no difference, but still cries *Neshek Vetarbitth*, Ezek. xviii. 8. xxii. 12.

But however, say the defendants, usury is only forbidden towards the poor by the law, therefore it is permitted towards the rich; by which it appears that it is not simply and absolutely forbidden.

It is confessed that the poor are named in Lev. xxv. and *Exod.* xxii. but it must also be remembered that elsewhere there is no mention of the poor at all, but the prohibition is general. The psalmist and the prophets say nothing of the poor, but flatly, and without exception, condemn usury. Secondly, It may truly be said, that any man, even a rich man, when he is constrained for his necessary occasions to borrow of his neighbour, is *pro hic et nunc*, as they speak, [for that present time,] poor.

Thirdly, The poor are therefore named when they are named, because they are the people necessitated to borrow, and most subject to oppression. He who argues thus, Usury is only forbidden towards the poor, therefore it is permitted towards the rich, may as well argue, from

the words next before, (*Exod. xxii. 22.*) we are only forbidden to afflict the widow and the fatherless, therefore we are allowed to do what we will with those who have husbands and parents; or from *Deut. xxvii. 18.* we are forbidden to cause the blind to wander out of the way, therefore we may safely misguide any who have eyes in their heads. What strange work would such kind of argument make? We are commanded plainly in *Deut. xviii. 7.* to lend to our poor brother; therefore, (according to the logic of these men,) we are not to lend to the rich. Well, be it so. Now when we lend to the poor, we are expressly charged (*Exod. xxii. 25.*) to take no usury of them. It will necessarily follow, then, that no usury at all is lawful.

In a word, if it be good logic or divinity, to say, Such a man is a rich man, usury will not much hurt him, it will indifferently serve to justify the robber as well as the usurer; and the ingenious Hind and Bracy shall go nigh to the canonized.

MEDITATION XXXI.

Other reasons for usury considered.

THE next attempt is, to prove, That though usury should be condemned in the Old Testament, yet it is not in the New. I have already proved usury forbidden in the New Testament, both by the precept and practice of the holy Author of that Testament; and proved that this

is no good argument, though it could not be proved. The allegation that I am now to consider is this, there is no intrinsic evil in usury, the laws against it are only political, binding the people of the Jews, and no further concern us, than as oppression is found therein. And this is further proved by the circumstance that usury was permitted to the Jews towards strangers.

As for the former part of this argument; it is *gratis dictum*, [uttered without authority,] that the law against usury was judicial. And methinks it should make any man of any tenderness of conscience, vehemently suspect, that there is something immoral in usury, when he finds it ranked by the psalmist and the prophet, (men of more than legal minds,) among the most notorious immoralities, such as idolatry and murder. What if any Papist or other should say, that the laws against worshipping of images, and of keeping one Sabbath in a week, were only judicial, and concerned the Jewish polity only; must these commandments therefore lose their morality? God forbid. Is it not more reasonable to conclude, that there is something intrinsically evil in usury, because the great and wise Law-giver has so flatly forbidden it, and so severely threatened it, than to conclude there is none, because we can see none? They say this judicial law binds no further than the reasons of it do bind, no further than there is oppression in it. And who can tell but that God does account all usury to be more or less oppressive, because he has forbidden all.

The gracious Law-giver, whose name is Love, better knows what are the several violations of

charity than we do, and he makes usury to be one, setting it so plainly in opposition to charitable lending. Thou shalt be charitable and lend; but thou shalt not put to usury.

Neither doth it hinder usury from being in its own nature evil and oppressive, because it was permitted to the Jews, to exercise it on strangers. There is nothing surely more unrighteous than stealing, and yet there was a time when the supreme Law-giver (who gives no account of his ways to us) permitted, yea, and bade the Israelites to spoil the Egyptians. And why might not he as well permit his people to spoil the heathen nations by usurious lending, as he had before permitted them to spoil the Egyptians by deceitful borrowing; and yet usury remain in its own nature oppressive? It would be a strange boldness to draw into example all things that at any time God hath permitted unto men for a time, by reason of the hardness of their hearts, or dispensed with by virtue of his infinite unaccountable prerogative, of transferring rights from one to another, from Laban to Israel, from Egyptians to Israelites.

Is it not more fair to infer, that if the law only allowed usury to strangers, (who were by the just judgment of God to be weakened and kept under in slavery and poverty,) the Gospel whose every line breathes love and mercy, and the holy Author of it, who has broken down the partition wall, and made all the world brethren, do allow it towards no body at all? But if you will have strangers still, I hope you will not find them among Christians; so that if there be any

place left for this merchandise of money, the usurer must transplant himself into Africa or Asia, and trade there; and try whether by that merciful means he can convert any of those strangers unto the faith of Christ.

If it be pleaded, that in reason a man may do what he will with his own, and make the best he can of it:

It will readily be answered, that man has properly nothing of his own, the propriety is in God, and we are but his stewards, and he has appointed us how we shall lay out his goods; he has forbidden us to use them intemperately, or improve them unjustly. No man may kill himself with a sword, though it be his own, nor play the debauchee with his own maid, nor the drunkard with his own liquor. It is true, a man may make the best he can of his own money, but not the most he can of it. This churlish principle will preclude all charity, and justify the most covetous worldling, who shuts up his bowels against the poor.

They seem to plead strangely for usury, who reduce it to the head of letting out to hire, and match it with letting out of lands or houses for rent. If they would compare it to a man's lending his neighbour a loaf of bread, and afterwards requiring as good a loaf, back again, and a good matter over and above, for his eating that loaf which he lent him to eat, it had been a fitter comparison, I think, and much more congruous. But to wave those several dissimilitudes that might be brought to spoil this comparison, there is just such difference between letting out land

and houses for rent, and money for usury, as there is between a thing allowed of God and all men, and another thing universally forbidden. The great Law-giver I suppose will at last, (but to our great astonishment,) either show us a convincing reason for all his commands, or convince us that his authority was reason sufficient. If any one say, that lending on usury is an act of charity, (as I have heard some say,) because it often proves the support of families, or at least preserves them and their estates from ruin for a season, until time and industry have wrought out better fortunes for them, I will not say with bishop Jewel, that this relief is as if a man should pull out the eye, to cure a blemish in the sight, and that usurers are so necessary to men, as a rust is to iron; nor with St. Ambrose, that such is the kindness of usurers, that they undo those whom they help; comparing them therefore to the scorpion, that embraceth kindly with his legs, and at the same time stingeth with his tail; whose poison also delights men at present, but afterwards kills; but I will suppose that usury has been accidentally beneficial even to the borrower. And yet this is no more than what the worst things in the world have sometimes been. Divines say, that the devil himself has eventually served the salvation of many souls; though I suppose no body ever yet justified the piety of his intentions, or commended the justness of his methods. But to speak plainly, it is not the usury, but the lending, that has been found beneficial. Lending indeed is a great act of charity, and so necessary, that as the world stands, it could scarce

stand without it. But I hope there may be lending without usury. If the minds of men were universally formed into that charitable and benign temper, in which they come out of the hands of God at first, they would give what they could spare, and lend what they could not give, and compassionately wish their poor neighbour what they have not to lend. In a word, they would do to others, as they would that others should do to them; and then I am sure there would be no need of such a thing as usury, to be a vehicle for charity. If there be at this day a necessity of usury, it is but such an one as the lusts of men have made; if there be any charity in it, it is to the usurer's sweet self; it begins at home, and we must thank the providence of God more than the kind intention of the usurer, if it do not end there too; for I dare make an usurer his own casuist here, to say what is his predominant consideration in his usurious contracts, the relief of his neighbour, or his own gratification.

But is there any reason why another man should make gainful purchases or bargains with my money, and I not share with him in the gain? To this is answered, that there is no reason to enforce me to lend my money to make other men rich; the poor are the objects of lending as well as of giving. To lend to the rich to make them still richer, is somewhat like giving to the poor, to make them idle.

But if you have such an excessive kindness for a rich friend, that you will make him still richer, you may either lend him your money freely, or share with him in the hazard; and so,

for aught I know, you may safely share with him in the gain.

But can God spread a table in the wilderness; can he provide for orphans, without this ingenious expedient of usury? Yes, surely he can; and they have the greatest security imaginable that he will; for he has as it were taken them into his own attributes, stiling himself the Father of the fatherless.

However there are many ways of paying Paul and not robbing Peter to do it, many ways to secure and improve the portions of orphans, and not be beholden to usury. And if there were none, it were better that all the orphans in the world broke, than that the commands of God should be broken. *Fiat justitia etiam ruente Cælo*, [let justice be done, if it even ruin the heavens.]

MEDITATION XXXII.

Authorities for usury considered.

ALTHOUGH usury defend itself mostly by arguments, yet of late it does somewhat insist on authorities too; and those divine and human. As for divine authority, I think they despair of finding any thing in the Old Testament to countenance it; but they have some hopes of better encouragement in the New. This I confess, one would think strange, that the Gospel should fall short of the law; and that charity should be more coldly recommended in that, than in this; and that Christians should be allowed a greater se-

verity against their brethren than the Jews, who yet were allowed it for the hardness of their hearts. This, I say, at the first sight, may seem strange; that the most charitable author in the Gospel should make void the law in this point of charity, who in all other things of morality perfected and fulfilled it; that he who made angry words, and lustful looks, to be murder and adultery, which never before were taken to be so, should make usury not to be unlawful, which ever before was taken to be so. Not unlawful did I say? Nay, if there be good divinity in their parabolical arguments, he makes it the duty of all his followers. For so it must be inferred from the parable, Mat. xxv. 27. *Thou oughtest to have put my money to the exchangers.* If we will understand the text literally, we must make it the indispensable duty of all Christians to be usurers; and we must say, that none but usurers shall be saved. For it follows, ver. 30. *Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness.* But these doctrines the greatest usurer in the world, I suppose, will think too, too abominable. The meaning of the parable, then, is the same with that of the unjust steward in Luke xvi. and they are both no more than this, that if the men of this world are so set on the world, that they will maintain and increase their estates, even by usury and knavery, it will be an arrant shame for children of light not to improve the grace of God, and work out their own salvation with great zeal and diligence; and the covetousness and craftiness of earthly mammonists about so mean a thing as an estate or livelihood, will at last condemn the coldness

and carelessness of professing Christians about the important matters of eternity. This is plainly the scope of the parable, which alone can be formed into a doctrine; but if any cunning usurer will needs raise doctrines from the parabolical phrase and mode of speech, let him preach those two which I named at first, and let him add this third doctrine, which seems most naturally to flow from the conjunction illative in the 27th verse, that it is the manner and property of covetous and unjust men, to improve their money by usury. View the context well, and see whether this be not the most natural doctrine, *Thou knowest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather here I have not sowed?* That is, thou knewest that I was a greedy, griping, unjust man; what then? How shouldest thou have behaved thyself, according to this apprehension that thou hadst of me? Why, thou oughtest therefore to have put out my money to usury. Now if any man will confess himself to be an unjust and rapacious person, let him take usury by the authority of this text; for it is of these alone that the text declares, that it is their manner to put their money to the exchangers.

The human authority that is brought for usury, is the law of the land, and some modern writers.

As for the law of the land, it is fit that great reverence should be had thereunto; and it is a thousand pities, that so sacred a thing as that should establish iniquity. But what, does this law command usury? No, that is not pretended. Does it allow it? Yes, it seems to allow it, inas-

much as it limits, and restrains it. This is no concluding argument. If a physician say to his patient, you must not drink above such a quantity of wine, it will be your death if you do; it does not follow that he may safely drink so much; it may be for all that, that the physician had rather he drink none at all. I have not seen the statute of the queen, but I have read in good authors, that the statute forbids all usury, and afterwards lays a great penalty on all those that exceed such a measure. This amounts but to a very weak allowance. But suppose the law of the land had more expressly allowed usury for the hardness of men's hearts, and for preventing the greater exactions and oppressions; it is only in pursuance of that known state maxim, better an inconvenience than a mischief. What if usury be, and be permitted in France, Spain, Italy, Rome, &c. What if it be every where and suffered, says bishop Jewel in the afore-quoted place? So the devil is every where, and suffered; and so are the stews suffered in France, Spain, Italy, Lombardy, Naples, Rome, and Venice. The Canaanites were among the people of God, and suffered; but they were as goads in their sides, and thorns in their eyes. As these were suffered and as the stews are suffered, and as the devil is suffered, so, and no otherwise are usurers.

But above all arguments and authorities, the authority of some modern divines of great note, has given the greatest encouragement to the practice of usury. It cannot be denied but that Calvin, Bucer, Zanchy, and some other divines of late, have spoken favourably of usury, and have

found out some distinctions to justify some kinds thereof, unknown to all the learned fathers that went before them. I will not stand to consider what necessities in time of persecution put them on this great project; but will a little consider of Mr. Calvin's mind in this matter; and then what a kind of usury, and how qualified it must be, that he allows.

It is very evident that Calvin had much rather there were no usury in the world than any, by what he says in one of his epistles, *In rep. bene constituta, &c.* In a well constituted commonwealth, no usury is to be endured; but ought altogether to be cast out of the society of men. To practise usury is a disingenuous way of trading, and unbecoming a pious and honest man. In his harmony on the pentateuch, I read these words, *Fieri vix potest quin fœnoris exactione exhauriantur inopes, et prope exugatur eorum sanguis,* [it can hardly be, but that, by the exaction of usury, the poor should be drained, and their blood almost exhausted.] Again, *Permissum fuit gentibus fœnerari, quod discrimen lex spiritualis non admittit,* [the Gentiles were allowed to take usury, which hazard the spiritual law does not admit.] Again, *Certe minime videtur licitum filiis Dei, quod prophani quoque homines detestati sunt. Scimus ubique et semper exosum et infame fuisse fœneratorum nomen,* [Certainly, that appears by no means allowed to the sons of God, which the most profane minds have detested. We know that every where and always the name of usurers was hated and infamous.] And again, *Fœnus quidem exercere, cum inter pudendos et turpes quæstus duxerint profani*

scriptores, multo minus tolerabile est inter filios Dei, [To practise usury, since it was esteemed a base and shameful employ by profane writers, is still less tolerable among the children of God.]

And after he had given his opinion that all usury without exception is not to be condemned, and allowed some usury, so it be exercised according to that golden rule, do not to another what thou wouldest not should be done to thyself; and had laid down two cases wherein he thinks usury lawful (which I will relate hereafter) fearing lest any one should encourage himself too far from what he had said, *Nolim quidem meo patrocinio usuras fovere, atq; utinam nomen ipsum abolitum esset e mundo,* [I should be unwilling to encourage usury by my own patronage, and wish its very name abolished.] By all which we plainly perceive what good opinion this learned man had of usury; he would be accounted no patron of it. But a patron he must be, because say the usurers, he does not simply condemn all usury. Well, if Mr. Calvin must, against his will, patronize usury, I hope they will give him leave to determine what usury he patronizes, and with what limitations; which is the second thing I was to consider.

To make usury lawful, he lays down the following rules:

1. That a man do not make a trade or a custom of it.
2. That it be not practised on the needy.
3. If a man be not so addicted to gain, but that he be still ready furnished, and willing to furnish his poor neighbour freely.

4. That the rule of Christ be ever our touchstone, to deal no otherwise than we would be dealt with.

5. That the borrower's gain be so much more at least as the usurer's interest comes to.

6. That no prejudice be done to the commonwealth.

7. That which never exceeds the stint set by the law.

And Zanchy, another patron of usury, says that the usury which he himself, and Calvin and Bucer defended, was to be thus qualified, that if it appear the borrower doth gain little or nothing, and if he lose of the principal, thou must bear part of the loss.

And now I wish that every one that takes encouragement from the arguments of these divines to practise usury, would conscientiously observe their restrictions also in practising it; and then I believe that though usury should be found ever so lawful, yet there would be no usurers.

MEDITATION XXXIII.

What usurers are lovers of the world.

ACCORDING to my method propounded, it now only remains to show what usurers are lovers of the world. But this I cannot well do, till I have premised, that some things are abusively called usury, or that all things are not usury that look like it, or are called by that name. In the last meditation I had occasion to quote out of Calvin

on the pentateuch, that his opinion was, that there are some kinds of usury lawful; and he names two. I am wholly of his opinion, that those two things are just and lawful; but here I differ from him, I do not think they are properly usury. So that although these two things be lawful, yet still all usury may remain unlawful. The things he instances in are these:

First, To receive satisfaction for the loss or damage, that I have already suffered from a man's keeping my money, beyond the time that I lent it to him, for it is just that the borrower should repay my loss that I sustain for his sake and by his fault. Bishop Jewel speaking of the difference between usury and interest, confesses interest to be lawful, which he explains thus; I lend my neighbour twenty pounds freely without usury to such a day, for I am then to pay it on an obligation of my own, I have no more but this, and if I fail of payment, I must forfeit five pounds. This neighbour fails me, whereby I lose five pounds. If I require that five pounds of him, it is interest, not usury, and it is just. In usury I seek to be a gainer; in interest, I only seek to be no loser, which stands with equity and conscience. But then this loss of mine must be really sustained. For says Calvin himself in the place afore cited, *Semper excogitant homines astuti captiunculas quibus deum illudant, &c.* [Cunning men will constantly be thinking of some subterfuge, by which they may elude even God.] Thus, whereas all men abhorred the name of usury, another name was found to escape the odium by an honest colour, and so they call it in-

terest, as if it were only a compensation of their loss. *Quanti intererat pecunie suæ usu carere*, [As much damage as it did to them, to be deprived of their money.] But there is no kind of usury which men may not put this specious pretence on; for whosoever has present money, when he is to lend it, will pretend it may be profitable to him to buy, or trade, or get some kind of gain withal daily, so there will always be place for compensation, when no creditor can lend his money without loss. Thus the name of interest, whereas in truth, it is the same with usury, is the covering of an odious matter. But alas that ever men should think by cavil to elude the judgment of God, where integrity alone can be our defence. The Jews did prevaricate partly after the same manner, the word *neshek*, that comes from biting, sounded very harsh; therefore because no man was willing to be accounted a hungry dog, that fed himself by biting others; they found out a sanctuary for their shame, they called it *tarbith*, that is, increase. But God, to meet with these fallacies, condemns usury both by the name of biting and increase, *Lev. xxv. 36. Ezek. xviii. 12.* God does antvert all vain excuses, and in general condemns *quamlibet sortis accessionem*, whatever is more than the principal.

I have more fully transcribed the words of this author, because he is taken to be a patron of usury, and to obviate that old thread-bare argument for usury, of *Damnum ex lucro cessante*, [Injury from ceasing to be gainful.] To say I have already sustained damage, by not having my money paid at the time prefixed, and there-

fore I require satisfaction for that damage, is good sense, and good divinity, for aught I know; but it is not usury. But to say I have sustained damage because I might possibly have gained by that money some other way, is not good logic; for that which may be, may also not be. Neither is it good divinity, that therefore I should oblige my neighbour, or his heirs, to make me a satisfaction for the want of this possible gain; for I might have trafficked with my money, and possibly I might have lost by so doing. And does not the avoiding of a possible loss sufficiently recompence the loss of a possible gain? The possible, but uncertain hopes of gain, which either the usurer or the borrower conceives, must not set the rate and value on the thing lent, but the present intrinsical worth of it.

The other thing that Mr. Calvin instances in, as a sort of lawful usury, is, If I lend a rich man a part of a great sum of money to buy land with, may I not receive a proportionable part of the actual rents, or profits of land, till my money be repaid me? This, he says, is lawful, and I know no body who denies it; but I deny it to be usury; it looks rather like a kind of partnership or temporary joint purchasing.

Nay, if a man will lend his money to another for any gainful use, and runs the hazard of the principal, he may, for aught I know, without usury, warrantably contract for an equitable part of the gain, when it shall be actually received, allowing for the pain and charge of the borrowers in managing it.

If a man, weary of the business of the world, will give his stock of money to another, engaging him to maintain him whilst he lives, he parts with the principal; it is a gift with a condition, "it is no usury," says bishop Jewel, in his fore-quoted comment on 1 *Thess.* iv. 6.

I will add further, That to receive a gratification or acknowledgment of any kind for money, or other things lent, is not in its own nature usurious, nor simply unlawful. God never intended to bind men up from gratitude, nor to forbid them to render one good turn for another. If my neighbour lend me money freely and charitably, and I happen to be advantaged, and much befriended by his courtesy, and am so grateful and ingenuous, as to requite his kindness in any thing wherein I can, and do it freely, without his contracting for it or requiring it; I cannot understand how my gratitude should make him a usurer, so long as his lending was freely, and my acknowledgment uncontracted and unconstrained.

So that instead of saying there are some sorts of usury lawful, let us say there are some lawful things that look like usury, yet are not it, and we are all agreed.

But if we would know who are the worldly usurers, (though I do not excuse any from being so,) it is evident that these that follow are of that sort:

Such as exceed the limits of the laws of the land, either directly or indirectly; who, unto usury, superadd those monsters of procuration and continuation, commit iniquity to be punished by the judge; and are accounted oppressors even by the more modest sort of usurers.

For a man, especially a divine, to require usury, where no profit has been made of the principal, yea, where the very principal has miscarried, and that of his friend, to whom he is beholden, and to extort it too, every one will say is a black character. But perhaps few believe that there is any such; neither should I, if I had not seen and known them.

To make a trade of usury, and to get one's living out of the sweat of other men's brows, is condemned for an idle wicked life, even by the most favourable censors, yea, by the very patrons of usury.

To bind men and their friends, and their heirs and executors, to make a certain advantageous return of an uncertain hazardous employment of money, is very cruel, and an atheistical confronting of Divine Providence.

To be content our neighbour should be subjected to all casualties, and to take no further care but to secure our own profit, is filthily selfish, and somewhat like the ill-conditioned generation, of whom Christ Jesus complained; who laid great and heavy burdens on the backs of others, which they themselves refused to touch with the least of their fingers.

To seek our own advantage or enrichment by the hurt or disadvantage of others, is flatly against the law of lovers, and the golden rule of charity, which the law commends, and the Gospel magnifies and enforces.

To make the poor pay for the use of money, or any other thing, which is merely for the relief of their necessities, is, by the most favoura-

ble interpreters, granted to be directly against the plain letter of the law; even by those, I say, who allow a little stricter dealing with the rich.

Let the usurers of England clear themselves of these spots, if they can; if they cannot, let them sit down with the mark of the world on them, till they can.

MEDITATION XXXIV.

Dissuasives from the love of the world, drawn from the consideration of our profession.

WHAT shall I say more? How shall I come closer? Having examined man in his moral capacity, and now in his political, wherein he is more discernible than in that; modesty will not suffer me to come any nearer; for I know not how, except I should *digito monstrare et dicere hic est*, [point the finger, and say this is the man!] except I should call men by their names, and say, thou John, or Thomas, or Richard, or Robert, or the like, art a lover of the world. These two things I am sure of, that there are but two sorts of people in the whole world, viz. The lovers of God and the lovers of the world; and that the former of these are blessed, and shall be yet more blessed; the latter are miserable and accursed. Who can but infer hence, that it is most absolutely necessary for every man to examine himself, which sort of men he belongs to? I have given what assistance I can in this important inquiry; which I think is the highest service that

can be done for the sons of men; except it be those endeavours which are directly used to disentangle the souls of men from the love of the world, and to engage them in the love of the Father. It is not in me, alas, to fashion the affections of men. (Oh, thou blessed sovereign Creator, and Searcher, Maker and Renewer of hearts, put in thy hand by the hole of the door, that the bowels of men may be moved to thee. Come into thy temple, O God, and let not that sacred thing, the heart of man, be any longer a place of merchandize, a den of thieves!) But though I cannot change the minds of men, yet as I have showed sufficient reason why they should be changed, so I can propound motives to induce them to labour after a change. But the house must be cleansed from its filth and rubbish, before the glory of the Lord will fill it. I begin, therefore, with some dissuasives from the predominant love of the world. And here I will content myself with a few of many.

First, If we make any reckoning of our noble title of Christians, and disciples of Christ Jesus; if it be any thing to us that we have entertained the Gospel, and are distinguished from heathens; let us cast out this predominant love of the world; otherwise, we shall bear the name of Christians, but be of the nature of heathens. A name, though ever so honourable, is but little available in any case; but I am sure, in the case of religion, it is not available at all, without a nature, either to the present comfort or future happiness of men. Why? A Christian loving the world, is but in name only distinguished from a

heathen. And truly, methinks, this is but a small honour, or consolation either. Who can reasonably bless himself that he is not an unbeliever, when in the mean time he is a hypocrite? Nay, rather, will not the heathen, adjudged to a more tolerable condemnation hereafter, bless himself that he was not a Christian, and had not so many obligations laid on him to forsake this world, nor such clear revelation of another as we have? It had been a goodly errand indeed for Christ to come into the world, and to gather together a company of disciples, only to bear his name, but really not to differ from other men, nor from what they themselves were before! Was it worthy of his blood, can we think, to purchase to himself a people peculiar only in nominal relation? Why, certainly, under the specious title of Christians, we are still heathens indeed and in truth, if our predominant love and care be of the things of this world! For so the heathens are described by our Lord himself, to have their minds mainly on worldly things, Mat. vi. 32. *After these things do the Gentiles seek.* And he would have his disciples to differ from the Gentiles in their seekings and loyings, as well as in their professing.

MEDITATION XXXV.

Further dissuasives, from the consideration of the nature of our souls.

Secondly, If we value ourselves only as men, creatures of noble natures and large capacities,

let us consider that the world, with all its trinity of riches, pleasures and honours, is inferior and inadequate to our souls; below our faculties, and insufficient to our necessities. It is justly accounted dishonourable for persons of noble extraction or ingenuous education to mingle themselves with persons or in things mean and unsuitable to them, as if it were a debasing and degrading of themselves. But if this mixture be a familiarity, it is still worse; and if this familiarity be an union, it is worst of all. What a stir do we make about a gentleman marrying his maid, or a lady her groom. Great indignation arises in the gentry of the neighbourhood presently, and much wonder in the rest. But the soul of the meanest man, matching with the most splendid object in the creation, and uniting itself thereunto, incurs a far sorer censure, and requires a far greater pity. The sun stooping to mortal Clymene, or the moon to the shepherd's boy Endymion, or Venus in the arms of dirty Vulcan, or Jupiter assuming horns and hoofs, for the sake of a mortal mistress, or whatever the poets have invented to the disparagement of their wanton deities, does but represent the infamous mixture which that offspring of Heaven, the soul of man, does make of itself with things terrene and mortal. A generous eagle preying upon carrion, or a glorious star falling from its sphere, and choaking itself in the dust; or the Roman emperor catching flies, are tolerable absurdities in comparison of that abominable and mischievous choice which all worldly minded men in the world do make. Does the Maker of souls, who best knows

the worth of them, value one soul, any one soul, against the whole world? And shall we think a little scantling of this world a fit match for millions of souls? Dost thou not know, O my soul, that thou art a son of God, the brother of angels, nay, even of the Angel of the covenant, by adoption; and canst thou pitch and fix on any object below God himself? It is unreasonable, it is unjust, it is sinful and shameful. Believe it, all inordinate love of thyself is an incestuous, and of other things a Sodomitical conjunction.

And besides the relation and capacity of souls, we may distinctly consider the wants and necessities of souls, which are such, as the world and the fulness thereof cannot supply or relieve. The appetites and thirsts of souls are great and strong, which the creature's cistern can never slake and quench. There is a kind of infinity in the lustings and cravings of souls, which all the possessions and conquests of the world could never yet fully gratify; *Curtæ nescio quid semper abest rei*, [There is in every object some undefined curtailment.] You may as well imagine that Behemoth, that drinketh up Jordan into his mouth, should be satisfied with one drop of a bucket, or the wrangling of a hungry infant for the full breast, should be from day to day silenced by gaudes and rattles, as that the thirst of a soul after rest and happiness, should be quenched and satisfied by creature fulness. No, no, the whole world is those husks that will not fill the belly of the hungry prodigal. Take it in all its dimensions, and a man may say of it, The bed is too short for a soul to stretch itself upon, and the

covering is too narrow for a soul to wrap itself in.

To which I may add, that the heart of man is also a sacred thing, a thing consecrate to God. The profanation of temples was ever banned. Our Saviour was never so transported with zeal as against the profaners of the temple; but certainly to entertain the world in our hearts is greater profaneness, than to drive a trade in the temple, to make a dove house or a stable of it.

MEDITATION XXXVI.

From the consideration of the nature of the world.

THE uncertainty and unsatisfying nature of the world, and all worldly things, is a peculiar theme, which every young scholar can rhetoricate upon and declaim against, before he has made any experiment of it, or any choice of a better object. The books of men are as full of invectives against the world, as their hearts are at the same time of the love of it. He is a very fool indeed who cannot repeat the words of the wise man, and cry *all is vanity*; but he is a wise man who heartily believes what he repeats, and acts agreeably to his belief.

The poetical fancies do prettily resemble pleasures to Syrens, which sing sweetly, and by their pleasant voice and beautiful aspect, allure the passenger to themselves, and then hug and kill him. And who can deny that this is somewhat like to Solomon's whorish woman in the Prov-

erbs? They compare honour to the wings of Icarus, mounting him so unreasonably high, that they are melted off by the heat, and so down comes that aspiring mortal to a degree lower than that from which he arose, and leaves nothing behind him, but a ridiculous fame of bold aspiring, *Magnis tamen excidit ausis*. Not unlike which is the description that the psalmist makes of man, who is in honour and abideth not, He stands on pinnacles indeed, but they are very slippery ones, from which he is soon cast down into destruction.

They resemble riches to the great wooden horse which the silly Trojans admitted into the very heart of the city, and rejoiced in it as a rare present, sent them by the gods; but it proved full of deadly enemies that presently murdered them in their security. And the apostle speaks to the same purpose, when he tells us, that *they who will be rich fall into temptations, and a snare, and many hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition*; and coveting after them, is piercing one's self through with many sorrows.

I have read of a bird in some parts of India, that has a note, singing in the language of that country, Here he is. This he is always singing, as our country cuckoos. Hereby many curious travellers are invited to the tree where he sits, who, seeing them coming, removes further to another, and after that to another, still calling them by the same note; whereby it has happened that many in seeking to find the bird have lost themselves. The application is easy. For the things of this world invite, and allure, and promise much

content. Lo, Here it is; and lo, There it is; but no body could ever light of it there; for when one comes near them, the deceitful birds take to themselves wings, and fly away. So the wisest of men tells us in plain words, Eccl. v. 10. *He who loveth silver shall not be satisfied, &c.* And concerning pleasure, the same wisdom said, that It is madness; and of mirth, What doth it? *Eccl. ii. 2.* And concerning honour, he thought the same thing; for *all that comes*, says he, *is vanity.*

This meditation is capable of much enlargement, but it does not need it. Therefore, I will dismiss it, and consider further, whether those things be indeed riches, pleasures, and honours, which are called by those names? I suppose that these things of the world are not only empty and unsatisfying, and therefore unfit to be the object of our love, but that they are deceitful, in not being what we call them, as well as in not giving what we expect from them. Shall these sorry things deserve the name of riches, honour, and pleasure, that are full of poverty, disgrace, and bitterness? Can I be properly said to be rich, when with my riches I am poor; or honourable, when with my honours I am the more abject and slavish; or a man of pleasures, when with my pleasures I am the sadder? And is it not thus?

The true measure of riches is, not how much the more one has, but how much the less he wants; for riches were not intended only that we might have more, but that nothing should be wanting. Now consider that famous man in the Gospel, for example, whether he was the richer or the poorer for that plentiful crop he reaped.

This increase made him solicitous and sleepless, made him more indigent then he was before; and was it not poverty then? For now the text tells us, he wants bigger barns, consequently a great many workmen to build him more, servants and cattle to manage his husbandry. And I pray what can poverty itself do more than make a man want? I will suppose a poor man in the common sense to be made rich; well, now he wants men and arms to defend his riches, servants to manage them, a retinue to wait on him; now he wants a stately house, and that wants stately furniture. He wants many other things, and whose things want many other things still; so that the poverty is mightily increased by the man's being enriched. And is it not thus with honours too? Was not Haman base and vile with all honour, who was subject to Mordecai, a captive, a slave? If it be said it was by accident; I answer, that all honour lies perfectly at the mercy of the people, they kill or save by the turning of a thumb, as they did in the Arena of old.

It is ill provided for proud men, whose greatness depends on a small matter, which is in the power of the meanest man to deny. And to be a servant to so many men, and those of the meanest too, methinks is a great reproach. And as for pleasure, I doubt not but that honest, self-denying Uriah had more satisfaction of mind in not going home to his wife, than David had in fetching her home to him; his denying of pleasure was pleasant, whereas the other's pleasure was painful and shameful.

And wilt thou, O my soul, be imposed on? Wilt thou be so childish as to pursue a painted and gadding butterfly, which either thou canst not catch, or it will weary thee to catch it; or it will at last shame thee of the pains and weariness that thou hast been at in catching it, when thou seest it will not answer thy expectations? Nay, worse, wilt thou follow a falsity, a delusion, a shadow instead of a substance, a name instead of a thing? Wilt thou travel all the day in pursuit of a notion, and at last it will prove nothing but a fallacy?

Is it such an admirable achievement, after all thy pains, and ploddings, and hazards of health and ease, and soul, and all, to be falsely called rich or honourable? Nay, nay, for stark shame lose not the substance for the shadow, and yet not get that neither. Reckon that true riches stand rather in not wanting any thing, than in having much; and not wanting, depends on not desiring; lessen thy desires, and thou art truly and compendiously become rich. If thou desirest many worldly things to make thee happy, thou dost both miss of thy happiness (which these things can never afford,) and lovest a great part of thyself too in the inquiry; for look how many desires do distract thee, so many bits and parcels of thyself are wanting; every concupiscence runs away with a piece of thee. To think to be made happy by the addition of mere worldly things, is as if one should attempt to make an entire garment of patches.

MEDITATION XXXVII.

From the consideration of the nature of love.

WHEN I begin to think of the nature of love, I see a wide field open, wherein I might either tire or lose myself. I will therefore confine my mind to the meditation of the nature of love, as it is giving, transforming, uniting, and subjecting. These are four famous properties of it, to give away the mind to the object, to assimilate it to it, to unite it, and to subject it thereunto.

From every one of which will arise a strong dissuasive from the love of the world.

He who loves gives; and what does he give? He gives his heart, he gives himself. The text seems to justify this notion, that predominant loving is a giving away of the heart to any object; *My son, give me thy heart.* He who predominantly loves God, gives him his heart; and it is true, on the other hand, that the covetous man is given to the world, and the sensualist is given to pleasures; *Anima est ubi amat, non ubi animat,* [the soul is where it loves, not where it animates.] The soul that loves, sojourns abroad all the while, and is another's, not his own. He who loves God, gives himself to God, and dwelleth in him; which giving away of ourselves is most advantageous. For in lieu of this poor gift, ourselves, we receive God, who is infinitely better than ten thousand selves. But he that by love gives himself to the world, parts with the best he has, even himself, for nothing. He gives himself

to that which can give him nothing back again, cannot so much as love him. In which respect I hesitate not to affirm, that the covetous man is the greatest prodigal in the world; he parts with that which is most precious, for no price at all. For, to allude to our Saviour, he hath nothing in exchange for his soul.

Again, let us a little consider the assimilating nature of love. As he that looks into a glass, even by looking into it, makes a face therein; so he that loves, even by loving, contracts a similitude. No man loves God, but he forthwith necessarily becomes God-like. How precious and honourable must this love be then, that makes this blessed transformation? And how vile and dishonourable is that worldly love, that transforms man into money, nay into muck! The poets tell of a covetous king that turned all he touched into gold; but lo here a stranger sight, the covetous worldling, turning even himself into gold by loving it. Wouldst thou be content, O man, that God should turn thee into gold or silver, into house or land? Why then wilt thou make this voluntary transformation of thyself? And yet so it is, thou becomest the thing that thou lovest; even as a lump of brass, cast and carved into the shape of a man, is said to be a man; but cut the effigies of a beast on it, and it will be called a lion or a dog.

Yea, more than so, the nature of love is not only assimilating but uniting. The soul of man is no otherwise united to any object but by love; this makes him as much one with God, as he is capable, if God be his best beloved object; and

it makes him one with the world, if that be his darling; even one with a harlot, if he be by love joined unto her. The particles of some worms cut off, seek to be united to the head; sure I am that man, (who is called a worm and no man,) being by his apostacy cut off from God, ought ever to be inquiring after his original, and seeking to be re-united to the blessed object from which at first he is so unhappily divorced.

In a word, the nature of all created love is to subject the heart to the beloved object. *Qui aliquo fruitur, ei necessesse est ut per amorem subdatur.* He that loves God above all, confesses that he needs him above all; and seeks to be made happy, in conjunction with something more excellent than himself is; which is but reasonable, and indeed honourable. And so he that loves the world predominantly, proclaims his need of, and dependance on the world, in the enjoyment of which he expects himself to be happy; which is unreasonable and shameful. The covetous rich man does not so properly possess the world, as indeed he is possessed by it; the world has the command of his heart, therefore it is his master; and he is the worst of slaves, as giving himself into a voluntary bondage, and that to the vilest and meanest of masters. What place in the creation shall I assign to that man that loves the lowest things; for by loving, he makes himself lower than they; and it will puzzle all philosophy to tell where to place that man, that is lower than the lowest.

Shake off these shameful fetters, O my soul; burst this yoke. Thou art called to liberty, renounce this abominable servitude, and reckon that if for an hand-maid to be heir to her mis-

tress, is a matter of pride, for a mistress to enslave herself to her hand-maid, is matter of shame and reproach. The gracious Creator hath placed thee in a noble degree and rank of the creatures, the lines are fallen to thee in a good place; do not wilfully degrade thyself by forsaking thy station and thrusting thyself down below the lowest, to thy eternal disparagement and amazement. Lest whilst thou standest in a mixture of disdain, and ire, beholding the mighty Nebuchadnezzar herding himself with the oxen; thou plunge thyself into a more dishonourable condition than this, and suffer thyself to be ridden by thy own beast.

MEDITATION XXXVIII.

From the consideration of the nature of the love of the world, idolatrous and adulterous.

HAVING briefly considered what the world is, and what love is, I will now put them together, and a little consider what worldly love is. And indeed I cannot think of any thing abominable, but I find it to be that. Methinks I hear the pathetic words of the blessed one, sounding in my ears, *Oh do not that abominable thing that I hate*, (Jer. xlv. 4.) It seems that all sin is abominable and hated of God's soul. But if one thing may be said to be more abominable than another, I doubt not but predominant worldly love is the most abominable of all things; as having in it the nature of all those things, which are of all sober judges accounted most abominable. I will con-

fine myself to five or six of the worst that I can think of. And here I will begin this black roll with idolatry.

This is confessed by all Christians to be an abominable thing, insomuch that that very part of the Christian world which we most suspect of it, are as studious to excuse it, as they are bold to commit it. And there is a great deal of reason why all men professing the knowledge of the true God, should abominate idolatry, when they hear him in his word so expressly charging the world against it, so terribly threatening the commission of it, and read what lamentable devastations he made among the Jews because of it; which the prophet excuses by a strange expression, *The Lord could no longer bear, because of their idolatry*, Jer. xlv. 22. But as abominable as it is, the love of the world is in it. What the apostle says of one branch of it, by the same argument, that covetousness is idolatry; pride and sensuality are no better. The highest act of worship is love; consequently, he who loves the praise of men, more than the praise of God, that is, a lover of pleasures more than of God, is a downright idolater. Gold and silver need not to be made into images, to be objects of admiration. He who loves and delights, and trusts in them chiefly, has given the worship peculiar to God to them, and made them his god already. Idols may be, and commonly are set up, as properly in the heart as in houses, *Ezek. xiv. 3.* and idolatry as well committed, by the inclinations of the will, as by the bending of the knee. There cannot be more palpable idolatry in the world, than

making that a God to one's self, which is none. Is not the sensualist an idolater in the most proper speech, whose belly is his god, as the apostle phraseth it? By the like propriety of speech, one may say of the proud gallant, that he makes his back his god; nay, an horse, an hawk, or an hound, may be as truly an idol to a Christian, as a calf is to an Egyptian.

A second abominable thing that I think of, is adultery. Whatever favourable opinion this wicked and wanton age has entertained of this vice, I am sure the holy God accounts it abominable, and ordained in his commonwealth of the Jews, that the adulterers should be stoned to death. Such is the opinion that God has of adultery, that he most usually, by his prophets, compares that incomparable sin of idolatry to it, and calls it *going a whoring after other gods*. It must needs be a foul pattern by which that monster of idolatry is drawn.

And is not the love of the world adultery? Is not the heart of man as much dedicate and due to God, as any man's wife is peculiar to him? Do men justly complain of great wrong done to them, and may not God as justly complain of the alienation of hearts? May not God reasonably be offended that such a vile thing as mundanes should be his rival, and defile the heart of man; which he esteems his greatest jewel. It is plain by the judgment of the great Searcher of hearts, that she who lusts after another man, more than her own husband, is a whore, and has already committed adultery with him in her heart. It must needs be, that the soul that lusts after and cleaves to

any object more than to God, (to whom souls are most nearly related, and to whom they are most firmly bound,) is abominably unchaste and adulterous in her loves. Souls have no way of playing the harlot but by mis-loving; and by how much the meaner the object of their love is, so much the grosser and more shameful their adultery. So that the soul prostituting itself to the world is not only adulterous, but indeed Sodomitical in this conjunction. For it is all one with lying down before a beast, which is forbidden by the law, abhorred of nature, and damned by the gentile theology, under the fable of *Pasiphæ* and her bull, and their monstrous offspring the *Minotaur*, *veneris monumenta nefandæ*.

MEDITATION XXXIX.

Of the blasphemy and sacrilege of worldly love.

A THIRD abominable thing that I think of, is blasphemy. To speak evil of God injuriously, reproachfully of the Deity, may justly be accounted horrible among the servants of the true God; when it was judged abominable even by the heathens, whose gods themselves were abominable. Paul's companions had like to have been pulled in pieces by the zealous Ephesians, for disparaging Diana; and the only way that the town clerk could take to appease the multitude, was to tell them whatsoever people said of her, Diana was a very brave goddess; and to deny that Paul's companions were blasphemers of her;

for he knew that if such a horrible thing as blasphemy were proved against them, the people would not have staid for any judicial sentence to be passed on them. Now there is blasphemy of the heart as well as of the tongue. So the fool blasphemeth, who says in his heart there is no God; and so do all they that either ascribe to God what he is not, as ignorance or injustice, or deny to him what he is, Omniscience and Omnipotence; or else ascribe that to the creature, which only and of right belongs to him. Thus every idolater, who gives divine worship to a creature, is a manifest blasphemer of God; and so are all predominant lovers of the world, who, by the predominant pursuit of the world, do declare they expect happiness from the creature, which is only to be found in God and in the enjoyment of him. It may seem harsh, when spoken in plain words, that every covetous, proud, and sensual soul is a blasphemer; but there is nothing more true nor scarce plainer. I do not speak of any single act of blasphemy that these worldlings are guilty of, but indeed they live in a constant and continued strain of blasphemy. Is it not evident that all these men seek happiness, rest, satisfaction, in the great abundance of worldly things? It is obvious to every one, that they do insatiably pursue them; there can be no cause of this assigned, but that they fancy and promise to themselves some satisfaction and happiness in the enjoyment of them. And is not this plainly to ascribe to the creature, that felicitating and satisfying virtue, which individually belongs to the Creator? Is it not to give the glory and es-

sence, and incommunicable attributes of God to another? Does not he disparage a fountain of living waters, who repairs to a broken cistern, to quench his thirst? Does not he disparage the nature of bread, who passes it by, and seeks to fill his belly with husks? That which is a disparagement to these, if it be committed against God, is blasphemy. He is the only root and centre of souls, and to take up in any thing below him, as an ultimate rest and satisfaction, does highly dishonour him, and plainly blaspheme him. How justly may it be answered to this worldly crew, at the last day, when, finding their miserable disappointment, they shall seek to enter into everlasting rest; I know you not, you have received your consolation, you have had your reward; in your life time, you received your good things. Get ye to your gods therefore of gold, of silver, and such other worldly deities, to which all along you blasphemously ascribed a filling and satisfying virtue.

The poor woman in the Gospel, who had spent all her living on physicians, and could get no cure, was indeed afterwards admitted to a touch of the hem of the garment of Jesus, and healed. But they who spend all their heart on the world, seeking for rest in things that cannot afford it, shall not find it, when they come to seek it where it is. No, no, it is just that they who blasphemously make this world their god, should be disposed of with the god of this world.

The fourth abominable thing that I think of, is sacrilege, or a robbing of God. How abominable a thing this is, one may easily discern by those

pathetic words of God himself, *Mal.* iii. 8. where he asks as it were with wonderment, *Will a man rob God?* It can scarcely be thought that there should be any such bold villany in the nature of things. The heathens accounted it a fearful thing to rob their gods, who indeed possessed nothing. Every body knows how Prometheus in their fables, was fastened to Mount Caucasus, and had a vulture perpetually assigned to feed on his liver, for defrauding Jupiter at a feast, putting him off with bones covered with fat, when he got the best morsels to his own trencher, and stealing fire from heaven. This sacrilege Jupiter did so much resent, as Lucian somewhere tells the story, that he thought instead of being bound to Mount Caucasus, he deserved the whole mountain to be thrown on him, and instead of one vulture, he deserved sixteen to torment him.

Are they esteemed to rob God, who withheld tithes and offerings from him; and shall not they be much rather so esteemed, who deny him their hearts? Our hearts are due to God, he requires them; *My son, give me thy heart.* This is his great commandment, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.* The heart of man is most sacred, the very temple, the living temple of the living God; and if it be accounted abominable sacrilege, to steal holy vessels out of the temple, what shall we call it, when we steal the temple itself? So do all they who withhold their hearts from God, and bestow them on the world.

MEDITATION XL.

Of the ingratitude and perjury of worldly love.

THE next abominable thing that I can think of, is ingratitude; a thing so abominable, that the very heathen, by the light of nature, every where cry out upon it with the sharpest invectives imaginable. I need name none of them, having once quoted that famous aphorism of their's, *Qui ingratum dixerit omnia dixit*, Call a man ungrateful, and you call him all that is naught. But yet there are degrees here, and some kind of ingratitude is more abominable than others. Of all the kinds, ingratitude towards God is the worst; and of all ingratitude towards God, the giving away of the heart is the worst; and to give it to such a vile thing, a hurtful thing, and his enemy too, makes it still worse. God has given us all the good we have, yea, even that good that is given us by our parents, tutors, patrons, benefactors, he is the doer of it. And for all this he looks for nothing from us but that we should love him. And is it not monstrous injustice and ingratitude, to deny him that? He gave us these very hearts; and shall we go and give them to his and our own professed enemy? Talk no more of the abominableness of the graceless lads that killed their master with their pen-knives, of Absalom taking up arms against his father, of rebellious subjects pursuing their king to death, by those very swords that he put into their hands, of the churl that denied a meal's meat to him who had kept

all his flock in the wilderness ; one covetous man outdoes them all, and every predominant lover of the world, who denies his heart to the God who gave it him, is more abominable than all they. It was a very cutting reflection that our Saviour made upon the ungrateful people, among whom he conversed, *I have done many good works among you, for which of these is it, that ye stone me ?* And what shall he be able to answer, to whom the Father of mercies shall put this question ; I have made thee what thou art, I have given thee what thou hast ; for which of these mercies is it, that thou hatest me ? If it be answered, nay, Lord, wherein did I hate thee ? It will soon be replied, to the eternal silencing of the ungrateful wretch, in as much as thou didst not love me, thou hatedst me, for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. But I will adjourn the further prosecution of this to some following Meditations, concerning motives to the love of God, and consider the last abominable thing, which the love of the world is, and that is perjury.

The Jews of our Saviour's time had very broad consciences, and many foul things they made a shift to swallow, such as revenge, hatred of enemies, neglect of poor parents, and the like ; yet perjury was such a morsel as they could never get down ; though they had made void many of the commands of God, yet for stark shame they left this standing in its full force, *Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform to thy Lord thy vows.* What opinion the heathen had of perjury, appears by the strange punishments

that they say the gods inflicted upon Laomedon, king of Troy, for falsifying the promissory oath that he had made to Neptune and Apollo; which vengeance did not only light on him and his age, but reached unto posterity. So that many years after, they cried out, *Laomedontea huius perjuria Trojæ*. [Troy feels the perjury of Laomedon.] Herod, could digest murder and incest (hard morsels one would think) yet hesitated at perjury; though the oath was a rash one, and made but to a girl, and that upon no valuable consideration neither, yet his stomach (as vitiated as it was) so nauseated perjury, that he would perform it. It seems it was accounted by them an abominable blasphemy, to call God to witness to a lie, to make truth itself a liar; but let the promise be made to whom it would, how much more abominable must it needs be, when that promise is made to God? That is at the same time, to defraud and blaspheme the Majesty of Heaven. And so do all they who solemnly, in the presence of God, covenant and swear to fight under his banner against the world, and afterwards turn to the world, and enter into a covenant of friendship with that which they had once declared their deadly enemy. Mercury in the fable, resented it grievously, that Battus should betray him to himself; *Et me mihi perfide prodis, me mihi prodis*. [Me to myself, perfidions, thou betrayest.] Certainly, a more intolerable affront cannot be put upon the Majesty of Heaven, than that men should swear by him, to him, and then forsake him; making themselves at once guilty of fraud and blasphemy, which all the lovers of the world do.

If now there be any thing abominable in idolatry, adultery, blasphemy, sacrilege, ingratitude, perjury, the predominant love of the world must needs be abominable even to amazement, which is really all these; and what needs, what can be said more to dissuade us from it?

O merciful God, who alone canst effectually deal with the hearts of men, persuade us thoroughly of the undefiling nature of thy love, that we may make it our great study, to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.

MEDITATION XLI.

General motives to the love of God.

AND now address thyself, O my soul, to the last and sweetest part of thy work, to meditate of some powerful motives to inflame thyself, and the rest of the benumbed world, with the love of God. Strengthen me, O my God, this once; not that I may be revenged on, but that I may perform the greatest kindness to thine enemies, by rescuing them out of their miserable bondage, and enlarging their souls in the most pure and generous love of thee! I let down my net once more, not without thy command. Oh that by thy gracious assistance and blessing, I may inclose a number of souls; and translate those, who all their days have swum in earthly delights, and in the brackish sea of this world, into the sweet rivers of pleasures that are at thy right hand; or rather into the pure fountain of peace.

and joy and pleasure, which thou art, for evermore.

And here, methinks, I have the whole world, and all the individuals therein, thronging about me, each offering its vote, each offering itself an orator, to plead the cause of God. The holy psalmist, in the 148th psalm, calls on the whole creation, heaven, and the heaven of heavens, and the waters that be above the heavens, the earth, and the deeps, and all the inhabitants of all those; angels, and the hosts of God, the lights of heaven, vapours, and flying fowls of the air, all men great and small, young and old, beasts and cattle, and creeping things, and all vegetables; I say, he calls on them to praise and celebrate the Lord. But, methinks, I hear all these calling on me, and all mankind, to love the Lord, and to delight ourselves greatly in our God. For certainly there is nothing in the creation but does plainly declare the loveliness of God, and whatsoever does so, does as good as preach and say, *O love the Lord, ye children of men.*

But I see I shall lose myself in this immensity; I will therefore confine myself to some few topics, from whence to bring arguments and motives to the love of God.

The nature of our Christian profession, the nature of our own souls, the nature of God, the nature of love, the nature of the love of God, will furnish us with powerful motives to the love of God; as all these, with the nature of the world and of worldly love, have furnished us with dissuasives from the love of the world. For

there is as much excellency in the nature of God, and of the love of God, to recommend them, as there is unsuitableness and unsatisfyingness in the world, or abominableness in worldly love, to disparage them. It is no hard thing for a devout mind to bring mighty motives to the love of God from the same heads, (the argument being a little altered,) from which the dissuasives from the love of the world were brought. As, for example, if we should therefore not love the world, because it is unsuitable and insufficient to us, and not that which it seems to be, then we should therefore love God, because of his infiniteness, and because he is the only substantial and agreeable good. If we should therefore not love the world, because by loving, we give, we assimilate, we unite, we subject ourselves to the world: If this be the nature of love, then what can be more excellent and advantageous to us than the love of God? If we should therefore not love the world, because the love of the world is abominable, idolatrous, adulterous, blasphemous, sacrilegious, ungrateful and perjurious: The love of God being, on the contrary, excellent and divine, pure, chaste, just, ingenuous, and reasonable, ought mightily to allure and attract us unto itself. And so of the rest. But here also I should be tempted to be too large; I will therefore limit myself to a few considerations, which I have found most powerful over my own soul. Oh, would it might please God to bless them with a mighty influence, that they may come to the hearts of those into whose hands they may fall.

MEDITATION XLII.

A particular motive to the love of God.

FIRST, I am wont to consider that God loves us best of any one. The law of nature suggests, yea, dictates and requires this, that we love those who love us; our Saviour takes it for granted that all men do this, because the worst of men do it; yea, the very beasts do it, *Sævis inter se convenit ursis*, [The savage bears agree among themselves;] nay, it seems that there is a kind of an agreement in hell, and an order and amity among the devils, else their kingdom could not stand. If two cannot walk together except they be agreed, how much less can four thousand (for so many was a Roman legion in our Saviour's days) dwell together in one man without some mutual kindness. The nature of love is sociable, it can endure any thing but solitude; this it can no more endure, than the wind can endure to be, and not to blow. Now what more proper object of love can there be, than one who loves us, or a thing that is our own. No one is our own so properly as he who loves us. I am more truly possessed of a friend who loves me, than of a child that I carry in mine arms, or wife that I lay in my bosom, that cares not for me. Of all the world therefore God is most our's, because he loves us best. The love that comes from above is strong. We commonly observe that the love that comes down from parents, upon their children, is stronger than that which rises up

from the children to their parents. An arrow falling from on high, wounds deeper. What deep impressions then in the hearts of men, should the arrows of Love make, that are shot from above the highest heavens? It is truly said, That God hates nothing of what he hath made. His hatred of the wicked and of the devils, if we understand it aright, is not so much his hatred of them, as their hatred of him. There is no such thing as hatred in the pure nature of God; his name is Love, and certainly he is named according to his nature. But speaking after the manner of men, he is said to hate evil doers, only to denote a contrariety of his nature to sin and wickedness; as if one should say, fire hates water, and light hates darkness. It is a passage of St. Bernard, somewhere in his Meditations, *Diligo te, Deus, plusquam mea, plusquam meos, plusquam me*, [I love thee, O God, more than my goods, more than my friends, more than myself.] That was a pure strain of devotion, and to be imitated by every soul of man that understands the nature of his happiness, and relation wherein he stands to God. But if we alter the grammar of it, it is as true divinity still, *Deus diligit me plusquam mea, plusquam mei, plusquam ego*, God loves us better than all our friends love us, better than we ourselves love ourselves. Of all our friends, our relations are supposed to love us best; and of all relations, our parents. The love of God towards us, therefore, is compared to the love that a father bears to his son who serves him, and a mother her to sucking child. But it infinitely excels these; for what wretched mortal can

pretend to love with such strength and wisdom as God loves. If we who are by nature evil and impotent parents, can love our children tenderly, how much more doth our heavenly Father? It is our Saviour's own argument, and it concludes as strongly concerning loving, as concerning giving. And if giving good things be an argument of love, God loves us better than our parents, for he has given us much more than our parents could; for he hath given us noble souls, and his Son to redeem them, yea, and he gave us those very parents themselves, who give us any good thing.

He loves us better than we love ourselves. I am much taken with the expression of the satyr-ist, (speaking of the gods, and their providence towards men,) *Charior est ipsis homo quam sibi*, [Man dearer is to them than to himself.] God's love towards us is more pure and wise than our own. He loves us so well, that he will deny us things hurtful to us, though we pray for them; so well, that he will afflict us for our good, though it be sore against our wills; so well, that he will remove us out of this world that we are so fond of, into a much better, which we, poor souls, have little mind to.

MEDITATION XLIII.

A further motive to the love of God.

SECONDLY, I consider, that I am beholden to God, and it is by him that I am able to love any thing; therefore I ought to love him above all

things. The bare possession of any thing, is not the enjoyment of it. It is not by having, but by loving things, that we enjoy them. If mere possession were enough, the sparrows had enjoyed the altar of God as much as David, and the owls had been as happy in the full barns of the Gospel rich man, as he himself. Light is sweet, but it is to them who see it; and so are meats and drinks, and perfumes, but it is only to them who can taste and smell. Nebuchadnezzar, in his distraction, when the heart of a man was taken from him, had no more enjoyment of his princely treasures, than a jackdaw or a magpie has of a thimble, or a bodkin, that they have hoarded up. Beauty is a pretty thing, but if there were no looking glasses in the world to represent it, the ladies would not be so proud of it as they are, nor dote on themselves as they do. I dare appeal to the greatest mammonist in the world, whether he would think it worth his care and toil to covet and scrape together great masses of money, if he were sure he should be deprived of the power of taking any pleasure in it. Certainly if it be vanity and an evil disease, that a man should have riches, wealth and honour, *and no power to eat thereof*, Eccl. vi. 2. it must needs be worse to have these things, and not be able so much as to love them, or esteem them lovely. Suppose God should give a man all the conveniences, advantages and ornaments imaginable, and should annex this only curse to them, that he should not be able, in any degree, to take any pleasure in them; I wonder who would account this man happy! Sure I am he himself would

not. Is it not God who gives us those affections and that power, by which we love any thing; ought we not to love him above all things, by whom it is that we love all things? It was a reasonable expostulation of the prophet, *He who hath made the ear, shall he not hear?* And is it not as reasonable to ask, *He who hath made the ear, shall he not be heard?* *He who hath created the affection of love in us, shall not he be loved?* I had rather never to have been, than not to have been a loving creature. Having is nothing without enjoying, and there is no enjoying without loving. If a man have ever so beautiful, sweet, chaste, virtuous a wife, if he cannot love her, it destroys all the pleasure of relation; *Eti- am medio de fonte leporum surgit amari aliquid,* [With all his joys some bitter thing is mixed.] Now certainly if I be beholden to God only for all the pleasure that I take in my wife and children, who hath given me power to love them, it is highly reasonable that I should love him above them. Tell me, thou man of pleasures, is there any pleasure in meats, sports, in wine or woman? That very pleasure that thou takest in them, ought in reason to call thee off from the intemperate and unchaste use of them, because it is inconsistent with the love of God, who gives thee the power of perceiving and delighting in even thy impure pleasures. The very pleasures of the table, and of the bed, do preach the predominant love of God. And tell me, thou mammonist, dost thou love to look on thy gold and silver, dost thou take pleasure in beholding them with thine eyes? Is it not highly reasonable thou

shouldst love God, who hath enabled thee to love gold? The power of loving is from God, therefore he ought to be the principal object of our love.

MEDITATION XLIV.

A further motive to the love of God.

THIRDLY, I consider that whatever is lovely in the creature, is from God. Jesus saith to Philip, desiring a sight of the Father, *Have I been so long with you, and sayest thou, show us the Father?* What an impertinent request is it, for a man that has so long conversed with the Son, the express image of the Father, to desire to see the Father! I may with reason wonder, and say the same concerning every lovely object in creation; have we seen so many beautiful objects, and tasted so many pleasant things, and can we not in all those see the beauty, and taste the sweetness of the Creator? Why, that whereby any thing is lovely is of God. *Deus est quodcumq; vides,* [God is every thing you behold;] and so we cannot miss of tasting the divinity in every pleasant morsel, of smelling it in every flower, of beholding it in every sweet face and feature: created good being nothing else but a reflection of the uncreated Goodness. The wit and ingenuity for which thou lovest thyself, the beauty and symmetry for which thou lovest thy wife, or any other woman, the deliciousness for which thou lovest meat, or drink, or music, the health and honour

for which thou so much dotest on the world, are but drops issuing out of that immense ocean of wisdom, beauty, sweetness and perfection, which God is.

To speak properly, the excellencies which we see in creatures, are not the perfections of this or that particular being, but the perfections of God; for they are nothing but what he made them; and it is by stamping his own beauty and goodness on them, that they are many of them in any degree good and beautiful; and indeed not only the perfections and ornaments of every particular being are of God, but the very thing itself. Because he is, therefore we are; for in him we live and have our being. In spite of all grammar, I cannot but sometimes ask myself this strange question, where was I before I was? A little philosophy will solve it; whatever there was of me, as I was future, and to exist, was in God; *Ibi nobilissimum mei exemplar*, [There was my most noble pattern.] All things are in God, I among the rest. *Age, anima, repete illud unde prodiisti, unde fuisti*, [Come then, my soul, seek that, from which thou didst proceed, and whence thou wast.] There is a great deal of reason why I should love God more than myself, who is the original and womb of my being; of whom it is, not only that I am thus accomplished, but that I am at all. And if more than myself, then certainly more than all other things whose being and excellencies are derivative as well as my own. The apostle John argues strongly, 1 John v. 1. *Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him that is begotten of*

him. Methinks I may invert the order of the words, and argue with no less clearness, (for the same spirit of God justifies this argumentation also,) If any one love that which is begotten, he ought to love him that beget. If any one love any lovely creature, he ought much more to admire the Creator. If a man delight in the picture of his friend, and love to contemplate it in his chamber, how much more will he love his friend, the original and prototype, when he hath him in his arms? Arise, O my soul, dwell not on the lowest round of the ladder, but spring up by the several creatures, as by so many steps, till thou arrive at the very Original of beauty and being.

MEDITATION XLV.

Further motives to the love of God.

AND now pursue this meditation a little, and add hereunto, that if all the loveliness of the several creatures be by way of communication from God, he himself must needs be infinitely more lovely, that blessed supreme Being, from whom these excellencies are derived, must needs himself be more excellent. The sweetness of the stream must needs fall short of the sweetness of the fountain; as it is true, *Nihil dat quod non habet*, [Nothing gives what it does not possess,] so it is also, *Nihil dat omne quod habet*, [Nothing gives all it possesses.] All created perfections do flow forth from God, as from an infinite fountain, by way of redundancy; how inconceivably infinite must the fountain fulness then be!

God hath given power to kings to kill the body ; who would not fear them ? He has given them authority that they can say to this man, come, and to another do this ; and who would not obey them ? How much rather, then, ought we to fear him who can cast both soul and body into hell ; how much rather ought we to be obedient to the supreme authority of Heaven, be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live ? In like manner may any devout mind reason, God hath endowed the souls of men with wisdom, ingenuity, good nature, gracious disposition. Who can but love such lovely objects as these ; nay, rather, who will not love the infinite wisdom, benignity, and holiness, from which these are but little emanations, and to which they do not bear so much proportion as the small dust of the balance does to the vast body of the earth.

Why stand ye admiring us, or the miracle, said the two disciples ? Admire the divine Jesus, by whose power these mighty miracles are wrought. And why stand ye gazing on me, may all created beauty say, pass on to the great Exemplar, contemplate, admire, and love the ravishing unspotted beauty, in comparison of whom I am mere vileness and deformity. And why stand ye gazing on me, may all created strength, may the behemoth and leviathan say, pass on from the chief of the ways of God, to God himself ; contemplate the Almighty, adore and reverence the absolute, indefeatable, uncontrollable, unchangeable, eternal Being, compared with whom our strength is as straw, and all our might but as rotten wood. And why stand ye drawing

at me, may all created sweetness, may the honey, and the honey comb say; go from the cistern to the Fountain, to the uncreated sweetness, entertain yourselves, and fill your souls with the heavenly manna, in comparison of which Fountain, all the rivers of created pleasures are as the waters of Marah; in comparison of which manna, all created entertainments are rather husks than bread, fitter for swine than souls.

And why dote ye on me, may all worldly glory, may Solomon in all his glory say, if you will aspire, let nothing terminate your covetousness or ambition below the Supreme Goodness, and the inaccessible glory, the glory of the Highest, who hath stamped some little of himself upon me, whereby I become desirable or glorious; but in comparison of whose brightness, I am a dark shadow, and a total eclipse.

MEDITATION XLVI.

A further motive to the love of God.

FIFTHLY, consider, that to love God, is to gain God. It may justly make one wonder to see men take such pains to gain the world, and yet be so indifferently affected to the enjoyment of God himself. Rising up early, and lying down late, and eating the bread of sorrows, describes but a little of that pains and solicitousness which men use for gaining the world, in comparison of that compassing of sea and land, running of strange hazards, adventuring health and life, soul

and all, in pursuit of wealth and honour, which we may every where discern among the greedy merchants, and ambitious courtiers and warriors of the world. And after all this, it proves that they seek but a very mean thing, and that they gain but a little of that which they seek, that they are not satisfied with that which they gain.

It is worth an age of pains to gain the creature, yea a small handful of it, yea, and such an handful too, as is gone as soon as it is well gained; and can any man that is master of his reason, choose but think it much more worthy of all possible endeavours to gain the Creator, and make the Supreme Good his own? Our Saviour seems to make a supposition of a thing not to be supposed, when he speaks of a single man gaining the whole world; (like which there are many hyperbolic suppositions made in the Holy Scripture;) But the gaining of God is no hyperbolic supposition, but a real proposal. It is sincerely propounded to the sons of men, and if they fail of it, it is their own fault and folly. It hath pleased God so to constitute the rational soul, that nothing besides himself can be the happiness of it. It is impossible in the very nature of the thing, that any thing below infinite truth and goodness, should satisfy the understanding and will of man, or that the same should be any otherwise perfected, but in the possession of this blessed object. It must needs follow, then, that he is willing to be enjoyed; else he had been cruel to the souls of men, in giving them faculties which should never be perfected, and appetites that should always be craving and never satisfied.

It must needs be that the Supreme Good is most communicative of himself, and that he who every where commands us to give to them who ask us, and not to turn away from them who would borrow of us, must himself be infinitely willing to be found of them who seek him. This being certain, it will as certainly follow that the loving of God, is the enjoyment of him. *Dilige et fruëris*, [Love, and thou enjoyest.] It is love that assimilates and unites, and makes this blessed object our own. Solomon tells us, *That he that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver ;* yea, it is true also, that he who loveth silver, oftentimes does not so much as possess silver. Poor men may be covetous as well as rich, and there are many in the world, no doubt, whose hearts mightily hanker after the world, who yet miss of it; who pursue this shadow, and it flies from them. But no man ever set his heart on God and was disappointed of the enjoyment of him. Though many love riches who never come to be rich, and beautiful mistresses who are never admitted to their embraces, yea, and the admirers of their own beauty are miserably disappointed, (Narcissus like, they cannot so much as obtain a kiss of that sweet mouth they so fondly contemplate in the glass,) having no advantage of their own fair faces, save the beholding of them with their eyes; yet it is far otherwise with the lovers of God. This most beautiful and blessed object envies no good thing, no not himself to his lovers and friends. As the benign sun envies not, denies not his precious light, no not to the meanest inhabitant of the

earth who will but look at him; (see him, and you enjoy him;) so neither does the Father of light, deny himself to any who do but heartily desire him; love him, and you enjoy him. For what other way can there be supposed to be of enjoying God? Every man is alike nigh to God, yea, and the devils as nigh as men. Set aside the loving of God, and the meanest man in the world is as much akin to him as the mightiest, and the apostate spirits as near to him as his menial servants, the courtiers of heaven. If we could suppose an unloving soul to be admitted into heaven, and to be as nigh the throne of God as the angels are, this very paradise would be a purgatory to him, and the bosom of Abraham a bed of thorns.

Oh how blessed, and yet how easy a thing is it to enjoy God? Love him, and he is your own. If kingdoms could be got with loving, what man would not be a prince? If great fortunes could be obtained by being desired, who would not be sure of a rich match? If the mere setting one's heart on silver and gold, would make them to increase, the prophesy would certainly fail, of having the poor always with us. God is more easily got than gold. Believe in Jesus, and you have him. Love God, and you are possessed of him.

Droop not, thou meanest, obscurest, poorest of the children of men; come, lift up thy head and take courage. I show thee a way, a certain way, an easy way, how thou mayest be as excellent, as rich, as honourable, as any of the princes of the earth, as the angels of heaven. Love the Father; for if any man love the Father and

the Son, they will come unto him and make their abode with him. Good God, what honour and happiness is this that thou bestowest on thy saints!

MEDITATION XLVII.

A further motive to the love of God.

To this consideration might well be added, that the lover of God in gaining God, gains all other things. *Habet omnia qui habet habentem omnia*, [He has all things, who has the possessor of them all.] *All things are your's*, says the apostle, to the lovers of God; and *all other things shall be added to you*, says Christ, to the seekers of the kingdom of God. Love God, and you gain all other things in him and with him. It was a generous speech of the Roman general, when they offered him great treasures to be friends with him? "I matter not your gifts, (said he,) I had rather command a people, that have all those riches, than have them myself." If it should be supposed, that a man should enjoy God, and nothing of the world with him, yet it were a more excellent and happy condition to enjoy him, who hath and indeed is all things, than to enjoy all other things without him. The lovers of God are sure of enjoying other things with him; the things even of this world shall be added to them, so far as is convenient for them. However, though they should live and die as poor as Job, when he was at the poorest; and as forlorn

as Lazarus, yet they enjoy all things in God. For whatever is truly sweet, pleasant, lovely, beautiful in the whole creation, is more excellently enjoyed in God, than as it lies scattered up and down among the creatures, *Dulcius*, (yea and *plenius* too,) *ex ipso fonte bibuntur aquæ*, [Sweeter the draught from the pure fount that flows.] The witty conceit of the Rabbins concerning their manna, that it tasted, to every particular palate, of that which he desired to eat; and so the fathers that fed on it, eat as many sorts of meat as they desired out of the same dish; (the more shame for them then to lust after quails;) this conceit, I say, will a little illustrate that great truth of a compendious enjoyment of all things in God. In him alone the deliciousness of the whole creation is enjoyed and relished all at once; and so the apostle's riddle is intelligibly interpreted, that the lovers of God, though they have nothing, yet possess all things.

But this is only by the by. I pass to a further motive to the love of God. If we do not love him, we shall not, we cannot live with him. Surely to live with God and abide with him forever, must needs be accounted the happiest state that man is capable of; and most men (at least when they see they must live here no longer) do profess to desire it. And those few, that do not desire it, yet are afraid of the contrary; even these dread the sentence of, *Depart from me, ye cursed*. Surely there is no man so profligate, that can firmly believe and steadily think of an eternal separation and exclusion from the beautiful presence of God, but would ten thousand

times rather wish to be quite unmade, than be made so miserable. But so miserable must all the lovers of the world, all the haters of the Father be. There are many mansions in our Father's house indeed, but they are only prepared for them of the household. The sons of the bond women must be cast out, be there ever so much room in the house to hold them. These children of whoredom, this spurious offspring of Christian mammonists are hateful, and must be cast forth, not by their brethren as Jephthah was, but by that God of whom they falsely say, that he is their Father. Ye hated me and cast me out, Jephthah said. Ye hated me, and therefore I will cast you out, will God say. To them that once said, depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways, will he say, *Depart from me, I know you not.* But to the lovers of the Father, will the Son say, *Come, ye beloved of the Father, inherit the kingdom.* These shall forever abide and dwell with him whom their soul loved; as they sought him earnestly, they shall find him certainly, and having found him, enjoy him everlastingly. They shall not come and see where Jesus dwells, and abide with him a day, as the two disciples did of old, but for evermore. For so it is his gracious pleasure, that where he is, there they shall be also.

MEDITATION XLVIII.

A further motive to the love of God.

LASTLY, Let us consider with ourselves, that whatever inducement there is to the love of the world, there is the same to the love of God, and greater. Is there any worthy consideration that recommends the world to our affections, and does not the same recommend God? I will not here again think of the beauty or excellency of the creatures, having already showed that the God who made any of them excellent, must needs be more excellent than they.

Do we love the world for its convenience and agreeableness to our appetites? Meats and drinks, because they gratify our hunger and thirst? Fields, because we are served by them? Sleep, because we are refreshed by it? Warm houses, because they are a defence to us? Friends, because they are akin to us, because they love us or assist us? Goods and cattle, because they bring in money, or money because it answers all things? And is not God the most agreeable good to us? Have not our souls their appetites as well our bodies? And what can gratify and perfect our understanding, wills and affections, but truth and goodness? Yea, and as to the corporal appetites, although God has ordained such things, as meat and drink, and sleep, houses, and friends, and money, for our gratification, refreshment, defence, assistance, yet he can perform all these for us without the help of them. *Man liveth not by*

bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, who can maintain us and refresh us forty days, yea, forty years or ages, if he please, without meat, or drink, or sleep. He is nearer akin to us than any relation, and can assist and comfort us in the absence of lovers and friends, and take care of us, even when our father and mother do cast us off. And if money should be granted to supply the want of all things, yet God is more full and agreeable, who can supply the want of money itself. They were rich men, and wanted no good thing; nay, they made many rich, and gave such good things as money cannot purchase, who said, *Silver and gold have we none.* But, to digress a little, I see no reason to grant such an omnipotence to money, nor (with the leave of the learned) such a translation of the text, whether we translate [all things] or [all men.] By answering all things cannot be meant, that it stands instead of all things. It could not stand instead of meat to Midas, who starved in the midst of his gold; for though men should eat gold, as they say the Jews did in the siege of Jerusalem, it would not keep them from famishing. It could not stand instead of drink to the thirsty king; if it could, he who had so much of it, would not have been so prodigal as to offer a kingdom for a cup of water. It cannot stand instead of so mean a thing as apparel; he who is ever so well laden with thick clay, may for all that be in such circumstances that he starves with gold. Neither by answering all things, can be meant, that it can purchase all things, and furnish men with whatever they want. If it could,

how comes money and the want of the most desirable thing in the world to be so compatible, as in our own language to be made up into one word, called the rich-gout? *Ægro-Dives habet nummos sed non habet ipsum*, [The sick, rich man holds wealth, yet not himself.] It often happens that health cannot be purchased with money. Liberty is often not recoverable, life not preservable by money. The poor apostle might have had his liberty, if he had had money; but the king of Judah had money enough, and yet could not get his liberty. Rich men may fall into the hands of such men, *as will not regard silver nor delight in gold*, that they should receive a ransom for them from thence, Isa. xiii. 17. And as for the ingenuity, learning, wisdom, grace, one may say of them as wise Solomon (who did *simul amare, et sapere*, [love them, and yet retain wisdom,] Cant. ii. 9.) says, concerning love, If a man would give all the substance of his house for them, it would utterly be contemned, nay, rejected with scorn; *thy money perish with thee*.

Neither is it true, That money answereth all men, as others interpret it, who thus paraphrase on the words, "Let there be money, and all men have their heart's desire." For there are many in the world, that prefer the favour of God, and their own consciences before thousands of gold and silver. Nay, and those very men, who love money best, and have most of it too, are not yet answered, they are not satisfied by money. I could heartily wish for the sake of those that damn themselves with the love of money, and take encouragement so to do from this text, that

the translation of it were amended, or the sense fully explained by the just consideration of the context, according to the learned Tremellius, the judicious Cartwright, or any one who can do it better.

Do men love the world because it is pleasant to them, they see and taste and handle it? I confess the world by being so nigh our senses, does affect and charm them. But is not God as nigh to us as any thing in the world? The invisible things of him, are seen by the things that are made, *præsentem monstrat quælibet herba Deum*, [each plant reveals a present God.] Well might the apostle say, *He is not far from every one of us*, Acts xvii. 27. Which is but a rhetorical meiosis, or diminution of the actual fact, for he is very nigh to every one of us; so nigh, that he is in us, and over us, and round about us; or rather indeed we are in him, who is the infinite goodness and omnipotent life, containing all things in himself. God is as nigh to our reasons as the world is to our senses, and it is as easy and obvious to conclude, that some one made the world, as it is to see that it is made.

Do men love the world because they apprehend it necessary to them, they cannot live contentedly and pleasantly, nor indeed live at all without it? This may be presumed to be one of the fairest excuses for the love of the world; for who can choose but love that which is necessary to life? How can any man live without money, as the world goes? In extreme old age we shall be forsaken and miserable, if we have not es-

tates, therefore we stick at nothing to get them whilst we are young.

This necessariness of the world may indeed justify the moderate industry of men for the obtaining of a competent portion of it; but it will never justify coveting after abundance, nor the predominant love of the world. For life itself, for whose sake, we say, we love the world, is in itself but a mean thing, and not very desirable; and in comparison of the favour of God, abominable, and to be hated. But supposing life ever so desirable, and consequently the world necessary, and therefore the love of it justifiable, yet certainly God is more necessary to us than the world, or any thing in it. Our souls are surely more excellent than our temporal lives, and consequently the grace of God, which is the life and happiness of souls, more necessary than the world can be to the maintenance of life. It is not necessary to us to live, but it is necessary to be saved. If a man lose his life he may find it again, but if he lose his soul, it is past recovery. Without the world we cannot live, therefore it is necessary; without God we cannot be saved, therefore He is more necessary. Nay, indeed, neither can we live without him. It is because he is, that we are; and if we could suppose that he should withdraw himself from the world, it may easily be conceived, that the world would hide its head, and steal away into its first nothing.

MEDITATION XLIX.

A concluding Meditation.

I CAN imagine nothing that does really commend the world, or any thing therein to our affections, or entertainment; but it is in a higher degree, or a more excellent kind to be found in God. (The superlative love of God must needs therefore be most just and reasonable.

And Oh, would to God it might appear so to all men, to all the children of God! Oh, thou Father of men, and Father of mercies, set home the consideration of the reasonableness, necessity, easiness, pleasantness, seemliness, profitability, of this love of thee upon the hearts of all men; that as thou lovest them more than they, so they may love thee more than themselves, or any thing else! How long, O Lord, shall it be observed, to the breaking of the hearts of thy friends, that thou art hated by so great a part of that creation, that is nothing but the product of thy own love and goodness! What a fearful, horrible rebellion is this world thrown into, when the children of the Most High rise up against their Father, their very hearts rise against him, against his service, against his people, against his name and authority! Oh, sad apostacy of human nature! Oh, lamentable degeneracy of rational faculties! How are men transformed into moles, hating the light, and making to themselves places and paradises in the base earth! How are souls converted into swine, feeding upon husks and

wallowing in filthiness! How stupendously are the rational palates vitiated, which loathe the honey and the honey-comb; to whom love itself is hateful! Oh Lord, pity this unnatural viperous generation, that are without natural affection to their Father; cast forth thy cords of love, and reconcile this undutiful, rebellious offspring, to thy blessed and lovely self! Hear me, O my God, in these requests, which on my own behalf, and on the behalf of all the undutiful crew of lapsed souls, I humbly present to thy merciful Majesty.

Disparage all the wealth and glory and sweetness, and beauty and bravery of the world in our apprehension, that we may look upon them as things unsuitable, inadequate, inferior to our noble natures; mere husks and trash, dust and gravel, in comparison of the proper food of souls!

Display thy Divine excellency, sweetness, fullness, infinite goodness, suitability and all-sufficiency to us, that we may be thoroughly convinced, that thou art altogether lovely, and that all other things, yea, heaven itself, are to be loved for thy sake.

Let thy good Spirit move upon our affections, and overshadow these souls, till it have impregnated them with Divine love! Whether love be like water, do thou shed it abroad in our hearts till it overflow all our faculties, as the waters cover the the sea; or whether it be like fire, let the breath of the Lord blow it up into a victorious and irresistible flame!

Grant, good God, that this love of thee, may express itself in the faith, love, and obedience of thy blessed Son Jesus, in the entertainment and

prosecution of the motions of thy Holy Spirit, in a sincere love of all men, in a singular delight in the saints, in the constant preference of truth, and righteousness, the establishment of peace and order, the advancement of the Gospel, the favour of God and our own consciences, before riches, honours, pleasures, self-pleasing, the favour of men, the propagation of parties, and all worldly interest whatsoever; in the preference of the peace and holiness of our souls before the gratifications of the body, and the securing of a happy eternity, before the serving of time!

Finally, I beseech thee, O my gracious Father, be daily adding fuel to this holy fire, maintain and increase this pious ardour. Keep us in thy love, waiting for the mercy of Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Be daily winding up these heavy and lingering hearts unto thyself; and carrying on these imperfect longings, till thou hast ripened them into perfect, lively, fearless, endless love and delight, in thy heavenly kingdom, for the sake of the Son of thy love; who hath loved us and given himself for us, that we might give ourselves to thee! To Him, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be all thanks, love and obedience for evermore. *Amen.*

THE END.



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